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Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

THE COLTON CELEBRATION CONGREGATION: A CASE STUDY
IN AMERICAN ADVENTIST WORSHIP RENEWAL
1986-1991

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Viviane Haenni

1996

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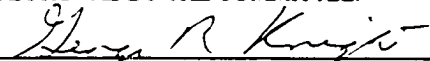
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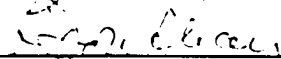
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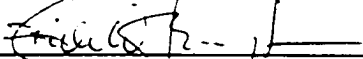
Faculty Adviser,
George R. Knight
Professor of Church History



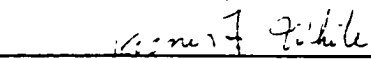
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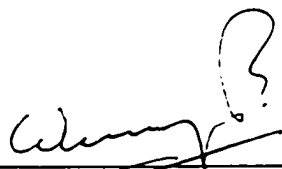
Lillianne Doukhan
Assistant Professor of Worship and Church Music



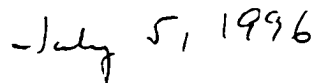
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Assistant Professor of World Mission



James F. White
Professor of Theology
Notre Dame University



Dean, SDA Theological Seminary
Werner K. Vyhmeister



ABSTRACT

THE COLTON CELEBRATION CHURCH: A CASE STUDY
IN AMERICAN ADVENTIST WORSHIP RENEWAL
1986-1991

by

Viviane Haenni

Chair: George R. Knight

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: THE COLTON CELEBRATION CONGREGATION: A CASE STUDY IN AMERICAN ADVENTISM WORSHIP RENEWAL, 1986-1991

Name of the researcher: Viviane Haenni

Name and degree of the faculty adviser: George R. Knight, Ed.D.

Date completed: June 1996

This study investigates the experience of Celebration Center (Colton, California), its milieu, and its impact on the North American Seventh-day Adventist Church through what has been perceived as the celebration movement and controversy, while addressing underlying historical, sociological, and philosophical/theological questions.

The principal findings of the study reveal that Celebration Center has uniquely attempted to explore a more multilayered approach to church life and worship within White Anglo Adventism. The celebration experience has ventured into breaking up some old Adventist expectations through its congregational trend; its emphasis on love, acceptance, and forgiveness; its different church organization and more holistic worship; and its accent on the divine presence, the Holy Spirit, and the spiritual gifts of all believers. In trying to explore in the late 1980s a new experiential liturgical language, Celebration Center seems to have uniquely embodied change and become, at times, the irrational scapegoat of people's fear/anger and sense of loss brought by societal and religious modifications.

Anticelebrationists have generally been perceptive in their recognition of deeper changes at stake in the celebration experience but have been mistaken in attributing them to a conspiracy within or outside of

Adventism. The implemented changes by the celebration movement are reflective of powerful trends shaping American Christianity and Adventism, such as revivalistic, third wave, and baby boomer religious innovations and the convergence between the liturgical and pentecostal/charismatic movements. Celebration worship grows out of a particular worldview not completely in harmony with the theological and philosophical assumptions of the years of denominational consolidation and stabilization (1920-1950) that are predominant among antagonists. The celebration movement and the reactions against it can be both understood as grass-roots attempts to bring renewal within White Anglo North American Adventism.

The principal implications which arise from the findings are: (1) A timely need for Adventism to recount its own history, apply to worship its holistic approach to reality, and investigate new models of hermeneutics, ecclesiology, sacramental liturgy, and church structure. (2) The common convictions of pro and anticelebrationists could inform Adventism of possible directions for the future and offer grounds of reconciliation.

Aux chevaliers et bouffons de la nuit,
partenaires de vérité et d'audacité
Dan
Dave
Paulo
Daniel
David
George
José

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------------|---|
| ASRS | Andrews Society for Religious Studies |
| BCC | Blue Card Comments (collected at Celebration Center) |
| CC | Celebration Center |
| FC | Florida Conference |
| NLCC | New Life Celebration Church |
| NPUC | North Pacific Union Conference |
| OC | Oregon Conference |
| PR-WM | Pilgrim's Rest Tract (Vance Ferrell uses the abbreviation WM followed by a number to order his documents) |
| PU | Pacific Union |
| SDA | Seventh-day Adventist |
| SECC | Southeastern California Conference |
| TDNT | <u>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</u> |
| VHPC | Viviane Haenni's Personal Collection |

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THANK YOU!

A STATEMENT OF CELEBRATION

The year 2000 approaches.

Time and change move on as they always have . . .

For the church the challenge continues . . .

To make Christianity clearly relevant
without minimizing the message . . .

The 1980s were a decade in which millions of young adults gave the church another chance. But many found little perceived value and turned away. While over eighty percent of adult Americans describe themselves as Christian, most of them feel that the church is an outdated institution that means well but has little to offer a contemporary person.

If God is to reach people through His church . . .

It must become a place where people find friendship, support and understanding.

In 1989 a group of Spirit-filled Christians, desiring to create such a place,

embarked

upon an adventure.¹

¹Celebration Story, produced and directed by John Sisk and Rand Randy Schornstein, 1991, videocassette.

PREFACE

General Remarks

Within the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists there has been much recent discussion regarding the celebration movement and particularly two of its pioneer churches, Celebration Center (Colton, California) and New Life Celebration Church (Milwaukie, Oregon).

A consensus on what "makes" a religious congregation a "celebration church" has not yet been reached within Adventism. Most proponents of "celebration worship" generally agree on the following definition: "a church having a worship service attempting to be contemporary, joyous and participative." On the other hand, opponents tend to define a celebration church as "a congregation conducting an irreverent, superficial, entertainment-based worship service, that distributes cheap grace, teaches compromised schemes of Adventist belief, and encourages exception to Adventist life-style traditions."¹

Eoin Giller attempts a more precise definition of celebration churches by identifying five worship characteristics: (1) obedience to the biblical call to congregational praise and participation, along with the proclamation and hearing of the Word; (2) use of contemporary and traditional songs accompanied by orchestral instruments in addition to an organ or a piano; (3) worship leaders actively conducting the service from the rostrum rather than its "just happening" from the order printed in the church bulletin; (4) weekly variations in the liturgy, such as in its order and praying modes, or various

¹See Donald Jacobsen, "Worship: Our Journey Ahead," W-57, Called to Worship, Oregon Conference, Clackamas, OR, April 1991, audiocassette. Cf. Joe Crews, "Consecration Desecration?" Inside Report, January 1991, 13; Lloyd Rosenvold and Leola Rosenvold, Adventist Carnivals (Hope, ID: Rosenvold Pub., 1991), 1; John Osborne, Celebration or Abomination (Apopka, FL: Prophecy Countdown), 1991, 5.

uses of contemporary means of worship, such as drama; and (5) emphasis on a warm, loving, accepting, and Christ-centered climate that includes children and focuses on fellowship.¹

Though generally agreeing with Giller, Darryl Comstock refines the definition through three additional characteristics and some minor details. A church, suggests Comstock, operates in a celebration "mode" when it subordinates or eliminates parts of the traditional Sabbath School program by allocating more time to small group discussions; features shorter sermons with less emphasis on "doctrine" and more emphasis on "the gospel," personal relationships, and contemporary issues; and encourages greater audience participation through vocal, acoustical, and visual feedback, including responses such as "Amen," "Praise the Lord," clapping, and the raising of hands. Additionally, the mode also frequently includes removing the pulpit in order to bring the pastor closer to the congregation and incorporates the singing from words projected onto a screen.²

Experimentation with celebration worship has opened a spectrum of innovation in Adventist worship and beneficially resulted in Adventists paying significantly more attention to worship. As Myron Widmer notes:

With the birth and rapid growth of several large "celebration style" Adventist churches in Oregon and California, and with hundreds of congregations adding celebrative elements to their worship services, the church has been, and is being forced to restudy the entire concept of worship to see how much innovation it will allow.³

The celebration controversy surrounding Colton and other celebration congregations has raised several key questions: Is celebration worship making a valid connection with present cultural realities, and especially with the North American baby boomer phenomenon?⁴ To what extent is non-participative, predictable, linear, and left-brain-oriented worship still satisfying for various believers

¹Eoin Giller, "Worship Renewal in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," *Ministry* 64 (October 1991): 18, 19.

²Darryl Comstock, "Selling Change," *Ministry* 64 (October 1991): 30.

³Myron Widmer, "Adventist Worship: Celebration-Style," *Adventist Review*, 1 November 1990, 12.

⁴Joe Engelkemier, "Lessons from Willow Creek," W-19; Monte Sahlin, "Worship: Audience Diversity," W-56; and idem, "Baby Boomers and Worship," W-18. Called to Worship, Oregon Conference, Clackamas, OR, April 1991, audiocassettes.

living in Western secularized society?¹ Is it possible, as Gordon Bietz noted, that "worshipping the unchanging God requires the use of changing language and culturally relevant symbols?"² How much does celebration worship incorporate in White Adventist churches elements already in existence in the denomination's Black churches?

If the celebration movement has triggered a vision and a variety of suggestions and pragmatics for worship "renewal" within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it has also been a catalytic agent for hundreds of other questions and has brought about somewhat of a crisis situation within the denomination. It has, in fact, caused a theological and emotional rift among many Seventh-day Adventist congregations. The following two paragraphs illustrate the key points in the crisis.

The most basic theoretical issues being debated in the celebration controversy concern: (1) the loss of certain "historic" Adventist distinctive doctrines, (2) E. G. White's prophetic authority, (3) the absence of reverence; (4) counterfeit revivals shaped by various influences (e.g., Pentecostalism, charismatic renewal, ecumenism, Roman Catholicism, neuro-linguistic programming, and the New Age); and (5) developments in church structure leading toward congregationalism.

In addition to those conceptual issues, the celebration practices most criticized are: (1) physical and emotional expressions during worship (e.g., hand raising and clapping); (2) contemporary music and the use of certain instruments; (3) drama; (4) too much emphasis on a lively, joyful, loving, forgiving, and accepting church atmosphere; (5) lax membership and disciplinary criteria; and (6) a shift from an emphasis on doctrines to the "Gospel," praise, personal relationships, and contemporary issues.

Dealing with the issue of the celebration "crisis/renewal" calls not only for an evaluation of the relevant factors that led certain North American Seventh-day Adventist congregations to initiate worship changes in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but also to an examination of possible deeper

¹Three of the seven mottoes of the First International Worship Conference (Portland, OR, 17-20 April 1991) vividly capture the awareness of change, from a left-brain-oriented to a more holistic worship: "The primary musical instrument in worship is the congregation"--Lyell Heise; "Our worship may be exuberant or it may be quiet, but it must never be passive"--Donald Jacobsen; and "Worship is not something you watch. It is an event you own"--Monte Sahlin ("Call to Worship," advertisement flyer).

²Gordon Bietz, "Worship Themes in Adventist Theology," W-07, Called to Worship, Oregon Conference, Clackamas, OR, April 1991, audiocassette.

issues at stake within Adventism. Adequate treatment of the topic also necessitates an examination of the presuppositions and theological principles undergirding the controversy;¹ the reasons for resurgent nineteenth-century revivalistic principles and methods; and the possible doctrinal, ecclesiological, hermeneutical, and socio-cultural paradigm shifts related to the celebration movement.

The prophetic tradition in the Bible teaches that God often uses crisis situations among His people to reject and destroy forms of worship that have become meaningless survivals of the past or impersonal routines.² Crises may become opportunities to liberate, renew, and purify worship--which expresses basic group orientation.³

Statement of Purpose

It is the purpose of this dissertation to investigate, describe, and analyze the experience of Celebration Center (Colton, California), its milieu, and impact on the North American Seventh-day Adventist Church through what has been perceived as the celebration movement and controversy, while addressing underlying historical, sociological, and philosophical/theological issues. In order to achieve this purpose the study: (1) presents the relevant contextual factors of celebration worship renewal;⁴ (2) observes the development of celebration worship at Celebration Center from 1986 to 1991; and (3) evaluates Celebration Center, its milieu, and impact on the North American Seventh-day Adventist Church, as well as, defines what a celebration church is.

The evaluation of Celebration Center, its milieu, and impact is attempted by examining: (1) positive perceptions about Celebration Center, (2) the experience of a similar church

¹E.g., the "lapping of the Third Wave at Adventism's shore," as Kenneth R. Samples suggests in "The Recent Truth about Seventh-day Adventism," Christianity Today, 5 February 1990, 18-21; or "the long-standing problem in North American Adventism--cultural fundamentalism," as Deanna Davis underlines in "Raised Hands, Raised Eyebrows--Adventists Learn to Celebrate," Theology, News and Notes (Fuller Theological Seminary), 9 March 1991, 19.

²Isa 1:10-17; Jer 6:20-21; Amos 5:5-11; 21-27.

³Exod 5: 2, 8; 16: 10; 3: 12; 31; 23:10-14; 25: 8, 9; Hos 4: 15-19; 2 Kgs 23; 2 Chro 29, 30.

⁴The contextual factors to be treated include: (1) the global context of liturgical versus charismatic worship renewal, (2) the American religious context, (3) the Seventh-day Adventist worship background.

(New Life Celebration Church, Milwaukie, Oregon) for cross-checking of data and discerning trends; (3) the Adventist context and tendencies of the celebration movement in the late 1980s; (4) the major concerns voiced about Celebration Center, its worship, and the celebration movement; and (5) the arguments against celebration worship. The paper concludes by suggesting how celebration worship relates to sociological developments, theological/doctrinal emphases, ecclesiological directions, and hermeneutical questions.

Delimitations and Scope

The focal point of this case study is the worship experience of the Colton Seventh-day Adventist congregation, because it was one of the two pioneer churches in the celebration movement. New Life Celebration Church, Oregon, as well as four other celebration churches, was selected for cross-checking of data and discerning definitions and trends in the celebration movement. These churches were also the most popular and most often criticized congregations in the celebration debate.

The study does not attempt to give a comprehensive historical account of the events, data, and experiences related to the entire celebration movement within North American Adventism. It does, however, emphasize the significant operative dynamics, presuppositions, and principles of worship renewal discovered in the congregations selected for study. Reference to other celebration worship experiences is made only when they shed light on the discussion.

The dissertation does address itself to current "high liturgy" worship renewal evident in such congregations as the La Sierra University Church or the Boston Temple.

The examination of data is largely confined to the period between 1986 and 1991, although it is recognized that some references needed to be made outside the limits of this time frame. The date 1986 was chosen because the sources indicate that the celebration experience of Celebration Center and New Life Celebration Church (the two pioneer churches in the celebration movement) began to gain momentum at that time. The year 1991 was arbitrarily chosen because the observation of the celebration churches and the major interviews related to the dissertation were completed during that year.

Undergirding this study is the belief that church renewal is a process and not merely a specific event. Presuppositional to the discussion is the recognition of the authority of the Bible.

Need for the Study

Within the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church there has been much discussion regarding the celebration movement, particularly as it is represented in Celebration Center (Colton, CA). The debate has become so controversial that the Northern California Conference constituency delegates in October 1990 considered voting a motion prohibiting "unholy" celebration worship. After a rather spirited debate, a counter-motion was finally accepted affirming the importance of "proper" worship.¹

But what is "proper" worship? Unfortunately, the church leaders could not suggest or refer to any in-depth study on the subject of celebration worship to inform the delegates' discussion and to aid in the decision-making process. Indeed, no serious attempts have yet been made to study celebration congregations to understand their impact upon the Adventist Church, discover the relevant factors behind their worship renewal, and understand the doctrinal, ecclesiological, and sociological shifts expressed in their experience. Also, no study has yet dealt with the presuppositions and principles undergirding the celebration controversy. The following literature review demonstrates that there are no in-depth, scholarly studies on Adventist celebration worship. These lacks underscore the need for this research.

Review of Adventist-Related Literature

In spite of the lack of scholarly studies on celebration worship, the topic has generated a good deal of less-than-scholarly literature.

Kenneth R. Samples's article in Christianity Today places Adventist celebration experiences in the context of the Third Wave Movement and the worship style of John Wimber's Vineyard Fellowship.² Gerhard F. Hasel presents the same religious frame of reference in his article "The 'Third Wave' Roots of Celebrationism."³

¹Susan Garza, "Northern California Conference Constituency Delegates Settle Two Controversial Issues," Pacific Union Recorder, 17 December 1990, 5.

²Samples, "The Recent Truth," 18-21.

³Gerhard F. Hasel, "The 'Third Wave' Roots of Celebrationism," Adventists Affirm (Fall 1991): 36-42.

Three chapters of Monte Sahlin's Sharing Our Faith with Friends without Losing Either give some current, historical, and socio-cultural perspectives on the Colton and Milwaukie congregations.¹ Deanna Davis shares the same approach in her article, "Raised Hands, Raised Eyebrows-Adventists Learn to Celebrate." She also adds some sketchy theological and historical references, such as past charismatic experiences within the denomination.²

Two papers presented at the First International Adventist Worship Conference (Portland, Oregon, April 17-20, 1991) also consider past and present historical perspectives and socio-cultural dimensions relevant to, and present in, the celebration worship issue.³

C. Mervyn Maxwell's article, "Baby Boomers and Moral Leadership," relates celebration worship to a specific American socio-cultural dimension, the baby boomer religious revival.⁴ Paul Richardson makes the same assessment in one of his editorials in Adventist Baby Boomer Awareness but from a different perspective.⁵ In the manual developed by Richardson, Sahlin, and several other key people (Craig Dossman, Margo Pitrone, Warren B. Nelson, and Gary Russell) for a leadership seminar on how churches can reach and hold the baby boomers, the issue of dramatic, participatory, and celebrative worship is addressed. A significant disclaimer, however, is written on the first page of the seminar manual and registration form:

One specific form of worship will not be held up or recommended in this seminar, but local churches will be encouraged to develop their individual strengths and styles. Controversial

¹Monte Sahlin, Sharing Our Faith with Friends without Losing Either (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1990), 30-75.

²Davis, "Raised Hands," 17-21.

³Gordon Bietz, "Worship Themes in Adventist Theology"; and Eoin Giller, "Worship Renewal in the Seventh-day Adventist Church." Two papers presented at the First International Adventist Worship Conference, Portland, OR, 18 April 1991.

⁴C. Mervyn Maxwell, "Baby Boomers and Moral Leadership," Adventists Affirm (Fall 1991): 5-22, 25. The article's title was "Baby Boomers, Celebration Churches, and Moral Leadership," when first presented as a paper at the Lake Union Conference morning worship, 11 March 1991; revised 9 June 1991. A variation of that paper was also published under the latter title and under the pseudonym Elijah Smith in Our Firm Foundation, July 1991, 8-13.

⁵Paul Richardson, "Targeting Church: Just as the denomination would provide a separate church for any ethnic group, so baby boomer churches must be planted to cater to their unique needs." Adventist Baby Boomer Awareness (ABBA) (May/June 1991): 8.

theological issues will not be discussed, and it is not the purpose of this seminar to advocate divergent forms of Adventism.¹

Ivan Charles Blake argues, in his D.Min. dissertation, that contemporary worship must not forget to please God first in its efforts to be more relevant and appealing to the baby boomers' generation.² In The Fragmenting of Adventism William G. Johnsson also considers why the torch has not been passed on to the baby boomer generation. If Johnsson welcomes a diversification of ministry, fellowship, music, and worship styles, he wonders how to counteract "this necessary segmentation so that it does not become fragmentation." For him, however, uniformity can only be a "mockery" within a denomination represented in more than two hundred nations.³

Ministry's special issue on worship addresses the celebration phenomenon through three articles. "Worship Renewal in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," by Eoin Giller, defends celebration worship through the perspective of incarnational theology; that is, Christians must meet and transform their culture in their very forms of liturgy.⁴ C. Raymond Holmes, in "Authentic Adventist Worship," negatively evaluates celebration worship, mainly in its failure to set proclamation above and before acclamation.⁵ Darryl Comstock provides eight guidelines to bring about effective changes in worship and relates the celebration issue to one of its undergirding questions: How has the Seventh-day Adventist Church implemented and reacted to change?⁶

Lyell Heise, David Snyder, and Donald Jacobsen also addressed the question of change in relation to the celebration controversy in their oral presentations at the 1991 John W. Osborn

¹Paul Richardson, ed., How Your Church Can Reach and Hold Baby Boomers (Portland, OR: Baby Boomer Ministries Resource Center, 1992), 2; How Your Church Can Reach and Hold Baby Boomers, registration form, 2.

²Ivan Charles Blake, "A Proposed Model Worship Service Incorporating a Biblical View of the Holiness of God for the Urbandale, Michigan, Seventh-day Adventist Church" (D.Min.diss., Andrews University, 1993), 51-53.

³William G. Johnsson, The Fragmenting of Adventism (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1995), 47, 54.

⁴Giller, "Worship Renewal," 16-19.

⁵C. Raymond Holmes, "Authentic Adventist Worship," Ministry 64 (October 1991): 13-16.

⁶Comstock, "Selling," 30-31, 39.

Lectureship.¹ Interestingly enough, the 1990 lectureship had focused on the same subject, but in the broader context of Seventh-day Adventist theology, church methodologies, and church structures.²

Creative Sabbath Morning Alternatives, a video and manual produced by Pacific Union Conference under the leadership of Herbert Broeckel, presents the celebrative worship of the Colton and Milwaukie congregations in the context of five other churches experiencing worship revitalization. Elements of effective worship and methods of implementing change are treated.³

Giller and Holmes address the question of "proper" religious revival. For the latter, only heart-searching experience guided by the Word of God can bring religious revival, and not changes in worship format. On the other hand, Giller defends the theory that no revival ever occurred in history without "an outburst of new music," which is often considered "scandalous" in the revival's own age, but is later "adopted and revered by later generations."⁴

Martin Weber devotes one chapter of Adventist Hot Potatoes to celebration worship. His presentation underlines personality, age, cultural preferences, and biblical truths as reference points to evaluate celebration worship. It is significant that he identifies the celebration controversy as one of the "hot potatoes" challenging Adventism in the 1990s. He also relates the question to a theological point--i.e., the assurance and joy of salvation quite possibly are closely connected with participation in celebration worship.⁵

¹Lyell Heise, "Blending Old and New"; David Snyder, "How Our Congregation Survived Change and Growth"; Donald Jacobsen, "Coping with Change in Worship," John Osborn Lectureship Series: The Third Millennium and the Church, Arizona Video Ministries, Scottsdale, AZ, October 1991, audiocassettes.

²Arthur Bietz, "Managing Change in the Church"; Stephen L. Gifford, "Coping with Change in the Church"; Richard, T. Rice, "Revision or Revolution? Theology Changes"; Reinhold Tilstra and Gayland Richardson, "Changes in the Church, How I Handle Them"; panel of presidents, "Coping with Changes"; panel of pastors, "Handling Changing Churches," John W. Osborn Series, Arizona Video Ministries, Scottsdale, AZ, 1990, audiocassettes.

³Creative Sabbath Morning Alternatives: Revitalizing the Worship Service and Sabbath School Program in Your Church (Westlake Village, CA: Church Ministries Department, Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1991), 1-29; Creative Sabbath Morning Alternatives, produced by the Church Ministries Department, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, 1991, videocassette.

⁴Giller, "Worship Renewal," 18.

⁵Martin Weber, Adventist Hot Potatoes (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1991), 11-35.

Don Hawley, in Set Free, relates the celebration issue to the same theological point as Weber.¹ Marvin Moore does the same in one chapter of his The Crisis of the End Time: Keeping Your Relationship with Jesus in Earth's Darkest Hour, when he describes the spiritual experience of the 144,000 as being that of a joyful, celebrative, worshipping community rather than of a group preoccupied with perfectionist concerns.² Richard Fredericks confirms in "To Celebrate or Not to Celebrate," that when Christians turn from themselves "to adore the Lord Jesus Christ for what he has done, then worship becomes a celebration."³ For Wintley Phipps, worship is not only coming to the presence of God but experiencing it. He writes, "God never meant worship and liturgy to be merely vehicles through which we disseminate information about His Gospel."⁴ In Clayton Peck's "Does It Matter How We Worship?" the issue of relevant celebration worship is understood in the context of joyful praise, its importance, complexity, power, and biblical roots.⁵ Barry D. Oliver essentially unfolds the same idea in "Make a Joyful Noise," emphasizing that Adventist worship should embrace both the predominantly cognitively and affectively-oriented members of the community.⁶

At the Second International Adventist Worship Conference (Riverside, California, 7-10 April 1993), David J. Newman emphasized similar ideas in his address "Where Is Adventist Worship Headed?" For him, "Celebration" reflects the joy of sinners experiencing God's unconditional acceptance. Worship should allow people "to learn to appreciate God with their whole being, both their intellect and their emotions."⁷ Drawing some conclusions from his own experience at the Damascus Seventh-day

¹Don Hawley, Set Free (Clackamas, OR: Better Living Publishing, 1990), 53-73.

²Marvin Moore, The Crisis of the End Time: Keeping Your Relationship with Jesus in Earth's Darkest Hour (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1992), 147-57.

³Richard Frederick, "To Celebrate or Not to Celebrate," Ministry 65 (August 1992): 7-11.

⁴Wintley Phipps, "Worship: God's Agent of Contact," Ministry 66 (April 1993): 22-23.

⁵Clayton Peck, "Does It Matter How We Worship?" Adventist Review, 28 May 1992, 8-10.

⁶Barry D. Oliver, "Make a Joyful Noise!" Ministry 67 (July 1994): 22-24.

⁷David J. Newman, "Where Is Adventist Worship Headed?" Second International Worship Conference, Riverside, CA, 7 April 1993, unpublished paper, 11.

Adventist Celebration Church, Maryland (under Richard Frederick's full leadership since September 1992), he declares: "I believe that Adventist worship is headed for greater creativity, more experimentation, more diversity."¹

Ten other presentations at the worship conference shed additional light on the celebration phenomenon but without addressing it directly.² The seminar by Dan Simpson, senior pastor, and Ray Shelden, worship committee chair of Celebration Center, on the "Worship Pilgrimage at Celebration [Center]" is an exception.³

One crucial theme prevails among all the conference papers and presentations: White Anglo Adventist worship requires change and the development of timely theological reflections to guide its renewal.⁴

In Adventism for a New Generation, Steve Daily also briefly argues within the context of the first angel's message of Rev 14 that worship is "a spontaneous, joyful, exciting experience for those who worship Jesus" but "a burden, ritual or bore for those who worship a day." He claims "celebration" is not a dirty word but a possible worship style meeting the great variety of human needs. Daily treats numerous other issues related to celebration worship or controversy but without connecting them directly

¹Ibid., 7, 8, 12.

²Audiocassettes from this conference include: Robert Webber, "Trends in Protestant Worship," Second International Worship Conference, Adventist Media Center, Newbury Park, CA, W-23, April 1993; Alf Birch, "Towards an Adventist Theology of Worship," *ibid.*, W-25; Ron Graybill, "Enthusiasm and Early Adventist Worship," *ibid.*, W-3; Monte Sahlin and Caleb Rosado, "Social Change and Its Impact on Adventist Worship," *ibid.*, W-6; Pedrito Maynard-Reid, "Multi-Cultural Perspectives on Worship," *ibid.*, W-27; Caleb Rosado, "Response to Maynard-Reid's paper on Multi-Cultural Perspectives on Worship," *ibid.*, W-27; Lyell Heise, "Music and Worship," *ibid.*, W-27; Edwin Zackrisson, "The Power of Drama," *ibid.*, W-11; Gary Patterson, "The Expression of Worship," *ibid.*, W-13; Richard T. Rice, "Toward an Adventist Theology of Worship," Second International Worship Conference, 8 April 1993, unpublished paper, 1-3; Bailey Gillespie and Stuart Tyner, "Youth and Worship," *ibid.*, W-8.

³Dan Simpson and Ray Shelden, "The Worship Pilgrimage at Celebration [Center]," *ibid.*, W-15, audiocassette.

⁴Rice, "Toward an Adventist Theology of Worship," 1, 2; Ray Shelden, "Toward an Adventist Theology of Worship," Second International Worship Conference, Riverside, CA, 8 April 1993, 1-5, unpublished paper.

with each other: early charismatic worship practices, need for ecclesiological diversity, changes or experiential theology within Adventism.¹

It is surprising that the issue of corporate worship or celebration worship is not addressed in Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance. This report on voluminous research conducted among Adventist young people unveils, however, some of the possible reasons for the success of certain celebration churches: their warm and caring climate.²

In "Worship Is a Verb" James A. Cress draws some interesting conclusions: Worship needs to be "creative" and "active."³ Heidi Brenner, in "Connecting Students with God," presents how creativity and participation have developed in the alternate celebration-style worship service at Pacific Union College Church since 25 January 1992, and how it is meeting the students' needs.⁴

Once again it should be noted that none of these materials was designed to provide a comprehensive investigation of the dynamics and principles undergirding the Adventist celebration worship renewal/crisis.

Myron Widmer's "Adventist Worship Celebration Style" is certainly the most comprehensive attempt to describe what has happened in the Colton and Milwaukie congregations. Although it lacks depth, his article succinctly addresses the movement's philosophy and church vision. He also presents a balanced evaluation of strengths and potential weaknesses of celebration worship.⁵

Joe Englekemier's book manuscript, "The Celebration Controversy," is at present the most comprehensive work on the subject by a Seventh-day Adventist author. The manuscript treats some historical and cultural data, including the development of the celebration dispute within Adventism.

¹Steve Daily, Adventism for a New Generation (Portland, OR: Better Living Pub., 1993), 158, 172, 272-74, 307, 308.

²Roger L. Dudley, Valuegenesis: Faith in Balance (Riverside, CA: La Sierra University Press, 1992), 173, 184, 185, 270-70, 282.

³James A. Cress, "Worship Is a Verb," Ministry 68 (June 1995): 29-30.

⁴Heidi Brenner, "Connecting Students with God," The Journal of Adventist Education 56 (October/November 1993): 36-38.

⁵Widmer, "Adventist Worship," 12-16.

historical Adventist precedents of celebration, cultural changes and preferences, and some principles that should guide worship renewal.¹

The issue of music in Adventist worship is best addressed in two editions of Notes, the magazine of the International Adventist Musicians Association. Seven musicians and clergy (among them Dan Simpson) present divergent opinions on the introduction of popular folk music into Adventist worship services. In these articles, the following questions are considered, as Dan Schulz, editor of Notes, summarizes: Is there a revolution in worship music? Are the developments of the past twenty-plus years "momentary tempests over passing worship and musical fads? Is the future of traditional church worship music at a crossroads? Or are both sides overacting and overstating the situation?"² Recurrent issues addressed in these articles are the need for developing principles to guide the experience of God-centered and praiseful worship services, to distinguish between the sacred and the profane, and to allow a wholistic and contextualized experience.³

Two articles in the journal Our Firm Foundation, denouncing "extreme literalism" in the interpretation of the Scriptures in regard to bodily expression within celebration churches, bring forth one undergirding question in the celebration debate--that of Adventist hermeneutics.⁴

A few other articles on celebration worship have been published in the Adventist Review, Ministry, Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, Our Firm Foundation, Adventists Affirm, Inside Report, Liberty Review, Freedom's Ring, and various union and conference papers (e.g., Pacific Union Recorder, North Pacific Union Conference Gleaner) and newsletters (e.g., Adventist Baby Boomer

¹Joe Engelkemier, "The Celebration Controversy," unpublished book manuscript.

²Dan Schulz, "Music in Worship," Notes, Summer/Spring, 1995, 5.

³Marvin L. Robertson, "Church Music in Turmoil . . . Searching for Solutions," Notes, Spring/Summer 1995, 6-8; Dennis Hunt, "Worship: Personal View," Notes, Spring/Summer 1995, 8-11; Dan Simpson, "Worship Music at Celebration," Notes, Spring/Summer 1995, 12-15; Jeffrey K. Lauritzen, "Contemporary Christian Music and Worship," Notes, Spring/Summer 1995, 15-22; James Teel, "Music That Worship, People That Worships, People That Worship Music, Music That Peoples Worship," Notes, Autumn 1995, 9-14; Eurydice V. Osterman, "Praise Him with Timbrel and Dance?" Notes, Autumn 1995, 14-16; Carlyle Manous, "A Suitable Music for Worship," Notes, Autumn 1995, 17-22.

⁴Ron Thompson, "The Celebration Approach to Worship," Our Firm Foundation, July 1991, 20-24; Elijah Smith, "Baby Boomers, Celebration Churches, and Moral Leadership," Our Firm Foundation, September 1991, 8-13.

Awareness, The Cutting Edge).¹ All these articles, however, are again rather limited in their treatment of both the development and the nature of the celebration worship renewal/crisis, due either to their commitment to other agendas or to their failure to adequately utilize primary sources.

The same kinds of problems exist in seven of the major statements by celebration-worship opponents: Celebration Show by Vance Ferrell,² Celebration or Abomination by John Osborne,³ Adventist Carnivals by Lloyd and Leola Rosenvold,⁴ No Time to Celebrate by Marshall Grosboll,⁵ Catholic Charismatic Attack: On God's SDA Church by Jan Marcussen,⁶ My Personal Experience in the History of Adventist Celebration by Gene Swanson,⁷ and Omega I and Omega II by Terry Ross.⁸

Issues, the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries is the most comprehensive collection of articles and documents dealing with the issues raised in the celebration controversy by private ministries. Some of the articles address issues related to the celebration controversy such as heresy, the use of E. G. White's writings, hypnosis, mind control, the book Questions on Doctrine, and historic Adventism.⁹ It is surprising, however, that the issue of celebration worship is

¹Consult bibliography for a complete list.

²The Celebration Show: The New Type of Seventh-day Adventist Church Services Called "Celebration" Compared with the Pentecostal Services (Beersheba Springs, TN: Pilgrims' Rest, May 1990), one videocassette. See the bibliography also for a list of tracts on the subject by Vance Ferrell.

³Osborne, Celebration or Abomination. See also The Greatest Crisis in the History of Adventism (Apopka FL: Video Production, Prophecy Countdown, 1990), four videocassettes.

⁴Rosenvold and Rosenvold, Adventist Carnivals.

⁵Marshall Grosboll, No Time to Celebrate (Wichita, KS: Steps to Life, 1990). Also published under the same title in Our Firm Foundation, December 1990, 14-24.

⁶Jan Marcussen, Catholic Charismatic Attack: On God's SDA Church (Thompsonville, IL: Amazing Truths Pub., 1991), four videocassettes.

⁷Gene Swanson, My Personal Experience in the History of Adventist Celebration (Apopka, FL: Prophecy Countdown, 1991), one videocassette.

⁸Terry S. Ross, Omega I and Omega II (Grants Pass, OR: Servants of the Savior, March 1991), two videocassettes.

⁹Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries (Silver Spring, MD: North American Division, 1993), 12-14, 21-33, 45-49.

not addressed. The essay dealing with the nature, function, and authority of the church does not even treat the issue of corporate worship.¹

The overall evaluation of the books, manuscripts, cassettes, and articles that have been reviewed is as follows: None of them offers a comprehensive study of celebration worship renewal in the late 1980s and early 1990s that combines historical description and theological analysis.² Most of them give scant treatment of the theological issues raised by certain celebration practices, and fail to provide sufficient in-depth information to place those issues or practices in their proper historical perspective. Analysis of the socio-cultural setting of the phenomenon, or of the context of the celebrationists' specific church philosophy is lacking. An analysis and evaluation of the worship phenomenon of Celebration Center and an evaluation of the arguments "for" and "against" celebration worship still remain to be done in this paper.

Methodology and Sources

The research methodology of this dissertation is related to the very nature and purpose of the study. As a case study of a religious/faith phenomenon, the data are qualitative in nature and were obtained through historic and personal interview research procedures.

This methodology (contrary to "hypothesis-testing" or "surveys") emphasizes research in a total context to gain a holistic view of the setting and its relation to the phenomenon being studied. It involves entering into and observing situations and recording what one sees and hears in an attempt to understand the assumptions, reasoning, feelings, motives, and actions of the people, as they experience them, in their own context and frame of reference. Therefore the data base for such research, as the sources listed below show, must of necessity be diverse if the complexity of the reality is to be adequately represented.

The personal interview ("observer-participant") model of research was selected to provide access to that "inside" knowledge that is crucial to an understanding of any social phenomenon.

¹Ibid., 65-83.

²Mike Wilson, however, offers a valuable historical study, "Enthusiasm and Charismatic Manifestations in Sabbatarian Adventism with Applications for the Seventh-day Adventist Church of the Late Twentieth Century" (D.Min. diss., Andrews University, 1995), 37-99.

The data analysis is also qualitative. Results emerged not from predetermined theories and hypotheses as in statistical research, but from theories and questions emerging from the data themselves. Results are presented with three dimensions in mind: descriptive narratives, analytical interpretations, and some theoretical explorations that appear in different partial conclusions and in the final conclusion.

The following pages describe in more detail the procedures used in oral interviews, the methodology employed in the writing of the study, and the available sources consulted.

Sets of questions were developed for the interviews. One set of questions concerned the foremost leaders of the Celebration Center and New Life Celebration Church churches and four additional pastors of other celebration churches. This set focused on their lives, education, spiritual journeys, leadership styles, communication skills, and worldviews, and their relationships to the Seventh-day Adventist organization and current theological trends within Adventism. A second set of questions addressed the ecclesiology of the celebration churches in an attempt to discover and understand the philosophy, mission, organization, structure, standards, discipline criteria, and teaching orientation of each. Finally, a last set of questions focused on celebration worship, including the philosophy, components, atmosphere, emotional and physical modes of expression, and use of certain elements (such as Christian contemporary music and drama) in the services. Special attention is also given to the practice and theological understanding of the ordinances at these celebration churches.¹

With the above sets of questions completed, an itinerary was developed to interview a wide range of proponents and opponents of celebration worship in California, Oregon, Florida, and other places. One hundred thirty interviews were conducted. Beyond that, plans were made to visit the Colton and Milwaukie churches over a period of a year to participate in their different activities, as well as to live with some of their members. Special time was also allotted in the course of the itinerary to attend a rally

¹Baptism, communion, laying on of hands, anointing, ordination, marriage, funeral, baby dedication, and church dedication.

against celebration churches,¹ as well as several conferences and lectures featuring celebration churches and/or worship renewal within Adventism.²

Descriptive and analytical, historical, sociological, theological, and hermeneutical perspectives are used in the writing of the study. It proceeds inductively to ascertain and set forth those forces that have influenced the Seventh-day Adventist worship renewal in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In the historical section of the study, secondary sources are first analyzed in order to grasp the global, American, and denominational contextual factors, then primary sources are utilized to document the significant data relevant to the central purpose of the study (chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4). Finally, the study inductively derives from those data the reasons, presuppositions, and principles undergirding the celebration controversy and the Colton celebration worship renewal movement between 1986 and 1991 (chapters 4 and the conclusions). Of particular importance is the examination of the significance of the above factors in the different paradigm shifts and in the transitional period that they express.

The following section lists the published and unpublished primary sources that provide the basic data for the study. A more complete itemization can be found in the bibliography. Secondary sources were consulted where appropriate.

Published Sources

Periodicals

Periodicals include, but are not limited to, the Review & Herald, Adventist Review, Ministry Magazine, Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, Spectrum, Our Firm Foundation, Adventists Affirm, Inside Report, Pacific Union Recorder, North Pacific Union Conference Gleaner, Adventist Baby Boomer Awareness, The Cutting Edge, New Life News, and The Celebration Experience.

¹San Bernardino High School, San Bernardino, CA, 5-7 April, 1991.

²The First International Adventist Worship Conference, Portland, OR, 17-20 April 1991; the Southeastern Conference workers' meetings, Pine Springs Ranch, CA, 20-21 August 1991; and the John W. Osborn Lectureship at La Sierra University, Riverside, CA, 27-29 October 1991; The Second Adventist Worship Conference, Riverside, CA, 7-10 April 1993.

Books and Tracts

Books and tracts were consulted that pertained to the celebration controversy and its evaluation, as listed in the bibliography.

Audio-Visual Material

Audio and videocassettes were examined that were produced by opponents and proponents of celebration worship, including lectures, sermons, teaching or "promotional" material from the Milwaukie and Colton congregations, and audio-visual material produced by such persons as John Osborne, Jan Marcussen, D. Swanson, Terry Ross, and Vance Ferrell.

Unpublished Sources

Interviews

1. One hundred and seven tape-recorded interviews were conducted to: (1) capture the history, ecclesiology, mission, structure, and celebration worship of the Colton and Milwaukie churches; (2) gain an understanding of the foremost leaders in these churches and other celebration churches; (3) grasp Adventist perceptions about these congregations (to that end a broad spectrum of theologians was consulted to secure a balanced theological perspective); and (4) understand the argumentation "for" and "against" celebration worship.

2. Twenty-four interviews were registered by hand-written notes when obtaining the same kind of information by tape recording was impossible.

Minutes

The minutes included:

1. Board minutes and proceedings from Celebration Center and the New Life Celebration Church (References for these materials can be found in the "Unpublished Material" section of the bibliography)

2. Committee minutes and proceedings from the Southeastern California, Oregon, and Florida Conferences, the North Pacific and Pacific Unions, as well as the General Conference of Seventh-

day Adventists (References for these materials can be found in the "Unpublished Materials" section of the bibliography).

Correspondence

The correspondence included:

1. The available files of the Colton and Milwaukie churches and their corresponding conferences and unions; also relevant personal files located at the Adventist Heritage Center at Andrews University
2. Correspondence files of selected participants.

Papers

Papers included:

Term papers, unpublished articles, and transcripts of non-tape-recorded lectures or sermons related to celebration worship.

Organization

The research findings are organized as follows: After a preface, the first chapter concerns itself with the contextual factors necessary to understand American religion and American worship renewal trends, especially since the 1960s. This chapter also provides the denominational context by presenting the roots of Seventh-day Adventist worship and its charismatic antecedents.

Chapter 2 describes the development of celebration worship at Celebration Center. Chapter 3 presents the milieu, development, and impact of the celebration movement within the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Chapter 4 examines and evaluates the concerns related to and the arguments "against" celebration worship and movement. The presentation of these arguments unveils some recurring undergirding presuppositions and theological trends at work.

Major transitions and paradoxes evident in the Colton Church and the celebration movement are discussed in the conclusions. They pay special attention to major paradigm shifts and to sociological, doctrinal, ecclesiological, and hermeneutical trends. Finally, possible lessons that the

Seventh-day Adventist Church could draw out of the celebration "renewal/crisis" are included and some recommendations that could foster and strengthen denominational worship renewal are made.

CHAPTER I

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Is there a thing of which it is said,
"See, this is new?"
It has already been,
In the ages before us.
The people of long ago are not remembered,
Nor will there be any remembrance
Of people yet to come
By those who come after them.

Ecc1 1:10-11 NRSV

This chapter examines major movements and influences that have shaped American evangelical worship. It also overviews the development of White and Black Seventh-day Adventist worship in North America.

Global Context: Liturgical versus Charismatic Renewals

The worship renewal seen in most American evangelical churches at the end of the twentieth century can be traced through both the liturgical and charismatic movements.¹ This phenomenon, Frank Cellier claims, is "as significant as the Reformation."² Jack Hayford views it as the second stage of the Reformation.³ For both of these authors, then, just as the Reformation brought the

¹Evangelical Action, special edition on worship (November/December 1986): 4-10; Robert E. Webber, ed., Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail: Why Evangelicals Are Attracted to the Liturgical Church (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 15; Elmer L. Towns, An Inside Look at 10 of Today's Most Innovative Churches (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990), 60-72, 193-209; Leith Anderson, Dying for Change (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1990), 97-98, 128-29.

²Frank Stephen Cellier, Liturgy Is Mission (New York: Seabury Press, 1964), 13.

³Jack W. Hayford, Worship His Majesty (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1987), 21-26. See also James H. Rutz, 1700 Years Is Long Enough: A New Strategy to Finish the Reformation and Fulfill the Great Commission (Colorado Springs, CO: Open Church Ministries, 1990), 9-16.

church back to the doctrine of justification by faith and the priesthood of all believers, so this second stage refocuses the church on worship,¹ thus transforming and reshaping the body of Christ in new ways.²

Both the liturgical and charismatic movements took on significant momentum among American mainline denominations in the 1960s.³ Even though they have significantly affected the evangelical churches only since 1975,⁴ both are much older movements.

The liturgical movement began and spread on the European continent; the charismatic movement developed in America.⁵ Their growth in different contexts has given them unique characteristics that are summarized in the following pages. Some contact points between the two movements are described, as well as some of the theological questions and implications they raise for American evangelical worship renewal.

The Liturgical Movement

The liturgical movement has its roots in Catholicism,⁶ beginning in the nineteenth-century revival of Benedictine monasticism.⁷ This was a reaction to Jansenism, the Enlightenment, and the laicization brought by Gallicanism.⁸

¹Jack Hayford, quoted in Towns, An Inside Look, 60.

²David Watson, I Believe in the Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 163.

³Cellier, Liturgy Is Mission, 13; Robert M. Anderson, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity," in The Encyclopedia of Religion (1987), 232; T. S. Garrett, Christian Worship: An Introductory Outline (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 1-2; James F. White, New Forms of Worship (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 16-20.

⁴Robert E. Webber, Worship Old and New (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 11-13; idem, "The Impact of the Liturgical Movement on the Evangelical Church," in Reformed Liturgy and Music (Louisville, KY: Joint Office of Worship of the United Presbyterians, 1987), 111.

⁵H. Ellsworth Chandlee, "The Liturgical Movement," in The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship (1986), 308, 309.

⁶E.g., Oliver Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique: Esquisse historique depuis le début du 19^e siècle jusqu'au pontificat de Pie X (Paris: Cerf, 1945), ix; Chandlee, "The Liturgical Movement," 308.

⁷Some of the major centers where the movement developed were Solesmes, France; Maredsous and Mont-César, Belgium; Beuron and Maria Laach, Germany.

⁸Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique, ix, 1-2, 21.

In the 1830s in France, Prosper Guéranger, who was greatly interested in church liturgy,¹ established in France the concept of the recovery of worship as central to church life and work. Reacting against traditional Catholicism, he wrote: "The primary means of living the Christian life is active participation in the Eucharist--not by the clergy alone . . . but by laymen as well."² The movement emphasized the beauty of Christianity, the rediscovery of the glorious past of the medieval church (especially by experiencing the "mystical" body of Christ through worship), and the socio-political influence of the church.³

The first advocates of the movement (e.g., Louis Duchesnes, Fernand Cabrol, Pierre Battifol), being enamored of the past and lovers of Romanticism (particularly of Chateaubriand), often became entrapped in archeological concerns in their attempt to revive traditions of the church that had been broken by the French Revolution. They aimed to bring "secular" people back to Christianity through worship, beautiful church services, prayers, rites, and music,⁴ which would "work like a heavenly vision on the emotions, to enlighten the soul, and warm the heart."⁵

¹In early Christianity the term "liturgy" described primarily the Eucharist. During the 19th century the term took on broader significance through the literature of the various movements interested in the reform of Christian worship. In fact, the term liturgy is now in greater harmony with its original Greek roots (*leitourgia* meaning any rendering of service or the performance of various cultic actions) which described it as "any system or set of rituals that is prescribed for public or corporate performance" (see Theodore W. Jennings, "Liturgy," The Encyclopedia of Religion [1987], 580-83). In this dissertation the term is used in its own historical context.

²R. W. Franklin, "Guéranger and Pastoral Liturgy: A Nineteenth-Century Context," Worship 50 (March 1976): 146; Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique, 73.

³Franklin, "Guéranger and Pastoral Liturgy," 154; Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique, 218; see also François Auguste René Viscount de Chateaubriand, Genius of Christianity: Spirit and Beauty of the Christian Religion, trans. Charles I. White (Baltimore: Murphy and Co, 1856), 43-71, 371, 385.

⁴Franklin, "Guéranger and Pastoral Liturgy," 152; Chateaubriand, Genius of Christianity, 479-507.

⁵Waldemar Trapp, Vorgeschichte und Ursprung der liturgischen Bewegung (Würzburg: R. Mayr, 1939), 363, quoted in Franklin, "Guéranger and Pastoral Liturgy," 152, 158.

Before it came to America in the 1920s,¹ the liturgical movement went through several transformations in Europe, responding to varying influences from participating countries. For example, the Cecilian movement in Germany contributed the ecclesiological perspective through the rediscovery of the nature and function of the church. The German revival also emphasized worship services (mass) as central expressions of the redeeming act of God, Christian unity, and the means of sanctification. It particularly fostered the development of a theology of the mystic symbols² through highlighting meaningful participation of the laity through the Eucharist, congregational singing, and the great prayers and confessions of the church tradition. Germany also contributed by developing a biblical hermeneutics through the church liturgical tradition.³ The Oxford or Tractarian movement in England added to the liturgical movement its taste for form and art. In particular, they restored the importance of architecture, stained-glass windows, vestments, ceremonial rites, ecclesiastical feasts, and singing as means to contemplate and apprehend the mysteries of the Christian faith.⁴ Italy contributed its own traditional sense of the musical, especially through "plainsong," considered the best sacred music to actualize the mysteries of the church.⁵

¹Jeremy Hall, "The American Liturgical Movement: The Early Years," *Worship* 50 (March, 1976): 472-89. See also the writings of Virgil Michel of St John Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, and the Abbey's periodical *Orate Fratres* (later named *Worship*), which became "one of the most important means of spreading the movement in America" (Chandlee, "The Liturgical Movement," 309).

²This theology has its emphasis on the paschal mystery and the resurrection, especially through the Eucharist as the most intimate experience that one can have with Christ. See Jeffrey J. Zetto, "Aspects of Theology in the Liturgical Movement in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod: 1930-1960" (Ph.D. diss., Christ Seminary-Seminex, 1982), 134, 140; Hageman, "The Liturgical Revival," *Theology Today* 61 (1950): 503.

³J. B. Hirsher, J. A. Mochler, Ildefons Herwegen, Odo Casel (from the Abbey of Maria Laach), and the publication *Ecclesia Orans* contributed to the ecclesiological perspective in the liturgical movement. See Rousseau, *Histoire du mouvement liturgique*, 63, 73, 74, 97, 105, 153, 204, 218; Horton Davies, "The Liturgical Renewal: Its Principles and Its Ecumenical Dimensions," *The Bulletin--The Moravian Theological Seminary* 1 (1965): 25-31; Hageman, "The Liturgical Revival," 498, 449.

⁴D. F. Cabrol, Gregory Dix, J. H. Newman, and A. W. Pugin were major contributors.

⁵E.g., see the works of Gaspar Spontini, the Arezzo Convention, and the diverse articles published in one of the major journals on the subject: *Musica Sacra*, Rousseau, 153, 165.

These different centers of liturgical foment produced a growing revival of worship. They increased the active role of the laity in worship and the use of vernacular language and local customs. They also encouraged new uses of space and new forms of bodily expression and liturgical practice. Through the influence of Pius X (1903-14) and Pius XII (1939-58) the liturgical movement entered a new phase. What began at first as the fruit of individual forces in different countries became the official position of the Catholic church in 1962 at the Vatican II council after much unrest and controversy.¹

From Vatican II came the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy on worship,² which, according to Chandlee, was the "best and most concise statement describing the principles and objectives of the liturgical movement." Because of its ecumenical significance and scope, Chandlee recommends its study by "anyone who wishes to understand the liturgical renewal of the whole Christian church."³

On an experiential level, the work of the Taizé Community, founded in France after Vatican II and grounded in both the Protestant and Catholic traditions, embodies an excellent expression of the principles of the liturgical movement. It emphasizes worship and mission and tries to build church unity through deep ecumenical understanding of worship and outreach.⁴

According to Chandlee, reforms introduced by the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy were "so sweeping and many" that they remain a lasting influence to the present day along three lines: (1) both leadership and laity instilled more spontaneity and freedom in worship than previously, and sought new and contemporary ways of expressing worship, (2) the resultant liturgical renewal forced a

¹The most significant contributors to the liturgical revival were: Lambert Beaudin (from the Abbey of Mont-César, Belgium), Josef Jungmann, Jean Danielou, Louis Bouyer, and the different scholars from the Centre de Pastorale Liturgique in Paris publishing in La Maison Dieu. Chandlee, "The Liturgical Movement," 310.

²De Sacra Liturgia was the Constitution promulgated by Paul VI in December 1963 as the result of the work of the Vatican II council on worship.

³Chandlee, "The Liturgical Movement," 311-13; Ronald C. D. Jasper, "The Renewal of Worship," in The Renewal of Worship: Essays by Members of the Joint Liturgical Group, ed. Ronald C. D. Jasper (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 1-3.

⁴Chandlee, "The Liturgical Movement," 313.

rethinking of the leadership and the essence of the church, and (3) both, in turn, fostered new concepts and experiments in Christian mission.¹

Howard G. Hageman, reporting on the worship section of the Faith and Order Conference at Montreal in 1963, concluded that the liturgical movement now belongs "squarely in the center of every church concern." It is "a new frontier" on which all churches, regardless of the rigidity of their liturgical traditions, find themselves assembled for common exploration and ecumenical conversation.² In addition, the liturgical movement has called for a broader understanding of worship in the context of social justice and involvement, as in the Old Testament tradition. Thus the movement has heightened awareness of worship as not only the response of the believers to God within the church but also as their committed service and actions to change their communities and the world.³

The Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement

The charismatic movement (or neo-pentecostalism) represents the spread of classical pentecostalism into the "mainline" churches in the United States during the 1960s.⁴ "Classical" or modern pentecostalism is accepted as beginning with Fox Parham in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901. Five years later the movement gained momentum in Los Angeles through William Seymour, a Black preacher. His Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission rapidly became the springboard for spreading the movement around the world.⁵

The movement first developed in America, principally among blue-collar workers and the poor, as a protest against increasing formalism, "modernism," and the middle-class character of the

¹Ibid., 312.

²See Howard G. Hageman, "The Coming-of-Age of the Liturgical Movement: Report on Section IV of the Montreal Conference," Studia Liturgica 2 (December 1963): 256-65.

³Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique, 218; Ernest B. Koenker, "Objectives and Achievements of the Liturgical Movement in the Roman Catholic Church Since World War II," Church History 20 (June 1951): 16; Hall, "The American Liturgical Movement," Worship 50, no. 2 (1976), 484-85; see also Isa 1:10-20 and Amos 5:21-25.

⁴Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique, 230, 232; Richard Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 4.

⁵Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 26-34.

mainstream denominations.¹ Initially emerging from the radical separatist wing of the late nineteenth-century holiness movement, early pentecostals subscribed to many of the tenants of fundamentalism² and rejected participation in the wider culture of "the world."³ The doctrinal influence of the holiness movement on pentecostalism can be summarized in the following points suggested by John Nichol: (1) there is a "second blessing" of "entire sanctification" through the baptism of the Holy Spirit to be sought and received after conversion, (2) a believer must seek the Spirit's leading in all of life, (3) revivals are crucial not only for evangelism but also for the rejuvenation of the spiritual lives of believers, (4) believers ought to expect the imminent return of Christ, and (5) Christians should shun the world and the manifestations of worldliness, such as luxuries, cosmetics, jewelry, amusements, and tobacco.⁴ Thus in the pentecostal movement, the social reality is the subculture formed within the realm of the congregational church, which offers spiritual as well as social and recreational activities in the characteristic style of revivalistic religious bodies.⁵

Arminian in essence,⁶ pentecostal theology puts its chief emphasis on "experience" rather than "doctrine." However, the doctrine of Spirit baptism is especially emphasized and is expected to be evidenced initially by speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*) and later by the other spiritual gifts (the *charismata*).⁷

¹Anderson, "Pentecostal Charismatic Christianity," 230; Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 3

²Anderson, 230. John MacArthur, The Charismatics (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 199-200, expressed ten problems making pentecostal renewal incompatible with fundamentalism.

³Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 189.

⁴John T. Nichol, Pentecostalism (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 7.

⁵Ibid., 189-90.

⁶Arminius maintained that salvation was open to all by an act of "free will" which needs to be reaffirmed by a godly life. He did not accept the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination--"eternal security." Believers (even Spirit-filled Christians) could fall back into sin. (Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 32, 223.)

⁷Anderson, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity," 230; Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 35; Nichol, Pentecostalism, 70-80.

But the heart of pentecostalism is worship. Its forms of expression, of course, have changed in the successive phases of the movement.¹ According to Richard Quebedeaux and Nathan Hatch, classical pentecostal worship has been influenced deeply by democratic, revivalistic, and Black religious experiences.² Thus it exhibits the following features: creative outpouring in the vernacular, communal ecstasy and spontaneity, expressive responses to the proclamation of the good news, and the use of lively, "singable" gospel music that captures the identity of plain people.³ However, pentecostal worship must be noted not only "for its enthusiasm and spontaneity" but also for "its well-orchestrated 'liturgical order'--built on the long tradition of slave religion and Black spirituality as a whole."⁴ For Anderson, pentecostal worship is "the ritual reenactment of Acts 2, the recapturing of awe, wonder, and joy in the immediate experience of the Holy Spirit, and immersion in mystery and miracle." It provides believers, according to Anderson, with an opportunity for individual expression and the "feeling of the moving of the Holy Spirit." It forges emotional bonds with the spiritual community, brings consolation and assurance, and lifts one into the sublime, despite its quite often chaotic appearance to the uninitiated.⁵

The institutionalization of the American pentecostal movement by the 1940s brought a decline in the fervor of worship, especially in the larger 'White pentecostal denominations. This led to the highly publicized deliverance revival at the end of the decade. The deliverance revival movement enlivened once again the use of the believers' charismata and the need of deliverance from formalism, sickness, and demon possessions.⁶ Through that movement the neo-pentecostal movement emerged in

¹In the early years of Pentecostalism nearly every worship service was characterized by speaking in tongues, prophesying, healing, exorcism, hand-clapping, uncoordinated praying aloud, jumping, falling, dancing "in the Spirit," crying, and shouting with great exuberance. Very rapidly these practices were subjected to unwritten but clearly understood conventions concerning what was appropriate and when (Anderson, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity," 230).

²Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 31-32; Nathan O. Hatch, The Democratization of American Christianity (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 214-19.

³Hatch, The Democratization, 105, 151, 153.

⁴Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 31, 182-83.

⁵Anderson, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity," 230.

⁶Ibid., 232.

the 1960s and rapidly spread to nearly all the Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic church. Quebedeaux refers to Edward O'Connor's comments on the rapid development of the neo-pentecostal movement: "What is remarkable about this movement in its early days is how unexpectedly it arose and how spontaneously it spread."¹

By the 1970s this "transdenominational" movement was being called "the charismatic renewal."² According to Synan, the word "renewal" was used to show that the purpose of the movement was to renew the existing churches rather than to establish new denominations. This movement, also called neo-pentecostalism, attracted more and more people from the White middle and upper classes, and these have characterized the predominant nature of the movement.³ It formed a theological counterculture that attracted intellectuals and theologians both from liberal theologies and sacramental churches.⁴ Gradually the movement departed from its classical pentecostal, holiness, and fundamentalist heritage. The concept of holiness was still important, but now it was viewed more as a positive attitude of the heart and good interpersonal relationships than as rigid moral codes and negativism.⁵ As the charismatic renewal became less critical toward culture it spread rapidly through the American middle class. It became more "liberal," even to the point of "baptizing the American dream."

The movement gradually assimilated the values of the prevalent materialistic American culture. According to Pousson, that accommodation sometimes led "a materialistic right consciousness to replace a cross-bearing servanthood" among many Christians and independent charismatic leaders, many

¹Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 5. See also Vinson Synan, "Charismatic Movement," The Perennial Dictionary of World Religions (1981), 162.

²Synan, "Charismatic Movement," 163.

³Some noteworthy contributors to that trend include Kathryn Kuhlman, Oral Roberts, David du Plessis, Demos Shakarian and the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, and Pat Robertson (Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 87-126).

⁴Synan, "Charismatic Movement," 162.

⁵Anderson, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity," 230; Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 162-63, 170, 191.

of whom indulged in extreme individualism, affluence, high-pressure fund-raising tactics, and a kind of "triumphalism" exalting pride and self.¹

On the other hand, some elements of the charismatic movement followed other tendencies, closer to those of the "liturgical" movement, by developing greater concerns for social justice and reformation. As Quebedeaux writes, charismatic theologians have often integrated Spirit baptism with a "radical Marxist-oriented" or "liberation theology."²

In the 1970s the charismatic movement's emphasis was no longer on speaking in tongues--although that still remained important as a prayer or praise language--but on "the release of the Spirit" and the ensuing charismata (spiritual gifts) perceived as the "actualization of graces already received at baptism." Hundreds of prayer groups began to spring up in America and in other countries as the movement focused on renewing a deeper taste for Scripture study, prayer, and praise.³ Many new songs were written and published, and a new style of worship celebration appeared, usually with subdued pentecostal features, or even, as Anderson describes it, "a high degree of decorum."⁴

Noting these characteristics in the mid-1970s, Pope Paul VI gave his blessing to the movement and encouraged the charismatics to "share" the joy of the Holy Spirit with everyone,⁵ thus definitively establishing the ecumenical character of the movement.⁶

Points of Convergence: Some Theological Questions and Implications

To better understand the influence of the liturgical and pentecostal-charismatic movements on American evangelical worship in the 1990s, we now must examine some of their points of

¹Edward K. Pousson, Spreading the Flame: Charismatic Church and Mission Today (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 47-49.

²Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 166-67, 237.

³Synan, "Charismatic Movement," 163.

⁴Anderson, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity," 230; Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 170.

⁵Synan, "Charismatic Movement," 163.

⁶Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 142.

convergence and some of the questions they have raised. Webber has underlined this convergence through a detailed observation of the American contemporary religious context. This analysis comes to a similar conclusion of convergence but from the investigation of a historical and theological understanding of the liturgical and charismatic movements.¹

Both movements have been characterized as reacting to what was perceived in their own contextual settings as the destroying forces of rationalism (the Enlightenment),² modernism, and secularization³ that had been prevailing in society and were perceived as dangerously influencing mainstream denominations.

In their own ways, both movements have aimed at presenting to their own generation a living God, actively working in visible and evidential ways through the lives of those committed to Him.⁴

Both movements have reintroduced the mystical and the supernatural into the Christian churches: the liturgical movement mainly through the subtle means of the Eucharist seen as a channel of God's presence and grace,⁵ and the pentecostal-charismatics through the dramatic manifestation of the Spirit in glossolalia, charismata, and small groups.⁶

¹Webber's analysis of that convergence was published after the conclusions presented in this section were written. See Robert Webber, Signs of Wonder: The Phenomenon of Convergence in Modern Liturgical and Charismatic Churches (Nashville: Abbott Martyn, 1992).

²See Gary Madison, "A Return to Mystery," in Webber, Evangelicals, 23-26; Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique, ix, x, 1-3, 75; Anderson, Dying for Change, 230; Franklin, "Guéranger and Pastoral Liturgy," 157.

³Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 3, 216-18; Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique, 4, 231; Franklin, "Guéranger and Pastoral Liturgy," 153.

⁴Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, xv.

⁵Franklin, "Guéranger and Pastoral Liturgy," 153; Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique, 1, 2, 153, 165, 166; Madison, "A Return to Mystery," 21-30.

⁶Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, xiv, 227, 236; Madison, "A Return to Mystery," 21-30.

Both movements reacted to the secularization of society and the church, but, at the same time, tried to adapt to secularization by creating new styles of church service more reflective of people's own culture and mentality.¹

Both movements stressed the corporate reality of the church--the body of Christ. In the liturgical movement, the corporate reality is primarily experienced on a mystical-ecclesiological level through worship and the sacraments. Christians unite into the body of Christ--a transcendental reality--through the mass, baptism, and the Eucharist.² As Hageman writes, corporate worship "lifts the people above the sense of their individuality, above the sense of their membership in a mere society."³ In contrast, corporate reality within the pentecostal movement is not as mystical, but is primarily experienced sociologically: historically, the movement originated as a gathering of the culturally and sociologically deprived; liturgically, even if worship permits a spiritual bonding of the believers to a spiritual community through their individual expressions or emotions, it is not primarily a bonding to the mystical and transcendental body of Christ but, mainly, a spiritual bonding of a community committed to evangelism--the propagation of religious and ethical principles.⁴

The "transdenominational" character of the charismatic movement and the distance it has traveled from its pentecostal, holiness, and sociological roots, allows it to come closer to the notion of a mystical corporate reality, especially through its emphasis on small group experience. The small group experience becomes the new channel of the outpouring of and communion with the Spirit, the new mystical corporate reality. This mystical experience differs, however, from the one lived in the liturgical

¹Chandlee, "The Liturgical Movement," 314; Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 216-18; Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique, 73, 104.

²Franklin, "Guéranger and Pastoral Liturgy," 179; Hageman, "The Liturgical Revival," 503; Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique 104, 123; Raymond Winling, La Théologie contemporaine (1945-1980) (Paris: Le Centurion, 1983), 154, 416-429; Zetto, "Aspects of Theology," 134, 140.

³Hageman, "The Liturgical Revival," 498; Davis C. Horn, Worship in Crisis (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 63; Zetto, "Aspects of Theology," 30, 179.

⁴Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 189-190.

movement, where it is found in a unifying corporate worship sensitive to the great church traditions and structured around dispensing the sacraments.

Both movements have placed worship at the core of church life and emphasized active participation in their "mystical" or "supernatural" services. Through celebrating the joy of Christian living, believers create a new and contemporary corporate reality.¹

The theological implications and the realities of the two movements have increasingly influenced the Christian world of the 1990s. The points of contact are: (1) the role and importance of the laity;² (2) the local church--or even the prayer group as a center or fundamental cell of the Christian life that fosters congregationalism;³ (3) the social character of Christianity through committed actions in the community;⁴ (4) worship as a rich experience of the divine presence or a rendezvous with Christ, whose active presence is manifested among the believers by the Holy Spirit;⁵ (5) mission to the unchurched and

¹Hall, "The American Liturgical Movement," 478-79; Howard G. Hageman, "The Liturgical Revival," Theology Today 61 (January 1950): 497; Rousseau, 76, 79; Anderson, 230. See also Robert Webber, Signs of Wonder, 9-11, 14, 26, 28.

²Even though the liturgical movement started as a reaction to laicization and as a restoration of the old hierarchical structures of the medieval church, the laity gained increasing importance through the Eucharist and other worship reforms (Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique, 153; Koenker, "Objectives and Achievements of the Liturgical Movements," 20-24; Winling, La théologie contemporaine, 78-79, 155-58, 185). On the other hand, as a democratic movement rooted in antisacramentalism, the pentecostal/charismatic movement has given prominence to the laity from the very beginning (Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 128-129, 33). See also Webber, Signs of Wonder, 67-70.

³Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique, 4, 76, 79, 204, 218; Hageman, "The Liturgical Revival," 498; Horn, Worship in Crisis, 24; Henry W. Reimann, "The Liturgical Movement: An Appraisal," Concordia Theological Monthly 30 (June 1959): 421-431; Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 6, 147; Webber, Signs of Wonder, 66.

⁴This feature is again expressed in nearly opposite ways by the movements. The liturgical and charismatic movements promote a recognition and penetration of the social reality, while the pentecostal movement advocates more the creation of a social subculture. Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique, 218; Koenker, "Objectives and Achievements," 16; Hall, "The American Liturgical Movement," 484-85; Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 166-69, 237.

⁵Winling, La Théologie Contemporaine, 75-76, 382; Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, xiv, xv, 39; Webber, Signs of Wonder, 72-82; Signs of the Spirit: Official Report of the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Canberra, Australia, 7-20 February 1991, ed. Michael Kinnamon (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991), 20, 27-37, 48-111, 150-169.

unconverted within specific cultural contexts and regions;¹ and (6) spiritual and pastoral studies.² These points of contact fomented renewed interest in the study of ecclesiology, pneumatology, and mission among church leaders and scholars.³

However, the most surprising yet subtle issue raised by the liturgical and pentecostal-charismatic movements is the ecumenical dialogue⁴ triggered by their similar hermeneutical orientation, despite their very different origins and theological roots. Sacramental theology, or theology of the mysteries, of the liturgical movement comes into close contact with the pentecostal-charismatic movement through its accent on experience of the divine and feeling God's presence within celebrations. In both cases, the core of Christianity is apprehended experientially. In that context, theology and biblical doctrines are studied and taught with existential emphases.⁵ According to Francis Schaeffer, new pentecostals and liberals of the mainline churches find charismatic renewal attractive because experience

¹In the liturgical movement, sensitivity to the indigenization or inculturation of worship developed gradually but intentionally on the basis of (1) a search for new expressions of worship which would be understood and have more meaning for people in the present day (e.g., the catholic vernacular controversy), (2) an increased "active participation" of the laity, and (3) the spreading of a Gospel committed to the social reality. In the case of the pentecostal/charismatic movement, sensitivity and adaptation to cultural needs and contexts came more as consequences of (1) its American democratic religious roots, (2) a strong bent to anti-institutionalism, (3) a commitment to pragmatic evangelism, and (4) a hermeneutical trend upholding personal authority (J. D. Crichton, Liturgical Changes: The Background [London: Catholic Truth Society, 1975], 11, 12; Chandlee, 310, 311; Horton Davies, "The Liturgical Renewal: Its Principles and Ecumenical Dimensions," The Bulletin--The Moravian Theological Seminary 1 [1965]: 25-31; Koenker, "Objectives and Achievements," 18, 20-21; Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 130-36, 142-50, 226-27; Winling, La Théologie Contemporaine, 76; Zetto, "Aspects of Theology," 204).

²Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, eds., "The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements (1988), 1; Winling, La Théologie Contemporaine, 90; Hall, "The American Liturgical Movement," 488; Koenker, "Objectives and Achievements," 26; Chandlee, "The Liturgical Movement," 308.

³Rousseau, Histoire du mouvement liturgique, 147; Winling, La Théologie Contemporaine 382; Hageman, "The Liturgical Revival," 498; Koenker, "Objectives and Achievements," 24-25.

⁴Webber, "The Impact," 112; Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 234; John F. MacArthur, Jr., Charismatic Chaos (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 293, 294. Without common consultations, MacArthur comes to the same conclusion presented above.

⁵Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 151-55, 207; Burgess and McGee, "The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements," 5; Winling, La Théologie Contemporaine, 320; MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, 31-46, 75-80; Robert K. Johnston, "Of Tidy Doctrine and Truncated Experience," Christianity Today, 18 February 1977, 11; Webber, Signs of Wonder, 73-75.

(feeling) functions as the central doctrine of both neo-pentecostalism and liberalism (with its roots in Schleiermacher, and later in existentialism and neo-orthodoxy).¹

Consequently, in both movements the Word of God is dynamic rather than static and the understanding of it is limited not only to the Bible (viewed as a closed canon) but also to traditions and personal authority.² Webber summarizes the common direction the two movements have taken and their impact on present-day Christianity, envisioning an ultimate goal in which perceived revelation and experience are finally integrated: "Perhaps the day will come when we realize that the identity of the Christian faith is not found in this or that set of dogmas, but in the worship of the church . . . for worship is truly the church's faith in action."³

The American Religious Context

Now we examine the American roots of evangelicalism--its background of worship traditions, subsequent trends, and the "third wave." We also consider the American social context of the baby boomers' religion in which evangelical worship has developed in recent years. These subjects are developed in order to provide some understanding of the basic life assumptions in America and how they relate to worship. It is one of the major presuppositions of this paper that liturgies or forms of corporate worship arise out of the actions of people dramatizing certain basic assumptions of life's meaning. Indeed, liturgies reflect not only how people structure time and apprehend different facets of reality, but also how they coordinate the varied dimensions of individual, domestic, social, and cosmic experience. They reveal not only how people socialize and define corporate reality, but also their fundamental paradigms for shared experiences and actions. A liturgy is therefore a focus of coalescence for a particular group of worshippers, who, in turn, influence the shape and expression of their liturgy.⁴

¹Francis Schaeffer, The New Spirituality (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1972), 16; MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, 39-42.

²Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 135, 153.

³Webber, "The Impact," 114; see also Hageman, "The Liturgical Revival," 500.

⁴Jennings, "Liturgy," 580-83; Horn, Worship in Crisis, 22; Mary Jo Meadow and Richard D. Kahoe, Psychology of Religion (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 175-82; David O. Moberg, "Religious Practice," in Research on Religious Development, ed. Merton P. Strommen (New York:

Roots of Evangelicalism and Worship Traditions

American Roots of Evangelicalism

There is no one definition of evangelicalism.¹ Probably a dozen traditions or currents in America come under the "evangelical umbrella."² Timothy Weber defines evangelicalism and identifies its four main branches:³ (1) classical evangelicals or creedalists, who downplay the role of religious experience--loyal primarily to the doctrines of the Protestant Reformation; (2) pietistic evangelicals--standing in the Reformation tradition but seeking to complete it by incorporating the experimental emphasis of pietism, Puritanism, and the evangelical awakenings; (3) fundamentalist evangelicals--shaped by the fundamentalist-modernist controversy;⁴ and (4) progressive evangelicals--incorporating elements from the other branches, but doing so with a conscious sense of "modernity" that seeks to adapt to a secular society.⁵

Hawthorn, 1971), 572; Harold L. Warking, "Why People Go to Church and Why They Do Not Go to Church," Pastoral Psychology 17 (1966): 53; Louis Bouyer, Rite and Man: Natural Sacredness and Christian Liturgy (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1967).

¹Timothy P. Weber, "Premillennialism and the Branches of Evangelicalism," in The Variety of American Evangelicalism, ed. Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 12.

²Robert K. Johnston, "American Evangelicalism: An Extended Family," in The Variety of American Evangelicalism, ed. Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 254.

³Weber, "Premillennialism and the Branches of Evangelicalism," 12-13.

⁴These fundamentalists have embraced many of the classical and pietistic characteristics of evangelicalism, but they focus on a few "fundamentals" in opposition to liberal and critical teaching. After World War II, a neo-evangelical movement emerged to moderate and broaden fundamentalist-evangelicalism. Notable contributors were: H. J. Ockenga, C. F. Henry, C. E. Fuller and Fuller Theological Seminary, Billy Graham, and Christianity Today. See Weber, "Premillennialism and the Branches of Evangelicalism," 13; George M. Marsden, "Evangelical and Fundamental Christianity," The Encyclopedia of Religion (1987), 190-97.

⁵This desire for "modernity" or adaptation to the secular world sprang from two rather different sources: (1) the neo-evangelicals, who attempted to reform fundamentalism by making it more relevant to the needs of what they perceived as a secular and increasingly "post-Christian" and pluralistic age; and (2) the conservatives in the "mainline churches," who maintained their ecumenical orientation during the fundamentalist/modernist controversy and never accepted fundamentalist separatism. Weber, 13.

Within these four branches, Robert Johnston distinguishes two main approaches to theology: (1) a "theology of the Word" and (2) a "theology of the Spirit." A theology of the Word begins with God's action as recorded in the Bible in regard to humankind, whereas a "theology of the Spirit" starts with the Christian's experience of God in His creation and redemption. A theology of the Word tends toward creedal definitions and formal doctrines. At its extreme, it generates literalism in biblical interpretation and legalistic attitudes in regard to experience.¹ A theology of the Spirit emphasizes Christian experience, the intuitive, and the interpersonal. At its extreme, it undermines the uniqueness and central authority of the Bible and, in regard to experience, tends toward mysticism and psychologism.²

Several major forces shape American evangelicalism. Two spring out of the religious and socio-political world and three from philosophical and theological trends.

In the socio-political realm, the first root is the American Revolution with its two intrinsically related consequences: the revivalism of the Second Great Awakening and the democratization of America.

According to Nathan Hatch, the American Revolution gave to America a strong populist and democratic orientation. It embedded in American Protestantism a hatred of authority, privilege, and oppressive structures and traditions. The Revolution stimulated a ferment for freedom, anti-institutionalism, and the well-being of the masses.³ Hatch describes the religious revivalism of the Second Great Awakening as the extension into the church of the American Revolution and religious populism.

Revolutionary values still influence present-day American life and religion. They are manifest in the constant "pushing and pulling of new religious movements away from central ecclesiastical institutions and high culture." It is this particular heritage of political, religious, and

¹Johnston, "American Evangelicalism," 266.

²Ibid.; MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, 41-43, 54, 64, 83, 84, 292.

³Michael Scott Horton, *Made in America: The Shaping of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 42; Hatch, *The Democratization*, 5.

sociological alliances and interactions that still distinguishes the United States from other industrial democracies.¹ Understanding this context is key to analyzing any phenomenon occurring within American evangelical churches.²

A second root in the socio-political realm that has shaped American evangelicalism is the impact of the American frontier. The frontier became the arena of religious populism and shaped evangelicalism with particular psycho-sociological characteristics.

In 1893 Frederick J. Turner described the significance of the frontier in the shaping of American history. He showed how changes involved in crossing a continent, winning the "wilderness," and developing each area from primitive to complex conditions of living compelled American political and religious institutions to develop a great flexibility as they adapted to new circumstances and defined people's freedom, privacy, and identity in terms of space, mobility, efficiency, and especially understandings of what is operable or useful.³

This westward movement of the frontier of civilization generated a spirit unique to Americans and unknown to most people in the world for whom "frontier" generally does not suggest growth, expansion, and ambitious individualism, or optimism, opportunities, and challenges. For Dyrness and Laurence Shames, the myth of the "wilderness" still exists in America. In modern days, it is simply expressed through experiences such as the last frontier of nuclear energy, the new frontier of "the

¹Hatch, The Democratization, 5.

²It is generally accepted that there is a certain level of discomfort among some in identifying Adventism within American evangelicalism. Both, however, share the same revivalistic roots, the same heritage of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century awakening in America, and a coalition reflecting a merger of pietist and Reformed heritages. George M. Marsden, "Fundamentalism and American Evangelicalism," in The Variety of American Evangelicalism, ed. Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 23; Russell L. Staples, "Adventism," in The Variety of American Evangelicalism, ed. Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 57-71, and Dayton and Johnston, "Evangelicalism," in The Variety of American Evangelicalism, ed. Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 3.

³Dyrness, How Does America Hear the Gospel? 30-37, 50-53.

night"--the night life and dangers of big cities, or of the challenge of "taking our cities for God"--the challenge to make Christ relevant in secularized centers.¹

For example, the frontier was the ideal setting for Methodist fervor. There, Methodism spread by way of highly charismatic leaders and the tradition of camp meetings.² In the regional and philosophic fragmentation of the frontier, early nineteenth-century religious groups not only struggled for radically different conceptions of Christian ministry but also developed a language of personal decision and expression.³ On the religious level, this kind of language began to eliminate all "social mediation." Primarily it became: "You stand alone before Christ"; "you have to decide for yourself"; "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life"; "you must be born again." According to Dyrness, this type of language still influences Americans and represents their prevalent need for individualism, discovery, challenge, and hope.⁴ Suddenly Christianity, which had been an instrument of cultural cohesion, became an agent of fragmentation, competition, and pluralism.⁵

Three major philosophical and theological forces are evident in the American Revolution, democratization, revivalism, and the frontier: (1) the Enlightenment and the reaction against it in Romanticism and the common sense philosophy; (2) Wesleyan Arminianism as opposed to Puritan determinism; and (3) Restorationism and some implications of its millennial dreams. An understanding of the three is essential to an understanding of modern evangelicalism.

The first force is the Enlightenment and its reaction in Romanticism. Together they paved the way for democratic religious movements and also strengthened them. The Enlightenment

¹Ibid., 36; Laurence Shames, The Hunger for More (New York: Times Books, 1989), 21-26; Robert Bellah et al., Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 6. See also Murray Melbin, Night as Frontier: Colonizing the World after Dark (New York: Free Press, 1987); Bruce C. Moyer, "The Challenge of the Cities," Ministry 65 (November 1992): 23-26; John Dawson, Taking Our Cities for God (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 1989).

²Nathan Hatch, "The Christian Movement and the Demand for a Theology of the People," Journal of American History 67 (December 1980): 550-54.

³Ibid., 44.

⁴Dyrness, How Does America Hear the Gospel? 77-78.

⁵Hatch, The Democratization, 64, 126.

contributed to the shift from a God-centered supernatural worldview to a human-centered naturalistic one. Human reason and empirical observations replaced the supreme authority of divine revelation and, as Horton comments, many Christians adopted nature as their church and reason as their Bible.¹ In such a context the influence of the popular common sense philosophy flourished. This Scottish philosophy, derived from the work of Thomas Reid and aligned with seventeenth-century philosopher Francis Bacon, was a form of realism. Its reliance on the individual's common sense "appealed to American Protestants as a bulwark against doubt."² Bull and Lockhart summarize the major features of this philosophy as follows:

The Scottish philosophy denied that anything intervenes between the mind and its apprehension of external facts. If the systematic study of these facts was undertaken by a mind unprejudiced by theory, it was believed that knowledge of a limited certainty would be obtained. In a religious context, Baconianism became identified with the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*, and it was later influential in the dispensationalist school of prophetic interpretation that divided past and future biblical events into distinctive eras.³

With Romanticism, the abstractions of Newtonian reason were replaced by the appeal to experience, human intuition, and introspection. Bernard Reardon notes that an obvious outcome of romantic egotism was the intense emotionalism or sentimentalism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In such a context, subjectivity became the real evidence of truth, giving way to all kinds of new metaphysical and transcendental cults that bloomed on the American frontier.⁴

A second philosophical and theological force that helped shape the American experience is Arminianism. Historians do not agree on whether Arminianism caused or became the

¹Horton, Made in America, 94.

²Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 23. On Scottish realism and American religion, see also Theodore Dwight Bozeman, Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum American Religious Thought (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 3-31 and 132-59; Herbert Hovenkamp, Science and Religion in America 1800-1860 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978); Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," Church History 24 (1955): 257-72. For the importance of Baconianism to dispensationalism, see George Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 55-62.

³Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 23.

⁴Bernard Reardon, Religion in the Age of Romanticism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), vii, 9; Horton, Made in America, 96, 98.

religion of Revolutionary liberty. Their controversy relates to the ongoing debate between the prevalence of theology over practice or of pragmatism over theology in the shaping of religious realities.¹ In any case, Arminian types of religion shattered the Puritan legacy in America. This resulted in changing the emphasis of the American settlers from the sovereignty of God to the power of human potential. In the nineteenth century, on the East Coast, Arminianism took a rationalistic connotation in line with the influences of the Enlightenment, while on the frontier it developed a utilitarian, antirationalist spirit that was more in harmony with romantic influences.²

Arminianism also fostered certain types of spiritual leaders and preaching styles more sensitive to people's needs. Popular exhorters soon took precedence over intellectual leaders. Unschooling communicators, unsophisticated religious activists, or, as Hatch describes some of them, virulent anticlerical leaders preached "volleys of criticism about pride, spiritual apathy, and love of station and wealth."³ The sermons of these leaders began to disregard the Calvinist and orthodox combination of philosophy, scholarship, and piety. Dogmatic, practical, and moral exhortations became prevalent. Arminianism gradually changed the frontier's spiritual perception. Religious faith developed outside common literacy and the acquisition of a worldview gained through classical education and a strong rational interpretation of the Bible.⁴

The Enlightenment, Romanticism, and Arminian types of religion all emphasized the concept of the individual. William Dyrness considers this emphasis to be one of the most important historical roots shaping evangelicalism and American values and ways of thinking. "Whether people

¹Mark A. Noll, Nathan Hatch, and George Marsden, The Search for Christian America (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1983), 118, quoted in Horton, Made in America, 33. See also Horton, Made in America, 21-27, 30, 98, 100, 108, 153; Hatch, The Democratization, 44

²It was democratic in terms of the creature-Creator relationship. It offered a Ruler whom the free citizen could elect instead of the dictatorship of a God who elected his citizens. In Arminianism, the people decided whether they would be subjects. In Calvinism/Puritanism, a person was a subject, whether he/she accepted the Sovereign's lordship or not (Horton, Made in America, 27). See also, William A. Dyrness, How Does America Hear the Gospel? (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 30, 33.

³Hatch, The Democratization, 44.

⁴Ibid., 112; Horton, Made in America, 17-18, 23, 164, 167; Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (New York: Vintage, 1963), 86-87.

trusted their reason or their emotions, the individual was enshrined."¹ This emphasis on the individual took an additional bend in premillennialist apocalyptic type of movements or denominations. In these, the eschatological vision not only heightened the need for evangelism and personal mission, but also for personal accountability in front of the imminent return of the Lord: "The Lord is coming, / I must decide and be ready now."

A third philosophical and theological root of evangelicalism is restorationism or biblical primitivism. It appeared within the fragmented context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when people searched for an "ancient order" that would give unity to Christians. They sought the restoration of apostolic simplicity and of a primitive church not corrupted by kingcraft and priestcraft. Ironically, restorationism in its attempt to foster unity through its rallying cry of "no creed but the Bible" actually encouraged populist hermeneutics and, in turn, greater religious fragmentation.²

Within the context of the old Puritan covenant relationship, in a frontier land of multiple resources, restorationism rapidly generated a deep sense of mission and an ethos of success within the American settlers. Restorationism helped them to develop a sense that history was moving to a new or final stage, where "the righteous could win" and establish the golden age.³

Generally, modern evangelicalism does not express postmillennial views of history in the late twentieth century. However, some evangelical circles are still shaped by the perfectionistic impulses and social ideals of the millennial views that tend to generate individualism, optimism, pragmatism, materialism, and immediatism.⁴

In summary, American evangelicalism is rooted in democratic forces that unsettled the Puritan tradition and struggled for different conceptions of Christian ministry. It favors populist

¹Dyrness, How Does America Hear the Gospel? 83-86; see also Sacvan Bercovitch, The Puritan Origin of the American Self (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), 7.

²Hatch, The Democratization, 80, 166, 167; Richard T. Hughes, "Are Restorationists Evangelicals?" in Variety, 109.

³Timothy Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Abingdon, 1957), 57, 137, 149.

⁴Weber, "Premillennialism and the Branches of Evangelicalism," 6-8, 16, 17; Dyrness, How Does America Hear the Gospel? 70, 91.

hermeneutics over academic theological systems. From its fragmented context of revivalism, evangelicalism developed "democratic" theologies that generally stand upon the practical and empirical foundation of a pragmatic Christian faith. Out of its dominant postmillennialist roots, evangelicalism exhibited perfectionist impulses for holy and victorious Christian experiences, as well as the desire to establish itself as a socio-political force.¹ Consequently, evangelicalism has tended to encourage more practice and morality than theory and theology.² Gregg Singer qualifies that trend from a different perspective when he describes evangelicalism as having a greater emphasis on the love of God than on His justice and holiness.³

Worship Traditions

Background

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the democratization of Christianity engendered a revolution in communication through the printed page, singing, preaching, and exuberant self-expression.⁴ Democratization progressively changed worship. Those changes were not only the end product of the Puritan tradition but also the work of powerful charismatic religious leaders in quest of revivalism, democracy, and Primitivism. In their quest, these leaders often gathered followers who were not only against the ancient authoritarian and hierarchical regime but also against liturgical worship that was ordered, formal, and traditional. Liturgical or Puritan forms of worship were considered as remnants of oppressive structures, hindrances to true piety, and, therefore, doomed to disappear.⁵

Hatch notes that Methodist revivalism in particular removed elitist constraints on music. It accepted increased spontaneous singing, exuberant shouting, and unrestrained musical

¹Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, 8, 57, 137, 149; Dymess, How Does America Hear the Gospel? 70, 91; Weber, "Premillennialism and the Branches of Evangelicalism," 16, 17.

²Horton, Made in America, 108.

³C. Gregg Singer, A Theological Interpretation of American History (Nutley, NJ: Craig, 1978), 40-41.

⁴Hatch, The Democratization, 226.

⁵Kenneth G. Phifer, A Protestant Case for Liturgical Renewal (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), 97.

enthusiasm as natural to a vibrant and communal ecstasy.¹ These lively expressions of faith were especially spread through the camp meetings. There they often became manifestations of subversiveness and open challenge to the accepted ecclesiastical standards of time, space, authority, and liturgical form.²

According to Hatch, American camp meetings were awesome spectacles, conjuring up feelings of supernatural awe in some, and, in the words of France Trollope, "the air of a cell in Bedlam in others."³ At the camp meeting, charismatic and self-made leaders, often of humble origin and "culturally marginal," generally "walked the fine line between authentic servanthood and exploitative demagoguery by appealing to the hopes, fears, and interests of common people."⁴

Preaching was often spellbinding in these camp meetings. In Whitefield's tradition, mass communication techniques including theatrical performances were often used excessively: the blowing of an unseen trumpet, the smashing of a chair, bonnets, the use of all kinds of voice effects, repartee from humor to irony, and displays of religious ecstasy called "the exercises," and so on.⁵ Hofstadter describes camp-meeting preachers as often hysterical, writhing on the ground in uncommon contortions, laughing senselessly "holy laughs," jumping around like barking dogs, and "treading the devil like dogs chasing a squirrel."⁶

In such an informal and antiliturgical context, traditional Protestant hymnody began to disappear and indigenous religious folk music gained prominence. Camp meetings preferred the newer more popular songs that focused on the personal and the experiential to the old songs uplifting God and

¹Hatch, The Democratization, 150, 151.

²Ibid., 50.

³France Trollope, Domestic Manners of the Americans, ed. Donald Smalley (New York: Vintage Books, 1949), 170, quoted in Hatch, The Democratization, 55.

⁴Hatch, The Democratization, 170, 208.

⁵Harry S. Stout, The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), xix, 93, 94, 204; Hatch, The Democratization, 55, 130.

⁶Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life, 79. For primary sources see especially Peter Cartwright's reports on camp meetings, Autobiography of Peter Cartwright: The Backwoods Preacher (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1856), 45-51.

an historical faith.¹ The loss of Protestant hymnody was not only a reaction against but also the direct prolongation of a Puritan tradition that had for decades exclusively emphasized prayers, testimony, and conversion narratives over older praise forms.² Hatch and Sizer also underline how popular gospel music took over and created a "spontaneous, moving medium, capable of capturing the identity of plain people" and "transcending denominational distinctives."³

Other significant changes occurred in styles of communication in the direct line of Whitefield and, later, Charles Finney. The style of sermons changed to become purposeful, dramatic, and "market-oriented." Sermons were viewed not only as the product of the unique and almost mystical influence of the Holy Spirit, as in the Calvinistic tradition, but also as a human art developed with specific goals in mind.⁴ Colloquial language, overt humor, graphic applications, and story telling expressing greater adaptation and sensitivity to audiences became the prevalent mode. The orthodox, traditional, and doctrinal teaching style became more narrative, and personal testimonies became important means of nurturing and exalting a Christian experience "that works" and "exalts those of low estate." Pragmatic, creative, and "bold" testimonies often replaced sermons.⁵

Sizer points out that emphasizing testimonies over sermons affected the emotional state of the individuals in a way that minimized transmission of Christian knowledge, making it virtually impossible for masses to gain a wider perspective on the Bible and theological issues.⁶ Hatch notes that

¹Hatch, The Democratization, 146.

²Dyness, How Does America Hear the Gospel? 9; Horton, Made in America, 155; see also, Kenneth G. Phifer, A Protestant Case for Liturgical Renewal (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), 104-5; Sandra Sizer, Gospel Hymns and Social Religion: The Rhetoric of Nineteenth-Century Revivalism (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), 52.

³On this point Hatch strongly disagrees with Phifer, who describes frontier singing as "excessively denominational and sectarian." Hatch, The Democratization, 153; Phifer, A Protestant Case, 101; Sizer, Gospel Hymns, 137.

⁴Stout, xv-xiii; James H. Moorehead, "Charles Finney and the Modernization of America," Journal of Presbyterian History 62 (1984): 103, 104.

⁵Hatch, The Democratization, 50, 57.

⁶Sizer, Gospel Hymns, 137.

early nineteenth-century audiences--as opposed to Bible scholarship--gradually shaped the contours of the biblical message.¹

According to James F. White, revivalism shaped Protestant worship with pragmatic patterns that lasted until the 1920s.² Revivalism limited the Christian worldview, engendering several worship practices that were in line with the Puritan tradition but which represented the populist spirit:³ (1) the discarding of community prayers, litanies, responses, and doxologies; (2) the practice of free and long prayers that nearly became sermons in themselves; (3) demagogic sermons that focused on immediate conversions and the mastering of different communication techniques geared to set goals;⁴ and (4) a strict simplicity in administering the sacraments and other ceremonies. For example, marriage ceremonies were confined to vows, while funeral services were reduced to a few words and a prayer at the tomb site.⁵

With these characteristics, evangelical worship soon became, in the words of White, "a means to the end of the making of converts and later the nourishing of those already converted." The traditional means of grace and corporate participation in worship through the sacraments were replaced with sensational new measures focusing on the individual's conversion and oscillating between relevancy and trivialization. Evangelical worship rooted in revivalism may be viewed as having fostered populist hermeneutics placing the particular above the universal, but according to White, it accomplished at least three things: (1) it understood people, their needs, and their aspirations by reflecting the dominant

¹Hatch, The Democratization, 16.

²James F. White, "Worship in Our Changing Culture," in Worship: Good News in Action, ed. Mandus A. Egge (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1973), 43.

³Phifer, A Protestant Case, 89-91. See also Horton Davies, The Worship of the American Puritans, 1629-1730 (New York: Peter Lang, 1990). Davies points out that Puritan worship is indeed "the parent of the Free Church tradition in worship, which has become the dominant mode in the Baptist, Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, and Reformed churches, as well as the Unitarian families of churches," p. 3.

⁴Hatch, The Democratization, 50, 57; Sizer, 137.

⁵Phifer, A Protestant Case, 98.

currents of their culture; (2) it allowed people "to move spiritually and in relation with their body"; and (3) it christianized a nation and fostered unique indigenous expressions of faith.¹

Influential trends

White describes the evolution of worship between the 1920s and the 1980s in mainline Protestantism through three different periods. We can parallel these periods with major cultural currents and the different stages of church institutionalization as underlined by David Moberg.²

First, there was an era of respectability and aestheticism. During that period, the accent in worship was on sobriety, refinement, and restraint. Worshippers shunned the ecstatic, the primitive, and the exuberant, and their worship became more and more the experience of those thought to be "converted." Such worship was colored with professionalism, formalism, respectability, and pleasing aesthetics. Tremendous efforts were made to raise the "quality" of church music. Protestant worship came to reflect the American middle-class taste for comfort and security. Paradoxically, during this era of respectability, worship still focused on highly subjective experience, though without the risk of participation and self-disclosure that revivalism and populist religions demanded.³

Second came an era of historicism. It followed World War II and fostered creedalism and dogmatism in which the worshipper expressed the need for a firm foundation on which to stand in order to resist postwar culpabilities and excesses. White suggests that the rediscovery of past creeds and confessions and the emphasis on human weaknesses rather than human potential strongly characterized this period. Thus revivalistic features in worship in mainline churches ended along with what remained of the golden age of rationalism in the more general culture.⁴

¹White, "Worship," 42.

²David O. Moberg, The Church as a Social Institution, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984): 100-26 (The five stages of organizational development are: (1) incipient, (2) formal, (3) "maximum efficiency," (4) institutionalized, and (5) overinstitutionalized and disintegration. Each stage matches a certain type of structure, worship, leadership style, and group characteristics.); White, "Worship," 41-49.

³White, "Worship," 45. See also *idem*, The Wordliness of Worship (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

⁴*Ibid.*, 47.

Finally, from the 1960s to the present, an era of pluralism and diversity has held sway. The combined influences of the charismatic and liturgical movements impacted the tradition of conformity, respectability, and dogmatism that has dominated the mainline churches. Eventually the positive aspects of revivalistic worship again permeated corporate worship.¹ So in White's opinion, these influences of the 1960s have also shaped evangelical worship through three typical models of church services: (1) the eclectic services that accommodate a cross section of the congregation and reflect more the minister's or the institution's philosophy than the people's needs, (2) the congenial services that minister to a segment of the congregation but only at specific times and according to specific needs, and (3) the multiple services similar to the congenial but available at the same time and therefore only possible in large congregations.²

A second way of looking at worship trends is set forth by Robert Webber. Webber has discerned two camps of evangelical worship in recent years: (1) the separatists and (2) the ecumenicals. These divisions correspond to the factions in the liberal-fundamentalist controversy earlier in the century.³

According to Webber, the separatists' interest in worship renewal started around 1975. It centered on the English word for worship: "weorthscipe" (weorth--worthy; scipe--ship), which refers to the quality of worthiness and means attributing worth, value, or respect to someone.⁴ The understanding of this etymology brought the separatists to open their worship to more praise songs to God,⁵ silence, and prayers in an atmosphere qualified by Webber as "warm, non-threatening, and entertaining."⁶ The

¹Ibid., 48.

²Ibid.

³Webber, "The Impact," 111.

⁴James F. White, Introduction to Christian Worship, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), 25.

⁵Paul W. Wohlgenuth, "Praise Singing," The Hymn 38 (January 1987): 18-24.

⁶Webber, "Impact," 112.

primary weakness of such an approach has been its lack of a theology of worship and reference to historical models.¹

On the other hand, the ecumenical churches have sought to understand worship and liturgical scholarship within biblical, historical, theological, and environmental studies. Since the 1980s, according to Webber, the ecumenicals particularly have seen worship as "rehearsal and anticipation" of the Christ event--His death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming. Greatly influenced by the liturgical movement, they have acknowledged the importance of the Eucharist, of space (the size and shape of church buildings), of bodily actions, the use of rituals, and other ceremonies.² Through a full spectrum of ancient and modern music, they have perceived worship as dynamic, participatory, imaginative, sensual, and as an encounter with the healing presence of Christ.³ Usually the primary concern raised by such an approach has been its undergirding liberal hermeneutics.

The Third Wave and Worship Renewal

The Third Wave

We must now consider the phenomenon of the third wave in the era of pluralism and diversity within evangelical worship. Generally, the wave metaphor has been used in history to discuss what lies beneath the raging surface of colliding and overlapping changes that cause the conflicts and tensions in modern society. It has been used, for example, to describe the shifts in Western civilization taking place in the 1980s.

¹Ibid.

²These include space, vestments, liturgical drama, and a return to festivity (ibid., 113).

³Representative books include Ralph Martin, The Worship of God (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982); Thomas Howard, Evangelical Is Not Enough (Nashville: Nelson, 1984); Robert Schafer, In His Presence (Nashville: Nelson, 1984); Robert Webber, Worship Old and New, idem, Worship Is a Verb (Waco, TX: Word, 1985); idem, Celebrating Our Faith: Evangelicalism Through Worship (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986).

In 1980, Alvin Toffler popularized the metaphor through one of his best-selling sociological and historical analyses, The Third Wave.¹ As he notes, the metaphor helps us to distinguish in history "those innovations that are merely cosmetic, or just extensions of the industrial past, from those that are truly revolutionary."²

As early as 1983, C. Peter Wagner brought Toffler's concept to the attention of Christians by describing the emergence of a post-charismatic movement as the third wave of the Holy Spirit, though Wagner denies that he intentionally ever related this movement to Toffler's concept and book.³ In harmony with Toffler's line of thought, however, it appears that the third wave on the religious plane cannot be confined only to the definition of its propagators who have related it to a renewal of "signs and wonders."⁴ This renewal has a wider significance. It impacted mainstream churches, as recognized by David Barrett who referred to it as "mainstream church renewal." He also considered it the

¹Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave (New York: Bantam Books, 1981; first published by William Morrow & Co., 1980). In an attempt at large-scale synthesis, Toffler divides civilization into three parts: a first wave--the agricultural phase, a second wave--the industrial phase, and a third wave--the phase that began in the 1980s. Toffler's major conclusions are: The world is undergoing radical fragmentation and dislocation and is opening up to unprecedented diversity, pluralism, and regionalism. Party structures, centralized decision-making, and the pursuit of an elusive majority are meritocratic pretensions of the second wave screening out subpopulations on racist, sexist, and similar grounds. The third wave is a new era that encourages: (1) de-massification, (2) a democracy of shared minority power, (3) a devolution of power favoring, paradoxically, localism and transnationalism, and (4) new political and institutional structures. Contrary to the first and second waves, the third wave is the creation (not the maintenance) of a civilization with new forms of social life--families, schools, businesses, and churches with new energy systems and means of communication. Toffler concludes that the responsibility for change lies in (1) "teaching ourselves not to close our minds prematurely to the novel, the surprising, the seemingly radical," and (2) "not killing any new suggestions on grounds of impracticality, while defending whatever now exists as practical, no matter how absurd, oppressive, or unworkable it may be" (ibid., 4, 443).

²Ibid., 6. For later affirmations of Toffler's theses on a secular level, see John Naisbitt, Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives (New York: Warner Books, 1984) and John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, Megatrends 2000: Ten New Directions for 1990s (New York: William Morrow, 1990). On a religious level, see Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Foresight: Ten Major Trends That Will Dramatically Affect the Future of Christians and the Church (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1986), and George Barna, The Frog in the Kettle: What Christians Need to Know about Life in the Year 2000 (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990).

³C. Peter Wagner, The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit: Encountering the Power of Signs and Wonders Today (Ann Arbor, MI: Vine Books, 1988), 15.

⁴Wagner, The Third Wave, 17, 40; MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, 141.

new moving of the Holy Spirit among evangelicals.¹ As such, this third wave reflects the major shifts within Christianity in the 1980s and early 1990s that superseded surface changes, overlapping movements, and influences.² As foreseen by Wagner, the overlapping of these movements and influences will probably gain more and more momentum toward the end of this century.³

On the one hand, this third wave movement has faithfully retained some of the restoration themes of the first pentecostal wave with its emphasis on laity, evangelism, and, among some, supernatural signs to herald the Second Coming of Christ.⁴ On the other hand, it expresses the ecumenism of the Spirit and "unity in diversity" of the second charismatic wave.⁵

According to Wagner, the religious third wave differs from the two preceding movements on certain distinctive beliefs, such as: (1) the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurring at conversion or the new birth rather than as a second work of grace (1 Cor 12:13); (2) multiple fillings of the Holy Spirit rather than just the one which accompanies a person's anointing; (3) subdued acceptance of tongues; (4) the exercise of ministries—healing the sick, casting out demons, receiving prophecies, etc.—under the Holy Spirit's anointing and within the context of a body of believers committed not to disturb a

¹David Barrett, "Statistics, Global," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements (1988), 812, 813, 819. Barrett estimated 28 million "third-wavers" in 1988.

²Examples of overlapping movements include the ecumenicals, charismatics, the Jesus people, and the restoration, positive-thinking, or therapeutic movements. Examples of overlapping influences include the social gospel, church growth models, prayer/intercession warfare, neo-orthodoxy, process theology, contextualized theology (Black theology, feminist theology, and baby-boomer or baby-buster approaches to religion).

³C. Peter Wagner, "A Third Wave?" Pastoral Renewal 8 (July/August 1983): 1-5; idem, "The Third Wave," Christian Life (September 1984): 90; idem, The Third Wave, 16; Barrett, "Statistics, Global," 812, 813.

⁴Synan, "Charismatic Movement," 162; Barrett, 820, 821; see also Charles H. Kraft, Christianity with Power: Your Worldview and Your Experience of the Supernatural (Ann Arbor, MI: Vine Books, 1989); John Wimber and Kevin Springer, Power Evangelism (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986); idem, Power Healing (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987); idem, Power Points (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991); C. Peter Wagner, Spiritual Power and Church Growth (Almonte Springs, FL: Strang Communication, 1986); idem, "Six Crucial Challenges for the Church in the 1990s," Ministries Today 5 (July/August 1987); Garry D. Nation, "The Restoration Movement," Christianity Today, 18 May 1992, 27-31.

⁵Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 238; Pousson, Spreading the Flame, 34-59; MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, 148.

church's governing philosophy; and, finally, (5) the avoidance of divisiveness implied by such characterizations as "charismatic" or "Spirit-filled" people.¹

This third wave or mainstream form of church renewal also differs from the pentecostal and charismatic movements in its attitude toward conducting church services and mission. In those fields, the third wave has been deeply influenced by the church-growth movement that has been influential since the 1970s. The major principles of this movement are: attention to the quality of church life and celebration as a preferred basis of worship, the application of modern management theory to the body of Christ, the importance of pastoral leadership, an intentional and targeted philosophy of ministry within and outside the church, the creation of megachurch (several thousands attending a single church service) or metachurch (tens of thousands) models, along with attention to organic church growth, church planting, lay ministry, professional consultation, spiritual gifts training, prayer warfare, and supernatural signs and wonders.²

Greg Ogden dubbed this mainstream church renewal "The New Reformation," and Jim Dethmer, "The Second Reformation."³ Along their lines of thought we can discern the following influential emphases: (1) a contextual theology propounded as a theology "that works," which boldly

¹Wagner, "The Third Wave," 843-44; see also Anthony Campolo, How to Be Pentecostal without Speaking in Tongues (Dallas: Word, 1991), 1, 2, 21-27.

²Pousson, Spreading the Flame, 52-54; MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, 141. Wagner underlines four major stages of the church-growth movement's development: (1) the 1950s or the birth of the movement--with Donald A. McGavran's The Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy of Mission (New York: Friendship Press, 1955), the Magna Carta of the church-growth movement; (2) the 1960s or the formative years--with McGavran becoming founding dean of Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth in Pasadena, California (1965); (3) the 1970s or the era of expansion--with Vergil Gerber and a focus on the concept of the Third World, while C. Peter Wagner and later Win Arn (founder of the American Institute of Church Growth) taught church-growth principles within the American context; and (4) the 1980s or the refining years--with scores of new issues brought by experimentation of new church-growth leaders (C. Peter Wagner, "Evangelism and the Church Growth Movement," in Evangelism in the Twenty-First Century, ed. Thom S. Rainer [Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Pub., 1989]; see also Pousson, 52-54; Ken Sidey, "Church Growth Fine Tunes Its Formulas," Christianity Today, 24 June 1991, 44-47; Aubrey Malphurs, Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century: A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992], 111-211).

³Greg Ogden, The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 12; Jim Dethmer interviewed by Russell Chandler and quoted in Russell Chandler, Racing Toward 2001: The Forces Shaping America's Religious Future (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1992), 211. See also Rutz, 1700 Years Is Long Enough, 1-12.

addresses (in relevant and creative ways) the thought patterns, questions, concerns, and felt needs of a given society or people group; (2) a pneumatology explained as the discovery of the Holy Spirit as a way of encountering the living God directly and thus transcending denominational loyalties; (3) a Christianity described as "Christ in you," an experience that expresses the priesthood of all believers and empowers the laity through cell or affinity groups; (4) the church viewed as a living organism, the body of Christ, the people of God, or a worshipping community; and (5) worship as the defining event in the church.¹

Worship Renewal

The primary emphasis of the third wave is worship. To summarize Anderson, Ogden, and Towns, "mainstream" renewal has generally affected evangelical Christians and corporate worship in the following ways:

1. Worship is participation not performance. Worship is not "something done to you, in front for you, or for you, but by you." It is not "show-biz" charisma, moving musical selections, or stirring sermons done by a superstar pastor. Neither is it a performance where worshippers are manipulated, or where they become critics of the leader's latest efforts. It is the expression of the individual's heart alive in Christ, and of a community that has come prepared to give of themselves with gratitude in song, prayer, praise, and response to the Word of God.²

2. Worship is God-centered, not human-centered. Worship is an encounter with the living God. According to Anderson, a recent shift in church music illustrates that aspect. From the 1900s to the 1970s church singing was mainly human-centered. But in recent years, Christian music has changed and shifted its focus to God, especially His attributes and saving actions.³

3. Worship needs to be diverse in style. Interestingly, studies show that it matters little whether worship is highly structured or spontaneous to be well-attended and appreciated. Towns ties

¹Steve Clapp, Plain Talk about Church Growth (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1989), 107-12; Ogden, The New Reformation, 12; Anderson's general synthesis in Dying for Change, especially 126-30; Pousson, Spreading the Flame, 50-55; Towns, An Inside Look, 178-260; Chandler, Racing Toward 2001, 283, 291-99; Rutz, 1700 Years is Long Enough, 5-33.

²Ogden, The New Reformation, 24; Rutz, 1700 Years is Long Enough, 12-16.

³Anderson, Dying for Change, 128.

"effectiveness" in corporate worship not so much to styles of preaching or music but to leaders capable of sharing their dominant gift and style and allowing others to do the same within the realm of a church's influence.¹

4. Worship takes precedence over doctrinal perceptions. In recent years, studies show that people are selecting their church more according to outward and functional criteria than doctrinal ones. Worship has become an observable, measurable, repeatable action. As such, people are choosing their church according to the style of worship that best reflects one's inclinations, temperament, lifestyle, and personal way of worshipping God.²

To conclude, we have noted the importance of the third wave and its impact on worship. This movement is in direct line with most of the convergent points we discerned above between the liturgical and charismatic movements. These three movements emphasize the importance of mission within regional and cultural contexts and the centrality of worship, laity, and congregations. One must underline the common impact of these movements on society, especially considering the increasing numbers of mega- or meta-third wave churches. We must also note that the three movements follow the same line of ecclesiology in building a Christian church according to community or mystical models rather than institutional ones. Finally, all three movements lean in hermeneutics towards very different views of Scriptural sufficiency.³

Baby-Boomer Religion and Corporate Worship

Considering the convergence of the liturgical, charismatic, and third wave movements on the indigenization of faith and contextual theology, we must now examine one prevalent aspect of the

¹Ibid., 206-09.

²Ibid., 24-25, 39; Ogden, The New Reformation, 128; Towns, An Inside Look, 198-209, 265-66.

³Chandler, Racing Toward 2001, 210-301; Ogden, The New Reformation, 15.

American religious scene in the late 1980s and early 1990s: the baby-boomer religious phenomenon and its influence on corporate worship.¹

"Baby boomers" is the name given to the extraordinary number of children born in North America between 1946-1964. This post-war generation represents one-third of the total American population and, presently, the majority of its adults. In the last two decades, boomers have tremendously and disproportionately influenced the American marketplace, organizations, value system, and lifestyle. They consume 51 percent of all goods and services. They make up 81 percent of America's journalists, thus "bringing their perspectives and prejudices into almost everything others read and see in the news."²

Unique influences have shaped this generation of boomers.³ Some major ones include: (1) secularization; (2) sex and media revolutions; (3) a paradoxical attitude of optimism and pessimism shaped by the great economic perspectives of the 1950s and 1980s, the positive reinforcement psychology, the threat of the atomic bomb, the Vietnam War, and the Watergate crisis; and (4) greater educational possibilities. These influences have created a unique baby-boomer profile. They are competitive winners, cocooning practitioners, educated consumers, and tolerant skeptics. They have their own set of values, such as experience versus possessions, individuals versus institutions, fun versus duty, change versus stability, confrontation versus tact, motivation by trust and open communication versus guilt, and a work ethic of worth versus one of purpose. Form, function, and up-to-date technologies shape the boomers' everyday lives, and thus they do not settle for less than the affordable best. Boomers also

¹Wade Clark Roof, "The Four Spiritual Styles of Baby Boomers," USA Weekend, 19-21 March 1993, 4-6; idem, A Generation of Seekers (San Francisco: Harper, 1993); Richard N. Ostling, "The Church Search: The Baby Boomers Go Back to Church and the Church Will Never Be the Same," Time, 5 April 1993, 44-49.

²Anderson, Dying for Change, 76. See also Cheryl Russell, What's Going to Happen When the Baby Boomers Get Older (Ithaca, NY: American Demographics, 1987); idem, 100 Predictions for Baby Boomers (New York: Plenum Press, 1987); Paul C. Light, The Baby Boomers (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1988); Landon Jones, Great Expectations: America and the Baby Boomer Generation (New York: Ballantine Books, 1986); idem, "Boomers Are Moving into Boardrooms," USA Today, 31 August 1988, 1-2.

³Towns, An Inside Look, 179-87.

have specific needs, such as individual distinction, quality relationships, support groups, creative experiences, social frameworks, and meaning in life.¹

In recent years, it has been well established that boomers are eager in this search for meaning in life and for churches oriented toward the family.² Analyses of the phenomenon have investigated what kind of churches attract boomers and what kind of changes church leaders need to implement to evangelize or assimilate these seekers within the church. Interestingly enough, the churches that have demonstrated effectiveness in reaching boomers are usually known more by their statement of purpose and "how they will minister" than by their doctrines. They also have the capacity to identify with the boomers' profile of values and needs described above.³

These churches also share a combination of common characteristics. They have: (1) an orientation toward the facilitation of the individual experience and practical action rather than of an intellectual and theoretical approach; (2) an informal, creative, and highly relational style of communication; (3) a strong focus on worship; (4) a high degree of tolerance and acceptance of diversity; (5) an emphasis on inclusion, with a particular concern to include women and newcomers in leadership; and (6) a meaningful educational program for persons of all ages.⁴

Corporate worship in boomers' churches exhibits carefully designed, fast-paced experience that touches people at the level of their feeling and evokes a sense of active involvement in

¹Shames, The Hunger for More, 19-66, 83, 146, 192-94; Anderson, Dying for Change, 76-95; Towns, An Inside Look, 177-89.

²See Anderson, Dying for Change; Robert L. Bast, The Missing Generation: The Church's Ministry with the Baby Boomers (Monrovia, CA: Church Growth, 1991); Mike Bellah, Baby Boomer Believers in the 90s (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991); William Easum, How to Reach Baby Boomers (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991); Doug Murren, The Baby Boomerang: Catching Baby Boomers as They Return to Church (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990); Ostling, "The Church Search"; Lyle Schaller, "Whatever Happened to the Baby Boomers?" MPL Journal 9 (1985); and idem, It's a Different World (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987).

³Towns, An Inside Look, 256; Michael Boze, ed., "Celebrating Community," Willow Creek 2 no. 2 (November/December 1990): 12-39; Anthony B. Robinson, "Learning from Willow Creek Church," The Christian Century, 23 January 1991, 68-70.

⁴Anderson, Dying for Change, 98-99; Murren, The Baby Boomerang, 36, 141, 152, 156, 168; Chandler, Racing Toward 2001, 241, 257, 260; Robert L. Bast, Attracting New Members (Monrovia, CA: Church Growth, 1988), 29-30; idem, The Missing Generation, 149-161.

worship, as contrasted to a spectator role. Music plays a key role in their congregations. It is at least equal to verbal communication of the gospel; it is contemporary in style and tries to reflect the boomers' taste and culture.¹

"Boomer worship" has taken many different forms and styles throughout America with varying degrees of success, integrity, exploitation, and abuse.² Some of the concerns most often voiced by proponents and opponents include: (1) the consumer or entrepreneurial pride and "soft-sell" mentality these styles foster; (2) the "comfort zone" and ego mentality they encourage; (3) the business or entertainment-like-spirit they exhibit; and (4) the convenience-oriented gospel they teach. But the most recurring question is whether, and to what extent, the sociological adaptation exhibited in the baby boomer services bends theological orientations and biblical truths?³

¹Murren, The Baby Boomerang, 188-212. See also George Barna, What Americans Believe: An Annual Survey of Values and Religious Views in the United States (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1991), 232, 257.

²Among the most popular and successful experiments are Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, Illinois; Skyline Wesleyan Church, San Diego, California; True Wine Missionary Baptist Church, Oakland, California; New Hope Community Church, Portland, Oregon; Horizon Christian Fellowship, San Diego, California; Central Community Church, Wichita, Kansas; Saddleback Community Church, Mission Viejo, California; First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida; Perimeter Church, Atlanta, Georgia; and Vineyard Ministries, Yorba Linda, California. Some older experiments that also had a powerful influence are: The Church on the Way, Van Nuys, California; and The Crystal Cathedral, Garden Grove, California (see Towns, An Inside Look, 2-18; Pousson, Spreading the Flame, 41; Dymess, How Does America Hear the Gospel? 119-130; Chandler, Racing Toward 2001, 247-282). See also Tim Stafford, "Testing the Wine from John Wimber's Vineyard: California's Latest 'Boom Church' Has Power Encounters with Sin and Sickness," Christianity Today, 8 August 1986, 17-22; Tom Valeo, "Bill Hybels Knows How to Coax Folks Back to Church," Daily Herald, 18 May 1988, section 2, pp. 4, 5; idem, "The Drama of Willow Creek," Daily Herald, 19 May 1988, section 9, pp. 3, 4; Thomas A. Stewart, "Turning Around the Lord's Business," Fortune, 25 September 1989, 78-84; Cindy Lafavre Yorks, "Megachurches," USA Weekend, 13-15 April 1990, 4-7; Kenneth L. Woodward, "A Time to Seek," Newsweek, 17 December 1990, 50-56; R. Gustav Niebuhr, "Mighty Fortress: Megachurches Strive to Be All Things to All Panshioners," The Wall Street Journal, 13 May 1991, pp. 1, A5, A6; Richard N. Ostling, "Superchurches and How They Grew," Time, 5 August 1991, 62, 63; Kate DeSmet, "Old-time Religion Won't Fill Church with Boomers," The Detroit News, 20 September 1991, 1A, 6A; Rodney Clapp, "The Sin of Winnie-the-Pooh," Christianity Today, 9 November 1992, 29-32.

³Anderson, Dying for Change, 96; Towns, An Inside Look, 220-26, 252; Pousson, Spreading the Flame, 136-40; Dymess, How Does America Hear the Gospel?, 132-53; Chandler, Racing Toward 2001, 193, 251, 255; Ostling, "The Church Search"; Hutz Hertzberg, "Contemporary Worship Services: Non-threatening and Entertaining," The Standard (March 1990): 42-43; John MacArthur, "Gimme That Showtime Religion," Masterpiece (September/October 1990): 2-3; C. H. Spurgeon, "Feeding Sheep or Amusing Goats," The Banner of Truth (November 1988): 5-6; Richard Mouw, "Preaching Christ or Packaging Jesus?" Christianity Today 11 February 1991, 29-32.

The Denominational Context

The Background of Seventh-day Adventist Worship: Charismatic Features

Adventists, whose roots are in the Millerite movement, are cultural heirs of nineteenth-century populist movements.¹ As such, they emerged from an anti-elitist and anti-centralist ideology outside high culture. Like other movements of the same era, Adventism spread at first "by the passion of ordinary people" and through the traditional values of localism, direct democracy, ruralism, individualism, and the common sense philosophy.² This philosophy facilitated the acceptance of E. G. White's visions. It emphasized that (1) the apprehension of objects was direct and not influential by mental constructs; so it was quite possible to believe that White literally saw what was written on the Ten Commandments, for example; (2) language was perspicuous, the servant rather than the master of thought, and words corresponded directly to objects. Language could therefore be trusted and accordingly, note Bull and Lockhart, "when Mrs. White related her vision, it was assumed that what she had seen determined the words she used. Her accounts were as authoritative as what she had experienced."³

Experiences of the 1840s and 1850s

Arthur L. White, Ronald D. Graybill, and Mike Wilson have carefully documented the highly expressive, charismatic, and ecstatic aspects of early Adventist worship--a worship style reflective

¹Hatch, The Democratization, 13, 56, 167, 224; Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 2, 6; Everett N. Dick, "The Millerite Movement: 1830-1851," in Adventism in America, ed. Gary Land (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 1-35.

²Adventists' early belief in direct democracy is evident in their initial difficulties with the concept of church organization. Ruralism not only influenced their predilection for simple means to attain denominational goals but often isolated them from cultural centers. See Hatch, The Democratization, 212; Anderson, Dying for Change, 36; Bozeman, Protestants in an Age of Science, 3-31; Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," 257-72.

³Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 25; see also *ibid.*, 26-28.

of and adapted to its general surrounding culture.¹ Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart have also emphasized how much early Adventists were "socially normal" and "culturally adapted."²

For example, the following first stanza of an early Adventist hymn illustrates Adventist adaptation to the romantic culture and its mode of expression:

Bright scenes of glory strike my senses,
 And all my passions capture;
 Eternal beauties round me shine,
 Infusing warmest rapture.
 I dive in pleasures deep and full,
 In swelling waves of glory;
 And feel my Savior in my soul,
 And groan to tell my story.³

Committed to the Reformation through a revivalist-Methodist connection,⁴ early Adventist meetings exhibited typical frontier and camp-meeting traditions.⁵ They were marked by evangelistic zeal, spontaneity, and the participation of the people. They were characterized by fervent

¹Arthur L. White, "Ecstatic Experiences in Early SDA History," a statement prepared for the Ellen G. White Estate, General Conference, Washington, D. C., December, 1972; republished as articles in Review & Herald (March 15, 22, 29, and April 5, 12, 19, 26, 1973). Later reprinted as a pamphlet distributed by the White Estate, Charismatic Experiences in Early Seventh-day Adventist History (n.d.); Ronald D. Graybill, "Glory! Glory! Glory! When Adventists Shouted for Joy," Adventist Review, October 1987, 12, 13; idem, "A Hymn of Joy: Enthusiasm and Celebration in Early Adventist Hymnody," Adventist Heritage 14 (Fall 1991): 28-33; idem, "Enthusiasm in Early Adventist Worship," Ministry 64 (October 1991): 10-12; idem, "Early Adventist Worship," John W. Osborn Lectureship, La Sierra University, 1991 (cf., audiocassette, Scottsdale, AZ: Arizona Video Ministries, 1991); Mike Wilson, "Enthusiasm and Charismatic Manifestations in Sabbatarian Adventism with Applications for the SDA Church of the late Twentieth Century" (D.Min. diss., Andrews University, 1995). See also Frederick Hoyt, "We Lifted up Our Voices Like a Trumpet: Millerites in Portland, Maine," Spectrum 17 (August 1987): 15-22; Steve Daily, "Rediscovering Our Adventist Heritage," unpublished paper, La Sierra University, April 1991; Steve Blotzke, "Early Advent Hymnody and Secular Tunes," term paper, E. G. White Center, DF 245-d, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

²Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 88.

³Hymns for Second Advent Believers Who Observe the Sabbath of the Lord (Rochester, NY: James White Pub., 1852), 5.

⁴Malcom Potts, "Origins of Adventist Worship," in Worship, ed. Alf Birch (Warburton, Australia: Signs Pub. Co., 1989), 14.

⁵See James F. White, Protestant Worship in Transition (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1989), 185-87; Gordon Bietz, "Worship Themes in Adventist Theology," paper presented at the First International Adventist Worship Conference, Portland, OR, April 18, 1991, 2.

enthusiasm expressed in "Amen," "Praise the Lord," "Glory," "Hallelujah," exuberant and spirited singing, and calls for repentance and acceptance of the Advent message.¹

Sharing testimonies, especially at "social meetings," was one aspect of people's participation.² Another aspect was the practice of the "exercises" that described different human responses to the moving of the Holy Spirit. According to Graybill and Mike Wilson, early Adventists participated in the following "exercises": shouting, singing, clapping, weeping, agonizing, Spirit slaying, visions, dreams, laughing, healing, impressions, prostrations, "freedom or liberty of speech," "melting powers," blessings, and speaking in tongues. Both Wilson and Arthur White also have pointed out that Ellen White always taught that only God could be the initiator of enthusiasm and the "exercises."³ According to Ellen White, striving for, producing, or seeking the exercises were unhealthy. Also they were unnecessary excitements and even dangerous if people trusted and rested upon them instead of on the Word of God.⁴

¹Graybill, "A Hymn," 29, 30. For additional information on the charismatic features of early Adventist meetings see: E. G. White to Joseph Bates, July 13, 1847; James White to Brother Hastings, January 10, 1850; George W. Holtz, "Dear Brother White," *Review & Herald*, 2 September 1851, 24; J. B. Frisbie, "Meeung in Wright, Michigan," *Review & Herald*, 24 February 1859, 112; Elias Goodwin, "Monthly Meeting at Kirkville, New York," *Review & Herald*, 17 February 1863, 93. See also the following documents from E. G. White: To Brother and Sister Hastings, May 29, 1848; MS 5, July 29, 1850; MS 11, December 25, 1850; To Brother and Sister Howland, August 15, 1850 and November 12, 1851; To Brother Pierce, undated, 1851; To Sister Kellogg, December 5, 1853; MS 3, February 12, 1854; To "Dear Friends," October 12, 1854; To W. C. White and Mary, June 27, 1875; To "Dear Children," August 31, 1877; To "Dear Husband," June 28, 1878; To James White, May 20, 1880; To "My Dear Brethren," circa April, 1889; To Brethren and Sisters in Norwich, December 4, 1890; To Teachers and Students of Battle Creek College and Educational Institutions, December, 1893; To "Dear Brethren in America," August 1, 1894; MS 49, November 3, 1894.

²Harold Camacho, "Early Seventh-day Adventist Religious Meetings," research paper, 1972, E. G. White Research Center, DF 211, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1, 4, 7, 8, 15.

³Graybill, "Glory! Glory! Glory!" 12, 13; idem, "Hymn," 28-33; idem "Enthusiasm," 10-12; idem, "Enthusiasm in Early Advent Worship," Second International Adventist Worship Conference, Riverside, CA, 8 April 1993, audiocassette; Mike Wilson, "Enthusiasm and Charismatic Manifestations in Sabbatarian Adventism," 1-50; cf., idem, interview by author, McMinnville, OR, May, 1991, audiocassette; A. L. White, "Ecstatic Experiences in Early SDA History," 4-7.

⁴E. G. White to Brethren and Sisters at Bedford, December 25, 1850 and 1861. See also Arthur L. White, "Tongues in Early SDA History," and "Bible Study Versus Ecstatic Experiences," in *Charismatic Experiences*, 4, 7; Graybill, "Enthusiasm," 12; Stanley D. Hickerson, "Congregational Participation in the Seventh-day Adventist Worship Service: A Study from the Writings of Mrs. Ellen G. White," research paper (E. G. White Research Center: DF 2119), Andrews University, 1976, 2, 12; James L. Steven, "Worship among the Pioneers: A Study of the Religious Meetings of the Early Seventh-

A comment by Ellen White in 1850 suggests the tenor of early sabbatarian Adventist worship: "I saw," she wrote, "that singing to the glory of God often drove the enemy, and shouting would beat him back and give us the victory."¹ Again she penned:

Sunday the power of God came upon us like a mighty rushing wind. All arose upon their feet and praised God with a loud voice; it was something as it was when the foundation of the house of God was laid. The voice of weeping could not be told from the voice of shouting. It was a triumphant time; all were strengthened and refreshed. I never witnessed such a powerful time before.²

We gain additional insights on the subject from one of James White's reports in 1857:

The place was filled with the Spirit of the Lord. Some rejoiced, others wept. All felt that the Lord was drawing very near. . . . When seated, Mrs. W[hite] began to praise the Lord, and continued rising higher and higher in perfect triumph in the Lord, till her voice changed, and the deep, clear shouts of Glory! Hallelujah! thrilled every heart. She was in vision.³

In 1868, another description by James White illustrates the charismatic features of early Adventist gatherings:

While a brother was anointing his wife, the room was filled with the power of God. I was standing, but with difficulty. I fell upon my face, and cried and groaned under the power of God. Brethren Sanburn and Ingraham felt about the same. We all laid on the floor under the power of God.⁴

Even though the Adventist mode of communication in singing, speaking, and the printed page was in tune with the culture, Adventists did not experience all the excesses of their times. According to Bull and Lockhart, Adventism's peculiar theology emphasizing a premillennial message, the objective authority of the Bible, and an historical interpretation of the biblical prophecies came into conflict with some of the major trends of a romantic age that, in America, was colored with enthusiasm and dreams for unlimited material and spiritual progress.⁵

day Adventists," research paper (E. G. White Research Center: DF 2119), Andrews University, 1977, 8, 9, 15.

¹E. G. White to Arabella Hastings, August 4, 1850.

²E. G. White to the church in Brother's Hastings' house, November 7, 1850.

³James White, "Report Meetings!" Review & Herald, 22 October 1857, 196-97.

⁴James White to Ellen White, November 6, 1860.

⁵Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 88, 91.

Indeed, Adventist worship did not reflect all the modes of expression that were typical in nineteenth-century revivalist, evangelistic, and pragmatic services. We can observe this in at least two respects: emotional expression and evangelistic zeal.

First, emotionalism, as described above, was present in Adventist circles but was restrained when compared to the violent outbursts generally associated with the Methodist frontier camp meetings.¹ That phenomenon can be explained in light of the fact that Adventists were interested in proving the truth of the Three Angels' Messages from the Bible. Adventists were developing a more rational approach to religion. Adventist worship reflected this cognitive orientation. Adventist concentration on doctrinal study was timely. In the context of high emotional expressiveness, Adventist worship remained more balanced than that of some Christian groups. However, the emphasis on the historical interpretation of the Three Angels' Messages of Rev 14 kept Adventists focused on the right day rather than on the right way of worship. Thus, they departed even further from a religion of the heart and experience.²

Yet, in spite of the fact that early Adventist worship was primarily evangelistic--"leading to baptism rather than leading from baptism," and more "interested in attracting people than adoring God," as suggested by Gordon Bietz--one must agree that it did not indulge in some of the theatrical excesses present in typical nineteenth-century revivalistic worship.³

Second, the early Adventist doctrine of the "shut door" contributed much to toning down evangelistic zeal and, therefore, to those worship excesses used to convert people at any cost and by any means. Early Adventists believed that only those who had heard the full Millerite message could be part of their group.⁴

¹See Graybill, "A Hymn," 30.

²Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 19-36; Pease, And Worship Him, (Nashville: Southern Pub. House, 1967), 8.

³Bietz, "Worship Themes," 2, 3.

⁴Emmett K. Vande Vere, "Years of Expansion: 1865-1885," in Adventism in America, ed. Land, 72; Arthur L. White, "Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question, A Review of the Experience of Early Seventh-day Adventist Believers in its Historical Context," paper, May 1982, Ellen G. White Estate, Andrews University, Berrien Springs MI.

Turning Points in the 1870s and Later

During the 1870s, even greater moderation occurred in Adventist meetings and worship. For example, in 1875 E. G. White wrote that "our camp meeting from its commencement to the present time has been most solemn and the Spirit of the Lord in a most signal manner has been manifested in the social and preaching meetings."¹ In 1889 she penned a report about the Minneapolis camp meeting: "Friday was a precious day. . . . Everything has been without excitement or extravagance."²

Even though White noticed that those meetings were more solemn and less extravagant compared to those of the 1840s and 1850s, she never described a religion of the head. In the 1870s and 1880s, she still acknowledged a religion of the heart, as seen in such expressions as "tearful eyes" and "warm hearts." White saw such emotions as a reflection of a true, deep, and earnest "state of feelings."³

Graybill presents three factors that helped to sober Adventist worship: (1) changes occurring in the American culture and the Methodist church after the Civil War, (2) the increasing number of Adventists who were becoming more educated, sophisticated, and interested in reverence, and (3) the excesses of some Adventist enthusiasts, such as that of the holy flesh revival (ca. 1900) that linked ecstatic manifestations to extreme views on sanctification.⁴

These factors influenced early Adventist worship because of the social adaptability of the early movement. This social adaptability had been inherited from religious populism and its rejection of tradition. These factors took root in the Adventist mind-set, which stressed an historical and "objective" approach to theology.

¹E. G. White to G. I. Butler, June 6, 1875.

²E. G. White to Brethren, April 17, 1889.

³Ibid.

⁴Graybill, "Enthusiasm," 12. Graybill's tape "Early Adventist Worship" gives a complete discussion of the possible solutions to understanding contradictory statements and experiences regarding nineteenth-century Adventist worship. See also Potts, 14, 15; D. T. Bordeau, "Punctuality in Attending and Taking Part in Religious Meetings," *Review & Herald*, 8 March 1870, 94, 95; 15 March 1870, 101, 102; 22 March 1870, 111; 10 May 1870, 163; 14 June 1870, 200; William H. Grotheer, "The Holy Flesh Movement," research paper (E. G. White Center: DF 190), Andrews University, 1965, 18.

By the late 1880s, Adventism had developed a certain level of stability both materially and theologically. Unfortunately, that stability was accompanied by negative side effects, such as "routinization," "stern and cold formalism," and abuses in leadership. Initiative and creativity were stifled in a climate of doctrinal debate. By the 1890s, Adventism had established itself as a religion of the mind. The predominance of the cognitive elements of Adventism was manifest in its preaching style, as well as in the divisive debates over the issue of righteousness by faith, as expounded, for example, in the Epistle to the Galatians.¹

On the other hand, throughout the 1880s and 1890s, E. G. White repeatedly encouraged a religion of the heart, Christ-centered revivals, spiritual regeneration, and radical church reorganization.² In 1895 she called for the enlivening of Adventist worship: "The prevailing monotony of the religious round of service in our churches needs to be disturbed. The leaven of activity needs to be introduced. The Holy Spirit's power will move upon hearts when this dead, lifeless monotony is broken up."³

The Holy Flesh Movement

Fanaticism inspired by Ellen White's encouragement of Christ-centered revivals and a desire for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was exhibited in a singular way by the holy flesh movement of 1899 to 1901 in the Indiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.⁴ The essential feature of the holy flesh movement was its emphasis on a so-called "cleansing message" brought about in people's lives by an experience similar to that of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. People had to attain "holy flesh" like that of Jesus or Adam before the fall. The means to achieve this goal were long prayers, loud

¹Richard W. Schwartz, "Perils of Growth," in Adventism in America, ed. Land, 95; Theobald, "The Role of Charisma," 94, 97, 99.

²Theobald, "The Role of Charisma," 94, 97, 99.

³E. G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1923), 204; idem, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1882), 5:619; Gary B. Patterson, "Possibilities for Creative Preaching and Worship in the Seventh-day Adventist Church" (D.Min. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1979), 48.

⁴See S. N. Haskell and Hattie Haskell to E. G. White, September 22 and 25, 1900.

instrumental music (with bass drums, tambourines, flutes, cornets, and large and small fiddles) singing out of a special hymn book (The Garden of Spices), and listening to highly excitable preaching.¹

Emotional extravagance characterized the holy flesh movement. Parishioners in some churches danced in large circles shouting and lifting up their hands. Preachers preached, shouted, and prayed until some persons in the congregation fell unconscious from their seats. Designated men, watching for this demonstration, took hold of those who had fallen and literally dragged them up the aisle to the rostrum. There, as many as a dozen persons, singing, shouting, or praying, surrounded the prostrated worshiper. When the unconscious individuals revived, they were counted among the faithful who had passed through the Garden. Hattie Haskell described these people as falling on one another's necks, kissing, and shaking hands while the music kept playing. She commented that "many of those taking part looked almost crazy."²

E. G. White condemned the emotional and musical expressions used at the Indiana camp meeting. She penned:

The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use musical instruments to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into our camp meetings.³

Thus the holy flesh movement brought additional condemnation of religious enthusiasm within Adventism. That condemnation, as far as E. G. White was concerned, was especially related to extreme emotional displays and, perhaps, especially with theological heresies connected with the holy flesh movement.⁴ Furthermore, that condemnation needs to be understood within the new cultural context

¹Grotheer, "The Holy Flesh Movement," 14-17; Norman Basset, "Holy Flesh Movement in Indiana 1900-1901," research paper (E. G. White Research Center: DF 190), Andrews University, 1971, 5-7; Ella Robinson, S. N. Haskell, Man of Action (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1967), 168; Jack J. Blanco, "Pentecostal 'Cleansing' Message' in the History of Adventism," Adventist Perspectives 6 (Winter 1992): 16. This last article, unfortunately, misuses the term "pentecostal."

²Grotheer, "The Holy Flesh Movement," 13-18; Bassett, "Holy Flesh Movement," 3; Hattie Haskell to E. G. White, September 22, 1900.

³E. G. White, Selected Messages (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1958), 2:36.

⁴Graybill, "Enthusiasm," 12.

of the end of the nineteenth century, a context that was departing from the milieu of revivalism and Romanticism.

Developments and Trends in Adventist Worship

An Era of Respectability and Conformism: 1901-1950

By the beginning of the twentieth century, an increasing number of second- and third-generation Adventists brought regularity in place of experimentation to the denomination.¹ Two major factors contributed to the trend. First, the institutionalized church structure entered the stage designated by Moberg as that of "maximum efficiency" in the life cycle of a denomination. That development, according to Bull and Lockhart, fostered "upward mobility" and a sense of achievement within the movement.² Second, Adventists were influenced by and sided with fundamentalists in the controversies over evolution, biblical criticism, and secular liberalism in the 1920s and 1930s. Bull and Lockhart remark that allegiance with fundamentalism reinforced some major types of changes within Adventism:

Adventists, like the fundamentalists with whom they now identified themselves, quietly accepted Trinitarianism; took a stronger line on the inerrancy of the Bible; accepted, in line with the penal-substitution theory, that the cross was a place of atonement; and reaffirmed their belief in human perfectibility in less mystical terms than had been current in 1890s. At the same time, they updated their eschatology with reference to the new political climate. The writings of Ellen White and the Bible now functioned not as a source of new ideas but a compendium of truths to be expounded and memorized. Doctrines were simplified so that they could be taught effectively to the children in Adventist schools and preached in the foreign lands to which Adventists were now traveling.³

That, in turn, nurtured Adventist conservatism and orientation toward a religion of the mind. In that context, the Bible, in symbiosis with White's writings, was perceived as readily comprehensible unless confused by the hypotheses of the liberals and evolutionists.⁴

¹Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 89.

²Gary Land, "Shaping the Modern Church," Adventism in America, ed. Land, 166. See Moberg's life cycle of the church and sociological stages of institutionalization, 118-25; Bull and Lockhart's "Revolving Door" concept, 256-68; George R. Knight, "The Fat Lady and the Kingdom," Adventist Review, 14 February 1991, 8-10.

³Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 89, 90.

⁴Land, "Shaping the Modern Church," 167-69.

During those years, Adventist scholarship took a definite conservative position and often concerned itself with archeology and chronology in order to establish more fully the validity of the Bible and White's writings. Issues of ecclesiology and worship were left unaddressed.¹

In the realm of worship, the tendency toward stabilization, standardization, consolidation, and conservatism in the denomination also muted what was left of revivalism and frontier worship. Adventism gradually lost the essence of its earlier worship, features of which have been described as participatory, charismatic, evangelistic, and culturally adapted.²

Four main factors contributed to the loss of those fundamental features in Adventist worship:

1. Instability both inside and outside the church brought about greater denominational efforts toward stability, respectability, order, decorum, and reverence in worship. Inside the denomination these efforts were made to restrain resurgent, fanatical, and irreverent experiences. Externally, the economic and political crises during the depression and war years were factors of instability that fostered greater efforts within the church toward order and decorum in worship.³ Both internal and external pressure emphasized the need of a firmer foundation in the spoken word and a better grasp of the sacred as opposed to the unstable profane and secular. Reformation-style hymnody and

¹Oliver K. S. Koh, "A Background of the Development of Adventist Worship," research paper for CHIS 690, Andrews University, 1981, 2-4, 7-11, 18

²Patterson, "Possibilities," 16. Patterson argues that Christian nurture became more significant to the church in the 1920s and later, but gives no evidence of it. In a church stage of "maximum efficiency" in which Adventism consolidated between the 1930 to 1950s, nurturing activities within the churches should have indeed flourished, but there is no evidence of them. It is not until the late 1980s that the Adventist Church developed concerns for nurture and promoted within the denomination such mottoes as "The Caring Church." Cf. W. C. Scales, Evangelism and Church Growth Manual: The Caring Church (Washington, DC: Ministerial Assn., North American Division, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1987).

³J. N. Loughborough, "The Church," Review & Herald, 9 July 1901, 2; Keld J. Reynolds, "The Church under Stress: 1931-1960," Adventism in America, ed. Land, 170-73.

classical music were encouraged and reintroduced in Adventist worship, especially during the 1930s and 1940s.¹

Oliver K. S. Koh points out that during the thirty-three years from 1928 to 1961, Ministry published only forty-three short articles on worship, more than twenty of which dealt with reverence or quietness in the church. Hardly any reflected on the history, nature, or theology of Adventist worship. Koh also notes that until the 1950s, worship was essentially considered as sermon-centered and divine services were regulated from the standpoint of what was "respectable" and "sacred."² During the 1930s and 1940s, Ministry published a polemic noteworthy of attention. Some Adventist evangelists, such as H. A. Miller and LeRoy E. Froom, began to question the denominational concerns for the sacred and the classical, especially in regard to music in evangelism.³ That polemic shows how much musical expression, at least within the specific context of evangelism, had shifted to becoming popular, participative, charismatic, and culturally adapted.

2. With the development of denominational "herald" and "institutional" models of worship (as presented by Avery Dulles) there was further loss of essential characteristics of early Adventist worship.⁴ In the development of Adventism according to a "herald" model, Adventist identity was more characterized by evangelism, witnessing, and the ministry of preachers dedicated to the proclamation of the "objective" Word of God than by concerns around worship. During the period from 1910 through the 1950s, Adventism seemed to develop according to an "institutional" model. In this model, denominational structures and organization expanded and doctrinal teaching emphasized greater

¹Wolfgang H. M. Stefani, "A Survey of Selected Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Articles on Music from 1915-1987," research paper for CHIS 675, Seminar in SDA Lifestyle, Andrews University, 1988, 17, 20, 30, 31.

²Koh, "A Background of the Development of Adventist Worship," 2-4, 7-11, 18; see also Patterson, "Possibilities," 34-37; Graybill, "Enthusiasm," 12.

³Stefani, "A Survey," 21, 22; H. A. Miller, "The Music of Our Message," Ministry 10 (May 1937): 12, 13; idem, "Evangelistic Music Problem," Ministry 12 (September 1939): 19; LeRoy E. Froom, "Music to Parallel Evangelistic Advance," Ministry 15 (February 1942): 19-21; idem, Ministry 15 (March 1942): 21-22, 46.

⁴Cf., Avery Dulles, Models of the Church (New York: Image Books, 1978), 31-96. Dulles approaches the mystery of the church through five "models" of behavior: Institution, Mystical Community, Sacramental, Herald, and Servant. See also Patterson, "Possibilities," 22-28.

triumphalism, authority, and uniformity. Worship services emphasized an individualistic, didactic, and linear experiencing of the liturgy.¹

The development of Adventism according to these two models reduced Adventist worship to functional and institutional expression. Worship before the proclamation of the Word was often termed the "preliminaries." The expression of "unity" was achieved through simple, cognitive, and standardized procedures reproduced throughout the world without real adaptation to specific needs and cultures or much theological reflection.²

3. A third factor was the influence of the evangelical world on Adventism with its own tendency toward "respectability and aestheticism," as noted above.³ This influence permeated the church through closer contacts between Adventists and evangelicals as Adventists gained recognition and escaped the label of a sect. However, these efforts became official and prevalent only in the 1950s.⁴

4. Finally, the lack of an expressed philosophy of worship due to denominational preoccupation with imminent eschatology contributed to that loss. Little research was done in ecclesiology and worship. In such an ecclesiological vacuum, church services simply reflected the general denominational praxis of uniform, simple, and respectable procedures. These procedures

¹Patterson, "Possibilities," 22-25.

²Dulles, Models of the Church, 44-50, 82-93; Erich W. Baumgartner, "Church Growth and Church Structure: 1901 Reorganization in the Light of the Expanding Missionary Enterprise of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," research paper for CHIS 670 Seminar in History of SDA Church, Andrews University, 1987, 66-68; Gary Patterson, "The Expression of Worship: An Ecclesiological Perspective," W-13, "Called to Worship," 1991 (Clackamas, OR: Oregon Conference, 1991), audiocassette); idem, "Possibilities," 14, 18. See also H. M. J. Richards, Church Order (Denver, CO: Colorado Tract Society, 1906), 64; Manual for Ministers (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1932), 3, 5, 151-52.

³See above sections, "Influential trends," p. 33 and "An Era of Respectability," p. 56.

⁴Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 74, 309; Reynolds, "The Church Under Stress," 185-88. See also Walter Martin, The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1960). See Kenneth R. Samples, "The Recent Truth about Seventh-day Adventism," Christianity Today, 5 February 1990, 19.

gravitated mainly around preaching of the Word of God and organizational pragmatism and anti-sacramentalism.¹

We cannot trace attempts of dialogue, at least not in America, prior to the 1950s between Adventists and Pentecostals or Christians from the liturgical movement. Other theological and sociological incompatibilities not discussed here hindered Adventists from learning from or dialoguing with Christians of the charismatic and liturgical movements.

Years of Questioning: 1951-1985

In the mid-1950s, debates with Walter Martin and Donald Barnhouse, two evangelicals who approached the Seventh-day Adventist Church hoping to determine whether it was a Christian church or a heretical cult, started the disputes over the limitations of the proof-text method, the hermeneutics used so profusely during the years of church consolidation. These debates continued through the 1960s with Robert Brinsmead, an Australian leader, who demonstrated the limitations of the proof-text method with the writings of White. From that time on, as Bull and Lockhart note, the Bible and the White's writings were seen by many as incapable, as they had been approached, "of producing answers that would satisfy more than one section of the church."² An era of questioning in the area of hermeneutics started opening all kinds of theological debates.

In that context of those theological debates, as early as 1951, there are indications of the development of a more holistic concept of worship that treats all the elements of worship as integrally important. The 1951 edition of the Church Manual was the first to describe worship in two parts: (1) the congregational response in prayer, singing, and gift; and (2) the message of the Word.³ Surprisingly, however, various editions of the Church Manual up through 1990 continued to state that long preliminaries or "opening exercises" should not consume time needed "for the worship and the preaching of the

¹See Russell Staples, "The Wesleyan Roots of Adventist Spirituality: Concepts of Salvation: Steps to Christ and 'The Way of Salvation,'" paper presented at Andrews Society for Religious Studies, Chicago, 1988; and Patterson, "Possibilities," 13-22.

²Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 30-31.

³Church Manual (1951), 108.

Word."¹ On the other hand, the 1977 Manual for Ministers addressed the concept of the "preliminaries." There, all parts of worship are recognized as equally important and as culminating in the congregational response.²

Also since 1951, a more holistic concept of worship gradually evolved as reflected in an increased number of articles written on the nature and theology of worship.³ For example, in 1957 R. A. Anderson explicitly linked Rev 14 to worship in a worship service.⁴ This is the reference we have found for such an association in Adventist literature. Moreover, a greater consciousness of liturgical elements is indicated by increased numbers of articles regarding music within church life and by the official recommendations given in 1954 to Adventist ministers regarding public prayers.⁵ However, the poverty of these attempts is obvious, considering that only two books, And Worship Him by Norval F. Pease and Music and Worship by Harold B. Hannum, came from Adventist publishers between 1951 and 1983.⁶

The 1960s and 1970s were times of turmoil. After one hundred years of waiting for the imminent Second Coming, twentieth-century Adventists became more distant to and less convicted

¹Church Manual (1976), 113; *ibid.* (1981), 110; *ibid.* (1986), 75; *ibid.* (1990), 75.

²Manual for Ministers (1977), 86.

³Koh, "A Background," 7. See also: R. A. Anderson, "True Worship," Ministry 24 (June 1951): 11-13; W. E. Strickland, "The Pastor as Leader of Worship," Ministry 24 (July 1951): 16-18, 50; Paul O. Campbell, "Soul-Winning Music," Ministry 25 (February 1952): 31-32; A. Meyer, "Reasonable Worship," Ministry 29 (June 1956): 20-22; R. A. Anderson, "The Supremacy of Worship," Ministry 30 (July 1957): 46 (this issue of Ministry deals especially with worship); R. D. Moon, "The Act of Public Worship," Ministry 36 (January 1963): 16-17; R. A. Anderson, "Effective Worship," Ministry 37 (September 1964): 48.

⁴R. A. Anderson, "The Supremacy of Worship," 46.

⁵Manual for Ministers (1954), 74-80; Wolfgang H. M. Stefani, "Seventh-day Adventist Bibliographic Resources on Music," presented at the International Church Music Conference, Andrews University, June 1990, 7-10; *idem.*, "A Survey," 38, 39, 42; H. B. Hannum, "Music in the College and the Church," Ministry 32 (October 1959): 21-23; *idem.*, "Liturgical or Free," Ministry 43 (August 1970): 15-17; *idem.*, "Sacred or Secular," Ministry 46 (May 1973): 14-15.

⁶Norval F. Pease, And Worship Him; Harold B. Hannum, Music and Worship (Nashville, TN: Southern Pub. House, 1969).

about that imminence. Doctrinal debates, already started in the 1950s, reached their peak in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Most of the debates revolved around issues such as the nature of Christ, the atonement, righteousness by faith, and the authority of the prophetic gift of E. G. White. This latter issue, in particular, sharpened critical thinking within the denomination regarding its traditional, historical, and rational interpretation of the Bible, especially in regard to apocalyptic prophecy. The questioning revealed the impact of critical scholarship on Adventism.

The works of professor Desmond Ford on the significance of the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844, and of Walter Rea on White's literary practices, again heightened hermeneutical debates within Adventism.¹ These debates not only caused doctrinal modifications but further polarized liberals and conservatives.² One result of all these debates was further fragmentation of the denomination over one specific issue: Adventism's uniqueness.³

These doctrinal polemics absorbed Adventist scholars and left little time and creativity for concern about practical theology, ecclesiology, or worship. Once again, a cognitive expression of religion was favored among Adventist scholars and thinkers. In the 1970s, the influence of a cognitive expression of religion extended one step further as, this time, it developed against a cultural and religious context that was less charismatic, expressive, and evangelistic than the one of the nineteenth century.

During the 1970s, some Adventist scholars, however, surrounded by the revolutionary changes of the 1960s, began to reconsider church practices in an attempt to reach what they saw as the

¹Walter Rea, The White Lie (Turlock, CA: M & R Publications, 1982); Desmond Ford, "The Investigative Judgment," unpublished paper, Pacific Union College, Adventist Forum, 1980, audiocassette transcript.

²Gary Land, "Coping with Changes," in Adventism in America, ed. Land, 215-19. See also Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine: An Explanation of Certain Major Aspects of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1957); Desmond Ford, Daniel (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1978); idem, Daniel 8:14, the Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment (Castleberry, FL: Euangelion Press, 1980); idem, Crisis: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation (New Castle, CA: Desmond Ford Pub., 1982); idem, The Adventist Crisis of Spiritual Identity (New Castle, CA: Desmond Ford Pub., 1982).

³Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 90; Samples, "The Recent Truth," 19.

"secular world" instead of just "secular Christians."¹ Among these efforts, we must note Gottfried Oosterwal's influence and his missiology that underlined the need to contextualize Christian faith, and foster lay participation and small-group ministries. Oosterwal's work alerted Adventists to issues of the indigenization of faith and social adaptability.² In addition, communication with leaders in the ecumenical movement by Raoul Dederen and Bert Beach, for example, began to stimulate Adventist reflection on ecclesiology.³

In the realm of worship during the 1970s, nothing of significance can be recorded except, once again, an increased interest in music issues within the church. This is evidenced by (1) more articles in denominational magazines, (2) at least three new books, (3) decisions of the Autumn Council General Conference Committee in October, 1972 (although with little follow-up), and (4) the creation at the national level in 1976 of the Seventh-day Adventist Musicians Guild, which held annual conventions and began publishing the Adventist Musician, a journal of music ministry for musicians and pastors.⁴

¹See Koh, "A Background," 7; Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 90; Samples, "The Recent Truth," 20, 21.

²G. Oosterwal, "Seventh-day Adventist Mission in the Seventies," Spectrum 2 (Spring, 1970), 5-20.

³Land, "Coping," 229; Cosmoas Rubencamp, "The Seventh-day Adventist and the Ecumenical Movement," Spectrum 2 (Fall 1970): 5-18; B. B. Beach, "Evangelicals in Critical Discussion with WCC," Ministry 48 (July 1975): 7-9; Raoul Dederen, "Faith and Order Commission," Review & Herald, 2 December 1971, 4-6; idem, "Crisis and Promise in the Consultation on Church Union," These Times 148 (January 1972): 21-24; idem, "The Present State of Ecumenism," Ministry 48 (September 1975): 12-14; idem, "Charismatics and Catholics," Ministry 49 (May 1976): 17-19; idem, "Nature of the Church," Ministry 52, supplement 24 (February 1978): B-F.

⁴R. R. Bietz, "The Power of Worship," Review & Herald, 5 October 1972, 15-16; Stefani, "A Survey," 42, 45, 52; "Guidelines towards a Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy on Music," Review & Herald, 30 November 1972, 16-19; see also Paul Hamel, The Christian and His Music (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1973); idem, Ellen White and Music: Background and Principles (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1976); Harold Byron Hannum, Christian Search for Beauty (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1975). The Seventh-day Adventist Musicians Guild was first organized in 1970 by Oliver S. Beltz and Albert E. Mayers in Southern California. It was nationally organized in 1976 at its first convention at Andrews University. The goals of the guild was to address issues of music related to worship and church life. In 1986, the journal of the guild became Music and Ministry. In 1989, the guild was dissolved for lack of membership. In 1984, the International Association of Adventist Musicians (IAMA) and its journal Notes were created to address broader educational and professional concerns (music in the Adventist educational system—history, theory, teaching, and issues related to the Adventist professional musicians' life).

These efforts have polarized those musicians who espoused classical sacred music against some ministers and laity who defended more popular styles of music.¹ The old polemic, prompted by jazz, of the 1930s and 1940s regarding the kind of music in evangelism resurfaced in the 1970s. Adventists debated about the proper use of music within the church and tried to deal with the effect of secular rock music on Adventist youth.² The two sides are represented in articles by Harold Hannum and Monte Sahlin published in *Ministry* in the late 1960s.³ According to Wolfgang Stefani, Adventist literature since the 1970s has distinctly moved away from implying that the best music for Christians is sacred music.⁴

Developments in Adventist music and worship occurring between 1985 and 1991 are considered in chapters 2 and 3. These developments are addressed in relationship to what have come to be known as "celebration experiences" and polarization in Adventist theology.

Black Adventist Worship

To complete the panorama of the denominational contextual factors, we must consider the issue of Black Adventist worship. Understanding Black Adventist worship requires an accurate understanding of African influences, the Southern slave culture, the rise of separate Black congregations/conferences, the impact in the late 1950s and 1960s of urbanization and the Black power movement, and, finally, the influence of members from the West Indies within the Adventist Church.⁵

¹Stefani, "A Survey," 41.

²Ibid., 40.

³Harold Byron Hannum, "Choosing the Right Music," *Ministry* 38 (May 1965): 39; Monte Sahlin, "Music and Adventism," *Ministry* 4 (September 1969): 20-21.

⁴Stefani, "A Survey," 53.

⁵Norman Miles, interview, Andrews University, April 7, 1992; Benjamin Franklin Reaves, "A Study of Black Seventh-day Adventist Worship," professional paper, Chicago Theological Seminary, 1974, 1; Barry Black, "The Heritage of African-American Worship," Second International Adventist Worship Conference, Riverside, CA, 9 April, 1993, audiocassette; James Dorgette, "Emotionality and Rationality in Black SDA Worship" (D.Min. diss., School of Theology at Claremont, CA, 1992).

Benjamin Reaves holds that the major characteristic of Black worship is emotionalism. The emotionalism of Black worship is the result of interpenetration of African and White evangelical traditions.¹ Some scholars have underlined the "African continuation" by showing how the roots of the Black psyche in religion find their expression in a concomitance of music and dance which survive when Christianity is accepted.²

On the other hand, White evangelical influences came through the Second Great Awakening. Revivalism brought several characteristics to the American religious context. Among others, it heightened emotionalism in White circles, reduced clerical control, and renewed interest in mission and evangelism among particular groups, such as Blacks. During the Second Great Awakening, religious enthusiasm replaced religious sophistication as a criterion for piety. The efforts of Anglican and Presbyterian missionaries to convert slaves in rural settings had accomplished little. The grave, solemn, and dignified attitude of Anglicans and Presbyterians, as well as a preaching style stressing religious instruction and conformity to the objective standards of an authoritarian church (such as strict Sabbath observance, sober church music, and formal catechism) had largely failed among Black people.³ But populist exhorters--Baptist and Methodist preachers, who emphasized the immediate conversion of sinners and the priesthood of all believers--brought Black people to Christianity in mass.

In this way, revivalism placed Blacks and Whites on the same ground. It allowed the emergence of Black religious leaders. It finally generated the fundamental paradox within evangelical Protestantism: its egalitarian character (through the emergence of Black leadership) and its racism

¹Reaves, "A Study of Black Seventh-day Adventist Worship," 13.

²Joseph R. Washington, "How Black Is Black Religion?" in Quest for a Black Theology, ed. James J. Gardiner and Deotis J. Roberts (Philadelphia: Pilgrim, 1971), 25. For a discussion as to whether or not the religion of black people is connected to African heritage, see Reaves, "A Study of Black Seventh-day Adventist Worship," 1-4; also Gayraud Wilmore, "The Case for a New Style," in The Black Church in America, ed. Hart M. Nelson, Raytha L. Yokley, and Anne K. Nelsen (New York: Basic Books, 1971), 327.

³Hatch, The Democratization, 104.

(through, consequently, the emergence of church communities having only the race characteristic of their leaders).¹

From its beginning, Black worship was shaped by the cultural, religious, and social oppression of early nineteenth-century slave culture. In such a context, the survival of the community demanded that worship be celebrative, affirm identity, and uplift hope and the promise of deliverance. Emotionalism not only strengthened the Black African psyche,² but also fostered endurance in oppression and creativity in the face of dehumanization.³ Emotionalism within worship is "an experience of yearning for and commitment to the freedom and dignity of man [and woman] and one of affirmation of the majesty, the mystery, the power and action of God."⁴

Two stages in Black American history have successively rooted, nurtured, developed, and even fostered revivalist African worship within the evangelical church. Those stages are segregation and the integration of African-Americans, especially within large urban centers. In the segregation stage special influences from the holiness and pentecostal movements rooted Black worship in such celebrative aspects as rhythmic religious music, vigorous sermonic exhortation, and a total emotional outpouring through body and vocal expression.⁵

During and after World War II, massive urbanization of African-Americans obliged them to reorganize their religious life largely according to the new stratification of Black communities.⁶ On the one hand, upper- and middle-class Blacks rejected their "negro heritage" as they sought "legitimization in Whites' eyes." In their quest for acceptance, they emphasized decorum and order in

¹Ibid., 106; Winthrop Jordan, The White Man's Burden (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 97-99.

²Roots of the Black psyche in religion find their expression in a concomitance of music and dance which survive when Christianity is accepted. See note 1 p. 58.

³Reaves, "A Study of Black Seventh-day Adventist Worship," 9.

⁴Ibid., 1.

⁵Joseph Washington, Black Sects and Cults (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 73-80.

⁶See Franklin Frazier, The Negro Church in America (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), 85.

worship as opposed to forms of ecstasy.¹ On the other hand, Blacks of lower status generally kept their African revivalistic style of worship, and developed new forms of gospel music.²

In the 1960s and later, the African revivalistic worship style again became generally prevalent in Black churches through the influence of the Black power movement that penetrated all stratas of Black society.³

Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, despite the creation of separate Black churches during the early 1900s and Black regional conferences in the mid-1940s,⁴ Black church services, surprisingly, resembled White services in structure, preaching themes, and music, although "preaching style and audience responsiveness and participation" differ.⁵ Two major reasons for this resemblance can be noted: (1) the creation of those services under a first generation of Black leaders in quest of acceptance and (2) the development of those services in the denominational era of stabilization and consolidation within the church.

Since the 1960s, however, development and new experimentation have taken place among Black Adventist churches and in their worship. According to Norman Miles, three major factors contributed to that experimentation: (1) the use of gospel music in evangelism in the late 1950s by such pioneers as E. E. and Harold Cleveland, which greatly influenced the Adventist Black churches; (2) the impact of the Black power movement; and (3) the influence of second- and third-generation Black leaders who affirmed independence and identity in the African-American tradition by creating new models of church leadership and worship.⁶

¹Reaves, "A Study of Black Seventh-day Adventist Worship," 16.

²Ibid., 18, 19.

³Miles interview, 7 April 1992

⁴W. W. Fordham, Righteous Rebel (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1990), 74-83, 134-41.

⁵Reaves, "A Study of Black Seventh-day Adventist Worship," 22.

⁶Miles interview, 7 April 1992.

In Black Adventist circles, these factors challenged the quiet and serene order of White worship services that was understood to represent progress.¹ Since the 1970s, experimentation in Black Adventist worship has produced tension between the African-Americans and the more conservative West Indian church members over what one might call the appropriate style of worship.² These debates, however, have had little impact on the White segment of the church. Miles explains it simply: "White and Black Adventist leadership and communities still tend to operate in separate worlds."³

Summary

To summarize, we have noted that Adventist worship is rooted in nineteenth-century revivalism. In such a context, the characteristics or essence of Adventist worship can be described as charismatic, participatory, evangelistic, pragmatic, and culturally adapted. Coming out of a charismatic culture, Adventist worship was in harmony with the surrounding society, although expressing some unique and peculiar theological views.

As society evolved in the industrial era at the end of the nineteenth century, Adventist worship kept its essence, remaining fundamentally participatory, evangelistic, and anti-sacramentalist, even as, through cultural adaptations, it became less charismatic.

From the early 1920s to the late 1950s, Adventist worship entered an era of respectability, through its fundamental adaptability to religious and societal changes and also through dynamics intrinsic in the "maximum efficiency" stage of the life cycle of a denomination. During that period of respectability, Adventist worship lost its earlier features (historical essence) in its quest to express "unity," uniformity, and the "sacred." Lack of expressed guiding principles in worship caused Adventist services to drift into passive patterns without developing the theological and practical resources needed to implement nurture in worship.

¹Benjamin F. Reaves, "A Study of Black Seventh-day Adventist Worship" (D.Min. diss., Andrews University, 1974), 24, 25.

²Miles interview, 7 April 1992.

³Ibid.

There is no evidence showing that Adventist worship followed the same pattern as did American Protestant worship after World War II. It did not experience an era of historicism accentuating the rediscovery of confessions and historical and theological studies in worship. Such a search for a history and theology of worship could have enriched Adventist worship and perhaps broken its Arminian roots of pragmatism, human-centeredness, and anti-sacramentalism. As such, and in historical amnesia, Adventism never really shifted from a passive sermon-centered form of worship to participative confession-and-God-centered worship with an emphasis on consecutive divine means of grace adapted to and incarnated in the human reality.

Conclusions

This chapter shows some of the major movements and influences that have shaped American evangelical worship. First, it underlines the particular contributions of the liturgical and pentecostal-charismatic movements. Both movements placed worship at the core of church life as a rich experience of the divine presence or a rendezvous with Christ whose active presence is manifested by the Holy Spirit. Both movements stressed the need for the believers' participation in worship and for a celebration of worship taking into account contemporary means within specific cultural contexts. Both movements aimed at reemphasizing the mystical and the supernatural in the Christian churches and attempted to present in their own ways and to their own generation a living God totally committed to working in evidential ways.

Second, American evangelicalism is rooted in strong democratic populist forces that have shaped a practical Christian faith and establishes itself with perfectionist impulses as a socio-political force. Deeply rooted in Enlightenment, Romantic, Arminian, and millennial views, much of the American evangelical faith and style of life have also fostered the individualism, immediatism, optimism, and pragmatism that have characterized its worship. Within such a context, evangelical worship developed first within the revivalist tradition before being influenced by a period of aestheticism, historicism, and "pluralism and diversity" that held sway from the 1960s on.

The third wave and the baby boomers' religion and worship preferences belong to that period of diversity and pluralism further shaping evangelical worship in the 1980s and early 1990s. The

third wave and the baby boomers' religion saw worship as the defining event in the church--diverse in styles, requiring participation, and taking precedence over doctrinal perceptions.

Third, we surveyed Adventist American worship from its origin to the present day in the differing traditions of Blacks and Whites. Adventist worship is rooted in nineteenth-century revivalism with charismatic, participatory, evangelistic, pragmatic, culturally adapted, and anti-sacramentalist features. In the course of the years, worship practices of both Adventist Whites and Blacks lost many of those characteristics as they were influenced by an era of aestheticism that came with the institutionalization of the church, the increasing educational level of many members, and for the Blacks, the predominance of White influence. The exploration of aestheticism within Adventism, however, did not lead to the historical and theological understanding of worship that enabled other churches and evangelical groups to build a better foundation for their worship practices.

This sweeping survey of Adventist worship acknowledges the existence of forerunners --people or important concepts in the Adventist Church--that, if followed, could have led to the preservation of some of the earlier features of Adventist corporate worship (its historical essence), and enabled it to meet the challenges of the 1980s. Three categories of forerunners are noted:

1. The first category of forerunners is unique to one Adventist theological particularity: the interpretation of Rev 14 as related to the birth of the denomination and the Adventist desire to take the Bible seriously. But even with such a background, it was not until 1957 that Adventist Bible scholars interpreted the First Angel's Message of Rev 14 as informing a corporate worship centered on giving glory to God. Up to the late 1960s, Adventists had not applied prophetic interpretations of the Bible to worship. Thus they failed to understand the historical, cultural, and musical dimensions so essential in expressing worship.

2. The second category includes individuals who, ahead of their time, saw what should be studied in regard to worship. But either they were not heard or taken seriously enough to have much impact on the culture and practice of the Adventist Church. These forerunners include: (a) E. G. White and her declarations in 1898 on communion as a sacrament and on worship which "should be intensely interesting and attractive to be acceptable"; (b) Anderson and his writings in 1957 on Rev 14 and active

corporate worship; (c) Hannum, in the 1950s and 1960s, and his unfolding of a need for a theology of music; and (d) Pease, and (e) Sahlin in the 1960s, with their respective appeals for God-centered worship and personal-cultural adaptation.

3. The third set of forerunners is comprised of individuals who were sensitive to new issues developing in the Church and the society, but who never applied their interest for them specifically to ecclesiology or worship. For example, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Miller and Froom challenged the church to keep Adventist music culturally adapted in evangelism; Oosterwal applied his contextualization of faith in the 1970s, but only to missiology and not to ecclesiology and worship as in the First Angel's Message of Rev 14; nor did Dederen and Beach, despite their contacts with the ecumenical movement, focus on worship issues that could have opened fruitful dialogue with the liturgical and pentecostal-charismatic movements.

Finally, we must acknowledge Adventist African-American churches as co-forerunners since the late 1960s. They have revitalized Black Adventist worship and evidenced the need for diversity, cultural adaptation, and the contextualization of faith. At the present, however, African-American worship has had little or no impact on worship in White Adventist churches.

CHAPTER II

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION: A CASE STUDY, CELEBRATION CENTER, COLTON, CALIFORNIA

Worship is a basic need shared by all people.
Robert E. Webber

This chapter describes the leader, the church system, and the worship style of the Colton Celebration Center, a Seventh-day Adventist Church, from its origin to 1991.

The Leader: Dan Simpson

Dan Simpson declares: "Unless you understand where I am coming from, you will not understand a thing about Celebration Center."¹ This section examines, therefore, the major steps and influences of Simpson's life journey leading to the Celebration Center experience that have shaped him into the leader he has become. It describes Simpson's vision for the church as well as his leadership and communication style. It also examines his basic philosophy, his fundamental approach to theology, and his perception of Seventh-day Adventism as an institution and his understanding of its fundamental beliefs.

The Man's Journey

Simpson's experience is best described as a journey through seven different stages. The first covers his formal years of education. Simpson was born 12 October 1942. He grew up in an Adventist family "where mother was always there" in the rural setting of Mankato, Minnesota.² He and his

¹Dan Simpson, "Worship as Celebration from Two Perspectives: Celebration Center," G. Arthur Keough Lectureship, Takoma Park, MD, 22 March 1991, audiocassette.

²Dan Simpson, interview by author, Colton, CA, 9 April 1991, #1.

family attended a traditional church of about a hundred members. Except for four years in public schools, Simpson studied in Adventist institutions. In 1967 he graduated from Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, having married Darlene Preston--a fellow Adventist student--during the course of his studies.

He evaluates his education as follows:

I was not a good student: I did not like studying. I seldom read a whole book. I barely made it through academy and college. . . . I knew I would not go to the seminary, I knew I would never handle all that--the languages and so on. . . . I was not a prominent person on campus [at Union College]; nobody had any expectation of my being anything. I had shown no creativity in college.¹

"Against all hopes," he says, he received a call from the Oklahoma Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in 1967. Simpson recalls having impressed the president of that conference by telling him in a job interview that, if hired, he would raise a church. Simpson adds, "I do not know how in the world I would have done that, but this is the kind of dream I had even then."²

The second stage of Simpson's journey was his successful pastoral experience in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and in a little district of three churches with nineteen to sixty members. Dan and Darlene Simpson like to recall the most significant experience of that stage that still influences them: their encounter with the gospel. In 1969 they both attended a conference in New Orleans organized by Elden Walter of the Southwestern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

My wife and I both had a life-changing experience. We both found the assurance of salvation in Jesus. We both came to the point where we trusted in Him [Jesus] for our salvation in a way we never had before. It was just like turning the light on. I saw things differently, the church differently, the gospel differently.³

From that day on, Simpson kept asking recurring questions in his ministry, such as: "How can a church reflect the essence of the 'gospel--the good news about who God is, His unconditional love, acceptance, and forgiveness?" "How can a church reflect the 'gospel' in the way it is organized, takes in new members, deals with offices, and functions in every aspect?"⁴

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Dan Simpson, interview by author, Colton, CA, 6 August 1991.

⁴Ibid.

The next five years, which he spent in evangelism in the Oklahoma and Chesapeake Conferences of Seventh-day Adventists, form the third stage of Simpson's journey. His comment about this stage is: "I think that the Lord had something more in mind for me in evangelism than winning souls--it was to develop me."¹ Those years gave Simpson, as he reflects on them, his "most valuable assets"--the opportunity to develop his creativity and free thinking in front of an audience. It was also during this time that Simpson began to ask serious questions regarding the traditional methods of Adventist evangelism:

Public evangelism did not allow people the freedom to grow at their own pace. A rose does not develop like a tree. Like many things, nature has its time. People, too. They have their own personality, their own time and development. I knew there should be a better way to bring people to the Lord. . . . I knew it was at the church level we should act. I became totally local-church centered because it is where life is. It is where real things happen. You can give people time there.²

Faithful to his new awareness, Simpson entered the fourth stage of his journey in 1976, beginning a nearly seven-year pastoral term in an Adventist church in Minnetonka, Minnesota. There Simpson tried what he terms "things." He still describes this period as a time focused more on his personal growth than on developing adequate church philosophy and practice. He refers to this stage as his informal education, because he kept learning new ideas through hundreds of tapes featuring such speakers as Skip Ross, Robert Schuller, Earl Nightingale, Tom Peters, and Denis Waitley. Simpson acknowledges that many of these speakers are very humanistically oriented, but he adds: "I took all that information and put it in a spiritual and E. G. White context."³

The fifth stage of Simpson's journey was his pastoral experience starting in July 1985 in Calimesa, California. He was now eager to implement all the ideas he had been collecting, sifting, and exploring in the realm of evangelism and church growth. He attempted to share and study C. Peter Wagner's church-growth principles with the Calimesa Church members.⁴ This stage focused on

¹Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid. Cf., C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow* (Glendale, CA: G/L Publications, 1976); idem, *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981); idem, *Leading Your Church to Growth* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1984).

establishing an "outstanding Seventh-day Adventist church," that is, according to his definition, one that is "good not only for its own people but also for the people in the community." However, at Calimesa his pastoral experience was difficult and frustrating. Simpson comments: "After a year and a half, it [the church] was going nowhere. All people wanted was an errand boy to baby them and keep their great programs going. They did not need me for that."¹

Upon the recommendation of Thomas Mostert, president of the Southeastern California Conference, Simpson started pastoring the Azure Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church in Grand Terrace, California toward the end of 1986. Here, the sixth stage of his journey began. He comments:

[The assignment to the Azure Hills Church] was beyond my wildest dreams. It turned out to be the hand of the Lord throughout the whole thing. Azure Hills was a great place to be. There they gave me freedom, even the freedom to fail. With the wonderful lay leadership [of the Azure Hills Church], we experimented with things. It was a church lab experience!²

Simpson used this "lab experience" to explore in many directions. He requested the services of Carl F. George, church consultant and director of the Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth, Pasadena, California. With some of his members he participated in leadership conferences at the New Hope Community Church in Portland, Oregon. He examined different churches in the Los Angeles area. He audited Graham Maxwell's classes at Loma Linda University to "deepen his understanding of the gospel." He keenly observed Jack Hayford's way of preaching and mastering worship. He was inspired by Paul Yonggi Cho's prayer life and Jerry Cook and Stanley C. Baldwin's book on love, acceptance, and forgiveness. For motivation he kept the motto of E. E. Cleveland: "People come where there is a minister on fire."³

Erich Baumgartner, associate director and professor of the Institute of World Mission at Andrews University, describes Simpson's experience at the Azure Hills Church as the shaping of the new principles of ministry and worship that were later exhibited at Celebration Center. According to

¹Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1.

²Dan Simpson, interview by author, Colton, CA, 9 April 1991, #2.

³Ibid. Cf. Jerry Cook and Stanley C. Baldwin, Love, Acceptance & Forgiveness: Equipping the Church to Be Truly Christian in a Non-Christian World (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1979).

Linda Halstead (Celebration Center administrator from 1989-1991) and Baumgartner, these principles resulted from Simpson's efforts "to apply the doctrine of Righteousness by Faith to church forms and structures."¹ Simpson declares:

I learned the freedom of the Gospel back in New Orleans. Then I heard [Graham] Maxwell; but all it was, was a message! Men standing up and speaking truth and then writing it down. It is a great message but only a message. . . . I have tried to bring the message and the methods together.²

For Simpson's wife, Darlene, these years of experimentation were "tough" and "threatening" because, she says, she has a "conservative" nature, "dislikes changes," and takes a more traditional view of church life and organization than her husband. She comments:

Dan took me places I had not chosen to go. If I had known the end from the beginning I would have not chosen to go. . . . The one thing which I think has enabled me to get through [to be able to follow and be supportive of Dan and of the Celebration experience] is that I have not had any doubts ever that Dan was being led by the Lord. That has scared me, but I have always known that he was sincere and honest in his relationship with the Lord.³

Simpson's "lab experience" at the Azure Hills Church brought many former Adventist members back to the church. The church building soon became too small. Plans to enlarge the building were made. Eventually, due to lack of space for expansion, the plans failed.⁴ Tensions rose relating to that issue, but the major cause of concern was the style of worship Simpson was experimenting with.⁵

Finally on 16 November 1988, Simpson remembers, "The Lord spoke to me in an unmistakable way."⁶ This experience became the anchor point of the whole Celebration Center adventure. Simpson recalls the event as follows:

¹Erich Baumgartner, interview by author, Pasadena, CA, 17 March 1991; Linda Halstead, interview by author, Colton, CA, 20 March 1991.

²Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1.

³Darlene Simpson, interview by author, Colton, CA, 22 August 1991; also The Celebration Story, produced by John Sisk and Randy Schornstein, Creative Concepts, September 1991, videocassette.

⁴Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #2.

⁵Stephen Gifford, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 6 August 1991.

⁶Simpson's personal hand-written corrections to the first draft of his biography, Calimesa, CA, 8 February 1993.

That day as I was traveling, coming from Anaheim, I received my dream--it was a clear impression of what I was supposed to do. It was a very unusual experience for me. . . . It was a unique inside feeling related at the same time to a unique cognitive awareness. I don't want to overwork the term "the Lord told me," but it was as if the Lord had said to me: "Dan, the time has come, all the things we have been talking about, trying to experiment with through the years, the time has come. Let's do it." It was like opening the flood gates, the door of my mind, heart. . . . It was freedom, energy.¹

In this experience Simpson perceived a clear picture of an ideal church. That picture affirmed the church understanding Simpson had developed so far, and it became the motivating force of the awareness experience: during the vision. The picture is that of an open physical structure accessible to people, making them "feel accepted." It reflects the gospel not only in its pedagogical but also in its architectural form. It is a "garden cathedral" or, more precisely, a covered park with an auditorium and a healing center where people can come, worship, receive help, and observe the continual changes of nature. This vision did not come to Simpson as a surprise. For years he had been interested in church architecture and had deplored the lack of expression and embodiment of basic Christian and Adventist distinctiveness--such as the doctrines of creation, Sabbath, and salvation, particularly in their healing aspect--in denominational buildings.²

Don Long, one of Simpson's Celebration Center associate pastors since 1989, comments about the "garden cathedral":

I have respected Dan's dream. He thinks it comes from God and I have no reason to question that. I do not care if it takes fifty years to accomplish that dream. I am very content with my ministry. . . . [Simpson's dream] says a lot about the theology of the God we serve, His love, the Sabbath, healing.³

Two conference leaders also comment about Simpson's dream church. The first states, "The garden cathedral' is a place integrating theology into actual practice; it makes, for the first time in the Seventh-day Adventist faith, a specific statement on worship."⁴ The second declares, "It is indeed culture-bound

¹Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #2; idem, interview, 6 August 1991.

²Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #2; also Harold Camacho, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 4 April 1991; Don Bettle, interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 26 March 1991.

³Don Long, interview by author, Colton, CA, 25 March 1991.

⁴Lynn Mallery, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 8 April 1991.

and biased to Southern California, where things like this are not considered out of this world or completely out of context."¹

The seventh stage of Simpson's journey was his transitional period from the Azure Hills Church to Celebration Center. It included numerous formal and informal presentations and discussions of his vision at the Azure Hills Church. It also included similar presentations and discussion at the conference level, first, with some leaders in private, and, then, with the conference committee.²

Stephen Gifford, Southeastern California Conference president from 1989 to 1992, agreed in January 1989 to support, protect, and monitor Simpson's plans after carefully scrutinizing them and submitting them to the conference committee. Yet, in 1991, Gifford stated that he did not believe in the final stage of Celebration Center, that is to say in its architectural realization--the "garden cathedral."³

In April of 1989, the conference committee voted to spawn a new company from the Azure Hills Church, and Simpson's seven-stage journey ended with the search for a place to establish the first phase of his dream church. After attempting to rent a theater or to buy a warehouse in San Bernardino, the congregation finally rented the Assembly of God Church in Colton, California.⁴ Simpson presented the Azure Hills Church members with a contest to find a name for the newly spawned church. Don Minesinger's suggestion of "Celebration Center" won.⁵

¹Camacho interview, 4 April 1991.

²Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #2; Lynn Mallery, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 21 March 1991; Camacho, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 9 April 1991.

³Gifford interview, 6 August 1991.

⁴Camacho interview, 9 April 1991.

⁵Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #2; idem, interview, Colton, CA, 8 February 1993, hand-written notes. On 24 April 1989 at the Campus Hill church, a group of representatives of the Celebration Center executive committee and the Southeastern California Conference (SECC) decided "to approve the name of Celebration Center of Seventh-day Adventists for the newly spawned church from the Azure Hills church under the leadership of Dan Simpson." Simpson had only requested the name "Celebration Center, but on Camacho's recommendations, the motion was amended to read "Celebration Center of Seventh-day Adventists." In reality the name was later slightly altered: Celebration Center, A Seventh-day Adventist Church (Camacho interview, 9 April 1991).

The Man's Personality

Simpson's personality may be described through a metaphor expressed in 1991 by Lynn Mallery, who was ministerial secretary of the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: "Simpson is a highly spirited, independent, racing horse."¹ He thrives on spontaneity, creativity, and intuition.² He likes people and interacts with them in casual, friendly, and open ways, often with a sense of humor.³ He easily shares himself, his ideas, his feelings, and even his shortcomings.⁴ While usually perceived as being very much involved with people, his wife and closest friends describe him as a loner "needing lots of time to recharge by himself."⁵ His intimates also declare that his integrity and humility may at times hide some self-doubts.⁶ In family matters, Darlene acknowledges that Dan is a better husband than a father to their three children.⁷

In a nutshell, one member at Celebration Center depicts Simpson in 1991 as follows: "He is at the right place, at the right time, with the right personality."⁸

The Leader and His Communication Style

As a leader, Simpson is a paradox. At his core, he is an evangelist, yet he is gifted with the spiritual gifts of exhortation and encouragement that are usually more associated with the ministry of a

¹Lynn Mallery, interview by author, 21 March 1991.

²Ibid.; Alfred Pala, interview by author, Pasadena, CA, 16 March 1991; Baumgartner interview; Don Bettle, interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 26 March 1991.

³*The Celebration Story*; Gayle Simmons, interview by author, Colton, CA, 22 August 1991; Gary [Anonymous], interview by author, Norco, CA, 4 April 1991.

⁴Simpson interview 6 August 1991; Joan [Anonymous], interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 26 March 1991.

⁵Darlene Simpson interview, 22 August 1991; Simmons interview, 22 August 1991; John Sisk, interview by the author, Colton, CA, 8 April 1991.

⁶Simpson interview, 6 August 1991; Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; Darlene Simpson interview, 22 August 1991; Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁷Darlene Simpson interview, 22 August 1991.

⁸Joan [Anonymous] interview, 26 March 1991.

pastor.¹ People consistently describe Simpson as a visionary and a charismatic leader. At the same time he is sometimes viewed as "politically and theologically naive."² Generally very autocratic in regard to the goals he sets for himself and his congregation, he is also very open and "laissez-faire" when it comes to the means by which his goals are reached, as long as the means are in line with his philosophy of leadership and the gospel.³

In Simpson's definition, leadership must recognize the uniqueness and freedom of people and congregations and provide a safe environment for them to be free and to risk for God and His kingdom. A good leader must be able to allow people to fail without inflicting them with shame or blame.⁴

John Sisk, another of Simpson's associate pastors, describes Simpson's leadership style as follows:

He is not dominant. His wonderful gift is being able to let things go a while even if he is uncomfortable with them and to give God a chance to work and move. It does not have to be fixed. He can risk and trust God will work. I have worked with a number of leaders and that is a new thing for me.⁵

Another paradox in Simpson's leadership centers in the close relationship and dialogue he maintains with the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, as represented in the Southeastern California Conference. At the same time, his anti-establishment attitude often is exhibited in his deeds and words.

¹Mallery interview, 21 March 1991; Simmons interview, 22 August 1991; Halstead interview, 20 March 1991; Bob Beall, interview by author, Colton, CA, 3 April 1991.

²Simpson interview, 6 August 1991; Darlene Simpson interview, 22 August 1991; Beall interview, 3 April 1991; Mallery interview, 8 April 1991; Joan [Anonymous] interview, 26 March 1991; Pala interview, 16 March 1991; John Lorntz, interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 23 March 1991; Harvey and Eleanor Elder, interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 24 March 1991.

³Darlene Simpson interview, 22 August 1991; Beall interview, 3 April 1991; Baumgartner interview, 17 April 1991; Mallery interview, 8 April 1991; Pala interview, 16 March 1991.

⁴Simpson interview, 6 August 1991; idem, "Celebration Center," Pine Springs Ranch, CA, 20 August 1991, audiocassette; Long interview, 25 March 1991; Joel Muñoz, interview by author, Colton, CA, 20 March 1991.

⁵Sisk interview, 8 April 1991.

such as in the very nature of Celebration Center itself and in critical comments he makes in sermons about the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.¹

Simpson is a persuader, says Sisk, recalling the results of leadership and management tests that they both took at Fuller Seminary.² He has the ability to share visions with the people, to inspire them, and to make his own goals theirs, while, at the same time, he addresses their needs as they are expressed in a definite time and space.³ Baumgartner concisely captures Simpson's incarnational style of leadership: "He understands the modern Southern California mind." Harvey Elder, one of Simpson's church attenders, adds, "He is very much on the cutting edge of reality, news, and information."⁴

Simpson's expressive communication style is not only verbal but physical.⁵ His preaching style is very informal, and he paces freely back and forth in front of his audience. He disregards any kind of pulpit and usually reduces his notes to just one paper with some key quotes or sentences.⁶ His audience generally perceives him as a good narrator but not a systematic teacher.⁷ Simpson's sermons usually illustrate one point, biblical truth, or story through different angles. He uses illustrations from daily life or his own experience when attempting to make his point crystal clear, even to

¹Darlene Simpson interview, 22 August 1991; Simpson, "Worship Service," Colton, CA, 16 March 1991, audiocassette; idem, "The Holy Spirit," 18 October 1991, audiocassette; Bailey Gillespie, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 19 March 1991; Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; Gilford interview, 6 August 1991; Lorntz interview, 23 March 1991; C. Mervyn Maxwell, "Baby Boomers and Moral Leadership," *Adventists Affirm*, Fall 1991, 9.

²Sisk interview, 8 April 1991.

³Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; Bettie interview, 26 March 1991; H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991.

⁴Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991.

⁵Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; Bettie interview, 26 March 1991; Pala interview, 16 March 1991

⁶*Celebration: A Vision for the '90s Comes Alive*, produced by John Sisk and Bert Pearson, Creative Spiritual Concepts, July 1991, videocassette; Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991.

⁷Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991; Pala interview, 16 March 1991; Teddric Mohr, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 8 April 1991.

children.¹ In his communication techniques, he often takes the audience with him in an aside, as if to share privileged information. He also easily interrupts the flow of ideas to make a trivial association or comment.²

In his presentations, he regularly analyzes himself and makes self-disclosures about his life, his feelings, and struggles. He also frequently edits his own speech. "Now let's go on, I've got to finish," or "This just came to my mind, I did not plan to say this," are common interruptions.³ He can also express derogatory remarks about himself. For example, he may say, "I am a simple thinker, some of you theologians make me feel nervous." "I don't look too deeply at some things," or "I am not too smart in all these things" [talking about the difference between membership and discipleship]. Finally, as already mentioned above, he can also be critical of the Adventist "establishment" in his sermons.

Simpson's Basic Life Principles and Theology

Simpson summarizes his deepest desire and mission in life as wanting to love the Lord, to be led by the Holy Spirit, and to give others the opportunity to know the Lord as He is.⁴ Two of his favorite mottoes in life are, "Do something magnificent for God" and "Shun mediocrity."⁵

Simpson develops his core basic Christian principles principally on two series of biblical texts.⁶ The first series is John 6:29; 3:16; and 17:3. Their thrust is towards what God expects from sinners--a "work" of faith. It is faith in Jesus Christ that gets people back to and into an interdependent relationship with God. Jesus is the only one to unveil the Father. The good news, the

¹E.g., Simpson, "The Holy Spirit," audiocassette; idem, "The Law of Inter-dependence," 31 August 1991, audiocassette; idem, interview, 9 April 1991, #2..

²E.g., Simpson, "He Decides," 26 October 1991, audiocassette; idem, "Law of Inter-dependence," audiocassette.

³E.g., Simpson, "He Decides," audiocassette; idem, "The Holy Spirit," audiocassette.

⁴The Celebration Story; Darlene Simpson interview, 22 August 1991; Simpson interview, 2 April 1991; idem, "He Decides."

⁵Simpson, "Worship as Celebration," 22 March 1991.

⁶Simpson, "The Law of Inter-dependence."

gospel, is not only the knowledge about how one is saved but about who the Father is, who God is.¹ It is the assurance of salvation, a salvation based entirely upon God's love, acceptance, and forgiveness. When questioned about his understanding of the gospel in relationship with Desmond Ford's theology, Simpson answers:

He and I just agree on nothing. . . . Ford has a legal understanding of the cross. I think there is a better way to see God. I think Ford's message is the ultimate works trip, the ultimate legalistic message [that] God sent Jesus to pay [for] my salvation.²

Regarding his understanding about the assurance of salvation, he also adds:

I have no problem with the "once saved always saved" people. I have never believed that God said, "Now that you have committed your life, you are saved, whether you like it or not. You are saved, and if you want to leave, it does not make any difference." I do not happen to believe that. But I believe that, as long as I am saved today and I stay in Him, then, I am saved all the way along.³

The second series of texts fundamental to Simpson is Luke 15:11-32 and Rom 2:4.⁴ In the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15), God's unconditional love, acceptance, and forgiveness toward His children are best illustrated. The parable underlines God's respect and eagerness for the lost and His desire to celebrate the decision of any sinners returning and reconnecting with Him. God accepts them back with no conditions.⁵ This experience of God's love is essential to repentance and to a trusting and lasting relationship with Jesus. This experience is the basis for one's peace, freedom, and joy in Jesus Christ, and the leading of the Holy Spirit.⁶

The methods used to carry out one's mission and philosophy of life should be in accordance with the gospel, Simpson declares.⁷ First, they must represent correctly who God is and keep

¹Simpson, "Celebration Center."

²Simpson, interview, 9 April 1991, #2.

³Simpson, "Celebration Center."

⁴Simpson, interview, 9 April 1991, #2; idem, "The Law of Inter-dependence;" idem, "Celebration Center."

⁵A Chat with Pastor Dan and Darlene Simpson: Celebration Center Orientation, produced by Celebration Center: Creative Spiritual Concepts, 1989, videocassette.

⁶Simpson interview, 6 August 1991; idem, "Celebration Center," audiocassette.

⁷The Celebration Story, videocassette; A Chat with Pastor Dan, videocassette.

people in total freedom of choice and action.¹ Second, they must meet and engage people appropriately where they are.² He supports his view by referring to two quotes from E. G. White,³ whom he refers to quite often in his presentations and seems to respect:⁴

Christ drew the hearts of His hearers to Him by the manifestation of His love, and then, little by little, as they were able to bear it, He unfolded to them the great truths of the kingdom. We must also learn to adapt our labors to the condition of the people--to meet men [and women] where they are.⁵ Let every worker in the Master's vineyard, study, plan, devise methods to reach the people where they are. We must do something out of the common course of things. We must arrest the attention.⁶

Gifford, Baumgartner, and Mallery evaluate Simpson's methodology as "very liberal" compared with their appraisal of his theology, which is more or less "conservative" or "very main stream."⁷

Simpson's ecclesiology is an expression of his sense of mission, his basic life principles and mottoes as presented above. For him, the church is the body of Christ, which provides a structure for people to go on in their trusting relationship with Jesus and in their understanding of and

¹Simpson, interview, 2 April 1991; idem, interview, 6 August 1991.

² Simpson, interview, 9 April 1991, #2; idem, "Worship as Celebration from Two Perspectives: Celebration Center," G. Arthur Keough Lectureship, Takoma Park, MD, 23 March 1991, audiocassette.

³Simpson declares that he still has some unresolved hermeneutical questions regarding the writings of E. G. White. These, however, do not shatter his confidence in her writings because when having difficulties with some of them, he says, "I just go to the Bible, as she said." Simpson's major area of struggle regarding E. G. White's writings is her portrayal of the judgment. He comments: "Gerhard F. Hasel gave me confidence to believe in the 1844 message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but neither he nor H. K. La Rondelle could clearly explain to me what really happened in heaven at that time." Simpson also states that because of his unresolved questions regarding the judgment, he has not yet fully taught this doctrine to his congregation, except for the idea that "there must be, of course, a deciding or a process of deciding about who will be in the kingdom of God (Matt 25)." He says, "I am still working on clarifying the issue. . . . I am not ready yet to preach on it" (Simpson interview, 9 April 1991 #1; idem interview, 8 February 1993).

⁴This view seems to be corroborated by my own observation, and in the following interviews: Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; Long interview, 25 March 1991; Sisk interview, 8 April 1991; Wilny Audain, interview by author, Colton, CA, 8 April 1991.

⁵E. G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1946), 57.

⁶Ibid., 122-23.

⁷Mallery interview, 8 April 1991; Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; Gifford interview, 6 August 1991.

love for God. It provides a safe environment for (1) physical, emotional, and spiritual healing; (2) responsible growth; (3) responsible relationships to one another, and (4) a place to serve as priests/mediators for Christ.¹

Simpson's ecclesiology also is based and developed upon sociological studies and evaluations of the Adventist Church at the end of the twentieth century. Simpson understands the Adventist Church in North America as mainly constituted by fourth- and fifth-generation Adventists.² Sociological studies show that institutions at that stage lose their motivation to carry on the mission of the founders.³

In the light of such studies, Simpson concludes that the best way to bring motivation back to the church is to give total freedom and ownership back to individuals. Only this can break the vicious cycle of control, use, and abuse happening in organizations on the verge of collapse and in systems that have become so institutionalized that they have overpowered the individual. In such a context, the individual needs to regain priority and the church needs to reflect God in certain aspects that have been forgotten by the established system.⁴ As Simpson says, "The church in the 1990s needs to be fresh, unpredictable, adaptable, and creative."⁵ He declares:

What I am rebelling against is systematizing religious experience. Somehow, we need some of that, yet people watching that system or undergoing it, feel not very contented. . . . My greatest need is to do away with all this systematizing, to bring it down to a RELATIONSHIP.⁶

Three additional premises are clearly expressed in Simpson's ecclesiology: (1) unity in diversity; (2) the existence of certain immovable doctrinal pillars such as salvation in and through Jesus

¹Simpson interview, 6 August 1991.

²Simpson interview, 2 April 1991.

³David O. Moberg, The Church as a Social Institution, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984), 118-25.

⁴Simpson, "Worship as Celebration," 23 March 1991, audiocassette; idem interview, 2 April 1991; idem, interview, 6 August 1991.

⁵Simpson, "Worship as Celebration," 22 March 1991, audiocassette. See also an article expounding the same ideas, located in the Celebration Center file: Robert H. Waterman, "Renewal: The Challenge," in The Renewal Factor, ed. Waterman (London: Bantam, 1988), 1-23.

⁶Simpson interview, 2 April 1991.

Christ, the seventh-day Sabbath, the unconscious state of the dead, and the soon Second Coming of Christ; and (3) respect for differences. He comments: "Celebration Center never wants to give you the impression that everybody ought to be like us. Nobody needs to do it like us. We need to do it like us and you need to do it like you. That's all."¹

The Church: Celebration Center

The following discussion attempts to describe synthetically (1) the history of Celebration Center, (2) its basic philosophy and teaching, and (3) its general organization and structure as expressed through its different leaders until 1991. Then there is a presentation of worship at Celebration Center in a major section.

History of Celebration Center

As we have seen, Celebration Center stems not only from Simpson's journey and his evolving church practice and philosophy but also, as Simpson likes to repeat, from one of his basic questions: "What would a church be like if it were run on the basis of the gospel?"² Thus, Celebration Center results also from the burden Simpson feels to reach out to former Adventists. He comments:

I know how former Adventists feel and what history most of them have. I chose that emphasis because in my own personal ministry I noticed that I have drawn former Adventists. . . . Finally, one day, it dawned on me that it was probably what God was calling me for. At Azure Hills, we took a board action that would develop a church specifically to reach former Adventists in the area.³

The number of former Adventists (i.e., backsliders) in the Azure Hills area is locally estimated at between 50,000 and 100,000.⁴

¹Simpson, "Celebration Center," audiocassette.

²Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1; idem, "Worship as Celebration," 22 March 1991, audiocassette; idem, A Chat with Pastor Dan, videocassette.

³Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #2..

⁴The Celebration Story, videocassette. This estimate has also been voiced by different people such as Mallery, Baumgartner, Halstead, and Simpson himself. But no reference to scientific data has ever been made.

Early in 1988, the second of three Sabbath worship services was reorganized at the Azure Hills Church specifically to reach out to university students and Adventist backsliders. This mid-service rapidly attracted between 500 and 600 people each week, raising the attendance of Azure Hills to over 1,700. But church growth came to a halt in mid-1988.

Simpson, reflecting on the problem at that time, stated: "There was simply no more room for people or cars."¹ This rapid growth caused much stress at the Azure Hills Church. Beside building logistics--people facing strangulation in their own facilities--tensions arose regarding changes in the Sabbath School, worship format, and music style. According to Don Bettie, church administrator at the Azure Hills Church in 1988, the biggest issue was music--its style, its volume, and the type of instruments used.² According to Gifford, two additional concerns were the raising of hands during church services and the type of sermon preached--a more experiential than "reasoning" type.³ Bettie describes the atmosphere at that time: "Things were evolving almost on a week-by-week basis." The change "was quite rapid at times. It was much too rapid for some people."⁴

In addition to the tension brought about by an experimental style of worship, there was the stress brought on by sustained efforts to welcome and nurture newcomers. At the same time, the need to keep supporting the "distinctive" elementary school that had just been opened under Simpson's leadership in September 1987 added pressure.⁵

By 1988 the church school held little interest for Simpson. All his efforts were concentrated on the Azure Hills mid-service and the shaping and practice of a new way to do church. Finally, Simpson's "encounter with the Lord" in November 1988 precipitated discussions to solve the rising tensions. In January 1989, some people from the Azure Hills Church--Simpson, his leadership

¹Mallery interview, 8 April 1991; Linda Halstead, "New Church," unpublished paper, 2 May 1989; idem, "Adventist Church Splits Congregation in Expansion Move," *Foot Hill Journal*, 4 May 1989, 2.

²Bettie interview, 26 March 1991.

³Gifford interview, 6 August 1991.

⁴Bettie interview, 26 March 1991.

⁵Ibid.

team, and a core group of members--decided to attempt to spawn a new congregation.¹ In a survey conducted on 21 and 28 January 1989, 545 persons indicated their desire to become part of a new church.²

After careful processing at the Azure Hills Church level, the Southeastern California Conference executive committee approved the formation of a new church on 9 February 1989.³ The new church was actually established 1 April 1989.⁴ Bettie comments, "Everyone was happy that the situation was solved that way." He also states that within ninety days following the spawn about a third of the nominal membership of the Azure Hills Church left it to join Celebration Center. But in reality it was much more than a third, Bettie said--perhaps half or even 60 percent of the most active members in the congregation.⁵

Within a few months--and as a phenomenon well known by church-growth experts--the Azure Hills Church regained its lost membership and Celebration Center experienced tremendous growth, amounting to 340 percent during its first twenty-one months.⁶ This growth qualified Celebration

¹The meeting between members of Celebration Center and the SECC executive committee took place at the Campus Hill Church on 9 November 1989 (Bettie interview, 26 March 1991).

²Halstead, "New Church"; idem, "Celebration Center Holds First Services," PU Recorder, 5 June 1989, 8, 9.

³Jocelyn Fay, "Committee Approves Azure Hills Plan," A Few News Notes from Communication (SCC), 15 February 1989, 1.

⁴Halstead, "Adventist Church Splits," 1, 2.

⁵Bettie interview, 26 March 1991.

⁶Carl F. George, Prepare Your Church for the Future (Tarrytown, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 1991), 192.

⁷Mohr interview, 8 April 1991; "Celebration Center Data Profiles," 1989, 1990; "Celebration Center Pastor's Report," 22 February 1991. On the 1 April 1989, 311 members joined Celebration Center and by 31 December, 662. Attendance during the same span of time grew from an average of 600 to 1400. The following year, membership grew from 662 to 868 with a regular attendance, during church services, leveling at 1600. At the end of 1990, 30 small groups were meeting regularly and 125 trained lay pastors were serving the congregation.

Center to receive significant financial help from the North American Division Church Growth Fund in 1990.¹

Camacho summarizes the numerous discussions with Conference people between fall 1988 and spring 1989 to establish Celebration Center as follows: Those discussions raised the question of a new legal status for a church within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Simpson did not want a church organized under the terms stipulated in the Church Manual. He wanted space and time to work with an evolving definition of church for Celebration Center. He wanted a church administration "neither congregationalist nor traditionalist." Additionally, he requested the option of committing his entire life to his congregation, like Robert Schuller. "For us, as a committee, it was a calculated risk," Camacho says. "It was unheard of," he continues, for an Adventist church to organize itself around a specific pastor, so that the future of that church would depend "on that sole pastor's vision for the future."²

The Southeastern California Conference agreed to experiment with those ideas and declared Celebration Center "a pilot project" within the conference. On 21 May 1989 it voted "to authorize the organization of a Celebration Center as a church within the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists subject to a review of their structure." This authorization was conditional on Simpson's documentation of how the church would be organized. He submitted documentation on 20 June 1989.³ Reflecting on those beginnings, Gifford declares: "I believe that my role as a Conference president is to protect those who are succeeding at doing something differently. . . . A good administrator encourages those who are trying something different."⁴ Camacho remembers that the issue of change was very much debated in those discussions: "We all agreed that agents of changes

¹Linda Halstead to Robert Tomlin, 29 June 1990; "North American Division Church Growth Fund: Southeastern California Conference Request and Progress Report Form," 14 December 1989.

²Camacho interview, 9 April 1991.

³"Celebration Center General Guiding Principles," unpublished paper, 20 June 1989.

⁴Gifford interview, 6 August 1991.

are more successful if they come more from within than from without. We all agreed that Celebration Center should stay within Adventism."¹

On 24 April 1989, Celebration Center received permission from the conference to also experiment with a financial non-profit corporation to support some of its future real estate investments. A compromise was accepted on the financial level: Celebration Center would receive funds from a non-profit organization but at the same time be accountable for them to Southeastern California Conference. The conference would hold any trust deed and protect, to some degree, church members who had made specific donations.²

Listed according to their areas of contribution, some of the key persons who have played a significant role in the early stages of "Celebration Center" at Azure Hills or the later stages at Colton until 1991 are: (1) organization, administration, and finances--Gordon Philipps, Don Bettle, Bucky Weeks, Mark Codington, Linda Halstead, Gayle Simmons, Darlene Simpson; (2) ministry for adults--Don Long, Dolores Robinson, John Sisk, Ellie Minesinger, Bob Beall, Raylene Philipps; (3) worship--Beth Andrade, Steve Bottroff, Joey Huerta, Dave Gaudet, Richie Carbagal, Ray and Dylene Shelden, Joel Muñoz, Charlie and Susan Wear, Mary Lou Luthas; (4) ministry for children and youth--Xaver Gramkow, Louise Howard, Kay Ceithamer, Al Munson, Mark Holms, and Wilny Audain.

These leaders have all journeyed with Simpson for some time and have espoused his vision regarding a "fresh, unpredictable, adaptable, and creative Seventh-day Adventist Church." The following description of the basic principles upheld at Celebration Center and shaping its worship, standards, organization, and mission reflects not only Simpson's vision but many of the continual and evolving ideas of those leaders around him.

¹Camacho interview, 9 April 1991.

²Muñoz interview, 20 March 1991; Camacho interview, 9 April 1991.

Basic Principles and Teachings

The Church

Five models of church are most often used to describe Celebration Center:

1. "The Body of Christ."¹ According to Simpson, the church must express the warmth, growth, and vibrancy of a human body. The church, as the body of Christ, must therefore be organic and based on the concept of growing and dying cells.²

2. A healing community. The church first addresses people's "felt needs" and expresses unconditional love, acceptance, and forgiveness as it serves as a channel for healing.³ It has to be primarily and holistically relevant to the individual and not the group. Long comments:

The Adventist Church I was raised in only dealt with the philosophy of people, not their "felt" needs. There was no place to express feelings, hurts, pain, and emotions. At Celebration the type of music that we have is a chance for God to speak. Through Scripture, He is really reaching down into our hearts to find sympathy. The garden of prayer really allows that intimacy with God to take place. The small groups also fit into that. Our greatest challenge is "we want people who keep barriers to experience intimacy and real intimate accountability in their lives. . . ." It is a whole paradigm shift in the church.⁴

3. A spiritual worshiping community. The church is the gathering of the children of God who are celebrating Him and His salvation.⁵ It is a place where the Holy Spirit decides and has His way among people. Simpson declares: "A church without the Holy Spirit is a club, a secular organization."⁶

¹Simpson, "Celebration Center," audiocassette; idem, "Worship as Celebration," 22 March 1991, audiocassette; Long interview, 25 March 1991; idem, "Celebration Center Goals," undated, unpublished paper, 2; idem, "Our Lay Pastor Ministry," undated, unpublished paper, 18; "Celebration Center Mission Statement," undated, unpublished paper.

²Simpson, interview by author, Calimesa, CA, 30 January 1993, hand-written notes.

³"Mission Statement," A Chat with Pastor Dan. See also from Celebration Center files in 1991 the following articles expounding the same idea: Kenneth L. Woodward, "A Time to Seek," Newsweek, 17 December 1990, 50-56; Charles E. Bradford, "A Healing Fellowship," Adventist Review, 7 June 1990, 4, 5.

⁴Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁵"Mission Statement," A Chat with Pastor Dan, videocassette.

⁶Simpson, "He Decides," audiocassette.

4. The equipping center and the Christian base for ministry.¹ The church supports "the priesthood of all believers," although this theological term is seldom used at Celebration Center. However, the concept is first acknowledged, taught, and practiced through the emphasis placed on participation in worship and the discovery and practice of one's spiritual gift(s).² Long comments: "We have to find ways to incorporate everybody to participate, otherwise it [the church] will become a theater and we will be in trouble."³ Sisk, reflecting on some of the implications of the priesthood of all the believers, states:

I found myself here as an ordained minister working with people [lay pastors] who had no years of pastoral experience. As we started ministry, that was not an issue. But when we began to think about breaking into districts and giving more pastoral care and everybody being on the same level, though I am a supporter of that, I remember having to emotionally check with myself and really see how I felt about it. It has been hard. . . . Finally, I am discovering that I really like the team approach a lot. It is a freeing experience. I don't have to be a four-years authority for God. I am discovering that together, really, ministry just happens.⁴

Second, the concept of the priesthood of all believers is fostered at Celebration Center through an emphasis placed on the experience of freedom. Audain acknowledges that he ministers at Celebration Center because of its philosophy about God, Jesus, and freedom. "I like openness and for people to have freedom."⁵ Beall sees freedom as the core of Celebration Center life. He says, "It is the beauty of it all. It is a glorious experience!"⁶ Simpson also comments on the importance of freedom: "This is part of the magic of Celebration Center. Nobody is telling anybody else what to do. Nobody is

¹Simpson, "Celebration Center," audiocassette; A Chat with Pastor Dan; Bettle interview, 26 March 1991; Long interview, 25 March 1991; idem, "Spiritual Gifts Are Recognized Not Taught," The Celebration Experience, April/May 1991, 4. See also from Celebration Center files in 1991 the following article: Doug Morgan, "An Inclusive Ministry," Adventist Review, 7 March 1991, 14, 15.

²A Chat with Pastor Dan, videocassette.

³Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁴Sisk interview, 8 April 1991. See also from Celebration Center files in 1991 the following article expounding the same idea: Brian Dumaine, "Who Needs a Boss?" Fortune, 7 May 1990, 52-60.

⁵Audain interview, 8 April 1991.

⁶Beall interview, 3 April 1991.

picking out somebody else and putting him there. Each one is free to decide where he or she is going to minister."¹

Long recognizes that Simpson risks a lot with this philosophy of freedom. He declares: "It is better to risk heresy and let it run its course than prevent the freedom of people to do what they want to do."² Simpson acknowledges that a lot of people warned him and predicted that such an encouragement for freedom of action would precipitate Celebration Center into chaos and failure. He recalls: "My response to them was if we fail, we fail, because it is still the right way to do it." Simpson underlines that he cannot "outdo" God. To preserve human freedom, God risked being considered the "number one failure in the universe," and He allowed His world to be "in the biggest mess that ever was."³

5. The church as a net. The church is by nature a gathering instrument. Like a fisherman's net, it gathers different people without distinctions of gender, race, status, or education. Sisk comments on the nature of the church: "We think that our church should be evangelistically centered all the time. People ought to walk [in] from the street and, no matter what they are wearing, ought to be loved. This is how Jesus treated people."⁴ Simpson recognizes that this concept of the net--the gathering--must be closely related to the Sabbath. It is on Sabbath that redemption--the saving, healing, and restoration of the sinful and broken human beings--can be expressed best and anchored in time in the Body of Christ. During the Sabbath hours, God's love particularly as expressed in redemption can be celebrated and ideally associated with His creative power. Simpson explains further that during the Sabbath only the "essential" should be expressed in a church gathering. Simpson expounds his thought through the biblical metaphor of the couple relationship:

¹Simpson interview, 2 April 1991.

²Long interview, 25 March 1991.

³Simpson interview, 6 August 1991.

⁴Sisk interview, 8 April 1991.

Even if a marriage goes through a lot of maturing with time, the only real glue is love. . . . You cannot grow beyond love. You can grow in your expression of it or in your commitment, but the bottom line is love. . . . What gets people is what holds them. It is the love of Jesus, the goodness of Jesus, the grace of God that gets people and that holds them. I see great value in learning about prophecies, in principles, but in small groups, somewhere else.¹

Thus, in Simpson's understanding, when the church meets on the Sabbath, it is primarily for nurturing the fundamentals of Christian commitment. It is not a time for "teaching" but for "celebrating," "grabbing," and "fishing."²

The Mission/Vision Statements

In the church-growth movement, George Barna has helped to clarify concepts such as mission and vision statements. In his terminology, a mission statement is a broad, general statement about who the church wishes to reach and what it hopes to accomplish. A mission statement is not geared to uniqueness or distinctiveness. On the other hand, a vision statement is specific, detailed, customized, distinctive, and unique to a given church. While the mission statement is philosophic in nature, the vision statement is strategic in character.³

At Celebration Center, Bettie provides a summary of the mission statement as follows:

First, it must start with where people are and focus on sharing the relationship we believe God invites us to have with Him. Second, it moves to a helping relationship to whatever is a significant issue in that person's life, offering support, opportunities, and so forth. Third, trusting that people are going to grow in Christ, it must help them find a mission, an activity which puts them to work.⁴

He comments on this mission statement: "It is a different emphasis from what I have experienced in the Adventist Church where you had to be 'acceptable' to the group before you could even come to it. . . . We have to learn this new language to be 'acceptable' and unconditionally accepted."⁵

¹Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #2.

²Ibid.

³George Barna, The Power of Vision: How You Can Capture and Apply God's Vision for Your Ministry (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992), 38-41.

⁴Bettie interview, 26 March 1991.

⁵Ibid.

Weeks stresses the importance of understanding Celebration Center in light of its official mission statement and not by what people say or do Sabbath mornings during the worship services.¹ According to Barna's definition, Celebration Center's official mission statement is a vision statement. It was written just after the spawning from the Azure Hills Church in April 1989. It reads as follows:

We, the members of a new Seventh-day Adventist congregation, have chosen to call ourselves "Celebration Center" as a reflection of our view that it is God's will that as we corporately commune with Him, we celebrate His love, acceptance, and forgiveness.

While recognizing our commitment to the pillar beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its world mission, we hereby dedicate ourselves to a specific mission, that is, to become a spiritually healing community whose primary goal is to reveal the accepting, loving, and redeeming character of God, particularly to those who have previously been disillusioned about God and the church's portrayal of Him.

The Celebration Center is dedicated to the concept of becoming a force that encourages and enables Spirit-filled people to meet others' needs in Jesus' name. For this purpose, the underlying structure of Celebration Center is the lay pastor leadership and small-group ministry. Such a ministry will help the believers discover and develop their spiritual gifts, thus bringing glory to God and strengthening His church.

Our Sabbath worship time is dedicated to the celebration of God's love, creation, and redemption. This celebration service will emphasize a revelation of the true nature of God, allowing the Holy Spirit the freedom to involve each individual attending in a personalized worship experience.

It is our conviction that the church as the Body of Christ should nurture in its members a desire to reach their full potential, empowering them to think and act in His name. All of us are called to minister, to reveal God's love to our fellow humans. Celebration Center will seek ways to enable its members to develop their goals. Just as God has no limits, Celebration Center will place no limits on people nor on the growth of individuals or that of the church.²

In order to fulfill the intent of this official "mission-vision statement," the executive council (or governing body) of Celebration Center adopted on 20 June 1989 the following guidelines:

1. Ministry leaders will have completed lay pastor training. Ministries, in most cases, will be based on the small group ministry model.
2. Ministries will be unifying and uplifting.

¹Weeks interview, 6 April 1991.

²Long, "Mission Statement," undated, unpublished paper, 1.

3. Ministries will be committed to the pillar beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and to spiritual healing of the disillusioned.
4. Ministries will be self-led.
5. Ministries will be self-funded.
6. To allow ministries that do not meet these guidelines the opportunity to fulfill the goals of Celebration Center, the Ministries Committee of the Executive Council will review non-conforming proposals with the goal of encouraging and enabling ministry.¹

Standards

Beall acknowledges that Celebration Center is not a "Church Manual-abiding church," but he adds, "it seems, though, that at Celebration Center we do not throw out the values of the Adventist Church, we just attempt to deliver differently."² Simpson corroborates:

We have higher standards than [those of] any church I know. We believe in all the standards of the Adventist Church, I have not done away with any of them. I am only open to people who don't follow them and because I am open, it looks like I don't believe in those standards. I believe in all of them. I believe in modesty in every area of our lives. But to pick out a few little areas of modesty, one being jewelry and make up, and ignore cars, furniture, hairdos, and houses makes God look like some kind of an idiot. In order to come and see how God is, we have to take out all the things which come between Him and us. Satan blinds us with a few things that are very important. They become so important that they grow between us and God. They become our religion. At Celebration we take those things out of the way, we let people see God and let their lives conform to the level He wants them to conform to.³

In two public lectures, Simpson expounds the same idea and declares that the standard they are trying to reach at Celebration Center is Jesus, and they allow "people to put their own limits on themselves under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."⁴ He comments:

We don't give you lists [on how to keep the Sabbath, to dress, and carry on relationships] and because we don't give you lists we are [called] "liberals." . . . I say that to give you lists is the easiest way to live; you just shut up your brain and you don't have to use it any more. It is like being in prison. . . . Somebody else decides for you! I refuse to put you in a prison called

¹Long, "Celebration Center Ministry Policies," undated, unpublished paper, 31.

²Beall interview, 3 April 1991.

³Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #2.

⁴Simpson, "Worship as Celebration," 22 March 1991, audiocassette; idem, "Celebration Center," audiocassette.

"religion" or "Adventism." I refuse to do it! I only want to hold up the highest standard of all, "Jesus before the people," and let Him do the drawing [of the people to Himself]!"¹

For Sisk, since Jesus is primarily interested in internal changes, Celebration Center focuses primarily on internal changes. Externals, however, are bound to change, so there is no need to work on them. Sisk states, "If you are really in touch with Jesus, you really have true sanctification. Sanctification is a process of being in touch with God."² For Sisk then, Celebration Center works on the assumption that if people come to God, it is to get something better for their lives. So as Jesus loves, accepts, and forgives them, they grow in the assurance that God will change them and not that they have to change. They grow in the assurance that God will continue His work in their lives, even, maybe, if they do not.³

Along this same line, Long insists that biblical teaching at Celebration Center attempts to balance the cognitive and the "relational," which, in his terms, is a better word than the "emotional." However, he strongly believes that people cannot be taught on a cognitive level unless they are open "emotionally." Thus there is the need to relate to people on their level and, before teaching, to primarily establish an emotional base of trust.⁴

For Bucky Weeks, Celebration Center is committed to providing opportunities to people, not standards. He says, "You cannot grab people, you just slowly provide direction."⁵

The Organization and Structure

Shaping Influences

Celebration Center does not consider itself to be an original model of a church. As Beall expressed it in 1991, this model may be original in Adventism but not in Christianity. In Beall's

¹Simpson, "The Law of Interdependence," Colton, CA, 31 August 1991, audiocassette.

²Sisk interview, 8 April 1991

³Ibid.

⁴Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁵Bucky Weeks, interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 10 April 1991. See also Robert H. Waterman, "Renewal: The Challenge," 6.

understanding, the organization and structure of Celebration Center are linked to New Hope's and Cho's models of churches.¹ Sisk says he has attended church-growth consulting seminars at Fuller Seminary.² Long also attended church-growth seminars.³ He remembers deciding while pastoring the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Salem, Oregon, to become a "church-growth expert." Soon after, he met Jerry Cook at a Four Square church and read his famous Love, Acceptance and Forgiveness. Simpson claims to have partially based his church organization on Carl George's Meta-church model.⁴ He also declares to have attended pastors' conferences led by Dale Galloway but not to have been personally in contact with John Wimber or the Vineyard ministries, although some of his members had such contacts before 1991.⁵ Simpson comments: "We looked at other models, too. We are just experimenting. We see Celebration Center also as a place where we in leadership can have the freedom to experiment."⁶ Weeks underlines the fact that one of the organizational models they have experimented with is the one he set up in his youth ministry in the Florida, North Carolina, and California conferences.⁷ One of Pala's comments may well summarize the complex diversity of shaping influences: "Simpson's church is a mixture of everything. Quite unique!"⁸

¹Beall interview, 3 April 1991.

²Sisk interview, 8 April 1991.

³Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁴Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #2.

⁵George, Prepare Your Church for the Future. See also from Celebration Center files in 1991 the documents expounding organizational models and a basic church structure philosophy. E.g., Stephen P. Robbins, Organizational Behavior: Concepts, Controversies, and Applications (Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 229-49; Robert S. Folkenberg, "Church Structure: Servant or Master?" Ministry 69 (June, 1989): 4-9.

⁶Simpson interview, 2 April 1991. Already in 1989, Simpson was underlining to Gifford the same idea: "I think we both recognize that some of the things we are doing are experimental. However, I don't want to think of Celebration Center as an experiment in the sense that if it fails, we walk away saying, 'We tried.' I am not in a position to say that anything we do is right—certainly not right for every other church. Nothing we do is necessarily forever, but we are doing what we believe is best for right now" (Dan Simpson to Stephen Gifford, 28 June 1989).

⁷Weeks interview, 6 April 1991

⁸Pala interview, 16 March 1991.

Departing from the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual

In August 1991, at the Pine Springs Ranch workers' retreat of the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Simpson presented his belief in a Spirit-led church with no elders, no deacons, and no nominating committee. Halstead corroborated the idea, "The Holy Spirit is our nominating committee." Sisk also stated, "As the church is free to put God in charge of it, some incredible things will happen."¹

Simpson also pointed out some of the limitations of the Church Manual at the Pine Springs Ranch meeting. According to him, the Church Manual has developed a "status quo" mentality that has made Adventists unable to adapt to the changing lifestyle and mind-set of people and society. It has developed a mentality of protection and fear, stifling the Holy Spirit and Her creativity.² He explains:

The Church Manual makes everybody the same. We even taught ministers and church members to take pride that all Adventists around the world are the same. Why do we take pride in that when that mentality tends to destroy the freedom of the Spirit to do His work in us, as He made us equipped to do, as individuals, as churches?³

At the same workers' meeting Simpson very openly declared that his experiment has a different pattern of local church organization, one that departs from the Church Manual.⁴ He commented:

I hope we never say [at Celebration Center]: "This is the way we are going to do it" [speaking about his church organization and structure]. I hope we are always open, because that was the problem with the Manual mentality. It does not allow room for growth, changing trends, mentalities, and changing attitudes. . . . The whole mentality of the Church Manual and what we are doing is like oil and water.⁵

¹The Celebration Story, videocassette; Halstead interview, 20 March 1991.

²Simpson, "Celebration Center," audiocassette.

³Simpson, interview, 2 April 1991.

⁴Simpson, "Celebration Center," audiocassette. See also The Renewal Factor, ed. Waterman, 6, 16-23.

⁵Simpson interview, 2 April 1991.

A Governing Body Submissive to
Its Leader and His Vision

From 1989 to 1991 the consistent organizational philosophy featured at Celebration Center has been based on Carl George's motto: "Large enough to celebrate, small enough to care."¹ To maintain this philosophy, a governing body (called first in 1989 an advisory council, then a steering committee, and, finally, in 1991, an executive council) works toward continually finding structures to empower people for ministry and permit unlimited growth to a church that gathers together at least once a week to celebrate God.² This governing body is entirely chosen by Simpson in order for him, as Weeks expresses it, not to have to "put up with people who would be antagonistic or in an argumentative and defensive mode."³ Such attitudes could stifle and limit the vision and potential of Celebration Center.³ Simpson explains:

Part of the magic for Celebration Center is the way it is organized. God gave me the vision and not to any committee or board. . . . Like in biblical stories, God still calls leaders and gives them all kinds of support people who have gifts and strength they don't have. But the leader is the catalyst for the vision. That leader must be allowed the freedom to lead, to continually monitor and be the final authority on whether his experience in ministry is going in the direction of the vision or not.⁴

At Celebration Center this governing body branches into four committees: Administrative, Finance, Long-range Planning, and Ministries. According to the Guiding Principles of Celebration Center, this governing body must be "looked upon as fluid, subject to change whenever the need arises to change or more clearly delineate the church's administration."⁵ Simpson emphasizes that the function of this governing body is not really to govern but to support.⁶

¹George, Prepare Your Church, 81; A Chat with Pastor Dan, videocassette.

²Halstead interview, 20 March 1991; Marilyn Wilcox, interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 21 March 1991.

³Weeks interview, 6 April 1991.

⁴Simpson interview, 9 April 1991 #2.

⁵Weeks interview, 6 April 1991. See also "Celebration Center: General Guiding Principles," unpublished paper, Colton, CA, 20 June 1989, 1, 2.

⁶Simpson interview, 9 April 1991 #2.

The Tripartite Basic Structure of
Celebration Center

A tripartite basic church structure has emerged at Celebration Center as the result of Simpson's and his leaders' experimentation and philosophy: (1) a celebration event (praise and worship), (2) growth opportunities for the church with an emphasis on lay pastors' training, and (3) small groups.¹ Only the last two points are treated here because the first will be analyzed in the next main section of this chapter.

Growth opportunities

The growth opportunities at Celebration Center form an evolving and complex infrastructure. The leaders have designed those growth opportunities as bridging or non-bridging events depending on whether or not an activity is perceived as relevant for non-members (non-bridging) or leading them to participate in the Celebration event or in a home-fellowship group (bridging). Those growth opportunities are ongoing activities and include audio tapes and videocassette ministries, activities for youth and children, concerts, opportunities for social action (SALT--Social Acting Love Team), lectures, seminars and recovery/support groups, as well as couple, family, and parental education (New Life Victorious).²

Until 1991, the major growth emphasis at Celebration Center in the area of Christian education had been the lay-pastor training. Long explains that their training material essentially had been

¹Long, "Our Small Groups," 15, pamphlet.

²The Celebration Story, videocassette. Lectures organized by New Life Victorious have included topics such as "Surviving a Relationship Crisis"; "Grief and Relationships, Living Through the End"; "Feeding the Hungry Heart"; "Abuse Isn't Always Obvious"; "Healing the Shame That Binds You"; "How Eating Behaviors Can Affect Your Life"; and "Who Am I: A Look at the Brain and Behavior." Seminars organized by Celebration Center have included topics such as "Spiritual Gifts"; "Basic Christian Faith and Growth"; "Principles in Christian Finances"; "Prevailing Prayer"; "Let's Change the World"; "Dealing with the Daily Grind"; and "Visitors Orientation." Recovery/support groups have addressed topics such as "Overeaters Anonymous"; "Incest Survivors"; "Divorce Recovery"; "Sexaholics Anonymous"; "Codependents Anonymous"; "Ministers Anonymous"; "Men's Group"; "Women's Group"; "Parents with Teenagers"; "Blended Families"; ("New Life Victorious: Finding Better Ways to Relate to Oneself, to Others and to God," The Celebration Experience, April/May 1991, 5; "New Life Victorious: Fall/Winter Programs," 1991-1992). See also Celebration Center files for the following articles in 1991: Gene F. Anderson, "The Presidential Address: A New Look at What Family Means in the Church," Adventist Single Ministries Bulletin, October 1989, 2, 3; Mary O' Roark, "Applying the Word," Guideposts Magazine (Church Award for 1989), November 1989, 42-44.

influenced by Carl George, the Serendipity material, and the model developed by the New Hope Church.¹ The mission of the lay pastors' ministry is "to equip, prepare, and release God's people for service." Subsequent goals elaborated: (1) that the Body of Christ might grow, both in number and in maturity; (2) that the Body of Christ might be built up in love, making healing and restoration possible; and (3) that healing, restoration, and growth will occur in the whole person including mind, body, spirit, and relationships.²

PULSE (Praise God, Uplift Jesus, Love one another, Seek the Spirit, Equip for ministry) undergirds the ongoing educational meetings provided to lay pastors.³ The purpose of PULSE is threefold: (1) to enable lay pastors, as a group, to regularly focus on Jesus, the head of the Body, and on the unique mission He has given to Celebration Center; (2) to regularly check the health of the Body of Christ to ensure that communication is flowing and all lay pastors are being nurtured with love; and (3) to provide opportunities for lay pastors to be trained and equipped for service to specially invest themselves in small groups and growth-opportunity groups.⁴

Small groups

"Small groups" is a fluid terminology at Celebration Center. It designates either Bible study or recovery/support group meetings between 9:30 and 11:00 on Sabbath morning (in addition to the traditional Sabbath School groups) or those that meet during the week mainly in people's homes.

Simpson declares that Celebration Center was influenced by the Willow Creek Community Church small-group ministries and particularly Jim Dethmer's teaching on the subject.

¹Long interview, 25 March 1991.

²Long, "Our Small Groups," undated, unpublished paper, 4.

³In George's terminology, PULSE would be "VHS" or what is necessary to bring the leadership of a place to maximum efficiency: Vision casting, Huddles (or a time when the coaches of the lay leaders meet with them for report-taking, celebrating, problem identification and solving, planning, anticipating, exhorting, sharing, and praying) and Skills developments. (George, Prepare Your Church for the Future, 135-43). See also, Long, "Our Lay Pastor Ministry," undated, unpublished paper, 8; "What Is PULSE?" The Celebration Experience, April/May 1991, 4.

⁴Long, "Our Lay Pastor Ministry," 8.

although nobody from the Celebration Center leadership ever visited that Illinois church. Long also credits Carl George's teaching with shaping the development of his small-groups ministries.¹

Many of the recovery/support group meetings are closed, that is to say only accessible to the people who are committed participants. They are based on the twelve-step philosophy where the group functions as a safe place or healthy family that exhibits acceptance, respect, attentive listening, and no shaming.² According to Ellie Minesinger, founder and lay pastor and leader of New Life Victorious until 1992, nobody in these small groups is asked "to fix" anybody. Nobody is a therapist. Lay pastors are trained only to facilitate. "The One who does the healing is the Holy Spirit," says Minesinger. She also declares that she is indebted in her ministry to Pastor Betty Jacques of the New Hope Community Church and that both of them borrow from each other's ideas.³

However, most of the small-group terminology and philosophy at Celebration Center refers to the Bible fellowship groups in private homes.⁴ According to Simpson, small groups are "the locus where we deepen [our understanding of] the Bible." He recognizes, however, that since Celebration Center draws so many former Seventh-day Adventists accustomed to a religion of the mind, that small-group leaders often keep Bible teaching in their group at a minimum level to favor, instead, prayer and ministry to felt needs. He points out that former Adventists are "fed up with facts and information" that "never changed their lives in academy or college."⁵ Long corroborates: "Adventists have missed the relational for so many years"; it is indeed the relational that plays an important part in home Bible small groups. Therefore, these groups favor sharing honestly one's life, applying the Bible to

¹Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1; Long interview, 25 March 1991.

²Cf. Tim Stafford, "The Hidden Gospel of the 12 Steps: Understanding the Origins of the Recovery Movement Can Help Christians Know How to Relate to It Today," Christianity Today, 22 July 1991, 15-19; Michael G. Maudlin, "Addicts in the Pew," Christianity Today, 22 July 1991, 19-21.

³Ellie Minesinger, interview by author, Colton, CA, 22 August 1991; The Celebration Story, videocassette.

⁴"Lay Pastors Receive Hero's Welcome," The Celebration Experience, April/May 1991, 1.

⁵Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1.

one's life, and encouraging prayer in the conversational mode. For Simpson, small groups are needed not only for fellowship or Bible study but also as the primary means of evangelism.¹

Twenty-one principles are suggested to lay leaders of small groups. Among them: "Be tuned up spiritually, keep learning, admit help is needed from others in your group, lead in love but remember Christ does the leading, the Bible is the authority and guide book, participation is key to success, admit faults to one another, respond lovingly and express needs immediately, do not allow doctrinal discussion that is divisive or argumentative."²

Finally, outside of trying to be a close family, Bible home-fellowship groups attempt to foster five possible goals: (1) the edification of Christians, (2) the discipling of new converts, (3) friendship evangelism, (4) the development of strong leadership, and (5) unlimited opportunities for meaningful service.³

Membership

Long explains that the membership process at Celebration is not different from the traditional Seventh-day Adventist membership in an annex Sabbath School class: everybody is welcomed and can be a member if they desire. No requirements are imposed. Long further explains that the concept of an annex Sabbath School membership is no longer relevant at the end of the twentieth century in North America, and therefore, they have just dared to replace it by another terminology--"Celebration Center."⁴

On the other hand, Simpson states that the Celebration Center membership process is based primarily on one of his fundamental Bible texts--the story of the prodigal son. As in this parable, anybody who wants to come back home is indeed welcomed with no conditions.⁵ Beall corroborates:

¹Long interview, 25 March 1991; idem, "Principles to Follow in Leading a Small Group Setting," undated, unpublished paper, 21; The Celebration Story, videocassette.

²Long, "Principles," 20-24.

³Long, "Our Small Groups," 13; The Celebration Story, videocassette..

⁴Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁵A Chat with Pastor Dan, videocassette..

"We know everybody does not come clean, ready to meet God, but we let the Holy Spirit do that work [of cleansing]. We are there to allow the nurturing and bring them in."¹ Simpson adds:

Members come along. They are part of Celebration Center and, in the process of being part of it, they learn and experience. Then at one point they say: "This is what I want to be for the rest of my life." Then they make a commitment, but it is in the context of acceptance.²

Susan and Charlie Wear recall how after Simpson's first sermon at Celebration Center on 1 April 1989, he opened up the possibility of membership to anyone who wished to join:

Then someone asked Simpson: "Do you mean that (referring to membership policy) if somebody has been kicked out of the church because they got divorced, they can come here and be a member of Celebration Center?" You could have heard a pin drop. Then the pastor answered after thinking for a while (it was very quiet): "This is what I mean." And the congregation applauded. It was not an applause for divorce or the importance of marriage, it was an applause for the acceptance of Celebration Center, of us saying: "If we have made a mistake, God forgave us, so why can't we?" It is not cheap grace. Grace isn't cheap. Jesus paid the price for it. He died. There is nothing I can do about it. I cannot earn God's grace. Maybe we should be just a little more open to let God do the work as opposed to the fruit inspectors.³

There are two possible modes of membership at Celebration Center:

1. Membership in Celebration Center is open to anyone and accessible by simply signing a "blue" card, thus committing one's self to God and to walking with Christ. This membership is not related to baptism but is linked to an orientation session conducted done by the pastoral staff with the help of a videocassette exposing new members to the basic principles of Celebration Center.⁴

2. Membership may be held in the Seventh-day Adventist Church of the Southeastern California Conference. This membership entails baptism and Bible studies exposing the new convert to the twenty-seven fundamental beliefs of Adventism.⁵

Simpson further explains that baptism at Celebration Center is not necessarily tied to church membership. People at Celebration Center baptize persons who want to celebrate the beginning

¹Beall interview, 3 April 1991.

²Simpson interview, 6 August 1991.

³Charles and Susan Wear, interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 26 March 1991.

⁴A Chat with Pastor Dan, videocassette.

⁵Halstead interview, 20 March 1991; Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; A Chat with Pastor Dan, videocassette.

of their walk with Christ without going through the "traditional" Adventist preparatory Bible studies. However, as acceptance of Christ according to Bible teaching also means entrance into His Body (1 Cor 12:13), those baptized are encouraged to attend a class to understand the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its teaching.¹

Halstead summarizes some of the greatest tensions and struggles that Celebration Center encountered in establishing such an organization and structure between 1989 and 1991: The difficulty was for leaders to establish an organization reflecting not only the gospel but also departing from "a certain former [church] structure which had driven people out of the Adventist Church."²

For Halstead and Sisk, this transition was "mammoth" and very easily threatened by the temptation to fall back on "the old ways." For them, the key to change requires first a transformation in attitude among the staff to not "run" programs anymore but coach and nurture lay leaders, who, in turn, do not assign functions to people but instead help them find their ministry as they walk with God.³

The Worship or Celebration "Event": Celebration Worship Style and Services

To grasp the "worship service and style" at Celebration Center we consider here: (1) its shaping influences, (2) its philosophy, and (3) its characteristics.

Shaping Influences and General Remarks of Some Leaders

In October 1989, six months after the birth of Celebration Center, a few people concerned with worship and music gathered at the grass-roots level. These included Beth Andrade, Mari-Lou Luthas, Charlie Wear, Joel Muñoz, Ray and Dyone Shelden, and Don Long. Around this core group many different musicians and vocalists gravitated, including Joey Huerta, Vickie Napier, Lenette

¹Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #2.

²Halstead interview, 20 March 1991. See also from 1991 Celebration Center files: William G. Johnsson, "The 'Missing' Tell Us Why," Adventist Review, 7 September 1989, 8-10.

³Halstead interview, 20 March 1991; Sisk interview, 8 April 1991. See also from Celebration Center files in 1991 the article: Editor, "Lay Organization Seeks to Re-establish Interest in Mission among Church Members," PU Recorder, 2 July 1990, 6.

Sharman, Dave Gaudet, Richie Carbagal, and Liz Doss.¹ All appreciated the direction Simpson had initiated and already developed in the Azure Hills Church worship. Ray Shelden comments about these beginnings: "We did not know what we wanted but we were waiting for that renewed worship and a different church structure."²

In October 1989 Charles Wear elaborated a ministry proposal, called the "Music Ministry Group," and submitted it to Simpson and the Advisory Committee.³ According to that proposal, the goals of the music-worship group were threefold: (1) to identify those persons desiring to minister and lead; to nurture and support their talents and abilities; and to encourage them to surround themselves with smaller groups of persons who actually would carry out various ministries in the realm of music during the week, Sabbath mornings, and at special musical events; (2) to provide training for future worship leaders; and (3) to establish an advisory-administration group to provide training for future worship leaders with (a) a participation-worshiper's viewpoint of the Celebration service's corporate worship experience; (b) a scriptural-study basis for the various means and methods of worship music through the church; and (c) administrative support in training and channeling the music resources of the church.⁴

In February 1990 the core group actively began its work, and a worship committee was made up of Andrade, Wear, and the Sheldens. Its first task was to write and develop for Celebration Center a philosophy of worship and to suggest to Simpson the continual need of teaching about worship at Celebration Center. In August of the same year, the committee actively taught the Colton congregation about worship. The following year they repeated the experience.⁵

¹Halstead interview, 20 March 1991; Sisk interview, 8 April 1991.

²Ray and Dyone Shelden and Joel Muñoz, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 19 March 1991.

³Charlie Wear, "Music Proposal: Music Ministry Group," unpublished paper, 27 October 1989.

⁴*Ibid.*, 2, 3.

⁵R. and D. Shelden and Muñoz, interview, 19 March 1991; "Worship: Celebration Center," handout for local church members, 11 August 1990; R. and D. Shelden, "Worship: Praise and Intimacy," Colton, CA, 24 August 1991, audiocassette.

In March 1991, Baumgartner observed that the major changes shaping Celebration Center worship, since its development at the Azure Hills Church, "have grown organically." They had been gradually implemented by different people with ideas and influences borrowed from within and without the Adventist community.

Charles Wear attended a Calvary Chapel in Redlands for two years before coming to Celebration Center. It was there, he declares, that he first learned about worship. Wear and Muñoz say they are also indebted to the Vineyard model (Yorba Linda, CA) in the shaping of their ideas, practice, and music ideals of worship. They also state that the "Maranatha" group had a significant role in the arena of music.¹ On the other hand, Simpson and Long suggest that worship at Celebration Center is not primarily based on the Vineyard model, but on the Old Testament sanctuary teaching frequently used in the pentecostal-charismatic movement.² The Old Testament sanctuary model inspires the following pattern of worship. It progresses like the fictional journey of a worshiper exploring "typologically" the different rooms of the sanctuary: (1) thanksgiving and praise at the gates, (2) repentance and cleansing in the courtyard, (3) proclamation of God's word and freedom of action through the Holy Spirit in the holy place, and (4) drawing near into an intimate relationship with God in the most holy place where one speaks directly to God.³

Baumgartner, however, keenly observed in March 1991: "Celebration Center is beyond the stage of having imported foreign elements into who they are. When you go there, week after week, you feel that celebration worship is Celebration Center, this is part of who you are."⁴

Halstead emphasizes that worship at Celebration Center has received much attention throughout the development of the church organization after the spawn at Azure Hills. She explains, "Worship is the entry point," it is what gives the most public relations, and what catches the "attention

¹C. and S. Wear interview, 26 March 1991; Muñoz interview, 20 March 1991.

²Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #2; Long interview, 25 March 1991.

³Long interview, *ibid.*

⁴Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991.

from up front."¹ Long corroborates and declares that Simpson often teaches about worship before or during his sermons.² Simpson likes to note that one of his pastoral goals is "to help his people adore God and not just serve or obey Him. Service and obedience come down the road. But you have got to adore and love first, then you obey, serve, and surrender."³

Simpson declares his desire for people at Celebration Center is to live an "experiential religion." He refers to E. G. White's admonition: "The necessity of an experimental religion must be urged upon those who accept the theory of the truth."⁴ In the same line of thought, Charles Wear states that celebration worship encourages "a relationship with a living God versus an intellectual or cognitive experience as usually presented in Adventism."⁵ Eleanor Elder, an educator and regular attendee at Celebration Center in 1991, underlines this orientation: "Celebration service is a more practical, down-to-earth way of experiencing a religion and imparting it to others. It is more than just studying the Sabbath School lessons, answering some questions, or going to hear a discussion."⁶

Simpson defines worship as personal contact and communication between the individual and his or her Creator. Worship demands honesty and is fundamentally an act of adoration. For Simpson, another key to worship is freedom. He declares worship to be the "highest experience an individual can do" and, as such, is "only possible without constraint."⁷ He underscores that at Celebration Center people are allowed "to be free to worship the way they want to."⁸ One medical student from Norway wrote to Simpson and his staff describing her experience at Celebration Center:

¹Halstead interview, 20 March 1991.

²Long interview, 25 March 1991.

³Simpson, "Worship as Celebration," 22 March 1991, audiocassette.

⁴Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1; The Celebration Story, videocassette; E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 5:619.

⁵C. and S. Wear interview, 26 March 1991.

⁶H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991.

⁷Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1; The Celebration Story, videocassette.

⁸A Chat with Pastor Dan, videocassette; Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1; "Celebration Center. Worship Service," Colton, CA, 23 March 1991, audiocassette.

I cannot describe the impression made by the combination of the theology of freedom of choice and commitment to God through public worship on my mind. The two had never met in my experience. Those who preached freedom never seemed to be able to show how to live out that theology, and those who prayed and worshiped in a personal manner (in Norway specifically) were the self-supporters, whose rigidity and rule enforcement had already burned me.¹

Weeks, who also advocates freedom in worship, recognizes that the traditional order of worship, which is often printed on pads of paper or announcements sheets, has served the Adventist Church well for the last thirty or forty years. Unfortunately, this printed order of worship has become sacred and so much a part of Seventh-day Adventist identity that it has crystallized in forms and structures that are "monotonous, boring, and do not meet the needs, especially of the youth."² Ray Shelden declares:

For something like a hundred and forty years the Adventist Church has stressed the importance of worshiping God on the correct day, but what about the way we worship God.

... I have come to believe that it is time for Adventist churches to give serious study on how to incorporate participatory worship in their church services.³

Ray Shelden believes that Adventist congregations need to be taught "how to worship," and this, he says, "takes a long time."⁴

Philosophy of Worship

Definition

The worship committee at Celebration Center proposed the following definition of worship in August 1990. This definition has been used to describe and explain celebration worship on several occasions, including the Seventh-day Adventist "Layman's Expo" at Riverside, California, in February 1991. It reads as follows:

Worship is man's love response to his Creator based on personal knowledge of Him. It involves the acknowledgment and enjoyment of God's attributes. It involves intimacy with God, being

¹Serena [Anonymous] to Dan Simpson and the staff at Celebration Center, 14 August 1989

²Weeks interview, 6 April 1991.

³R. and D. Shelden, "Worship: Praise and Intimacy," audiocassette.

⁴R. and D. Shelden and Muñoz interview, 19 March 1991. See also R. and D. Shelden, "Worship: Praise and Intimacy," audiocassette.

before His throne in two-way fellowship. It is man's offering of himself as a sacrifice to God in ways that are pleasing to God.

Worship begins internally with attitudes and emotions which result from man's relationship with God. Combining both mental and spiritual activity, internal worship "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23, 24) is the welling up within one's spirit of attitudes and emotions as prompted by the Holy Spirit and in accordance with one's true inner condition.

Some of the attitudes and emotions experienced in worship are expectation, thanksgiving, adoration, celebration, joyfulness, praise, awe, humility, supplication, brokenness, and surrender.

Worship continues externally with the physical response that is compelled by the activity within. This external worship response is the bodily expression of the worship that is coming from one's spirit. On the external level, worship "in spirit and in truth" means physical action that is prompted by the Holy Spirit and that is in accordance with scriptural revelation regarding how God desires to be worshiped.

Physical responses cited in Scripture include vocal expression through singing, speaking and shouting, use of instruments, standing, kneeling, bowing down or lifting the head, lifting or stretching out the hands and clapping.¹

The following biblical texts are representative of the Scriptures studied by the worship committee and upon which the above definition is based. These texts are calls to worship. These texts include injunctions to worship with the voice, instruments, and physical expression. They also highlight the importance of the moving of the Spirit: Exod 20:3, 8-11; Deut 5:7; 1 Chr 16:28-31; Pss 100; 139; 22:27; 51: 10,17; 95:6; Isa 44:6-10; 66:23; Dan 3:17; Mark 12:29-30; 1 Cor 10:31; Gal 6:7, 8; Phil 3 8-11; 1 Thess 2:4; Rev 14 4-7; 4:1-11; 5:8-14; Heb 12:28; 13: 15; 4: 16; Pss 96:2; 98:1; 104 33; 47 1; 150 1-6; 149:3; Rom 12:1, 2; Eph 5:18, 19; Pss 42:4; 134:2; 28:2; Isa 63:10; John 4:23, 24; 14:15-21; 1 Cor 2:10-14; 1 Thess 4.7, 8; 5:19; Acts 4:30, 31; and Ps 19:14.²

Causes and Effects

The presentation of the reasons for and benefits of worship as enunciated by the worship committee evolved over a period of two years. Generally, four reasons with consequential

¹R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Concepts on Church Service," handout given at the Lay-Expo, Riverside, CA, 15 February 1991; "Worship: Celebration Center," audiocassette.

²Worship, Colton, CA, 11 August 1990, videocassette; R. and D. Shelden, "Worship: Praise and Intimacy," audiocassette; idem, "Celebration Center: Concepts."

benefits can be discerned. A synthesis of the statements made in 1991 on the causes and benefits of worship includes:

1. Worship is the human response to God's love and action toward sinners, namely, to His "priceless gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ." Worship fosters the experience of positive emotions such as awe, wonder, gratitude, commitment, joy, and exuberance.

2. Worship is an act in accordance with created and fallen human nature:

a. God designed and created human beings to be worshipers and recipients of His love. Worship reminds creatures of their dependence on God and of His love. God loves His creatures and wants to spend intimate time with them "to pour more of His love into them."

b. God designed worship for fallen human beings to edify and enable them to grow. Thus worship releases them from self-centeredness by focusing them on God, His actions, and His Word. Worship also heals broken human beings from doubts, discouragement, and selfishness. It is a means by which God pours His blessings upon sinners. Worship, therefore, increases sinners' sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and prepares them for prayer and communion with God.

3. Worship is an act of obedience to the First Angel's Message of Rev 14:7. God wants people to worship Him and acknowledge His sovereignty. Thus, worship allows God's people to focus on His power to become overcomers. It strengthens people's faith in overcoming, especially when this faith is personally expressed or is heard expressed by others in a corporate worship service.

4. Worship is an act in accordance with God's nature. God loves His creatures and needs to receive their love through intimate times. Worship fosters a responsible love relationship and emotional expressions in human beings toward God. They need to express their love to God to prevent their becoming emotionally and spiritually "stunted."¹

¹R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Concepts"; idem, "Celebration Center: Church Service," Riverside, CA, 15 February 1991, audiocassette; idem, "Worship: Praise and Intimacy," audiocassette; *Worship*, ed. A. Birch, a publication of the Department of Church Ministries of the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (Wahroonga, Australia: Wharbuton: Signs Publishing Co., 1988).

Pragmatics

Several practical items were addressed by the worship committee in their teaching about worship between 1989 and 1991, and many have been more or less successfully applied during Celebration Center worship services. (These are discussed later when considering the self-criticism of the Celebration Center worship leaders and my own evaluation.)

Principles

Four principles are taught to direct the implementation, the "how," of worship, at Celebration Center.¹

1. Worship needs to focus people's attention on God and not on themselves or a particular person.
2. Worship must provide the possibility of transformation. It is not an entertainment.
3. Worship involves participation. It goes beyond a time set aside to be with God or beyond the appreciation of the "beautiful" in a church service. Worship is much more than a special time set aside, or an aesthetic or musical experience. Ray Shelden states:

The value of worship is in the doing, not in the watching or listening to others do it. . . . It is the individual responsibility to make worship more than a musical experience. Worship does not happen to you like a passing thunderstorm, it is a choice. You choose to enter worship to worship. It takes some effort. It is not a passive activity, a turning off of the mind, or a going into a state of bliss, rather it is the mind actively focusing on God and relating to Him.²

Weeks corroborates, "The secret to spiritual growth is involvement. . . . When we are spoon fed or entertained, the potential for spiritual growth is not there. Growth comes only when we are involved."³

Beall shares his own experience as follows: "In other churches, I felt like a spectator. At Celebration, I was participating. I was an actor and there was a connection between God and me."⁴

¹Cf., R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Concepts"; idem, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette; idem, "Worship: Praise and Intimacy," audiocassette; idem, Worship, videocassette.

²R. Shelden and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette; idem, "Worship: Praise and Intimacy," audiocassette.

³Weeks interview, 6 April 1991.

⁴Beall interview, 3 April 1991.

4. Worship needs to be taught. This requires time and involvement from the leadership because human beings are not naturally inclined to worship.¹

Progression

At Celebration Center the worship service is designed on the premise of worship leaders meeting people where they are. Worship is planned to specifically meet the needs of the target audience, that is to say, inactive Adventists living in the secular context of Southern California.² As such, the services do not start in the traditional frame of reference or expectation of people coming "prepared" to worship in church after a traditional Adventist Friday of preparation. Simpson clearly states, "We do not expect people to come prepared for worship."³

Therefore, special progression is designed in worship to take people from their hectic activities of the past week to communion with God by first allowing them to release their minds. Thus considerable care is given to the order of the worship service and to the progression of the musical selections. Songs are selected to sustain an atmosphere that is progressive to foster emotions that correspond to the stages of worship: (1) praise, (2) commitment, (3) dedication, (4) adoration, and (5) intimacy.⁴ Shelden comments on the worship progression: "This is the type of progression we have found meaningful for the Spirit to lead in worship."⁵

Counsels to enhance worship

A synthesis of ideas presented by different leaders at Celebration Center between 1989 and 1991 provides some advice as to how worship may be enhanced.

¹Shelden, "Worship: Praise and Intimacy," audiocassette.

²Weeks interview, 6 April 1991.

³Simpson, "Worship as Celebration," 23 March 1991, audiocassette.

⁴Worship, videocassette.

⁵Ibid.

1. Preparation: Worship becomes more "interesting" when it is anticipated before coming to church.¹

2. Use of the will: Active focusing of the mind and the thoughts is encouraged. Closing one's eyes or visualizing one's self in some type of scenario in interaction with God is suggested as helpful.²

3. Singing as a means of worship: Singing is not merely a musical and emotional experience. It is also a means of praying and cleansing when repentance is expressed. Memorization and repetition of simple songs, therefore, are encouraged to facilitate praying or a cleansing experience.

Shelden comments on one possible use of this type of singing:

While you are singing a song it may bring to the mind something about which you need to do business with God and for a few moments you quit singing and pray to God. You may use the words of the song as a prayer that is spoken in your heart or verbally, so the worship experience becomes a flowing back and forth between your singing and praying until they blend together and you are just being with God.³

4. Use of body language: An holistic approach to worship is recommended and advocated on the basis of the biblical texts regarding worship. Ray Shelden comments: "Those people who choose to worship sitting down possibly should be a little slow to criticize the people who choose to follow the Bible's admonition in terms of how they worship."⁴ Long corroborates the importance of bodily involvement in worship as supported by the Bible. He refers to his own studies about formalism and worship in the Bible and the writings of E. G. White and states: "I understand that if we want to take the Bible for what it says, there are lots of ways to worship and they are not just sitting down and singing a hymn."⁵

¹The Celebration Story, videocassette; Worship, videocassette.

²R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette; Worship, videocassette.

³Ibid.

⁴R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

⁵Long interview, 25 March 1991.

Physical involvement in worship, therefore, is often encouraged at Celebration Center. However, says Long, anything that "inhibits another person's worship--like speaking in tongues--will not be allowed."¹ Body expressions in worship like standing, kneeling, bowing, clapping, lifting up one's head or hands are viewed as the extension of the will and the heart to God and His salvation. As Jackie Moore, a 1991 Celebration Center member, says, physical involvement is "a three dimensional and a whole-brain experience."²

For the Worship Committee, one's body language in worship is also a "testimony" or possibly a means for one to check whether "we really believe, are involved, and dedicated to what our mouth is saying."³ Thus body language is a means by which one can evaluate his or her inhibitions. In other words, the ability or inability to express body language in worship could very well measure Satan's influence over an individual--evil influences hindering him or her to experience a more meaningful, personal or corporate worship. The difficulty of expressing oneself with one's body in worship may also reveal one's fears of not being able to meet expectations built in by years of tradition.⁴

Five physical expressions are particularly advocated and practiced at Celebration Center:

1. Closing one's eyes to get more focus and deeper involvement
2. Kneeling to express reverence, humility, submission, repentance, or total surrender (Kneeling can also acknowledge God's sovereignty or express one's supplication for cleansing and filling by the Holy Spirit. Joan, a member at Celebration in 1991, comments: "At Celebration I am free to kneel before the service and I do not feel out of place. . . . I am comfortable and to me it is meaningful. . . . It is the freedom to worship and express and experience more deeply the biblical truths.")⁵

¹Ibid..

²Jackie Moore, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 22 August 1991.

³R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Joan [Anonymous] interview, 26 March 1991.

3. Standing to honor and praise God (This body language, however, must not come under a particular leader's demand but must only be done under the moving of the Holy Spirit.)

4. Clapping as an expression of freedom, spontaneity, enthusiasm, and especially joyful praise (Dyone Shelden explains: While clapping "we must respect and remember who God is, of course. By all means, but we do not have to let that shut us down emotionally in expressing ourselves to Him.")¹

5. Lifting one's hands to receive God's love, power, or cleansing or to praise God and to give Him honor and thanksgiving with one's whole being. Dyone Shelden, referring to her own experience of lifting up her hands, states: "It is not that I am acting out the words to the songs, but lifting up my hands lends substance and meaning to my words and does demonstrate and reinforce the attitude in my heart wanting to receive and being open to receive."² Harvey Elder, a medical doctor, evaluates his personal experience at Celebration Center in connection with lifting his hands as follows:

I have learned about God's majesty, glory, and awesomeness through Celebration Center worship. At Celebration there was freedom. If I felt like standing, kneeling, or sitting before God, it was okay. I still have a hard time lifting up my hands. . . . I am a third-generation Seventh-day Adventist. Maybe I will once . . . but it is not important. What is important is I go to a church where I have the freedom to do so if I choose to.³

Description

The complexity of worship at Celebration Center can be approached through a description of the following eight facets: atmosphere, music, components and order, teaching, ministry, worship, ordinances and ceremonies, and architecture and space.

Atmosphere

On 16 March 1991, among a group of thirty-eight young people, the following answers were given in response to why they attend Celebration Center: It is "positive," "upbeat," "unpredictable," "accepting," and "more comfortable." "We do not fall asleep." "We do not fear being constantly judged

¹R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

²D. Shelden, R. Shelden, and J. Muñoz interview, 19 March 1993.

³H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991.

on lifestyle issues." "We have the freedom to make choices." "There is a power of belonging."¹ The same day, Alfred Pala (a Polish pastor, graduate from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, and doctoral student at Fuller Seminary) answered the same question by saying, "I choose to go to Celebration Center whenever I can because it is very innovative, unpredictable, and warm."² One member of Celebration Center in 1991 evaluated Simpson's efforts to create an atmosphere as follows: "He sets the tone for life and joy. He works hard at keeping that type of atmosphere."³

Simpson recognizes his emphasis on an atmosphere of "joy" and "freedom" and explains this choice in relationship with his targeted audience--former Adventists.⁴ In February 1990, one of Simpson's colleagues commented positively on the atmosphere he experienced at Celebration Center when visiting on 27 January 1990. He wrote: "I rejoice with you in what you are doing in reaching the former and non-attending members of our church."⁵ One former Adventist visiting Celebration Center on 3 August 1991 declared:

You can see and feel immediately that there is more vibration, contact (of a type) between people at Celebration than you have at the Adventist churches [in which] I was brought up. I grew up in a formal church. It felt stuffier, at least from a kid's point of view. In that very formal church you felt you could not speak, certainly not display appreciation in any way that was perceivable other than "Amen" and even those had to be proper, not like in Black churches.⁶

Bob Beall, another of Simpson's leaders in 1991, describes his initial uneasiness with that type of atmosphere when first he first visited Celebration Center in 1989. "It scared me to see the connection between religion and excitement and joy. . . . I felt uncomfortable. That was not church. They were not doing church right. I did not want to go back." He further explains the discomfort of his experience as a sense of unfamiliarity. He continues: "I did not have a sense of worshiping there. . . . I

¹Youth Group, interview by author, Colton, CA, 16 March 1991, hand-written notes and audiocassette.

²Pala interview, 16 March 1991.

³Wilcox interview, 21 March 1991.

⁴Simpson interview, 2 April 1991; The Celebration Story, videocassette.

⁵Albert Tilstra to Dan Simpson, 9 February 1990.

⁶Cam Deleon, interview by author, Pasadena, CA, 5 August 1991.

felt uncomfortable with [the] music. . . . There was no attempt of reverence as I knew it from [the] traditional church."¹

Muñoz commented when questioned on this atmosphere of joy in 1991 as follows:

"We are not just happy, we take church seriously, but we do believe in a spontaneous, joyous celebration with God."² Finally, Baumgartner notes that the prevalent issue related with an atmosphere of joy and freedom is, indeed, the notion of reverence.³

Simpson defines reverence as expressing "awe" to God, possibly in various ways. He declares:

When we look at the Scriptures we begin to get an idea of what reverence might be. In heaven we find people singing or being quiet. Apparently within the range of reverence there is quietness and a lot of noise. . . . Could it be that reverence is just having an awe to God and, however we choose to express that awe, whether it be with quietness or shouting, it is appropriate as long as we have that marvelous awe for Him.⁴

Weeks proposes that reverence might be "more than walking or talking softly in the sanctuary."⁵ Harvey Elder corroborates and wonders if the notion of reverence in church might be "influenced still by the spirit of the medieval cathedrals."⁶ For Dyone Shelden, voicing the ideas of the worship committee, "true" reverence is more "an attitude" than "behaviors prescribed by cultural restraints."⁷

¹Beall interview, 3 April 1991.

²Muñoz interview, 20 March 1991.

³Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991.

⁴The Celebration Story, videocassette.

⁵Weeks interview, 6 April 1991.

⁶H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991.

⁷R. and D. Shelden, "Colton Celebration Center. Church Service," audiocassette.

Music

Music is one of the primary means by which celebration worship leaders seek to establish a healthy balance between reverence and joy. The next sections examine the development of Celebration Center's musical style.

Shaping influences

The style of music at Celebration Center is the reflection of the laity's choice, taste, musical talents, and limitations. In 1991, Simpson declared:

What we do [in music] is connected with what we have as leadership and talents. I am limited by the people who want to serve. . . . I would like to have more [musical] variety, because it would fit our philosophy to meet people's needs. . . . At the present time I have to go with what I have. . . . I have to support what I have.¹

Weeks corroborates:

Because we are using volunteers . . . it is very difficult to make them do what we want them to do. . . . We also want them to be creative. We do not want them to be stuffed in who they are and what they do. We have to be willing to make some allowances. . . . That is dangerous and scary. . . . I am not so sure that God has asked us to be restrictive of who we accept or don't. Once "you open up" then "you truly run some serious risk." It is not safe; it is dangerous. The role of the Executive Council, then, is to advise and to share our concerns.²

Three leaders have shaped the formative years of Celebration Center music with a definite Christian contemporary style of music. Joye Huerta has generally followed at first a more campfire style of music with simple choruses and guitars. Later his style was more like the one of the "Maranatha" group, which is more inventive and keyboard-based. Jim Teel describes that style as "pops," quasi-classical, with Hebrew and Black gospel connotations.³ On the other hand, Dave Gaudet and Charlie Wear have followed a more "aggressive," rock style very similar to or from the music at the

¹Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1.

²Weeks interview, 6 April 1991.

³Jim Teel, interview by author, Berrien Springs, MI, 10 April 1996.

Vineyard, at Yorba Linda, California.¹ The melodies are more simple and guitar-based than the style of "Maranatha."² Long comments on that latter influence:

I know that Charlie Wear loves "Vineyard" music. . . . But to do "Vineyard type" of music at Celebration Center is too powerful. I mean, you talk about AN EMOTIONAL MUSIC. . . . We think, at least Dan and I, that it is a little too far from us.³

An evolving philosophy and practice

For Simpson the use of Christian contemporary music is "just one way of expressing the message"--one way to incarnate the gospel of love and acceptance--at Celebration Center. For him traditional Adventist music "closes people," it usually functions as a teaching device or as a "mental process which does not allow an opening experience." According to Simpson, music should primarily speak to people's right brain and be an emotional support. It must communicate an "emotional message":

We are open to everybody [at Celebration Center]. You are free to be you here. That message comes through by using a [contemporary] style of music. But besides that message, it is also that kind of music that, I think, can open people up. But there are other kinds of music, too [that can accomplish the same goal].⁴

In 1991, however, Simpson declared he was still searching for "a genius" who could take the philosophy of Celebration Center and "make it happen in music."⁵ The same year Weeks declared: "I hope that the issue of music will be addressed. At this point, Celebration Center is still an infant and you train a child a little bit at a time."⁶

Charles Wear also recognizes that Celebration Center is at the beginning of the development of its music ministry:

¹Long interview, 25 March 1991; C. and S. Wear interview, 26 March 1991; Lyell Heise, interview by author, Pine Springs Ranch, CA, 20 August 1991.

²Jim Teel interview, 10 April 1996.

³Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁴Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1.

⁵Simpson interview, 2 April 1991; idem, interview, 9 April 1991, #1.

⁶Weeks interview, 6 April 1991.

We are at the beginning and I am going to be interested to see what develops as new people come along. There will be new worship leaders and there will be new expression. It should be interesting to see. In my opinion, this will become a movement.¹

In Wear's opinion, also, the style of music at Celebration Center is bound to change if the members are recognized and taken seriously. For him, each generation moving into church leadership positions brings along the music of their youth, what they are most comfortable with. Therefore, music is bound to change "generationally," except, perhaps, in educated ecclesiastical centers where diverse musical traditions and styles are preserved and taught. Wear acknowledges that no dialogue has taken place between Celebration Center and the Seventh-day Adventist Musicians' Guild.²

For Long, the use of drums at Celebration Center is not only the expression of the taste of the audience and what belongs to a contemporary style of music, it is also a symbolic statement. Drums incarnate the recognition of the diversity and the different church model attempted at Celebration Center. In addition, they also function as a dividing catalyst. Long suggests, "The drums are a unique dividing of people when they come to this church. People either cannot tolerate them--thinking it sacrilegious--or they do and they stay. It was not planned that way, but this is what is happening."³

In conclusion, one can say that at least up through 1991 music at Celebration Center tried to reflect who people were or a direction they wanted to go. Despite various opinions among the leaders and the congregation about the appropriate style and performance of music at Celebration Center, people generally agree on the following undergirding principles. Music should: (1) reflect that people are loved, accepted, and understood in their taste and perception of reality, (2) use contemporary means to express the gospel to people and praises to God, and (3) reveal openness to the contemporary surrounding culture.⁴ One must note that these principles underline more a nurturing, didactic, bonding, and celebrative role of music than a cleansing and meditative role that is also advocated by leaders (see,

¹C. and S. Wear interview, 26 March 1991.

²Ibid.

³Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁴Simmons interview, 22 August 1991; Weeks interview, 6 April 1991; Joan [Anonymous] interview, 26 March 1991; H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991; Susan Wear in C. and S. Wear interview, 26 March 1991.

third counsel to enhance worship). The principles on which people agree do not seem to entirely match the philosophy of their leaders. This discrepancy reveals the ever-present challenge that leaders face of implementing new values at the grass-roots level. Lack of intentional and repetitive education from leaders may well result in missing the goals they have set.

Components and Order

According to the worship committee, three main objectives are pursued at Celebration Center during worship services: (1) worship, (2) ministry, and (3) teaching.¹ Each of these objectives (presented below) is reached by different means or components of worship enacted in a more or less predictable way during each of the two worship services held at Celebration Center on Sabbath mornings. Five components are usually present during the first service at 9:30 a.m.: (1) a welcome-invocation; (2) a worship time, which, particularly in the Celebration Center terminology, is an extended period of time spent in singing; (3) a drama for adults; (4) the garden of prayer, and (5) the sermon. Six predictable elements are also present in the second service at 11:15 a.m. After the welcome-invocation, a new element is added--the drama for children, which always concludes with the children collecting the tithes and offerings from the congregation. The last four elements remain the same as those in the first service.² Each of these components of worship is considered separately below. Some are regrouped according to their objectives rather than in their order of enactment in the service.

The tension between the predictable components of worship and the unpredictable atmosphere generally experienced and described at Celebration Center can possibly be understood and explained by four additional categories that may be interjected during the worship services: (1) a presentation of or an introduction to the different components of worship in a unique, personalized, and informal way; (2) some unpredictable but appropriate additional singing that comes between the predictable elements of the service; (3) a high level of creativity and diversity of means and visual aids

¹Ibid.

²C. and S. Wear interview; Charles Wear, "Celebration Service," unpublished papers--order of worship for musicians, 2 and 23 March 1991. Also personal observations, "Worship Service, Celebration Center," Colton, CA, 16 and 23 March 1991, 26 October 1991, 30 January 1993, and 6 February 1993, audiocassettes.

used in dramatic presentations either for adults or children; and (4) a constant stream of updated information about the church life shared unpredictably at various moments in the service, although never after the sermon.¹

"Worship"

The notion of "worship" at Celebration Center is uniquely understood. Its basic definition, guidelines, and two major components will be presented.

Definition, basic principles, and goals. At Celebration Center, "worship" specifically designates the singing time of the church service. It is an extended period of twenty to thirty minutes of music that just flows from one song to another. It is not like a song service. People singing in front during that "worship" time are not song leaders but models creating an atmosphere that allows people in the audience through their singing to "make personal contact with God." For Simpson and other worship committee members, "worship" is the expression of the outgrowth of personal assurance of salvation. It is a vertical versus a horizontal time. It is a time, as Dyone Shelden says, "to do business with God," or as her husband expresses it, "to bond with God." Ultimately, therefore, it is a time for intimacy with God and the deep moving of the Holy Spirit.²

Guidelines to facilitate "worship" The "worship" time at Celebration Center is guided by the principles cited above describing the whole worship service. Additional guidelines are advocated to enhance "worship":

1. Standing marks the starting point of "worship."
2. "Worship" is experienced through an uninterrupted flow of music, keeping comments between songs to a minimum.
3. "Worship" leaders choose contemporary music.

¹Ibid.

²The Celebration Story, videocassette; Simpson, "Worship as Celebration," 23 March 1991, audiocassette; Dan Simpson and Ray Shelden, "The Pilgrimage at Celebration Center," Second International Adventist Worship Conference, Riverside, CA, 9 April 1993, audiocassette.

4. They carefully create a sequence of songs leading from praise, commitment, and dedication to adoration and intimacy.
5. They also select songs with meaningful and relevant words.
6. Sometimes, they favor repetitious songs to allow the better grasping of, and meditating on, the words sung.
7. Songs are personable and addressed directly to God or talking about God.
8. Vicarious singing through choir and soloists is disregarded.
9. "Worship" leaders are selected according to their experience in personal worship.
10. "Worship" leaders encourage--but do not coerce--bodily expressions and closed eyes to better focus on God.¹

Praise. Two aspects in "worship" are underlined at Celebration Center: praise and intimacy. Praise is viewed as the "acclaiming, extolling, and expressing admiration to God for who He is and what He has done for human beings." According to Celebration Center leaders, praise can be defined in the biblical records (especially Heb 13:15, Luke 19:28-40, and the Psalms) as an exuberant, audible, visible, and physical act, best expressed through singing. Praise is a holistic activity expressed with one's body through standing, raising one's hands, clapping, and so on. Praise is also a sacrifice (Heb 13:15). According to Ray Shelden, it implies the death of human ego, of the end of "our comfort zones used to doing things our way" and, even, maybe, the death of human cherished traditions.² In the same line of thought, Ray Shelden continues: "We should praise God's way, not our way, Charlie's way, Lisa's way, or even Pastor Dan's way. It is a matter of doing it His way. . . . When we decide to enter into worship, it may require putting aside our agenda in favor of God's."³

¹R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette; Simpson and Shelden, "The Pilgrimage," audiocassette; C. and S. Wear interview, 26 March 1991; Weeks interview, 6 April 1991; Audain interview, 8 April 1991.

²R. and D. Shelden, "Worship: Praise and Intimacy," audiocassette; Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1; C. and S. Wear interview, 26 March 1991.

³R. and D. Shelden, "Worship: Praise and Intimacy," audiocassette.

Finally, leaders at Celebration Center stress that any physical expression in worship must be an individual response and not "a preprogrammed set of motions or the acting out of the words of a song."¹

Intimacy. Intimacy is viewed at Celebration Center as an experience of belonging, in the temple model of worship, to the ultimate experience of worshipping in the most holy place: the encounter with and the adoration of God. Intimacy happens when "the human heart is open to God's heart in complete disclosure of one's vulnerable self." It is the unveiling to God of a person's joy, sorrow, motives, wrongs, and needs. It is knowing that people are safe with God; that they can trust Him; and that He loves and accepts them as they are. It is "the experience of listening to God's gentle voice to know the divine on a deeper level."²

According to worship leaders at Celebration Center, intimacy is best experienced if worshippers have gone through the different "worship" steps, "done business with God," and allowed the words of the songs to be part of their experience through the prompting of the Holy Spirit. To experience intimacy, people are encouraged to: (1) identify with the type of songs they sing during "worship" (Is it a song of praise, commitment, or adoration?); (2) learn by heart the words of the songs; (3) let the Holy Spirit use the words of the songs "to touch and heal" them; (4) shut out distractions by closing their eyes; and (5) respond holistically to the expression of their hearts.³

Ministry

The garden of prayer and the touch of the hands are two important facets of worship at Celebration Center.

¹Ibid., A Chat with Pastor Dan, videocassette; Dan Simpson, "Celebration Worship Service," Colton, CA, 23 March 1991, audiocassette; R. and D. Shelden and Muñoz interview, 19 March 1991; C. and E. Wear interview, 26 March 1991; Joan [Anonymous] interview, 26 March 1991.

²Long interview, 25 March 1991; R. and D. Shelden, "Worship: Praise and Intimacy," audiocassette; Simpson and Shelden, "The Pilgrimage," audiocassette.

³R. and D. Shelden, "Worship: Praise and Intimacy," audiocassette.

The garden of prayer. Shelden explains that ministry at Celebration Center is shared during the church service in the garden of prayer. People are usually invited by Simpson and his wife to come up onto the platform and kneel with them in prayer while soft music plays in the background. The garden of prayer is not an "altar call," says Shelden, or the privileged experience of a few people who suffer from catastrophic illness, loss, or grief. Anyone who seeks "a stronger sense of God's presence" or aspires "to draw closer to Him" is invited to come to the garden of prayer. As Darlene and Dan Simpson also express it, it is a family time, a time and place to be vulnerable and honest and to "bring the needs of our people in front of God."¹

People who choose not to go forward in the garden of prayer simply remain where they are in the congregation and are free to sit, kneel, or do whatever they feel comfortable doing while they pray.²

The garden of prayer, therefore, is viewed first as a special time. It is a time to allow people over a prolonged period of prayer to become "intimate with God." Simpson captures this special time while praying in the garden of prayer:

This is your time, Jesus, to have freedom in us, to say what needs to be said, to point out what needs to be pointed out, to reach out and lift us up above our pain and disappointment. Lord come on! You never failed us before. Over and over you have answered our prayers in the garden of prayer. In the name of Jesus, may you be glorified this morning as you meet people's needs.³

Second, the garden of prayer is a special place where people can "bow before God and be collectively alone with Him" and in that special place to symbolically "unload their burdens as at the foot of the cross to receive healing and peace."⁴ Dyone Shelden shares her own perception and experience about this place of ministry:

The blessing is just so much greater [in the garden of prayer]. First, for taking the initiative to go there and, second, for actually what happens there. . . . While I am in the garden of prayer I experience a sense of privacy, a sense of being alone with God that I cannot experience at my

¹Ibid.: The Celebration Story, videocassette; A Chat with Pastor Dan, videocassette.

²R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

³Dan Simpson, "Church Service," Colton, CA, 5 January 1991, audiocassette.

⁴R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

seat. While I am surrounded by people, I can still feel alone with God because every one in the garden of prayer is focused completely on God. . . . There is nothing to distract me or make me feel self-conscious as I bow down before God.¹

Additional testimonies confirm the garden of prayer to be a special time and a special place for people to receive unique blessings, healing, and peace.²

The "touch of the hands." In the garden while the pastor and his wife pray aloud and the people pray silently, lay pastors move quietly among them, laying a hand on a shoulder of each person and praying silently for that person. In the video orientation available to new Celebration Center members, Simpson stresses that this kind of laying on of hands is "not a biblical concept at all." Neither is it a ministry of a saint to a lesser saint. It is simply an expression of care--"a person reaching out to another person saying, 'We are here together. Just take it in, enjoy it and accept it.'"³ Dyone Shelden also comments on this touch of hands. "It is just like being touched by the very hands of God, because God's people are His hands and feet on earth."⁴

When someone is touched and has a special need or desire to be prayed for directly, he or she communicates this to the lay pastor by placing one hand on the lay pastor's hand. The lay pastor then kneels beside that person and begins to minister to him or her through a whispered prayer.⁵

Teaching

Teaching at Celebration Center is expressed through three major forms: sermons, drama for adults, and drama for children.

¹Ibid.

²The Celebration Story, videocassette.

³A Chat with Pastor Dan, videocassette.

⁴R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

⁵Ibid.

Sermon. The first aspect of teaching described by the worship committee is the sermon.¹ As Simpson is the recognized communicator and visionary at Celebration Center, he usually preaches every Sabbath. Generally, he is well accepted in this leading and predominant role because preaching and creative communication are recognized as Simpson's basic gifts.²

Different opinions are voiced about Simpson's teaching. Most people who attend Celebration Center on a regular basis and who are aware of its philosophy and goals give various positive responses. Characteristics such as "biblical," "meaningful," "full of charisma," "relevant," "on the cutting edge of reality or social issues," "excellent," "vivid story telling," as well as "more exhorting than didactic" are used.³ On the other hand, visitors, some colleagues, and some members deplore Simpson's lack of "in depth," "biblical," "expository," or "theological" preaching.⁴

Ray Shelden describes the running themes of Simpson's sermons (from 1989 to 1991) as correcting misconceptions about God and as presenting Him as a "real and attractive God who loves, accepts, and forgives sinners."⁵ Simpson corroborates this and also claims that (at least through 1992) he preached on another running theme--the twenty-seven Seventh-day Adventist beliefs that he treated from an existential point of view. He acknowledges, however, to have skipped the issues of health, which is addressed through *New Life Victorious*, and judgment--the first due to lack of time, the second due to conviction. He admits to being uneasy about teaching the judgment from a traditional Adventist perspective. In his understanding, the notions of a pre-investigative judgment and a time of the close of

¹R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

²Halstead interview, 20 March 1991.

³Ibid.; Joan [Anonymous] interview, 26 March 1991; Bettie interview, 26 March 1991; Simmons interview, 22 August 1991; H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991; Pala interview, 16 March 1991; Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; Lorntz interview, 23 March 1991.

⁴Wilcox interview, 21 March 1991; Mohr interview, 8 April 1991; H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991; Gary [Anonymous] interview, 4 April 1991; David VanDenburgh, interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 10 April 1991; George Reid, interview by author, Berrien Springs, MI, 8 May 1992.

⁵R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

probation before the Second Coming of Christ have overemphasized fear and the power of sin over the power of the cross in one's life. They have overshadowed assurance in Christ's salvation.¹

Drama for adults. The second aspect of teaching is the drama for adults. Celebration Center leaders view it in direct contrast with the didactic teaching of sermons. Long describes drama as teaching "through a right-brain experience."² For Dyone Shelden, drama is a means of teaching that is especially relevant for people who learn through observation and non-verbal communication and explanation.³

Drama also creates an atmosphere that encourages people to "experience" on the spiritual level and to ultimately "participate in a sharing time." Therefore, drama is enacted with the following purposes in mind: (1) to "vividly communicate God's love and forgiveness to people"; (2) to foster in people a desire to "experience" new spiritual insights; and (3) to strengthen people's desire to relate to a corporate body--"something they can associate with, something they can tie into."⁴

The principles of drama at Celebration Center are not based on a typical "theater approach," says Shelden, but on one of Jesus' ways of teaching--the parables. Steve Bottroff, leader of the drama ministry (since 1989) suggests that as Jesus Christ taught with parables, associating familiar experiences with spiritual insights, so Celebration Center uses drama as a possible twentieth-century parabolic way of teaching. Long recognizes Bottroff to be uniquely gifted in putting "into aesthetic ways the communication of the basic gospel and our relationship to one another."⁵

For Bottroff, drama in a church service allows people to see and feel their life experiences connected with possible spiritual insights. He further affirms that "drama is life itself." It is not a means "to entertain people" or to "escape from reality" but a twentieth-century device to teach about

¹Simpson interview, 6 August 1991; idem interview, 30 January 1993.

²Long interview, 25 March 1991.

³R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

⁴Steve Bottroff, in The Celebration Story, videocassette.

⁵Long interview, 25 March 1991.

the kingdom of God. It is a possible means of responding to people's spiritual quest and to the felt need of people in modern Western society for concrete experience. "Take me," is the plea of many modern persons, "give me experience, give me a feeling, give me Jesus Christ, right here where I can touch, taste, hold, and love Him."¹ Thus drama is "not to perform" or just to "be different" but to "make a difference."² Drama in a church service must result in people committing themselves and saying after each service: "Thank you. I have seen reality, I have seen hope, and I have seen [an] idealism that I can strive for next week."³

Bottroff also claims that a drama ministry is relevant only if "real" people from the congregation come each week to share life experiences that are constantly changing and evolving under the power of the Holy Spirit. Each Sabbath renewal can happen only if "real" people come to share their walk with Christ with "renewed courage" and "renewed passion."⁴

Therefore, drama greatly varies each week in style and content. Typical topics addressed in the drama include: Bible themes, responding to God's call, family interactions, and Christians' responses to living in the twentieth century. For example, a voice off stage reads a passage from the Bible while the participants enact a passage of the Bible. But instead of being dressed in biblical garb, the participants may be dressed as modern teachers, nurses, or truck drivers.⁵

There is, however, a predominant way of enacting drama at Celebration Center. Most of the time a song is interpreted as participants portray its message.⁶ Simpson claims that in church drama he favors a non-verbal approach over verbal skits, such as those enacted at the Willow Creek

¹Bottroff, in The Celebration Story, videocassette.

²The Celebration Story, videocassette; Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

³The Celebration Story, videocassette.

⁴Bottroff, in The Celebration Story, videocassette; idem, interview by author, Grand Terrace, CA, 8 August 1991, hand-written notes.

⁵R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette; The Celebration Story, videocassette; Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; Moore interview, 22 August 1991.

⁶Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

Community Church services, for example. Along with Bottroff, he suggests that non-verbal drama leaves people freer to feel and interpret the message for themselves, under the prompting of the Holy Spirit, than if they are given the very words, as in a sermon.¹ Ray Shelden corroborates: "Drama teaches by example and implication, leaving the observer to figure some things out for him or herself."²

According to Bottroff, non-verbal enactments additionally permit the easy involvement of a lot of people. It is indeed one of Bottroff's goals to have as many participants as possible--at least sixty--on the platform every Sabbath. Anybody from the congregation can participate in the drama by coming to Thursday evening rehearsals. Also, anyone can share with Bottroff a song, an idea, or an experience he or she wants to enact or see enacted. Bottroff works with it and creatively leads the people attending the rehearsals into the enactment of the proposition. Usually after two rehearsals, Thursday and Sabbath morning, the drama is ready to be presented.³

Drama for children. A third aspect of teaching is the children's story, which is not just a story but also a drama based on the same principles as the drama described above for the adults. The drama for children is also prepared utilizing anyone, children included, who comes to the Thursday night rehearsals. But contrary to the adults' drama, the children's story usually involves other children from the congregation who wish to participate.

Various creative enactments are proposed to the children. For example, they become involved in the stories as animals going into the ark, Israelites crossing the Red Sea, collecting manna, or marching around the walls of Jericho.

Al Munson, leader of the drama team for children, declares: "Although we have a lot of fun with it [the children's story], there are goals we have established and want to accomplish every week."⁴ These goals are fourfold:

¹Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1.

²R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

³Weeks interview, 6 April 1991.

⁴The Celebration Story, videocassette.

1. They teach children biblical stories. Sequences of stories are generally favored, such as those from the Exodus, the life of David, or Paul's missionary trips.
2. They allow children to remember and apply these stories in their lives, even later in their lives. Thus special effort is made to involve them in lively and creative enactment to strengthen their memory.
3. They encourage the children's spontaneity and respect their high level of energy by giving them the possibility to actively participate in the story and, therefore, make a positive association of their energy and spontaneity with religious and church experiences.
4. They involve parents as well and stimulate their responsibility in the children's religious education.

As Munson says, "We always play to the kids but act for the parents." After the service, the parents are invited to read the biblical passage of the story to their children and add their own comments on the story. "That completes the learning curve," concludes Munson.¹

Ray Shelden summarizes the common element between the drama for adults and the "children's story." Both serve as vehicles for lay persons' participation in the church services. Through both enactments lay people become involved in the church and use their talents to reach out and serve their congregation.²

Ordinances and Ceremonies

Celebration Center generally subscribes to the traditional ordinances of the Adventist Church--baptism and communion--and other ceremonies such as dedication services, prayer for the sick, child dedication, marriage, and burial services.³ However, some modifications have been made. Audain

¹Ibid.

²R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

³Manual for Ministers (Takoma Park, Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1977), 93-153.

declares, "We like to be creative, we don't like to do things the way it is usually done, because nothing is written in stone."¹

Details regarding the theological understanding of baptism at Celebration Center can be examined above under membership in the church-organization section (see pages 95 and 96). On a practical level, baptismal ceremonies are basically the same as observed in other Adventist churches in North America. However, Harvey Elder adds, the ceremonies at Celebration Center are "more celebrative and more people-oriented." One way Celebration Center expresses this sensitivity toward people and, at the same time, affirms the priesthood of all believers is to let lay pastors teach the fundamentals of Christian living and baptize the candidate. Also, any person introducing a friend to Christ can baptize him or her if one wishes to do so. If that individual or the lay pastor chooses not to baptize the candidate, a staff pastor then baptizes, although not without inviting those persons to be present in the baptismal waters. Additional friends or family members may also join. This procedure encourages bonding between members and the new "disciple."²

The Lord's Supper is celebrated once or twice a year. According to Sisk, Halstead, and Beall, it is a special service or a big event that takes place outside the regular church services. Halstead declared that a different format and timing had been selected in 1991, not only to adapt to the logistics of the building's facilities but also in order to do something fresh, different, and attractive for former Adventists--something that differs from the "old ways of doing communion."

During the Lord's Supper, informality is emphasized. The emblems are distributed by "staff" and lay pastors, and the people are usually invited to come to the front to receive the emblems. In 1991, the leaders of Celebration Center considered having the Lord's Supper celebrated in small home groups under the guidance of lay pastors.³

Other ceremonies, such as weddings, funerals, baby dedications, special projects, and other means for evangelism, have been incorporated into regular church services. At that time a special

¹Audain interview, 8 April 1991.

²Sisk interview, 8 April 1991.

³Ibid., Halstead interview, 20 March 1991; Beall interview, 3 April 1991.

statement is made acknowledging the importance of the "spiritual extended family" who participates and unites in the celebration of those ceremonies to commit to, encourage, sustain, or pray for protection against the devil.¹

Celebration Center does not practice ordination of any kind. However, lay pastors of both genders are anointed at the end of their leadership training. As Simpson says, this anointing affirms the lay pastors' "commitment and acceptance of the Spirit to equip them to do what God is asking them to do in their ministry." This unction is modeled after David's experience in the Old Testament. He was anointed and recognized in his ministry some years before his official appointment and unction to the kingship (1 Sam 16:1-14). In addition, another type of oil unction accompanied by the laying-on of hands is practiced on suffering people by the lay pastors and their intercessory prayers (Jas 5:14-16).²

Architecture and Space

Celebration Center has been influenced in its philosophy of architecture and use of space by Simpson's ideas on architecture, as described above, and by Caleb Rosado's research papers on "Architecture, Worship and the Mission of the church."³ According to Halstead, Rosado's papers have given the Celebration Center an articulate philosophy for its use of space and future architectural dreams.⁴

Four major ideas have given shape to that philosophy:

1. Christ is the Temple. With the incarnation (John 1:14), the Old Testament tabernacle is embodied in the person of Jesus. As Rosado says, "Christ is every aspect of the ancient tabernacle present in human form before humankind." The rending of the veil at Christ's death affirms

¹Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; Sisk interview, 8 April 1991; Halstead interview, 20 March 1991; H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991.

²Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #2; Halstead interview, 20 March 1991; Sisk interview, 8 April 1991; Audain interview, 8 April 1991; Beall interview, 3 April 1991.

³Caleb Rosado, "Architecture, Worship and the Mission of the Church: The Rending of the Veil and Church Architecture," unpublished paper (part 1), All Nations Church Sermon Series, Berrien Springs, MI, 10 October 1981; idem, "Architecture, Worship and the Mission of the Church: The Medium Is the Message--Architecture and Theology," unpublished paper (part 2, All Nations Church Sermon Series, Berrien Springs, MI, 17 October 1981.

⁴Halstead, interview by author, Colton, CA, 2 April 1991, hand-written notes.

that there are no more holy places on the earth. Christian worship involves people. God's holy presence is to be connected with people and not special places, times, or rituals. Therefore, God is to be worshiped in spirit and truth wherever Jesus is to be found, even in very small gatherings or insignificant settings (John 4:20; Matt 18:20).¹

2. Architecture is a matter of theology. If Christians faithfully adhere to the incarnation and a holistic approach to reality they will develop architectural vision and projects that represent the gospel and serve the church in its nature and mission. If the Adventist Church tries to accurately proclaim the gospel through verbal communication week by week, it should also attempt to be faithful and accurate in its architectural proclamation, where its message speaks year after year. Along with Simpson, Rosado denounces the lack of Adventist architectural expression of faith and "the shifting sea of eclectic borrowing" in denominational buildings. He says:

A church building is a place where God's people gather together to worship, and how they worship, as well as what they believe is either reinforced or undermined by the architecture of that building. Church architecture is therefore and foremost a matter of theology rather a matter of style.²

3. Architecture represents and serves the gospel. Church structures are means of servanthood to facilitate the church in its worship and mission. Therefore, church structures should be multifunctional and serve the needs of humanity and a particular surrounding community.³

4. Architecture should not engender false dichotomies such as that between the sacred and the secular (profane). Christian architects do not build "places that are sacred, but places where the sacred--the worship of God--takes place." They build places "where the worshiping community can celebrate all of life, not just its spiritual dimension."

¹Rosado, "Architecture: The Rending of the Veil," 5, 6.

²Rosado, "Architecture: The Medium Is the Message," 2, 3.

³Ibid., 7

Summary

The church system and the worship style of the Colton Celebration Center from its origin until 1991 demonstrate that Celebration Center is intrinsically related to Simpson's life journey. That journey led him to believe in and experiment with the idea of a church organization and structure that he considers to be more fully reflective of the gospel--God's unconditional love, acceptance, and forgiveness--prescribed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual.

Celebration Center is also intrinsically connected to Simpson's intuitive personality and sensitivity toward the trends, needs, and means of the American secular society and the American evangelical world. Additionally, the Celebration experience reflects Simpson's visionary and charismatic leadership that has fostered the laity's creativity toward one focal point of ministry--namely, ministry to former Adventists.

In Simpson's understanding, former Adventists especially need to experience the heavenly Father's unconditional love as depicted in the parable of the prodigal son. Former Adventists also need to regain ownership of their church and discover relational truth. Toward that goal, the discovery of an experiential religion is important. The understanding of the spiritual gifts for empowerment in service is essential, as well as, for active involvement in worship and small groups.

Simpson first started the Celebration experience by implementing a different worship style at the Azure Hills Church in 1988. With the permission and supervision of the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, he established Celebration Center in Colton in 1989. Its radical new church organization and evolving worship style built on developments in the Azure Hills Church.

The structures of Celebration Center developed under many different influences. Church-growth principles have been particularly influential, as has Carl George's personal advice that outlined the following components of healthy church life: (1) a vision-mission statement; (2) a celebration event; (3) growth opportunities through different classes, seminars, lectures, support groups addressing the needs of diverse people; and (4) small groups dedicated to the study of the Bible, evangelism, and ministry.

Celebration Center worship services do not directly follow an imposed model of worship, such as the Vineyard model on a practical level, or the sanctuary model on a more theological level, although leaders acknowledge the influence of both models. Instead, Celebration worship has grown from the grass roots as lay persons were inspired by Simpson's leadership and general ideas of worship. Celebration worship has also grown out of the opportunity given to the lay persons to experiment with those ideas. Among the ideas connected to worship are the desires for: (1) relevant worship at the core of church life that is transformational and not entertaining; (2) people's active participation and creative expression in worship; (3) use of contemporary means of communication and music in services; (4) holistic demonstrations of praise, adoration, or responsiveness (as derived from the Bible) when singing, praying, or listening; and (5) a place of worship that does not separate the sacred from the secular.

People such as Bottroff, Ray and Dyone Shelden, Munson, and Wear have been especially instrumental in the development of Celebration Center worship services. Three distinctive parts characterize those services in which two key elements are unpredictability and diversity:

1. The "worship" experience is principally expressed by singing directly to God. The twenty to thirty minutes of worship in music begin with upbeat songs and move to more meditative selections. This progression is designed to lead the congregation from praise to adoration and intimacy.
2. A teaching experience addresses "both parts of the human brain" through sermons and drama to express God's truths in modern, parabolic, and impressive ways.
3. An opportunity is present to minister to people through the garden of prayer, with Simpson's pastoral prayer or specific prayers and anointings given by lay pastors to individuals with specific needs and requests.

But the heart of Celebration worship at Colton is its accent on a contextualized, unique, and free human response to God's love and action toward sinners. Thus, Celebration worship focuses on God and stresses two basic concepts that are regarded as especially needed by former Adventists: joy and freedom. In line with those two concepts, the celebration philosophy does not impose worship steps or experiences on the congregation. Worship leaders establish a safe atmosphere by modeling involvement

and physical expression. Sometimes they actively encourage such expression, but only as they feel free themselves to participate and express their own body language according to their own religious pilgrimage.

CHAPTER III

EVALUATION OF CELEBRATION CENTER, ITS MILIEU AND IMPACT ON THE NORTH AMERICAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH PART I

There is to be in the churches a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but it will not move upon those who have not humbled themselves before the Lord, and opened the door of their heart by confession and repentance. In the manifestation of that power which lightens the earth with the Glory of God, they will see only something which in their blindness they think dangerous, something which will arouse their fears, and they will brace themselves to resist it. Because the Lord does not work according to their expectations and ideal, they will oppose the work. "Why," they say, "should we not know the Spirit of God, when we have been in the work so many years?"--Because they did not respond to the message of God, but persistently said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."

Ellen G. White

In the context of the North American Seventh-day Adventist Church, chapters 3 and 4 present positive perceptions about Celebration Center expressed both by its members and people outside the congregation as well as an emerging definition of a celebration church, and some positive perceptions collected at New Life Celebration Church (NLCC) in Milwaukie, Oregon. The New Life Celebration Church experience serves as a point of reference to verify the tentative definition of a celebration church; the impact of both Celebration Center and what has been perceived as the celebration movement; critical concerns expressed by those sympathetic to Celebration Center and, finally, critical arguments by opponents of Celebration Center, similar churches, and the celebration movement as a whole. To close, the two chapters summarize the major conclusions.

Positive Perceptions and an Emerging Definition
of a Celebration Church

Peoples' Positive Perceptions of Celebration Center

This section summarizes many opinions that have already surfaced during the discussion of the history, ecclesiology, and worship of Celebration Center (chapter 2), and links them with other perceptions of what seems "different and essential" at Celebration Center. These perceptions are drawn from two videos produced by Celebration Center, forty letters, and 775 short comments collected from the pews at Celebration Center on the Blue Card Comments (BCC). All this material is filed either at Celebration Center or the Southeastern California Conference office.¹ Perceptions presented in this chapter also come from thirty interviews conducted by the author with regular attendees at Celebration Center, local people, and conference officials who have attended services at the Center.

On 9 February 1990, Simpson received a letter from a colleague in Nevada who had just visited Celebration Center: "I came on January 27, received great blessings, appreciated the atmosphere. . . . I rejoice with you in what you are doing in reaching the former and non-attending members of our church."² This letter is a good example of one of the major first perceptions of many first-time visitors to Celebration Center: The place has a different atmosphere.

Positive evaluations of the Celebration Center atmosphere revolve around six characteristics:³

¹These Blue Card Comments (BCC)--ranging between seventy-seven and four comments a week--were collected between June 1989 and July 1990 from an average audience of 1500. These cards represent the comments from four categories of people: members, regular attendees, visitors, and one-time visitors. As most comments cannot be most of the time associated with one category or the other, we will not draw any conclusions related to these categories, but try only to discern some trends of emphasis in the comments.

²Albert Tilstra to Dan Simpson, 9 February 1990.

³Each of the six characteristics are illustrated by composite extracts from different people's impressions regarding Celebration Center atmosphere.

1. *Fresh, upbeat, and joyous*¹

The whole atmosphere is like a breath of ocean air--totally exhilarating.² Celebration Center reminds me of my church back in Munich, with all its positive outlook. The music might be slightly different and the songs may have a different tempo but the zest and joy is there and I have finally come home.³ This place is wonderful! Such fire for God! Exactly what I've been looking for. Keep up the good work.⁴ I have been a Seventh-day Adventist all my life. Your church is vivacious and very timely.⁵ Pastor Dan is "fantastic" and "dynamic."⁶ It has been incredible to be involved in a church environment where people are excited about church, where the lay people are so excited.⁷ We are not just happy, we do take church seriously but we do believe in a spontaneous, joyous celebration with God.⁸ It scared me at the beginning to see the connection between religion, excitement and joy. It is okay for me now to think that God can be fun too.⁹ I'm happy to be here. I am blessed with this service. It is so much fun worshipping the Lord this way. Thank you.¹⁰

2. *Warm and relational—loving*¹¹

I must tell you how much Celebration Center means to me! Never have I felt such love, warmth and acceptance in a church.¹² Thanks for the "loving and caring" environment created here!¹³ It is Simpson's approach to worship that has brought me back to Adventism after a ten-year

¹Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; Deleon interview, 5 August 1991; Weeks interview, 6 April 1991; Wilcox interview, 21 March 1991; Youth Group, interview by author, Colton, CA, 16 April 1991, hand-written notes; Don and Marilyn [Anonymous] to Stephen Gifford, 22 October 1989; and Ronald [Anonymous] to Stephen Gifford, 24 October 1989.

²[Anonymous], BCC, 22 July 1989.

³Marilyn [Anonymous] to John Osborne, 4 July 1990.

⁴Lyn [Anonymous], BCC, 29 July 1989.

⁵Lisa [Anonymous], BCC, 23 September 1989.

⁶Glen [Anonymous], BCC, 4 November 1989.

⁷Halstead interview, 20 March 1991.

⁸Muñoz interview, 20 March 1991.

⁹Beall interview, 3 April 1991.

¹⁰[Anonymous], BCC, 8 July 1989.

¹¹Archie Ayres, Donna Curtis interviewed in Celebration, videocassette; Deleon interview, 5 August 1991; Youth group interview, 16 April 1991; Anne [Anonymous] to Stephen Gifford, 26 October 1989.

¹²Patricia [Anonymous] to Stephen Gifford, 3 May 1990.

¹³Penny [Anonymous], BCC, 23 September 1989.

absence. The love, warmth, and acceptance to be found there is such a blessed change from the brand of Adventism that drove me out so many years ago.¹ Celebration Center is a place where we can feel love and care.² This church has been the warmest I've ever been in [in Southern California]. Thanks.³ Love the warmth and openness of members and creativity of presentation of Christ.⁴ Thank God for the greeters. What a joy to see the smiles, feel the sincerity and experience the welcome they afford.⁵ In my early forties, I consider myself young, and when I go to Celebration Center I say "Hey I feel at home here." It is something I can be involved with. It is casual, relational, experiential and when I come to the University Church I come into status quo Adventism. . . . It is a very much controlled environment. It is just not comfortable even though I prefer the University Church music.⁶

3. *Non-judgmental--acceptance*

In our mobile society today, we are free to choose to go to church or not. . . . Nobody wants to be judged. When I can come to church, I want to be able to sit down with you and be real and say "I am really going through some pain in this area of my life and as a friend how do you see this coming about, what are the causes [and] the end results; [where is] the road out of this pain?" [Through such a conversation] now we are getting real and relevant with life.⁷ Excellent service. I am glad you mentioned the fact that once you make Jesus your banner, the rest (dress, uthe, etc.) will come naturally.⁸ People do not feel criticized or condemned at Celebration Center.⁹ People see at Celebration Center a kind of Adventism which appears to them to be flexible, accepting and non-judgmental.¹⁰ As an Adventist of five generations, I am attracted to Celebration Center. I am tired of churches that have an emphasis on right and wrong and not on loving people.¹¹

¹Ronald [Anonymous] to Gifford, 24 October 1989.

²Devi [Anonymous], BCC, 7 October 1989.

³[Anonymous], BCC, 16 September 1989.

⁴Craig and V. [Anonymous], BCC, 27 January 1990.

⁵Joan [Anonymous], BCC, 17 March 1990.

⁶Lorntz interview, 23 March 1991.

⁷Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁸Loida [Anonymous], BCC, 29 July 1989.

⁹H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991.

¹⁰Heise interview, 20 August 1991.

¹¹Lorntz interview, 23 March 1991.

4. *Free—allows diversity, participation, vulnerability and self-expression*¹

Thank you for teaching me about freedom. And thank you for demonstrating the warmth and love. It's new to me.² Celebration Center is a place to be free to be you.³ It is better to risk heresy and let it run its course than prevent the freedom of people to do what they want to do.⁴ At Celebration Center I am free to kneel before the service in the benches. I do not feel out of place. . . . I am comfortable and to me it is meaningful--the freedom to worship and express and experience more deeply biblical truths like lifting up hands.⁵ I do not think that Celebration Center is a channel of revival but it just adds to the diversity, variety of SDA churches. It is a very delightful thing in this area.⁶ Celebration church is all about audience participation versus being lectured to.⁷ This church has everyone in the church participate with the program and this makes it family oriented.⁸ I'm so grateful to God for this church. This is the first church I've been taught and allowed to actively express my love and emotions to God.⁹ Celebration Center has renewed my spirit. After ten years as a minister's wife, I was burned-out and jaded. Now I am shedding tears of joy again.¹⁰ People do come up to the garden of prayers. . . . It is like a family. You can be sorrowful and cry.¹¹ Celebration Center offers an alternative, something for people to think [about].¹²

¹Beall interview, 3 April 1991; Bettie interview, 26 March 1991; Jocelyn Fay, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 19 April 1991, hand-written notes; Moore interview, 22 August 1991; Simmons interview, 22 August 1991; Wilcox interview, 21 March 1991.

²Dave [Anonymous], BCC, 23 September 1989.

³Sheila Darrell interviewed in Celebration, videocassette.

⁴Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁵Joan [Anonymous] interview, 26 March 1991.

⁶Dave Osborne, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 3 April 1991.

⁷Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁸[Anonymous], BCC, 22 July 1989.

⁹Carol [Anonymous], BCC, 1 July 1989.

¹⁰Joan [Anonymous], BCC, 23 September 1989.

¹¹Susan Wear in C. and S. Wear interview, 26 March 1991.

¹²Bettie interview, 26 March 1991.

5. *Creative and unpredictable*¹

I appreciate your creativity, [your] authentic, genuine, and transformational values-centered church.² I love being excited to wake up on Sabbath mornings. It is exciting to not know what to predict.³ Variety puts fun into worship. Usually church is very boring with danger of being in a rut.⁴ Celebration Center is fresh. I see enormous numbers of college-age young people coming because it is different.⁵ I love the creative things Don Long's group is doing with the music time. I entered into worship.⁶ Thank you for the worshipful experience and creativity put into church.⁷ It is a wonderful, worshipful experience not a ritual or weekly routine! May it continue.⁸ The drama was the most moving element of the service. I got the message loud and clear. I know the message. . . . and yet it was powerful enough, the way it was presented, it strengthened something. . . . It was not redundant to me.⁹

6. *Relevant and contemporary*¹⁰

Your church service is the first SDA church that I feel is very tuned in, [it has] a very unique style of worship. Thank you! Keep up the good faith and love.¹¹ We are glad to hear longer sermons lately. They are so practical and pertinent to daily life.¹² We want to do something different at Celebration Center because there are already dozens of churches, in half an hour's drive, where you can have the regular stuff and people are not going, so we want to present something different to try to reach them. So we want to sing praises that are meaningful to

¹Audain interview, 8 April 1991; Weeks interview, 6 April 1991; Jocelyn Fay, 19 April 1991; Youth Group interview, 16 April 1991; Celebration, videocassette.

²[Anonymous], BCC, 9 September 1989.

³[Anonymous], "Discussion and Comments," Focus Group Meeting Report, Colton, CA, 6 July 1989, 1.

⁴[Anonymous], *ibid.*, 2.

⁵[Anonymous], *ibid.*, 4.

⁶[Anonymous], BCC, 9 September 1989.

⁷R. [Anonymous], BCC, 26 August 1989.

⁸Yvonne [Anonymous], BCC, 23 September 1989.

⁹Deleon interview, 5 August 1991.

¹⁰Bettle interview, 26 March 1991; Gillespie interview, 19 March 1991; Long interview, 25 March 1991; Youth Group interview, 16 April 1991; Charles Scriven, interview by author, College Place, WA, 28 April 1991.

¹¹[Anonymous], BCC, 9 September 1989.

¹²Manlyn [Anonymous], BCC, 24 February 1990.

them.¹ I am an old-fashioned Adventist in my seventies. I don't like your loud music, but since I heard we are losing 70 percent of our young people and this way interests them, I will not criticize your church but will pray that God will bless what you are doing.² Our young people just have not seen the church as a dynamic and relevant organization. . . . The Celebration experience is an attempt to be more relevant, to focus more on the more important kinds of things and not only external concerns and to try to teach Adventism to worship more and criticize less.³ I think that Adventist worship in the Western world needs much more familiarity with contemporary music . . . to be relevant to the most number of people. I, therefore, applaud an involvement [like at Celebration Center] with contemporary music.⁴

The atmosphere of Celebration Center is generated in part by its emphases of (1) love, acceptance, forgiveness, and healing; (2) *God made real*--the presence of the Holy Spirit and the assurance of salvation; and (3) certain pragmatic and congregational ecclesiastical trends.

1. *Love, acceptance, forgiveness, and healing*

On 31 January 1991 a letter from a prisoner to Simpson illustrates this first fundamental principle:

Your message has been an inspiration to me and a great blessing to my ministry here in prison. . . . I use your stories and excerpts from your tapes to witness to and counsel with fellow inmates here. By the grace of God, I feel I have found a fantastic church I can come home to. . . . A minister is human and each one is unique in his own way, but you have so much love for your congregation and they in turn love you. Most churches lack this and are dying because of lack of love. Because of your great love for the ministry and your flock your church is growing by leaps and bounds and the Lord is blessing all of you.⁵

Commitment to love, acceptance, and forgiveness is publicly affirmed and modeled by leaders. Celebration Center is viewed as a people-centered church where members are available to help

¹Susan Wear in C. and S. Wear interview, 26 March 1991.

²V. [Anonymous], BCC, 26 August 1989.

³Steve Daily, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 3 April 1991; Muñoz interview, 20 March 1991

⁴Heise interview, 20 August 1991.

⁵Marc [Anonymous] to Dan Simpson, 31 January 1991.

and support each other. In this atmosphere, people find healing.¹ The following comments are representative of those perceptions:

I love the Adventist message. I am proud of my truth. I don't ever want to lose that. But I have found something at Celebration Center that I have not been able to find for a long time: a conscious effort to accept, love and promote healing.² In this church it seems you can be who you are. We feel accepted. We are all brothers.³ Celebration is a joyful and healing process.⁴ Praise God for Celebration Center. Because I have been able to start my "healing journey" I can assist others [who are starting] their journey.⁵ The first Sabbath of Celebration Center I cried and for the first time I felt forgiven [for having failed] as a minister.⁶ I don't think there is [a] place for dogmatics in church services [anymore]. We come there to worship and to be healed. I come to worship to be healed and find thoughts that get me through the pain of my week. Simpson presents wonderful thoughts and makes them so clear that I can remember them for the whole week.⁷ [Leaders at Celebration Center] have a completely new view, from a SDA view point, of what church is all about. For them, church is to be a healing station. So, wherever you are in life, no matter what kind of hurt you have gone through or are going through, the church should be able to relate and help you, through Christ's grace. Their church service is set up that way: the music is done to get you in touch with God's grace; prayer ministry is geared toward hurting people.⁸

2. *God made real through the presence of the Holy Spirit, the assurance of*

salvation, worship

Celebration Center is also viewed as a God-centered church where God is made real.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is manifested in the believer's spiritual gifts and within the community

¹Donna Curtis, Sheila Darrell, Liz Doss, Thomas Frederick, Alfred Lee, and Archie Ayres interviewed in *Celebration*, videocassette; Edna Gallington, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 19 April 1991, hand-written notes; Robert Tomlin, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 10 April 1991; Dorothy Mensink, interview by author, 23 April 1991, hand-written notes; H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991; Halstead interview, 20 March 1991; Youth Group interview, 16 April 1991; Marilyn [Anonymous] to Osborne, 4 July 1990.

²Virginia [Anonymous] to Stephen Gifford, 14 May 1990.

³Youth Group interview, 16 April 1991.

⁴Adams [Anonymous], BCC, 24 March 1990.

⁵Karen [Anonymous], BCC, 23 April 1990.

⁶Audain interview, 8 April 1991.

⁷Moore interview, 22 August 1991.

⁸Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991.

worshipping together. Believers experience the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of God, the assurance of salvation, as well as the ministry of the Spirit's gifts to human beings.¹

Pastor Dan, I am a "home-grown" Adventist who hasn't gone to church in years. I heard you at Azure Hills. Here at Celebration Center, the Spirit is present and God has renewed Himself to me. Thanks for providing this, for living your beliefs and making God real.² I appreciate Celebration Center for exhibiting and preaching the same loving, joyful, forgiving God and Savior I know and love.³ Thank you for the sermons on forgiveness. I needed the reassurance.⁴ I felt drawn to Dan's preaching. He always preaches salvation and the assurance of salvation. Finally, I got the assurance of salvation.⁵ Thank you for Celebration Center! The presence of the Holy Spirit is here. I am "filled" for the week ahead.⁶ I loved the music today. It gave me loving chills and I really felt the Holy Spirit.⁷ We do not want to match any charismatic churches. . . . Never once had we ever had a discussion in staff meeting or anywhere about some charismatic churches that are doing something, therefore, we have to. That has never been part of what we are doing, but being real has been a part of New Life Victorious, our small groups and every thing we do: the touches, the welcoming and the hugging. Let's be real with our God.⁸ A friend, whom we have spent years praying for, came to Celebration Center and experienced Christ. Christ healed his marriage which was falling apart. Thank God.⁹ I am much more intimate with God now compared to five years ago thanks to celebration worship.¹⁰ This knowledge and the touch of the hands [during the garden of prayer] help to communicate God's love to me. It is being touched by the very hands of God. Because God's people are His hands and feet on earth.¹¹ Celebration Center is more concerned with the presence of God and

¹Audain interview, 8 April 1991; Daily interview, 3 April 1991; Mensink interview, 23 April 1991; Wilcox interview, 21 March 1991; Simmons interview, 22 August 1991; Susan Wear in C. and S. Wear interview, 26 March 1991; Gary Peterson interviewed in Celebration, videocassette; Don [Anonymous] to Gifford; Marilyn [Anonymous] to Gifford.

²[Anonymous], BCC, 26 August 1989.

³Mendith [Anonymous], BCC, 23 September 1989.

⁴Alice [Anonymous], BCC, 18 November 1989.

⁵Simmons interview, 22 August 1991.

⁶[Anonymous], BCC, 2 December 1989.

⁷Deanne [Anonymous], BCC, 12 December 1989.

⁸Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁹[Anonymous], BCC, 26 August 1989.

¹⁰Muñoz interview, 20 March 1991.

¹¹Dyone Shelden in Ray and Dyone Shelden, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 6 February 1993, hand-written notes.

realizing the presence of God in the here and now than . . . in the present, in eschatological issues.¹

3. *A pragmatic church experience exhibiting challenging congregationalist trends*

In addition to shifts in theological emphases, Celebration Center has revised its working model of church structure.

We see Celebration Center also as a place where we in leadership can have the freedom to experiment... I see that trend [congregationalism] very positively. The idea of a whole world structure is not biblical. It has come out of our belief in denominationalism. I do not believe in denominationalism to the extent I used to, to the extent our leaders would. I believe to the extent that it is good for a local church to be concerned about the people in Pakistan or Switzerland, to have a mission concept. I think that could be expressed locally but it needs also to be expressed world-wide. I don't know what it would take. I don't think on those levels. I think only locally.²

Celebration Center is perceived as a leader within Adventism in its response to North American culture. The Center is also viewed as challenging the "status quo" of the North American Adventism and bringing to the forefront questions regarding a more congregational type of church organization.

I like your church. I grew up in the church, but didn't like it. This church shows me a different side to the SDA church. I am in the Navy, so I don't always get to come, but when I do, I come.³ Dan is trying to find something that works. He is not an intellectual or philosophical "animal," [nor] a student of history. I don't think he sees himself as a head of a column. We are all marching into a new direction to redefine what Adventism is. . . . Simpson is definitively a challenge to SDA structure which does not know what to do with Celebration Center.⁴

¹Dave VanDenburgh, interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 10 April 1991.

²Simpson interview, 2 April 1991. It is interesting to note that the perceptions describing a church trend toward congregationalism, whether they are related to the Celebration Center experience or not, are evidenced in some of Gifford's concerns addressed at the Southeastern California Conference workers' annual meeting in Pine Springs Ranch, CA: "We are now entering the times when the conference cannot guarantee a lifetime job. No matter how confident we are. And the reason is simple, because as we have edged more and more toward congregationalism. . . . We are on that path and leaders can do all they want to try to keep the church from not going on that path, but the train is on that track and it is moving and going. . . . If time lasts long enough, you give us seventy-five years, or less, and we will be a congregational church. Now, frankly, I don't want that, I would like to stop it, but there is no way of stopping that. You pastors, you want it there, because you wanted less and less conference control in your life. . . . But as we lose control, you also lose job security. The two go hand in hand. You cannot have one and not the other." Stephen Gifford, "President's Address," Pine Springs Ranch, CA, 20 August 1991, audiocassette recorded by author.

³Chris [Anonymous], BCC, 15 July 1989

⁴Bettle interview, 26 March 1991.

Personally, I prefer a more traditional style [of worship] service, as I suppose most members still do. However, I feel we must be willing to at least permit different options to reach a changing and diverse culture. This cultural change is affecting all of us to some degree. This is 1990, not 1930. This is American culture. Changes we cannot imagine are breaking upon us. We must move to meet the final events.¹ Celebration Center has tended to be quite independent, quite congregational, regardless of the rest of the denomination. . . . One thing that Celebration Center has done and that I agree with, is to say, a church has got to have the flexibility to create structures that are right for it and not be so tied to traditional ways of doing things that there is no room to move.² The celebration church type of experience is causing a tremendous shaking in the church structure, its funding, but it may not be all bad.³ Celebration Center is a new model of church but I do not think it has to be the only one.⁴

Two means are recognized as particularly important in fostering Celebration Center's atmosphere and in achieving its mission of making God real through love, acceptance, forgiveness, and a different church structure: (1) worship and (2) lay service/ministry.

1. Worship services are viewed as celebrative, holistic, and biblically based.

The worship service--particularly the music--is the most salient feature of Celebration Center. Worship and music grab people's attention, and are the two subjects of most Blue Card Comments.⁵ Those who appreciate the different worship style at Celebration Center usually cite biblical teachings to support it. They consider their worship more celebrative, participatory and holistic than that of traditional Adventist worship services.⁶ Music draws constant and diverse reactions, all of which are treated in the third section of this chapter.⁷

¹Carl [Anonymous] to Stephen Gifford, 6 September 1990.

²VanDenburgh interview, 10 April 1991.

³Dave Osborne interview, 3 April 1991.

⁴Beall interview, 3 April 1991.

⁵For a detailed analysis of the BCC, see section "Inside Celebration Center--Worship and Music."

⁶Terry [Anonymous] to Stephen Gifford, 17 August 1990; Moore interview, 22 August 1991; H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991; Pala interview, 16 March 1991; Holder, Peterson, and Joan interviewed in Celebration, videocassette.

⁷For example, see BCC on 19, 26 August 1989; 16, 23 September 1989; 25 November 1989; 2, 30 December 1989; 13, 20 January 1990; 10, 17 March 1990, and 5 May 1990.

This church family has taught me [that] I can cast my burden on Jesus. I enjoy so much worshipping God in song and physical expression!¹ I have been very active in the Redlands SDA church and my philosophy of worship has been the same as yours--my attempts at creating change at my church have been met with resistance over a four-year period and I'm burned out. It has been such a relief to finally feel like I can worship God!!!² Your whole church is centered on worship. That's great. Thanks.³ I really appreciate the fact that we have a church like Celebration Center where we can worship.⁴ [Celebration worship] is a deliberate effort on the part of some people to restore a kind of worship. We have become so cerebral, cognitive and objective, so intellectual, we have down-played the role of emotions and the affective domain.⁵ Tensions are there at Celebration Center. But there is a lot of movement going on. We had people complaining about Celebration, but what is good is that we are reaching people that we were not reaching before; also, the issue of worship, how we worship, how we are total people, right and left brain, I am glad is finally addressed.⁶ I understood, if you want to take the Bible for what it says, there are lots of ways to worship and it is not [just] sitting down and singing a hymn.⁷ The music and children's participation is wonderful.⁸ The new upbeat music is WONDERFUL! Thanks.⁹ Rich!! What a terrific worship experience. This band is THE BEST!!¹⁰ Worship [in the Bible] is always accompanied by physical expression overriding personality. It is the attitude "Every knee shall bow."¹¹

2. Lay ministry is emphasized and driven by spiritual gifts and groups.

At Celebration Center, service--ministry--is affirmed in the teaching of spiritual gifts.

Through them, all believers enter the privilege of ministry. The creation of small recovery or support groups is one area of service where ministry can be either given or received, and is available on Sabbath

¹[Anonymous], BCC, 9 September 1989.

²Donna [Anonymous], BCC, 16 September 1989.

³Karl [Anonymous], BCC, 25 November 1989.

⁴David [Anonymous], BCC, 17 March 1990.

⁵VanDenburgh interview, 10 April 1991.

⁶Mallery interview, 8 April 1991.

⁷Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁸R., M., and gang [Anonymous], BCC, 1 July 1989.

⁹Carol [Anonymous], BCC, January 1990.

¹⁰Carlene [Anonymous], BCC, 20 January 1990.

¹¹Dyone Shelden in R. and D. Shelden, "On Celebration Church Services," 15 February 1991, audiocassette recorded by R. and D. Shelden for the author.

or during the week. Overall, lay ministry is the subject of fewer comments than is worship or any of the other items described above.¹

I cannot tell you how people get excited when they discover their spiritual gifts.² I never thought a ministry such as this would be possible within our denomination, but I'm overjoyed that it's here. Every time I come, I leave ministered to.³ Your Twelve Step Spiritual Journey class is a blessing. It is wonderful to be an SDA and be able to be in Sabbath school in a Twelve Step class. God bless you all.⁴ I have received growth and healing because of the groups on Monday nights and Sabbath mornings. Keep the groups continuing.⁵ I love how the ministry of Celebration Center works! I want to be a lay pastor. . . .⁶ I've been gone for a month and I have never been so glad to return to a place as Celebration Center. Praise God for this place--a place and a God to share with others.⁷ My wife and extended family here have really appreciated the 'Bradshaw' videos. Thank you.⁸ I'm being fed by the 12-Step group!⁹ We really appreciate the New Life Victorious Program. We have received so much healing.¹⁰ Celebration is great! Introduce new songs. Let's have a food gathering for homeless.¹¹ When there is true revival, there is a life change. When people find freedom and hope, they start ministering to each other, feeding the poor. We have a group of people in our church who every Sabbath feed up to 150 people. They do it all themselves. God gave them the idea.¹²

Emerging Definition of a Celebration Church

Based on the description of Celebration Center in chapter 2 and the perceptions about it in this first section of chapter 3, we can synthesize a tentative definition of a celebration church.

Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991; Doss interview in Celebration, videocassette; Mensink interview, 23 April 1991

²Halstead interview, 20 March 1991.

³[Anonymous], BCC, 26 August 1989.

⁴[Anonymous], BCC, 12 August 1989.

⁵[Anonymous], BCC, 22 July 1989.

⁶Jan [Anonymous], BCC, 23 September 1989.

⁷[Anonymous], BCC, 2 September 1989.

⁸Daniel and C. [Anonymous], BCC, 12 December 1989.

⁹Dennis [Anonymous], BCC, 23 September 1989.

¹⁰Richard [Anonymous], BCC, 30 June 1990.

¹¹Eric [Anonymous], BCC, 4 November 1989.

¹²Sisk interview, 8 April 1991.

Within the North American Adventist context, a celebration church is a church attempting to be more relevant. Specific characteristics include: (1) visionary leadership; (2) a warm, casual, and joyous atmosphere created primarily by a more participative, creative, and emotional type of worship; and (3) active lay ministries and relational evangelism.

These salient characteristics are undergirded by three clusters of concepts: (1) in ecclesiology--the church as a body and healing station encouraging lay leadership and redesigning typical congregational structures advocated by the denomination; (2) in soteriology--an emphasis on God's grace, His love, acceptance, and forgiveness of people who, assured of their salvation, relate the same way to their neighbors and celebrate in worship; and, finally, (3) in pneumatology--an emphasis on the function of the Holy Spirit in "making God real" and related to human lives in the discovery and practice of both worship and the spiritual gifts of all believers in ministry.¹

A celebration church cannot be defined solely by its worship style. A celebration church is not characterized simply by contemporary music, a screen on which to project lively praise songs, or a variety of musical instruments such as drums, electric guitars, piano, flutes, and synthesizers.² As Simpson and Sisk comment, what people see on Sabbath morning is only the "tip of the iceberg." Worship is only part of our total philosophy; a celebration church is more than just "doing" a different worship service. It is a complex package involving theology, and "theology is very important."³

¹Similar types of definitions are given by people in the following interviews: Audain, 8 April 1991; Beall, 3 April 1991; Baumgartner, 17 March 1991; Bettle, 26 March 1991; Camacho, 9 April 1991; Mohr, 8 April 1991; VanDenburgh, 10 April 1991; Sisk, 8 April 1991; Elizabeth Schultz in C. and E. interview, 21 August 1991; Paul Bissel, interview by author, Portland, OR, 7 May 1991; Paul Richardson, interview by author, Portland, OR, 3 May 1991; Tim and Bev Ruskjer, interview by author, Grants Pass, OR, 16 August 1991. See also Myron Widmer, "Adventist Worship Celebration-Style," Adventist Review, 1 November 1990, 12-14.

²Susan Chin, unfortunately, uses such a simplistic definition in her research, "A Comparative Study of the Music in the Traditional and Celebration Churches" (Master's project, Andrews University, 1991), 8.

³Simpson interview, 2 April 1991; Sisk interview, 8 April 1991.

Perceptions of a Similar Church

New Life Celebration Church--A Parallel Case Study

On 23 September 1989, visitor Leona [Anonymous] wrote this message on one of the Blue Card Comments at Celebration Center: "Very good service. Similar to my church in Milwaukie, Oregon."¹ Her statement is investigated in this second section. It briefly examines the history and basic principles of the Milwaukie Church, which was re-named "New Life Celebration Church, Seventh-day Adventists," in 1990.² It presents the positive perceptions of attendees of the New Life congregation and of some outside it. These perceptions are drawn from church documents, papers, correspondence filed at the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and thirty interviews of regular attendees, pastors in the area, and conference officials who have attended New Life.

In 1983 David Snyder, after a stint as conference evangelist, assumed the pastorate of the Seventh-day Adventist Milwaukie Church located on King Road. It soon became the fastest-growing church in North America.³ By 1985 the King Road church was bulging. Finally, on 1 January 1988, the congregation moved into temporary facilities at the New Hope Community Church in Clackamas, Oregon, waiting to enter its own facilities under construction on a ten-acre site bordered by Lake Road and Oregon highway 224.⁴

¹Leona [Anonymous], BCC, 23 September 1989.

²"Milwaukie" (90-91), Oregon Conference Executive Committee Minutes, 24 June 1990.

³Morten Juberg, "'Us and They,' the Story of the Milwaukie Church," NPUC Gleaner, 7 May 1990, 4, 5. In 1982, the Milwaukie Church membership stood at 332, in 1991 (NLCC) at 941. (Jay Prall, "Data," hand-written information, April 1991; also "1991 Church Attendance List.")

⁴Janet Mullet and Jay Prall, "Milwaukie Members Move Services to New Site," NPUC Gleaner, 7 March 1988, 17; Sam Bennet, "Milwaukie River Plan, New Church Gets Blessing," Clackamas Co. Review, 27 July 1989, 1, 2; idem, "Ground Broken on SDA Church," Clackamas Co. Review, 19 October 1989, 2; Linda McCarthy, "Church Under Construction in Milwaukie," The Oregonian, 26 October 1989, 10; Shell McKedy, "New Church Building Going Up in Milwaukie," The Oregonian, 29 November 1990, 9; Jay Prall, "Ground Broken for New Milwaukie Sanctuary," NPUC Gleaner, 18 December 1989, 22.

In 1991, New Life Celebration Church defined its mission as first "to proclaim the Love and Power of Jesus" and second to (a) "encourage people to accept Christ as Lord and Savior"; (b) "provide an atmosphere for personal Christian growth and active, caring fellowship and service"; and finally, (c) "provide education toward a better understanding of body, mind and spirit."¹

Three means are understood to accomplish Christ's ministry in the Milwaukie community. In George Barna's terminology and as described in chapter 2, the description of these means is actually the vision statement of New Life Celebration Church.²

1. The Church: It strives "to uphold the teachings and principles of the Seventh-day Adventist world church"; it is "an umbrella of love, acceptance and forgiveness for all--its members, those seeking membership, and those who choose to worship with the church without making specific commitments;" it is "a place where personal and spiritual growth is provided for the young, the old, the single, and family units."³

2. Evangelism: It brings "people to Christ and teaches them the great truths of God's Word"; it includes, "as a high priority, the reaching out to former and non-active Adventists in the Portland area."⁴

3. Worship: It offers "uplifting and meaningful forms of music, preaching, and a feeling of community among the people." It presents "God's plan for humankind" in a "clear and appealing" way, opens people to "the Holy Spirit's conviction," and offers "hope and healing through positive gospel-centered messages."⁵ It is modeled after the three parts of worship exhibited in Ps 95: (a) a joyful and exuberant celebration ("Come let us sing . . ."), (b) a quiet and theocentric time (kneeling

¹Building to Touch Lives . . . By His Spirit (Milwaukie, OR: New Life Celebration Church, 1991), 7.

²See Chapter 2 p. 84.

³Building, 8.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

before God in repentance), and (c) the proclamation of the Word of God ("Today if you hear His voice...").¹

The leadership of New Life Celebration Church has developed an eight-fold mission strategy:

- (1) Encourage our people to develop relationships with the unchurched and always be on the alert to bring someone to church or other church-related events. Teach our people to pray daily to meet someone with whom they can share their faith. We need to regain a burden for the unsaved around us.
- (2) We must help our people to discover their Spiritual Gifts and teach them to use those Gifts in and outside the church. We must function like the [New Testament] church where no one is without ministry in the body of Christ. Spiritual Gifts Seminars will be held three times a year on Sabbath morning.
- (3) There will be a strong commitment to prayer among the people. By using the altar of prayer, seminars on prayer, and prayer awareness programs we will encourage our church to become a praying church.
- (4) The Sabbath school will be used for specialty classes to train and disciple our people for better service and Christian commitment. Specialty classes will be held each quarter lasting for four weeks at a time.
- (5) The Worship Service will become a great evangelistic tool. Our services must be meaningful, professional, and tastefully done so as to attract those who attend. We must strive for excellence in all our services. Soul winning and decision making must be part of every service. Our people will be encouraged to bring people to church so God can deal with their souls.
- (6) We will use our "Mid-Week-Service-Group" to reproduce itself until Wednesday evenings are a main event in the church. This group will become a force in the church and needs its own mission.
- (7) Home Bible Fellowship will continue with greater promotion and leadership. These groups will become a major soul winning force in the church as time goes on. These groups are a must for this church to grow effectively and accomplish its purpose.
- (8) Stewardship is a Bible Doctrine that will be taught until our church is following the New Testament principles. Stewardship is more than dollars, it is faithfulness in all areas of the Christian life.²

Analysis of these vision and mission statements reveals the following key aspects of New Life Celebration Church:

1. The atmosphere is described with words such as active, personable, caring, as having a "feeling of community," positive, and appealing.

¹David Snyder, "Pilgrimage of a Celebration Church," First International Worship Conference, "Called to Worship," Portland, OR, 16 April 1991, audiocassette; idem, "The Milwaukie Experience," 1, 3, pamphlet.

²Snyder, "The Milwaukie Experience," 1990, 6, pamphlet.

2. It understands the church as the body of Christ, which functions as: (a) a center of education, (b) an evangelistic spiritual fellowship, (c) a serving community and, finally, (d) a place of hope and healing. The emphasis is most prominent in the first two points.¹

3. Particular emphases are in theology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and missiology. The mission and vision statements emphasize concepts such as power, love, acceptance, forgiveness, worship, "meaningful" music forms, an altar of prayer, lay ministry/spiritual gifts, prayer, commitment, the Holy Spirit's conviction, home Bible fellowship, and, in "high priority," the reaching out to former and non-active Adventists.

From these short remarks, nine similarities with Celebration Center can be discovered:² (1) the use of "celebration" in the name of the church, (2) the atmosphere, (3) an emphasis on "love, acceptance, and forgiveness," (4) "meaningful" worship/music, (5) emphasis on spiritual gifts, (6) alternative Sabbath school classes, (7) commitment to Adventism, (8) interest in former Adventists, and (9) small home groups.

Church documents, correspondence, articles, and interviews augment this list of nine similarities, suggesting fourteen similarities and seven differences. These similarities and differences are discussed in the next two sections.

Similarities with Celebration Center

In 1991, New Life Celebration Church exhibited the following similarities with Celebration Center:

¹In the eight-step strategy, words related to education ("growth," "teaching," "preaching," "principles," "gospel-centered messages," "seminars," "specialty classes," "teach," "train," "help," "discover") appear sixteen times. Words related to evangelism ("share faith," "encourage to accept Christ," "attract," "disciple," "soul winning," "decision making," "use of gifts for the outside," "the unchurched") appear eleven times. Finally, the notion of healing/hope and the metaphor of the body of Christ appear only once.

²See "Celebration Philosophy and Teaching, Mission/Vision Statement, Organization and Structure," Chap. 2 pp. 84-96.

1. Both selected a name that includes "celebration." Don Hawley initiated the change of name at New Life Celebration Church. The name expressed the desire to clearly communicate the essence of the life and mission of the church to the surrounding community. According to Dan Snyder, five names were selected and submitted to the church board, which then took elements of each to create a new name--New Life Celebration Church. In 1989, this name was submitted to the church family, voted, and accepted after three weeks' consideration.¹

2. Both churches had a fresh, positive, warm (feeling of fellowship), relational (personable, caring, casual, relaxed), non-judgmental, free, creative, unpredictable, and relevant (appealing, meaningful) atmosphere.²

I believe that . . . our responsibility is simply to provide an environment for people to be saved. It is God's job to save them, but we provide the environment.³ What impressed me most about the New Life Celebration Church was, there was less feeling of judgment going on. . . . There, people were dressed more casual and more adorned than some people you might expect in church, but no judgment was being pronounced.⁴ There is a freedom here that there is not in other places.⁵ I have a twelve and a seven-year old and they have never shown any interest in going to church until I came here. They look forward to it now. That is exciting to me. . . . They make comments about the worship service. They say they enjoy the singing and they even

¹Jay Prall, "Church/School Name Change Policy Voted," *Communiqué*, June 1990, 3; Dan Snyder, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 30 April 1991; Don and Bonnie Hawley, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 23 April 1991; Evelyn and Marvin Blehm, interview by author, Portland, OR, 29 April 1991. Because of the volatile nature of discussions surrounding the term "celebration" and the high visibility of the New Life Celebration Church, the Oregon Conference requested in 1990 that this church postpone its proposed name change ("Milwaukie Name Change Proposal," 90-77; Oregon Conference Executive Committee Minutes, 24 May 1990).

²Dan [Anonymous] to Don Jacobsen, 27 July 1986; Janice Matthews to Don Jacobsen, 25 July 1986; Snyder, "Pilgrimage of a Celebration Church"; idem, *A Fresh Breeze Blowing* (Milwaukie, OR: David Snyder), 1, 4, 10, 18, 21; Juberg, "Us and They," 4; Alf Birch, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 15 April 1991; Bissel interview, 7 May 1991; D. and B. Hawley interview, 23 April 1991; Jeannette Martinez, interview by author, Portland, OR, 8 May 1991; Bill and Nancy McCord, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 30 April 1991; Jay Prall, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 22 April 1991; Richardson interview, 3 May 1991; Doug Simcock, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 2 May 1991; Dan Snyder interview, 30 April 1991; William [Anonymous] to David Snyder, 22 August 1990.

³David Snyder interviewed by author, Clackamas, OR, 22 April 1991, #1.

⁴Kenneth Schmidt in Kenneth and Jan Schmidt, interview by author, Vancouver, WA, 25 April 1991.

⁵Darlene Anderson, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 29 April 1991.

make comments about the sermons in which before they were really never interested. . . . I believe it is an atmosphere more than it is a difference or what we are or are not doing. What we have, I believe, at New Life Celebration Church are people who are excited about their church, who look forward to being together as church family and who basically sense the church is new. . . . This is a church on the move.¹ My wife and I are kind of expressive and responsive people. . . . I like to be in an environment where there is expectation, responsiveness and openness, and where people are not afraid of having the freedom to try new approaches to worship. I like to be in an environment where you are free to discuss some of the taboos of our faith.² I don't know how you can show love, acceptance, and forgiveness in silence, especially to visitors, for example. That does not promote the fellowship God wants us to have.³

3. In their teaching, both churches emphasize two concepts:

a. Love, acceptance, and forgiveness--the gospel, the assurance of salvation⁴

We never said [that] in our congregation jewelry is okay. We said, jewelry, miniskirts, jeans, etc., will never be an issue if you come here. The greatest thing which needs to happen here is between you and God, to find healing and fellowship, and we want to provide an environment where that can happen.⁵ I was not raised an SDA but I know when I first came into the church there was a lot more emphasis on outward appearance and what you put on your plate and the length of your skirt. . . . It seems now, at least at the Milwaukie [New Life Celebration] Church, people are more concerned with the inner man and his relationship to God and the good news of the gospel.⁶ The acceptance of me at the church helped me to understand how Jesus accepted me. It made me want to change for Him instead of changing just because I had to obey rules. . . . It changed my motives and when my motives were changed, it was so much easier to change certain behaviors. . . . Now I see more the love of Jesus than the anger of God.⁷ I used to be a Christian out of fear. I was not going to make it. I worked harder. I felt that much further away from God all the time because I felt I was never good enough. I don't know what that was that put this idea in me. I was not taught salvation by works but I don't know what made me feel that way. It was not what the pastors taught, it was what they did not teach: the simple gospel.⁸ I was an SDA minister. . . . All I had was a bunch of proof texts. I could not articulate the gospel

¹Glenn Munson, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 26 April 1991.

²Dick E. Hanson, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 25 April 1991.

³Nancy McCord, interview in B. and N. McCord interview, 30 April 1991.

⁴Snyder, *A Fresh Breeze*, 17. These three concepts were even printed as a logo on the Milwaukie Church bulletin in 1991. Darlene Anderson, interview by author, Portland, OR, 29 April 1991; John Brunt, interview by author, College Place, WA, 28 April 1991; John Corban, interview by author, Portland, OR, 8 May 1991; B. and N. McCord interview, 30 April 1991; Prall interview, 22 April 1991; Richardson interview, 3 May 1991; K. and J. Schmidt interview, 25 April 1991.

⁵Snyder interview, 22 April 1991.

⁶Mary Mace, interview by author, Portland, OR, 6 May 1991.

⁷Martinez interview, 8 May 1991.

⁸Anderson interview, 29 April 1991.

in any way. Now I have forgotten some of the proof texts but I can articulate the gospel of Jesus Christ and I praise Him for that. . . . It is just like the blind man. I know one thing: I was blind and now I can see. I am having the most wonderful experience in Jesus Christ that I ever had and it is because of this church body. . . . I finally figured out what the gospel of Jesus Christ is, largely through Dave Snyder's sermons. And so, it just completely remade me. I remember, I think, it was two or three years ago when I sent my Christmas letter. This is so amazing, I am in my sixties and this is the happiest year of my entire life. . . . I finally know who I am in Jesus Christ. I have a self-respect that I did not have and, surely, a self-assurance that I never had. The average SDA is still riddled with doubt, fear, and confusion. . . . I don't know how you love the gospel and are free without expressing some joy. I have to express it! [New Life] Celebration Church allows joy, it is legal. People are not going to be suspicious if you smile. They give persons the permission to enjoy their God. . . . They don't have to feel guilty. They can praise Him and love Him openly.¹

b. Making God real--getting to know God

Celebration Church has personally changed my heart, my relationship with the Lord. . . . I was tired going through the motions of being an SDA. I believed in what the church had to say but I was tired of having a religion that was empty of emotion, of a relationship with the Lord. What I found in the Celebration Church is an environment that not only retains the traditional values I was raised with, but also an environment that puts me in touch with that God who loves me so much that there is nothing that I can do that would cause Him to turn His back and say, "You are never going to make it." It has changed my life in ways I could spend hours to share [from] the depth of my soul. It has changed my life incredibly.² [I was a Catholic], this is the first SDA church that I am attending. If I would have entered into the SDA church through another door, I would have never stayed, because the other churches are not like this one. They are too much like the Catholics. In the other SDA churches I have visited, we get up and down, up and down, there is no devotion to God. The focus is not on God. There is no liberty to bring your devotion to God. It is too passive. Such churches cannot attract Catholics, they are too much alike. . . . Here there is God. There are not rules but there is God. If you want to wear jewels you wear them, if you don't, you don't. It is strictly between you and your God.³

4. Like Celebration Center, New Life Celebration Church promoted meaningful,

Spirit-led and participatory worship services where God is considered the audience and members are considered the actors.⁴

¹Don Hawley in D. and B. Hawley interview, 23 April 1991.

²Prall interview, 7 May 1991.

³Joe Barnett, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 1 May 1991.

⁴Snyder interview, 22 April 1991; idem, "Adventism in the 90's: How Our Congregation Survived Change and Growth," John W. Osborn Lectureship, Riverside, CA, 27 October 1991, audiocassette; Evelyn Blehm in Evelyn and Marvin Blehm, interview by author, Portland, OR, 29 April 1991; B. and N. McCord interview, 30 April 1991; Corban interview, 8 May 1991; Bruce Fox, interview by author, Portland, OR, 6 May 1991; Dick Hanson, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 25 April 1991; Bunnie Hawley in D. and B. Hawley interview, 23 April 1991; Martinez interview, 8 May 1991; Snyder interview, 22 April 1991.

People are tired of this old format: You come to church, you sit in the same pews, nobody hardly speaks to you, maybe you will have somebody at the door with a guests' book, you can walk in and walk out and no one hardly ever speaks to you.¹ Being young, I really appreciated the fresh, innovative worship format. It was not predictable, dull, or boring.² The church service is not a script-event. It is a heart-event. It is not what the bulletin says this is when to stand up and sit down. It is an event that is designed to bring you into closer contact with the Lord.³ In worship God is the audience, we are the actors. That is not after traditional SDA thinking. Traditional SDA thinking is "We came here and now God, Do something for me." That is totally opposite to "I come here because I want to do something for God. I want to worship, praise, honor Him. I want to confess, pray, sing and glorify His name". And then God is blessed. . . . We try to change the whole mentality on that.⁴

The two worship services were similar in six additional areas:

- a. Scriptural grounding. Leaders of both congregations justified the changes in their services through biblical support.⁵
- b. Musical innovation. The worship music of both services was contemporary, including instruments such as the flute, synthesizer, guitars, and drums.⁶
- c. Direct communion with God. During praising times, they both encouraged members to directly address God and leave time and space for the Holy Spirit to move.⁷ At New Life Celebration Church, as at Celebration Center, a significant portion of time on Sabbath morning was dedicated to expressing praises to God. It usually progressed from upbeat, joyous celebration to more sensitive songs that help "people get their heart tuned with the Lord."⁸

¹Evelyn Blehm in E. and M. interview, 29 April 1991.

²Simcock interview, 2 May 1991.

³Prall interview, 22 April 1991.

⁴Snyder interview, 22 April 1991.

⁵Snyder, "Pilgrimage of a Celebration Church"; idem, "The Milwaukie Experience," 1, 3, pamphlet.

⁶Juberg, "Us and They," 4, 5.

⁷Snyder, "Adventism in the 90's: How Our Congregation Survived Change and Growth"; Evelyn Blehm in E. and M. Blehm interview, 29 April 1991.

⁸Juberg, "Us and They," 4.

One of the great values of our experience at the Milwaukie Church [New Life Celebration Church] was [that] we came to [experience] the value of praising the Lord in a way we had never done before. . . . There is a fresh approach to worship. . . . They are trying to make room for the Holy Spirit.¹ Instead of singing about Jesus, you are singing to Jesus and to God. You are praising and thanking Him. It just seems that the focus, instead of being on yourself and how bad you are--like a worm-- and [how] you don't deserve all this, the focus is really on God, how great He is, His saving power, the victory He gives us, and what He can do for us to equip us to be His witnesses. The focus is on Him!²

d. Physical movement. Both churches offered opportunities for body expression during worship.³

I raise my hands because I remember who I was, what God did for me in this church, how my life has changed, how He helped me in my finances, and brought a lady into my life that loves me like I have never been loved. We are happy, we pray together, we read our Bible together, we communicate, and now we don't have arguments [as I used to have in my other relationship]. We can go out and love and serve other people because we have so much love to give like God gave us. Then, they want to know why I would raise my hands to God? This is why. When I do it, it is like "Thank you God for what you really did on the Cross." It has meaning now. . . . I want to shout for joy.⁴ I had visited pentecostal churches when studying at La Sierra and I was extremely uncomfortable with the speaking in tongues, raising hands, and emotionalism. I was uncomfortable. When I came here I saw no pressure put on anybody. There was freedom to worship God in any way we felt appropriate.⁵ I am not a musician, but when I am moved, I like to clap to show my appreciation, approval, and gratitude. It seems a natural thing like children do. They do it just by instinct.⁶ I don't encourage hand raising but I don't discourage it. I really prefer they [church members] don't do it on Sabbath to be a friendly church--it is too disturbing, too threatening to visitors. . . . I would hope the day would come, with our new church, that Wednesday nights will be "the church" [service] and, on Sabbath, we are all conscious of visitors, of people who need Jesus, so conscientious [about our responsibility for] them that we put away our desire to clap our hands, or wave, or whatever, for the sake of those people! That

¹Corban interview, 8 May 1991.

²Martinez interview, 8 May 1991.

³Ibid. Snyder, however, often "flip-flopped" about his convictions on physical expression during Sabbath worship services. He first encouraged it, then "scolded" platform people for doing it, saying he wished it would only happen on Wednesday during the mid-week services. At his subsequent "Good News" congregation after he was requested to leave New Life Celebration Church, he went back to acceptance of body expression during Sabbath services (Prall, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 25 September 1995, hand-written notes).

⁴Marvin Blehm in E. and M. Blehm interview, 29 April 1991.

⁵Munson interview, 26 April 1991.

⁶Nancy McCord in B. and N. McCord interview, 30 April 1991.

takes an education among people and some don't understand that yet. They think we are trying to stifle the Spirit.¹

e. Place of prayer. During worship at New Life Celebration Church members were invited to an altar of prayer similar to the garden of prayer of Celebration Center. In both places, people came to a special place in front of the church to pray. There, in the altar or garden of prayer, lay pastors sometimes laid hands on people as a sign that they associated silently with their intercessions. As Snyder says, it is a touch very much needed today in big cities where there is so much loneliness.²

f. Evangelism. Both churches featured worship services that were primarily understood as an evangelistic meeting or "fishing/grabbing" time.³

We have a tough time doing evangelism, we have no place to do it. So our evangelism has to be our Sabbath morning [service]. Every Sabbath [church service] is an evangelistic meeting . . . because people come every week who don't know the Lord and have never been to the church.⁴ My main focus is to make the church [service] a time that is for everybody. But not only that, our focus during the church services is [on being] evangelistic. I always believed that the church should be evangelistic because if the church does not focus on evangelism it becomes a country club. We should not be exclusive.⁵

5. New Life Celebration Church and Celebration Center both made innovations in the practice of the ordinances of baptism and communion. For communion--twice to four times a year--the emphasis was on the bread and the wine and not on footwashing. The reason claimed at Celebration Center for this lack of emphasis was logistics--lack of space. The same was true for New Life, although for David Snyder, it appeared more theological, as he argued that there are a lot of American Adventists who are not convinced it is a sacrament that Jesus laid down.⁶

¹Snyder interview, 22 April 1991.

²Ibid. Also Prall interview, 22 April 1991.

³Snyder, "Pilgrimage of a Celebration Church."

⁴Ibid.

⁵Munson interview, 26 April 1991.

⁶Snyder interview, 22 April 1991. See also D. and B. Hawley interview, 23 April 1991; Corban interview, 8 May 1991; Prall interview, 22 April 1991.

Leaders at Celebration Center and New Life also innovated regarding the celebration of baptism. At Celebration Center they allowed non-ordained persons to perform it; at New Life the ordained pastors laid hands on the candidate and prayed after his or her immersion as a sign of his or her ordination to ministry according to the spiritual gifts received at baptism.¹ In both churches, leaders also innovated by performing marriages during Sabbath church services and communion on Friday evenings.²

6. Both churches favored ministry by all people through spiritual gifts--manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence.³

Our services are conservative by Christian standards across the board. Christians don't need to be concerned. But the renewed emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit is new. But that has been fostered by our [Oregon] Conference.⁴ I was afraid of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. I was scared to death. . . . I was not taught in the Holy Spirit. I have always warned against the power and the miracles because they were from the devil. This is how I was taught. So if anything is powerful like the Holy Spirit you [have] got to be careful.⁵ I never heard of a church talking about the Holy Spirit and what His gifts are. I never heard of that before. . . . I grew up. Pastor Snyder has [taught us]. He says, "Let's pray for the Holy Spirit and what His gifts are."⁶ Only in such a congregation where the gospel is preached can the gifts of the Holy Spirit become truly operative. The Holy Spirit does not empower legalism or an antichristian spirit.⁷ Here members are doing the evangelizing and the ministry.⁸

7. New Life Celebration Church and Celebration Center both provided alternatives to typical Sabbath School classes. Both churches were designed to meet the needs of people in the community, and were therefore regarded as an evangelistic tool. Organized under the umbrella of

¹Snyder interview, 22 April 1991.

²Evelyn Blehm in E. and M. Blehm interview, 29 April 1991; Anderson interview, 29 April 1991; Halstead interview, 20 March 1991; Audain interview, 8 April 1991; Dan Snyder interview, 30 April 1991.

³Anderson interview, 29 April 1991. The lay pastors' ministries program was started mid-1989 (E. Blehm in E. and M. Blehm interview, 29 April 1991.)

⁴Dan Snyder interview, 30 April 1991.

⁵Martinez interview, 8 May 1991.

⁶Evelyn Blehm in E. and M. Blehm interview, 29 April 1991.

⁷Don Hawley in D. and B. Hawley interview, 23 April 1991.

⁸Bill McCord in B. and N. McCord interview, 30 April 1991.

"Victorious Living" at the New Life Celebration Church, these classes met needs by encouraging people to be vulnerable and open to each other. Their success is indicated by the following participant responses:¹

I don't want to sing the praises of the Milwaukie Church [New Life Celebration Church] too much, because there is no heaven outside heaven. Milwaukie [New Life Celebration Church] is not perfect. I don't know if you can find a perfect church but I would say it is meeting the need of a lot of people.² Preaching the gospel and healing souls, central themes in the New Testament, are the heart of the support groups. Adventists have always believed in helping people become healthy anyway.³

8. Both churches advocated small group experiences in homes.⁴ In 1991, at New Life Celebration Church, home groups were still more a written ideal of the church's eight-step strategy than a functioning reality. Then only ten to fifteen groups were meeting. A well-attended midweek celebration, called "Preaching and Praise" (with no parallel at Celebration Center), was certainly the main reason for this slower development of groups at New Life; time-wise, it is indeed demanding for people to attend a midweek celebration as well as a small group meeting in the same week.

9. Both churches encouraged interest in and activities for former Adventists.⁵

I grew up as an SDA, I knew all the do's and don'ts, but I did not know the love of God and I deliberately went out and did this and that. I was angry. There was no love. But our Celebration church gives you that beauty of what God is and you want to be like Him. . . . People around America are sick and tired of the old SDA format. We are in a new era. We are wanting more. We want to know what God is really like. God has something of substance to offer. We want that, that which we feel we have not had before. We were told about the 2300 days and the mark of the beast. That is still very important but we also want to know God and about what kind of relationship we can have when committed to Him. When you are so committed to the Lord, you don't want to do these things that we have been told we cannot do. We preach about what God is all about. We don't want to hurt Him, because we love Him so

¹Snyder, "The Marriage," New Life Celebration Church sermon, 3 February 1990, 1, script; New Life News, Sept./Oct. 1991, 1; Jacqueline Piatt, "More on Milwaukie," NPUC Gleaner, July 1991, 3; Martinez interview, 8 May 1991; Prall interview, 7 May 1991; Betty Hiebert, interview by author, Gresham, OR, 7 May 1991.

²Mace interview, 6 May 1991.

³Karen Meyer, "Twelve-Step Group Grows at New Life Church," New Life Celebration Church News, November/December 1991, 2

⁴B. and N. McCord interview, 30 April 1991.

⁵Munson interview, 26 April 1991.

deeply and want Him hurrying [to come again]. We want to get ready. . . . I am tired of this world.¹

10. Both churches diverged from traditional Adventist patterns of church organization.

Although New Life's organization was not as developed as Celebration Center's, the two congregations exhibited the following organizational similarities:

a. Both fostered lay leadership according to spiritual gifts.

b. Both struggled to establish themselves. Explosive church growth was difficult to manage. Healthy church structure was further hampered by conflict between pastors or between pastors and lay leaders regarding issues of management and controversies over how responsibilities and tasks should be delegated.²

c. Both congregations experimented with financing through private donors.³

Pastor David Snyder discusses his attitude toward innovating church structure:

I think, as much as we can, we should follow the Church Manual, because I think we need to be in great harmony in the SDA church, harmony of structure as much as possible. But when something comes against the local church, then it must be adapted to meet the need of the local church--culture, time, setting and place.⁴

11. Leaders in both churches viewed their congregations as "in process" and were still searching for the best methods and patterns of organization to accomplish their church mission and vision.⁵

We are just learning and growing. . . . Somebody has to go through the trial and error and end up with something that other churches can take and say, let's learn and grow from their experience. We suffer a lot of setbacks, but we go two steps forwards and one back.⁶

¹Evelyn Blehm in E. and M. Blehm interview, 29 April 1991.

²Prahl interview, 22 April 1991; Dan Snyder interview, 30 April 1991; Hanson interview, 25 April 1991; especially see, "Don Hawley to Church Board Members of New Life Celebration Church," 31 March 1991.

³Dan Snyder interview, 30 April 1991.

⁴Snyder interview, 22 April 1991.

⁵Dan Snyder interview, 30 April 1991; Anderson interview, 29 April 1991.

⁶Anderson interview, 29 April 1991.

12. Both churches were committed to the base teachings and principles of the Seventh-day Adventist world church/mission.¹

Man will always mess up organizations but they are still needed--and people, I want to tell you this, as a minister of the SDA church for fifteen years, this is still the best organization I have ever been involved in. It is still the best. I'm not saying that others are not as good--I don't think there are others that are any better.²

13. Both churches moved out of their original building and rented facilities before settling in their own.

14. Both churches were led by charismatic and visionary leaders with the desire to give their life-long commitment to their church. Simpson and Snyder were both former Seventh-day Adventist evangelists. They both wanted to pastor a church that would become an ideal environment for people to encounter Christ. They also wanted the church to give people all the time they needed to mature in Christ--an extended contact period that evangelistic campaigns cannot offer. Both entered the

¹See above section: Vision Statement No. 1 (p.146). Snyder's most contested sermon is certainly the "Marriage." In that sermon he denounces certain myths about Adventism. The sermon was perceived by a number of people (see section of this chapter, "Critical Concerns") as a betrayal of fundamental Adventist beliefs and disrespect for E. G. White. The myths presented were: (1) the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only church in the world that is blessed; (2) Obedience to human-made rules is a thermostat for personal spirituality; (3) I must read and obey E. G. White to be a good Adventist; (4) On E. G. White writings: they are the final Word of God for Seventh-day Adventists, they are equal to the Word of God, and the compilations of White's writings have as much authority as her own books; (5) There is no investigative judgment (here Snyder argues on the word "investigative" to which he prefers "pre-advent judgment"); (6) Adventists have all the truth; (7) All traditions serve the believers and the Church; (8) Emphasis on the law or the Ten Commandments as a legal code versus the new covenant law that God puts in the believer's heart.

In this sermon, Snyder also affirms his credo and his perspective on the fundamental beliefs of Adventism outside salvation by grace: (1) relevancy of E. G. White's ministry to the church of today; (2) baptism by immersion and the validity of God's holy day of rest; (3) godly living; (4) the imminent second coming of Christ; (5) tithing; (6) the unconscious state of the dead; and (7) the importance of local and world organization of the church (David Snyder, "The Marriage," 5-8; see also Hawley interview).

Two church members remember the following major themes of teaching received at the Milwaukee church between 1989 to 1991. Their list does not pretend to be exhaustive or to reflect a special order of importance: List #1: Holy Spirit; last day events; stop criticizing; love, acceptance and forgiveness; and witnessing. List #2: Sabbath, Holy Spirit, Jesus can help us become overcomers, responsibility of being a witness to others, encouraging and uplifting others (Evelyn Blehm in E. and M. Blehm interview, 29 April 1991; Martinez interview, 8 May 1991).

²Snyder, "The Marriage," 8.

ministry without seminary education. Both referred to a clear vision given by God prescribing their specific commitment and course of action.¹

Both Snyder and Simpson claim not to have been influenced by the other when making leadership decisions and shaping the experience of their church. Thus the above fourteen similarities between Celebration Center and New Life can only be explained by similar types of experiences and influences molding them and their church leaders.² Comparing the personality and experiences of Simpson and Snyder reveals the following parallels: (1) a charismatic personality, a willingness to risk everything--even their ministerial reputation--to make their vision happen; (2) similar educational and professional backgrounds; (3) a dramatic conversion to Christ and the discovery of the "gospel" later in life; (4) influences on their ecclesiology (a) from books such as Cook and Baldwin's Love, Acceptance, and Forgiveness; (b) from the church growth movement--seminars and books from Carl George, George Barna, and Dale Galloway, which helped Simpson and Snyder design their church methodology and structure; and (c) rolemodels in worship (like Jack Hayford) and church life (like the New Hope Community Church).³

¹Snyder, A Fresh Breeze, 3-18; idem, "An Important Message from the Senior Pastor," NLCC News, July/August 1991, insert; Snyder interview, 22 April 1991; Dan Snyder interview, 30 April 1991.

²Munson never attended New Hope Community Church but recognizes Jack Hayford to have particularly influenced him through his books and lectures held at La Sierra University at the John Osborne lectureship in 1989 (Munson interview, 26 April 1991). Dan Snyder knows much about church growth principles and publications. In 1990 he also attended a three-day seminar in Portland conducted by the Willow Creek Community Church. He mentions Warren W. Wiersbe's book, Real Worship: It Will Transform Your Life (Nashville: Oliver Nelson, 1986), as pivotal in the shaping of his philosophy of worship (Dan Snyder interview, 30 April 1991). Jay Prall declares that some people at the Milwaukie Church attended seminars at the New Hope Community Church and Willow Creek Church. He adds that there has been a cross-fertilization of ideas with the New Hope Church (Prall interview, 22 April 1991).

³Snyder admits to have been significantly influenced by Ronald Allen and Gordon Borrer's book, Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewels (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1982). He mentions Bill Hybels and the Willow Creek Community Church as among his role models even though, as he said in 1991, he had visited that church only once for a "quick Wednesday evening visit" (Snyder, interview, 22 April 1991; *ibid.*, "Will God Find a Steadfast Church?" 13 July 1991, sermon's notes by author).

Both men claim not to have been involved in the Desmond Ford controversy.¹ And, finally, both claim to be aware of the Vineyard ministries but do not follow their example. Snyder says:

I think that it is too charismatic. It does not satisfy me. I think they are a little too far off into that direction. I don't think I agree with John Wimber's theology, I think he is too much "off the wall," on the edges; I am just not comfortable with his style or theology of worship or ministry. . . . He is too much into the human side of worship, the healing, the tongues. . . . For Wimber, it seems that God is that Santa Claus who will give you [everything] if you have faith. . . . I believe in signs and wonders but I am on the conservative side of that. I have seen too much in my experience in life with the charismatics to see what the human flesh can become involved in. . . . I see the danger of the counterfeit.²

Differences between Celebration Center and New Life Celebration Church

Seven differences between Celebration Center and New Life Celebration Church, as well as between Simpson and Snyder, must be noted:

1. New Life Celebration Church seems to place a greater emphasis on education, preaching, and evangelism than does Celebration Center. These words appear more frequently in the written documents of New Life Celebration Church than in those of Celebration Center. Also the seminars offered by Victorious Living present a greater variety (including discussion and teaching on religious topics) than those of New Life Victorious at Celebration Center (which focus more on healing, support, and recovery).³

2. New Life Celebration Church places less emphasis on social activities. None of the interviews or documents refer to them. The major emphasis is definitively on teaching and healing as underscored in classical Adventist methods of evangelism and church life. People are still primarily

¹Snyder interview, 22 April 1991; Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #2. See chap. 2, p. 73.

²Snyder interview, 22 April 1991.

³Victorious Living offers classes such as "Divorce Recovery," "Handling Stress," "Healing Damaged Emotions," "Codependent No More," along with other types of classes such as "Discovering the Roots of Adventism," "Making Peace with God," "Christian Values," "Adventist Hot Potatoes," etc. Despite the different approaches taken by Victorious Living and New Life Victorious, it is important to note that both aim at meeting the needs of people in the community and helping them make God real through support or educational experiences. As Snyder says, "People are broken and defeated. And we discovered that the church is a healing ground for broken and defeated people" (Snyder, "Pilgrimage").

exposed to the gospel through teaching rather than social actions. At New Life Celebration Church, teaching is perceived as more relevant to a greater crosssection of people than in traditional Adventist Church programs and methods.

3. Worship principles have been less developed at New Life Celebration Church than at Celebration Center. At New Life Celebration Church, Snyder has formulated most of the principles of worship himself, and personally led out in the majority of worship experiences. Outside his basic model of worship and praise from Ps 95, no other guidelines have been provided by any worship team.¹ At the end of 1990, efforts were made to form such a team. However, in 1991, Darlene Anderson, an on-the-job musician, was still Snyder's main collaborator and had organized most of the worship services with her musical group, "Set Free."² For Anderson, worship is primarily a time of communication with God to thank Him, adore Him, and "let Him hold me in His arms."³ As Corban concludes, "We did not spend much time analyzing worship, we were more concerned about the mechanics--how can we do better?"⁴

As in the revivalist tradition, worship at New Life is primarily seen as an evangelistic tool.⁵ Therefore, preaching remains the main emphasis. Although worship leaders at New Life include praise songs during the Sabbath worship services, they allow praise songs to be prolonged only during the Wednesday evening meetings that are designed for members. Worship at New Life has no adult or children's drama on a regular basis. The children's story, sometimes presented with dramatic effects, is very well narrated by usually just one person, and only every other week.

¹Juberg, "Us and They," 5; Evelyn Blehm in E. and M. Blehm interview, 29 April 1991; Snyder, "The Milwaukee Experience," 1, 3, pamphlet.

²Anderson interview, 29 April 1991.

³Ibid.

⁴Corban interview, 8 May 1991.

⁵Juberg, "Us and They," 5.

4. The style of music at New Life is quite different from Celebration Center. It is an "older" style and often incorporates traditional hymns.¹ As Heise says, their music is virtually locked into a Heritage Singers' style of the 1960s and 1970s and, therefore, is not really contemporary.²

5. While 1991 found lay people performing baptisms at Celebration Center, ordained pastors still administered all baptisms at New Life. The views of baptism held by New Life's leadership were essentially congruent with those outlined in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual. Baptism is regarded as the entry point into the body of Christ and into the Adventist Church. However, leaders both at New Life Celebration Church and Celebration Center recognized the possibility of allowing a candidate to be baptized without joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church.³

6. There are significant differences in the structures of New Life Celebration Church and Celebration Center, despite superficial similarities in the two congregations' executive boards and emphasis on worship and the spiritual gifts. New Life's structure of elders, deacons, and deaconesses is closer to the traditional organization advocated in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual.⁴ This is probably because New Life Celebration Church started out as a traditional church in 1985, whereas Celebration Center spawned from Azure Hills, reorganizing itself as a new congregation in 1988. Thus there are fewer signs of congregationalism in New Life Celebration Church, either in descriptions of its structure or in comments from interviews conducted there.⁵

7. Simpson and Snyder are different brands of charismatic leaders. Snyder is perceived as more of a choleric type of personality with an autocratic leadership style. He is the "doer," a

¹Alf Birch, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 15 April 1991.

²Heise interview, 20 August 1991.

³Snyder interview, 22 April 1991; Prall interview, 22 April 1991; Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1.

⁴Prall interview, 22 April 1991.

⁵Dan Snyder interview, 30 April 1991.

"gospel" preacher influenced (in the Adventist world) by Morris Venden.¹ On the other hand, Simpson is perceived more as a sanguine type of personality with a laissez-faire leadership style. He is a "dreamer," a lover of freedom, an encourager influenced (in the Adventist world) by Graham Maxwell.² When we consider significant church models, Snyder seems more influenced by Willow Creek Community Church, while Simpson has patterned his church after Carl George's meta-model or the New Hope Community Church.

Partial Conclusion

Overall, we can say that New Life Celebration Church definitively exhibits a more sober type of worship than does Celebration Center, a more traditional church organization, and less sophistication in ecclesiastical principles, written material, and actions.³ Church locations, as well as differences between Simpson's and Snyder's personalities and journeys, account for much of the difference, along with the basic church growth principle that each church must respond to its own culture. Munson summarizes, "Dan Simpson has his hand on the pulse of Southern California Adventism just as David Snyder has the pulse of the conservative Northwest/Portland Adventism."⁴

According to our definition of a celebration church, New Life Celebration Church-- beyond its name or its less contemporary style of worship and some differences with Celebration Center-- can be called a celebration church in the fullest sense of our definition. As a New Life Celebration Church lay leader says, "A celebration church is a church in touch with the goodness and aliveness of God, where I can find Hope and reasons to celebrate because God is still in control of our lives."⁵

¹Snyder interview, 22 April 1991; Birch interview, 15 April 1991; Hanson interview, 25 April 1991; Bruce Johnston, interview by author, Portland, OR, 8 May 1991; Don Hawley to Church Board Members at New Life Celebration Church, 31 March 1991.

²Camacho interview, 9 April 1991; Mallery interview, 8 April 1991; Bruce Johnston interview, 8 May 1991.

³Garrie Williams, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 23 April 1993.

⁴Munson interview, 26 April 1991.

⁵Anderson interview, 29 April 1991.

Therefore, modifications in worship at New Life Celebration Church, as at Celebration Center, express reforms beyond cosmetic changes regarding the order of services, music style, or the use of devices such as screen and drums.¹ Prall adds:

As we look at worship renewal, it is more than how we do church on Sabbath; it is a philosophy of how to relate to the Lord as a family. And that whole experience can be translated into any community. And I believe, as we look at that whole array of relationship with the Lord, that we can make what Adventism is all about even more attractive to the non-Adventists.²

Impact of Celebration Center and the Celebration Movement

This third section examines (1) the nature and the extent of the influence of Celebration Center and New Life Celebration Church on the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists in 1991; (2) possible roots in the Adventist historical context for the celebration movement and samples of perceptions of the celebration movement from various Adventist Church officials around North America; (3) four celebration churches in addition to the Celebration Center and New Life Celebration Church and the journeys of their leaders; and (4) additional evidences of the impact of the celebration movement on the North American Adventist Church in 1991 through key events, church experiences, as well as oral and written material.

Evidences of the Influence on Adventism by Celebration Center and New Life Celebration Church in 1991

In March of 1991 Simpson estimated that over 10,000 visitors had come to Celebration Center in the past two years.³ Though Snyder had not estimated the number of visitors to New Life Celebration Church, we can assume at least the same number of people over the same period, if

¹Simpson interview, 2 April 1991; Sisk interview, 8 April 1991; Tomlin interview, 10 April 1991.

²Prall interview, 22 April 1991.

³Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1.

not more.¹ In addition to those visitors, hundreds of people worldwide have been exposed first-hand to the concepts of a celebration church/worship through special occasions.

For example, in February of 1991, the Sheldens, Bob Beall, and Ellie Minesinger taught celebration concepts at the Layman's Outreach Expo in Riverside, California.² In March, Simpson and Don Jacobsen (president of the Oregon Conference) lectured at Columbia Union College, Tacoma Park, Maryland, for the G. Arthur Keough Lectureship series.³ In April, over 300 people attended the First International Seventh-day Adventist Worship Conference in Portland, Oregon, which included a seminar on Snyder's pilgrimage with New Life Celebration Church.⁴ On the Sabbath of the conference, over 150 people (nearly half of the regular attendees at the conference), mainly leaders from Hawaii, England, Australia, and North America, visited New Life Celebration Church.⁵ In August, at the Southeastern California Conference Workers' Retreat in Pine Springs Ranch, California, Simpson presented his personal journey, the underlying principles of Celebration Center, and celebration worship.⁶ In October, Snyder and Jacobsen along with other guest speakers addressed the issue of "Worship and

¹In 1991, between 200 and 800 visitors came to New Life each Sabbath for the first five months (Prall, "Statistics Information," May 1991, hand-written notes).

²Bob Beall, "How to Reactivate the Non-Attendees," Layman's Outreach Expo, Riverside, CA, workshop #1; Ellie Minesinger, "How to Witness to Those Experiencing Personal Crisis," *ibid.*, workshop #2; Ray and Dyone Shelden, "Celebration Church Service," *ibid.*, workshop # 17.

³Guest speakers Dan Simpson and Don Jacobsen, "Worship as Celebration from Two Perspectives," The G. Arthur Keough Lectureship, Takoma Park, MD, 22 and 23 March 1991; Dan Simpson, "Celebration Movement," 22 March 1991, audiocassette; *idem.*, "Celebration Worship," 23 March 1991, audiocassette; Don Jacobsen, "Adventism and the Celebration Movement," 22 March 1991, audiocassette; *idem.*, "Celebration Worship," 23 March 1991, audiocassette.

⁴Snyder, "Pilgrimage."

⁵Karen Meyer, "NLCC Welcomes Conferees," NLCC News, June 1991, 1.

⁶Simpson, "The Celebration Adventure," Pine Springs Ranch, CA, 20 August 1991, audiocassette.

Change in the Third Millennium" at the John W. Osborn lectureship series at La Sierra University, California.¹

Thus by the end of 1991, in addition to the minimum of 20,000 visitors to the Celebration Center and New Life Celebration Church, at least one thousand leaders, by conservative estimates, had been exposed first-hand to the principles and/or modes of functioning of a celebration church.

At first, neither Simpson nor Snyder intended to start a movement. Simpson always affirmed his primary commitment to the local church: "God did not call me to restructure the world church organization. He called me to make a difference in a local area."² Snyder agreed: "The celebration movement was really coined and started by the right-wingers. They are the ones that have labeled us as the celebration movement. There was no movement in our intention, in our beginning."³ Simpson declared that the message delivered to visitors was always the same: get outside your boxes, reevaluate what you are doing, look at things under a new light, and open your mind to the Spirit.⁴

In March of 1991, however, Simpson publicly referred to a celebration movement when asking his congregation to pray for him as he went to Washington, D.C., to lecture on celebration worship:⁵ "I want to represent Celebration [Center] right. This will be the first time many people will

¹David Snyder, "Adventism in the 90's: How Our Congregation Survived the Challenges of Change and Growth," John Osborn Lectureship Series: The Third Millennium and the Church, Riverside, CA, 27 October 1991, audiocassette; Don Jacobsen, "Coping with Change in Worship," *ibid.*, 29 October 1991, audiocassette.

²Simpson interview, 2 April 1991.

³Snyder interview, 22 April 1991. See also Darlene Anderson: "We are not about a mission to change everybody in the country, we are about doing what the Lord led us to do here. And if somebody can gain something from that, praise the Lord! But it is not a vendetta or a mission. No! We would like to make a change but we are not engineering that change" (Anderson interview, 29 April 1991).

⁴Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1.

⁵Simpson and Jacobsen, "Worship as Celebration from Two Perspectives." Jacobsen uses the terminology "celebration movement" in his two lectures. See Jacobsen, "Adventism and the Celebration Movement" and "Celebration Worship," audiocassettes.

ever have contact with someone who is just really involved with the celebration movement [emphasis supplied] not because we thought it would be at first, but that it turned out to be."¹

In July 1991, Snyder also acknowledged the impact of his church over the Adventist world at large when he wrote: "New Life captures the attention of the entire Adventist world with its reformation in worship and attitude."²

In April of the same year, Alf Birch, director of church ministries in the North Pacific Union, noted that the "celebration movement" was still a very ill-defined movement within the Adventist Church. Birch had the impression that any worship service that moved away from the predictable, traditional style of worship was labeled "celebration," regardless of how closely it reflected what was happening at Celebration Center or at New Life Celebration Church.³ The same year, Lyell Heise, senior pastor of La Sierra University Church, California, declared that contemporary music seemed to be the signature of the celebration movement. But it was, he added, much more than contemporary music. It was a move in Adventism toward valuing informality, personal interaction, and fellowship.⁴

In April of 1991, Charles Scriven, senior pastor of Sligo Church in Takoma Park, Maryland, declared that there was clearly a celebration movement within the United States--a movement in the direction of a relatively informal worship that focused on singing praise songs to the accompaniment of non-traditional instruments. For Scriven, however, this was not the whole picture. There was a tremendous focus, he added, on acceptance and forgiveness, on the idea of a God-friend who is with human beings no matter what. Scriven also noticed an anti-institutional ethos, congregational trends, and a proud assertion of independence. For Scriven the celebration movement was both the result

¹Dan Simpson, "Worship Service," Colton, CA, 16 March 1991, audiocassette recorded by author.

²Dave Snyder, "Important Message from the Senior Pastor," NLCC News, July/August 1991, insert.

³Birch interview, 15 April 1991.

⁴Heise interview, 20 August 1991.

of Simpson's and Snyder's experimentation, and of many conference presidents and pastors "perking up, taking notice, and wondering if they should not be doing something similar."¹

In May of 1991, Bruce Fox, senior pastor of the Tabernacle Seventh-day Adventist Church in Portland, Oregon, declared that the celebration movement had finally allowed people a possibility of change in the Adventist Church. He noted, "Our church is not cast in an iron clad mode of the nineteenth century, but it can finally emerge in the modern times and not lose the things that are really important to hold onto."² Jon Paulien, professor of New Testament at Andrews University Theological Seminary, corroborated and added, "In the next ten years Adventism [in North America] will be either smaller or different."³

By 1991 all these leaders, along with many others (such as Gifford, Mallery, Bettie, Johnston, Corban, and Bissel), had noticed a definite trend in the Adventist Church toward (1) an alternative worship style, (2) a different church structure, (3) an emphasis on a few particular theological beliefs, such as divine and human love, acceptance and forgiveness, and the assurance of salvation, and (4) bold new actions and methodologies to meet people's needs in the 1990s.

Seventh-day Adventist Context and Possible Roots of the Celebration Movement

This section studies the milieu in which Celebration Center and the celebration movement were born. It reviews articles, books, events, and trends illustrative of the context of the times. General remarks covering the years 1972 to 1986 are presented. Then, five sub-sections discuss events and materials illustrating the milieu between 1986 and 1990. These five sub-sections are a year-by-year progress report showing some of the major trends, particularly those developing among Adventists in North America. This presentation is not exhaustive; only a representative sample is given to suggest parallels in development among different celebration congregations. It is interesting to note that new ideas are generally voiced by individual heralds, then accepted and promoted as their own by conferences

¹Scriven interview, 20 April 1991

²Fox interview, 6 May 1991.

³Jon Paulien, interview by author, Berrien Springs, MI, 6 February 1992.

and unions, even sometimes by General Conference officers. Most of these events and materials were referenced in interviews conducted by the author or can be found as documents filed at Celebration Center. Cities are included in the footnote references to show the geographic breadth of the celebration movement's impact.

General Remarks

Birch's perceptive comments corroborate the description of the historical context presented in chapter 1. He noted that the celebration movement (with its emphasis on culturally relevant worship services) is "a spill over" of what has generally been experienced in the Christian world since the 1960s.¹ In Birch's view, Adventist leaders became interested in these questions of ecclesiology and worship in 1972 when the first Doctor of Ministry program was started on 4 February at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan. A few years later, intensive classes at the seminary on Word and Worship began to observe worship practices in different denominations.²

This budding interest in the questions of ecclesiology and worship is evidenced at the pragmatic as well as the academic level by Caleb Rosado's experience at the All Nations Church. In 1979, for the first time in Berrien Springs (a strategic center of Adventist leadership training) a different, informal, and more creative style of worship was experienced under Rosado's leadership. A few basic concepts shaped Rosado's new church experience and worship: (1) love and acceptance of diversity--especially ethnic, but also of age and gender; (2) a de-centralized model of church organization; (3) informal, creative, inclusive, and warm fellowship; (4) worship as "a joyous living reality"; (5) a close relationship between church architecture and mission--the multi-functional church; (6) social consciousness; and (7) a good level of healthy ecumenism to break down the walls of religio-centrism.³

¹Birch interview, 15 April 1991.

²Ibid.; Giller interview, 19 April 1991; Louis Venden, "Adventists and a Theology of Worship," unpublished paper for Andrews Society for Religious Studies, Kansas City, MO, 22 November 1991, 3.

³Caleb Rosado, "Ministry in a Multicultural Society--The All Nations Story," unpublished book manuscript, Berrien Springs, MI, 1984, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12.

Though Simpson never attended the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, it is interesting to note that Rosado's unpublished papers on his experience at the All Nations Church helped to shape Simpson's journey. For this, he thanked Rosado.¹

A few additional factors must be noted regarding the milieu in which the celebration movement was born. In February of 1980, Charles Bradford, president of the North American Division, set forth his dream and priorities for the church in North America in the 1980s:

We are now into the 1980s, the decade when the local church, the congregation, must come into its own. During this decade the Word must get out of the seminaries, conference offices, and committee rooms and into the pews and into the hearts and lives of the people, who are, in fact, the church. The 1980s must and will see the revitalization of the fellowship, the body of Christ in its basic manifestation where our Lord exists as community. The 1980s will be the consciousness-raising decade when every organization and institution comes to a vital, new understanding of its relationship and responsibility to the congregation and begins to act on the basis of that vital, new realization. Leaders and administrators on every level will grasp afresh their role as enablers and equippers whose major function is to prepare the members for kingdom-building service. . . . Administrative and departmental ministries will truly become servants to pastoral and people concerns. Program, policies, and plans will be configured to meet the felt needs of the communities of faith they are called upon to serve. . . . So on with the work, my fellow leaders, of revitalizing the caring cell, the basic unit of Christ's body.²

In 1982, Adventists began to explore concepts of the church growth movement at higher academic institutions. At Fuller Theological Seminary, for example, Jere Webb conceptualized a Seventh-day Adventist Church operative around the involvement of the laity in celebrative worship, and relational evangelism through small groups.³

In 1984, Raymond Holmes, a seminary professor at Andrews University, published the first book in Adventist history in which an Adventist theology of worship is articulated. *Sing a New Song*

¹See chap. 2, pp. 125-126. Caleb Rosado, interview by author, College Place, WA, 8 June 1995.

²Charles Bradford, "Decade of the Eighties: Focus on the Local Church," North American Division President's address, 23 February 1980, *Adventist Review*, 5 January 1989, 15.

³Jere Webb, "A Conceptualization of a Church as a Base for a Seventh-day Adventist Evangelistic Training Program" (D.Min. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1982).

aims at fostering liturgical responsibility and change based on one of the core doctrines of the Adventist Church--Rev 14.¹

In 1985, Douglas Cooper published his book on the Holy Spirit.² The same year an office of Church Music was added to the Church Ministries Department at the General Conference.³ This office has the following objectives: (1) increase publicity relative to the ministry of music and its significance; (2) revitalize interest in the singing of hymns, with a positive approach to music ministry; (3) encourage musicians to cooperate with pastors in spiritual leadership; (4) provide audio-visual material for churches, institutions, and homes; (5) publish "how to" material for volunteer musicians (such as how to teach new hymns); (6) hold workshops, seminars, and hymn festivals; encourage congregational singing, choirs, and the use of instruments; (8) foster expression of creative abilities through music; and (9) guide youth in music appreciation and a better understanding of church standards, worship, and entertainment.⁴

Let us now examine some significant developments between 1986 and 1991 that contributed to the celebration movement.

1986

In January, Russell Staples, chairman of the department of World Mission at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, observed that some quarters of the Adventist Church "have reached the point at which centralization begins to hamper local initiative."⁵ The same month, Myron Widmer published "Challenges Facing Our Church" in which he noted the dramatically slow growth rate

¹Raymond C. Holmes, Sing a New Song (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1984); Gerhard Hasel, interview by author, 2 March 1991.

²Douglas Cooper, Living the Spirit-filled Life (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1985).

³Alf Birch, executive editor, Worship (Warburton, Australia: Signs Pub. Co., 1989), 39.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Russell Staples, "The Faces of the Church to Come," Adventist Review, 2 January 1986, 10.

among Caucasian churches.¹ In Christianity Today, one day later, Carl George observed a trend toward "the relational" in American churches:

Younger Americans everywhere seem to be searching for camaraderie and mutual support. . . . Some observers have attributed the growth of the charismatic movement not so much to doctrine as to atmosphere. In these worship services, there is often such a quality of joy that people stand in line to get in. . . . Seventeen people are shot to death annually on Houston freeways. People need islands of love and joy and acceptance. Our church can be one of these.²

In March of 1986, Garrie Williams, ministerial director of the Oregon Conference, signaled to his readers the existence of growing, spirit-filled, joyful, and dynamic congregations in his conference that were moved by the everlasting gospel and wrongly labeled as "charismatics, tongue-speaking and holy roller organizations."³ In the same communiqué to the Oregon ministerial association, Williams called for a needed "revolution" among the churches of his conference. He described them as "stuck in the rut of frozen ritual, confident in the truth but lacking the love of the truth and the excitement of salvation." The ideal state of churches, he added, "thaws away the icicles of church politics, petty jealousies, egotistical selfishness and religious pride." He asked church boards to study new worship hour structures that combine "reverence and rejoicing; truth and triumph, prayer, praise and preaching."⁴

In May of 1986, Donald Jacobsen resigned as the Outreach Director of the Southeastern California Conference and accepted the presidency of the Oregon Conference.⁵ Contrary to his predecessor, Edwin Beck, Jacobsen supported worship renewal and provided, according to Jay Prall (Oregon Conference Communication Director), "an opportunity for the Oregon Adventist churches to

¹Myron K. Widmer, "Challenges Facing Our Church," Adventist Review, 16 January 1986, 9.

²Carl F. George, "A Tilt Toward The Relational," Christianity Today 17 (January 1986): 22, 23-1. See also Reinhold K. Tilstra, "The SDA Pastor in Transition: A Study of Pastoral Leadership Requirements in the Approaching 1990's" (D.Min. diss., California Graduate School of Theology, 1986), 92-94.

³Garrie Williams, "Adventist Spring That Waits," Energy--Power for SDA Preachers, Ministerial Association Oregon Conference, March 1986, 1, 2.

⁴Ibid., 2.

⁵"Constituency Session Minutes," 4 May 1986, OC.

move ahead in the direction of worship renewal."¹ Jacobsen's interest in worship can be traced not only to his past experience as a seminary professor in practical theology at Andrews University, but also by his first-hand observations of changes as a member of the Azure Hills Church between 1983 to 1986.²

In June of 1986, Morris L. Venden published his book on the Holy Spirit.³ At about the same time, Dale E. Galloway's best seller, 20/20 Vision: How to Create a Successful Church, came out. It explains the power of prayer, the importance of the Holy Spirit, and the principles and the necessary planning behind church growth.⁴

In July of 1986, correspondence filed at the Oregon Conference shows the intensity of debates about Snyder's experience at New Life Celebration Church. Several letters presented Snyder's congregation as a less conservative, but spirit-led church with a loving, accepting, warm, and relational atmosphere.⁵

In August of 1986, the Church Ministries Department, under the leadership of North American Division vice president Robert Dale, launched Celebration. This new magazine was intended to inspire church members "to share the incarnational ministry of Christ" and become "the Caring Church." Three methods were suggested to accomplish this mission: (1) program suggestions that follow the "caring church" strategy; (2) helpful ideas on making the Sabbath a time of true celebration; and (3) encouraging reports on successful "caring church" ministries from across the Division.⁶ For Celebration, promoting the "caring church" principle entails developing new concepts of evangelism and church.

¹Prall interview, 7 May 1991.

²Ibid.

³Morris L. Venden, Your Friend the Holy Spirit (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1986).

⁴Dale E. Galloway, 20/20 Vision: How to Create a Successful Church (Portland, OR: Scott Pub. Co., 1986).

⁵David and Denise [Anonymous] to Don Jacobsen, 25 July 1986; Janice [Anonymous] to Don Jacobsen, 25 July 1986; Dan [Anonymous] to Brother Jacobsen, 27 July 1986.

⁶"The Caring Church Challenge," Celebration 2, no. 1 (1986), 6.

Lasting renewal requires more than "new programs" or "new things to do."¹ Paradoxically, however, a new model of Sabbath morning services was among the first topics addressed by the magazine. The proposed worship format was based on three concepts: (1) consecration--individuals coming from the cares of daily life to a planned, progressive Sabbath experience; (2) communion--small groups experiencing the fellowship of nurturing and training activities; and (3) celebration--the church family joining together for inspiration, motivation, and worship.²

In November of 1986, Garrie Williams published the first of a series of five articles which, according to Prall, have been pivotal in the Oregon Conference in promoting church and worship renewal. "Closing the Back Door in the Northwest," advocates the importance of creating small-group ministries within the congregations to "meet people's heart needs" following E. G. White's recommendations and successful experiences of pastors such as Galloway and Cho.³ In his second article of December 1986, Williams called for a proliferation of pastors in the Northwest by training more men and women as lay pastors.⁴

1987

In January, Williams recommended seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit through fasting and fervent prayers to break "the drought in the Northwest."⁵ The same month, Simpson and Snyder were invited as guest speakers to the Oregon Pastor's Conference, a Conference dedicated to

¹"The Caring Church Concept: Biblical Base," *ibid.*, 2, no. 8 (1986), 3.

²"Program Helps," *ibid.*, 2, no. 1 (1986), 34.

³Garrie Williams, "Closing the Back Door in the Northwest," *NPUC Gleaner*, 17 November 1986, 8-9.

⁴Garrie Williams, "Proliferation of Pastors in the Northwest," *NPUC Gleaner*, 15 December 1986, 12.

⁵Garrie Williams, "Breaking the Drought of the Northwest," *NPUC Gleaner*, 5 January 1987, 16, 17

exploring "ways of making the church service the highlight of each week."¹ According to Jacobsen, this Pastors' Conference was an opportunity to introduce the subject of possible alternatives to traditional Adventist worship services.² As Williams noted:

Celebration worship was not the issue. . . . We had a lot of calls from around the country telling us the church is dead, worship is boring. We thought, "Dan and David have worship services that are attracting people" so we could discuss it. We were not trying to start any movement or celebration movement.³

In February of 1987, Williams claimed that spirit-led churches were concerned not only with the right day but the right way of worship, which then fosters "dynamic celebrations." Building on his March 1986 article, he again called for a "revolution" and "new worship hour structures."⁴ Finally, in mid-February he concluded his series of articles with "Visions and Dreams in the Northwest," in which he unfolded how intentional planning was needed to escape the limits of denominational growth by conception. Radical changes were now needed in North America to foster growth by conversion, "not changes in doctrines or teaching--these are firmly established by the Word of God--but in methodologies."⁵

In mid-1987, W. C. Scales at the Ministerial Association of the North American Division published Evangelism and Church Growth Manual: The Caring Church.⁶ In September of 1987, the Columbia Union Executive Committee, under Ron M. Wisbey's leadership, accepted "Vision 2000," a dream describing three goals for the Adventist Church in the year 2000:

¹Jay Prall, "Oregon Pastors Hold Annual Winter Meeting," NPUC Gleaner, 16 February 1987, 3, 4; see also "Teach Me, O Lord," Oregon Pastors' Conference, 5-8 January 1987, program pamphlet.

²Jacobsen interview, 2 May 1991.

³Williams interview, 23 April 1991.

⁴Garrie Williams, "Spring Fever Worship in the Northwest," NPUC Gleaner, 2 February 1987, 8.

⁵Garrie Williams, "Visions and Dreams in the Northwest," NPUC Gleaner, 16 February 1987, 10, 11.

⁶W. C. Scales, Evangelism and Church Growth Manual: The Caring Church (Washington, DC: Ministerial Assn., General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1987).

(1) The local church will be the driving force and central focus of the denomination. (2) The joy and celebration of worship will attract people to our churches, allowing the Sabbath experience to become a major evangelistic tool. (3) Church fellowship will be so vibrant that member retention will improve and conflict over Adventist lifestyle issues will decrease.¹

Around the same time, at the Joint Departmental Council of the six North Pacific Conferences and Union of Seventh-day Adventists, Bruce Johnston, president of the North Pacific Union, challenged his workers to establish changes in the Sabbath School programs and worship services. A Sabbath Celebration Committee was established to work on fostering changes.²

1988

This year marked the centennial anniversary of the Minneapolis General Conference session, a pivotal event in Adventist history. This anniversary refocused Adventists' attention on the importance of salvation by faith in Christ's righteousness. Reflecting on the impact of the events of 1988 that helped shape the Adventist Church, Widmer wrote, "I pray that we, the church, haven't rejected such a message of hope."³ In the same article, he noted the growth of independent ministries with contentious tendencies. He also reported on a "historic" decision made by North American church leaders: the commitment to reorder priorities and place highest emphasis upon the local congregation as the "central most important institution of the Adventist Church." Widmer added: "Backing the emphasis is a plan beginning 1 January 1989, that will provide \$3 million--from General Conference, division, unions, and local conferences--directly to local churches for soul-winning endeavors. This acceptance is a historic action for the division."⁴

¹Ron M. Wisbey, "Forward" in *Empty Pews, Empty Streets* (Columbia, MD: Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988); idem, "On Looking Back--Or Is It Forward?" *Columbia Union Visitor*, 1 January 1989, 2.

²Bruce Johnston interview, 8 May 1991; Williams interview, 23 April 1991.

³Myron Widmer, "1988--Its Impact upon the Church," *Adventist Review*, 29 December 1988, 8.

⁴*Ibid.*, 9

In the July 1988 issue of Celebration, Ron Watts advised his readers to "market" their "Sabbath Celebrations" with excellence. He wrote, "Examine your product and make sure it is meeting the spiritual needs of people."¹ The same summer Jacobsen wrote that the experience at New Life Celebration Church is not "an attempt to be novel or nonconformist but rather an earnest desire to respond to the Spirit's leading."²

In November of 1988, Harold Lee and Charles Scriven addressed the issue of worship in their devotional given at the Joint Departmental Council of the Columbia Union focusing on "Vision 2000" and how to do church.³ Lee reflected on how loving fellowship came from true worship and Scriven explained why leaders needed to "learn to celebrate" because Sabbaths are like Fourth of July celebrations. Sabbath should involve "gigantic celebration" and be a "joyous festival."⁴

In December of 1988, the first results of an extensive study, conducted at the request of the North American Division on young people's perceptions of the Adventist Church and why some left it, were released by the Institute of Church Ministry, based at Andrews University. Among other conclusions, Roger L. Dudley and Janet Leigh Kangas underlined the new challenges Adventists faced in making their religion relevant to their young people. Dudley and Kangas pointed out that the majority of young people unfortunately perceived their church as not meeting their spiritual and social needs. Most of them also disagreed with, or at least questioned, standards on adornment and recreation.⁵

¹Ron Watts, "Caring Church Concept--Marketing Your Sabbath Celebrations," Celebration 4 (July 1988): 3, 4, 11.

²Don Jacobsen, "A President's Viewpoint on Milwaukee," Administration, Summer 1988, 11, 16.

³Wisbey, "On Looking Back," 2.

⁴Harold Lee, "Loving Fellowship Comes from True Worship," Columbia Union Visitor, 1 January 1989, 7, 8; Charles Scriven, "Celebration Sabbath Like the Fourth of July," *ibid.*, 5, 6.

⁵Roger L. Dudley and Janet Leigh Kangas, "Teenagers Speak to the Church," Adventist Review, 15 December 1988, 13-16.

1989

In January, three important articles underlined other challenges facing Adventists. First, excerpts from Carl George's ten-year study of Adventism appeared in the Adventist Review. In the article, George mainly attributed the plateauing of Anglo growth within the Adventist Church to (a) the use of "outdated methodologies" for reaching the Anglo population, (b) the siphoning of key talent from the local church into conference management, (c) cultural fundamentalism (third- or fourth-generation Adventists unable to distinguish faith from their own subculture), and (d) the lack of emphasis, finances, and representation for the local church.¹ Second, Caleb Rosado featured multiculturalism as the new challenge for Adventists, and declared that the church had to reevaluate its mission and become more inclusive. He claimed that the age of multiculturalism demanded "new methodologies and new structures, for the ferment of change cannot be contained in the old structures." Rosado explained further:

Along with these changes has come an increasing demand for expressions of worship and musical forms that are multiculturally sensitive and inclusive. . . . Each style of worship arises out of the religious experience of the different worshipers and meets the collective needs of the group, each style is an acceptable expression of worship to God, though not necessarily the only way to worship.²

Finally, Arthur Glasser, professor at the Fuller Theological Seminary, challenged the Adventist Church not only to perceive itself as a remnant movement but as a renewal movement, both within itself and within all the other churches.³

In February, Steve Daily, chaplain at La Sierra University campus, first reported on the changes of worship happening at the Azure Hills, New Life Celebration Church, and Collegiate (Riverside, California) churches. He stated that new directions in Adventist worship reflected an increasing openness to what the Spirit was doing outside Adventism and a desire to "break out of the old wineskins of formalism and to worship God in dynamic, contemporary forms." According to his analysis

¹Carl George, "Challenges Facing Adventists," Adventist Review, 5 January 1989, 17-19. See also, idem, Empty Pews, Empty Streets, 49-69.

²Caleb Rosado, "Multiculturalism: A Challenge for the Church," Music Ministry 16, no. 1 (1989): 3-5.

³Arthur F. Glasser, "A Friendly Outsider Looks at the Seventh-day Adventists," Ministry 62 (January 1989): 8-10.

of Simpson's experience, changes were met with resistance and three challenges: (1) the Adventist individualistic approach to life; (2) the divergence of Adventist interpretations of E. G. White writings; and (3) a move away from volunteerism and active church life as the latter was progressively led and administered by more "professional" ministers.¹

In June of 1989, Robert S. Folkenberg, president of the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, published "Church Structure--Servant or Master?" in which he challenged the Adventist status quo, and demonstrated the church trend toward spending more money on maintenance of structures than mission. He concluded: "We must remember that structure is only a tool in the hand of the Holy Spirit to accomplish His work on earth--it is not as an end in itself!"² The same month, Garrie Williams launched the first "Holy Spirit Fellowship," gathering a group of Oregon pastors committed to seek and pray for the Holy Spirit.³

In July of 1989, at Cohutta Springs, Georgia, Gottfried Oosterwal addressed a group of Adventist Church leaders appointed by the General Conference to develop the concept of "a global strategy for finishing the work." Reflecting on the sobering tragedy of the aftermaths of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), Oosterwal underlined the importance of presenting the gospel in terms of people's own culture. The whole history of mission and all the research on church growth demonstrate that mission is most successful when it allows people to experience and express their faith through their own cultural modalities. He also noted the fundamental importance of reclaiming and proclaiming "the specific values of the American frontier culture" that generated and nurtured the Adventist movement.⁴

¹Steve Daily, "Church Growth Bloweth Where It Listeth," Spectrum 19 (February 1989): 2-4

²Robert S. Folkenberg, "Church Structure--Servant or Master?" Ministry 62 (June 1989): 4-9

³This fellowship began on 21-28 June 1989. Garrie Williams, interview by author, College Place, WA, 15 June 1995, hand-written notes.

⁴Gottfried Oosterwal, "Shedding the Gospel's Western Package," Adventist Review, 19 October 1989, 18-23.

Three important publications must still be noted during 1989:

1. Worship, a booklet produced under the direction of Alf Birch by the South Pacific Division and available in the North American Division.¹ The publication focuses on the dynamics and components of worship and encourages the experience of new styles of worship to make worship services more "meaningful." Commenting on this work, Bronwyn Slade writes, "because the gospel must be seen as relevant, fresh, and vibrant, this publication emphasizes creativity and the language and the imagery of today."²

2. A special edition of the Adventist Review, designed to promote the "caring church" concept and welcome home ex-members, advertised Snyder's experience and the New Life Celebration Church as a "safe place to come and be healed."³

3. Williams published his Trinity Power Circle, a manual promoting not new programs but a series of seminars about the infilling of the Holy Spirit, the beauty of Christ's character, small group ministries, and "intense, responsive, and hearty" congregational worship, as well as lay ministries, through the discovery of spiritual gifts.⁴

The year 1989 ended with the "First Seventh-day Adventist International Small Group Conference" under the leadership of Williams. During this conference, it was evident that issues like "reverence" and "clapping" in the "sanctuary" were questioned in some Adventist circles.⁵

¹Birch, Worship.

²Bronwyn Slade, in Birch, Worship, 72.

³"So I'm Not Coming to Church Any More, WHO CARES?" Adventist Review, 2 November 1989, 7.

⁴Garne Williams, Trinity Power Circle (Clackamas, OR: Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1989).

⁵Sally Christen, "An Important Aspect of Worship," Pacific Union Recorder, 20 November 1989, 3; Calvin B. Rock, "Afraid to Get Married; Irreverence in Church," Adventist Review, 7 December 1989, 13.

1990

The year opened with the promotion of the evangelistic book of the year--Hurt, Healing, and Happy Again--a title reflective of the preoccupations of the time.¹ In January, a special edition of the Adventist Review considered new challenges facing the church in the 1990s. In it, Neal C. Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, called for reformation and revival through the infilling of the Holy Spirit.² Other important themes can be traced in the same edition: waves of changes polarizing "regular," "traditional," "intellectual," and "cultural" Adventists;³ appreciation of diversity;⁴ the opening of a decade of healing;⁵ and the need for recapturing the genius of nineteenth-century Adventism that applied changeless truths to current situations. Mitchell Tyner stated, "If we fail to do this, we may just become another small group that society considers increasingly irrelevant."⁶

The same month, Thomas Mostert, president of the Pacific Union Conference, started a new column in the Pacific Union Recorder specifically dedicated to "issues most often raised by church members in the Pacific Union."⁷ The following issues were frequent topics: (1) concerns about experimental worship approaches; (2) boring church services ("I wish to get you thinking and discussing

¹Martin Webber, Hurt, Healing, and Happy Again (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1990).

²Neal C. Wilson, "Time for Revival," Adventist Review, 4 January 1990, 2-3. See also idem, "Revival and Reformation," Ministry 63 (May 1990): 10-11.

³Ralph Martin, "The Church in Changing Times," Adventist Review, 4 January 1990, 7-9.

⁴Manuel Vasquez, "Emerging Voices in the Church," *ibid.*, 12-13.

⁵Madelynn Jones Haldeman, "A Decade of Healing," *ibid.*, 18-19.

⁶Mitchell A. Tyner, "The Church and Society," *ibid.*, 14-15.

⁷Thomas Mostert, "Danger Ahead for the Pacific Union," PU Recorder, 1 January 1990, 3; idem, "Boring Church Services," *ibid.*, 2 April 1990, 2; idem, "Are We Over-Organized?" *ibid.*, 7 May 1990, 3; idem, "Responses to Your Questions," *ibid.*, 18 June 1990, 3; idem, "What Youth Think About Worship," *ibid.*, 20 August 1990, 3.

in your church, for worship is the primary ingredient of a growing Christian");¹ (3) congregationalism; (4) pluralism ("We need more creative, fresh, new ideas and methods, and at times, even adjustments in our organization, if we are to be successful in sharing God's message with others");² and (5) youth and worship. A few months later, Don Schneider, Northern California Conference president, launched his outreach to inactive Adventist members--an idea that he claimed was triggered by a sign he saw in Chicago saying "Outreach for Former Catholics."³

In 1990 a recrudescence of letters and articles dealing with celebration churches/worship, and related issues, began to appear in different Adventist publications, demonstrating a polarization of ideas.⁴ Major issues and questions raised included:⁵ the need of

¹Mostert, "Boring Church Services," 2.

²Mostert, "Responses to Your Questions," 3.

³Susan Garza, "Northern California Conference President Launches Outreach to Inactive Members," PU Recorder, 2 July 1990, 8,9.

⁴Marvin L. Stack (Portland, OR), "Letters--Youth Worship," NPUC Gleaner, 15 January 1990, 3; Michael Cook (Portland, OR), "Letters--Youth Music," NPUC Gleaner, 19 February 1990, 3; Garrie Williams, "Celebration Crisis," Trinity Power Ministries, Spring 1990, 7; William G. Johnsson, "Born to Grow," Adventist Review, 22 March 1990, 4; Melvin E. Davis (Norland, WA), "Letters--Thoughts on Music," NPUC Gleaner, 2 April 1990, 3; William G. Johnsson, "Why Churches Grow," Adventist Review, 12 April 1990, 4; J. David Newman, "Is There Room for Mavenccks in the Church?" Ministry 63 (May 1990): 22, 23; Juberg, "Us and They," 4, 5; C. Allen and Diane Roy (Beavercreek, OR), "Letters--More About Music," NPUC Gleaner, 21 May 1990, 3; J. David Newman and Kenneth R. Wade, "Is it Safe to Celebrate?" Ministry 63 (June 1990): 26-29; Jim and Debbie Fineout (Portland, OR) "Letters--Milwaukie Comments," NPUC Gleaner, 4 June 1990, 3; Richard E. Gemar (Carson, WA) "Letters--Milwaukie Comments," *ibid.*; Simon Elloway, M.D. (Chehalis, WA), "Letters--Milwaukie Comments," *ibid.*; Bob Coyle (Bakersfield, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Why Are They Boring?" PU Recorder, 4 June 1990, 31; Bob Bischoff (Marlin, WA), "Letters--More on Milwaukie," NPUC Gleaner 18 June 1990, 3; Marilyn Campbell (Eagle, ID), "Letters--More on Milwaukie," *ibid.*; Joe Barnett (Milwaukie, OR), "Letters--More on Milwaukie," *ibid.*; Richard Cameron (Dillard, OR), "Letters--More on Milwaukie," *ibid.*; Dorothy LaVallee (Medford, OR), "Letters--More on Milwaukie," *ibid.*; Marion Van Tassel (Hillsboro, OR), "Letters--More on Milwaukie," *ibid.*; Don Jacobsen, "What Do They Mean, 'Celebration'?" NPUC Gleaner, 16 July 1990, 7, 8; C. Dean Mathers (Sandpoint, ID), "Letters--Singing a New Song," NPUC Gleaner, 16 July 1990, 3; Jesse A. Cone (Grants Pass, OR) to Don Jacobsen, 27 July 1990; Charlottee Garton (Auburn, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Boring Church?" PU Recorder, 6 August 1990, 31; Jacqueline Piatt (Baker, OR) "Letters--More on Milwaukie," NPUC Gleaner 6 August 1990, 3; William G. Johnsson, "Between Fire and Ice," Adventist Review, 9 August 1990, 4; Christopher Blake, "The Youth Challenge: Why Revival Isn't Enough--2," Adventist Review, 16 August 1990, 8-10; Bonnie Eichman (Roseburg, OR), "Letters--Celebration Service," NPUC Gleaner, 20 August 1990, 3; Myrn and John Corban (Gresham, OR), "More on Milwaukie," *ibid.*; Rita Back (Battle Ground, WA), "Letters to the Editor--Milwaukie Criticism," *ibid.*; L. Stephen Gifford, "About

revival and of the Holy Spirit; calls to youth and adults for more energy, participation, and fellowship in churches;¹ recognition of people taking independent stands;² questions such as, "Is celebration really part

Celebration Center," *PU Recorder*, 20 August 1990, 2; Ron Joanson (Grand Junction, OR) to Prayer Conference, 21 August 1990; L. Stephen Gifford, "A Statement on 'Celebration Center'," Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 22 August 1990, pamphlet; William L. Huffman (Alexandria, LA) to Dave Snyder, 22 August 1990; Mary [Anonymous] (Mosier, OR) to John Osborne, 29 August 1990; Jay Prall, "Committee Grants Name Change," *Communique*, September 1990, 4; Sandra Schneider (Auburn, WA), "Letters--Celebration," *NPUC Gleaner*, 3 September 1990, 3; Jeanne Weidman (Hillsboro, OR), "Letters--More About Music II," *ibid.*; Paula Nixon (Auburn, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration Churches," *PU Recorder*, 17 September 1990, 31; Stephen Riley (Angwin, CA), "Celebration Churches," *ibid.*; Gordon L. Retzer (Denver, CO) to Tanya [Anonymous], 20 September 1990; O. Graham (Orlando, FL) to James C. Parmele (Mountain Home, ID), 24 September 1990; Margaret Jordan (Silver Spring, MD), "Letters to the Editor--Celebrating," *Adventist Review*, 27 September 1990, 2; Alice Frasier (Centerville, TN), "Celebrating," *ibid.*; Cliff Ludington (Loma Linda, CA), "Celebrating," *ibid.*; Clarence Small (Champaign, IL), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration Churches," *Ministry* 63 (October 1990): 2; Gertrude Battle (Collegedale, TN), "Celebration Churches," *ibid.*; Philip R. Mills (Wichita, KA), "Celebration Churches," *ibid.*; Ron Thompson (Cleburn, TX), "Celebration Churches," *ibid.*; Robert N. Foeman (Monmouth, IL), "Celebration Churches," *ibid.*; Norman Chestnut (Martinsburgh, WV), "Celebration Churches," *ibid.*; Frank Hutchins (Mt. Lake Terrace, WA), "Letters--Celebration," *NPUC Gleaner*, 1 October 1990, 2; Ruth V. Templin (Redmond, WA), "Letters--Celebration," *ibid.*; Mildred Dolloff (Merced, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration Churches," *PU Recorder*, 1 October 1990, 31; Paul F. Bork (Napa, CA), "Celebration Churches," *ibid.*; Dan C. Robles (West Covina, CA), "Celebration Churches," *ibid.*; Ruffina G. Perez (West Covina, CA), "Celebration Churches," *ibid.*; Earl L. Thompson (Adams, OR), "Letters to the Editor--Celebrating, Pro and Con," *Adventist Review*, 4 October 1990, 2; "Celebration Worship: Original Motion: Stop 'Unholy Movement,'" *Northern California Conference News Front*, November 1990, 2; Myron Widmer, "Adventist Worship--Celebration-Style," *Adventist Review*, 1 November 1990, 12-16; William H. Shea, "God: Transcendent or Immanent?" *Adventist Review*, 1 November 1990, 14; Mike Cleveland (Vancouver, WA), "Letters--Celebrating," *NPUC Gleaner*, 5 November 1990, 3; Don Reiber, "Letters--Regarding Change," *ibid.*; Verla Fuller (Cornelius, OR), "Letters--About Milwaukie," *ibid.*; Corina Talkington (Yuba City, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Youth and Worship," *PU Recorder*, 5 November 1990, 31; Gordon Bietz, "Whatever Happened to Reverence," *Adventist Review*, 8 November 1990, 8, 9; Helen Stimpel (Pollock Pines, CA), "Youth and Worship," *ibid.*; Fredrick W. Edwardy (Deer Park, CA), "Youth and Worship," *ibid.*; Kay Drumwright, "God's Beautiful Contrasts," *NPUC Gleaner*, 19 November 1990, 2; Ron M. Wisbey to Don Jacobsen, 30 November 1990; Bill Whiversidge, "Guiding Principles for Celebration in Worship," *The Cutting Edge* 2, no. 2 (November/December 1990), 1, 4; Eugene F. Durand, "Contemporary Christian Music," *Adventist Review*, 6 December 1990, 5; Jeff Truby, "I Wonder . . ." *ibid.*, 13; J. David Newman, "Celebration' Is a Naughty Word," *Ministry* 63 (December 1990): 26-27; Adriel Chilson (Angwin, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration Churches," *PU Recorder*, 3 December 1990, 31; [Anonymous], "Celebration Churches," *ibid.*; Barbara Hopmann (La Center, WA), "Letters--More on Music" *NPUC Gleaner*, 17 December 1990.

¹A good spectrum of these questions is outlined by David Newman and Kenneth R. Wade, in "Is It Safe to Celebrate?" *Ministry* 63 (June 1990): 26-29.

²Johnsson, "Born to Grow," 4; *idem*, "When Churches Grow," 4; Blake, "The Youth Challenge," 9; Widmer, "Adventist Worship," 14.

³Newman, "Is There Room for Mavericks . . . ?" 22.

of a complex package of ideas that will fall apart if pastors attempt to just add on certain formats to their worship services?";¹ admonitions to proceed with care when changing Adventist traditional worship and not follow a unique model such as the "celebration services in California or Oregon";² churches as safe places of diversity, change, and healing;³ perceptions of an existing worship renewal movement and celebration movement;⁴ the importance of "celebration" as a biblical concept;⁵ a "wait-and-see" attitude toward celebration churches;⁶ concerns regarding the lack of an Adventist theology of worship, and a quest for distinguishing between the sacred and the profane.⁷

Three additional significant publications of 1990 must be noted:

1. Paul Richardson published the first newsletter for Adventist baby boomers--Adventist Baby Boomer Awareness (ABBA). Interestingly, among the first subjects of the review are what Adventist baby boomers want from their church as they come back and invite their friends to it, and spirit-led participation in "winsome" worship to bring renewal to "boring" worship services.⁸

2. Monte Sahlin's book, Sharing Your Faith with Friends without Losing Either, describes the concept of relational evangelism as the third era of Adventism evangelism, which will lead

¹Newman and Wade, "Is It Safe to Celebrate?" 28.

²Jacobsen, "What Do They Mean?" 8; Garrie Williams, "Celebration Crisis," Trinity Power Newsletter, Spring 1990, 7.

³Ludington, "Letters," 2; Drumwright, "God's Beautiful Contrasts," 2; Newman, "Celebration," 27; Johnsson, "Between Fire and Ice," 4.

⁴Prall, "Committee Grants," 4; "Celebration Worship," News Front, 2; Widmer, "Adventist Worship," 16.

⁵Templin, "Letters--Celebration," NPUC Gleaner, 1 October 1990, 2; Cleveland, "Letters--Celebrating," NPUC Gleaner, 5 November 1990, 3; Drumwright, "God's Beautiful Contrasts," 2; Newman, "Celebration," 26, 27.

⁶Johnsson, "Between Fire and Ice," 4; Widmer, "Adventist Worship," 15.

⁷Newman, "Celebration," 27; Bietz, "Whatever Happened," 8.

⁸Paul Richardson, "Thirtysomething Thinking: What Adventist Baby Boomers Want from Their Church as They Come Back to It," Adventist Baby Boomer Awareness (ABBA), July/August 1990, 1; idem, "Adventist Perestroika in the 90s," *ibid.*, 12; Monte Sahlin, "Spirit-led Participation in Winsome Worship," *ibid.*, 8, 9.

to a "reinventing" of the local church. The book also addresses evangelism and baby boomers and gives examples of several growing Seventh-day Adventist churches in the 1990s, such as Celebration Center and New Life Celebration Church.¹

3. Don Hawley's Set Free: A Personal Message to Former and Nonattending Seventh-day Adventists, published by one who was an ordained pastor and church leader for thirty years, deals candidly and scripturally with problems facing Adventists in the 1990s. It also treats the issue of celebration worship as anchored in righteousness by faith, the assurance of salvation, and the response to God's grace.²

The year 1990 must also be remembered for five significant events in the North American Adventist Church:

1. The Fifth Annual International Music Festival was held at Andrews University-- June 26-29. It considered the issue of diversity in music and how to remedy the lack of relationship between theology, music, and worship.³ Concepts presented were worship versus entertainment;⁴ the distinction between the holy and the profane, and the religious and the sacred;⁵ singing as the center of

¹Monte Sahlin, Sharing Our Faith with Friends without Losing Either (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1990).

²Don Hawley, Set Free: A Personal Message to Former and Nonattending Seventh-day Adventists (Clackamas, OR: Better Living Publishers, 1990), 52-73.

³Sandra Tennison Gillan, "The Relation of Theology to Music and Worship," unpublished paper, Fifth Annual International Music Festival, Andrews University, June 1990; Harold Lickey, "Current Issues in Church Music," unpublished paper, *ibid.*; Wolfgang Hans Martin Stefani, "Toward a Theology of Church Music," unpublished paper, *ibid.*; Vernon E. Andrews, "Unity in Diversity: A Call for Understanding," unpublished paper, *ibid.*; Russell Staples, "Church Music in the World: An Anthropological Perspective," unpublished paper, *ibid.*; Christopher Ederesinghe, "Making Hymnody Relevant and Meaningful in Small Congregations," unpublished paper, *ibid.*; Eurdyce Osterman, "Christian Music: Sacred or Religious," unpublished paper, *ibid.*.

⁴Gillan, "The Relation of Theology," 5.

⁵*Ibid.*, 10; Lickey, "Current Issues in Church Music," 3; Stefani, "Toward a Theology of Church Music," 9.

church music;¹ musicians as servants and not pragmaticians or aestheticians;² the need to explore musical diversity and give people priority over music;³ a model of worship with God as the audience, worshippers the actors, and worship leaders the prompters.⁴

During the conference, allusions to celebration churches were made and a description of celebration worship was attempted:

The program is centered on experiencing the joy of salvation and making lavish expression of joy in music and other demonstrative acts which are associated with charismatic behavior. Some of our churches are proceeding down this track at full speed. There are many of our people who are flocking to these churches. There is a great emphasis there on fellowship with a lot of hugging and caring. The whole service is generally characterized by a very informal and folksy approach.⁵

Wolfgang Stefani, an Australian doctoral student, also presented a careful study on Luther's, Zwingli's, and Calvin's approach to worship and music and concluded: "It can be shown . . . that not only specific theological decisions, but also the general theological conceptions which engender the ethos or the 'atmosphere' of a community of faith can influence its expression in sacred music."⁶

2. The fifty-fifth session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was held Indianapolis, Indiana--July 1-5. Although the theme of the Council was "We Shall Behold Him," no general addresses or theology seminars ventured to study the topic of worship per se. George Brown, president of the Inter-American Division, came close to addressing the topic by treating the theological foundations and the three celebrative dimensions of Sabbath observance: creation, redemption, and

¹Lickey, "Current Issues in Church Music," 5.

²Ibid., 6, 7.

³Staples, "Church Music," 5; Vernon, "Unity in Diversity," 1, 2.

⁴Ibid.; this idea is borrowed from Søren Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing (New York: Harper Brothers, 1938), 164.

⁵Lickey, "Current Issues in Church Music," 5, 6.

⁶Stefani, "Toward a Theology of Church Music," 24.

recreation.¹ No business session treated the issue of worship, except two dealing with details related to communion and public prayer.² One panel discussion must, however, be noticed. Led by Floyd Bresee, secretary of the Ministerial Association at the General Conference, it considered worship along with preaching through twenty questions, of which ten were related to worship:³

1. Where does the Bible insist on corporate worship? Couldn't we just as well stay home and enjoy the electronic church? 2. What changes would our youth most like to see in our worship services? 3. What direction should the church be moving in encouraging emotion in our worship? 4. What about the new "celebration" models of worship that have attracted so much attention in Adventism lately? 5. What means have you found successful in increasing audience participation during the worship service? 6. How can you make more effective the use of Bible in worship? 7. What use of music are you finding most helpful in worship? 8. What use of intercessory prayer are you finding most effective in worship? 9. Are you finding the use of personal testimonies helpful in worship? 10. How do you structure a worship service so it will lead to decisions?⁴

We must also observe that a few evangelism and pastoral seminars, as well as one theology and administration seminar, addressed issues related to celebration worship and its theological context as described above.⁵

3. The Second and Third International Adventist Small Group Conferences met in Gresham, Oregon (18, 19 April 1990), and Springfield, Oregon (17-20 October 1990), respectively.

¹George Brown, "The Joys of Worship and Sabbath Keeping," 6 July 1991, Adventist Media Center, Newbury, CA, audiocassette.

²"Fourteenth Business Meeting: 55th General Conference Session, July 13, 1990, 9:00 a.m.," *Adventist Review*, 19 July 1990, 11; "Fifteenth Business Meeting: 55th General Conference Session, July 13, 2:00 p.m.," *Adventist Review*, 26 July-2 August 1990, 7, 8.

³Participants: Zeblon Ncube, Head, Theology Dept., Solusi College, Zimbabwe; William Steve Bassham, President, Thailand Mission; Lyell V. Heise, Pastor, La Sierra Collegiate Church, Riverside, CA; Dwight Nelson, Pastor, Pioneer Memorial Church, Berrien Springs, MI; Hyveth Williams, Pastor, Boston Temple, Boston, MA, "1990 World Ministers Council," 10, pamphlet.

⁴"Pastoral Panel Survey," Indianapolis, 4 July 1990, survey sheet; "1990 World Ministers Council," July 1-5, Hoosier Dome and Convention Center, Indianapolis, IN; 10, program booklet.

⁵Evangelism Seminars: Garrie Williams, "Small Group Ministry for Growth." Pastoral Seminars: Eoin Giller, "Church Alive--Methods of Church Revitalization"; Monte Sahlin, "Handling the Dropout Problem"; Jerry Page, "Using Lay Pastors Effectively"; Israel Leito, "Youth Issues." Administration Seminar: Donald G. Reynolds, "Administrative Issues: The 1990s." Theology Seminar: Erwin Gane, "The Holy Spirit and the Latter Rain" ("1990 Ministers Council," program booklet, 12-14).

These conferences each gathered over 300 international attendees from North America, Europe, South America, Asia, and the South Pacific.¹ Interestingly, the First Small Group Conference was preceded by the First International Adventist Prayer Conference--Baptism of the Holy Spirit (14-17 October 1990), which explored the connections between the prayer and small group movements. Guest speakers came from all over the United States.²

4. A request was made from the president of the General Conference to be informed about the celebration movement. In 1990, according to George Reid, director of the Adventist Biblical Research Institute, the office of the General Conference president was receiving many inquiries from members from "everywhere" about celebration churches/worship. In the fall, the Biblical Research Institute was requested by the president, for his own information, to "objectively" investigate this issue. Reid, Herbert Kiesler, and William Shea visited Celebration Center and New Life Celebration Church. Written materials were investigated, interviews conducted, and the Arthur Keough Lectureship attended. A report was completed before Annual Council 1991 to help Folkenberg ascertain if this issue should go on the agenda of the Council. As Reid remembers, he wanted to see if we had on our hands a major crisis or a major opportunity.³

5. The John Osborn Lectureship Series was held at La Sierra University, "The Third Millennium and the Church," October 1990. The series focused on change.⁴ Gifford recognized that

¹Garrie Williams, interview by author, College Place, WA, 14 June 1995, hand-written notes; Hiebert made a similar estimate (Hiebert interview, 7 May 1991). See also, "Oregon Conference Hosts First International Prayer Conference," Trinity Power Ministries Newsletter, Spring 1991, 5.

²Robert Dale, associate secretary of the North American Division; Ruthie Jacobsen, Women's Ministries, Oregon Conference; Don Jacobsen, President of the Oregon Conference; Janet Page, Women's Ministries, Pennsylvania Conference; Jerry Page, President of the Pennsylvania Conference; Garrie Williams, Ministerial Secretary, Oregon Conference (Trinity Power Ministries, Spring 1990, 8).

³George Reid, interview by author, Berrien Springs, MI, 8 May 1992.

⁴Arthur Bietz, "Managing Change in the Church," John Osborn Lectureship Series, The Third Millennium and the Church--Part 1, Arizona Video Ministries, Scottsdale, AZ, 1990, audiocassette. Other audiocassettes in this lectureship include: Peter Benson, "The Adventist Church of the 1990's--Parts 1 and 2," *ibid.*; Richard T. Rice, "Revision or Revolution--Parts 1 and 2," *ibid.*; L. Stephen Gifford, "Coping with Change in the Church," *ibid.*; Reinhold Tilstra and Gayland Richardson,

Adventist young people, especially those not familiar with Adventist culture, needed changes in worship.¹ Arthur Bietz, retired evangelist and minister, viewed the celebration concept as an attempt "to move out of dying into living, but not as an accomplishment in itself." However, appraising recent changes within the Adventist Church, he declared, "We have taken a handful of certainties and exchanged them for a car load of possibilities."² Richard Rice, theology professor at La Sierra University, emphasized that changes within the church require an understanding of changes in theology. For Rice, changes within the church follow certain doctrinal changes: (a) addition or subtraction of beliefs, (b) shifts in the configuration of beliefs or the importance attached to a belief at a given time, (c) shifts of rationale for a belief, and (d) shifts of distinction between a fundamental belief and a test of fellowship. Rice noted that the professional clergy's role is to give theological direction and to preserve sound biblical messages that are relevant to people. Rice did not think that the major issues facing Adventism in the 1990s related directly to theology, but more to church life (declining church growth, various roles of membership and women in ministry, decreasing enrollment in church schools, and keeping a vision alive for younger generations). He still affirmed the need for unique church contributions in theology to address those practical issues. He particularly called for a theology of ordination, ministry, and ecclesiology.³

At the same conference, Gayland Richardson, reflecting on the major changes⁴ occurring in the Adventist denomination during his twenty years of pastoral experience, concluded that coping with change necessitates coping with anger, frustration, and "second level" changes:

"Changes in the Church--How I Handled Them," *ibid.*; Panel of Presidents, "The Third Millennium and the Church," *ibid.*; Panel of Pastors, "Handling the Changing Church," *ibid.*

¹Gifford, "Coping with Changes," audiocassette.

²Bietz, "Managing Change in the Church," audiocassette.

³Cf. Robert Brow, "Evangelical Megashift," Christianity Today 34 (19 February 1990): 12-18; Rice, "Revision or Revolution?" audiocassette.

⁴The areas in which he perceived shifts are: (1) members' giving patterns that has led to greater demands from members for money management and accountability, (2) the invulnerable position and political power of the Union presidents, (3) the importance and trust credited to the conferences, (4) the configuration of groups within Adventism--polarization of extremes and shrinking of the center (Tilstra and Richardson, "Changes in the Church," audiocassette).

The second level of change is something that happens from outside the system. The solution is not to change some little something within the system [first level of change], but to change the entire system. What we need as we face the twenty first century is, in my opinion, second level change. Changes within the system will not get us where we need to be. It seems to me that the time has come when the system itself must change. . . . We need to wake up!¹

Finally, the year 1990 ended with additional evidence that "celebration churches" and worship renewal were among the major concerns of the North American Adventist Church. For example, one of the two major business items of the Northern California Conference constituency session was a motion dealing with the "misleading, divisive and unholy celebration movement" which was "a glorification of man and self instead of holy reverence for God and His sanctuary."² An alternative motion was finally voted encouraging the importance of "proper worship" and its study from a biblical perspective.³ The Michigan Conference gave similar encouragement to all its leaders.⁴ Finally, some letters testified to the fact that "a lot of people" from Grants Pass, Oregon, to Columbia, Maryland, were interested in what Simpson and Snyder were doing, the work of the Holy Spirit, and worship renewal.⁵

By the end of 1990, Robert Folkenberg, the new General Conference president, gave an interview focusing on the five biggest challenges facing Adventism. Surprisingly, Folkenberg did not address the issue of celebration churches or worship renewal. Alfred McClure, president of the North American Division, also remained silent on those issues at the year-end meetings.⁶

However, the report of Merton Strommen, founder of Search Institute, was the centerpiece of these year-end meetings. It presented Project Affirmation and its component, the Valuegenesis

¹Tilstra and Richardson, *ibid.*

²Susan Garza, "Northern California Conference Constituency," PU Recorder 17 December 1990, 4, 5.

³*Ibid.*, 5.

⁴"Priority Info to and from Michigan Leaders," Michigan Conference Newsletter, 11 December 1990, 1.

⁵[Anonymous] to Don Jacobsen, 27 July 1990; [Anonymous], to David Snyder, 30 August 1990; Ron Wisbey to Don Jacobsen, 30 November 1990.

⁶Beverly Beach, interview by author, Silver Spring, MD, 19 October 1992.

Project. Both projects pioneered a comprehensive study of Adventist in comparison to other Christian youth in order to understand, among other issues, why young people are leaving the church.¹ Strommen claimed that "traditional methods used to hold the youth are not working. Unless we reform our methods for raising youth we will lose them."² Bailey Gillespie, professor at La Sierra University and a primary researcher in the Valuegenesis Project, later reported on this massive project with more than 12,500 respondents. He drew attention to the fact that only 37 percent of the Adventist youth surveyed believe that their church felt "warm." In contrast, mainline denominations responded at the 48 percent level to this question, while 70 percent of Southern Baptist youth responded that their church "felt warm." Gillespie concluded, "Unless a caring, thinking climate begins to permeate the local congregation, we may not be able to nurture faith in its fullest sense in the future."³

Other Celebration Churches in 1991

In November 1990, Widmer claimed in the Adventist Review that less than a dozen "celebration churches" existed among the nearly 4,500 Adventist churches in North America. His definition of a "celebration church" is vague; only three are mentioned, and two presented: Celebration Center and New Life Celebration Church along with a reference to the Buffalo church.⁴

This section examines four churches and briefly outlines the journeys of their leaders, as told to the author in interviews in 1991. The description of these churches and of their leaders' journeys shows the definite influence throughout North America of a worship renewal movement exhibiting the same characteristics as those of Celebration Center and New Life Celebration Church. This section also briefly reports on and evaluates other Adventist Church worship experiences in 1991

¹Owen A. Troy, "Year-End Meeting Launches NAD into the 1990s," Adventist Review, 1 November 1990, 23-29.

²Merton Strommen quoted in Troy, "Year-end Meeting," 26.

³V. Bailey Gillespie, "Valuegenesis Report Offers Important Information," PU Recorder, 3 December 1990, 10, 11.

⁴Widmer, "Adventist Worship--Celebration Style," 15.

that belong to the same realm of influences and which were perceived within Adventism as belonging to the celebration movement.

In a conversation between Simpson and Snyder in Portland, Oregon (where the two met for the first time in 1991 just before the First International Adventist Worship Conference), the names of a few like-minded leaders whom they perceive as working toward church and worship renewal were mentioned. In planning to network with each other and others they mentioned: Eoin Giller at the Desert Valley Church in Tucson, Arizona; Ray Mitchell at the Camelback Church in Phoenix, Arizona; Jere Webb at the North Coast Christian Fellowship in San Diego, California; and Lyell Heise, at La Sierra University Church in Riverside, California.¹ In June 1991, Newman and Wade added Edward Couser, pastor of the Buffalo Church in New York, to this list of "celebration leaders." Interestingly, Couser had replaced Giller as pastor in this community.²

Desert Valley Church--Eoin Giller

In April 1991, Eoin Giller said that he had never met Snyder and had only spoken with Simpson for five minutes. Giller's interest in church and worship renewal stems from his personal journey. The following five points outline experiences that contributed to Giller's understanding of church and worship:

1. He was influenced by the New Zealand Scripture songs movement of the 1960s.
2. He went through a period of questioning while working as an evangelist in Australia.
3. While serving as a missionary in New Guinea, Giller successfully applied principles from the church growth movement.

¹Dan Simpson and Dave Snyder, interview by author, 16 April 1991, Portland, OR, hand-written notes. Camacho and Simpson in separate interviews also mentioned Jere Webb's church experience as being a celebration church (Camacho interview, 9 April 1991; Simpson interview, 2 April 1991).

²Newman and Wade, "Is It Safe to Celebrate?" 26.

4. Giller visited different denominational worship services while studying under Louis Venden at Andrews University in the 1970s.¹

Since 1977, Giller claims that wherever he has been assigned, he has applied the church growth and church revitalization principles that he gained through his own personal and professional journey. In 1984, he began a successful pastoral effort to revitalize the Buffalo Church in New York. In 1989 he went to Tucson, Arizona, to do the same in the Desert Valley Church.² For Giller, church revitalization is not a program but a process lived within a church. He describes church revitalization:

Based upon Scripture and using insights gained from the social sciences, organization development, system theories and management by objectives, it [church revitalization] is aimed at renewing the organic structure of interdependent relationships within the church. This process leads to church growth--which is both an increase in numbers attending church and a deepening of Christian experience among members. Church revival and revitalization frequently go together. Many do not see a distinction. Revival is the work of the Spirit beyond human beings. Revitalization is the renewal of the organic structures of the church from within the church. It is a human program which can be tested, observed, and measured.³

Giller perceives himself as a conservative Christian and as a gospel preacher. He believes that people are saved by faith, that God justifies them, and that justification is past, present, and future. For him people are not once saved, always saved. They can lose their faith and be lost again.

Giller is open to new methods of evangelism and church life. Regarding worship he declares:

As pastors we are not here to carry on traditions, to please people, but to build into the life of the church the values of New Testament biblical Christianity. What I do in worship, I do with a theology of worship. I don't do it because "it appeals to people," or because "it works." I am not working out of a pragmatic base but out of a theological base. That is, the Gospel frees us from ourselves, our sins and, therefore, we are called by God to praise Him. We minister to the Lord. We are not here to be ministered to. There is a theology of worship behind it!⁴

¹Eoin Giller, interview by author, Portland, OR, 18 April 1991.

²Giller interview, 19 April 1991.

³Eoin Giller, "Worship Revitalization," Called to Worship W-03, Clackamas, OR, April 1991, audiocassette.

⁴Giller interview, 19 April 1991.

Other fundamental elements of Giller's theology can be summarized as follows:

1. He believes in a theology of love, acceptance, and forgiveness leading to the acknowledgment of God's grace. People are human, not saints, and need to live together to do their best to respond to grace by caring, being positive, and helping others in life's troubles.
2. Giller believes in a theology of gratitude, celebration, and praise deeply seated in the assurance of salvation. For him, incipient perfectionism and conditional salvation (the belief that God forgives people's sins and if they try hard enough they can make it) represent some deep-seated problems within Adventism, which are detrimental to the church and its mission.
3. Giller understands ecclesiology as moving away from church offices and nominating committees toward understanding spiritual gifts and the power of ministries.
4. Finally, Giller values a theology of the incarnation--Christ is above all cultures but working through specific cultures. For him, Adventists need to move further into the area of social concerns and interactions with culture. Otherwise, they are in danger of becoming like the nineteenth-century Amish: a cult.¹

Giller has networked with Heise since they became friends at Avondale College in Australia.²

North Oshawa--Ladd Dunfield

Ladd Dunfield claims that he never met or networked with Simpson or Snyder. His interest in church and worship renewal grew from personal experience.

1. The first influence was the rock and roll and hippie culture in which he grew up.
2. In the late 1970s, while doing outreach programs among Canadian university students, Dunfield realized that if worship was to attract and retain students, it needed to be loose, informal, and dynamic with lot of contemporary music and diverse instruments.

¹Ibid.; idem, "Worship Revitalization," audiocassette; idem, "Worship and Witness," W-54, Called to Worship, Clackamas, OR, April 1991, audiocassette.

²Giller interview, 19 April 1991.

3. Later, while teaching in an academy he observed that his students wanted to become Christians but not Adventists because they did not see the Adventist Church as relevant. Its sermons and music did not fit their needs; they wanted more participation in worship.

4. Dunfield's personal journey was influenced by several books on church growth, including Cook and Baldwin's book, Love, Acceptance, and Forgiveness. He comments on the books he read: "Later, when I found that the so called 'celebration churches' were using the same things--meeting the needs of people, contemporary music, drama, etc., I just said, 'Oh, man, they have been reading the same books!' If it works, use it!"¹

When Dunfield began pastoring the North Oshawa Seventh-day Adventist Church in mid-1989, he experimented with a celebrative worship style. He focused on (1) a special target audience--the unchurched and the poor, as well as youth and former Adventists; (2) evangelistic worship with a circle of prayer up front, contemporary and joyful praise music, relevant preaching; and (3) different study and support groups. Dunfield claims that at the end of 1991 he had more questions than answers. Even though his church did not yet screen all members to find their spiritual gifts, it was already operating with a definite recognition of the contribution of everybody's gifts, a strong sense of the corporate body of Christ, and a deep respect for individuality.² According to Dunfield,

A lot of celebration churches draw a lot of very talented people, people who are musicians, artists, painters, writers. I draw people who have a creative bent that do not feel very comfortable any place else, because in most mainline churches our individuality is sort of removed. We almost become like cookie-cutter Christians where we all look alike, dress alike, talk alike, act alike, and so forth, to fit the mold. And in some of these [celebration] churches you actually can be yourself. You can have a guy play the piano with hair down to his waist. You can have a guy play the drums with no hair. . . . The good aspect of a church like that is that every body can accept each other for who they are with their hassles, their positive features and bad features.³

Dunfield foresees that the celebration movement will move ahead a little bit and then fizzle. In his view, two factors will contribute to this: (1) the type of people drawn to the movement often

¹Ladd Dunfield, interview by author, Oshawa, Canada, 28 December 1991.

²Dunfield interview, 28 December 1991; also Larry Febns, interview by author, Oshawa, Canada, 28 December 1991.

³Dunfield interview, 28 December 1991.

have difficulty growing and maturing in the Christian walk, and (2) the strong backlash against the movement already at work at the end of 1991. When asked why he belongs to a movement which is going to fade, Dunfield answers:

I believe in it, it is right, it is the way to go. I have just known the history of our church. I expect to run into opposition. Right now the opposition comes from the sort of strange people on the fringes but I think there is much more opposition in the mainstream of the church than has manifested itself so far. . . . I think if it threatens and becomes threatening to the established role of the established churches, there will be interference. There are a lot of powerful Adventist churches that are not celebration in their orientation and if they feel threatened, I think there could be a lot of backlash. They have a lot of power and money. This is basically a new movement, a new idea. I do believe it is spirit-led. I think the Holy Spirit has started to work on individuals all over America. I think it could well be and it should well be a basis for starting a revival in our church. A lot of people who come are revived but the pressures are going to be such that it may not be the sort of catalyst of revival that we would like to see.¹

New Hope Church--Tim and Bev Ruskjer

Tim Ruskjer's interest in worship and church renewal stems from his personal journey and a brief encounter with Dan Simpson. His personal journey includes the following landmarks:

1. In 1978, Tim and his wife Bev (both born and raised in Adventist families) experienced a late conversion, years after their baptism and just before going to the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Michigan. They attribute their renewed understanding of the gospel and their spiritual birth to the teachings of Morris Venden, Smuts Van Rooyen, and Desmond Ford. Bev comments:

We became born again Christians in our hearts and understood that our righteousness was 100 percent in Jesus and it made me joyful in the Lord.¹ . . . I think that was the beginning actually. The beginning of praise and worship happens when you start knowing Jesus in your heart. . . . I think that one thing that freed me is finding Jesus, my Savior. Christ shall set you free. I used to define truth by what I knew instead of who I knew. Now I find truth to be a capital T, as a person Jesus. "I am the Way, the Truth, and Life." When you know Jesus you have the Way, the Truth and the Life. I may not understand everything about every theological point but I know Jesus. I have the Truth, no matter how much theology I have in my head. So, I redefined truth when I came to Jesus. It became a person--knowing Him, seeking Him, and desiring Him in my life and desiring others to just have a walk and knowing Him. It totally changed my attitude towards what truth was. And so, it frees me, you see, in my worship style to do anything that draws me nearer to Jesus Christ.²

¹Ibid.

²Bev Ruskjer in T. and B. Ruskjer interview by author. Grants Pass, OR, 16 August 1991.

2. In the Gladstone, Oregon, camp-meeting youth tent in 1983, Bev discovered how people love praise choruses. On her recommendation, Tim introduced them in the worship at the Madras Seventh-day Adventist Church, Oregon. During the following years of trial and error in that congregation and at the Brookings Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Ruskjers learned how to worship according to their new insights, increase commitment to prayer, and walk in submission to the Holy Spirit's direction. They encountered much resistance. Tim explains:

A big part was the perfectionist type of orientation [found in many members]. It is difficult to praise the Lord if you really don't know where you stand, if you don't know if your name is going to come up some time soon, or if you are trying to get perfect and not getting much success at times. That is pressure. It is hard to really rejoice in the Lord when you have that pressure and you are carrying around a burden!¹

3. In 1987, Tim experienced a pivotal spiritual revival while attending the spring Leadership Conference at the New Hope Community Church in Portland, Oregon. There he discovered the concept of small groups. More importantly, he learned that physically expressing his spiritual feelings in joyful, enthusiastic worship in the Lord creates openness with God. He remembers:

I was enthralled with their worship more than with their small group classes, because of the joy, and acceptance, and love. . . . The people seem to be enjoying being there, worshipping there, because they were not there because they were supposed to be there, because they had to do that if they wanted to be in heaven some day. No obligation. There was definitely a sense of desire, not obligation. . . . There you were built up, you felt energized and ready to share your faith afterwards, because you had verbalized and acted out your faith before the Lord. . . . When I gave physical expression of what was going on in my heart it really strengthened it!²

At this Conference, Tim briefly encountered Simpson and many of the Azure Hills Church leaders. They made a lasting impression on him. He remembers them as a praise-singing and praying group, even while visiting the Columbia River falls on Sabbath afternoon.³

In the summer of 1990, Tim accepted the pastorate of the North Valley and Rogue River Seventh-day Adventist churches near Grants Pass, Oregon. At the request of a group of members from the North Valley Church, concerned to reach former Adventists and unchurched people in the

¹Tim Ruskjer in T. and B. Ruskjer, interview by author, Grants Pass, OR, 16 August 1991.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

valley, Tim planned to develop a celebration worship service. Tensions and oppositions arose from another group in the church under Terry Ross's leadership. Finally, after many debates with the leadership of five of the surrounding Adventist churches and in the presence of Larry Evans and Don Jacobsen from the Seventh-day Adventist regional headquarters in Clackamas, Oregon, the Ruskjers were assigned to lead an alternative style of Adventist Church. Space was rented in a Free Methodist Church in Grants Pass, as Adventist pastors in the area, fearing the negative reactions and possible dropout of their conservative members, did not offer their own facilities.¹

In October of 1990, Tim attended the First Seventh-day Adventist International Prayer Conference and the Small Group Conference in Springfield, Oregon. On 1 December 1990, about 140 people attended the first meeting of the New Hope Christian Fellowship, Seventh-day Adventist congregation.

One year after their arrival in Grants Pass, Tim and Bev attributed their actions at the New Hope Church to their personal journey, church growth books (such as Barna's), a renewed concept of God (the prodigal son's Father as well as a high, majestic God, approachable through the power of the Lamb), and personal growth in corporate worship. As a result, they became more vulnerable to and aware of spiritual warfare. Bev adds:

I believe God is raising up in Christendom a group of people, like the beginning of an orchestra around the world; not just here, but in Europe, in Africa. It is in the Orient. God is raising His people and they are going to have a breadth of worshipping Him. I believe it is going to be one of the last things which is going to happen. I believe it's going to be the true remnant worshippers. He called us to worship Him who made heavens and earth. I believe God is training us to become worshippers because it is at the center of the Kingdom. . . . I cannot go back to tradition in worship, to no energy, no spirit in the pews and doing humdrum boring church!²

Celebration of Praise--Kal Kirkle

Kal Kirkle's interest in church and worship renewal is an outgrowth of his personal journey and encounter with Dan Simpson. Five elements shape his personal journey, culminating his

¹Jacobsen interview, 2 May 1991; T. and B. Ruskjer interview, 16 August 1991.

²Bev Ruskjer in T. and B. Ruskjer interview, 16 August 1991.

decision to start (with five other lay families) the Celebration of Praise Seventh-day Adventist Church even though there were already five Adventist churches established in the area.

1. As a life-long member of the Modesto Central Adventist Church, Kirkle observed judgmental attitudes and constant power struggles within its core leadership. He struggled with his incapacity, even while in positions of influence, to effect changes. He comments, "In Modesto Central, you did not change anything; if it had been done this way for thirty years, it stays."¹

2. Through Pastor Nathan Simms's teaching in the mid- and late 1980s, Kirkle discovered that worship is vertical, not horizontal, and that the reception of a blessing depends upon one's openness to heaven. "I realized," he says, that "the pastor's job is nothing more than facilitating the worship that should occur."²

3. In 1989, Kirkle realized that of the thirty-five students in his graduating class at the Seventh-day Adventist Modesto Academy, only seven still go to church. He recalls his perceptions at the academy:

At the academy, they were good at teaching us rules. They were really good at correcting us. They did not teach us about Jesus' love. If you have firm rules without love, you will end up hating the rules. I am not saying we don't need standards, rules, or guidelines, but you have to have balance!³

4. Kirkle experienced a personal conversion of his own judgmental attitudes. He remembers:

The attitude was very judgmental--not just of Nathan Simms but in the Modesto Church. If a new member was baptized into the church, they were under the microscope to make sure that every thing they did was perfect and, if it was not, we would not talk to them but about them. Whenever we set ourselves as judges, we are going to make errors, because the only one who judges is God. The biggest thing that happened to me is that God made it very clear that it is not my job to judge you, to evaluate your dress, your style of speech, if you have pepperoni on your

¹Kal Kirkle, interview by author, Modesto, CA, 11 March 1991. See also, Dorsey Griffith, "The New Adventists," *The Modesto Bee*, 6 January 1990, E-3.

²Kirkle interview, 11 March 1991.

³Ibid.

pizza. My job is to love you and help you know my friend Jesus. If you have areas in your life that need correction, He will take care of that. It has been a wonderful burden lifted for me.¹

5. In June of 1989, the simultaneous resignations of both the associate pastor and senior pastor catalyzed his decision to start a celebration church. Kinkle comments on Simms and his associate: "Their spirit had been broken so much by the hatred. . . . If we can, as a congregation, break somebody so strong, there is no hope for baby Christians and our congregation to grow. No hope at all! I realized I had to do something for baby Christians."²

At the end of the summer of 1989, Kinkle visited Celebration Center. "I was very impressed," he says. Upon Simpson's recommendations, the following October he attended the New Hope Community Church leadership conference in Portland, Oregon. There, Kinkle learned about cell/small-group ministries and more about prayer, the Holy Spirit, worship, music, response, and bodily expression in worship. He comments, "The Christian church at large has been doing extensive study and research on this for years. This is not a new thing. It is just new for Adventists. We've had our heads stuck into the sand."³

On 9 December 1989, the Celebration of Praise congregation met for the first time. Its clearly articulated mission statement is similar to that of Celebration Center, emphasizing divine and human love, acceptance, and forgiveness; the church as a healing community functioning on the basis of the spiritual gifts and small groups; and a special mission to former Adventists and the unchurched. Its worship format is also very close to Celebration Center's, although it does not include drama and there are some differences in the style of music and of instrumentation.⁴

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid. Steve Daily articulates the same conclusion in his interview, 3 April 1991.

⁴"Celebration of Praise! History of Miracles," Celebration Praise Connections, 22 May 1990, 1; "Celebration of Praises! A New Seventh-day Adventist Congregation," 26 January 1991, church bulletin.

According to Kirkle, Celebration of Praise first had a celebration worship because of the assurance of salvation:

We have to be thankful that Jesus died for us. We have the hope of salvation, not because of anything we do but because Jesus-Christ loved us enough, when we were yet sinners, He died for us. To me, that is what we are celebrating. However badly I messed up in my life in the past, Jesus will forgive me today and make me a new creature. That is what we are celebrating. I get excited about that!¹

Second, Celebration of Praise is a celebration church because of some undergirding concepts, such as an understanding of spiritual gifts, cell groups, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Kirkle comments on the celebration concept: "It is an attitude. It goes with not being judgmental. It is not our job to judge motives. It goes with an attitude of openness to the Holy Spirit. It goes with an attitude on what worship is, what Christian love is, what it means to love and take care of my fellow men."²

At the end of 1991, Michael Mesnard evaluated the impact of Celebration of Praise. Ministering to over a thousand different people, the worship service, he says, usually involves as many visitors as it does members, all excited about worshipping God as one.³

Evidences of the Celebration Movement's Impact in 1991

The reality of a worship movement or at least a definite worship awareness within the Adventist North American Church can be established, as seen above, by various church events, written and oral material, and specific local church experiences directly related to or concurrent with the birth of Celebration Center. The extent and the impact of the celebration movement is difficult to evaluate. Such an appraisal could have been accurately accomplished only through sophisticated research techniques beyond the scope of this study. However, within the methodologies and limitations of this dissertation, the impact of the celebration movement can be evaluated by: (1) oral perceptions collected in interviews and (2) additional key events and written material produced in 1991 and selected according to the same

¹Kirkle interview, 11 March 1991.

²Ibid.

³Michael Mesnard, "Two Years of Celebration," Celebration of Praise-Celebrate, November 1991, 2.

criteria used above for materials describing the preceding years. As we will see, the movement is much larger than the summation of the different influences of various celebration churches. It encompasses and expresses the general trend in the 1990s of a renewed interest in, and better practice and understanding of, worship within the North American Adventist Church.

People's Perceptions

According to Hiebert and Hanson, between 1987 and 1990 the Gresham Seventh-day Adventist Church in Oregon exhibited the basic characteristics of a celebration church. It had a visionary pastor (Don James), church structures organized around small group ministries, and a participative, celebrative type of worship.¹ According to Paul Richardson, a member of the Pleasant Valley Adventist Church in Oregon, his church also matches the definition of a celebration church. There, it is not only the pastor (Larry Gibson) but also a strong core of lay leadership who have shaped a definite new vision about the functioning and mission of their church and its innovative worship services.²

In 1991, the names of other leaders of celebration churches were collected in interviews, such as Gary Taber in Escondido, California; Ralph Neidigh in Vasalia, California; and Glenn Gingery in Springfield, Oregon. They were perceived as pastors experimenting with a different church life and worship.³

Six other churches were also seen as having unique worship services similar to Celebration Center's--services that were contemporary, participative, joyful, creative, informal. They exhibited balance of the emotional and the cognitive, the proclamation and the response.⁴ Examples cited include: Sligo Church at Columbia Union College with Charles Scriven; La Sierra Campus Church with Lyell Heise; the Boston Temple with Hyveth Williams; Pacific Union College Church with Louis Venden;

¹Hiebert interview, 7 May 1991; Hanson interview, 25 April 1991

²Richardson interview, 3 May 1991; "Pleasant Valley People: A Brief History and Mission Statement of the Pleasant Valley SDA Church," Pleasant Valley, OR, April 1991.

³Munson interview, 26 April 1991; Hiebert interview, 7 May 1991.

⁴Loren Smith, interview by author, Palo Alto, CA, 12 March 1991.

Pioneer Memorial Church with Dwight Nelson, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Palo Alto, California, with Loren Seibolt and one of his musicians, Loren Smith.¹

From our own observations, although all these churches have unique charismatic leaders, worship services, and even sometimes one or two other characteristics of a celebration church, they really cannot be labeled as celebration churches according to our definition. Most of them do not exhibit major changes in ecclesiology or basic church structures, usually because they are affiliated with Adventist institutions where changes are usually slower. We will now briefly comment on each of these influential churches. Due to the large number of people they attract, they have contributed to heightened awareness of worship renewal within Adventism.

In 1991, Scriven described his early Sabbath morning "celebration" service, started in September 1990, as attracting more people--not high school or college students, but middle-aged people--because of the 1960s style of music they were playing.²

Interestingly, in instigating creative worship services in the La Sierra Collegiate Church, Lyell Heise is perceived as continuing a tradition established in the mid 1970s by people like Lynn Mallery, previously senior pastor at the same church, and Charles and Marta Teel ministering at the Riverside City Parish in California.³

Worship services under the gifted leadership of Hyveth Williams, senior pastor at the Boston Temple since 1990, can be considered a uniquely successful blend of several traditions--West-Indian, Anglican/Episcopal, and traditional Adventism.⁴

¹Dan Snyder interview, 30 April 1991; Scriven interview, 20 April 1991; Heise interview, 20 August 1991; Loren Smith, interview by author, Palo Alto, CA, 12 March 1991; Loren Seibold, interview by author, Palo Alto, CA, 12 March 1991.

²Scriven interview, 20 April 1991.

³Mallery interview, 8 April 1991; Charles Teel, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 21 August 1991; Munson interview, 26 April 1991; Louis Venden, "Adventists and Worship," 4.

⁴Hyveth Williams, interview by author, College Place, WA, 16 July 1995, hand-written notes.

In the fall of 1991, Louis Venden, senior pastor of the Pacific Union College Church, along with Mike Dunn, chaplain, and three "bright, eager, passionately dedicated students" (Marc Judd, Dan Savino, and Walter Thomas), developed seven "worship planning perspectives" to shape an alternative corporate worship service on their campus. The purpose of the new worship service is described as follows:

(1) To highlight and emphasize worship as centered in "meeting" with God. (2) To pray for, recognize and be open to the ministry of the Holy Spirit as "God with us." (3) To deepen each person's understanding and sense of being a worshiper. (4) To emphasize participation--not performance or entertainment. To build and enhance a sense of community and worship as the shared activity of the family of God. (5) To cultivate variety appropriate to and meaningful for the great diversity represented in our church family. Our goal is to be inclusive. We are not seeking to exclude but to add to. (6) To deliberately encourage flexibility and tolerance for differences in "styles" of worship. (7) To seek to heighten a sense of having something to share as a result of having worshipped.¹

We must note in this statement the effort to define a philosophy of worship. The first four perspectives are very similar to that of Celebration Center. The last three perspectives are, however, unique to the Pacific Union College Church.

At Pioneer Memorial Church, no significant changes related to a more contemporary style of worship appeared before 19 September 1992. The announcement (delivered one week in advance) emphasized mission/evangelism and increased participation in worship to better meet the students' needs:

Beginning next Sabbath, September 19, Pioneer Memorial Church's traditional 11:20 a.m. worship service, which has influenced Adventist worship around the world, will move to the 8:30 a.m. time slot. This will include the organ prelude and postlude, majestic choral and instrumental music, and usual high quality preaching, with the additional feature of a children's story. The 11:20 service will then change formats, blending traditional and contemporary components designed to appeal to and involve many college students. Thank you, 11:20 attenders, for your understanding and faithfulness to this mission project.²

At the Palo Alto Seventh-day Adventist Church, changes in worship were described as pragmatic. They sprang out of the observation of the success of the local Vineyard ministries and of people's needs--what they like and respond best to--and the desire to have an evangelistic worship

¹Venden, "Adventists and Worship," 2.

²"11:20 Worship Service Moves to New Time," Keeping Pioneer People in Touch 7 (12 September 1992): 1.

reaching out to friends, former Adventists, and the unchurched people within the community.¹ Loren Smith, lay musician at the Palo Alto Seventh-day Adventist Church, says:

What we felt we needed was to contextualize the worship experience for people who were not familiar with the church. . . . One thing we are trying to be very careful about is that it [music] does not come across as a performance, that it is always done in a context of corporate worship. That is an important distinction.²

Loren Seibold, senior pastor, commented on his own experience in this new worship context: "My theological training is so cerebral, so propositional that I cannot worship emotionally. . . . I am too much an Adventist to put that across. We have not yet developed a critical mass of emotionally open people to be vulnerable to that extent."³

Additional perceptions collected in 1991 also show a more direct influence of the celebration churches on other Adventist churches. For example, Bruce Johnston observed that his Gladstone Seventh-day Adventist Church in Oregon is undergoing worship changes modeled after the ones brought by "celebration" worship. He claimed that the Gladstone worship service had become much more accepting, warm, and praise-oriented.⁴ The same year, John Brunt, professor and vice-president at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington, declared:

It [the celebration movement] has had a lot of influence on the way everybody else worships and I think that is one of most important things that will come from it. But I don't think that we will see a large number of churches like Milwaukie and Colton throughout Adventism. I think we see a lot of worship services that have more singing and informality within them, and that is wonderful. . . . I think the celebration movement has influenced a lot of other churches like the Walla Walla College Church to do more singing and I think that is positive.⁵

Brunt noted that the Walla Walla College Church worship services have included more singing since the birthing of various celebration churches within Adventism. Other than three to four additional praise songs, however, no significant changes have been established in the worship service in the last two years. There is no evidence of any change related either to structure, theology, or the practice of worship in

¹Seibold interview, 12 March 1991.

²Smith interview, 12 March 1991.

³Seibold interview, 12 March 1991.

⁴Bruce Johnston interview, 8 May 1991.

⁵Brunt interview, 28 April 1991.

order to become more relevant to students' needs, lest the congregation risk being labeled a celebration church.¹

Similar conclusions regarding the worship service at the Oklahoma City Seventh-day Adventist Church can be made after observing the 17 June 1990 service. The increased singing and praise music accompanied by a band (including drums) definitely caught worshippers' attention. Although it was more "contemporary" than the Walla Walla College Church service, both services simply injected innovations within a typical Adventist traditional church structure and order of worship. Both congregations obviously had mixed feelings about the whole experiment.²

Bruce Fox summarized the situation and the impact of the celebration movement in 1991. It was pushing people to grapple with the issue of worship. This deserved thought, prayer, and study. Fox added, "The Oregon Conference has pioneered this more than any other place, but it has a ripple effect throughout the North American Division and around the world."³

Key Events and Publications

In 1991, additional key events and written material contributed to increased awareness, discussion, and research related to worship, celebration church/worship, and the perceived celebration movement.⁴ In the material related to worship, the Valuegenesis Project must be noted. It stressed that

¹Personal observation and comments made to author.

²Personal observation of the author, 17 June 1990. See also Carol Routon, interview by author, Oklahoma City, OK, 16 June 1990, hand-written notes.

³Fox interview, 6 May 1991.

⁴Creative Morning Sabbath Alternatives: Revitalizing Sabbath School and Church, manual produced by Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Westlake, CA: Church Ministries Dept., 1991), 2. For other material related to issues raised by the celebration movement, see: Roy Adams, "Come, Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation--Report from the Seventh Assembly of the World Council Churches, Canberra, Australia, 1991," Adventist Review, 11 April 1991, 8-10; "Oregon Hosts First International Prayer Conference," Trinity Power Ministries News Letter, Spring 1991, 5; Marlene Anderson, "Instruction for Small Groups: Meeting Needs Better," Celebration 6, no. 5 (1991), 6, 8; Jack Calkins, "Innovative Sabbath Schools," Adventist Review, 23 May 1991, 16-18; George R. Knight, "Adventism, Institutionalism, and the Challenge of Secularization," Ministry 64 (June 1991): 6-10, 29; Paul Richardson, "Targeting Church," ABBA, May/June 1991, 8; Bruce Campbell Moyer, "The Jonah in All of Us: The Challenge of Urban Ministry," Adventist Review, 8 August 1991, 8-10; Steve Daily, "Revival of the Holy Spirit," Colton, CA, July 1991, transcribed by Gayle Simmons; Myron Widmer, "The Church Left Them," Adventist Review, 8 August 1991, 5; "Making a Big Difference:

only 35 percent of Adventist youth think that their local church climate is "warm," 13 percent that it is "thinking," and 27 percent that their local church has interesting programs. This project generated reports and reflections on Adventist worship.¹

In the material directly related to celebration churches/worship, there are again numerous evidences of polarization throughout North America of positions regarding the celebration movement and/or specific celebration churches.² For example, in Ministry Giller argued for and Holmes

Small Groups for Growth," Ministry 64 (August 1991): 26, advertisement; Darryl Comstock, "Selling Change: How to Bring About Change in Your Church Without Losing Your Members," Ministry 64 (October 1991): 30, 31, 39; Robert S. Folkenberg, "The State of the Church--1991," Adventist Review, 3 October 1991, 14, 15; Thomas S. Geraty, "Christians and the Surrounding Culture," Adventist Review, 26 December 1991, 18-20; Garrie F. Williams, How to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit and Know It (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1991); "A Working Paper Toward a Theology of the Holy Spirit," unpublished paper, Cherrybrook, Australia, 1991.

¹Peter Benson, Michael Donahue, and V. Bailey Gillespie, Valuegenesis Report Document C (Minnesota, MN: Search Institute, 1991); V. Bailey Gillespie, "Faith, Values, and Commitment," Adventist Review, 10 January 1991, 17, 18; idem, "Nurturing Our Next Generation," Adventist Review, 3 January 1991, 5-11; Charles T. Smith, "New Valuegenesis Report Gives More Insight Into Youth Values," Adventist Review, 27 June 1991, 6; Roger Dudley and V. Bailey Gillespie, Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance (Riverside, CA: La Sierra University Press, 1992); Helmut Ott, "Another Look at Valuegenesis," Ministry 67 (February 1994): 18-20.

²Irene Wakeham Lee (Banning, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration Churches," PU Recorder, 7 January 1991, 31; Caleb Rosado (Humboldt, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration-Style Worship," Adventist Review, 24 January 1991, 2; Fred E. Schlehuder (Harrison, AK), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration-Style Worship," ibid.; Frank R. Lemon (Beaumont, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration-Style Worship," ibid.; Rosanna Crider (Grand Terrace, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration-Style Worship," ibid.; C. Raymond Holmes (Berrien Springs, MI), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration-Style Worship," ibid.; Danna R. Lott (Seale, AL), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration-Style Worship," ibid.; C. Roscoe Swan (Riverside, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration Style," Adventist Review, 31 January 1991, 2; Stanley Harris (Waterfront, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration Style," ibid.; Len Zachrson (Portland, OR), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration Style," ibid.; Marilyn Moshos (Yucaipa, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Celebration Style," ibid.; Harold K. Dawson (Yelm, WA), "Letters to the Editors--Celebration Style," ibid.; Kevin D. Paulson, "Letters to the Editor--Celebration Style," ibid.; Dennis [Anonymous] (Scappoose, OR) to Garrie Williams, 5 February 1991; Gary Taber (Escondido, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Singing Different Tunes," Adventist Review, 14 February 1991, 2; the following letters are only a small portion of the 256 letters sent to the Adventist Review commenting on Durand's article on "Contemporary Christian Music" (182 [71 percent] in favor and 74 [29 percent] opposed): Christine Bothne (Pipe Creek, TX), "Letters to the Editor--Singing Different Tunes," ibid.; Paul E. Hamel (Berrien Springs, MI), "Letters to the Editor--Singing Different Tunes," ibid.; John M. Sullivan (Germantown, MD), "Letters to the Editor--Singing Different Tunes," ibid.; James A. Ayars (Thousands Oaks, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Singing Different Tunes," ibid.; Dennis E. Kendall (Caldwell, ID), "Letters to the Editor--Singing Different Tunes," ibid.; Steve Case (Sacramento, CA) "Letters to the Editor--Singing Different Tunes," ibid.; Stacey B. Curtis (Mountain View, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Singing Different Tunes," ibid.; Raymond O. Whitley (Scappoose, OR), "Letters to the Editor--Singing Different Tunes," ibid.; Homer Treccartin (Gaylor, MI), "Letters to the Editor--That Naughty Word Again," Ministry 64 (April 1991): 28, 29; Paul E. Hamel (Berrien Springs, MI), "Letters

against "celebration" worship.¹ Material on worship was prepared for different professional meetings and conferences,² and three publications were entirely dedicated to the subject of worship.³

to the Editor--That Naughty Word Again," *ibid.*; W. D. Wampler (West Des Moines, IA), "Letters to the Editor--That Naughty Word Again," *ibid.*; Lyle Hamel (Yucaipa, CA), "Letters to the Editor--That Naughty Word Again," *ibid.*; Pat Milligan (Enid, OK), "Letters to the Editor--That Naughty Word Again," *ibid.*; C. Raymond Holmes (Berrien Springs, MI), "Letters to the Editor--That Naughty Word Again," *ibid.*; Aileen Ludington (Loma Linda, CA), "Letters to the Editor--That Naughty Word Again," *ibid.*; N. N. "Applause and Approval," Camp News--Florida Conference Camp Meeting, 25 May 1991, 2; Geoff Garne (Maryborough, Queensland, Australia), "Letters to the Editor--Emotions Versus Emotionalism," Ministry 64 (June 1991): 28; Carolyn Hatley (College Place, WA), NPUC Gleaner, 3 June 1991, 3; Bob Coyle (Bakersfield, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Why Are They Boring?" PU Recorder, 4 June 1990, 31; Phylis M. Bess (Longview, WA), "Letters--Why Change?" NPUC Gleaner, 17 June 1991, 3; Kent N. Campbell J. D. (Fort Collins, CO), "Letters to the Editor--Testing Worship," Adventist Review, 4 July 1991, 2; Shelley Senner (Garrison, MT), "Letters--Likes Simple Services," NPUC Gleaner, 15 July 1991, 3; Lauri Onjukka (Gold Hill, OR), "Letters--Celebration Biblical," *ibid.*; John C. Scott (Bakersfield, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Authentic Worship," PU Recorder, 15 July 1991, 31; M. L. King (Portland, OR), "Letters--Loud Music Condemned," NPUC Gleaner, 5 August 1991, 3; Kolleen Schlender (Wapato, WA), "Letters--Stumbling Blocks," NPUC Gleaner, 19 August 1991, 3; Harry A. Knopper, M.D. (Pasco, WA), "Letters--Apostate Anthems," NPUC Gleaner, 16 September 1991, 3; Carol Mayes (Chatsworth, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Let's Be Ourselves," PU Recorder, 7 October 1991, 31; Bob Edwards (Malibu, CA), "Letters to the Editor--Guidelines for Music," Adventist Review, 12 December 1991, 2; Martin Weber, Adventist Hot Potatoes (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1991), 11-24.

¹C. Raymond Holmes, "Authentic Adventist Worship," Ministry 64 (October 1991): 13-16; Eoin Giller, "Worship Renewal in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," *ibid.*, 16-19.

²Andrew Leonie, "Nurturing Our Next Generation Through the Church," Adventist Review, 3 January 1991, 14, 15; Jeffrey K. Lauritzen, "Music in Worship, Are We Really Worshipping Him?" Adventist Perspectives 5, no. 2 (1991): 31-35; Deanna Davis, "Raised Hands, Raised Eyebrows--Adventists Learn to Celebrate," Theology, News and Notes, March 1991, 17-21; Miriam Wood, "Concerned About 'Celebration,'" Adventist Review, 2 May 1991, 11; Floyd Bresee, "Adventist Worship," Ministry 64 (June 1991): 24; Eugene F. Durand, "Guidelines for Music--1," Adventist Review, 5 September 1991, 3; *idem*, "Guidelines for Music--2," *ibid.*, 12 September 1991, 5; Elisabeth Wear, "Family Worship That Works," Adventist Review, 3 October 1991, 16-18; Garrie F. Williams, "The Wonderful Weapon of Praise," January 1991, handout; "Some Information on Celebration from the Adventist Review, Ministry, Union Papers, Personal Letters, Etc., Plus Some Statements Concerning the Validity of John Osborne, Etc. Material," (documents compiled and distributed by the Oregon Conference, Spring 1991); Gregory Franey Duran, "Celebration Cult: A Comparison of the Biblical and Spirit of Prophecy Data," unpublished paper (E. G. White Research Center--DF 2119-C), Berrien Springs, MI, March 1991; L. Hoehnes, "The Focus of Worship: Anthropocentric or Theocentric," unpublished paper, Riverside, CA, June 1991; Chin, "A Comparative Study of the Music in the Traditional and Celebration Churches"; Joe Englekemier, "Worship Styles: The Celebration Controversy," unpublished and uncompleted manuscript, Berrien Springs, MI, December, 1991. For specific papers related to professional meetings see footnotes pp. 215, 216.

³The articles in these publications are as follows: Gary Krause, "Winsome Corporate Worship," ABBA, May/June 1991, 1, 6; "Supportive Space," *ibid.*, 4; Gary Russel, "Authentic Adventist Worship," *ibid.*, 5, 6; Rick Hodge, "Celebration Cultural Connection," *ibid.*, 7; C. Raymond Holmes, "Authentic Adventist Worship," Ministry 64 (October 1991): 13-16; Eoin Giller, "Worship Renewal in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," *ibid.*, 16-19; J. David Newman, "The Cross, the Center of Worship," *ibid.*, 4; Rex D. Edwards, "Threats to Worship," *ibid.*, 5; John M. Fowler, "O Come, Let Us Worship,"

At the beginning of 1991, the Pacific Union Conference produced a special video and a study guide on creative Sabbath morning alternatives. On July 28, Herbert Broeckel, president of Central California Conference, advertised them at the Soquel camp meeting, Santa Cruz, California, within the context of his presentation on the changes needed in Adventist congregations. Celebration Center was mentioned as a possible model of change but not the only one.¹ The video and corresponding material explore options for revitalizing Sabbath schools and worship. They present Celebration Center among different case studies. In the video, five working goals are drawn from the success of Celebration Center and of three additional churches:² (1) people must feel loved and accepted; (2) worship is informal and participatory; (3) worship is part of a nurturing ministry to members; (4) outreach approaches are innovative; and (5) Sabbath morning services are seen as grand spiritual adventures led by the power of the Holy Spirit.³

The same year, at least ten major meetings with about 1,000 church leaders and scholars in addition to an estimated 2,000 church members were also grappling with worship, celebration churches/worship, or the celebration movement.

Among these meetings, the most important event was certainly the First International Worship Conference, "Called to Worship," held in Portland, Oregon, April 16-22 with over 300

ibid., 6-9; Ronald D. Graybill, "Enthusiasm in Early Adventist Worship," *ibid.*, 10-12; Lyell V. Heise, "Music and Worship," *ibid.*, 20-24; Craig A. Dossman, "Don't Forget the Bridge," *ibid.*, 24-26; Saustin Sampson, "More Than Half a Brain," *ibid.*, 28-30; "101 Ideas for Better Worship Services," *ibid.*, 32-33; William Fagal, "The War Over Worship," *Adventists Affirm* 5 (Fall 1991): 3, 4; C. Mervyn Maxwell, "Baby Boomers and Moral Leadership," *ibid.*, 5-22, 25-28; C. Raymond Holmes, "Searching for Genuine Adventist Worship," *ibid.*, 29-35; Gerhard F. Hasel, "The 'Third Wave' Roots of Celebrationism," *ibid.*, 36-52; Laurel Damsteegt, "Unity: Future? Now? How?" *ibid.*, 53-59.

¹Viviane Haenni, "Soquel Camp Meeting," 28 July 1991, Santa Cruz, CA, hand-written notes.

²The Pleasant Valley Church in OR with Pastor Larry Gibson, the Ephesus Church in CA with Pastor Craig Dossman, the Westchester Church in CA with Pastor John Jensen, and Celebration Center in CA with Pastor Dan Simpson. Additional examples are studied in the written material: the Boston Temple in MA with Pastor Hyveth Williams; the Arlington Church in TX with Pastor James W. Gilley; New Life Celebration Center in OR with Pastor Dave Snyder; the Capitol Hill Church in DC with Pastor Wintley Phipps; and the Stamford Church in CT with Pastor Tony Moore.

³Creative Sabbath Morning Alternatives: Revitalizing Sabbath School and Church. Kennedy-Nelson-Schultz, Inc., for the Pacific Union Conference with support from the North American Division (Westlake, CA: Church Ministries Dept., 1991), videocassette.

international attendees, twenty-seven seminars, and eight general presentations featuring the work of leading thinkers and pragmatians in the area of worship.¹ Alf Birch, organizer of the conference, described the conference as the North Pacific Union's proactive stand on Adventist worship renewal. Jacobsen added that the goal of the conference was not to urge one form of worship over another. "There is not one best way for all Adventist churches," Jacobsen stated, "but we do want to encourage spirit-led worship services and not just dull repetitious services."²

The variety of workshops and lectures presented at the conference reflected a general questioning of traditional Adventist worship. Like their predecessor at the Uppsala Assembly of World Council of Churches twenty-three years before, attendees of the "Called to Worship" Conference also recognized that "there is crisis in worship."³

Three emerging goals can be discerned in the conference:

1. Participants were motivated regarding the neglected first Adventist mission mandate--worship (Rev 14.6-13).⁴
2. The audience was awakened to the absolute necessity of connecting worship issues with present cultural realities (as Gordon Bietz said, "Worshipping the unchanging God requires the use of changing language and culturally relevant symbols").

¹See appendix for program of seminars.

²Jacobsen, "Worship: Our Journey Ahead," audiocassette.

³Duncan Forrester, James I. H. McDonald, and Gian Tellini, *Encounter with God* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983), 163. See also unpublished survey for the Church Ministries Department of the North American Division, February 1991, quoted in Sahlin, "Worship: Audience Diversity," audiocassette. According to Sahlin, the study reveals an acute dissatisfaction with worship in the North American churches.

⁴Johnson, "Called to Worship," audiocassette. Eoin Giller, "Worship Renewal in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," unpublished paper, 1991, 1; Jacobsen, "Our Journey Ahead."

⁵Bietz, "Worship Themes in Adventist Theology," 6. See also the following audiocassettes: Englekemier, "Lessons from Willow Creek"; Sahlin, "Worship: Audience Diversity"; idem, "Baby Boomers and Worship"; Heise, "Worship: Music as Ministry"; Snyder, "Pilgrimage."

3. Attendees were helped to realize that the era of passive, predictable, linear, and cognitive-dominant worship has been shaken and has come to an end.¹

Despite attempts by Snyder, Jacobsen, and Lloyd Perrin, the conference unfortunately never directly addressed the Adventist worship crisis.² Although celebration churches/worship and the celebration movement or controversy were frequently referred to, they were never defined or dealt with.

The variety of suggestions offered at the conference certainly evoked a vision for worship renewal. But too little background--historical perspectives, theological principles, ecclesiological and socio-cultural frameworks--was offered to explore the roots of this budding interest in worship and assess the Adventist worship crisis. We must note Gary Patterson's and Gordon Bietz's seminars as exceptions.³

Beyond the "Called to Worship" Conference, Celebration Center was well-represented in 1991 at the Layman's Outreach Expo in Riverside, California. Bob Beall, Ray and Dyone Shelden, and Ellie Minesinger held workshops about celebration worship at the Expo, with an estimated 150 people participating in the Sheldens' workshop alone.⁴

The same year, two lectureship series, also already referred to, each gathered over 200 ministers and ministerial students to examine issues of worship and change. Each lectureship series

¹Three of the seven conference mottoes vividly captured that awareness of change: "The primary musical instrument in worship is the congregation" (Heise, "Call to Worship," advertisement flyer); "Our worship may be exuberant or it may be quiet, but it must never be passive" (Jacobsen, *ibid.*); and "Worship is not something you watch. It is an event you own" (Sahlin, *ibid.*).

²Among the twenty-seven different conference workshops recorded on audiocassette, two directly address the celebration issue (Snyder, "The Pilgrimage of a Celebration Church"; Perrin, "How to Assess and Respond to Different Worship Preferences") and ten integrate the subject by allusions, and theological and pragmatic associations (Sahlin, "Audience Diversity"; *idem*, "Making Worship Inclusive"; *idem*, "Baby Boomers and Worship"; Giller, "Worship and Witness"; *idem*, "Strategies for Worship Revitalization"; Bietz, "Worship Themes in Adventist Theology"; Patterson, "The Expression of Worship: An Ecclesiological Perspective"; Munson, "Ellen White Counsels About Worship"; Haffner, "Drama in Worship"; Englekemier, "Lessons from Willow Creek Community Church"; Nelson, "Worship Renewal in a Youth-Oriented Church"; Johnson, "Music, Overheads and Slide Production"). Also, among the eight general presentations, only one reported directly about celebration worship and its controversy (Jacobsen, "Our Journey Ahead").

³Patterson, "Ecclesiological Perspectives," audiocassette; Bietz, "Themes in Adventist Theology," audiocassette.

⁴Ray Shelden in R. and D. Shelden and Muñoz interview, 19 March 1991.

featured a specific celebration church: in March, Dan Simpson made a presentation on Celebration Center at the G. Arthur Keough Lectureship and in October, David Snyder spoke about New Life Celebration Church at the John Osborn Lectureship.¹

The year 1991 also saw over 150 people hear Simpson's special address on Celebration Center at the Southeastern California Conference Worker's Meeting, held at Pine Springs Ranch in August. In addition, Larry Lichtenwalter, Lorren Nelson, and a dozen of their colleagues studied celebration worship at the Michigan Conference's non-ordained pastors' meetings in Berrien Springs.²

Interest in the celebration movement encompassed more than the pastoral community in 1991. Two professional meetings gathered the academic community including over 150 Adventist scholars. At the West Coast Religion Teachers Conference meeting at La Sierra University, scholars explored the theme of "Theology and Worship." Douglas Clark (dean of the School of Theology of Walla Walla College) noted the holistic and participatory nature of worship in ancient Israel.³ In the second meeting at the Andrews Society for Religious Studies in Kansas City, Missouri, Pedro Maynard-Reid (also a theology professor at Walla Walla College) emphasized the great extent to which worship experience has

¹David Snyder, "Adventism in the 90's: How Our Congregation Survived the Challenges of Change and Growth," John W. Osborn Lectureship Series: The Third Millennium and the Church--Part II," Riverside, CA, 1991, audiocassette. Other audiocassettes in this lectureship include: Lyell Heise, "Blending the Old and the New"; Calvin J. Thompsen, "A Personal Pilgrimage Through Organizational Change"; Caleb Rosado, "Worship and Ethnic Perspectives"; Edwin Hernandez, "Hung up between Two Worlds: The Experience of the Second Generation Hispanic"; Ron Smith, "From Broken Spirits to Burning Hearts"; Ron Graybill, "Early Adventist Worship"; Don Jacobsen, "Coping with Change in Worship". Heise, Hernandez, Graybill, Jacobsen, Rosado, Smith, Snyder, "Panel Discussion."

²Dan Simpson, "Celebration Center," 20 August 1991, Pine Springs Ranch, CA, audiocassette recorded by author; Mitchell Jonakin, interview by author, 16 October 1991, Berrien Springs, MI, hand-written notes.

³Douglas R. Clark, "Worship Patterns in the Psalms," unpublished paper for West Coast Religion Teachers' Conference, April 1991; see also Bruce Johanson, "To Draw Near to a Faithful God: Worship--Appropriate Features of 1 Thessalonians," unpublished paper, *ibid.*; Ron Bissel, "Worship in the Early Seventh-day Adventist Church," unpublished paper, *ibid.*; Charles Teel, "The Worldliness of Worship--Liturgy," unpublished paper, *ibid.*

been ignored in the Adventist Church. It must become an incarnational event, Maynard-Reid declared, one that is relevant and meaningful for the total person in her or his cultural context.¹

Finally, three events including either the president of the General Conference or the president of the North American Division must be noted because of the high visibility of their leadership role, and the symbolic and concrete influence of their position in the hierarchical administrative structure of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

On 16 February 1991, Folkenberg, president of the General Conference, appeared in a television interview open to the public at the Yakima, Washington Seventh-day Adventist Church. One caller, Colleen (from Selah, Washington), labeled her own question as "loaded," but explained that it "needed to be asked at this point of time." Colleen made the surprising association of the celebration movement with selling tee-shirts on Sabbath at a youth function. The following quote reveals Folkenberg's thoughts and suggestions on the celebration movement:²

We have had celebration, let's say, churches celebrating for decades. No one labeled them as "celebration churches." I have seen two extremes and a third massive danger. I would like just to take a moment, Jerry, I don't think this is a quick answer. To the degree that, let me address the celebration issue first of all in terms of worship style. There are obviously moral overtones to inappropriate worship of the God of the universe. Unfortunately, as human as we are, we tend to fail, to place ourselves into two categories: on one hand, we have the traditional Adventist White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant style of high church in which our worships are death defying, in which formaldehyde is *de rigor*. And frankly, it is a tragedy of the highest order. . . . What many of our churches have taken as a traditional worship service languishes in contrast to the joyful exuberance that God wants us to have in our worship of Him. That is not an idea, it is common in North America. It is not common in Latin America or Africa or other growing parts of the church. There, there is a great deal of exuberance. When I walked on the platform to preach less than two months ago in Africa. . . . We have to be careful that we don't take and declare misery as equal to holy, and discomfort as equal to piety. That is one extreme. Now, the other extreme is equally dangerous. When we take emotional superficiality and move into neo-pentecostalism in which emotion is a substitute for truth and content, we have gone to the other extreme. Both of them have come from the handiwork of his excellency the evil one. Both of them. He does not care which trap you fall into, so long you fall into a ditch on either side of the road. So, I am equally concerned about balance. I am concerned by having to address the issue

¹Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, "What Liturgy Shall I Borrow? A Caribbean Response to Western Traditions," unpublished paper for Andrews Society for Religious Studies (ASRS) Meeting, Kansas City, MO, November 1991; see also, Louis Venden, "Adventists and Theology of Worship: Where Do We Go from Here?"; *ibid.*; Norman Miles, C. Raymond Holmes, and Edwin Hernandez, "Diversity in Adventist Worship," report of ASRS Executive Committee, *ibid.*; Don Jacobsen, "Dialogue on Worship," *ibid.*, audiocassette recorded by author (per George R. Knight).

²Colleen [Anonymous] to Robert Folkenberg, in *Issues and Interviews Highlights*, Jerry Patzer host, Blue Mountain Broadcasting Assn., Yakima, WA, 16 February 1991, videocassette.

of celebration in terms of worship style, because the questioner, and I am not speaking to the one who just calls now, but generically speaking--I found myself in a very discomforting situation very frequently--the individual who asks me about celebration is not asking for his own edification but asking me to find out into which cubby-hole he can place me. That is the objective: "Can I trust this president? I want to find out where he stands on this," because they have already made up their minds and so I am hoping I am dealing with people who are broad-minded enough to listen to what I am saying. . . . I really hate the name [celebration movement] because we all ought to have the right to feel we are celebrating without indulging with what some people are using as a pejorative. This is tragic because we all should be celebrating every Sabbath and praising God. Our lives ought to revolve around the Lord and our worship of Him, and not simply feel, if it happens we use an overhead projector and put the words of a song on a platform, that somehow we are labeled. That is a tragic oversimplification! What is waiting in the wings that gives us the greatest concern is, as you alluded to now in your question, that frequently the content of the gospel is sublimated, disappears. "Set free," if you please, from any constraints from the gospel in which there is no need for any kind of restrictions--the claims of God on our lives disappear. And that is a tragedy because the devil wants us to lose sight of God's claims on our lives even if we do it by being asleep on the one hand or being super-excited on the other. His objective is for us to lose sight of what we are here for and what is taught in God's holy word. And tragically, one other thing, we should never lose sight of, as we look at this movement, is to say, that which is culturally driven. There needs to be a place for an invigorating opportunity for interaction and worship. I went to these services and I was blessed. I was met in the parking lot. I was warmly received, and that before everybody in the world knew who I was. They had all kinds of small groups ministries; the church was on fire. It had an evangelistic program reaching out for the backsliders and I praise God for all of that. It is possible to have a church worship service that is alive and well and invigorating and still holding true to the message that we believe. I only pray that we will take that which is valid and good from the worship we have been accustomed to and the worship that we can become accustomed to, neither one of which has elements which should be excluded. Both have elements that are valuable and good but, at no point, should we allow the worship style to draw us out where we stand in the stream of time, what our beliefs really are. We also need to reemphasize our balanced perspective of righteousness by faith. There are so many issues we cannot afford to lose in the distraction and debates over what is secondary.¹

Folkenberg made only general statements in his speech. He offered no clarification on the celebration movement, no specific historical data, names, or locations and suggested no theological paradigms related to worship, no definition of biblical worship or of celebration churches/worship.

Second, on 25 February 1991, Alfred McClure, president of the North American Division, made the same type of general comments on the celebration movement without practical or theological clarifications. In a presentation to nearly fifty professors and doctoral students at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, he outlined six challenges facing his division in 1991: (1) to reinforce the identity and mission of the Adventist Church; (2) to stop the declining interest in secondary and higher Christian education in the Seventh-day Adventist educational system; (3) to find new sources

¹Robert Folkenberg in Issues and Interviews Highlights, videocassette.

of financial support; (4) to increase enrollment in Adventist educational institutions; (5) to mobilize the 750,000 Adventists in the North American Division--many of whom do not attend any Sabbath school groups or church services--to reach the estimated 2,000,000 former Adventists; and (6) to counteract the stagnation in middle-class, white-collar churches, churches that appear "more interested in nurture than outreach, in spending money on buildings rather than on ministry, in valuing stability and rituals over growth and change," in order to inspire these churches to evangelize.¹

Not a word was said about worship, the celebration movement, or their attendant crisis in the North American Seventh-day Adventist Church. Finally, at the end of the question-and-answer period following his presentation, McClure answered a question raised by the author regarding worship and the celebration movement as a possible means to nurture and answer the identity crisis of the white-collar, middle-class churches. Regarding the celebration movement, McClure declared:

I thought we would get there sometime before this conversation ended. Let me comment on that. I indicated a moment ago it is my feeling that one needs to be revived when it comes to worship services and the Sabbath schools. And there is a great deal of talk these days about certain things that are happening in this Division and some concerns along those lines. I think we need to be careful about excesses. We certainly need to revive the dead when it comes to our church services. Personally, my own particular style of worship is not to the excess the other way. I think it is important we maintain a balance there. I would hope, when you asked, if there were studies going on about worship, I have to admit that I know none as officially commissioned by the Division. I suspect in this institution there are some studies being undertaken along those lines, and perhaps this place could serve as a resource center for matters of worship and spiritual life for our congregation. I do have concerns on both sides of the issue. I am hoping we can provide the kind of leadership that will keep us in the middle of the road.²

Again, as in Folkenberg's answer, only generalizations were offered. No specific data, definitions, or historical or theological concepts were given. The same day, when asked during a private appointment, if the North American Division would be interested in sponsoring or supporting the present research to help clarify the issue of worship and the celebration movement, McClure answered in the negative. No

¹Alfred C. McClure, "Challenges Facing the North American Division: An Open Dialogue with the President," Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Doctoral Club, Berrien Springs, MI, 25 February 1991, audiocassette recorded by author.

²Ibid.

reference was made to Reid's research, the existence of which we discovered during our interview in May of 1992.¹

Finally, Folkenberg's address to the graduating class at Andrews University in June 1991 is noteworthy. Building on the metaphor of the new song to be learned by the Israelites at the Exodus, Folkenberg referred to the two camps polarized in the celebration movement controversy, but with no specific names or historical data. He also declared that "the dreams" of the Advent movement will not be fulfilled using yesterday's "approaches" and affirmed:

Every generation needs to have a new song that is their song. Every generation needs to have music that resonates with their own heart's beat that captures their vision, their enthusiasm and turns on their imagination. Every generation needs to march to the tune of the music they have composed.²

In the fall of 1991, upon the recommendations of the Biblical Research Institute and Reid's six-page summary of the celebration issue, Folkenberg concluded that the issue was not a crisis and not worth inclusion on the agenda of the Annual Council.³ Reid remembers his advice to Folkenberg

¹Alfred McClure, interview by author, Berrien Springs, MI, 25 February 1991, handwritten notes.

²Robert S. Folkenberg, "A New Song," undergraduate commencement sermon, Andrews University, June 1991, audiocassette.

³The present researcher did not have access to this document. Reid summarized it in his interview (George Reid, interview by author, Berrien Springs, MI, 8 May 1992). Later, on 2 December 1992, Bert Beach, director of the Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, summarized the issues raised by the Biblical Research Institute as follows: (1) Celebrationism seems to be more a fad than a permanent development. It would appear that it has reached a sort of plateau. We are told that the best-known celebrationist church in California is experiencing both a decline in attendance and some financial difficulties. (2) Celebrationism is theologically one-sided. It gives heavy emphasis to "acceptance," but neglects character development and thus appears to be weak regarding the doctrine of sin, and is overly experiential. (3) There also appears to be a lack of growth and maturity. While the aim of maturity leading to staunch membership is the goal (some celebration leaders speak of their churches as "half-way houses" to attract backsliders), it appears that many of those attracted do not advance much beyond the preliminary stages. (4) Celebrationism appears to be very much locally centered and tends to have a provincial rather than a world vision. The congregational resources are devoted to immediate local activity, and so the emphasis seems to be on congregationalism. (5) Celebrationism is very much based on strong personalities, and seems to do poorly in areas where there is not a dominant figure giving leadership. (6) Celebrationism is heavily dependent, it would appear, on contemporary entertainment sources. There are strong elements of rock-and-roll, with the use of popular sentimentalized religious lyrics. The use of drama is frequent. All this promotes audience involvement, and in that sense it is positive, though for true worship you need not only involvement, but involvement that produces the fruits of the spirit. (7) The ministry of celebrationism aims at helping with severe problems. This is, of course, commendable, but can have the effect of diverting resources in a way that diminishes ministry to the average church member. (8) There is an anti-organizational and anti-

related to the celebration issue: "Our purpose was not judgmental. If we had felt that there was an imminent threat to the church, we would have sounded the alarm. That was not our conclusion. So it did not go to the agenda."¹

Earlier the same year, Gary Patterson, assistant to the president of the North American Division, revealed one of his fears, which may explain the above decision as well as the generalized answers from top officials:

The thing that concerns me, is that, if we don't process these things [the celebration and other controversies], and you can't safely talk about some of them; you see, if you even try to open the dialogue on some of these issues as a church leader you will be destroyed by a segment of the church; the thing that concerns me is that we will not be allowed to dialogue on it and address concerns, so that decisions will be made by default rather than by intent [emphasis supplied]; that is my real concern. There are subjects that are off limits to church leadership to talk about, because even talking about them, even if the intent is to open dialogue and avoid pitfalls, the mere fact that you talk about it, will cause you to be destroyed by certain people.²

When asked why dialogue and addressing issues are so hard in Adventism, Patterson answered:

We do not have in our history and among many of our people a grace orientation. We have what I call a "truth package orientation." I say that because it is distinct from what we would think as a legalistic orientation. It is a specialized form of legalism which is built around what I call the "truth package." Adventist security with a lot of people for years has been developed over having the truth, so they rest secure in this. When someone comes along and undermines their "truth package," then they are threatened by it, because they feel that they are lost if their "truth package" is not right.³

Partial Conclusion

The information of this last section shows the impact of Celebration Center and the celebration movement on North American Seventh-day Adventism through five different church experiences and the description and analysis of a series of events, and oral and written materials up to 1991. These church experiences, events, and written or oral materials all testify to a definite and greater

leadership spirit common in society today, which is making inroads in Christianity, and celebrationism appears to be influenced by this spirit and can, in fact, result in rejection of noncongregational church organization aiming at expanding God's work in the framework of global mission (Bert B. Beach to Viviane Haenni, 2 December 1992).

¹Reid interview, 8 May 1992.

²Gary Patterson, interview by author, Clackamas, OR, 19 April 1991.

³Ibid.

awareness of and sensitivity in North America toward issues of worship and celebration churches/worship within the Adventist Church. They reveal some visionary leaders--prophets of their times--in tune with contemporary issues, such as church and worship renewal, that were raised within the context of their own Adventist Church, the Christian Church at large, and the American society.

They reveal, according to Herbert Blumer, the development of a specific social movement. For this sociologist, a specific social movement is "the crystallization of much of the motivation of dissatisfaction, hope, and desire awakened by a general social movement" (in our case, the interdenominational worship and church renewal movement) and "the focusing of this motivation on specific objectives."¹ Blumer groups the mechanisms and the means through which a movement is able to grow and become organized under five headings: (1) agitation, (2) development of *esprit de corps*, (3) development of morale, (4) the formation of an ideology, and (5) the development of operating tactics. We have already seen sufficient evidences in this chapter to assess that the celebration movement was in 1991 in the infancy of stage 3 according to Blumer's taxonomy. Thousands of people had indeed awakened to new impulses and ideas related to worship and church renewal within Adventism. A group enthusiasm was developing in relationship to issues of worship and as a sense of belonging to an "in group," which will become even more evident in chapter 4.²

The various events, as well as the written and oral material related to worship and church renewal up to 1991, also suggest the inadequacy of proactive action by top official leadership. The leadership's historical and theological clarifications were inadequate to elucidate matters of church and worship renewal for other Adventist leaders and members. They also illustrate official timidity and lethargy in the face of challenges typically exhibited in the more advance stages of a religious movement as described in Moberg's institutional life cycle. In these advance stages, according to sociologist Thomas

¹Herbert Blumer, "Social Movements," in Studies in Social Movements: A Psychological Perspective, ed. Barry McLaughlin (New York: The Free Press, 1969), 8-29.

²Ibid., 17, 18.

O'Dea, mixed motivations within a religious organization often block the progressive spirit required to risk renewal, reformation, and transformation.¹

¹Thomas F. O'Dea, Sociology and the Study of Religion: Theory, Research, Interpretation (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 240-255; idem, The Sociology of Religion (Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1983), 55-71. I owe my awareness of these stages to George R. Knight, "Adventism, Institutionalism, and Challenges of Secularization," Ministry 64 (June 1991): 6-9, 29; idem, The Fat Lady and the Kingdom (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1995), 17, 23-46.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION OF CELEBRATION CENTER, ITS MILIEU AND IMPACT ON THE NORTH AMERICAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH PART II

Adventists have yet to grasp the real potential of the Minneapolis message in its fullest sense. . . . It has been one of the greatest tragedies down through church history that men and women have continued to manufacture new landmarks in their attempt to protect the distinctiveness of the faith handed down by their spiritual forebears. While the motives behind such actions may be positive, the result has too often been negative and divisive, since the landmark-creating process tends to point to a particular group's tradition (especially one that may be challenged or questioned at a particular moment in history) rather than to the Bible. The Bible, in fact, often becomes a threat to the traditionalists as a new generation of reformers seeks to resurrect truths that are more basic than their traditions. In the face of doctrinal change the traditionalists often lose perspective and magnify "mere molehills" into "mountains."

George R. Knight

This chapter examines the (1) the critical concerns expressed by those sympathetic to Celebration Center, and (2) the critical arguments by opponents of Celebration Center, similar churches, and the celebration movement as a whole. To close, this chapter summarizes the major conclusions drawn from the evaluation of Celebration Center, its milieu, and impact on the North American Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Concerns about Celebration Center

This first section covers critical perceptions of Celebration Center, expressed from inside and outside of the congregation.

Inside Celebration Center

General Remarks

The analyses made at Celebration Center were voiced by some of its regular attendees and leaders between 1989 and 1993.¹ Most are drawn from the same sources used in chapter 3 to describe people's positive perceptions inside Celebration Center. The critical perceptions of this section express concerns or analyses of discrepancies that have been noticed at Celebration Center. They also express gaps between what has been advocated, modeled, taught, or intended to be implemented at Celebration Center and what is or is not actually happening there. These critical perceptions or self-analyses cover three major areas: (1) worship and music, (2) structure and organization, and (3) principles and concepts. This order is justified not only by the focus of this dissertation and the major means of action used at Celebration Center, but also, by the critical comments collected over one year (1989/1990). Of the 170 responses found on the Blue Card Comments (BCC), 83 deal with worship and music, 24 with procedures of organization, and 10 with principles or conceptual issues.

Worship and Music

Among the eighty-three critical concerns related to worship, sixty deal with music: (1) thirty to its volume--too loud or confusing²; (2) nine to the length of time dedicated to singing--too long³.

¹A critical comment was defined in the largest sense of the term, including any question or suggestion for improvement or change at Celebration Center.

²Joan [Anonymous], BCC, 1 July 1989; Robert [Anonymous], *ibid.*; [Anonymous], BCC, 22 July 1989; [Anonymous], BCC, 19 August 1989; five anonymous BCC were recorded on 26 August 1989; [Anonymous], BCC, 23 September 1989; Roy and Eddie [Anonymous], 4 November 1989; Deanne [Anonymous], BCC, 25 November 1989; Sheila [Anonymous], *ibid.*; Doug and Debbie [Anonymous], *ibid.*; [Anonymous], 27 January 1990; [Anonymous], BCC, 3 February 1990; John [Anonymous], *ibid.*; Jim [Anonymous], *ibid.*; [Anonymous], BCC, 10 February 1990; Margaret [Anonymous], BCC, 3 March 1990; Evan [Anonymous], BCC, 17 March 1990; Sam [Anonymous], BCC, 31 March 1990; Joy [Anonymous], *ibid.*; Ursula [Anonymous], BCC, 7 April 1990; [Anonymous], BCC, 23 April, 1990; Jim [Anonymous], BCC, 5 May 1990; [Anonymous], *ibid.*; Alan [Anonymous], *ibid.*; Swarnny [Anonymous], *ibid.*; A. [Anonymous], BCC, 26 May 1990.

³[Anonymous], BCC, 26 August 1989; Ellen [Anonymous], BCC, 11 November 1989; Cam [Anonymous], BCC, 2 December 1989; Dan [Anonymous], *ibid.*; T. [Anonymous], *ibid.*; Lucy, [Anonymous], BCC, 3 March 1990; Bob [Anonymous], BCC, 31 March, 1990; Tina [Anonymous], BCC, 28 April 1990; Max [Anonymous], BCC, 6 June 1990. Kam and Lucy stated that they were visitors and this most likely explains their comments about not knowing the "worship" philosophy of the place.

(3) tune to the need for more or less variety and a few traditional songs¹; (4) three to the flow of the singing--with fewer interruptions or comments²; and, finally, (5) eleven to questioning the style of music--too rapid, wild, country, rocky, or disco.³

Your music is too loud but your sermon was great. Thank God for a pastor that doesn't put you to sleep.⁴ The music is TERRIBLE today! It needs to be toned down to what it used to be like. I hope the background sound does not continue with this volume and intensity.⁵ Having the synthesizer behind the prayer takes away from the importance of the prayer. It's almost too commercial and drowns out the prayer!⁶ I really like the song service but the songs are about the same. They are in the same key with the same beat and basically the same words. It gets REALLY dull, so let's have a little variety please. Some upbeat hymns would be good. "For Those Tears I Died," "Seek Ye First," etc. Other contemporary songs "Have You Seen Jesus My Lord?" "Pass It On," "El Shaddai," "The Battle Belongs To the Lord," etc.⁷ I really miss singing some of the good old hymns.⁸ Not so much singing!⁹ Please, allow the flow of music to go from praise to worship and intimacy.¹⁰ The Holy Spirit will move more powerfully when the music flows without breaks and pauses.¹¹ It would be nice to end songs that are a capella that same way--don't go back to band music to finish the song. That interferes with my worship. Don't talk during songs. (Raise

¹[Anonymous], BCC, 26 August 1989; [Anonymous], *ibid.*, Mary [Anonymous], BCC, 16 September 1989; Henk [Anonymous], BCC, 23 September 1989; Deanne [Anonymous], BCC, 2 December 1989; Joy [Anonymous], BCC, 24 February 1990; Emily [Anonymous], BCC, 3 March 1990; [Anonymous], 10 March 1990; Roxanna [Anonymous], BCC, 26 May 1990.

²[Anonymous], BCC, 16 September 1989; [Anonymous], BCC, 6 January 1990; Bob [Anonymous], BCC, 3 March 1990.

³[Anonymous], BBC, 12 August 1989; [Anonymous], BCC, 19 August 1989; Sheila [Anonymous], BCC, 16 September 1989; Anthony [Anonymous], BCC, 10 February 1990; Dan [Anonymous], *ibid.*; [Anonymous], BCC, 10 March 1990; Douglas [Anonymous], *ibid.*; Christina [Anonymous], BCC, 17 March 1990; [Anonymous], BCC, 31 March 1990; Emily [Anonymous], BCC, 7 April 1990; Jackie [Anonymous], BCC, 23 April 1990.

⁴Roy [Anonymous], BCC, 4 November 1989.

⁵[Anonymous], BCC, 23 April 1990.

⁶A. [Anonymous], BCC, 26 May 1990.

⁷Emily [Anonymous], BCC, 7 April 1990.

⁸Joy [Anonymous], BCC, 24 February 1990.

⁹Kam [Anonymous], BCC, 2 December 1989.

¹⁰[Anonymous], BCC, 6 January 1990.

¹¹Bob [Anonymous], BCC, 3 March 1990.

your hands, clap, etc.) Let the Spirit lead the worship.¹ The music today is getting too loud and too "rock sounding." Hope it does not continue!²

Applying contemporary musical forms to worship has required challenging adjustments at Celebration Center. The following remarks selected on three different Sabbaths (17 and 31 March and 5 May 1991) express either support or frustration at Celebration Center for its music ministry. The worshippers' paradoxical reactions underline some of the challenges that contemporary music with drums brings within a predominantly White Anglo Adventist Church. They also express some of the tension leaders have faced in finding adequate and meaningful musical expression that would, at the same time, meet different people's needs and use the musical talents available at Celebration Center.

My wife and I have always loved your song service, but lately I've had a few friends tell me that the music, especially the drums and the guitar, have been a little wild. Please--I urge you--I love this church and I don't want to leave it, but it's getting to the point where I'm noticing it also. Please, slow it down a little. Thank you. May my Lord keep blessing you in your ministry.³ Thank you for toning down the volume of the drums. We are back to worship, uplifting our voices. I can hear myself sing again. The disco style of the last month was really opposing to Celebration purpose. I know the audio system is hard to work, but to be able to hear the words of the songs is the most important.⁴ I come every week and love the music, but this week it was too loud and harsh, or something.⁵ The music was wonderful. It brought me right to the feet of Jesus. I praise the Lord and thank him for Celebration.⁶ Please, let's not have "hard rock;" the bongo drums are just offensive. I have been here from the beginning and I like the band, but it feels like music in a bar with the additional drums.⁷ The band today was fantastic! Upbeat, motivating praising with a beat--nice. Our regulars could use a dose! Made you want to stand up and shake the rattlers!⁸

Although expressed on two different Sabbaths, the following comments again contradict each other, unless the first comment received prompt and radical attention:

¹Carleen [Anonymous], BCC, 9 December 1990.

²Jackie [Anonymous], BCC, 23 April 1990.

³[Anonymous], BCC, 31 March 1990.

⁴Christina [Anonymous], BCC, 31 March 1990.

⁵Jim [Anonymous], BCC, 5 May 1990.

⁶Nadine [Anonymous], BCC, 5 May 1990.

⁷Christina [Anonymous], BCC, 17 March 1990.

⁸Dena [Anonymous], BCC, 17 March 1990.

Not a criticism, but a suggestion. Lately the music seems to be all the same--rather monotonous; frequently minor. This is fine, but where are some of the other 'happy' songs we used to sing?¹ I don't mind the drums or music for worship but I couldn't feel any reverence in the church. This is becoming a circus. My visitors were utterly shocked and so was I. There are beautiful things in this group which brought me back Sabbath after Sabbath. It would be sad for me to come only during Bradshaw time.²

It is interesting to note that for some Celebration Center attendees the use of contemporary music and drums was associated with secular places such as the bar and the circus. Nine people commented on the need for longer sermons or more study on the Word of God, eight during the first six months and one during the last six months of the available BCC comments.³ Four are concerned with the next possible practice of communion.⁴ Finally, only one critical comment is stated for each of the nine following topics: female leaders wearing pants when up-front, too much clapping, services being too long, children's stories being too long and complicated, the need for more quiet times or standing, and not enough music and altar calls during worship services.⁵

Overall, the critical written comments from the pews regarding worship, representing roughly 10 percent of the comments, lack substantial reflection. They do not express any elaborate reflection from a theological, musical, ethical, or cultural-critical perspective. They principally share personal preferences or convictions, generally without presenting any underlying rationale or principle.

¹Dan [Anonymous], BCC, 10 January 1990.

²Ursula [Anonymous], BCC, 7 April 1990.

³[Anonymous], BCC, 26 August 1989; [Anonymous], BCC, 9 September 1989; [Anonymous], *ibid.*; [Anonymous], BCC, 11 November 1989; Ellen [Anonymous], *ibid.*; Cyndy [Anonymous], *ibid.*; Dan [Anonymous], BCC, December 9, 1989; T. [Anonymous], *ibid.*; Bob [Anonymous], BCC, 31 March 1990.

⁴[Anonymous], BCC, 12 August 1989; [Anonymous], BCC, 26 August 1992; [Anonymous], BCC, 18 November 1989; Anthony and Karlyn [Anonymous], BCC, 2 December 1989.

⁵[Anonymous] BCC, 2 September 1989; Jeff [Anonymous], BCC, 3 February 1990; Shirley [Anonymous], BCC, 6 June 1990; [Anonymous], BCC, 1 July 1989; [Anonymous], 2 September 1989; [Anonymous], BCC, 31 March 1990; Ardis [Anonymous], BCC, 23 September 1989; [Anonymous], 10 March 1990; Myrna [Anonymous], BCC, 5 May 1990.

There were, however, four substantive comments:

1. The need for a greater variety of songs is justified by the monotony of beat, key, and words in the present songs.¹
2. The need for less variety of songs is justified by the presence of many visitors every Sabbath.²
3. The plea for not using bongo drums is argued on the basis of negative association with bar music.³
4. Finally, one attendee ventures a theological insight but, unfortunately, fails to support it with reasons: "Do we have to have drama every week? Why not special music? Would there be as much "production value" for an Adventist member church? I enjoy the Celebration concept but I am concerned that people are more involved with the concept than with Christ."⁴

Leaders at Celebration Center express four critical concerns about their own worship services, which they do not consider original or a model to be copied.⁵

First, the worship committee acknowledged the gap between the philosophy and the practice of worship at Celebration Center. In 1991, Ray Shelden stated, "We've got a long way to move on at Celebration Center. There is a difference between writing a philosophy and living it. . . . We have a lot of members who do not worship."⁶

Second, Bettle recognized that the main two entrance keys to celebration worship are also its two greatest points of vulnerability. The dynamic atmosphere of Celebration worship depends on a great number of people coming, but also being involved, each week. This high level of lay involvement

¹Emily [Anonymous], BCC, 7 April 1990.

²Roxanna [Anonymous], BCC, 26 May 1990.

³Emily [Anonymous], BCC, 7 April 1990.

⁴Bob [Anonymous], BCC, 3 February 1990.

⁵Simpson, "Celebration Center," audiocassette recorded by author.

⁶R. and D. Shelden interview, 6 February 1993. See also R. and D. Shelden and Muñoz interview, 19 March 1991; Simpson interview, 2 April 1991; R. and D. Shelden, "Worship: Praise and Intimacy," audiocassette.

demands sophisticated organization, as well as steady commitment and accountability. Celebration worship also relies on sophisticated technological devices and acoustical engineers. Without this technology, Bettie says, "you cannot propagate [the] sense of intimacy" that is so important in celebration worship.¹ Celebration worship seems too reliant on complex technological devices.

Third, most leaders have a pragmatic approach to music. Thus, the congregation guides the choice of music; or, as Beall says, we do "what works better for our people."²

The self-critiques most often voiced by leaders in the area of music are those already expressed from the pews: (1) technical difficulties in controlling the volume of the music, (2) whether or not to use drums, and (3) the choice of the music style (contemporary, traditional, or classical).³ In 1991, Weeks noted, "I have appealed to Dan. I don't think we need the drums for accomplishing what could be accomplished. But I am not here to impose that. . . . I am not here to get my way. The church has been too often led by people who want to get their own way."⁴

Finally, Weeks is concerned that Celebration Center might become too emotional, and that their worship might deteriorate into a "spectacle."⁵

Organization and Structure

On the organizational and structural levels, critical remarks from the Blue Card Comments are mainly procedural and again insubstantial. Only once (or at most twice) do they deal with seating and temperature issues, noise in the lobby, organization and schedule issues in the youth/adult groups and the nursery, preferences in the order or time of worship, tuning up of the instruments, or the need for a special

¹Bettie interview, 26 March 1991.

²Beall interview, 3 April 1991.

³Simpson interview, 9 April 1991, #1, Long interview, 25 March 1991; Sisk interview, 8 April 1991; Beall interview, 3 April 1991; Muñoz interview, 20 March 1991.

⁴Weeks interview, 6 April 1991. See also Audain interview, 8 April 1991; Beall interview, 3 April 1991; Simmons interview, 22 August 1991; Joan [Anonymous] interview, 26 March 1991; H. and E. Elder interview, 24 March 1991.

⁵Weeks interview, 6 April 1991.

ministry to singles, lay pastors, and the elderly.¹ Surprisingly, the procedural concern most often voiced deals with the offering picked up by the children.²

From the leadership side, in 1991 Long affirmed that one of the greatest weaknesses at Celebration Center is its lack of "quality" leadership. Celebration Center has grown so rapidly that, paradoxically, it is too large to develop this "quality" leadership through small/support-group ministries.³

In 1991 through 1993, Long, Halstead, Muñoz, Audain, and Simpson observed a certain level of organizational confusion. Audain expressed concerns regarding Simpson preaching every Sabbath. "I hope Celebration Center does not become a one-man show." He also voiced concerns related to the leadership in New Life Victorious. He perceived it as inadequately trained or as lacking in charisma.⁴ In March 1991, Long recognized that the meta-church model was not really "in operation" but "in a state of confusion."⁵ He suggested four major reasons for the "organizational confusion": (1) rapid growth causing too many changes to manage and incorporate; * (2) lack of centralized information exchange, which is indispensable in an organization accentuating freedom and the pursuit of individual ministries; (3) difficulties in refocusing people's attention from activities and ministries that are program-oriented towards those that are training-oriented, empowering, and purpose driven; and (4) lack of a

¹[Anonymous], BCC, 22 July 1989; Rob [Anonymous], BCC, 5 August 1989; Karen [Anonymous], 19 August 1989; Barbara [Anonymous], BCC, 4 November 1989; Paul [Anonymous], BCC, 25 November 1989; Carl [Anonymous], BCC, 2 December 1989; Myrna [Anonymous], BCC, 23 December 1989; Debbie [Anonymous], BCC, 30 December 1989; Elise [Anonymous], *ibid.*; Judith [Anonymous], BCC, 6 January 1990; Jade [Anonymous], *ibid.*; Thomas [Anonymous], BCC, 3 February 1990; Stan [Anonymous], BCC, 3 March 1990; [Anonymous], BCC, 17 March 1990; [Anonymous], BCC, 7 April 1990; Mary [Anonymous], *ibid.*; Dianne [Anonymous], 7 April 1990; Gary [Anonymous], BCC, 23 April 1990; [Anonymous], BCC, 28 April 1990.

²[Anonymous], BCC, 20 January 1990; [Anonymous], BCC, 24 March 1990; Dorothy [Anonymous], *ibid.*; [Anonymous], *ibid.*; [Anonymous], BCC, 31 March 1990.

³Long interview, 25 March 1991.

⁴Audain interview, 8 April 1991; Wilcox interview, 21 March 1991.

⁵*Ibid.*

^{*}E.g., on 1 April 1989 Celebration Center held its first services in Colton, CA. On 4 April 1991, a new organization was set in place by Simpson. On 3 February 1993, Simpson launched a new motto: "We are changing everything, almost." On 3 April 1993, Simpson announced a new vision for Celebration Center.

managerial infrastructure. This latter problem was perceived as having three major causes: (1) Simpson's limitations as a leader-manager; (2) lack of recognition, delegation, and trust among the staff at a managerial level; and (3) conflicting philosophical positions among the staff regarding management.

Long thinks that the philosophy of Celebration Center, which has tried to make church management consistent with the gospel, is at the core of their difficulties. He explains that, from Simpson's theological point of view, "nobody ought to be the boss over somebody else." For Long, however, a managerial issue should not be viewed as theological but operational. He says, "I think you can have a graceful management without 'lording' over somebody else. There is still a need for control, management, and care."¹

Principles and Concepts

Only ten concerns expressed from the pews can be related to the fundamental principles of Celebration Center. One person wonders about the mission emphasis at Celebration Center.² Two succinctly refer to the Holy Spirit's presence: "Don't stifle the Holy Spirit in any way, shape, manner, or form," and "we do need the Holy Spirit more."³ Two others comment on social actions. One suggests investing in a worthy students' fund instead of cordless microphones, the other questions the activity of an anti-abortionist group at Celebration Center shadowing the diversity of positions within Adventism, pointing out that "the Adventist Church has wisely stayed out of political issues, Israel versus Palestine, Vietnam versus Anti-war, etc."⁴ Two other persons suggest the need for a change regarding preaching and the title of lay pastors. Neither give any reason for the change, except their own preference:

Health lectures are nice. Please no more! I believe in good health but I don't believe in making it part of my religion [emphasis supplied]. Jesus didn't.⁵ I have a suggestion to change the name of the "lay pastor." This has a strange connotation to me [emphasis supplied] and doesn't sound

¹Long interview, 25 March 1991.

²Jim [Anonymous], BBC, 13 January 1990.

³Joanne [Anonymous], BCC, 1 July 1989; [Anonymous], BCC, 31 March 1990.

⁴Barbara [Anonymous], BCC, 29 July 1990.

⁵James [Anonymous], BCC, 30 September 1989.

inviting to women or even young men. "Spiritual Counselors" or "The Seventy" or other suggestions?¹

The comment expressing a preference regarding the lay pastor's title might indicate a communication problem: When church leaders attempt to adapt to the surrounding culture, some of their members do not understand the new church semantics.

Another comment suggests more youth involvement (as the service is specially geared toward them), and another person questions why "nobody talks about Ellen G. White." Neither elaborated on their comments.² Finally, the most critical and certainly the longest of all analysis is the comment related to the perception of "self praise" at Celebration Center:

I really appreciate how Celebration Center stands for accepting people as they are and working to set the human spirit free to serve as Gods wants it. This is why I attend this church. However, it bothers me that Celebration Center feels it needs to praise itself continually. I know what this church is about, but I would rather concentrate on reaching these goals rather than extolling how wonderful this church is [in] trying to meet them. It especially bothered me to hear a comparison of Celebration Center with another Adventist church a few miles away which was like this church in many ways. It was said that church seemed to be against something, where celebration Center is for something. Telling this story today seemed to contradict the part that the story was trying to make. The story was negative. This other church is in my home town and I feel it is serving a good work. Please, let us not extol ourselves or put down others. Let us simply accomplish the work.³

This concern is especially interesting as it underlines not only some of the basic ideas of the Center--acceptance, freedom, and service--but also a trait already observed in chapter 1 and so typical of nineteenth-century revivalism, the propensity to criticize the "establishment."

From the leadership point of view, Simpson and his leaders all acknowledge that the themes of joy, love, acceptance, and freedom emphasized at the core of the Celebration philosophy may very well be temporary.⁴ As Audain comments, Celebration Center also needs some solid teaching on how to live the life of an accepted, loved, and forgiven person. He adds, "I need to be honest with you, I

¹[Anonymous], BCC, 9 September 1990.

²Elsie [Anonymous], BCC, 13 January 1990; H. [Anonymous], BCC, 14 April 1990.

³[Anonymous], BCC, 16 September 1989.

⁴The Celebration Story, videocassette: Weeks interview, 6 April 1991; Charles Wear in C. and S. Wear interview, 26 March 1991; Muñoz interview, 20 March 1991; Ray Shelden in R. and D. Shelden and Muñoz interview, 19 March 1991; Sisk interview, 8 April 1991; Long interview, 25 March 1991.

think what Celebration Center lacks is more mature, in-depth teaching. For me it is lacking."¹ Simpson suspects that, in the coming years, theological emphases may well shift in response to changing cultural contexts. He adds:

What we are doing for now and for here in America, at least for a certain segment of people, is right. But it does not mean that it [the celebration philosophy] will always be there. We emphasize joy and freedom but other things might become emphasized, though I don't think we will de-emphasize those.²

Leaders at Celebration Center have recognized that the Celebration experience, even two years after its official launching, is still in a stage of experimentation. As such, these leaders do not propose that the Celebration experience be directly copied, especially its worship format, which they regard as the unique product of a specific people's journey.³

In the area of leadership, Simpson has recognized the limitations of his philosophy of freedom in Christ. In August of 1991 he declared that he was still struggling with how much commitment he should require from his lay leaders. He also believed he had been "much too easy on them." In 1993, however, Simpson stated that he and his staff were very concerned with the moral life, Christian character, and marital status of their leaders. He declared his commitment to maintaining "extremely high standards" because leaders are the role models in the congregation.⁴ He continued:

I am concerned about people's spirituality, how to bring people to real God-likeness. We always have done that by insisting on life style changes, rules, and so on. I refuse to do it that way. I am looking for better ways: encourage people, instruct people, model godly living myself, and to preach and pray.⁵

Darlene Simpson's concern is that leaders--including herself at Celebration Center--might go "ahead of themselves and of the Lord." She fears that leaders might get caught up in their mission, or,

¹Audain interview, 8 April 1991. See also Weeks interview, 6 April 1991.

²Simpson interview, 2 April 1991.

³Simmons interview, 22 August 1991; Simpson, "Celebration Center," audiocassette; Charles Wear in C. and S. Wear interview, 26 March 1991; Weeks interview, 6 April 1991; R. and D. Shelden, "Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette recorded by author.

⁴Simpson interviews 6 August 1991 and 8 February 1993.

⁵Simpson interview, 6 August 1991.

as Weeks would say, in doing "things for self-gratification, attention and show." Darlene is concerned that some of their leaders forget to stay on their knees, or, as Weeks would say, "stay in a servant mentality." Instead, Darlene senses that leaders often "try to do mechanical changes that are not Spirit-inspired." She adds:

Celebration is not about changes you do or instruments you use. It is much bigger and broader than that. If changes are made without [theological /ecclesiological] background you will hurt people. Celebration is not about cosmetic changes. You have to get real but also let people make mistakes. You cannot control, you need to let go and be like the Lord who is letting us make mistakes.¹

In the next section, we will consider concerns of observers and scholars who have more experience with the celebration movement, like Reid, Widmer, Brunt, Jacobsen, Gifford, and pastors in the vicinity of celebration churches.

Outside Celebration Center

General Remarks

The critical concerns voiced in this section are from members, teachers, or leaders in the North American Seventh-day Adventist Church who attended Celebration Center or a similar church at least once (and most of them only once). We will also consider concerns of more seasoned observers and scholars like Reid, Widmer, Brunt, Jacobsen, Gifford, and pastors in the vicinity of celebration churches. Severe criticisms are analyzed in the last major section of this chapter.

Most of the critical perceptions presented in this section were expressed within the context of recognition and/or appreciation of positive characteristics of celebration churches or the celebration movement. It is interesting to notice that people usually used these terms interchangeably in evaluating their single visit to Celebration Center or the New Life Celebration Church. This may indicate the importance of the celebration phenomenon in their worldview.

Examples of some positive comments and of different uses of words related to celebration churches are evidenced in various interviews, even among those somewhat critical of the movement as

¹Darlene Simpson, interview by author, Colton, CA, 22 August 1991.

expressed at Celebration Center. Richard Davidson, professor at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, says:

I would wish that there would be a concerted effort on the part of our church to examine the nature of worship, the nature of the spiritual experience, the nature of biblical celebration, and what it involves and what are the principles involved in it, and to seek to emulate those in our own church and to freely express our debt of gratitude to the celebration movement for stirring us to undertake this study and not to be afraid to apologize to the whole world that we have not done it before.¹

C. Raymond Holmes, former professor (in worship and preaching) at the same seminary, corroborates:

Perhaps we should be grateful that celebration worship is calling attention to the long overdue need for worship renewal in our churches. Not giving worship the attention Revelation 14:6,7 demands has created a vacuum. We should not be surprised by what fills it. Perhaps God is giving the Adventist Church an opportunity to respond more fully to the first angel's message, and to begin to think seriously about an Adventist theology of worship.²

Teddric Mohr, assistant to Gifford, also voices the same idea: "I think we need that revival, I think we need celebration, we will probably have to call it something else, but we need it!"³ For Corban, the celebration experience at New Life Celebration Church has given him a new experiential awareness of prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit in small groups.⁴ Commenting on his personal experience at the same church, Holmes declares, "Nothing I saw and heard was heretical or devilish." On the contrary, his impression was that "the pastoral staff were dedicated and loyal Seventh-day Adventists, with commendable motives."⁵ According to Lynn Mallery, Celebration Center and celebration churches unveil hidden or unaddressed issues within Adventism. He says:

My biggest concern is, I think, that Celebration Center and [all] celebration churches . . . bring up some theological issues that we as a denomination need to address. . . . We as Adventists tend to see things as right or wrong, as in the proof-text method. So the danger is to polarize the issue of celebration, for or against, when the issue is more, "What does it say to our ecclesiology?"⁶

¹Richard Davidson, interview by author, Berrien Springs, MI, 30 January 1992.

²C. Raymond Holmes, "Letters to the Editor," *Ministry*, 64 (April 1991): 29.

³Mohr interview, 8 April 1991.

⁴Corban interview, 8 May 1991.

⁵C. Raymond Holmes, "Letters to the Editor," *Adventist Review*, 24 January 1991, 2; idem, "Authentic Adventist Worship," 13-16.

⁶Mallery interview, 8 April 1991. See also Lorntz interview, 23 March 1991.

Finally, Reid acknowledges that at the beginning of his study of the celebration movement, he thought "it was something significant and represented a possible turn in direction as to the self-identity of the Adventist Church."¹

The concerns expressed within the context of those positive remarks can now be divided into six categories: (1) theological/soteriological, (2) pneumatological, (3) ecclesiological, (4) liturgical, (5) contextual, and (6) basic trends.

Theological/Soteriological Concerns

Theological concerns regarding celebration churches generally center on their emphasis of love, acceptance, and forgiveness and their lack of commitment to truth and Scripture.²

The first concern is that love, acceptance, and forgiveness are emphasized at the expense of other aspects of the gospel, such as the obedience of faith and sanctification. This emphasis may present a weak, one-dimensional gospel,³ a "gospel" reduced to "a warm fuzzy feeling."⁴ In 1990, Widmer feared that because historic Adventist truths are so rarely proclaimed, the general public might be left uninformed, with the impression that these truths are unimportant.⁵ By the end of 1991, George Reid, director of the Biblical Research Institute (BRI), labeled "celebrationism" as "theologically one-sided."⁶ C. Mervyn Maxwell, seminary emeritus professor, of Church History at Berrien Springs, attributes a "theology of easy assurance" to the influence of the Adventist theology in the 1950s. He says: "In the 1950s influential Adventists insisted that Christ was not our example, that for sinners this side of

¹Reid interview, 8 May 1992.

²Gifford interview, 6 August 1991; Robert Johnston, interview by author, Berrien Springs, MI, 23 January 1992.

³Newman and Wade, "Is It Safe to Celebrate?" 28; Gerhard Hasel, "The 'Third Wave' Roots of Celebrationism," Adventists Affirm 5 (Fall 1991): 40.

⁴Charles and Elizabeth Schultz, interview by author, Pine Springs Ranch, CA, 21 August 1991.

⁵Widmer, "Adventist Worship--Celebration-Style," 15. See also Reid interview, 8 May 1992; Gifford interview, 6 August 1991.

⁶Reid interview, 8 May 1992; Beach to Haenni, 1.

Adam's fall, obedience to God was impossible, and that development of a Christ-like character was certainly impossible."¹ According to Maxwell, by the 1970s this theology had developed into an emphasis on the assurance of salvation that became the test of all other doctrines, including the sanctuary and the judgment. He adds, "Justification all but eclipsed sanctification. A sentimentalized view of God's love all but eclipsed His law."²

Along the same line of thought, Davidson sees Celebration Center missing the gospel synthesis of justice and mercy. In its concentration on the loving, forgiving aspects of God, the theology of the celebration movement seems to have lost a sense of the gravity of sin in front of the holy presence of God. It is only with this basic conviction of sin and proper understanding of God that divine grace can be properly understood and experienced. Davidson comments:

He [Simpson] does not understand the depth of the gospel. . . . The gospel that he preaches is not the gospel of the New Testament gospel. As far I am concerned, it is a distortion. For example, he preached on Romans 3 which is the heart of justification by faith, and instead, there, of finding justification by faith in the hilasterion of the expiation and propitiation of Christ, he removed any references to God's justice, to the side of God that portrays the omnipotent, holy God. It was a buddy, buddy God who welcomes you to leap into His presence on a familiar tone of equals. I find that true celebration all throughout the Old and the New Testaments starts out whenever a saint of God gets a picture of God's presence.³

The second concern, as expressed in 1991 by Dick Hanson (department director of Stewardship and Development at the Oregon Conference) is that the primacy of Scripture may be forgotten in New Life Celebration Church's efforts to meet people's needs.⁴ In the same year, a Loma Linda pastor, Lorntz, reported that the two concerns he heard most often about Celebration Center were "too noisy" and "not enough Bible."⁵ Charles Schultz, Dave VanDenburgh, and Gary Jensen--all ministers in the Southeastern California Conference in 1991--had the same concerns about sermons they

¹C. Mervyn Maxwell, "Baby Boomers and Moral Leadership," Adventists Affirm 5 (Fall 1991): 26.

²Ibid.

³Davidson interview, 30 January 1992.

⁴Hanson interview, 25 April 1991.

⁵Lorntz interview, 23 March 1991. See also Gary [Anonymous], interview by author, Norco, CA, 4 April 1991.

heard at Celebration Center. Preaching needed to be more "expository," including "word-by-word exegesis," it did not deliver enough "substance" or "doctrinal teachings," nor was it sufficiently "Bible-focused."¹ Dave Osborne, vice-president of Students Affairs at La Sierra University, says that the sermons at Colton didn't have enough content for his taste.² Brunt echoes this assessment for New Life Celebration Church with the same personal disclaimer.³ Finally, Reid describes "celebrationism" as lacking in growth and maturity and not assisting the membership in "graduating from their half-way house."⁴

Pneumatological Concerns

Concerns about the Holy Spirit are rarely and indirectly raised. Bruce Johnston reports that some unnamed leaders up to the General Conference level are afraid that the celebration movement may be "more pentecostal than Methodist."⁵ Gerhard Hasel, deceased seminary professor at Andrews University, saws "celebrationism" as influenced by the third wave and, therefore, charismatic in its congregational structure, its joyful and vibrant liturgy, and in its "soft theology nurturing soft ethics." He questioned: "What sources are celebration churches drinking from? What 'fire' are they playing with? What spirit is at work?" These are serious, gnawing questions.⁶

Ecclesiological Concerns

Concerns related to church life most often spring from the congregational trend celebration churches exhibit. Congregationalism is often anti-organizational/leadership, leading to an "us versus

¹C. and E. Schultz interview, 21 August 1991; VanDenburgh interview, 10 April 1991; Gary [Anonymous] interview, 4 April 1991.

²Dave Osborne interview, 3 April 1991.

³Brunt interview, 28 April 1991.

⁴Reid interview, 8 May 1992; Beach to Haenni, 1.

⁵Davidson interview, 30 January 1992; Bruce Johnston interview, 8 May 1991.

⁶Hasel, "The 'Third Wave'," 41.

them mentality," self-praise, and derogatory remarks about the "brethren" and the "hierarchy."¹ V. Bailey Gillespie, Professor of Theology at La Sierra University, notes: "The administration of Celebration Center tends to be a bit critical of the institution of the church. . . . It sets itself apart from the church. . . . 'We are doing it right, they are doing it wrong.'" Gillespie perceptively observes that this attitude has a drawing power, particularly for disenfranchised people. He also fears that this critical attitude isolates people and sets them up as a reference point. They thus enter the same spirit of criticism and pride manifested by John Osborne.²

As a result of this perceived critical spirit, celebration churches are often perceived as too internally-oriented and as losing their focus on world mission.³ In 1991, for example, Gifford declared, "I see Celebration Center at this point really near-sighted; they see only themselves, their own difficulties."⁴ That same year, Don Hawley commented on his own New Life Celebration Church: "Really, we are at the present time a shell. What we have is a beautiful worship service and that is all! My concern is you cannot go on forever and just serve yourselves each Sabbath. There has to be some river flowing out."⁵ C. Mervyn Maxwell expresses the same concern while broadening it to a perception of a possible shift in ecclesiology: "A wave of baby boomers is demanding that we ape the superficial self-pampering excitement of the pentecostalized Evangelical churches. Babylon is being dragged into our midst instead of our fleeing for our lives out of Babylon."⁶

¹Gerhard Hasel, interview by author, Berrien Springs, MI, 3 February 1992; idem, "The Third Wave," 40; Maxwell, "Baby Boomers and Moral Leadership," 9; Corban interview, 8 May 1991; Gillespie interview, 19 March 1991; Scriven interview, 28 April 1991; Lortz interview, 23 March 1991; VanDenburgh interview, 10 April 1991; Reid interview, 8 May 1992; Beach to Haenni, 2; Jennifer Bottroff, interview by author, College Place, WA, 14 October 1994.

²Gillespie interview, 19 March 1991. See also Dave Osborne interview, 3 April 1991; Elizabeth Schultz in C. and E. Schultz interview, 21 August 1991.

³Reid interview, 8 May 1992; Scriven interview, 28 April 1991; Brunt interview, 28 April 1991; Roger Coon to Stephen Gifford, 6 September 1990, 2. For Coon, the lack of a world perspective is perceived through the modified Sabbath School program which lacked a mission report.

⁴Gifford interview, 6 August 1991.

⁵Don Hawley in D. and B. Hawley interview, 23 April 1991.

⁶Maxwell, "Baby Boomers and Moral Leadership," 27.

Hasel summarizes the same trend toward an internal focus in light of a traditional Adventist model of mission that is work, utilitarian, and institution-oriented:

I see those congregations more internally oriented trying to solve their own problems, dealing with their own issues. They are not oriented right now to make the Advent movement complete its task. They are more interested in the people who are there than using the resources of these people to bring about something that is larger. In that sense, to my mind, congregationalism is negative.¹

Second, concerns are expressed about the high profile of the senior pastors at Celebration Center and at New Life Celebration Church. People wonder if a highly charismatic pastor does not leave a congregation vulnerable, risking a leadership vacuum if he/she leaves. The charismatic leadership style is itself a subject of critique--either as too loose and lacking organization (as in Simpson's case), or as too strong and lacking the ability to delegate (as for Snyder).² Gifford comments on the high profile of the pastor in the autocratic pastoral model: "I do not like the autocratic pastoral model, which is what Dan has built. I tolerate [it] but I am opposed. I don't think it is the best model. There needs to be more lay involvement in the government of the church."³

Finally, some concerns are expressed regarding the disparity between Seventh-day Adventist Church polity, outlined in the Church Manual, and the way church membership, discipline, and polity are actually handled in celebration churches.⁴ We must notice that those concerns are rarely mentioned by one-time visitors and that they are most often seen as positive by pastors living around Celebration Center

¹Hasel interview, 3 February 1992.

²Don Hawley in D. and B. Hawley interview, 23 April 1991; Jan Schmidt in K. and J. Schmidt interview, 25 April 1991; Corban interview, 8 May 1991; Jacobsen interview, 2 May 1991; Beach to Haenni, 1; Widmer, "Adventist Worship," 15; Charles Schultz in C. and E. Schultz interview, 21 August 1991

³Gifford interview, 6 August 1991.

⁴Roger Coon to Stephen Gifford, 6 September 1990, 3; Widmer, "Adventist Worship--Celebration Style," 15; Bruce Johnston interview, 8 May 1991.

Liturgical Concerns

Most concerns regarding corporate worship are related to the contemporary music style found in celebration churches. Outside of these, a few concerns deal with other fundamental questions. Holmes questions a celebration theology of worship that results in praise coming before the proclamation. Robert Johnston wonders about the importance of the sacraments. Davidson is concerned about an approach to worship that seems more utilitarian than aesthetic. C. Mervyn Maxwell probes the problematic issues of enthusiasm, clapping, and "dances." Steve Daily, chaplain at La Sierra University, wonders if the celebration liturgy has been more imposed from the outside than generated from within the congregation.¹

The major issue is that the music is often perceived as manipulative, too loud, emotional, entertaining, superficial, ephemeral, pentecostal, secular, human-centered, or even addictive.² Heise expresses his concern about the music. Celebration music generally expresses only one style: "Celebration worship would profit by exposure to a wider spectrum of music in the contemporary style, because deep in the heart, in the Adventist psyche, religious experiences can only respond to some of the old ingrained gospel songs that express our spirituality."³ Mohr also voices concerns, but in a more radical way:

I maintain this, that there is and should be a difference in the type of music that our young people play in their Friday night meeting, Sabbath afternoon meeting, and their Sabbath School, and what they play, if they come in and play for at the 11 o'clock service or the big Sabbath School.⁴

We can summarize the concerns about worship by stating that celebration services are perceived as tending to disconnect themselves from the "grand Christian tradition" not only at the level of

¹Davidson interview, 30 January 1992; Robert Johnston interview, 23 January 1992; Holmes, "Authentic Adventist Worship," 14, 15; Maxwell, "Baby Boomers and Moral Leadership," 13-15; Daily interview, 3 April 1991.

²Brunt interview, 28 April 1991; Corban interview, 8 May 1991; Gillespie interview, 19 March 1991; Reid interview, 8 May 1992; Gary [Anonymous] interview, 4 April 1991; Smith interview, 12 March 1991; Widmer, "Adventist Worship--Celebration Style," 15; Whiversidge, "Guiding Principles for Celebration Worship," 1; Coon to Gifford, 3.

³Heise interview, 20 August 1991; see also Gifford interview, 6 August 1991.

⁴Mohr interview, 8 April 1991.

music and "symbols," as noted by Scriven and Holmes, but also at the level of the traditional modes of meditation such as silence and the centrality of the practice of the sacraments, as noted by Brunt, Fox, and Robert Johnston.¹ Also, we must note that behind the issue of contemporary music, there are some more fundamental questions as pointed out by Widmer, Reid, Davidson, Holmes, Lickey, Lauritzen, and Shea. These include the "[trivialization] of the sacred," the breakdown of the distinction between the profane and the holy, and the maintenance of the proper balance between the immanent and the transcendent.²

Contextual Concerns

Three types of concerns can be distinguished in this area:

1. Daily and Lornitz acknowledge some "professional jealousy." Pastors are jealous of Simpson's experience. Lornitz says, "The other pastors have to be with the old people here who do not want to celebrate and they cannot do it."³

2. Gifford, Mallery, and Jacobsen are concerned with the increased polarization of camps for and against celebration churches that has led to some irrational reactions, such as a death threat to Jacobsen on 15 April 1991 and a growing tendency in the Southeastern California Conference to evaluate potential new pastors, and church business meeting, on the basis of their "celebration theology."⁴

3. Birch, Daily, Prall, Munson, Newman, and Wade are concerned about celebration worship becoming a fad in Adventist churches, just another stereotyped program.⁵ In 1991 Birch declared:

¹Scriven interview, 28 April 1991; Holmes, "Authentic Worship," 14; Brunt interview, 28 April 1991; Fox interview, 6 May 1991; Robert Johnston interview, 23 January 1992.

²Scriven interview, 28 April 1991; Fox interview, 6 May 1991; Widmer, "Adventist Worship--Celebration Style," 15; Reid interview, 8 May 1992; Shea, "God: Transcendent or Immanent?" 14; Holmes, "Searching for Genuine Adventist Worship," 30-32; Whiversidge, "Guiding Principles," 1; Lauritzen, "Music in Worship: Are We Really Worshipping Him?" 47-51; Lickey, "Music in Worship: the Classical/Traditional Perspective," audiocassette.

³Lornitz interview, 23 March 1991. See also Daily interview, 3 April 1991.

⁴Patterson interview, 19 April 1991; Jacobsen, "Our Journey Ahead," audiocassette; Mallery interview, 21 March 1991.

⁵Daily interview, 3 April 1991; Munson interview, 26 April 1991; Prall interview, 22 April 1991; Newman and Wade, "Is It Safe to Celebrate?" 29.

A concern would be that the celebration churches just became another stereotype, just another happy-go-lucky type of religion. That would be a tragedy if that were to happen. I think that the challenge is to be deeply committed spiritually, and that really finds expression in a weekly corporate praise event.¹

Munson also commented the same year:

My concern for all this is that Adventism not just discard one package and buy another package.

... We should not buy into cheap pentecostalism or emotionalism. If we have here a movement which is led by the Holy Spirit, at this point [April] I believe that it is, I hope that we not, at some point, lose touch with that, the sensitivity toward the Holy Spirit. I hope that the new package will not be denominationalized or institutionalized.²

Just before Annual Council in 1991, the Biblical Research Institute (in the person of George Reid) complied with Folkenberg's request for an evaluation of the celebration movement. Reid's conclusion was: It is a fad that does not merit much attention from top official leadership. Reid comments on his advice to and influence on Folkenberg:

Based upon what I said, he [Folkenberg] concluded it was not something that was a crisis issue in the Adventist Church. It was something we could conceivably live with from an administrative perspective. If I had come through and said to him, "This is something which could rip the Adventist Church to pieces," then, he would have given more attention to it. To that degree I had an effect. I did not give that counsel.³

Basic Trends

Three concerns can be discerned:

1. The major concern is related to the issue of contemporary music. It is the fear that an experiential and emotional (good feeling) type of religion will take over a more rational, doctrinal, and "substantive" type of religion.⁴ Gillespie notes that the music in celebration churches is "typically evangelical," focusing "on feeling rather than theology, on instrumentation rather than message."⁵ Gifford

¹Birch interview, 15 April 1991.

²Munson interview, 26 April 1991.

³Reid interview, 8 May 1992; Beach to Haenni, 1.

⁴Corban interview, 8 May 1991; Bissel interview, 7 May 1991; Hiebert interview, 7 May 1991; Jacobsen interview, 2 May 1991; Homes, "Authentic Adventist Worship," 14; Whiversidge, "Guiding Principles," 1; C. and E. Schultz interview, 21 August 1991; Gary [Anonymous] interview, 4 April 1991

⁵Gillespie interview, 19 March 1991.

states that Southeastern California Conference supports Celebration Center because they want to support a "statement [which needs] to be made in Adventism." However, Gifford speculates that Celebration Center lacks the solid theological grounding necessary to survive as a congregation; in Gifford's opinion, Celebration Center "won't stay; they are not cognitive enough."¹ Davidson fears that the celebration movement will engender a generation that is feeling-oriented without that feeling having a solid enough basis--the Scripture.² Finally, Dave Osborne summarizes all the above concerns in one sentence: "The experience of the moment might supersede the message or theology."³

2. Another matter of concern is the triumph of secular entertainment, consumerism, and the increasing acceptance of psychotherapy within the church, accompanied by a general appreciation of the therapeutic aspects of church life.⁴ Davidson notes that Simpson's dream of the garden cathedral springs directly from that consumerism trend.⁵ Celebration churches have a particular tendency, Reid observes, to be governed by one generation's assumption that the church should be at its service. He adds: "Much of the preaching that is done . . . is what I call therapeutic preaching. It is designed to meet people's needs rather than to present the supreme God, His will, and His purposes. I see it as arising from an inductive source."⁶

Reid suggests that a change in reasoning procedure underlies the basic trend in celebration churches. His comment may reveal one possible worldview supporting his concerns and, possibly, many other people's critiques:

To my mind I will be a little critical of celebrationism in saying, I think, it is excessive in reliance upon inductive techniques. It has lost something that could be there, if it had a more deductive approach. I think that Christianity loses something if it is approached from a largely inductive

¹Gifford interview, 6 August 1991.

²Davidson interview, 30 January 1992.

³Dave Osborne interview, 3 April 1991.

⁴C. and E. Schultz interview, 21 August 1991; Robert Johnston interview, 23 January 1992; Whiverside, "Guiding Principles," 1; Gary [Anonymous] interview, 4 April 1991; Reid interview, 8 May 1992.

⁵Davidson interview, 30 January 1992.

⁶Reid interview, 8 May 1992.

approach. The message that God has sent to earth through His son has been staged in the Scripture essentially as a deductive rational process.¹

3. Finally, Brunt and Scriven note a lack of "prophetic" concerns in the celebration movement, a failure to take a stand on social, racial, and gender issues, a failure to make declarations against war, etc. Scriven comments: "The spirit of prophecy is probably almost dead in these churches. When I say, spirit of prophecy, I mean the spirit of the biblical prophets, where you rage against the evil that exists in the institutions and the hearts of people who lead us."²

Partial Conclusion

To conclude this fourth section, we note:

1. The concerns expressed outside Celebration Center are generally voiced in general terms and are rarely precisely related to a specific celebration church, either Celebration Center, New Life Celebration Church, or any similar church. The concerns most often refer to either celebration churches, celebration worship, the celebration movement, or "celebration/ism" in general.

2. Some correspondence can be discerned between the concerns expressed by the leadership at Celebration Center and the concerns expressed outside, such as the music style and the relativity of the themes of joy, love, acceptance, and freedom.

3. Some correspondence can also be noted between the concerns expressed as Blue Card Comments and the ones expressed outside Celebration Center, such as the anti-establishment, self-praise, and derogatory remarks, as well as the lack of in-depth Bible study.

It is surprising, however, to find so little correspondence between the Blue Card Comments and concerns voiced outside Celebration Center. Three possible explanations can be offered from the most objectionable to plausible one:

1. People in the pew have limited perceptions of sociological, theological, ecclesiastical, and liturgical frames of reference.

¹Ibid.

²Scriven interview, 28 April 1991.

2. People with concerns all directly spoke with or personally wrote to Simpson and/or other celebration leaders. Gifford and Jacobsen did speak directly to Simpson and Snyder, and Coon did send Simpson a copy of his letter to Gifford. Other than these few instances, however, there are no indications of direct, heart-to-heart interactions (either in person or by correspondence) between concerned individuals and leaders responsible for "celebration" congregations.

3. Attendees at Celebration Center lacked the conviction and/or the commitment to write their concerns, even when encouraged, because past experiences may have taught them that expressing their concerns would not make a difference.

All three explanations may reflect some truth, or the reality of many people. Yet, against the backdrop of the proliferation of positive and negative criticism in the public media of periodicals, books, and speeches made, one may wonder how seriously Adventists take the mandate of Matt 18:15-19.

Also, it appears that concerns about Celebration Center, celebration churches, or the celebration movement may be serving as a channel for criticisms of Adventist Church structure and Adventist worship in general. "Celebrationism" in the 1990s seems to have become an ideal "scapegoat," a focal point distant enough to be publicly debated.

For example, Holmes's concerns for a different order of worship at New Life Celebration Church--regarding praises coming too early in the service--could also apply to any other traditional Adventist worship service. The same could be said for the concerns related to a lack of attention to the sacraments, aesthetics, and the loss of the "grand Christian tradition." Outside a few college or metropolitan churches, traditional Adventist churches in North America generally exhibit the same lack of concern for those issues. A plausible explanation is the mixture of influences still at work within Adventism, such as its Arminian nineteenth-century Methodist roots, and its pragmatic frontier mentality augmented with strong "anti-world" teachings based on rational biblical and prophetic argumentation.

Another example of possible "scapegoating" is the criticism that the celebration movement has been compromised by consumerism. Many worshippers "shop" for a church that "meets their needs." The ministries of celebration congregations tend to be predominately therapeutic rather than outreach oriented. The critical concern about the therapeutic, however, does not seem to hold in light of

Adventism's traditional holistic understanding of human beings. In a denomination that has devoted so much of its resources to physical health--in the form of medical, dietetic, and preventive health institutions and programs--why shouldn't a therapeutic for the spiritual and psychological dimensions of life be operative during the Sabbath School and corporate worship? The critique of consumerism seems equally surprising coming from North American Adventists of whom, in 1991, 68 percent were home owners, who worship by the thousands in facilities hardly ever used during the week and which are often furnished with expensive organs, and who, in addition, support massive educational and medical institutional systems.¹

Other concerns seem justifiable, although the critics often lack information and perhaps allow their criticism to be a "scapegoating" mechanism. For example, this study has shown the consistently one-sided theology motivating celebration churches, such as an emphasis on divine and human love, acceptance and forgiveness, to the detriment of the complementary Adventist teachings on sanctification. The criticism of this one-sided driving force is justified, though it neglects to include the interest that celebration churches exhibit for new forms of ecclesiology, "pragmatic" pneumatology, and charismatic, holistic, and participatory worship services. The same type of criticism could also be made about more traditional Adventist churches in which the driving forces are prophetic interpretation and health concerns. These concerns in themselves represent just another type of one-sided theology, a theology that did not particularly encourage--until goaded by the celebration controversy--renewed interest in, and practice of, worship and spiritual gifts.

The trend toward experience, feelings, and the "subjective" is another fair criticism. But as in the preceding issue, to what extent is a tendency toward the cognitive, the didactic, and the "objective" another one-sided trend in Adventist churches?

C. Mervyn Maxwell's and Hasel's analyses of the influence of baby boomers and the third charismatic wave as the broader context of Adventist renewal is perceptive, although they lack a more

¹McClure, "Challenges Facing the North American Division," audiocassette recorded by author; George R. Knight, "The Fat Lady and the Kingdom," *Adventist Review*, 14 February 1991, 8-10.

comprehensive historical understanding of this influence on the Adventist renewal of worship (which has been described in chapter 1).¹

A series of concerns expressed in 1991 center around a lack of "heart-searching," repentance, confession, and commitment within celebration churches. Even though many interviews evidence stories of conversion or recommitment to God, this evaluation seems to be fair when the celebration movement is compared to accounts of other revival movements such as the North Hampton revival in 1734. However, how can such an evaluation accurately be made? The criticism is more likely attributable to a broader concern within Adventism--the general stagnation of White Anglo Adventist churches in North America since the 1980s.² In any case, repentance, confession, and commitment are difficult to measure, especially in a nascent movement.

Other concerns seem to have little basis, such as Reid faulting Celebration Center for a lack of growth and maturity and for its leader's incapacity to "make people graduate from their half-way house." When we consider that Celebration Center entered its congregational independent adventure only in 1989, remarks such as Reid expressed in 1991 seem premature and difficult to evaluate. Maxwell's and Hasel's comments about dancing and "singing in tongues" in celebration churches seem to contain unfair insinuations.³

One of the key issues behind most of the concerns is indeed the distinction between the secular and the sacred, the common and the holy. Most of the concerns, however, do not explore, how, when, and where this distinction needs to be made in the 1990s. Lauritzen and Lickey justify it on the basis of Ezek 22, 26, 28, as well as on some specific Old Testament cultic prescriptions, practices, and stories such as that of Uzzah (1 Chr 13), who paid with his life for not having followed a divine command.

¹Maxwell, "Baby Boomers and Moral Leadership," 9, 14, 15; Hasel, "The 'Third Wave,'" 40.

²Holmes, "Authentic Adventist Worship," 14, 15.

³Maxwell, "Baby Boomers and Moral Leadership," 9, 14, 15; Hasel, "The 'Third Wave,'" 40, 42 (Hasel's n. 27 contradicts his insinuations made in the text about speaking in tongues in celebration churches. N. 27 specifies that no connection can yet be established between speaking in tongues and celebration churches.)

Until the 1970s, North American Adventists generally followed the traditional demarcations of the nineteenth-century tenants of fundamentalism and the Holiness Movement, which pentecostals also espoused later. Within the context of their communities and culture, these groups saw the absence of cosmetics, jewelry, and "worldly pleasures" (theater, dances, etc.) as external evidences of their demarcation as a holy people and/or of their shunning of the world. Adventists traditionally have subscribed to these external indicators and added to the list the absence of a wedding band, a certain length of hair, dress, and/or a vegetarian diet.

But a century later, Adventists are asking where to draw the line between the sacred and the secular within the context of a changing America dominated by media, fads, and pluralistic lifestyle approaches. The question is indeed quite perplexing for Adventists. Drawing a new line between a consecrated and worldly lifestyle is especially puzzling when, for example, Adventists did not allow "radical" music at the eleven o'clock worship services in the 60s and 70s. "Radical" groups like the Wedgewood Trio or the Heritage Singers, or even "radical" music defined by the playing of guitars, were considered inappropriate for the "sacred hour." But just two decades later, Adventists generally accept all of the above as valid "sacred" music or instrumentation in their worship services.¹

Additionally, the number of Adventist Church members exhibiting significant upward mobility also complicates the issue of demarcation between the sacred and the profane.² Sociological studies reveal that the transformation of a lower-class sect into a middle-class church tends to pull down the chosen barriers of a religious group in relation to the world. Strict behavioral standards that had once

¹Anderson interview, 29 April 1991; Evelyn Blehm in E. and M. Blehm interview, 29 April 1991; D. and B. Hawley interview, 23 April 1991; Joan [Anonymous] interview, 26 April 1991; Eileen Greenwalt, "Comments on the Wedgewood Trio," College Place, WA, 20 May 1995, hand-written notes; Kirkle interview, 11 March 1991; Pam Arnold, interview by author, College Place, WA, 17 April 1991; Prall interview, 7 May 1991; J. and K. Schmidt interview, 25 April 1991; and so on.

²Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 256-68; H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: World Publishing, 1929), 29, 30.

been the hallmark of the group fall, leaving the group vulnerable until it redefines its identity and relationship to the world. If such redefinition does not occur, the group's growth stagnates or regresses.¹

Within the context of an Adventist White Anglo church at its lowest growth rate, the question of demarcation between the sacred and the profane is indeed a sensitive and pertinent question requiring diligent consideration. Answers come in the 90s within the context of a church where certain external characteristics (dress code, diet, and entertainment, for example) have traditionally received much attention, even defined membership in the group. These external characteristics have also been too often perceived as a principal sign of one's salvation, and have been commonly mistaken as characteristics of the sacred. The loss or transformation of these external characteristics is threatening, and is still easily perceived within the Adventist community as a symptom of the loss of the sacred.

Within such a context of redefinition of the group's boundaries, it is not surprising to have certain people reinforce certain external characteristics, old "landmarks" such as the ultimate cry for reclaiming the sacred, the group's identity and growth.

As next chapter shows, many of the critical concerns presented in this section refer to false dichotomies related to the church and its worship such as activity versus word, a sense of well-being versus reverence in God's presence, faith influenced by feelings versus feelings influenced by faith, the subjective versus the objective, experience versus revelation, God as the audience versus God as the actor, and so on.

Finally, two concluding remarks need to be added. First, despite the intensity of both written and oral reactions to the celebration movement, almost no resources were devoted to helping celebration churches clarify or improve their adventure or support their commendable efforts to respond to the challenges facing an Anglo Adventist Church in its identity crisis. Agencies at the Union, Division, and General Conference level, such as the Biblical Research Institute, the Office of Church Music, the Musicians' Guild or the Theological Seminary, could have offered these churches theoretical and practical

¹O'Dea, The Sociology of Religion, 55-71; Rodney Stark and William Simps Bainbridge, The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 122-25; Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, The Churching of America (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 161, 145-98.

consultation, as well as temporary human resources. The investment would have certainly been worthwhile in the 1990s, as we have seen in this chapter. In 1990 and 1991 celebration churches uniquely catalyzed and fostered within Adventism a growing interest in church and worship renewal. We can even add, within the context of chapter 1, that Adventists have never before exhibited such an awareness of, and interest in, ecclesiology and liturgy/worship.

Second, the issue of "celebrationists" perceived lack of commitment to their congregations appears less a moral issue related to "celebration theology" than a typical trend of individualistic American society. This trend can be traced back to revivalism, the American frontier, and apocalyptic/premillennialist type of religion as seen in chapter 1. These influences all fostered the privatization of life and faith to the detriment of their social dimensions. Anderson, of New Life Celebration Church, perceptively comments on this trend in 1991 within her own frame of reference:

I am concerned over the fact that Adventists are very reluctant to commit and help build something and make it grow. Something's got to happen within the heart of Adventism that causes rebirth, desire, and passion. We are on the verge of that. God is leading us through a time of sifting and testing. We are being purified and we are going through those fires to be sifted out.¹

Critical Arguments Against Celebration Churches

This second section addresses the more severe criticisms against the celebration movement.

General Remarks

Most of the criticisms considered in this section were voiced between 1990 and 1991 by people with limited first-hand experience. Some had never attended a celebration church, most notably Ralph Larson, Colin Standish, John Osborne, and Jan Marcussen. Others claimed to have made between one and four visits, but never to more than one congregation.² Among the most notable antagonists

¹Anderson interview, 29 April 1991.

²Ron Thompson is an exception. He claimed to have visited two of the largest celebration churches in two different states, but did not name either of them. See Ron Thompson, "The Celebration Approach to Worship," Our Firm Foundation, July 1991, 20.

visiting celebration churches are Terry Ross (three times to New Life Celebration Church), Kevin Paulson (twice to Celebration Center), and Marshall Grosboll (once to an unnamed celebration church).

It is interesting to analyze the response of Terry Ross, John Osborne's personal research and administrative assistant in 1991. When he was asked if he ever visited Celebration Center in Colton, California, he responded, "No, and I don't need to. The film that I had seen [on Celebration Center] was less than a week old and it came right out of the person who took the film."¹ This answer expresses the importance Ross places upon (1) second-hand visual information--videos, (2) second-hand information received with promptness, and (3) second-hand information received from a person one trusts. Antagonists often use these three criteria to validate their source of information.²

When Colin Standish, founder and president of Hartland Institute, was asked in 1991 if he had ever visited a celebration church, his answer parallels that of Ross, and adds a rationale: "I have never been to a celebration church. I deliberately did not go. . . . The servant of the Lord [E. G. White] tells us not to go on Satan's territory."³ When asked on what basis he could then analyze the celebration movement, he answered: "Very well, very easily. I mean, I have seen it on video of course."⁴ Standish's answer uses E. G. White's perceived disapproval to justify his reliance on second-hand visual information. Antagonists often use the perceived approval or disapproval of Mrs. White to determine their course of action, because for them White's writing still directly informs contemporary situations.

I also attempted to interview John Osborne, founder/speaker of the Prophecy Countdown television ministry and senior pastor of the Rolling Hills Historic Seventh-day Adventist Church. He agreed to meet me on 31 October 1991, but then canceled the interview on 22 October 1991.⁵

¹Terry Ross, interview by author, San Bernardino, CA, 6 April 1991.

²Michael Frankland, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 7 April 1991. See also Richard Cameron (Dillard, OR), "Letters to the Editor: More on Milwaukie," *NPUC Gleaner*, 18 June 1990, 3; Lloyd Rosenvold and Leola Rosenvold, *Adventist Carnivals* (Hope, ID: Rosenvold Pub., 1991), 14, 15.

³Colin Standish, interview by author, San Bernardino, CA, 6 April 1991.

⁴Ibid.

⁵I flew, however, to Florida as arranged. By mail and by phone I insisted on seeing John Osborne. Only Cathy and Terry Ross would speak to me. On October 24, I finally received a promise from Cathy Ross that if I would visit Prophecy Countdown, I could have a short encounter with Osborne.

Before presenting the antagonists' arguments (through the same six categories as set forth in the fourth section of this chapter), the following paragraph paints a composite picture of the major criticisms. Then, the purpose and influence of those criticisms are briefly discussed, as well as the underlying attitudes and assumptions perceived during the interviews.

Standish sees only two ways to fill a church at the end of this twentieth century: (1) preach and teach about the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the judgment, and the second coming, or (2) go "celebration."¹ Marshall Grosboll, founder and director of Steps to Life until his death in July 1991, first wondered if the celebration movement was an honest attempt encouraged by the leaders of the denomination to receive the Holy Spirit. He wrote: "If it is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, it would be disastrous to reject it. But if it is a counterfeit working of satanic agencies, it would be equally disastrous to receive it, or even remain neutral about it." However, without further exploring the idea, his next comment reveals his black-and-white worldview: "The celebration movement is not part good or part bad, it is one or the other."² Daniel Caslow, a retired minister, believes the celebration controversy is more than a question of worship style. It is a theological controversy related to a "new theology" influenced by Calvin, spiritualism, and pentecostalism.³ Ron Thompson, a layperson, states that the consensus of concerns for the celebration movement is "drama, music, and the preaching being used in Celebration."⁴ For Jan Marcussen, a Seventh-day Adventist minister, the celebration movement is dangerously characterized by

I visited on 1 November 1991. Terry Ross, Osborne's spokesperson, met with me, as Osborne had an urgent meeting to attend. I returned the next day hoping to dialogue informally with Osborne at the pot-luck following his Sabbath sermon. I was literally escorted to the pot-luck and given the place of honor, thus isolated from the rest of the congregation. I asked when I could see Osborne. I was told he would join the table shortly. Osborne never came. Finally, I caught him in the hallway just before he stepped on the platform for his afternoon meeting. He briefly told me that he really did not want to see me. He feared I would distort his words. When I promised to show him whatever I reported from our conversation, he agreed to see me after the meeting. That encounter never took place. He disappeared during the video he presented for his meeting. I tried to follow him but never found him (Author's recollection of the events. See also Viviane Haenni to John Osborne, 31 October 1991).

¹Colin Standish, "The Entertainment Syndrome," Anti-celebration Rally, San Bernardino, CA, 5 April 1991, audiocassette recorded by author.

²Marshall Grosboll, "No Time to Celebrate," Our Firm Foundation, December 1990, 14.

³Daniel E. Caslow, interview by author, Portland, OR, 7 May 1991.

⁴Ron Thompson, "The Celebration Approach," 20.

five areas of concern: (1) music, (2) mind control through Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), (3) a Catholic "new theology," (4) a Catholic liturgy, and (5) a Catholic message of peace and safety.¹ For Kevin Paulson, M.A. in Public Health, Snyder and Simpson (and the influence they exert on denominational leadership styles) are more part of the present problem within Adventism than part of the solution.²

The antagonists' purposes in expressing critical concerns seem to vary from sharing facts and praying for the enlightenment of celebrationists, to radical calls for separation from celebrationists or from the Adventist Church.³ For example, Marcussen invites his video audience to love, share facts, educate, and pray for "God's dear people"--every faithful Seventh-day Adventist within celebration churches.⁴ Marshall Grosboll, on the other hand, declares that when a church becomes a celebration church, it is the duty of every true and faithful Seventh-day Adventist to leave that "apostate congregation."⁵ In a sermon in April of 1991, Standish concluded his sermon with a similar plea: "Get out of those celebration churches!"⁶

¹Jan Marcussen, Catholic Charismatic Attack on God's SDA Church--Part I, videocassette.

²Kevin Paulson, interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 6 August 1991.

³Marcussen, Catholic Charismatic Attack on God's SDA Church--Parts I and II, videocassettes; John Osborne, Celebration or Abomination (Mt. Dora, FL: Prophecy Countdown, 1991), 60

⁴Marcussen, *ibid.*

⁵Marshall Grosboll, "No Time to Celebrate," 18; Lloyd Rosenvold and Leola Rosenvold, Adventist Carnivals, 82.

⁶Colin Standish, "Burdened to Call Back People to the Narrow Way," 11 o' clock sermon, Anti-celebration Rally, San Bernardino, CA, 6 April 1991, audiocassette.

The antagonists interviewed generally seemed to feel genuine concern, to be engaged in troubled questioning, often with a fear of not doing what is right in God's sight.¹ Ross expressed such a mixture of attitudes when describing his journey regarding the celebration movement:

What I saw there [at New Life Celebration Church] was very disturbing, so far as my historical heart told me. So, I decided to be involved in a closer way with it. I started researching, very much like what you are doing. I am not a person who feeds on hearsay. I am a person who tries to deal face up. We tried to be honest with the situation from both sides. I feel that heaven is the ultimate goal. If we are playing games and being dishonest with our research (even if we like or dislike what we are looking at), if we are not honest with our research, then we are all going to face the judgment, sooner or later, and the Lord is going to ask us: "Did you exaggerate your position?"²

Having examined the antagonist's feelings about their responsibility in the celebration controversy and considered how this affected their compilation and presentation of criticisms, we now examine their criticisms in detail, following the six categories set forth in the fourth section of this chapter.

Theological Criticisms

Theological criticisms especially center around the fear of "new theology" replacing "historic" Adventist theology.³ "New theology" is used to label a mosaic of influences that supposedly continue to alter Adventism. They include Catholicism, Calvinism, liberals, evangelicals, perceived personification of evil through people like Walter Martin, Desmond Ford, Robert Brinsmead, Walter Rea, and even a specific Seventh-day Adventist book--Questions on Doctrine.⁴

¹David Morris, interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 6 April 1991; Ross interview, 6 April 1991; Frankland interview, 7 April 1991; Pam [Anonymous] interview by author, College Place, WA, 27 April 1991; Standish interview, 6 April 1991; Caslow interview, 7 May 1991; Paulson interview, 6 August 1991; Glenn Chinn interview by author, Grants Pass, OR, 14 August 1991; Virginia [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991; Scott and Rema [Anonymous] interview by author, Grants Pass, OR, 16 August 1991; Merle and Mildred Tilloston, interview by author, Grants Pass, OR, 16 August 1991, hand-written notes; Dave and Adelaide Brackett, interview by author, Berrien Springs, MI, 23 October 1991.

²Ross interview, 6 April 1991.

³David Morris interview, 6 April 1991; Scott [Anonymous] in S. and R. [Anonymous] interview, 16 August 1991

⁴Questions on Doctrine (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1957). See Standish, "Burdened," audiocassette tape recorded by author; Terry Ross, "Exposing What Is Apostate," Anti-celebration Rally, San Bernardino, CA, 6 April 1991, audiocassette tape recorded by author; Marcussen, Catholic Charismatic Attack on God's SDA Church--Parts I and II, videocassettes; John Osborne, Celebration or Abomination 3, 51.

For antagonists, all these perceived influences on Adventism have changed "the correct" biblical understanding of the nature of human beings and Christ, sin and salvation, love and repentance, grace and the law of God, and/or justification and sanctification. The following composite quote illustrates some of those concerns:

With Questions on Doctrine, the sanctuary message is torn down by saying: When Christ died on the cross, the atonement is completed at the cross once for all at Golgotha. With this altered message, it is claimed that the believer should rejoice, should have fun, fun, fun without the necessity of making at-one-ment with Christ. This led to the belief that the believer can continue to sin and ask for forgiveness until Christ returns. That is why all walks of believers should celebrate. No one should condemn sins for God can wave His magic hand over the believer and he can be cleansed from sin.¹ [Celebrationists] are making people feel very relaxed and comfortable in their sins, by the main reason they don't get into any standards and doctrines.² What scares me the most is that my niece who belongs to a celebration church says that we are accepted how we are by God and that He loves us.³

Standish sees "new theology" as much rooted in the so-called "objective gospel" as in "relational theology" or the "subjective gospel." On the other hand, "relational theology" teaches that "as long as one retains a relationship with Jesus, performance has nothing to do with salvation."⁴ Both approaches, it is claimed, shatter belief in perfectionist or victorious Christian living that true Seventh-day Adventists should preach and teach.

For Caslow, as well as for Ralph Larson, a retired minister, evangelist, and former seminary professor, celebrationists are influenced by Calvinism, specifically in their emphasis on love, acceptance, and forgiveness.⁵ According to Caslow, Calvin's views on salvation downplay the Ten Commandments, the doctrines, and the lifestyle standards, and allow people to believe that they can be

¹Anonymous reference in Chin, "Summary of Historical Background to the Origin of the Celebration Churches," 10.

²Frankland interview, 7 April 1991.

³Rema [Anonymous] in S. and R. [Anonymous] interview, 16 August 1991.

⁴Colin Standish, "After Charisma," Our Firm Foundation, April 1990, 18.

⁵Caslow interview, 7 May 1991; Ralph Larson, interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 24 April 1991, hand-written notes.

saved in their sins.¹ Many antagonists are concerned that celebrationists might believe in "once saved, always saved," and that justification could be separated from sanctification.²

"Celebration Adventism" denies that the gospel is indeed "the power of God unto salvation," salvation from sin. It would build upon the snares of God's enemy and "create an atmosphere of love" that would make the gospel merely good advice or an appeal to the emotions.³ It is called a "blessed hope," not a "blessed fact." . . . Well, then, if regardless of your actions, you have already been saved--then how should you conduct your church services? That's simple enough; just celebrate!⁴

The problem with "new theology" and its perceived pervasive influence is that it has laid the foundation of the celebration movement: "Since new theology was introduced, indifference and blindness to sin has been steadily growing [within Adventism]. It has laid the foundation for the celebration movement."⁵ Celebration churches have indiscriminately jettisoned the "straight message," the "landmarks," the "distinctives," the "pillars," and the "standards" of Adventism. They have replaced "traditional," "pure" Adventist theology with "new theology," which brings a sense of loss, leads to disloyalty to God, and ultimately results in being deceived.⁶

¹Caslow interview, 7 May 1991.

²Ray Foster, interview by author, Loma Linda, CA, 24 March 1991; Rema [Anonymous] in S. and R. [Anonymous] interview, 16 August 1991. See also Vance Ferrell, "The Fastest-Growing Movement in American Adventism Today--Multiplying the Celebration Churches --Part I," PR-WM 270; John Osborne, The Jesuit Agenda, Prophecy Countdown, December 1991, videocassette.

³Donald K. Short, "Evangelical Adventism: Celebration of What?" Adventism Triumphant 1 (June 1990): 20.

⁴Vance Ferrell, "The Fastest-Growing Movement in American Adventism Today--Multiplying the Celebration Churches--Part 2," PR-WM 270, n.d., 1.

⁵Grosboll, "No Time to Celebrate," 17. Chin, "A Comparative Study," 10.

⁶Chin, "A Comparative Study," 13; Thompson, "The Celebration Approach," 23; Morris interview, 6 April 1991; Ross interview, 6 April 1991; Terry Ross, "The Omega Tract," unpublished document, Grants Pass, OR, 1990, 5; Virginia [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991; Larson interview, 24 April 1991; Larry [Anonymous], interview by author, Central Point, OR, 15 August 1991; Merle Tilloston interview, 16 August 1991; Daniel Caslow, "Review of the Theology of the Celebration Book--Set Free--by Don Hawley," unpublished paper, Portland, OR, 7 May 1991, 4; Vance Ferrell, "North American Division: Getting Rid of the Standards," PR-WM 287; Eugene [Anonymous] (Winfield, B.C., Canada) to Stephen Gifford, 3 July 1990; Julian [Anonymous] (Merced, CA) to Stephen Gifford, 29 August 1990; Ray [Anonymous] (Winston, OR) to Bruce Johnston, 4 April 1991.

Five "pillars" of Adventism are viewed as particularly threatened:

- (1) The historic doctrine that all of Adam's descendants inherit his weakness is now being replaced by the Calvinistic doctrine that all of Adam's descendants inherit his guilt. . . . (2) The historic doctrine that Christ came to earth in the human nature of fallen man, is now being replaced by the Calvinistic doctrine that Christ came to earth in the human nature of unfallen Adam. . . . (3) The historic doctrine of righteousness by faith (right-doing by means of power received from God) is now being replaced by the Calvinist doctrine of unrighteousness by presumption (wrong doing with the expectation of getting by with it). . . . (4) The historic doctrine of the sanctuary and the investigative Judgment is now being replaced by various Calvinistic theories. Actually the various Calvinistic theories consist mostly of sneers, jeers, and expression of unbelief. . . . (5) The historic doctrine of the Spirit of Prophecy is now being replaced by dependence on human reasoning.¹

In the interviews, it is interesting to note that among the five "pillars" those most often commented on are the importance of a life without sin (victorious living) and issues related to the sanctuary and the "investigative" judgment.

For Osborne, Paulson, Marshall Grosboll, and Fred Allaback, Adventists live in the antitypical day of atonement. They should not celebrate. Life is to be led seriously in the context of the countdown of world history.²

To us, living during the antitypical Day of Atonement, the Lord says: "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinner, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (James 4:8-10). It is no time to celebrate when a church is in apostasy. Those who make celebration the focal point of worship during this time of crisis will not receive the seal of God. . . . Probation is soon to close, and those who are celebrating when the Lord is calling for sorrow for sin will find themselves without a mediator. "Satan invents unnumbered schemes to occupy our minds"--his goal is to keep us joyfully celebrating within the church, until probation's door is forever closed and we are unprepared (*Great Controversy*, page 488).³

In the area of Christian living, several visible and measurable changes are perceived to be supported by "new theology" and the celebration movement: for example, "jewelry, eating out and

¹Ralph Larson, "The False Reasoning of a False Theology," *Our Firm Foundation*, March 1991, 20-24.

²Osborne, *Celebration or Abomination*, 11; Paulson interview, 6 August 1991; Fred Allaback, "The Celebration Church," *Liberty Review*, Spring 1990, 22; Virginia [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991; Foster interview, 24 March 1991; Fredrik W. Edwardy (Deer Park, CA), "Letters to the Editor: Youth and Worship," *PU Recorder*, 5 November 1990, 31; Sandra Schneider (Auburn, WA), "Letters: Celebration," *NPUIC Gleaner*, 3 September 1990, 3; Kenny Shelton, *What's Wrong With Celebration?* (West Frankfort, IL: Behold the Lamb, 1991); Colin Standish, "What Is the Message of Our Church?" Anti-celebration Rally, San Bernardino, 7 April 1991, audiocassette.

³Marshall Grosboll, *No Time to Celebrate*, (Wichita, KS: Steps to Life), 3, 7.

playing football on Sabbath." The following comment points out other areas of possible perceived changes within Christian living:

Do these celebration-style churches preach revival and reformation, which is our greatest need as people? It would be very easy for me, as a pastor, to change the church sign and attract large numbers of people, and then preach to them what they want to hear. I live in the Bible Belt, and these types of people want to hear Jesus loves them and that they can be saved in their sins. The crowd will continue to grow if I don't preach to them about giving up their caffeine, tobacco, jewelry, and impure TV and videos Are these celebration centers leading our church to the straight and narrow lifestyle of Jesus? If they are--praise God! If not, then beware of the counterfeit!¹

Women wearing jewelry and make-up is certainly the most often cited evidence of the negative influence of "new theology" and the celebration churches on Christian living. For example, a "fine Christian woman" who attends a celebration church and "suddenly" begins wearing earrings and make-up is described as "going backward."² For Paulson, women should be without adornment during the anti-typical day of atonement. And finally, Standish declares, "you cannot wear jewelry and be a Christian."³

Pneumatological Criticisms

The pneumatic concerns related to celebration churches are threefold: The celebration movement is a counterfeit revival, a tongue-speaking movement, and a movement denigrating E. G. White and her writings.

1. Antagonists fear that celebration churches incarnate a "counterfeit revival," a parody of the activity of the Holy Spirit and of the promised renewed Pentecost at the end of time.⁴ For Larson, counterfeit revivals exhibit seven major characteristics present in celebration churches: (a) an emphasis

¹Pat Milligam (Enid, OK), "Letters to the Editor," *Ministry* 64 (April 1991): 29.

²Virginia [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991.

³Paulson interview, 6 August 1991; idem, "No Revival Without Reformation," Anti-celebration Rally, San Bernardino, CA, 7 April 1991, audiocassette recorded by author; Standish, "What is the Message?" audiocassette recorded by author; Glen Chinn, interview by author, Grants Pass, OR, 14 August 1991.

⁴See Joel 2: 28-32; E. G. White, *Great Controversy*, chaps 38, 39. Steve [Anonymous] interview by author, Portland, OR, 25 April 1991, hand-written notes; Betty [Anonymous] (Waterford, CA) to Stephen Gifford, 30 October 1990; Osborne, *Jesuit Agenda*, videocassette; idem, *Celebration or Abomination*, 15. Allaback, "The Celebration Church," 14-20.

of feelings over Truth, (b) lower standards of piety, (c) de-emphasis of self-denial, (d) use of music to excite the emotions, (e) denigration of the divine law, (f) shallow and superficial conversions, and (g) great popularity.¹ Grosboll contrasts the characteristics of the true and false revivals:

There is a true outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But it will not be accompanied by worldly music, clapping of hands, lightness and triviality, and fanaticism--on the contrary, it will lead to deep contrition of soul. But before the genuine outpouring of the Holy Spirit there will come a counterfeit movement, just as before the second coming of Christ there will be [the appearance of the antichrist]. Is it not far better to wait for the genuine Holy Spirit, and the genuine Second Coming?²

Vance Ferrell detects evidence of false revival in the use celebration churches make of rhetoric typical of the holiness and fundamentalist movements: "These are FALSE revivals, because those presenting them and those receiving them continue on as worldlings in their clothing, diet, entertainment, and objectives. By this ye shall know them."³

In 1990 Standish perceived the charismatic movement as sweeping through the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia; France; Italy; Colton, California; Modesto, California; Portland, Oregon; Tucson, Arizona; and New Buffalo, New York, like a prairie fire.⁴ As celebration churches accepted charismatic church methodologies and a charismatic style of worship, they thus belong to the counterfeit revival. Ross declared in 1990 that "we see the inroads of the 'celebration' counterfeit revival sweeping our church."⁵

2. Antagonists perceive the celebration movement as a "tongue-speaking movement" led by wrong/evil spirits.⁶

¹Larson, "The Greatest of All Revivals," Our Firm Foundation, December 1990, 6; see also Paulson interview, 6 August 1991; Rema [Anonymous] in S. and R. [Anonymous] interview, 16 August 1991; Foster interview, 24 March 1991.

²Larson interview, 24 April 1991; Grosboll, "No Time to Celebrate," 19.

³Vance Ferrell, "Inroads of the Celebration Church--Part 1," PR-WM 277, 3.

⁴Standish, "Charisma," Our Firm Foundation, March 1990, 22.

⁵Terry Ross to Dear Brothers and Sisters, n.d. (cover letter of "The Omega Tract").

⁶Kevin Paulson, "Seventh-day Adventist Pentecostalism: A Tragedy Long Coming," Anti-celebration Rally, San Bernardino, CA, 6 April 1991, audiocassette recorded by author; see Donovan [Anonymous] (Grand Terrace, CA) to Stephen Gifford, 7 July 1990; Texe Marrs "The Secret Brotherhood," Prophecy Countdown, 1993, videocassette; John Osborne, "Revelation 13--Historic

Most of these celebration churches have not, as yet, moved into the most obvious aspects of charisma such as speaking in tongues. Nevertheless, the telltale experiential aspects of charisma are very apparent. At the present rate of development, I predict this movement will all but take over the Seventh-day Adventist Church by 1995.¹ Establishing what all these pentecostal gestures lead to, I stated in part one that it was just a matter of time before the celebration churches are speaking in tongues. And I still firmly stand by my prediction. One retired General Conference pastor told me [that] a good friend of his just attended the celebration church I show on the video, and stated emphatically, "There was speaking in tongues going on all around me in the congregation." There are other credible eyewitnesses who will confirm that these celebration churches are now starting to show signs of glossolalia.² The chief purpose of the celebration-type format in the pentecostal churches is to lead worshipers into the tongues experience. In truth, it can almost be said that some uncontrolled phenomena will have to take place if the stimulation continues long enough. As other Protestant churches adopt the same formula of worship, the danger will be ever present for the emotions to be stirred out of conscious control and for "tongues" to result.³

3. Finally, antagonists perceive celebration churches as denigrating the spirit of prophecy manifested through E. G. White:⁴

Listen, celebration folks, if you're Adventists and love the Spirit of Prophecy, you would be reading and studying. And if you were reading and studying the Spirit of Prophecy, you wouldn't be doing the things you're doing!⁵ I have had these celebration people tell me that they believe in the Spirit of Prophecy. If that's true, then it's obvious that they're not reading it. Because you cannot read and study the Spirit of Prophecy and then embrace the celebration church. The two are mutually exclusive. You either accept the one and reject the other, or vice versa. You cannot honestly embrace both.⁶

Frankland comments: "Celebration is a channel of revival, the false revival . . . simply because they [celebrationists] have outspokenly put away the Testimonies [of E. G. White]."⁷

Most of the following remarks stem from misunderstandings of one of Snyder's sermons ("The Marriage"). In this sermon, Snyder denounced some of the myths that impede Adventist

Adventism," meeting sponsored by Steps to Life, Bernen Springs, MI, 17 April 1993, audiocassette recorded by author.

¹Standish, "Charisma," 22.

²Osborne, *Celebration or Abomination*, 45.

³Joe Crews, "Consecration or Desecration?" *Inside Report* 9 (January 1991): 4.

⁴See Debbie [Anonymous] (Milton, OR) to Bruce Johnston, 4 February 1991.

⁵Osborne, *Celebration or Abomination*, 45.

⁶Ibid., 37.

⁷Frankland interview, 7 April 1991.

backsliders' recommitment to Christ, metaphorically using his MacIntosh computer trash can to illustrate where such destructive myths belong.¹ This demonstration incurred an emphatic response from opponents of the celebration movement. Thus one critic suggested that, in churches which are adopting a charismatic form of worship,

the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy are little valued, and human philosophy and social reasoning become the basis of preaching. . . . Indeed one pastor is reported to have verbally assigned compilations of the Spirit of Prophecy to the trash can during worship service.² I am not afraid of her [White's] books. I do not need to trash them.³

Ecclesiological Criticisms

Antagonists perceive four ecclesiological issues to be threatened by celebration churches:

(1) church unity, (2) the nature of the church as a sanctuary, (3) church leadership style, and (4) church mission.

1. Ron Thompson warns that "the celebration trend is divisive and could split the church."⁴ For Steve, Virginia, Jack, and Scott, celebrationism brings pluralism, division, and/or destruction of Adventism's "distinctiveness."⁵ For Standish, this divisiveness runs counter to true revival because true revival can only bring "the need for unity."⁶

2. Anti-celebrationists fear that celebration churches are destroying the very nature of the church as a sanctuary.⁷ For most of them, this notion is usually understood literally (and not as a metaphor) and describes the church's essence. Five fundamental notions are closely related to the church

¹On Snyder's sermon--"The Marriage" see chapter 3, n. 184; Snyder interview, 22 April 1991.

²Standish, "Charisma," 24.

³Ross interview, 6 April 1991.

⁴Ron Thompson, "Letters to the Editor," *Ministry* 69 (October 1990): 2. See also Chinn interview, 14 August 1991; Aaron [Anonymous] (Denair, CA) to Don Jacobsen, 19 December 1990.

⁵Steve [Anonymous] interview, 25 April 1991; Virginia [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991; Jack [Anonymous] interview by author, Central Point, OR, 15 August 1991; Scott [Anonymous] in S. and R. [Anonymous] interview, 16 August 1991.

⁶Standish, "What Is the Message?" audiocassette tape recorded by author.

⁷Vance Ferrell, "Celebration Update--Part 4," PR-WM 400, 1.

as a sanctuary: It is a place of (a) sacredness, (b) peace and silence, (c) reverence, (d) refuge, and (e) purity.¹

Worship inside or outside the sanctuary is different. The sanctuary is for holy use. The church is the earthly sanctuary where God comes and meets His people.² It is okay to clap hands on special occasions: in the evening around a fire for singles, or with kids around the campground fire, but not in the sanctuary. . . . The church is a sacred place!³ The sanctuary service was a very reverent, very "awedly" kind of thing. The church is the continuation of the sanctuary when it has been blessed and ordained and put aside for that use.⁴ God's house is sacred and we need to be very reverent. If we need to do a lot of talking, we need to do it in the hall.⁵ I disagree with the [celebration] format of worship. I think there is a time and a place for everything. The sanctuary, God's house, is not a place to have that style of worship (to clap your hands and stuff). What I read in volume five of the Testimonies about the sacredness of the sanctuary is that there should be absolutely no commotion in the sanctuary when we come into His house, into the presence of God.⁶ [When a person is drawn to Christ] entertainment has already left him bored. . . . He doesn't want to celebrate, because all he remembers are the hangovers. He needs peaceful communion with the Lord. . . . Where, amid the changes and constant debates, will anyone find the peace and reverence to nurture the believers? How can we concentrate on eternal life, as we celebrate this one? We can't. The sanctuary is our refuge, not our social center.⁷

For antagonists the purity of the church has been lost within celebration churches.

Celebration gatherings are often described as a seance (Satan's territory) or a brothel (the brothel of Jericho--a half-way house).⁸ John Osborne writes:

With celebration churches popping up everywhere, I could just tell you to find one and check it out for yourself. But friend, I don't want you placing yourself on Satan's ground. Now understand,

¹Duran, "Celebration Cult," 19; Frankland interview, 7 April 1991; Jack [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991; Virginia [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991; Rosenvold, Adventist Carnivals, 31; Crews, "Consecration or Desecration?" 13; Leona and Eugene [Anonymous] to Dear Friends at Prophecy Countdown, April 1990, in Celebration or Abomination, vi; Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, 25, 30.

²Frankland interview, 7 April 1991.

³Virginia [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991.

⁴Frankland interview, 7 April 1991.

⁵Ross interview, 6 April 1991.

⁶Larry [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991.

⁷Greg Kendall, "I Am an Eighteen-Year-Old . . ." Our Firm Foundation, September 1991,

⁸Foster interview, 24 March 1991; Standish interview, 6 April 1991; Reid interview, 8 May 1992; Rick and Cathy [Anonymous], interview by author, San Bernardino, CA, 6 April 1991, hand-written notes; Daniel [Anonymous], interview by author, San Bernardino, CA, 6 April 1991, hand-written notes.

it's really difficult for me to call a celebration church "Satan's ground" when they claim to be Adventist. But I'm sorry friend, inspiration tells us that this is exactly what it is. Granted, our *new Adventist* pentecostal churches aren't as bad as the pentecostals we show on video, as yet that is, but I'm pleading with you to believe me, and I'm pleading with you to believe God's prophet, because it's just a matter of time before they look just alike. And God's people cannot just calmly sit back and watch this happen!¹

3. Antagonists also perceive the celebration leadership style as arrogant and confrontational, displaying an "us-versus-them" mentality.² For them, celebration leaders are also failing in their responsibility to exercise proper church authority and discipline.³

You do a scriptural and Spirit of Prophecy study on how pastors are to reprove the sins in the church, and the necessity of church censure, and discipline--and then you look at the celebration church. What a mockery against the counsel that God has given to us through His prophets.⁴

4. Finally, a few antagonists criticize Celebration Center's "garden cathedral" mission vision. Paulson sees this outreach project as "disgraceful" and "boastfully attempting to recreate the garden of Eden on earth." He adds, "our churches are starving to hear present Truth and the Testimonies, but we give them a circus!"⁵

Liturgical Criticisms

The numerous critical concerns related to worship need first to be understood in light of the antagonists' theology of worship. Then, they can be considered through two major classifications: (1) the worship atmosphere and (2) concerns related to specific liturgical items, such as preaching, drama, physical expressions, and music. Presuppositions undergirding the antagonists' worldview of these liturgical criticisms are discussed at the end of this section.

¹Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, 18.

²Chinn interview, 14 August 1991; Virginia [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991; Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, 64.

³Clarence Small (Champaign, IL), "Letters to the Editor," Ministry 68 (October 1990): 2; Standish, "After Charisma," 19.

⁴Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, 33.

⁵Kevin Paulson, "Seventh-day Adventist Pentecostalism," Anti-celebration Rally, San Bernardino, CA, 6 April 1991, audiocassette recorded by author.

Antagonists' Theology of Worship

Antagonists believe that specific guidelines and absolutes can be found in the Bible, in the writings of E. G. White, and in the Church Manual to determine how human beings should worship.¹

For example, Duran does not believe that God allows human beings to decide how they want to worship. God has divine ways of being worshipped and the church must follow them. Duran analyzes the earthly sanctuary (Exodus and Leviticus) and the heavenly sanctuary (Rev 4, 5) to develop a worship model. From the first example, he concludes that God's house is holy. Human physical cleanliness as well as proper conduct are vital for worship. Worship services must be perfectly ordered in reverence and silence.² From the second model, Duran underlines the importance of honoring God's presence in reverential awe with heavenly beings. He also notes that worship must include music, offerings, prayers, and a sermon. Finally, according to Duran, E. G. White confirms this model by emphasizing order, reverence, quietness, physical cleanliness, a particular way of dressing, controlled and subdued emotions, and pure music that resonates "as nearly as possible to the harmony with the heavenly choirs."³

For Thompson, celebration has no biblical basis in a theology of worship. He writes: "Celebration has the colloquial meaning of having a good time with festivity, approaching a secular connotation. A band or full orchestra increases the "hoopla." The emphasis on celebration is not scriptural. The scriptural emphasis is praise (Ps 150:1) and worship (Ps 29:2)."⁴

¹Paulson interview, 6 August 1991; D. and A. Brackett interview, 23 October 1991; Merle Tilloston in M. and M. Tilloston interview, 16 August 1991; Morris interview, 6 April 1991; Virginia [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991; Foster interview, 24 March 1991.

²Duran, "Celebration Cult," 17, 18.

³E. G. White quoted by Duran, *ibid.*, 29; see also Duran, *ibid.*, 17-28.

⁴Ron Thompson, "Letters to the Editor," *Ministry* 68 (October 1990): 2. See also, *idem*, "The Celebration Approach," *Our Firm Foundation*, July 1991, 22.

Finally, for Gertrude Battle the issue of worship could simply be settled by publishing and circulating among "all our people, the chapter in Volume 5 of Testimonies entitled, 'Behavior in the house of God,' and let the word speak for itself!"¹

Atmosphere

Essentially, those opposed to the celebration movement see its services as irreverent and sacrilegious. The atmosphere is too noisy and comfortable, they say. Being at a celebration church is like being at a party, a social gathering, or a carnival:²

When a video is viewed by staid Seventh-day Adventists of the goings-on in these church services, it leaves them aghast with disbelief! Can it be possible that an actual rock band with its din and confusion, and with an off-beat that appeals to the physical body in a sensual fashion, would actually be used to accompany so-called gospel songs in Seventh-day Adventist Church services? Under the influence of the music, some in the congregation raise their hands heavenward and sway their torsos back and forth as is done in pentecostal churches. Some congregations act as if they were attending a carnival rather than a service of divine worship. Concerned members are openly wondering how much support should be given to such local churches with their wild cacophonous music, worldly dramatics, etc.--practices which have been spoken against in the TESTIMONIES for the church. In addition to this they teach "erroneous theories!"³ I can try to describe what we saw and heard, but how does one describe an atmosphere? The moment we stepped in we felt it ... a highly-charged, strangely bewitching, almost-electric excitement. Even as I type, I am feeling the same weird stirring within me that I experienced then. There was not one iota of reverence.⁴ We don't need more of this bedlam. The vast majority of our churches already sound like cattle markets. You people have never taught our members how to come reverently, and quietly before the Lord in sacred worship. You will be held responsible!⁵

The major concern is that such a setting may be too permeable to emotion, and might therefore compromise the central purpose of worship: the cognitive study of God's Word.

¹Gertrude Battle (Collegedale, TN), "Letters to the Editor," Ministry 68 (October 1990): 2.

²Grosboll, "No Time to Celebrate," 18; Standish, "What is the Message," Chinn interview, 14 August 1991; Morris interview, 6 April 1991; Virginia [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991; Vance Ferrell, "Multiplying the Celebration Church--Part 3," PR-WM 311, 1,4.

³Rosenvold and Rosenvold, Adventist Carnivals, 14.

⁴Leona and Eugene [Anonymous] in Celebration or Abomination, v.

⁵Anonymous to Jacobsen in Ferrell, "Inroads of the Celebration Church," PR-WM 277, 1.

Liturgical Items

Preaching

Preaching in celebration churches is usually described as shallow, smooth, manifesting disrespect for the standards, departing from the landmarks, or shaking the pillars.¹ Altogether it is too emotional, without enough doctrinal substance:² "My objection against the celebration movement is that I don't see them preaching the message for this time--to prepare a people for the second coming of the Lord--because their emphasis is too much on the feelings and not enough on the message content."³

Also, the relationship of preaching to praises and music is questioned. Critics fear that the celebration movement's de-emphasis of preaching might cut Adventism off from its Protestant heritage. In the celebrationist drive to become "music-centered," critics fear that Adventism will lose its "altar-centeredness."⁴ Paulson sees only one way to revive Adventist worship: "Dull and boring services require but one remedy--the unambiguous restoration of historic Adventist preaching."⁵

Drama

In most antagonists' minds, drama is associated with the secular world of entertainment. Therefore, it is improper for worship.⁶ Thompson's declaration illustrates these dichotomies: "Drama

¹Larson interview, 24 April 1991; Chinn interview, 14 August 1991; Morris interview, 6 April 1991; Virginia [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991; M. and M. Tilloston interview, 16 August 1991; Larry [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991; Ross interview, 6 April 1991; idem, "The Omega Tract," 5. See also Stanley Harris (Waterford, CA), "Letters: Celebration-Style," *Adventist Review*, 31 January 1991, 2; Chin, "A Comparative Study," 12; Osborne, *Celebration or Abomination*, 13.

²Paulson interview, 6 August 1991; Ramona [Anonymous], interview by author, San Bernardino, CA, 6 April 1991, hand-written notes.

³Foster interview, 24 March 1991.

⁴Thompson, "Letters," 2.

⁵Paulson, "Letters: Celebration-Style," 2.

⁶For a contrasting analysis of the role of drama in liturgy, see Stephen Merton Bottroff, "A Study of Ellen Gould White's Rejection of Nineteenth-Century Theatrical and Elocutionary Techniques in Evangelism" (M.A. thesis, California State University, Fullerton, 1981); Roger W. Coon, "The Public Speaking of Dr. William T. Fagal of 'Faith for Today': America's First National Television Pastor," Vol. 1 (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1969), 192-202; Delmer I. Davis, "Hotbed of Immorality," *Adventist Heritage: A Journal of Adventist History* 7 (Spring 1982): 20-33; Rodney Vance to Theology and Communication Faculty at Walla Walla College, "Drama Fact Sheet," 9 June 1994, pamphlet.

has a place in the theater and is for entertainment. The house of worship is not for theater, and worship is not entertainment. Therefore a drama presentation has no place in a theology of worship on the Sabbath day."¹

For other antagonists, drama is also reprehensible because E. G. White seems to condemn theatrical displays. Typical samples from her writings read, "Our success will depend on carrying forward the work in the simplicity in which Christ carried it forward, without any theatrical display."² "It is not a theatrical performance that glorifies God, but the presentation of the truth, in the love of Christ."³ Ross (among others) published lists of White's quotations on the subject that appear to condemn drama, and therefore celebration churches. Ross claims: "The quotations on drama [from E. G. White] were left to us by a loving God who wants [us] to be with Him, if we choose to be. We pass them to you with the same hope and spirit, and it is our prayer that you will see Jesus reaching out to save all that will be saved."⁴

Physical expression

Any physical expression outside standing, kneeling, and sitting is suspicious and seen as a capitulation of Adventism to the influence of the pentecostal/charismatic movement or of the world of entertainment. "The celebration format opens the door to neo-pentecostalism with rhythmic hand clapping, raising of hands, and laying on of hands by elders during prayer."⁵ Ironically, critics--usually "historic" Adventists who advocate a literal hermeneutic--accuse celebration congregations of taking

¹Thompson, "The Celebration Approach," 23. See also, Colin Standish, "The Entertainment Syndrome," audiocassette recorded by author; John Grosboll, "Overwhelming Surprises Looming on Adventism--Historic Adventism," meeting sponsored by Steps to Life, Bernen Springs, MI, 16 October 1993, audiocassette recorded by author.

²Ellen G. White, Eyangelism (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1946), 139.

³Ellen G. White, Testimonies to the Church, vol. 9 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 142.

⁴Terry Ross, "Acting Upon the Truth," Grants Pass, OR: Servants of the Saviour, n.d., 1, unpublished pamphlet.

⁵Ross, "Take a Bow," Grants Pass, OR: Servants of the Saviour, October 1990, 1-4, unpublished pamphlet; Thompson, "Letters," 2.

certain biblical injunctions too literally. When a text can be taken literally, antagonists are paradoxically cautious. Regarding the biblical injunction to raise hands during worship (1 Tim 2:8), one critic warns:

In our time the raising of hands has become a device used by certain religious groups to deepen their excitement in religious meetings. . . . 1 Tim 2:8-9 teaches us . . . [that] it is the earnestness of the heart that is to push those hands up. . . . Let it never degenerate to a mere form; something that is always done because it has to be done, or something that is done as an evidence in the eyes of others that you are very dedicated in your prayers.¹

Critics also allege that celebration worship includes shouting and dancing. Without offering an alternate hermeneutic for interpreting biblical precedents for these modes of worship, critics summarily denounce "celebration" behavior:²

Some of the apologists for the celebration "dancing" activities justify their physical gyrations by referring to the various mentions in the Old Testament, such as to the dancing of Miriam and David etc. Neither we, nor the apologist for religious dancing, lived back there in Bible times, so none of us can accurately evaluate such dancing as was done. We do not propose to enter the quagmire of argument about such things.³ The celebrationist supports dancing in the context that since King David danced, he should follow the same too. The celebrationists' main purpose of dancing is to draw more missing members who desire excitement in the church.⁴

Music

Celebration music is perceived as loud, upbeat, and repetitious. It has more syncopated music than traditional church music, and usually includes bass and percussion.⁵ Critics characterize this as rock-and-roll, and justify their aversion on two principal grounds. First, the cultural associations many people have with rock-and-roll are detrimental to spiritual development. Second, critics fear that rock-

¹Vance Ferrell, "Counsels on the Celebration Church--Part I," PR-WM 211.

²Ross, "The Omega Tract," 3.

³Rosenvold and Rosenvolt, Adventist Carnivals, 33.

⁴Chin, "A Comparative Study," 26.

⁵M. L. King (Portland, OR), "Letters: Loud Music Condemned," NPUC Gleaner, 5 August 1991, 3. Ronica Hopkins (Algona, WA), "Letters: Apostate Anthems," NPUC Gleaner, 16 September 1991, 3.

and-roll is hypnotic, making its listeners vulnerable to sensuality, to false or sentimental love, and other evil influences.¹

The use of drums is especially condemned because E. G. White mentions them in one of her writings. The context of this statement is White's disapproval of the Indiana camp meeting "holy flesh" worship described in chapter 1. The same expression of worship is foreseen to repeat at the end of times.² Antagonists believe the prophecy is being fulfilled by celebration churches in two possible ways:

The future that the spirit of prophecy was foretelling is with us now. And what we see happening is with us now! What we see happening in the "celebration" churches has been predicted, so all who would see it, will see it. Those who are the leaders in this sad and fatal deception must be exposed for the purposes of protecting the flock, much as the Lord had E. G. White expose Dr. Kellogg during the Alpha of Apostasy.³ The Muncie, Indiana, camp meeting was characterized by wild demonstrations of physical activity with shouting, prostration on the floor and other bizarre

¹Leona and Eugene [Anonymous] to Dear Friends in Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, v; Standish, "Charisma," 22; Ross, "Exposing What Is Apostate"; Morris interview, 6 April 1991; Marcussen, Catholic Charismatic Attack--Part I, videocassette; Chinn interview, 14 August 1991; Merle Tilloston in M. and M. Tilloston interview, 16 August 1991; Paulson interview, 6 August 1991. See also Melvin E. Davis (Nordland, WA), "Letters: Thoughts on Music," NPUC Gleaner, 2 April 1990, 3; R. L. [Anonymous] (Newbury Park, CA) to Stephen Gifford, 17 July 1990; Kurt [Anonymous] (Eatonville, WA) to Dan Simpson, 22 August 1990; Jeanne Weidman (Hillsboro, OR), "Letters: More About Music II," NPUC Gleaner, 3 September 1990, 3; Vance Ferrell, "Is It Time for Such a Celebration as This? Celebration Music" PR-WM 405; Paul E. Hamel (Berrien Springs, MI), "Letters: Singing Different Tunes," Adventist Review, 14 February 1991, 2; Harry A. Knopper (Pasco, WA), "Letters: Apostate Anthems," NPUC Gleaner, 16 September 1991, 3; Hal Mayer, "Music in Worship," Our Firm Foundation, January 1992, 11; Rosenvold and Rosenvold, Adventist Carnivals, 21-31, 49. When the Adventist Review closed the correspondence regarding Durand's article, "Contemporary Christian Music" on 14 February 1991, 74 (29 percent) of the 256 letters it had received were negative (Adventist Review, 14 February 1991, 2).

²"It is impossible to estimate too largely the work that the Lord will accomplish through His proposed vessels in carrying out His mind and purpose. The thing you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit.

"The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling truth for this time. Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use musical instruments to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into our camp meetings. The truth for this time needs nothing of this kind in its work of converting souls. A bedlam of noise shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing. The powers of satanic agencies blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working." E. G. White, Selected Messages (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1958), 2:36, 37.

³Ross, "The Omega Tract," 6, 7; see also Marcussen, The Catholic Charismatic Attack--Part I, videocassette; Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, 59; Caslow interview, 7 May 1991; Frankland interview, 7 April 1991; Morris interview, 6 April 1991.

contortions. The suggestion is made that this statement must not be used in relation to today's music because of these strange actions. To do so is to take the Selected Messages statement out of context, it is claimed. Is it possible that Satan would use a different context, different circumstances, and even different theology as the setting for the music? Why wouldn't he be willing to combine his music with different false doctrine today? Is he bound to use exactly the same milieu of circumstances? Certainly not.¹

Finally, celebration music is denounced because it usually shuns the old hymns and the traditional hymnals in order to sing contemporary praises from a screen and borrowed evangelical repertoires. Christ in Song (1908) was republished in 1992 to keep alive the favored songs of the Adventist pioneers. Selecting songs from a repertoire of this vintage exemplifies the predilection of most critics to focus on the past instead of the future.²

Presuppositions

Four presuppositions seem to undergird most of the antagonists' liturgical criticisms. First, they reflect a belief in an intrinsic power and morality in worship methods, especially music. These means can therefore be judged as right or wrong from objective and inspired guidelines.³ Second, if worship expressions can be associated with something perceived as evil, then they are evil.⁴ Examples of the type of syllogisms used are as follows: Entertainment is bad; clapping is related to entertainment; therefore clapping during worship is bad. Bars are bad; contemporary music is related to bars; therefore contemporary music played in church is bad. Third, wrong means allow Satan to access deceptively the human soul and invade it. People may then lose control of themselves, slip out of Christ's protection, and fall into sin. Fourth, Christ's victory at the cross does not provide grace for possible failure during the Christian walk, provision for intentional sin, or protection from evil influences.

¹Mayer, "Music in Worship," 11.

²Marcussen, Catholic Charismatic Attack--Part I, videocassette; Merle Tilloston in M. and M. Tilloston interview, 16 August 1991; Chin, "A Comparative Study," 2. The steady output of songbooks by Adventist pioneers climaxed in the first publication of Christ in Song in 1908. Christ in Song was republished in May of 1992 by Harvestime Books, Altamont, TN. In 1993, Steps to Life ministries also printed a little hymnbook with traditional Adventist hymns (Steps to Life Hymnbook [Wichita, KS: Steps to Life, 1993]).

³Mayer, "Music and Worship," 8.

⁴*Ibid.*, 9.

The following composite quote illustrates some of those presuppositions:

Back in the Hebrews' time, the music they had was not associated with dancing and rock music. Today, the music they have in celebration is the same as what you hear on the radio or when you go to the disco, or to the roller skating rink. It is the same music. They just put Christ's words but it is the same music.¹ I don't want to be hypnotized. That could happen . . . by the music, the heavy beat. I would be afraid to be deceptively out of control, not knowing that I was out of control.² I wonder what Jesus would have said if He had attended [a celebration church]. I am certain He would have called the service sacrilegious. I will not go back for I do not believe the Lord could protect me from evil influences that there prevailed. Is it too old-fashioned, too far fetched? But haven't we always told our members not to attend spiritualistic meetings and pentecostal services because the Lord could not protect us in such places.³

Contextual Criticisms

Opponents of the celebration movement denounce borrowing any thoughts, ideas, or material. They are suspicious of any association with philosophical, theological, and methodological influences that deviate from what is perceived as "historic" Adventism. Some even see celebration churches as part of an orchestrated conspiracy.

Negative Infiltration of Influences

Many antagonists see celebration worship as infiltrated by the secular--by humanism, the market place, or the world of entertainment.⁴

The celebration music assumes the mode of entertainment and is secularized.⁵ The way the [celebration] service is conducted shows more of an emphasis on a stage production than on worship as such.⁶ The church [with drums, synthesizers, and contemporary music] becomes an entertainment center, rather a holy sanctuary to worship the infinite God.⁷ I am afraid that some types of amplification system, sound track, and lighting arrangements could be spotlighting the

¹Morris interview, 6 April 1991. Also, Larry [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991.

²Foster interview, 24 March 1991.

³Grosboll, "No Time to Celebrate," 18.

⁴Barbara Hopmann (La Center, WA), "Letters: More on Music," NPUC Gleaner, 17 December 1990, 3.

⁵Thompson, "Letters," 2.

⁶Scott [Anonymous] in S. and R. [Anonymous] interview, 16 August 1991.

⁷Standish, "Charisma," 24, 31; idem, "The Entertainment Syndrome," audiocassette recorded by author.

performers more than is healthy for them or the congregation. If that is being incorporated in a church, whether "celebration" or not--I am opposed to it.¹

Other antagonists perceive celebration churches as unduly influenced by the Calvinists, the Baptists, the Lutherans, the pentecostals, the charismatics, the Catholics, the World Council of Churches, the church growth movement, or the Vineyard Ministries.² They especially criticize borrowing ideas from the works of Vatican II, Dale Galloway, and John Wimber.³ They wonder why Adventists should learn from these "Sunday-keeping churches" and copy their programs.⁴ In copying these churches, celebration churches abandon the Three Angels' messages of Rev 14, calling God's remnant church to come out of

¹Trecartin, "Letters," 28.

²Vance Ferrell, "The Plague of Pentecostalism Has Finally Arrived--The Celebration Church," PR-WM 254; idem, "Changing Our Mid-Week Meetings--The Celebration Group Meetings: Conforming Us to the Other Churches--Part 1," PR-WM 289, 1; idem, "Celebration News Notes--Part 1 of 3," PR-WM 407; idem, "Celebration News Notes--Part 3 of 3," PR-WM 409; idem, "Catholicism and Celebration," PR-WM 425; Bob Trefz, "Tracing Infiltration in Professed Adventism," Freedom's Ring, November 1990, 3; idem, "John XXIII Renews Infiltration Using Love and Unity, Charismatic Movement," Freedom's Ring, November 1990, 3; idem, "Rome Said 'Celebrate' and All the Churches Said 'Amen!'," Freedom's Ring, December 1990, 1-14; idem, "Life and Death Combat in the Sanctuaries of Liberty," Freedom's Ring, July 1991, 11; idem, "Repudiating the Constitution--from English Common Law and American Constitutionalism to Papal Canon Law," Freedom's Ring, August 1991, 1-18; idem, "Worshipping the Creator Christ, or Celebrating the Cosmic Spirit--New Age--Catholic Dimensions of Celebration," Freedom's Ring, September 1991, 1-18; idem, "The Rock Christ Jesus Prevails over the Jesuit Plan for the World Church-to-Be," Freedom's Ring, October 1991, 1-18; idem, "The Right to Privacy Battles for Life Against the Tentacles of Canon Law," Freedom's Ring, November/December 1991, 1-17; Rosenvold and Rosenvold, Adventist Carnivals, 14, 86; John Osborne, "Kenneth Cox's 90-minute T.V. Interview," Prophecy Countdown Newsletter, February 1993; idem, "The Image to the Beast--It's a Lot More Than We Ever Dreamed!" Prophecy Countdown Newsletter, March 1995, 1-4; idem, Jesuit Agenda, videocassette.

³Standish, "What Is the Message," audiocassette recorded by author; idem, "After Charisma," 19; Thompson, "The Celebration Approach to Worship," 21, 23; Marcussen, Catholic Charismatic Attack--Parts 1 and 3, videocassette; Dave Brackett in D. and A. Brackett interview, 23 October 1991; Vance Ferrell, "Multiplying the Celebration Church--Part 5," PR-WM 313, 1; Bob Trefz, "The Body of Christ--Part 1," Historic Adventist Land Marks, April 1994, 19; idem, "Primitive Godliness Confronts Professed Lambs that Speak Like Dragons," Freedom's Ring, April-May 1991, 1-18; idem, "The Catholicization of Thought," Freedom's Ring, June 1991, 1-18.

⁴Grosboll, "No Time to Celebrate," 17; Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, 91, 92; Rosenvold and Rosenvold, Adventist Carnivals, 45; Merle Tilloston in M. and M. Tilloston interview, 16 August 1991; Caslow interview, 7 May 1991; Chinn interview, 14 August 1991; Larson interview, 24 April 1991.

Babylon.¹ They also question why celebration churches have adopted new names.² Yet other antagonists denounce the influence of the church growth movement, the Third Wave, or a Joint Worldwide Movement:³

We are bringing in things from the world, from pentecostal churches, getting their ideas and bringing them to our Adventism. I feel it is contrary to what we believe.⁴ The celebration movement is not a Seventh-day Adventist movement but a charismatic movement.⁵ In an attempt to display openness to the community, and a more popular and palatable approach, by the use of the word Celebration, placed foremost on public signs, the name Seventh-day Adventist is played down and diminished. Our message to the world is not celebration--whatever that nebulous term conveys. The Spirit of Prophecy counsels: "There must be no cloaking of our faith to secure patronage. . . . The name Seventh-day Adventist is a standing rebuke to the Protestant world. . . . The name Seventh-day Adventist carries the true features of our faith in front and will convict the inquiring mind."⁶

To many antagonists, supplementing traditional Sabbath Schools and Wednesday night prayer meetings with "self-help" groups betrays a dangerous humanistic influence.⁷ Cell groups are seen as the basic structure orchestrated within church life to promote totalitarian manipulation.⁸

Conspiracy Theories

Finally, many antagonists see different entities (both inside and outside the denomination) as using celebration churches to infiltrate and destroy Adventism (God's Church) and undermine its foundational pillars.⁹

¹Osborne, Jesuit Agenda, videocassette.

²Ferrell, "Multiplying the Celebration Church--Part 2," PR-WM 310, 1.

³Thompson, "The Celebration Approach," 21, 23; Standish, "Burdened," audiocassette recorded by author.

⁴Jack [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991.

⁵Marcussen, Catholic Charismatic Attack--Part I, videocassette.

⁶Thompson, "The Celebration Approach," 22.

⁷Vance Ferrell, "The Celebration Update--Part 5," PR-WM 401, 4.

⁸Osborne, Jesuit Agenda, videocassette.

⁹Vance Ferrell, "Information Pack," PR-July 1992, 4; Osborne, Jesuit Agenda, videocassette. Regarding the "removal" of "major" portions of the Spanish edition of The Great Controversy, see Osborne, Prophecy Countdown Newsletter, 9 October 1991, 1.

Among the main outside conspirators are again the pentecostal-charismatic and the New Age movements, the Catholics (particularly the Jesuits and the participants of Vatican II), but also John Savage and the Neuro-Linguistic Programming experts who purportedly train, among others, celebration leaders as mass hypnotists.¹ Lloyd and Leola Rosenvold, for example, write:

About ten years after that council was ended, a Roman clergyman compiled a book [of] over 1000 pages containing many of the various official documents and decisions which were produced during that monumental council, but for whatever reasons, most of us did not know about that book until quite recently. A perusal of that collection reveals some very startling things, such as the fact that in those [sic] early 1960s Rome planned in detail the birth, promotion and growth of the "celebration-style" worship! And it has developed and progressed just the way she planned it --nearly three decades ago. . . . Adventists owe a great debt of gratitude to Brother Trefz in his role of being the first to alert us to the dangers inherent in the Vatican II connection with celebrationism.²

Some critics of celebration churches fear that denominational leadership may not be sufficiently vigilant in guarding the church from dangerous influences.³ Adventist leaders, such as Robert Folkenberg, Beverly Beach, Don Jacobsen, Garrie Williams, and Bill Loveless, or teachers like Samuel Bacchiocchi and Raoul Dederen are seen as inside conspirators.⁴

The tendency [of a strong charismatic worship format] not only implies leadership support for the charismatic form of worship, but also trains another generation of ministers in this Satan-inspired,

¹Jeff Reid, "New Age Comes to Church," Our Firm Foundation, December 1990, 22; Colin Standish, "Revival, Rebellion, Reformation," Anti-celebration Rally, San Bernardino, CA, 6 April 1991, audiocassette recorded by author; Marcussen, Charismatic Catholic Attack the Church--Parts I and II, videocassettes; Ross, "The Omega Tract," 8, 9; Bob Trefz, "Hypnosis Used to Control," Freedom's Ring, January 1991, 9; idem, "Forming the Conscience in the Image of the Beast by Hypnotizing the Very Elect," Freedom's Ring, February 1991, 1-16; idem, "Freedom and Sanctuary Amid Hypnotic Warfare in Reframing the Church," Freedom's Ring, March 1991, 1-18; John Osborne, "Regarding. . . . Our Pastors Being Trained to Literally Hypnotize Their Congregations During the 11 o'clock Hour . . .", Prophecy Countdown Newsletter, August 1991; Vance Ferrell, "Hypnotism Enters the Adventist Church," PR-WM 322-332; idem, "Information Pack for the Month of February 1992," PR, 3; John Osborne, The New Age of Adventism--Parts I and II, Prophecy Countdown, 1992, videocassettes; John Grosboll, ed., "A Brief Analysis about the Necessity of Home Churches," Steps to Life, August 1994, 5.

²Rosenvold and Rosenvold, Adventist Carnivals, 83, 89.

³William [Anonymous] (Grand Terrace, CA) to Stephen Gifford, 23 June 1990; Frank [Anonymous] (Beaumont, CA) to Stephen Gifford, 28 June 1990; L. C. [Anonymous] (Sedona, AZ) to Stephen Gifford, 30 August 1990; John [Anonymous] (Citrus Heights, CA) to Stephen Gifford, 30 August 1990; Joseph [Anonymous] (Victorville, CA) to Stephen Gifford, 27 November 1990; Lea [Anonymous] (Dexter, OR) et al. to Delegates, 26 June 1990; Rosenvold and Rosenvold, Adventist Carnivals, 14.

⁴Ross, "The Omega Tract," 10, 11; Rema [Anonymous] in S. and R. [Anonymous] interview, 16 August 1991; Osborne, Jesuit Agenda, videocassette.

false revival.¹ My research shows that the celebration movement is a well-orchestrated plan. . . . They [the Oregon Conference leadership] are urging one style of worship and trashing the books of E. G. White. Donald Jacobsen is leading the church into apostasy.² We must be on our guard for there are men among us that use techniques such as NLP.³ Several of our ministers have gone to the pentecostal churches to learn the secret of their power. . . . We believed that the pentecostal power would help unite apostate Protestantism. We are not in a Mickey Mouse situation but in a great battle.⁴ Why did the General Conference, in the late summer of 1989, send down word through the union offices to the local conference leadership that they were to back the new worship format?⁵ When the GC broke down the barriers about wedding rings, they opened up a Pandora's box to every kind of jewelry, and there's no stopping it. Things are breaking down fast, and Jesus will be here soon.⁶

Outside and inside conspirators are ultimately viewed as directly manipulated by Satan to orchestrate the final great ecumenical and New Age connection that will bring persecution on the Adventist people and the end of time:⁷

For four hours we [had seen], heard and felt Satan and his demons in all their ugliness at work under the guise of worship and praise. No one need try to tell us anything good can come from these pentecostal type Celebration churches, and this form of "worship" is spreading like a plague amongst us.⁸ We believe that the pentecostal power was spiritualistic, and that it would help unite apostate Protestantism with Catholicism, and that under this threefold power America would "follow in the steps of Rome in trampling the rights of conscience" (Great Controversy, 588).⁹ What is the greatest crisis in the history of the Adventist Church that we are facing *today*? Well, it can be termed "evangelicalism," "pentecostalism," or "spiritualism." But the term that has become most familiar to Adventists recently has been "Celebration."¹⁰

¹Standish, "Charisma," 23.

²Terry Ross, "Historical Adventism," Anti-celebration Rally, San Bernardino, CA, 6 April 1991 (a.m.), audiocassette recorded by author.

³Reid, "New Age Comes to Church," 24.

⁴Marcussen, Catholic Charismatic Attack--Part II, videocassette.

⁵Vance Ferrell, "Our Local Church Crisis--Local Conferences Switching Over to Pentecostalism--What It Is, Where It Came from, Why It Is Coming to Your Local Church--Part I," PR-WM 267, 1.

⁶Vance Ferrell, "Information Pack," PR-August 1992, 3.

⁷Standish interview, 6 April 1991; Ross, "The Omega Tract," 2; Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, 21; idem, "The Greatest Crisis in SDA History--Parts 4 to 7," Prophecy Countdown, 1990-1991, audiocassettes.

⁸Leona and Eugene [Anonymous] in Celebration or Abomination, xii.

⁹Grosboll, "No Time to Celebrate," 17.

¹⁰Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, 5.

Basic Trends

Four basic trends can be discerned in all of the above critical concerns: (1) a belief that truth is best accessed through the human cognitive dimension, particularly the study of God's Word as interpreted by E. G. White; (2) a preference for a model of church perceived as a fortress, leading to a view of the profane and the sacred as distinct, a perception of changes as negative, and relationships to God as defined within an internal subculture; (3) a separatist trend leading antagonists to gather a new remnant from within the apostate Adventist Church; and finally, (4) a biblical hermeneutic based on a fundamentalist/foundationalist orientation.

Cognitive Access to Truth

In line with the mixed traditions of Thomas Aquinas, René Descartes, and Francis Bacon, antagonists seem to place greater trust in the cognitive dimension of human beings than in their other capacities. Anti-celebrationists seem to view human intelligence and rationality as less corrupted by sin than human emotions and intuitive perceptions. For them, the universe is primarily regimented by "principles" that need to be known. Feeling and intuition are suspect. Therefore, intelligence must always scrutinize feeling, filtering it according to doctrinal knowledge and moral truths.¹ If human beings access life and truth through feelings and experiences, they will lose control of themselves. Satan can then directly manipulate and mislead them.²

To antagonists, celebrationists appear to apprehend truth at an experiential level and rely too heavily on emotions for the substance of their Christian walk.³ They are therefore dangerous and most likely misled by Satan.⁴ The following composite quote illustrates some of the antagonists' reflections:

¹Ross interview, 6 April 1991; Paulson interview, 6 August 1991.

²Ross, "Exposing What Is Apostate," audiocassette recorded by author

³Marvin L. Stack (Portland, OR), "Letters: Youth Worship," *NPUC Gleaner*, 15 January 1990, 3; Lois Hall (Troutdale, OR), "Letters: To Clap or Not Clap," *NPUC Gleaner*, 4 June 1990, 3; Vance Ferrell, "The Fastest-Growing Movement in American Adventism Today--Multiplying the Celebration Churches--Part 1," PR-WM 270; Crews, "Consecration or Desecration," 5, 13.

⁴Chinn interview, 14 August 1991; Larson interview, 24 April 1991; Standish, "Burdened," audiocassette recorded by author; Caslow, "Review," 3; Crews, "Consecration or Desecration?" 15; Ferrell, "Simpson at Glendale," PR-WM 365, 2.

There are principles behind things. First, you apply a principle and then a feeling comes. [Celebrationists] are trying to apply feelings first. Principles don't come with the feelings put first. . . . I think celebration is misleading because it deals with emotions.¹ You don't want to operate by feelings because you know that Satan can work with your emotions. . . . If you operate from what you think or feel is right, you will be led astray, because our natural propensities are toward wrong things.² God speaks to us through our intellect. Satan speaks to us only through our senses. That is how sin entered the world. . . . Is it not now ironic, and a strange perversion of logic that modern Adventism, which should be holding the banner of Truth high, uses the devil's channel of communication to attempt a genuine revival in reverential worship?³

Antagonists hold that church life can only be relevant and truthful if it focuses on fostering the cognitive. It must emphasize preaching and teaching the Word of God, the calculation and interpretation of predictive prophecies, the preservation of the right set of doctrines, and a certain codification of the Christian life, etc. As Morris sums it up: "Experience is not the key to Truth."⁴ From that perspective, the only safeguard against satanic delusions, according to Ross, is to "love and obey, read and obey,"⁵ or for Morris, "to go by the testimony and the Law."⁶ Such a legalistic orientation tends to make a person suspicious of any truths apprehended through spirit-led intuition, experience, or relationships.

Pam's poignant testimony sheds light on some possible dynamics behind the antagonists' worldview and criticisms. Her statement about her early education within the context of a family and a church who opposed celebration churches possibly parallels the background and influences of other antagonists, a background marked by emotional neglect, pressure to perform, and spiritual and emotional abuse:

[Growing up,] I always had to perform and do everything right. I had to keep the Sabbath right, pray, and read the Bible every night because that's what Jesus wanted. I could never have outside friends. . . . The Catholics were seen as apostate, almost as the devil's children because they were Catholic. I was not allowed to have normal relationships. [If I did not perform I was punished.] I

¹Larry [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991.

²Mary [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991; Osborne, "Revelation 13," audiocassette recorded by author.

³Ferrell, "Celebration Update--Part 3," PR-WM 399, 1.

⁴Morris interview, 6 April 1991.

⁵Ross, "Historical Adventism," audiocassette recorded by author.

⁶Morris interview, 6 April 1991.

was spanked a lot. . . . I was never allowed to be me. . . . [In this environment of very strict rules], my emotions died and, somehow, I just weaned my emotions and turned my brain on. . . . I appear in control through status and look but I am really not.¹

The Fortress Model of Church

With reference to Avery Dulles's five models of church,² a sixth model seems necessary to encompass most of the antagonists' paradoxical comments. Because of the predominant antagonists' lack of confidence in and respect for top official leadership and hierarchy, their remarks about church life certainly do not fit Dulles's institutional model. However, their critiques conform to such a model by emphasizing doctrinal continuity, formalism, and uniformity. The antagonists' authoritarian and propositional approach to revelation also fits the institutional model.³

On the other hand, antagonists' criticisms also reflect Dulles's herald model when they describe the church's identity as "prophetic," "pulpit-centered," and "functional" (people must "finish the work for the Lord to come back," or "get the job done and go home").⁴ The herald model is also visible when they stress the annunciation of the end times and advocate a particular preparation for these apocalyptic moments. However, the antagonists' remarks certainly do not exhibit a herald model in their lack of emphasis on proclaiming Christ, the centrality of the gospel, and the importance of faith.⁵

A fortress model seems to better incorporate most of the antagonists' paradoxical views of the church and their fear of external influences. This model explains why they see celebration churches as doctrinally impure and breaking from tradition. From that perspective, celebration churches are indeed not protecting people from the surrounding world and certainly not preserving the status quo of Truth that

¹Pam [Anonymous] interview, 27 April 1991.

²According to Dulles, models are not metaphors but realities having sufficient functional correspondence with the object under study so that they provide conceptual tools and vocabulary; they permit the holding of facts that would otherwise seem unrelated, and they suggest consequences that may subsequently be verified by experiment (Models of the Church [New York: Image Books], 27).

³Ibid., 30-50.

⁴Ross interview, 6 April 1991; Virginia [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991; Osborne, Jesuit Agenda, videocassette.

⁵Dulles, Models of Church, 81-94.

was revealed and explained once for all to Adventists through the writings of E. G. White. From that perspective, two conclusions naturally flow: the secular and the sacred must be clearly distinguished¹ and changes are either threatening or dangerous.² As Ross expresses it, "We do not need new light, we need to follow the old light!"³ He adds:

At this time we are not quite ready to say how far-reaching within the organization the "celebration" apostasy is, but we do see the same confidence and radical change coming into our churches [paralleling Korah's confidence of making a radical change in the government of Israel]. The results will be the same, friends. This strange fire will destroy all in this organization.⁴

For C. Mervyn Maxwell, the baby boomers are responsible for the change in Adventism's church model that is implicitly depicted in his comment as a fortress:

First, [the baby boomers] have painted the Adventist Church gray. Embarrassed to state that we have the truth and are the remnant, they have insisted that our message isn't much of an improvement after all. They have painted the other churches gray, and insisted that they aren't so bad after all. So what have they left us? A gray church on a gray background, a church virtually indistinguishable--except for some kind of Sabbath observance--from all the others. And now they want us to celebrate the accommodation.⁵

Separatism

Having attributed the celebration movement to the false latter rain, and presumed official church support of celebrationism, antagonists often conclude that the denomination itself has become evil.⁶ As stated in the Liberty Review:

While there are still honest sincere individuals within the denomination whom God is still using, and by whom the loud cry will eventually be given to the world, yet the Seventh-day Adventist denomination as a corporate institution: (a) Has fallen from the favor of God, allied itself with spiritual Babylon and ceased to be acknowledged as His "representative" denomination on this

¹Thompson, "The Celebration Approach," 23; Mayer, "Music in Worship," 12.

²Scott [Anonymous] in S. and R. [Anonymous] interview, 16 August 1991.

³Ross, "Historical Adventism," audiocassette recorded by author.

⁴Ross, "The Omega Tract," 3; Phyllis M. Bess (Longview, WA), "Letters: Why Change?" NPUC Gleaner, 17 June 1991, 3.

⁵Vance Ferrell, "C. Mervyn Maxwell-- Baby Boomers, Celebration Churches, and Moral Leadership--Part 2," PR-WM 424.

⁶Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, 35, 93; Bob Trefz, "An Open Letter from Bob Trefz," 3 May 1992; John Grosboll, ed., "Camp Meeting," News Notes--Steps to Life Monthly Newsletter, September 1995, 1.

earth. (b) Will never repent and be cleansed as a denomination. (c) Will never be used by God as the vehicle to proclaim the "Loud Cry" of Revelation 18:1-4 to the world and other churches. (d) Is presently, and will continue to be the worst persecutors of the true Seventh-day Adventists (those who choose to remain faithful to the historic doctrines and lifestyle given to them by God.) (e) Is making enough consistent compromises in doctrine and practice preparatory to receiving the mark of the beast in order to continue functioning as an institution (Jn 11:47-50), all the while urging and coercing its members to be loyal to the "church" and accept the mark of the beast under the guise of loyalty to God and of receiving His seal.¹

Some of these antagonists attribute Adventism's failure to its "hierarchical system of church governance."²

Others see denominational support of celebrationism as a concession aimed at attracting masses of people to the church to generate more tithe dollars.³

Many of these anticelibration leaders were disfellowshipped: Terry Ross (28 June 1990) and John Osborne (29 September 1991 from the Florida Conference for "apostasy"),⁴ Bob Trefz (20 July 1992), and John Grosboll (26 May 1993). Others chose to leave the church.⁵

¹Fred Allaback, "The Celebration Church," Liberty Review, Spring 1990, 9, 10.

²Mei Davis, "A Letter from the Field," Steps to Life, October 1993, 3.

³Vance Ferrell, "Fordite Donations: Multiplying the Celebration Churches--Part 2," PR-WM 271; idem, "Update--Part 3," PR-WM 399, 4.

⁴R. L. Walden (Treasurer, Florida Conference) to Fellow Workers, 1 October 1991.

⁵Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Independent Ministries (Silver Spring, MD: North American Division, 1993), 24, 205, 208, 214, 345, 415-417. See also John Osborne to Fellow Adventists ("Newly defrocked SDA pastor, of the recently 'excommunicated' Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church"), January 1991, 1-5, pamphlet; idem, "Jesuit Agenda--Parts I and II," Prophecy Countdown Newsletter, 11 May 1992; idem, "Bob Trefz Was Disfellowshipped July 20," Prophecy Countdown Newsletter, 31 July 1992, 4; John Grosboll, "Being Fellowshiped," Steps to Life, June 1993, 6,7

Having identified mainstream Adventism as "under the control of Satan," many felt compelled to redirect their tithes.¹ Many began organizing their own missions,² schools of evangelism,³ ordaining their own ministers,⁴ and conducting their own baptisms.⁵ Osborne presents a rationale:

Very kindly I would like to say that we, as Adventist laity, are a peace-loving people, and we do not want any strife or contention. But there comes a time when you can no longer compromise peace for truth. The days of us being *told* what to believe, the days of us having our theology changed, the days of us inviting Satan into our churches--those days are over. It's time for God's people to take a stand. . . . To our leadership endorsing and promoting this celebration worship style, to these celebration pastors and their congregations I plead, "Quit dragging this church to the edge of the precipice. If you refuse to change, then separate yourself from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. No longer use that precious identification that was given to us by God." [You may ask,] "John, am I understanding you correctly? Are you actually asking for the resignation of these Oregon conference officials?" No, friend, I'm not--God is! . . . Do you understand brethren, we, as faithful Adventist laity have an inspired mandate to unite, and remove from office all administrators leading this church into apostasy.⁶

¹Ralph Larson, The Tithe Problem: Who Is Responsible? An Open Letter to the Church, co-published by Prophecy Countdown and Steps to Life, n.d.

²John Grosboll, "The European Super Channel," Prophecy Countdown Newsletter, July 1992; John Osborne, "Prophecy Countdown's Television Network (PCTN)," Prophecy Countdown Newsletter, 20 January 1993; Dianne Osborne, "WVHA: World Voice of Historic Adventism," Prophecy Countdown Newsletter, 1 November 1994; John Grosboll, "Steps to Life TV Broadcast in Nigeria and Ghana," Steps to Life, 26 June 1995; Kathleen Greenfield, "The Purchase of WVHA (World Voice of Historic Adventism; formerly WCSN) Belonging to Historic Adventism through Prophecy Countdown," Prophecy Countdown Newsletter, 7 April 1995.

³Davis, "A Letter from the Field," 2.

⁴John Wesley Osborne, Jr., Robert Joseph Trefz, and Michael John Thompson were ordained on 13 June 1992. Kenny Shelton was ordained in Santa Rosa, CA on 8 August of 1992. See John Grosboll to Dear Friend ["Biblical Rationale for Ordination"], 17 June 1992; Ralph Larson, "Ordained to a Mission," Address delivered at the ordination ceremony at the Steps to Life Camp Meeting, Wichita, KS, 17 June 1992; Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Independent Ministries, 198-205.

⁵Bob Trefz, Open Letter, Hermosa, SD, 18 June 1992, pamphlet.

⁶Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, 36, 76, 77. Another technique for fostering separatism involves the use of E. G. White quotations for separatist rhetoric. For example, John Grosboll uses the phrase "press together" thirteen times in his two-page article. John Grosboll, "Press Together," Steps to Life, July 1993, 1, 2.

Atemporal Nineteenth-Century and Fundamentalist
Biblical Hermeneutics

The antagonists' biblical hermeneutic is a reflection of their understanding of God as an unchanging judge, human beings as mainly dependent on their intelligence to find Truth, and the church as a fortress protecting people from outside influences.

Antagonists generally work from the premise that God is the God of the investigative judgment. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The Bible is the Word of God. It never changes, its truths and interpretation never change, and therefore can be codified.¹ Truth is expressed beyond time and space, beyond any culture, unaffected by the limits of human apprehension. As Forester notes, Truth revealed in the Bible is "independent from the human perception of it." It is absolute, defined by God, the Scripture, and the Spirit of Prophecy (E. G. White's writings). "You cannot arrive at Truth by taking the senses. Truth is not related to subjective perceptions."² Paulson's following remark additionally unveils some of the perceived dichotomy at work between culture and revelation: "Our young people don't know why the rules are what they are. They are unable to tell any more between the ones based on culture, on the one hand, and those which are based on the 'Thus say the Lord,' on the other hand."³ Frankland corroborates: "The Bible makes it [what could settle the issue of music] very clear--not culture. Nothing should stand between us and God."⁴

Two different views of biblical hermeneutics seem to undergird most of the antagonists' reflections: On one hand, the Bible doesn't really need to be interpreted because it is God's Word beyond time and space. "Truth speaks for itself." "The Bible says it, that settles it!"⁵ Therefore, the Bible must be taken literally, just for what it says, and truth is self-evident.⁶ On the other hand, a personal reading of the

¹Jack [Anonymous] interview, 15 August 1991.

²Foster interview, 24 March 1991.

³Paulson interview, 6 August 1991.

⁴Frankland interview, 7 April 1991.

⁵Battle, "Letters," 2.

⁶Rick [Anonymous], interview by author, San Bernardino, CA, 6 April 1991.

Bible quickly reveals that truth is not so easily understood. Even "landmark" Adventist prophetic interpretations are too complicated for the average member to understand. Understanding some Adventist doctrines clearly depends on more than a surface-level reading. When straightforward and complex approaches to the Bible appear confusing, antagonists then turn to the gift of prophecy that Adventists received in E. G. White. This modern prophet, they say, revealed the correct interpretation of God's unchanging truths "in plain English."¹ Her writings--though never openly declared as equal to the Bible--are considered to express God's unchangeable truths outside time and space. Therefore, they need to be simply read and obeyed like the Bible.

Partial Conclusion

In analyzing the above critical concerns, three basic conclusions can be drawn:

1. The antagonists' criticisms are often biased not only at the level of how they collected their information but also at the level of how the information was transmitted writtenly, orally, and visually.
2. The critiques generally lack historical, philosophical, and theological perspective.
3. They usually represent a unique way of understanding biblical hermeneutics.

Methods of Criticism: Lack of Integrity in Collecting and Transmitting Verbal and Visual Information

Even though most vocal antagonists claim that they simply want to share facts or information given to them by God,² most of them lacked integrity in methods of collection and transmission of data about celebration churches, the celebration movement, or issues related to both of them.³ Dennis [Anonymous], a local elder in Oregon, described Osborne's methods as "having the

¹Marcussen, Catholic Charismatic Attack--Part I, videocassette.

²Marcussen, Catholic Charismatic Attack--Part I, videocassette; Osborne, Prophecy Countdown Newsletter, March 1995, 1; [Anonymous], "Introduction to Osborne's Revelation 13--Historic Adventism," Bernen Springs, MI, 16 April 1993, audiocassette recorded by author.

³Issues, 21, 26, 27, 31. See also Don Jacobsen (President, Oregon Conference) to Obed Graham (President, Florida Conference), 1 October 1991.

signature of Satan."¹ Graeme Bradford carefully presents how Osborne randomly collected data and used it out of context to fit his argument. Bradford especially focuses on Osborne's inadequate application of E. G. White's writings, showing how Osborne quoted them out of context.²

We must also note a predicament at the level of the antagonists' meta-language--the ways verbal language is communicated. Most likely, antagonists were not even aware of it. A problematic meta-language, however, is recurrent in their writings and speeches, impeding a more sensitive approach to reality. Antagonists often speak in general terms using expressions such as "always" and "never" or expressing a value judgment without rationale. They often suppress information by omitting valuable details, sharing incomplete comparisons, and/or using vague verbs. They often distort data by trying to read the thoughts of another person, perceiving cause-and-effect relationships or complex equivalence between disconnected items, and/or using undeclared presuppositions to draw conclusions. They often use syllogisms and/or leap to hastened conclusions. Examples of generalization, suppression or distortion of information are:

The pastor of the New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church really had cause to celebrate. He was headed South to attend a church conference meeting, but stopped off to rob a bank.³ We fear for God's people as we see the inroads of the "celebration" counterfeit revival sweep our church.⁴ Whereas in 1900 the Adventist carnival activity was mostly limited to one conference (Indiana), in the 1980s and 1990s there are hundreds of Adventist congregations in North America that either feature the whole carnival show, or are practicing various aspects of the celebration format. This is true, not only in the United States and Canada, but overseas as well! According to church reports it is fast becoming a worldwide phenomenon.⁵ The Fordites will get together in their groups and laugh at the Spirit of Prophecy and the laws, while the historic Adventists will gather into other groups and read the Spirit of Prophecy and pray together over the decline in the church.⁶

¹Dennis [Anonymous] to Garrie Williams, his cover letter and book review of Osborne's Celebration or Abomination, 5 February 1991; see also Gordon L. Retzer (President, Rocky Mountain Conference) to Tanya [Anonymous], 4.

²Graeme Bradford, "Celebration or Abomination by John Osborne: A Book Review," unpublished paper for ministers of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference, Australia, 1991.

³Vance Ferrell, "Information Pack," Pilgrim's Rest Tract, June 1992.

⁴Vance Ross, "Letter to Dear Brothers and Sisters" in "The Omega Tract."

⁵Rosenvold and Rosenvold, Adventist Carnivals, 16.

⁶Vance Ferrell, "The Fastest-Growing Movement in American Adventism Today--Multiplying the Celebration Churches--Part II," PR-WM 271, 1.

One example of syllogisms and leaping to conclusions is:

But the worst problem is, these "celebration church" instructors went to the Assemblies of God to be trained. You heard me right. Our Adventist pastors are flocking to Oregon to be trained in "celebration" by instructors who were trained by the tongues-speaking, pentecostal, Assemblies of God. Now, I *know* they are going to deny this, but friend, it's true. But besides that, just *think* about it for a second. Where else could they have been trained? By some books? No. This has to be done in person. So where did they go? Friend, it's so obvious, they had to go to the pentecostals to *be* pentecostal.¹

Also, the tone of the verbal criticisms is generally mingled with sarcasm, slander, condescension, and manipulative rhetorical techniques. These passages from Jan Marcussen's Charismatic Catholic Attack and John Osborne's Celebration or Abomination include some of these rhetorical techniques:

[Celebrationists] say they are Adventists but they are not. . . . Be sweet and kind do not accuse anyone.² Why friend, you may even hear your pastor, or see an article in your union paper or the Review, denouncing me and this message. You may even hear that this book is full of lies, and that I have used the Spirit of Prophecy quotations all out of context. (This is always their famous line.) But if they find they can't discredit the message, then *they'll discredit the messenger*. That's always the way it's been. And if that happens, all I ask you to do friend is to get your Bible out and read it again. Then get the little red books out, and read them again.³

As stated in the introductory remarks of this section, second-hand visual information (videos) is important for the antagonists. The way information was cut and "collaged" in the production of these videos often lacks integrity, and reveals weak professional ethics. For example, one video presents Snyder's New Life Celebration Church along with a youth rally program in Oregon to draw a composite description of the celebration movement.⁴

When we consider the antagonists' proliferation of criticisms, it is additionally surprising to note that neither Simpson nor Snyder ever reported encountering one of these major antagonists or even receiving a letter from any of them--with the exception of Osborne, who spoke with Snyder by phone. Osborne wanted to know if Snyder really had trashed White's writings in his controversial sermon. "The

¹Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, 11; see also Thompson, "The Celebration Approach," 23 and Ross, "Take a Bow," 1-4.

²Marcussen, Charismatic Catholic Attack--Part I, videocassette.

³Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, 35.

⁴See, e.g., John Osborne, The Greatest Crisis in the History of Adventism--Parts I and II, Prophecy Countdown, 1990, videocassettes.

Marriage.” Yet, despite Snyder’s explanations, Osborne still transmitted distorted information.¹ When Ross was asked why he did not share his concerns directly with Simpson or Snyder, he answered as follows:

I have not talked to either one of these people and I really don't feel it is necessary because I already know what they are doing. . . . I have talked to Don Jacobsen, I have written letters up to the General Conference to Wilson, to one hundred delegates who went to General Conference [at Indianapolis]. I received no letters in response.²

When we consider these attitudes and the fact that there are no evidences of oral or written records related to interactions between major antagonists and celebrationists, this once again raises the question of how serious these Adventists are about the gospel mandate of Matt 18:15-19 and Matt 5:21-26.³

In this realm of concerns, we must record Debra Kontra’s attempt to take these mandates seriously. As a lay pastor and representative of Celebration Center, she attended the San Bernardino Anti-celebration Rally in April 1991 and requested to be able to explain why her church was experimenting with a new style of worship. Kontra was denied that opportunity to speak by Ross, Standish, and Paulson, even when she stood up during the question-and-answer period.⁴

Antagonists have lacked integrity not only in collecting and transmitting information, but also in dealing responsibly with their concerns according to the Christian mandate on how to resolve divergent opinions, crises, and perceived apostasy. Considering the antagonists’ arguments, we can also discern a second trend in their worldview: a lack of historical, philosophical, and theological perspective.

¹Osborne, Celebration or Abomination, 11, 73; Snyder interview, 22 April 1991; Issues, 33, 34.

²Ross interview, 6 April 1991

³For example, see John Osborne, “Dear Fellow Adventists,” Prophecy Countdown Newsletter, September 1991

⁴Author’s observation and recollection of the event. See also Mary [Anonymous] to John Osborne.

Lack of Historical, Philosophical, and Theological Perspectives

Critics generally draw their impressions of the celebration experience from their own contextual experience (hearsay and literature and videos at hand). They evaluate these impressions according to a limited understanding of the Reformation, pentecostal or worship renewal movements (liturgical and charismatic), and "historic" Adventism.

When drawing lessons from history, antagonists particularly like to look at the European Reformation--Huss and Luther--although generally with little in-depth historical, sociological, or theological analysis. For example, they may incorrectly associate Calvinism with moral laxity.¹ Again, many critics are oblivious to Luther's openness to the indigenization of faith and to his worship innovations.² They also seem to be unaware of other important historical religious landmarks, such as the Great Awakening or the fundamentalist-modernist controversy and its particular characteristics in North America. However, they perceptively associate "pentecostalism" (the neo-pentecostal/charismatic movement) and influences of Vatican II (the liturgical movement) with the renewal of worship, although this association is made through severe historical distortions including assumptions of conspiracy.

This lack of historical perspective in the antagonists' own cultural background and church traditions has led them to forget that the formative years of Adventism were deeply imbedded in nineteenth-century American revivalism and frontier religion (as presented in chapter 1). Early Adventist worship, like the celebration movement, pushed away from an institutionalized pattern of worship services (Puritan/Anglican/Presbyterian) and experimented with new populist modes of expression (like the exuberant Methodist camp meetings). In this context, "historic" Adventist worship was participative, enthusiastic, creative, evangelistic, and experimental. Moreover, antagonists seem to forget that early Adventist theology, despite its rigorous intellectual approach to doctrine, was also open to

¹Caslow interview, 7 May 1991; idem, "Review," 2.

²For a summary of Luther and worship, see Gordon Lathrop, "Reformation Models of Worship," chap. in Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship, ed. Robert Webber, vol. 2, (Nashville: Star Song Publishing Group, 1994), 188-95; *ibid.*, "Lutheran Theology of Worship," 286-88.

experimentation, change, and evolution.¹ The antagonists need to realize that "historic" Adventist worship was indeed characterized by "liveliness and flexibility" in its theological debate, social concerns, and ways of worship.²

Anticelebrationists also seem to forget that, in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy at the beginning of this century, they would have rallied with pentecostals against evolution, biblical criticism, and secular liberalism. Antagonists would have agreed on the pentecostal's view of sanctification, and upon their stance against worldliness in cosmetics, amusements, and jewelry. Thus guilt by association is not as forceful an argument as the anticelebrationists often claim.

Criticisms of celebration churches typically reflect the theological and philosophical assumptions of the years of denominational consolidation and stabilization (the 1920s-1950s). As described in Chapter I, these years were characterized by respectability in worship. The apologetic scholarship typical of this era fostered a style of worship that was simple and cognitive. Worship procedures were standardized in Adventism without much theological reflection or adaptation to specific needs and cultures.

Within such conceptual frameworks, it is not surprising to observe the antagonists' difficulties in understanding or appreciating the innovations of celebration churches. The antagonists' framework of thought stresses the standardization of faith, conformity, sobriety of practice, and the diligent study of biblical doctrines. The theological and philosophical emphases of the celebrationists, on the other hand, could be perceived as contradictory. Not constrained by tradition, the celebrationists emphasize the contextualization of faith and the joy of the believer's individual and corporate search for the Holy Spirit, and the appreciation of diversity that these experiences bring.

¹Erwin R. Gane, "The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in the Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer" (M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1963), 65; George R. Knight, "Adventists and Change," *Ministry* 65 (October 1993): 10-13; idem, "Adventist Theology 1844/1994," *Ministry* 66 (August 1994): 10-13, 25.

²Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*, 89.

Biblical Hermeneutics of the Years of Consolidation

Antagonists to celebration churches draw not only on the typical historical and philosophical perspectives of the years of Adventist Church consolidation, but also on its hermeneutics as well. Their critiques of celebration churches illustrate a system of thought, epistemology, and a perception of authority influenced by revived Baconian rhetoric, a rigid understanding of biblical inspiration, and of White's inviolable position as the Bible interpreter. As seen in the discussion of Baconian rhetoric in chapter 1, the Bible or White's writings are seen as a collection of readily comprehensible facts "unless confused by hypotheses of the liberals and evolutionists."¹

During the years of church consolidation (1901-1950), Adventist theologians, such as M. E. Kern and F. M. Wilcox, would have been hesitant to claim inerrancy or verbal inspiration for the Bible or White's writings. However, the pervasive application of the proof-text method (in which isolated passages are used to prove specific doctrines) to both the Bible and White's writings indicates that, in practice, verbal inspiration, universal applicability, and infallibility were assumed. These concepts still shape Adventist thought.²

In the late 1880s, W. W. Prescott, president of Battle Creek College in Michigan, and S. N. Haskell were both enamored with Theodore Gaussen's theories on *Thenopneustia*.³ Their influence continued into the years of church consolidation despite changes in Prescott's own position and a Bible Conference (Battle Creek, 1919) advocating a more moderate view of inspiration.⁴ Bull and Lockhart summarize the hermeneutical trend of those years of church consolidation:

The relative methodological importance of reason, the Bible, and visionary authority was now the reverse of what it had been for the Millerites. Reason had once tested and expounded the Bible and discounted individual revelation; it was now considered unfit to test or expound either Scripture or the spirit of prophecy. The authority of Mrs. White's vision, however could define the

¹Ibid., 28

²Alden Thompson, Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1991), 269

³Ibid., 268.

⁴Ibid., 50, 268. See also, S. N. Haskell, Bible Handbook (South Lancaster, MA: Bible Training School, 1919); Molleurus Couperus, ed., "The Bible Conference of 1919," Spectrum 12 (May 1979): 23-27

meaning of the Bible and the status of reason. Certainly, the Bible was supposed to test the Bible but it could not be understood without the prophet; such an investigation would be hard to initiate. Thus, although Mrs. White was never accorded theological primacy, her methodological priority made her position inviolable.¹

Bull and Lockhart also note the difference between Baconian rhetoric of the 1820s and the 1920s. "In the 1820s Baconianism had been directed against the skeptics who felt they could know nothing. In the 1920s it was directed against the scientists who claimed to know too much. The basic thrust of the new Baconianism was *antiintellectual* (emphasis supplied)."²

From this perspective, we can better understand why antagonists to celebration churches have preferred to state their positions by quoting E. G. White and why they have so perceptively criticized people like Ford and Rea, whose research has questioned their hermeneutics. It is therefore not surprising for antagonists to have also criticized the series of debates initiated in the 1950s by Walter Martin and Donald Barnhouse whose research indirectly questioned their proof-text approach to reality. Antagonists, however, have been mistaken, in identifying people like Ford, Rea, Martin, Barnhouse, etc., as conspirators against Adventism and at the root of the celebration movement.

The Baconian influence makes antagonist rhetoric appear paradoxical. On one hand, antagonists emphasize reason and distrust feelings and experience; on the other hand, they emphasize revelation (E. G. White's writings) and reveal their fundamental uneasiness with reason in their anti-intellectual approach to diverse historical, theological, and ecclesiological facets of biblical truths.

Yet the antagonist's logic has its own internal consistency. It faithfully reflects a mode of thinking that has interpreted the Bible through the proof-text method. From this perspective, the criticisms of Bradford, among others, on how the antagonists quote White out of context do not even seem to be fair or relevant. Considering the overwhelming abundance of inspired material, it is not surprising that antagonists revert to quoting isolated sentences from the Bible or White's writings to address any particular human experience and assess the celebration movement.

¹Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*, 27.

²Ibid., 28.

Within such a hermeneutical system, the need for human reason and dialogue rarely arises. When it does, reason is called upon mainly to formulate theological positions in opposition to real or perceived polar positions. As George R. Knight, a professor of Adventist history at Andrews University, suggests, such a context sets the stage for "more rapid strides in both further polarization and additional theological distortion."¹

We must note that the celebration controversy within Adventism has arisen within the context of twenty years of polarized debates. Adventists have struggled to define whether the source of church authority is reason or revelation, the Bible or Mrs. White. Concurrently, Adventists have struggled with various models of inspiration.²

A religious system can accommodate only so many recombinations of authoritative sources and hermeneutic approaches. In the late 1980s, Bull and Lockhart noticed three possible trends within Adventism pointing in directions that many Adventists nevertheless found unsatisfactory: (1) an emphasis on the authority of reason, resulting in liberalism; (2) an emphasis on biblical authority, resulting in fundamentalism; and (3) an emphasis of the authority of Mrs. White, resulting in sectarianism.³ In his 1992 review of the theological positions in Adventism including the disputes over the limits of the proof text-method, Knight declared Adventism in "theological disarray." These disputes, along with fundamentalism and a rigid view of inspiration (both of the Bible and the writings of Ellen

¹George R. Knight, "Adventist Theology 1892/1992: The Search for Identity and the Threat of Polarity," unpublished paper delivered at Walla Walla College, College Place, WA, 25 April 1992, 6.

²Adventists have debated to what extent inspiration is a human experience or a divine transmission--and whether this transmission comes verbatim, or in the form of thoughts (propositional). They have pondered whether God adapts his inspired message to the time and place of biblical writers (the incarnational model), and whether inspiration is the human outcome of a personal encounter with God (the encounter model). Gordon, M. Hyde, A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1974); Couperus, ed., "The Bible Conference of 1919," 23-27; Desmond Ford, "The Investigative Judgment," unpublished paper, Pacific Union College, Adventist Forum, 1980, audiocassette transcript; Walter Rea, The White Lie (Turlock, CA: M & R Publications, 1982); Harold Weiss, "Formative Authority, Yes; Canonization, No," Spectrum 16 (August 1985): 10; Alden Thompson, "Adventists and Inspiration--Improving the Testimonies through Revisions," Adventist Review, 12 September 1985, 13-15; idem, "Adventist and Inspiration--Questions and Perplexities Without End," Adventist Review, 19 September 1985, 7-9; idem, Inspiration, 50, 268-69; Knight, "Adventist Theology 1892/1992," 12-14.

³Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 32.

White), have left Adventism with basic identity questions: What is distinctively Adventist in Adventism? What is Christian in Adventism? What is fundamentalist in Adventism?¹ Denominational officials have rarely clarified these issues with the general membership. New experiences in Adventist worship, and the polarization of views these developments engendered, could only add tension to these theological debates.²

In times of change, issues shaking the status quo of practical church life easily become rallying points around which people express fears and reaffirm their system of beliefs. Issues like the revision of models of the church, corporate worship, or the ordination of women may appear to threaten "official, traditional, historic, and truthful Adventism." They become focal points of discussion in efforts to control change in the practices of the church. These discussions often crystallize around lifestyle issues (such as jewelry), which are used again and again to control change and evaluate orthodoxy. Questions of Christian lifestyle are seldom examined as possible clues to the real problems within the community. For Adventists, these problems include the redefinition of identity and of sources of authority, and the as yet unsatisfactory attempts to redefine both of them from a theological or practical level.

Conclusions

Evidence discussed in chapter 3 shows that the genesis of the celebration movement in 1986 was responding to the culmination of ten to fifteen years of growing interest in church and worship renewal within North American Christianity. We have examined in chapters 3 and 4 how celebration churches in 1990 and 1991 uniquely catalyzed and fostered this interest within certain sectors of Adventism. Increasing numbers of books, articles, pamphlets, audio and video material, letters, and presentations at professional and other meetings between 1986 and 1991 all witness to Adventism's endeavor to redefine its worship practices and, ultimately, its identity and mission within the evolving North American culture.

¹Knights, "Adventist Theology 1844/1994," 10-13, 25; idem, "Adventists and Change," 10-13.

²Douglas Clark, "Are Adventists Still People of the Book?" *Spectrum* 2 (September 1995): 25-29.

In chapter 3, the celebration movement is surveyed in the context of deeper changes within Adventism. Considering the principal celebration congregations (New Life Celebration Church, Desert Valley Church, North Oshawa Church, New Hope Church, Celebration of Praise, and Celebration Center), changes in worship style are certainly the most salient features. Analysis of parallels in these congregations' experiences, however, suggests that the celebration movement entailed more than cosmetic change. For example, these experiences were all catalyzed by visionary leaders who had recently renewed their understanding of God's grace, salvation, the Holy Spirit, and the importance of lay involvement (i.e., the priesthood of all believers). Further, at least the leaders of each congregation were motivated by a new understanding of how the church should relate to a larger cultural community with greater relevance. Mutual influence accounts for some of these parallels, but the greater explanatory factor is that each congregation was responding to powerful trends shaping North American Christianity at the end of the twentieth century--the church growth movement, the unique needs of the baby boomer generation, and the examples of some highly visible communities (such as the nondenominational New Hope Community Church and the Willow Creek Community Church), which have successfully experimented with church and worship renewal within the secular culture.¹

Critics of celebration churches have been perceptive in their recognition of deeper changes within Adventism. Where those critics have been mistaken is in attributing these changes to a conspiracy within or outside Adventism. Some antagonists compiled their material unscrupulously. Most antagonists, however, probably lacked the historical, theological, sociological, and philosophical perspective to analyze their perceptions. Their criticisms have usually been congruent with the system of thought, epistemology, and hermeneutics of the years of Adventist consolidation (1901-1950). During this period, emphasis on a cognitive, proof-text approach to the Bible and E. G. White's writings generated a worldview that was carefully expressed in doctrinal statements. Because the celebrationists' differing worldviews are manifested in such high-visibility changes, it is not surprising that they became

¹For other examples, see Elmer L. Towns, 10 of the Most Innovative Churches (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990).

targets of the most antagonistic critics. Celebration congregations became the scapegoat for expressions of anger, fear, and the sense of loss that change usually brings.¹

As of 1991, we can estimate that of tens of thousands of people were involved or interested in the celebration movement. Using a psychosocial system of analysis, we can estimate that this means that hundreds of thousands of people were influenced by it.² In any case, the above figures attest that a significant proportion of North American Adventist members were at least aware of the celebration movement.

Considering these figures, it is surprising to note that leadership (at the General Conference or North American Division) regarding the celebration issue was provided "by default rather than by intent." One could wish, for example, that George Reid, director of the Adventist Biblical Research Institute, had advised Folkenberg to include a discussion about the celebration movement, and church and worship renewal at the 1991 Annual Council. The extensive impact of Adventism's celebration movement certainly merited attention from the Council. One may also wish that McClure, North American Division president, and other Union presidents from the same division (other than Herbert Broeckel, Don Wisbey, and Thomas Mostert) had provided some official visionary leadership to help clarify the celebration issue,³ especially when we consider the polarization of opinions in 1991.⁴

The primary task of leaders is to shape visions, in collaboration with scholars and teachers. In congruence with this role, it is the responsibility of top official Adventist leadership to try to elucidate the celebration controversy and shape Adventism for the third millennium. One could wish they had

¹On the issue of change and how it affects church communities, see Ken Blanchard, "Becoming More Effective Leaders," Leadership Summit, Willow Creek Community Church, August 1995, audiocassette; idem, "Leading More Effective Organization," Leadership Summit, Willow Creek Community Church, August 1995, audiocassette.

²E. Mansell Pattison, Pastor and Parish--A System Approach (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 19

³Broeckel provided such leadership in the videocassette (Creative Sabbath Morning Alternatives), Wisbey with a vision statement ("On Looking Back"), and Mostert with some articles in the PU Recorder ("Danger Ahead," "Boring Church Services," "Are We Over-Organized?" "Responses to Your Questions," and "What Youth Think About Worship"). These leaders at least encouraged some research and experimentation with worship and church renewal.

⁴Jacobsen interview, 2 April 1991.

provided or at least promoted the development of philosophical, theological, sociological, and historical research to clarify the celebration controversy. They could also have encouraged more forums and training in worship, as well as supplied human and material resources to help congregations searching for change (in worship and organization) or struggling with the celebration controversy.¹ One could also wish that they had listened more closely to some of the prophetic voices within Adventism that had long been addressing the issues related to the celebration crisis. For example, top official Adventist leaders could have publicized the 1990 John Osborn Lectureship material on ecclesiastical changes for the third millennium among the general membership. They also could have planned forums and business sessions more focused and acquainted with hermeneutical issues and discussions of church and worship renewal. They could have organized spiritual opportunities for experiential learning. The world 1990 General Conference at Indianapolis, for example, could have been an ideal forum to launch this type of educational process. But training and forums at the local level would have certainly been more important to organize in order to familiarize the Adventist membership with its own charismatic tradition, liturgical family, its different views of biblical interpretations, and some of the basic trends shaping the American culture at the end of the twentieth century.

The analysis of chapter 3 also exhibited two fundamental characteristics of the celebration movement. It showed, first, how the celebration movement has tried to recover the experiential side of religious community life. It has promoted the expression of religious feelings and intuition (the subjective), moving away from a more cognitive, objective, and didactic approach to worship and the Christian experience. Second, the celebration movement has incorporated selected aspects of the secular world, the world of entertainment, consumerism, and psychotherapy. This melding of apparent divergent philosophies and disciplines (the church and the market place) has contributed to further erode the traditional nineteenth-century fundamentalist demarcations of the secular and the sacred. While the melding of the traditional distinctiveness of the sacred and the secular has been problematic for some critics, because of the apparent dissonance it brings, for others, the spirituality and actions of the

¹George Barna, *The Power of Vision* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992); Harold, Myra, ed., *Leaders: Learning from Some of Christianity Best* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987); Derek J. Tidball, *Skillful Shepherds* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986); Prov 29: 18; 1 Cor 12: 28; Rom 12: 7-8.

celebration movement have been too aloof from real-world concerns. Both critics, however, seem to agree that celebrationists have lost the prophetic tradition of Adventism. While for some, a greater socio-political involvement would be the sign of renewal and the manifestation of the prophetic function of Adventism, for others, the blend of the secular and the sacred has muted its prophetic voice.

We must note that Adventists in general have made few socio-political commitments during this period (1986-1991). Lack of a prophetic voice, therefore, cannot be a criticism of the celebration movement in particular. Furthermore, although celebration churches have not been involved with their environment on a socio-political level, they might be seen as prophetic in their attempt to live in the realm of the Spirit and translate the gospel into their own customs and culture for shaping the future of the church. In any case, it was premature to evaluate a young movement by trying to measure how successfully its members have been achieving their ideals. Their emphasis on the rediscovery of the Holy Spirit on helping people develop their spiritual gifts and worship with greater participation and personal commitment represent a challenge to evaluate at the infancy of an experience or a movement. Divine guidance as a force within a culture or subculture stays a mystery, which unfolds in time. The germs of renewal within the celebration movement might have matured had they been given more support.

Despite their opposing worldviews, celebrationists and their antagonists share a conviction that Adventists must recapture their spiritual commitment. Both celebrationists and antagonists question or criticize the denominational hierarchy. Both have called for organizational change. Both have emphasized the importance of laity (the priesthood of all believers through small groups or home churches) and renewed ways of recognizing leaders in their midst (the ordination issue).

Additionally, people in both groups have expressed the same type of American pragmatic biblical hermeneutics to argue their positions. The celebrationists have emphasized the Bible and the experience of the Holy Spirit through generally more pragmatic-intuitive comments. On the other hand, the anticelebrationists have stressed the writings of the Bible and E. G. White through more pragmatic-rationalistic comments. Finally, both celebrationists and antagonists have deplored the lack of support as well as proactive stance from top official leaders. Both have negatively commented about the "wait and see" attitude of top leaders, as well as their lack of endeavors to either redefine or preserve Adventism.

The disparity of worldview between celebrationists and antagonists has largely obscured these shared concerns. Perhaps these points of common conviction could become an arena for both groups to develop their prophetic voice within Adventism and dialogue with each other.

Despite the antagonists' wariness of denominational leadership, their critiques of the celebration movement resemble the official church response. Both antagonists and denominational leaders discuss the celebration movement in general terms without precise geographical, historical, philosophical, and theological data. Both of these groups have severely suppressed information in their comments about the celebration churches.

Finally, the analysis of chapters 3 and 4 implies that the polarization in the debate over celebration worship could not have been resolved without first addressing deeper issues within the denomination. These issues include the source of church authority, Adventist changing identity, and questions of hermeneutics related to the Bible and E. G. White's writings. Clarifications in these areas could have helped Adventists to discern how prophetic messages of the past could be better applied in specific twenty-first-century cultures.

In a pyramidal church organization such as that of Adventism, clarifications on those issues could have been easily fostered and promoted by top official leaders. Such commitments from top officials could have certainly opened more dialogue within the celebration controversy and accommodated possible resolutions. A better attempt to answer the questions raised by the "grass-roots" could have positively contributed to redefine the sources of authority and identity within Adventism, a much-needed task after 150 years of denominational life.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Christian worship is not rooted in human need, but in God's will. It is less a call than an obedience.

Jean-Jacques Von Allmen

This section presents first an analysis of the material presented in chapters 2, 3, and 4 within the context of chapter 1. It compares the Adventist celebration movement with the church and worship renewal movement within the context of societal changes. It considers four parallels between these two movements and four distinct characteristics of the celebration movement. In conclusion, this section also presents four contradictions within Celebration Center and the celebration movement, and a brief evaluation of the evolution of the movement.

Analysis

Summary

This dissertation has presented the historical context and the milieu in which the worship revival of the Colton Seventh-day Adventist Church (Celebration Center) has taken place. It has described how this experience, particularly when considered along with that of the Milwaukee Seventh-day Adventist Church (New Life Celebration Church), has expressed and catalyzed within the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, interest in worship and church renewal in the late 1980s. This dissertation has also presented how the Adventist celebration movement has been shaped by key leaders who have been particularly sensitive to the working of God's love, acceptance, and forgiveness in their own spiritual journeys. These leaders have also been sensitive to the needs of people of their own culture, particularly former Adventists. This dissertation has shown how the issue of worship and church renewal, exhibited most visibly in these Adventist celebration churches, brought tremendous polarization of opinion within the denomination.

The celebration controversy has unmasked divergent opinions regarding ecclesiological, liturgical, doctrinal, and hermeneutical issues yet to be addressed and clarified within Adventism, especially at the grass-roots level. It has also unveiled some of the dynamics in Adventist ecclesiastical change and how they are managed at the top leadership level.

Many Adventist leaders and members have recognized that both Dan Simpson and Dave Snyder have taken "a lot of flack--even abuse" from their Adventist community in trying something new at the liturgical and ecclesiastical level. In 1991, Bruce Johnston recognized the "traumatic" effects of the celebration controversy, but also expressed hope that it contributed to greater maturity and tolerance within Adventism.¹ This dissertation represents an effort to support the growth of maturity and tolerance. It offers information and reflective analyses, which are necessary prerequisites for these lessons of church life to be integrated, for dialogue to flourish, and for tolerance to be encouraged.

Contribution and Context of Celebration Center

In 1991, many pastors (such as Bruce Fox), denominational leaders (such as Bruce Johnston), and scholars (such as Erich Baumgartner) recognized that Dan Simpson and Dave Snyder had the courage to do something new in Adventist circles and contributed to establishing worship as a crucial concern within the denomination. "They were willing to rush in where angels fear to tread."²

This study has unveiled how these celebration pastors have been innovators only within the context of typical White Seventh-day Adventist North American congregations, which are used to a certain format of worship reflective of the years of church consolidation, a format that is mainly passive, linear, didactic, cerebral, and conformist. Caleb Rosado reflected on how the celebration controversy has unveiled the ever-present "ethnocentrism" and "racism" still operating in Adventism.³

¹Bruce Johnston interview, 8 May 1991.

²Fox interview, 6 May 1991.

³It is interesting to note that in 1992 C. Mervyn Maxwell added a quote from E. G. White condemning emotional worship in relationship to the "colored" people's practice of worship to the file related to the celebration issue in the E. G. White Estate office at Andrews University. See "An Appeal from the South," Review & Herald, 3 December 1895, 769--DF 2119-C file, E. G. White Estate, Andrews University

Black or even Hispanic celebration worship has never been questioned or drawn such polarization of opinions, because, Rosado observed, they have been seen as "ethnic" styles--in other words, "marginal."¹ Rosado's perceptive analysis, however, bypasses important elements revealed in this study: Black and Hispanic Adventist celebration worship services have never experimented with new local church structures.² As Baumgartner says: "The Adventist denomination owes Simpson a debt for being willing to experiment with a new kind of church structure."³

When we consider the historical context of the celebration experience, Simpson and other celebration pastors with their churches have only reflected (sometimes, indeed, in unique, flamboyant, and creative ways) some of the powerful trends of North American Christianity that have been at work since the late 1960s. Trends such as these can be first traced to the influences of the European liturgical movement, with its indigenization of faith, accent on religious experience, lay involvement, and ecumenical openness. Celebration leaders have all reflected these influences in their personal and church experiences. These leaders have also reflected older traditions, such as nineteenth-century North American revivalism (evident in early Adventist charismatic worship and ecclesiastical life) and different aspects of specific ethnic religious services, such as African-American worship.

These older traditions have all been characterized by a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, spontaneous religious experience, localism, human freedom, direct democracy, individual moral courage, and crusading against elitism and demonic forces. These traditions have opposed absolute principles of worship that had been determined in the reactionary setting of Reformation/Post-Reformation European polemics in which plainness and simple uniformity were too often understood as normative.⁴ On the contrary, these traditions have encouraged bold, creative, and lay communication, as well as populist hermeneutics. They have often seen themselves as "self-sprung from the Bible, or through the Bible from

¹Caleb Rosado, "Letters to the Editors--Celebration-Style Worship," Adventist Review, 24 January 1991

²Tomlin interview, 10 April 1991.

³Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991.

⁴Eugene Westra and Helen Westra, "Let All the Earth Worship the Lord," Reformed Worship 3 (Spring 1987): 9.

the skies."¹ They also have reacted to what was perceived in their context as "tradition," hierarchy, or dogmatism (theological systems).

In line with these older traditions, celebration churches have experimented with populist orientation, localism, and pluralism. Pushing away from ecclesiastical institutions and traditional authority, they have exhibited the same enthusiastic and anti-liturgical spirit. They have also viewed worship as a possible evangelistic tool. Like revivalist leaders, at least two of the best-known leaders in the Adventist celebration movement have been entrepreneurial, individualistic, and attached to a fundamentalist and practical approach to the Bible. Like revivalistic leaders, they have been more popular exhorters than intellectual leaders shaping classical worldviews and historical continuity. Like revivalistic pastors, their leadership has nurtured a view of Christianity as a personal experience rather than social mediation. At the same time, however, they have been extremely sensitive to people's needs and human potential.

Parallels and Differences between Revivalism and Worship and Church Renewal

It is interesting to note the parallels between nineteenth-century revivalism and the interdenominational worship and church renewal movement (1970s-1990s) that has been driven by the third wave, the church growth movement, and baby boomer needs. Both movements have been romantic movements.² Just as revivalism was a natural reaction to the Enlightenment, Puritanism, and dogmatism, the worship and church renewal movement is a reaction to the technological and materialist, scientific Western world and its dogmatism and individualism.³ Both have been restorationist movements underlining the gift of the Holy Spirit and the importance of community, desiring the reestablishment of apostolic models of church and worship not corrupted by the institutionalization and formalization of Christianity. Both have attempted to redefine liturgical forms and ecclesiological standards, and have

¹Hatch, Democratization, 169.

²Towns, 10 Most Innovative Churches, 258.

³Horton, Made in America, 101; Charles Kraft, Christianity with Power (Ann Arbor, MI: Vine Books, 1989), 23-35.

questioned traditional measures of ecclesiastical authority. Both have incorporated physical display and emotional release in their search for supernatural awe and experience. Both have created and played religious folk music and presented the drama of salvation through successful communication strategies (visual aids, charismatic preaching, etc.). Both have praised "democratic leadership" and "populist culture at the periphery of high culture and historical consciousness."¹ Both have fostered private religious experience and conversions out of conformity with objective traditional church standards that encourage order and decorum, sober church music, formal catechism, and "grave, solemn dignified clergymen."² Finally, both have affirmed energetic, resourceful, and inventive leaders--entrepreneurial communicators, whose commonplace origin and personal touch have sometimes seemed "strangely at odds with the authoritarian mantle that people allow them to assume."³

We must also note some fundamental differences between nineteenth-century revivalism and the interdenominational North American worship and church renewal movement. In general, the latter movement certainly has included more tolerance, respectability, and professional "esprit" than the former. As Towns says, dissatisfied liberals are finding in that movement a clear gospel ministry; fundamentalists, the release from legalistic attitudes in which they grew up; and pentecostals, solid Bible teaching instead of emotionalism.⁴ Though each movement has been a reaction to its own world, the worship and church renewal movement has surprisingly integrated numerous elements from its world--including scientific, technological, and capitalist North American elements. Although both movements have brought popular music back into the churches, the latter movement has definitely been more God-centered and doxological than revivalism, whose music tended to center on glorifying Christian experiences and sentiments. Also, as a whole, the worship and church renewal movement has been more grounded in the Bible, drawing more support from theological and scholarly studies than revivalism.

¹Hatch, Democratization, 212.

²Ibid., 105.

³Ibid., 16.

⁴Towns, 10 Most Innovative Churches, 158.

Comparison of the Adventist Celebration Movement
and the Worship and Church Renewal Movement
within the Context of Societal Changes

As celebration leader Don Bettie noted in 1991, the celebration movement has not been a "new" phenomenon, but rather has drawn from sociological and religious changes within Western society over the last twenty years.¹ We can summarize the celebration phenomenon within Adventism by building on one of Mallery's metaphors: It is the Adventist tip of a huge societal and interdenominational iceberg.² Baumgartner corroborates in perceiving that Simpson's innovations are not "new," but are "unique in the sense that he is applying what he has learned from non-Adventists to Adventism."³

First, we note the parallels between the celebration movement, societal changes, and the worship and church renewal, and second, the distinctiveness of the celebration movement. In these parallels we underline four major shifts of emphasis present in Western worldviews, the Church, and the celebration movement at the end of the second millennium. We examine these four shifts separately, although they are interconnected and influence each other.

Parallels

From an industrial to an information
society

Sociological studies reveal that people's understanding of God and life is influenced by experiences they have undergone in their development.⁴ Rosado claims, "It is out of these experiences, unique to their culture, that a people begins to articulate questions about God and how to best express their worship of the divine."⁵ Celebration Center is no exception. As shown in this dissertation, Celebration Center closely reflects the secular and religious culture in which it was born. It is an

¹Bettie interview, 26 March 1991.

²Mallery interview, 8 April 1991.

³Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991.

⁴Niebuhr, The Societal Sources, 77-105; Chuck Kraft, "World View and Worship," Worship Times 2 (Spring 1987): 2.

⁵Caleb Rosado, "Multiculturalism: A Challenge for the Church," Journal of Music Ministry, January/March 1989, 3.

Adventist expression of the typical characteristics of an industrial society (1850s-1950s) in the process of shifting to an information society (1950s-1990s). Some of the characteristics of this process, as described by Rosado, are: (1) an economy changing from manufacture to service and high-technology, (2) an ethnic focus changing from uniformity to diversity, (3) loyalty shifting from the authority and power of tradition and the institution to "what works" and the individual, and (4) a view of God shifting from questions related to ontology to questions dealing with functionality.¹

In considering these four characteristics, we can gain perspective on the deeper issues and/or tensions at stake within the Adventist celebration phenomenon. This study has shown that Adventist celebration leaders and churches, in their effort to contextualize faith, have, consciously or unconsciously, absorbed some of the typical features of an information era: "what works" (functionality), service (ministry) to the individual, and diversity of practice to meet people's needs ("what is relevant"). Drawing these emphases into the Adventist community in the late 1980s, a community that was at that time still mainly operating on models and values of the old industrial society, could only intensify the clashes and insecurities related to this societal change. It is, therefore, not surprising to have witnessed the passionate reactions elicited by the celebration movement. They have only expressed some of the tension, fear, and pain as Adventism moves into the twenty-first century.

Paul Richardson's 1991 comment on the Adventist context of this societal shift typifies the perception of many baby boomers:

I think that today's [worship] services were created by those who are in their sixties and seventies right now. They worked hard to bring the services where they are right now. They worked in the industrial age when you put together a good model and then they stamped out as many of those models as they could. The faster you could do it, the better and the more successful you were. You could go to different towns and the Adventist services were similar.

Those people have not changed to the information age which is characterized by personalization, targeting, really finding out the needs of the local congregations and meeting those needs. It is an age which is need-based rather than structure-based. Now those people say, we worked hard at this [planning a good worship service], it worked well, don't take it away. This was good for one or two decades but not three. The baby boomers are now on the forefront. The people in the forties and fifties (the *Spectrum* and Forum generations) did not come to the forefront as much. They were not as *experiential* as the baby boomers. They were

¹ Caleb Rosado, "The Challenge of Diversity to Mission of the Church in the 21st Century," book manuscript.

also a very small generation. They could not affect some of the changes the boomers can. Also, the overall picture of the church of their times was still in expansion and stimulating.¹

For Baumgartner, a church consultant and seminary professor, the issue of celebration worship also needs to be understood within the context of the changes happening to an Adventist worship typical of an industrial society. For him, it additionally calls for a redefinition of Adventist ecclesiology and tradition:

Adventism has given the impression of a very monolithic melting pot type of church that had one form [of worship services]. . . . We have had our *Church Manual*. There we have prescribed the worship order, we have prescribed what the local church should look like. Then, on a more practical level, we have realized of course, that every culture expresses itself a little differently. Therefore, we have allowed certain parameters, but which were really never defined; and yet, for conservative Adventists they were quite narrow. Now Celebration [Center] is the first open experiment within the Adventist Church that goes beyond those parameters and actually argues against those parameters: the traditional forms.²

From reason to experience as supreme authority, or
from cerebral to holistic faith

A second shift of emphasis present in Western worldviews, Christianity, and the celebration movement at the end of the twentieth century is what Harvey Cox and Hans Küng name the shift from "reason" to "experience" or from "reason" to "holistic thought."³

We have seen that "reason," or a cerebral and linear approach to reality, has dominated Adventism despite its nineteenth-century revivalistic roots. We can summarize this predominance through four possible influences:

¹Paul Richardson interview, 3 May 1991.

²Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991.

³Hans Küng, *Christianity: Essence, History, and Future* (New York: Continuum, 1995) 766-69, 938-39. This book is an analysis of the dominant structural elements of six major paradigms in Christian history, the shift from reason to holistic faith being the last one. People like Pascal, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher and movements like Romanticism and existentialism have contributed a great deal to that shift. We must note, however, that this shift has had its own unique course of development within the American religious context related to revivalism, fundamentalism, and the triumph of a scientific and technological society. See also Harvey Cox, *Feast of Fools* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 165-77.

1. The formative years of Adventism still belong to the general fifth Christian paradigm of "reason," as described by Kūng.¹
2. Adventism never really escaped the deep-seated influences of European Protestantism, American Puritanism, and the common-sense philosophy, all of which encourage a linear, pragmatic way of thinking and a cerebral approach to worship. These deep-seated influences all contributed to shaping Adventism's "reasonable and functional perception of the world" and its prevailing "liturgy of the Word."²
3. For years, Adventists have explored the divine, the Bible, and Christian experience primarily through verbal modalities. Attention is often absorbed in fundamentalist doctrinal affirmations, apologetic declarations, theological statements, and the search for historical, prophetic, and numerical biblical interpretations.
4. And finally, during the triumphant era and explosion of science and industry in an American society dominated by "reason" and pragmatism, Adventism expanded and also consolidated and formalized its denominational structure.

These influences have all contributed to the development of a predominantly "reasonable" and one-sided cerebral worship that, as David Randolph expresses, is "as dull as getting in an elevator, watching the doors close, then getting out without going anywhere."³

In the early 1990s, many Adventist leaders expressed concern about this trend toward the cerebral or the cognitive within the Adventist community. Charles Scriven, a pastor and college president, stated that the focus of Adventism has too long been locked on orthodoxy, correct doctrines, words and rationality, and being correct.⁴ Charles Teel, a professor of religion and society, corroborated

¹Kūng, *Christianity*, 767-68.

²Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 12-13; Ralph Jackson Gore, Jr., "The Pursuit of Plainness: Rethinking the Puritan Regulative Principle of Worship (Calvinism, Presbyterianism)" (Ph.D. diss. Westminster Theological Seminary, 1988), 217-18; Joseph Crouch, *Puritanism and Art* (London: Cassell, 1910), 9.

³David James Randolph, *God's Party* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), 67.

⁴Scriven interview, 28 April 1991.

this perception. For him, Adventists have not taken worship seriously because the pulpit, the word, and the right belief of doctrinal propositions have taken precedence over more "nebulous" terms, such as myths, symbols, and rites.¹ For Pastor David VanDenburgh, Adventists are "sick to death" of theology and theological arguments. They are looking for an experience.² For him, Lyell Heise, and many others, celebration worship has provided a new context for the experiential, and has ignited an Adventist shift from *logos* to *ethos*.³ In 1992, Jon Paulien, a New Testament professor at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary of Andrews University, observed that students in his Revelation classes were less and less interested in abstract, doctrinal, political, historical, and cosmic perspectives but more and more interested in questions of Christian experience and practice.⁴ Finally, Bernard Brandstater, professor of medicine at Loma Linda University and a regular participant at Celebration Center for over three years, described in 1996 this paradigm shift in his own life experience by declaring, "Celebration Center has allowed me to expand my faith from cerebration to celebration."⁵

As this dissertation has shown, celebration churches have uniquely attempted to explore a more multilayered and holistic approach to worship and church life within the White Anglo Adventist community.⁶ In trying to regain the experiential and multi-sensory dimensions of worship through movement, new music, and audio-visual methods, celebration churches have converged with the liturgical and charismatic movements (see chapter 1). In other words, they have ventured into a new experiential liturgical language that reflects deeper paradigm shifts at work within the society and the

¹Charles Teel, interview by author, Riverside, CA, 21 August 1991.

²VanDenburgh interview, 10 April 1991.

³Ibid., Heise interview, 20 August 1991; Kinkle interview, 11 March 1991; R. and D. Sheldon and Muñoz interview, 19 March 1991; Sisk interview, 8 April 1991; Gifford interview, 6 August 1991; D. Hawley in D. and B. Hawley interview, 23 April 1991; Muñoz interview, 20 March 1991.

⁴Jon Paulien, interview by author, Bermen Springs, MI, 6 February 1992.

⁵Bernard Brandstater, interview by author, College Place, WA, 8 March 1996, handwritten notes.

⁶Newman, "Is It Safe to Celebrate?" 27.

church.¹ The shift toward the experiential, and a holistic approach to faith, is certainly not in disagreement with Adventist theology. However, it is contrary to years of a cerebral, factual, and "package-oriented" approach to religion, church life, and worship. For Gordon Bietz, pastor and conference president, it is a necessary shift if Adventism is to be transmitted to other generations: "DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH THAT ARE NOT EXPERIENCED IN THE LIVES OF THE MEMBERS WILL NOT BE TRANSMITTED TO FUTURE GENERATIONS EXCEPT AS CREEDAL STATEMENTS. OUR DOCTRINES MUST FIND EXPRESSION IN LIFE AND WORSHIP."²

From revelation to relevance

A shift of emphasis from revelation to relevance is a natural consequence flowing out of the two preceding shifts. Concerned voices, as mentioned in chapters 1 and 3, have underlined the dangers of this trend in celebration churches. Some of the major considerations relate to transmitting a cheap gospel that fosters self-centeredness, narcissistic preoccupations, relativism, and a consumerist or entertainment type of mentality.³ However, as Richard N. Ostling says, "... much is gained when houses of worship address real needs of people rather than purveying old abstractions, expectations and mannerisms."⁴

This dissertation has shown how celebration churches have attempted, and have been perceived generally, to be more relevant, contemporary, warm, and relational than other Adventist churches. This dissertation has also evidenced how the celebration experience has ventured into breaking up some old Adventist "abstractions and expectations" with its congregational trend: emphasis on love.

¹Robert E. Webber, "Evangelical Megashift," Christianity Today, 19 February 1990, 16, 17; Leith Anderson, A Church for the 21st Century (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1992), 20, 21, 44-7. See also Harvey Cox, Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1995), 81-83.

²Gordon Bietz, "Worship Themes in Adventist Theology," First International Adventist Worship Conference, unpublished paper, 18 April 1991, 10.

³Horton, Made in America, 70, 71, 83, 140. See also, David F. Wells, No Place for Truth (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 95, 96.

⁴Richard N. Ostling, "The Church Search," Time (5 April 1993), 49.

acceptance, and forgiveness; its different church organization and more holistic worship; and its accent on divine presence, the Holy Spirit, and the spiritual gifts of all believers.

Two major issues can be related to the shift of emphasis from revelation to relevance: first, the question of relationships between Christians/churches and culture; and second, the issue of hermeneutics. This dissertation has revealed how these two questions have also surfaced within the Adventist celebration controversy. Niebuhr's six categories of relationship are helpful in clarifying the issue of relationship between Christians/church and culture and gaining additional perspectives on the celebration controversy. They can be summarized as: "Christ against culture, of culture, above culture, in culture, in paradox with culture, or the transformer of culture."¹ This dissertation has shown through the antagonists' arguments that traditional Adventism, reflecting the mind-set of the years of church consolidation, has functioned on a "Christ-against-culture" model. It is not surprising, therefore, to have witnessed the intense reactions raised by celebration churches, which have mainly functioned through a "Christ-of-culture" model.²

Leith Anderson succinctly describes these two opposite models in relationship to Christian factions and reveals what could reconcile them: "Liberal Christians have too often forsaken revelation for relevance, and conservative Christians relevance for revelation. Neither is consistent with the incarnation of Jesus."³ For him the model of Jesus' incarnation (and we could add additional models drawn from Acts 15, or Old Testament stories such as Daniel's or Esther's) is necessary to help resolve the tension between revelation and relevance. The incarnation model (as well as the additional ones mentioned) can facilitate discernment of the fine line of the Christian walk between the call to uphold revelation and the supernatural and at the same time be relevant to the world and contemporary generations.

¹H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1951), 45-229

²Mallery interview, 8 April 1991.

³Anderson, Dying for Change, 119.

To adequately resolve this paradox, Aubrey Malphurs advocates the development of a pertinent theology of change as an absolute necessity in a church. It helps a church to know and focus on what it *can change*, *what it must not change* and then what kind of appropriate decisions it *must* make.¹ This dissertation has shown how Celebration Center uniquely embodied change for Adventism in 1990 or 1991 and how the John Osborn Lectureships in the same years perceptively and timely addressed this issue within Adventism. The propagation of these lectureship presentations and their research papers within Adventism could have permitted the development of a sound Adventist theology of change. It could have also offered to the Adventist Church and particularly to its leadership some helpful frames of reference to appease the tensions and to address the questions raised by the celebration controversy.

A second question related to the shift from revelation to relevance is the hermeneutical one. One can address this question by considering a typical paradigm expressed in evangelical circles, including Adventism. It can be summarized as, "If a person has the right teaching, that person will experience God."² In recent years, this paradigm has, however, changed. It has been shaken by societal changes, new philosophical emphases, and religious explorations. It has gradually been replaced by one that can be summarized as, "If a people experience God, they will have the right teaching."³

This dissertation has evidenced how the church and worship renewal, as well as the celebration movements, with their sensitivity to the experience of all believers and the church as a body, have operated within this new paradigm. This change has certainly opened new legitimate hermeneutical concerns that can be partially resolved by understanding a fourth and last shift of emphasis shared by the two movements.

¹Aubrey Malphurs, Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins: How to Change a Church without Destroying It (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), 169-72.

²Anderson, A Church for the 21st Century, 21.

³Ibid.

From systematic theology to
practical ecclesiology, or
from *kerygma* to *koinonia*

A fourth shift of emphasis shared between the celebration movements and the worship and church renewal movement is the shift from systematic theology to practical ecclesiology or from *kerygma* to *koinonia*. The study of the arguments for and against celebration churches has shown that the assumption that propositional truth needs to precede and dictate religious experience is still deeply rooted in Adventism. The rediscovery of the Holy Spirit, particularly recaptured by the worship and church renewal and celebration movement, has exposed the limitation of a rationalist/cerebral approach to religion and its concurrent hermeneutic. A rationalist hermeneutic has much to contribute but is certainly incomplete. For Adventists, a rationalist mind-set and hermeneutics are the product of years of a cerebral, proof-text, and factual approach to religion, stressing revelation and prophecy over relevance and culture. For Leith Anderson, another important factor contributes to the rationalist mind-set. It is still the prevailing influence of systematic rather than biblical theology over fundamentalist types of religions. A systematic approach to biblical truths has much to contribute but is incomplete.¹

Renewed interest in biblical theology in fundamentalist circles has helped many to recognize the value of the Bible for patterns of experience followed by propositions.² The validity of such a position can be directly argued from biblical arguments. For example, the Exodus from Egypt preceded the recording of the Exodus in the Bible. Again, the experience of the crucifixion, the resurrection, and Pentecost all predated the propositional declaration of those events in the New Testament.

Greg Ogden offers an interesting inclusive model that is congruent with Adventist theology and one that can help Adventists resolve some of the questions and tensions raised by the celebration controversy. Ogden recognizes the inseparable connection of the Holy Spirit and the Word, while at the same time claiming that the Holy Spirit also has a direct relationship with the church. The Word is the objective standard by which truth is measured. It is the test of whether the claims of the

¹Anderson, *A Church for the 21st Century*, 21.

²Cox, *Feast of Fools*, 165.

Spirit's work are valid. But Ogden also suggests that the Spirit speaks directly to the church today, not solely through the avenue of the written Word but through the body also.¹

Ogden's model advocates a valuable explanation and/or justification for the shift of emphasis away from systematic theology toward practical ecclesiology or away from kerygma toward koinonia. This shift appears necessary to maintain a balanced approach to the life and actions of the Spirit among the believers. The following diagram captures Ogden's model. It has been slightly adapted to the Adventist celebration issue. It presents some of the major ideas underlined by both the Adventist celebration and worship and church renewal movements (see fig. 1).

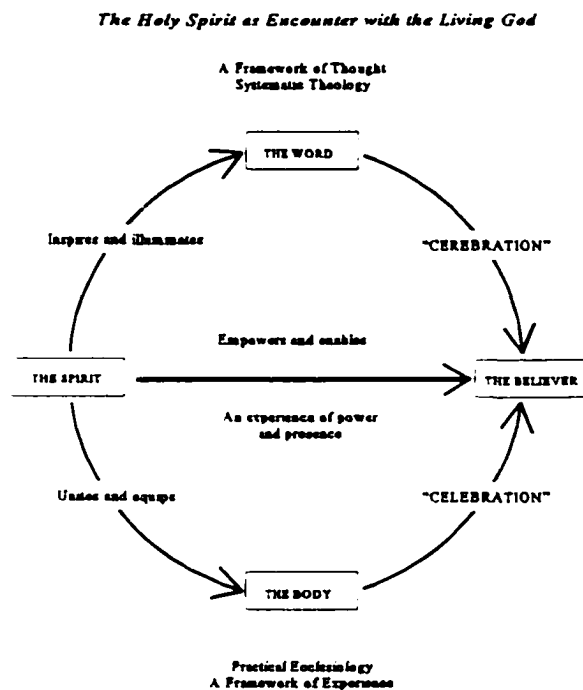


Figure 1 Holy Spirit Encounter with the Living God.

¹Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 14, 15.

This dissertation has shown how both the worship and church renewal movement and celebration churches have emphasized both the Holy Spirit's effective presence among the believers and the church as being a body. Both movements have attempted to understand how the Holy Spirit empowers the believers but also equips and unites the church. They have both attempted to reclaim body life through worship and many kinds of small support, intercession, or action groups.¹

In 1991, VanDenburgh perceptively described a general trend within Adventism accentuating participation, basic/practical theology, body life, and warm gatherings, as seen in celebration churches:

Nowadays a number of Adventists are working with a different definition of church. They see church as fellowship, as family. They are more interested in love, acceptance, and forgiveness than in identifying truth for its own sake. They do not want to come to church and hear sermons telling them what they already know, the truth, and how right they are to believe this. They want to come to church and experience the presence of God, the warmth of Christian fellowship, and the joy of belonging.²

The celebration movement, as noted above, shares at least four of the general trends present in Christianity at the end of the twentieth century. It also expresses its own characteristics reflective of the particular historical, theological, and sociological development of North American Adventism. We will now briefly mention the peculiarity of the celebration movement as another way to gain perspective and understanding on the celebration controversy.

Distinctiveness

This study of Celebration Center and its milieu reflects four major shifts of emphasis peculiar to Adventist development. These shifts are unique to the celebration movement. As presented in chapter 3, they have gradually occurred within the Adventist denomination in the late 1980s and have been particularly visible in the celebration movement and controversy.

¹Regarding this general trend in the worship and church renewal movement, see M. Scott Peck, *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); James W. Fowler, *Weaving the New Creation: Stages of Faith and the Public Church* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991); Charles Colson with Ellen Santilli Vaughn, *The Body* (Dallas: Word Pub., 1992); Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here?* (Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 1990); William A. Beckham, *The Second Reformation: Reshaping the Church for the 21st Century* (Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 1995).

²VanDenburgh interview, 10 April 1991.

From maximum efficiency and institution to
crisis/disintegration

According to Moberg's taxonomy of the five stages of church development, the first shift evident in the celebration movement is a reaction to a church organization changing from stage 3 and 4 (maximum efficiency and institutionalism with their creedal legislation and church policies) to stage 5 of crisis/disintegration.¹ For George Knight, professor of church history, Adventism has still "a fair piece to go before it is firmly at stage five."² A completed stage of Adventism disintegration is yet to come in the Western world, and a sense of crisis is yet to develop in the Eastern world. However, crisis has certainly prevailed in North America over the last twenty years (see chapter 3 and 4). The following composite comments collected during the investigation of the celebration movements support this analysis:

I believe that this denomination I gave my whole life to is in the greatest crisis it ever faced, and I believe it is right now deciding whether it is going to count at the end of time or not.³ In the next ten years [North American] Adventism will be either smaller or different. . . . We are in the midst of a change of era. There is confusion. We do not see where we are going. . . . Time will tell, and those who have kept open their eyes on reality and revelation will know which direction to go.⁴ I think our leaders believe we have come to a time where the church is in a serious illness and they don't know what to do. If they knew what to do . . . they would feel free to knock down what we [Celebration Center] are doing. They do not know, and because they do not know, they let crazy guys like me experiment.⁵ I believe there is a tremendous shift happening in the Adventist Church right now, for the members are awakened to the fact that we really are operating a very expensive church. . . . I really see celebration as a protest movement. I don't mean a hostile protest, but I think that Celebration Center is trying to make a statement to the Adventist Church.⁶ I will tell you why so many are troubled by Celebration Center: it is because Dan is busy unfastening what has been fastened down.

It is difficult for our church to accept that. Wisdom prevails when one can address this issue by determining what works, keeping what does work, and getting rid of what fails.⁷

¹Moberg, *The Church as Social Institution*, 100-126.

²Knight, "Adventism, Institutionalism," 9; also idem, *The Fat Lady*, 30.

³Don Hawley in D. and B. Hawley interview, 23 April 1991.

⁴Paulien interview, 6 February 1992.

⁵Simpson interview, 2 April 1991.

⁶Gifford interview, 6 August 1991.

⁷Gifford, "Leaders/Managers," audiocassette recorded by author.

In most of the arguments voiced for or against celebration churches, it is interesting to note that we can discern overtones to most of the characteristics of Moberg's fifth stage of church development: formalism, overinstitutionalism, indifference, obsolescence, and the lack of responsiveness from the official leadership to the personal and social needs of members, which causes them to lose confidence in leadership. Within such a context, the celebration movement and the reaction against it can be both understood as grass-roots attempts to bring renewal and reformation within White North American Adventism. These attempts of renewal, which are typical in a church in the crisis stage, seem to have encouraged both sides, but particularly the anti-celebrationists, to turn to two typical group reactions in times of crisis--retrenchment and detachment.¹

From distinctive Adventist doctrines
to basic Christian truths

A second shift reflected in the celebration controversy is a change of emphasis over the way religion and certain particular Adventist doctrines have been approached and understood (e.g., judgment, sanctuary, worship, etc.). The study of the philosophy, practice, and perceptions of the celebration movement has revealed that it is a shift of emphasis away from apologetics to a more practical approach to religion, away from doctrinal to a more relational understanding of salvation and the godly life. Various comments within North American Adventism illustrate this shift as especially expressed in celebration churches:

The greatest need of Adventism is not worship renewal but to understand God, what God is like, and know how to respond to this awesome God.² A revolution in love, acceptance, and forgiveness is more important than worship renewal.³ I was thirty-three years in evangelism with my husband; I can tell you very few people know about the gospel, the assurance of salvation.⁴ I think that a lot of Adventists are confused about salvation. We are not all unified

¹Rosado interview, 8 June 1995, hand-written notes.

²Snyder, "The Pilgrimage of Celebration Church," audiocassette.

³Calvin J. Thomsen, "A Personal Pilgrimage through Organizational Change," John Osborn Lectureship, 28 October 1991, audiocassette.

⁴Bunnie Hawley in H. and B. Hawley interview, 23 April 1991.

on how people are saved. . . . I think Celebration Center does not get caught up in all of that. They just love and accept people.¹

Our investigation of celebration churches has additionally evidenced another doctrinal shift. It is a move of emphasis away from concerns related to Christology and soteriology to concerns more focused on pneumatology and ecclesiology. The next composite quote depicts this trend:

The celebration experience, I think, is a needed thing in Adventism that is looking into new directions. I think that Celebration Center is certainly trying to expand the horizon of Adventism, and that needs to happen. But what I think really needs to happen is a core revival within Adventism of the Holy Spirit that will transform the hearts of the people so that worship will become an inner reality as opposed to something that we try to import from other churches and places.² The real issue [of the Celebration movement] is not liturgy but ecclesiology. We really do not have a very well developed theology of the church. What is the church, and who speaks for the church? Which are the true acceptable parameters inside the church, and on which parameters must the church function? How is responsible change brought about? How does the church stay timeless and contemporary? (And it must be both.) Who decides to what extent we are committed to a century-old worship format, and to what extent must each generation discover its own? Who decides?³ I always believed that in the 1990s our job was ecclesiology. We have worried long enough about eschatology during the Ford days, let's get on with ecclesiology where the action is going to be.⁴

From sanctuary or evangelistic school
to body life

A third major shift of emphasis expressed by the celebration movement is how the church is perceived. It is a shift of perception from the church as sanctuary or evangelistic school to the church as body. The church is no longer perceived as the continuation of the Old Testament sanctuary, but as the incarnation of the body of Christ, the visible presence of God on earth. It is a move away from the notion of sacred material and space toward the rediscovery of sacred time and assemblies of people. According to Dulles's models of churches, we could also label this move from a herald/institutional model to a more social/sacramental one. Or, we could also add, building on Patterson's fortress analogy and

¹Tomlin interview, 10 April 1991.

²Daily interview, 3 April 1991. See also Hanson interview, 25 April 1991; Munson interview, 26 April 1991.

³Jacobsen, "Adventism and the Celebration Movement," audiocassette.

⁴Gillespie interview, 19 March 1991.

Cook's and Baldwin's taxonomy, that celebration churches have expressed within Adventism a shift of emphasis away from "fortress" to "hospital," from "field" to "force."¹

The church is no longer perceived primarily as a "school" where correct doctrines must be transmitted and/or discussed to equip members for evangelism, but a place of encounter to worship the living God. It is a move away from what Carl George once labelled (when speaking of Adventism) "a school in disguise" toward a "body" attempting to rediscover community life and a sense of the mysterious presence and acts of God.²

From propositional to incarnational
hermeneutics

Finally, a fourth major shift of emphasis expressed by the celebration movement is a trend within Adventism away from propositional to incarnational hermeneutics. The latter faithfully reflects early Adventist beliefs, E. G. White's position, and the 1919 Bible Conference statements.³ All these have underlined the importance of contextual interpretations and rejected inerrancy, verbal inspiration, and the universal applicability of "inspired writings" as they were recorded. We must note that the manuscripts expressing White's position were unavailable to the general public until 1958, and that the minutes of the 1919 Bible Conference positions were unavailable to the general Adventist public until 1979.⁴

Many Adventist scholars publicly distanced themselves from a fundamentalist propositional position in the 1960s and 1970s (in spite of the more conservative view encouraged by the

¹Dulles, Models of Church; Cook and Baldwin, Love, Acceptance, and Forgiveness, 33-37; Patterson, "Ecclesiological Models," audiocassette.

²Baumgartner interview, 17 March 1991.

³Thompson, Inspiration, 268; Molleurus Couperus, ed., "The Bible Conference of 1919." Spectrum 10 (May 1979): 23-57. This position is congruent with White's own position as presented in the introduction to the Great Controversy (1888 and 1911), E. G. White, Selected Messages, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1958), 15-23.

⁴Thompson, Inspiration, 271.

1974 Bible Conference).¹ On the other hand, the proof-text method still prevailed among Adventist membership. Herold Weiss, a New Testament professor at St. Mary's College, described this approach still prevalent in the mid-1980s and particularly evident in the arguments against celebration churches:

Today the authority of Mrs. White on practical matters is invoked only when the objectives sought happen to coincide with something that she said at one time or another. And to some degree, this has become the case also in the area of doctrines. She supplies authority for whatever anyone wishes to teach, particularly in the area of esoteric knowledge. . . . Some persons claim to have authoritative answers to all these questions on the basis of statements penned by Mrs. White.²

In the same article, Weiss also declared (albeit prematurely) that this trend would probably disappear when Adventists took into consideration the work of some of their scholars. He said, "From now on, no one should be able to end a theological dialogue by giving a quotation from Mrs. White."³ We must note that if celebrationists have sometimes argued their positions by using the proof-text method, they have generally reflected Weiss's convictions and hardly ever argued their beliefs and actions by quoting Mrs. White.

Conclusion

Contradictions within Celebration Center and the Celebration Movement

Celebration Center has exhibited internal contradictions within all these shifts of emphasis. These points of dissonance have certainly contributed to the later crisis of Celebration Center and most likely, at an intuitive level at least, to some of the negative perceptions about the celebration movement. We now examine four of these major dissonances:

¹Bull and Lockhart, Seeking a Sanctuary, 31; Gordon M. Hyde, A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1974).

²Herold Weiss, "Formative Authority, Yes; Canonization, No," Spectrum 16 (August 1985): 10.

³*Ibid.*

An Evangelistic Celebration Worship in Which
God Is the Audience

In chapter 3, this comparative study of different celebration churches has shown how they have tried to promote meaningful, Spirit-led, and participatory worship services through a particular concept: God is the audience and members are the actors. If this concept encourages people to be more holistically engaged in their responses to God, it only partially reflects the distinctiveness of biblical worship.

Throughout the story of God's people, biblical worship has always been perceived, first, as rooted in the recounting of God's salvation history and, second, as anchored in the people's individual and collective responses through prescribed or free forms of expression touching all dimensions of life (spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, and social). In other words, Christ's two "liturgical" commands well summarize the essence of biblical worship: It is an *anamnesis* of salvation history ("Do this in remembrance of me--Luke 22:19"), as well as a personal and collective response that involves the whole person ("Baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit--Matt 28:19").

Biblical worship always begins with God as the actor and His people as the audience.¹ Therein lies the uniqueness and foolishness of the gospel (Matt 22:1-14) and the power of Judeo-Christian worship. First, biblical worship is a personal and collective experience that passionately engages worshippers in recounting and remembering the stories of God's actions in history through words, music, songs, prayers, dances, and/or processions. Second, biblical worship includes people's unique responses to that recounting in the here and now. It is their unique expression of love and commitment to those stories that have become their own. Through people's own expression (words, prayers, songs, silence, and rites) God is loved and adored, the community (the body of Christ) built up, and caring ministries of reconciliation freshly encouraged and released throughout the world.²

As Randolph expresses it, biblical worship is a combination of word, image, sound, gesture, and responsibilities, which generates a new understanding of the world and our place in it. "It

¹James F. White, Christian Worship in Transition (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 16; idem, The Wordliness of Worship (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 15, 58.

²White, "Worship in Our Changing Culture," 50-52.

allows an insight into reality that gives rise to patterns of behavior."¹ Biblical worship, therefore, must include both an actor/audience God and an audience/actor people. To encourage only one part of this equation, or miss its sequence, has been the weakness at Celebration Center and other celebration churches, which endangers the integrity of Christian worship. To first anchor worship in human praise, intellectual, physical, or emotional offerings threatens biblical worship by making it dependent upon human motivation and strivings for excellence. Thus is felt the need for soulful, upbeat music, powerful visual and auditory aids, gifted speakers, talented singers, conducive space, and so on. These new communication devices, the ability to meet people's needs, to speak with eloquence, and to sing with passion or pray in "the garden of prayers," run the risk of becoming the new sacraments of the body of Christ.

Robert Webber points out that singing praises is gradually becoming the new sacrament among evangelical churches, and we might add, among celebration churches. Celebrationists need to remember that even though singing, eloquence, updated mediums of communication, and the indigenization of faith are useful instruments to enhance the recounting and remembering of God's love and acts in history, they are not Christ's sacraments, the chosen symbols of biblical worship and divine involvement in human reality. A lack of clarity regarding the theory and practice of the biblical understanding of worship can only, therefore, foster dissonance and unrest.

This comparative study of celebration churches has additionally shown how they have expressed worship along the same lines as revivalist traditions, and how their worship has been viewed as the "new thing" for "doing evangelism," for "fishing" and "grabbing." This revivalistic concept of worship contradicts other aspects of the Celebration Center worship philosophy that encourage holistic expressions of love and commitment to God. In fact, these expressions are possible only for committed believers living in the life of the Spirit and could be very threatening to unbelievers.

The tension between evangelistic worship and a worship expressing the believers' deep longings and commitments can be resolved if we understand celebration worship in the context of the Isaian promise of a centripetal worship drawing believers and strangers/unbelievers alike to the Lord (Isa

¹Randolph, *God's Party*, 83.

56:6-8). If such an explanation offers fruitful reflection, it must not, however, eclipse the radical NT command of a centrifugal evangelism (Matt 28:19).

Finally, another tension expressed in celebration worship is the emphasis placed on developing a sense of fellowship (being the body of Christ) by mainly offering individualistic types of experiences. For example, singing is an individual act to be done with eyes closed, personal physical expressions and introspection. It is a private time to do business with God and be cleansed. Praying is also a personal response expressed in going, as one chooses, to the garden of prayer. Celebration worship is indeed dominated by the involvement of more worshipping actors but this, mainly and paradoxically, through private acts. Individual enthusiasm and gifts are predominantly encouraged in the group, leaving the congregation vulnerable to limit worship to a "gnostic" or "mystical" type of experience. This may only endanger the celebrationists' attempts to rediscover the Spirit whose purpose is to build up a believing community.¹

Superstar Entrepreneurs/Facilitators

A second point of dissonance in the celebration adventure lies in its concept of leadership, organization, and belief in the priesthood of all believers. We have seen how Celebration Center and celebration churches in general have been committed to exploring new ideas in Adventist ecclesiology: the church as a body/hospital, experiential worship, and an emphasis on the spiritual gifts of all believers. In venturing into new forms of church organization highly influenced by the church growth movement and the market place, celebration churches have functioned with strong charismatic entrepreneurs totally devoted to their vision and the idea of bringing change into the church. This type of leader is certainly necessary to *introduce* change in an excessively institutionalized Adventist denomination more interested in *researching and debating* about crisis or change than proactively resolving crisis and implementing changes. Within such a context, only powerful charismatic risk-takers could renew the church's worship and organization, and develop new forms of evangelism through small

¹Gordon D. Fee, Paul, the Holy Spirit, and the People of God (Hendrickson, MA: Hendrickson, 1996).

group interaction. By pressing down their ideas and using their forceful influence, these leaders were, indeed, able to introduce change.

But the forcefulness of their drive proved to be a liability to the reality of the priesthood of all believers--a concept they were committed to support.¹ For example, to facilitate the introduction of organizational changes, Simpson and other leaders introduced the idea of a governing body submissive to its leader and vision (see chapter 2). If the idea is defensible on the basis of recognizing and honoring the gift of leadership within the church, it certainly left, at least in theory, too much power and decision-making in Simpson's hands.

However, if visionary leaders skillfully redistribute the power they have been entrusted with to other leaders and their followers by carefully building up plural leadership or fostering and managing people's free initiative, they could easily escape the dissonance that neither Simpson nor Snyder avoided. Snyder's dissonance was to get caught in an authoritarian model of leadership, and Simpson's was his lack of accountability in managing plural leadership and nurturing the initiatives of all his people.

Both Simpson and Snyder seem to have been entangled in mantles of leadership more patterned after typical OT hierarchical models (kings, priests, or prophets) or examples from the marketplace (CEOs) than NT paradigms. In recent years, NT models have been understood as opening the door to plural servant leadership.² The dissonances in Simpson's and Snyder's entrepreneurial leadership styles have certainly limited the creation and the influence of new servant ministries, hindered a greater holistic participation in their worship services, and limited sound development of what could otherwise have been promising renewal within Adventism.

¹Dan Simpson, interview by author, Redlands, CA, 22 February 1992; Hawley interview in H. and B. Hawley interview, 23 April 1991; Don Hawley to Church Board Members; Corban interview, 8 May 1991; Jennifer Bottroff interview, 14 October 1994.

²Gilbert Bilezikian, "Biblical Community: Contemporary Church," Second International Leadership Conference, Willow Creek Community Church, August 1995, four pre-recorded cassettes.

Spirit-Filled "Placid" Members

The third dissonance within Celebration Center and the celebration movement is related to the leadership's dissonance expressed in those congregations. The members' participation in the worship services is still too limited (an extended praise/worship time, a garden of prayer, some dramatic feature, and possible body expressions), although recognizably stronger than in most other worship services of similar cultural background. As Paul Richardson comments, "If celebration churches took really at heart *participation*, the result would be a lot different."¹ Indeed, a healthier concept of leadership could have fostered greater participation in celebration worship services. The strong and nearly priestly roles of the worship and garden of prayer leaders have not necessarily been conducive to greater participation.

Limited participation can also be explained by how people are perceived or perceive themselves in the church: Although celebration believers are understood to be recipients of the Holy Spirit and Her gifts, they are usually called the church's *members* and not Christ's *disciples*--a distinction that seems to lead to a more passive understanding of religious life.

Discipleship, accountability, and discipline are, indeed, rarely explored in the celebration material or experience. A greater focus on these notions could have opened greater Spirit empowerment and participation in celebration worship services beyond people's personal preference--"what they feel like" or "what is comfortable to them."²

If we must admit that greater participation in celebration church services has been limited also by influences deep-seated in cerebral White Anglo cultural Adventism, celebration churches have still to disciple their worshippers into the fullness of biblical worship.

Intimacy and Dominant Male Figures

The fourth point of dissonance at Celebration Center is related to the tension between certain values modelled within the church experience: a more feminine aspect of worship which.

¹Richardson interview, 3 May 1991.

²E.g., "Celebration Worship Service," Celebration Center, Colton, CA, 23 March 1991

paradoxically, is still predominantly male in its choice of key leaders, language, and imagery. One characteristic of "worship" at Celebration Center is its "intimacy" segment that usually follows praises about and to God (see chapter 2). This time of intimacy with God allows people to open up and offer complete disclosure of their vulnerable self to God. It is a time of adoration, of listening to God's gentle voice to know the divine on a deeper level. In 1991, Ray Shelden commented about his difficulty as a man to express himself during this segment of "worship": "It just did not fit my macho image to be that intimate with God, to talk to God about my feelings, to give the Holy Spirit permission to increase my comfort zones, and understand God as the Lord of my happiness and joy but also of my tears."¹ However, if songs of intimacy usually reflect a more feminine approach to the religious experience, their words most of the time feature male imagery about God (Father, King) and macho themes of salvation (wars, battle, God's lordship, etc.). They hardly ever use inclusive language. The same paradox is evident in Simpson's preaching, which shares in the intimate (more feminine) mode but hardly ever uses inclusive language.

Even if an indiscriminate choice of female and male lay pastors, equally consecrated to the task, has indeed been an attempt at Celebration Center (or New Life Celebration Church) toward a more inclusive understanding of the religious experience, we must, however, note that the core leadership has been and still is male-dominated, despite Simpson's claims of having had female leaders at all levels of responsibilities except his own.²

Development of the Celebration Movement and Concluding Remarks

This dissertation has uncovered a process of ecclesiastical change within Adventism through one specific phenomenon: the celebration movement. This celebration phenomenon is a process not only stemming conjointly from the personal journeys and ideas of some key risk-takers but also from the response of a grass-roots movement eager to establish change within Adventism to make it more relevant for the twenty-first century. This study of celebration worship at Celebration Center and of the

¹Ray Shelden and Dyone Shelden, "On Celebration Center: Church Service," audiocassette.

²Simpson interview, 22 February 1996.

celebration movement within its own cultural context has revealed the deep ecclesiological and liturgical void out of which Adventist worship renewal has attempted to evolve in recent years.

If Simpson and Snyder never intended to start a movement, increased numbers of pastors, baby boomers, and diverse antagonists interested in this new attempt to change Adventist worship and church life (chapter 2, 3, and 4) did actually start, in Herbert Blumer's terms, a specific social movement (chapter 3). Using Blumer's taxonomy, we can now assess the celebration movement and say that it really never developed beyond phase 3--development of morale.¹ During the first phase of agitation (1986-1990)--a phase especially dramatized by the anticelebrationists' propaganda--many thousands of people, as we assessed in chapter 4, awoke to new impulses and ideas related to worship renewal within Adventism. If the First Adventist International Worship Conference in Portland, Oregon, in 1991, never really addressed the issue of celebration worship, every conference organizer and participant knew that the celebration issue was the driving force of the conference.² This conference, along with other important events (see chapter 3), and an increase of literature related to the celebration issue, all contributed to climaxing the *esprit de corps* and morale phases of the celebration movement. These events and writings not only developed solidarity, group enthusiasm, and a sense of belonging to an "in-group," but they also captured the determination of the movement to regenerate Adventism through its worship and ecclesial experimentation.³

Yet, just as agitation is inadequate for the development of a movement, so is mere reliance on an *esprit de corps* and morale. To firmly establish the celebration movement within Adventism, the next two phases would have been absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, they really never fully developed. The production of The Celebration Story videocassette is certainly the best attempt up through 1991 to develop phase 4 of the celebration movement--a group ideology. According to Blumer, this phase is fundamental to generate a well-defined ideology, establish sets of convictions, produce some

¹Blumer. "Social Movements," 2-29.

²Jacobsen interview, 2 May 1991.

³Blumer. "Social Movements," 17, 18.

weapons to defend the movement's values, and bring special words of inspiration and hope.¹ Other videocassettes yet to be released in 1991 were never produced. Phase 4 of the movement, therefore, was never completed.²

In April 1993, Dan Simpson, Dave and Irene Snyder, Lyell Heise, Jere Webb, Eoin Giller, and Alf Birch informally gathered at La Sierra University cafeteria. This meeting, held on the last day of the Second International Worship Conference, can be seen as a timid attempt to enter phase 5 of the celebration movement--a phase of tactics to gain and hold adherents as well as to reach objectives. For the first time, like-minded "celebrationist" pastors grouped to network with each other in order to spread worship renewal within Adventism. They also deliberated about the possibility of organizing a Third International Worship Conference that would be, this time, directly focused on the issues raised by the celebration experience.³ These plans, however, were never fulfilled, and phase 5 was not even entered into. Dunfield's perceptive analysis already expressed in December 1991 became a reality. The celebration movement fizzled not only because of opposition on the fringes of the church, but also because of opposition and apathy from within the main stream of the church⁴--and, we might add, because of lack of intentional leadership at the head of the movement.

To conclude, we can now summarize seven principal findings revealed by this study and outline five major implications for North American Seventh-day Adventism. The major findings are:

1. Celebration Center has uniquely attempted to explore a more multilayered approach to church life and worship within White Anglo Adventism. Modifications in worship have expressed reforms beyond cosmetic changes regarding the order of service, music style, or the use of devices such as screens and drums.

¹Ibid., 19.

²The Celebration Story, videocassette.

³Viviane Haenni, "Informal meeting with Dan and Irene Snyder, Dan Simpson, Jere Webb, Alf Birch, Eoin Giller, and Lyell Heise," La Sierra University Cafeteria, 10 April 1991, handwritten notes.

⁴Dunfield interview, 28 December 1991.

2. The celebration experience has ventured into breaking up some old Adventist expectations through its congregational trend; its emphasis on love, acceptance, and forgiveness; its different church organization and more holistic worship; and its accent on the divine presence, the Holy Spirit, and the spiritual gifts of all believers.

3. Celebration worship grows out of a certain worldview not particularly in harmony with the theological and philosophical assumptions of the years of denominational consolidation and stabilization (1920-1950) that are still predominant among antagonists (standardization, conformity, sobriety of practice, and diligent Bible study predominantly approached through a proof-text method). The celebration experience grows out of a worldview valuing: (1) God as a friend; (2) a grace versus a truth-package orientation; (3) the assurance of salvation; (3) fellowship and personal interactions; (4) informality, spontaneity, joy, imagination, and variety; and (5) the contextualization of faith.

4. Anticelebrationists have generally been perceptive in their recognition of deeper changes at stake in the celebration experience but have been mistaken in attributing them to a conspiracy within or outside of Adventism. The implemented changes by the celebration movement are reflective of powerful trends shaping American Christianity and Adventism, such as revivalistic, third wave, and baby boomer religious innovations and the convergence between the liturgical and pentecostal/charismatic movements. The Adventist celebration phenomenon is only the tip of "a huge societal and interdenominational iceberg" and, really, its controversy, "a tempest in a glass of water within White Adventist subculture."

5. This study unveils some important information on how a segment of Adventism was trying to implement change and another reacted to it. In uniquely embodying change within White North American Adventism, Celebration Center became, at times, the irrational scapegoat of people's fear/anger and sense of loss brought by societal and religious modifications. Through the celebration controversy, hundreds of thousands of people had indeed been awakened to new realities. Strategic leadership should have required that decisions be made not by default but by intent, specially at top levels of denominational leadership.

6. This study also shows that the celebration movement and the reactions against it, arise within the context of more than twenty years of progressive changes and polarized debates over the source of authority within Adventism: what is distinctively Adventist in Adventism; what is Christian in Adventism; what is fundamentalist in Adventism; and false dichotomies related to sources of authority: reason or revelation, the individual or the church.

7. Finally, the celebration movement and the reactions against it, can be both understood as grass-roots attempts to bring renewal and reformation within White Anglo North American Adventism. Together they might have very well been a prophetic voice within Adventism at the end of this century. Together they certainly contributed to push Adventism toward the twenty first century. There seems to be a consensus among leading Adventist thinkers that "Adventism will never be the same" and that the celebration phenomenon "has forced Adventism to grapple with the issue of worship." Thanks to the celebration controversy "the old wineskins of formalism and uniformity of the years of Adventism's consolidation have broken," "alternative worship styles have been created," and "bold new church structures, methodologies, experiential awareness in prayer, the power of the Holy Spirit, and small groups have been explored."

Five major principal implications arise from the findings of this study. They might inform White Anglo American Adventism of possible future directions:

1. It is timely for Adventism to recount its own history, apply to worship its holistic approach to reality, and investigate new models of hermeneutics, ecclesiology, church structure, and sacramental liturgy.
2. The celebration controversy has evidenced a need for Adventism to urgently reclaim and actively live some basic Christian beliefs such as Christ's teaching regarding confrontation and reconciliation (Matt 5: 22-24, 18: 15-19).
3. Adventism is particularly in need to intentionally clarify certain issues at the grass-root level in order to develop a new creative unity within Adventism. Some of these issues are: (1) worship/sacramental worship; (2) the incarnation as God's model of involvement; (3) the corporate dimensions of faith; (4) a biblical hermeneutics capable of guiding Adventists into the twenty first century

and transcending a foundationalist approach; and (5) the false dichotomy between the sacred and the secular.

4. As mentioned, some common convictions of pro and anticelebrationists could inform Adventism of possible new directions for the future and offer grounds of dialogue and reconciliation. Some of the messages heard in the celebration controversy have been: (1) a call to deeper renewal and reformation; (2) a reevaluation of the church hierarchy and political system; and (3) the importance of the role and leadership of the laity. Beyond those conscious messages is the need to rethink the limits of a foundationalist, pragmatic, or literalist approach to biblical hermeneutics.

5. Finally, the study reveals that White Anglo Adventism needs second-level change. It does not need cosmetic changes within the system but a change of system. This last implication is therefore a call for prophets and servants among the community to boldly open up to the Spirit, stand, and be willing to reevaluate their hermeneutics, doctrinal and liturgical families, as well as system of church organization. It is particularly a call to develop stronger proactive scholarly and administrative leadership to (1) serve; (2) provide serious historical, sociological, and theological answers; (3) explore new paradigms; (4) experiment and test them; (5) engage in team work; and (6) mentor new experiences. The celebration controversy has certainly unveiled the necessity to enter within Adventism a phase of closer action and collaboration between scholars/musicians and administrators/pastors. It is a call to dare venturing beyond Adventist perfectionist impulses and realize that mistakes are part of a process of change and redemption.

Finally it is timely for Adventism to explore the practical dimensions of community life--the BODY of CHRIST. White Anglo Adventism would benefit by adding to its typical functional ecclesiology more ontological dimensions (Eph 2:22) and experiment with models of church, such as the mystical, sacramental, or servant community models.

Lyell Heise's plea seems particularly relevant when he calls Adventists, and, we may add, especially Adventist leaders, to "recapture" the initiative of worship and church renewal started at Celebration Center and by the celebration movement.¹ The time is still auspicious for the deepening and

¹Heise interview, 20 August 1991.

the maturation of a worship and church renewal in the Adventist Church. The time is ripe to ask scholars to write creatively in the framework of Adventism and for worship leaders to boldly experiment. Now is the time to realize that worship celebrates the vitality by which we enjoy life, the values by which we govern life, and the vision by which we transform life.¹ Values are changing, innovative visions for the future are being shaped, and fresh vitalities are emerging. Will there be any more jesters?

¹Randolph, God's Party, 18.

A PERSONAL AFTERWORD

Thank you Dan, Dave, Ladd, Eoin, Kal, Tim, Bev, and other celebration leaders for being God's jesters in His Adventist court. People arguing against you and your experiences because of some dissonances seem to forget, as Cox declares, that

the great breakthroughs in the history of theology have always introduced notes of cacophony and dissonance. They have been discontinuous (heretical) from the perspective of their immediate contemporaries. Only in retrospect do we trace out the continuity and include them in the unfolding drama of development.¹

Thank you, Dan, for daring to reintroduce in fantasy-hungry and ritually emasculated White Anglo Adventism some sense of celebration. The journey is yet to be completed, and the last laugh has yet to burst. Now our walk might be to detect life beneath the crust and embers in the ashes of the celebration movement.

Here and there a small flame may even break through. Nevertheless, the new church we look for need not come entirely from the churches of today. It certainly will not. It will come . . . as new congeries of elements, some from the churches, some from outside, some from those fertile interstices between. And it will assume a shape we can hardly predict, though we can sometimes see its outlines--in fantasy.²

Thank you, Dan, for cracking open the doors of festivity and fantasy within Adventism and helping us rejoin the great circle of dances before God.

¹Cox, The Feast of Fools, 137

²*Ibid.*, 97

EPILOGUE

In 1992, and at the beginning 1993, four significant developments, with varying implications on worship, can be discerned at Celebration Center. These developments occurred within the context of some persistent managerial problems recognized by Simpson himself. Until November 1992, he says, he searched for the right manager who would be able to organize the celebration vision. Finally, Steve Bottroff was appointed executive pastor in a matters of weeks. He rapidly advised Simpson to become more involved in the managerial affairs of the church in order to be a more rounded leader. Simpson comments on the circumstances related to that request: "I am a people person. I do not know how to organize. But the Lord gave me the desire to do it. I have taken that responsibility. I am happy to do my part. But I am still saying "send me someone, Lord, to help me."¹

At that very time, four significant developments took place at Celebration Center:

1. The membership and general attendance declined.²
2. A professional musician was added to the staff: Jim Teel from the King's Heralds.

He was chosen not because of any deliberate reflection related to a specific philosophy of music but because his style was compatible with the one developed by celebration lay musicians. Teel worked for two and a half years (March 1992 to September 1994) helping musicians to appreciate different styles of music. He describes his work at Celebration Center as much "diplomatic as artistic."³ He sought to bring peace between different musicians contesting the appropriate style of music to enhance worship. Teel primarily attempted to teach musicians to see themselves as teams serving the congregation to facilitate the people's worship. Teel familiarized the musicians at Celebration Center with different styles

¹Simpson interview, 8 February 1993.

²Dan Simpson, interview by author, Barrington, IL, 19 June 1994, hand-written notes.

³Jim Teel, interview by author, Berrien Springs, MI, 10 April 1996, hand-written notes.

of contemporary music (pops, folk, rock, jazz, and Black gospel) in order to minister to the musical diversity of Celebration Center. He trained four teams and introduced new songs from Integrity, Maranatha, Vineyard, his own collection, and even some "worshipful" hymns. Teel defines "worshipful" hymns as hymns that are not primarily educational but experiential in nature and addressing God directly. In other words, hymns that not only favor an experience of the mind but also of the soul and the spirit. The selection of hymns was generally limited to the ones flowing with contemporary songs, directed to and facilitating intimacy with God.¹

3. An alternative worship style called the "open church" was begun. Launched on 6 February 1993, this experimental worship style was first the result of the study of Rutz's book The Open Church by both staff and lay leaders.² It was also the work and the implementation of some leaders of the worship committee who felt displaced by Teel's arrival. Finally it was the expression of a growing dissatisfaction among members who saw celebration worship as too passive, program-oriented, and lacking in audience participation. If Simpson welcomed this alternative parallel worship under the umbrella of Celebration Center, he did not nurture it and, within a few months, it stopped. Simpson comments: "It was one of our experiments that did not work!"³

4. A new vision at Celebration Center was cast on 3 February 1993. Simpson recognized that he was going through a period of transition. His recent participation at the Saddleback Community Church Leadership Conference had challenged his "too narrow mission to former Adventists." Reflecting on Rick Warren's teaching at the conference, Simpson began to see how he had to broaden his mission and expand it to the "seekers" and the "unchurched." A week later, a poster at his Celebration office declared, "We Are Changing Everything, Almost." On 3 April 1993, Celebration Center's fourth birthday, Simpson announced in the church service the broadening of Celebration Center's vision statement: As Jesus started His ministry by focusing on the twelve tribes of Israel and later expanded it to the world, so the Celebration Center. Simpson commented, "We are just taking another

¹Ibid.

²James H. Rutz, The Open Church (Colorado Springs, CO: SeedSowers, 1992).

³Simpson interview, 22 February 1996.

step." After targeting former Adventists, Celebration would now encompass a wider mission--to reach the unchurched. On 4 April 1993, at "The Second International Worship Conference" at La Sierra University, Simpson, in collaboration with Ray Shelden, directly related this new mission to the need of changing and shaping "the way of doing worship" to reach the unchurched.¹ For over a year, Simpson's preaching was particularly targeted to reach the unchurched. Then one day, he said, I realized that

this was ridiculous. I don't know how to preach to secular people. When I look back on my ministry, I have always spoken to former, unhappy, or questioning Adventists. I have never appealed to non-Adventists, to seekers. Why do I think I can? I still believe that it is a mission of the church that the Lord calls his people to. . . . However, I believe that some churches exist for the purpose of reaching the lost sheep of the house of Israel. So, it just hit me. This is foolish, I am trying to be a squirrel when I am a duck.²

The following years (1994 and 1995) were again years of change, but also of deeper turmoil, and even depression for Simpson. Five significant developments must be associated with those years:

1. Three changes of location significantly contributed to another significant reduction of the attendance at Celebration Center. In May 1994, Celebration Center moved out of its rented space in Colton. For three months, it first stayed at the Loma Linda gymnasium, a few miles from its original location. Then, it temporarily relocated at the Oasis, a refurbished citrus-packing center in Redlands, and finally settled in another remodelled warehouse in the same city. Each of these moves increased the loss of participants. Simpson estimates that roughly 90 percent of his original congregation was lost in those relocations and that the lowest attendance at some points was around three hundred.³

2. A new focus was given to the Gospel. In 1994 and 1995, Simpson refocused on addressing former Adventists and preached over a year specifically on the books of Romans and Ephesians. The study of those books brought people closer to the Lord and, as never before, "deeper into the Gospel message."

¹Dan Simpson, "The Heart of God," Colton, CA, 3 April 1993, audiocassette; *idem*, "The Heart of God," 3 April 1993, sermon handout; Dan Simpson and R. Shelden, "The Worship Pilgrimage at Celebration Center."

²Simpson interview, 22 February 1996.

³*Ibid.*

3. Leadership turmoil and disaffection. Over a period of two years, Simpson lost all of his original leaders. In the fall of 1994, Simpson asked Pastor Don Long to leave. The following months, Steve Bottroff, Jim Teel, Charlie Wear, Gayle Simmons, and other key leaders all left because of managerial confusion, philosophical disagreement, embitterment, or relocation to other appointments. Finally, in the fall of 1995, Simpson had to ask the last person from his "original" core leadership, Pastor John Sisk, to resign in order to preserve the integrity of the leadership at Celebration Center. Simpson explains the managerial confusion of those years by two major factors. First, it was the result of his lack of proactive leadership during first years at Celebration Center in Colton. He explains:

I took so many hits denominationally and from other different sources. . . . It was so new to me. I did not know how to handle this. I unconsciously backed away from it and put somebody in front of me. Steve was the first in front to carry the load. Then, it was Charlie. These people were admirable. I am so proud of them. I appreciate them for what they did. But what happened was that the people in the church still saw me as the leader. But actually these other men were leading. . . . We were creating confusion in the minds of people. People don't like confusion. They want clarity, they want to know who the leader is, where the buck stops. None of us could have verbalized then what happened. Now I can, now I see.¹

Simpson also explains part of the confusion prevailing at Celebration as related to his own internal conflicts and lack of certain skills. He declares:

When things get tough, I don't really know how to get us through. Or, when people are going through pain, I don't know how to get them through. I want to but I don't know how. That is probably why I am not the pastor of a larger church, because there is conflict inside of me. . . . I think I am a good preacher, leader, but I create too much tension, dissonance, disease. People don't like that. . . . I remember studying in college Paul and Moses. Paul had to be three years and Moses forty years alone. . . . In order for God to accomplish in us what He did with those people back then, He needs to do it while we are busy doing ministry and having demands on our lives. It is just hell. It hurts. It is painful but . . . the work of the Lord still gets done! . . . The guys who achieve great things have clarity of vision, they are focused. There is no dissonance in their leadership, in the people they work with, maybe at times but then it is well taken care of. The human mind doesn't like dissonances. People go away.²

During these years of turmoil, the organization at Celebration Center changed somehow. Simpson no longer exercised the final authority in matters of church decision. A church council modelled after the one of the Willow Creek Community Church became the ultimate deciding body of the church. Twelve members were selected according to the biblical principles of elders and

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

deacons. These members collaborate for life for the well-being of the church unless they take themselves out of the church council or the latter removes them for not meeting anymore biblical requirements.¹

4. Simpson experienced depression. In March 1995, despite a time of spiritual refreshment through the study of the book of Romans, Simpson fell deeper and deeper into depression. He remembers, he could not stand the whole thing. He hated ministry. He hated everything about it. He still liked to preach but he hated everything else. He wanted a whole year off.² On the advice of his new staff, he left in March for a whole month, not expecting significant change. Simpson, however, soon experienced in Toronto at the Vineyard Ministries one of the most important moments in his life. He recalls:

I did not speak in tongues, shake, or make funny noises. . . . One night, the last night I was there, I was just sitting in the audience. The pastor to whom I had been talking to before the meeting started, leaned over to me during worship and said: " Dan, God has taken your visions away from you so that you can concentrate on knowing Him and leading your people to know Him." I began to weep. I knew I had heard from God. It was one of those defining moments. I did not stay for ministry time that night. I went back to my hotel room, because I knew I had heard from God.³

Simpson's new awareness about himself and his vocation did not lift up the depression. It still lingered until September 1995. Then, one Sunday morning, as he sat in the Saddleback Church, he was delivered from the oppression of the depression. He recaptures this moment of grace:

I sat there and God did His thing. He poured into me all the original energy I used to have. During that one service, it just came. The depression was uplifted. I told Rick [Saldana, the new executive pastor], "I am back, I am back." I told Darlene [Simpson's wife], "I am back, I am back." It was unbelievable! I knew it would happen but I did not know when and how. I have been like that since then. I am back in charge here. I am again the leader. . . . The energy is there. The excitement is there. The drive is there.⁴

5. A new vision was implemented. In November 1995, Simpson attended a Conference on Prayer led by Jack Hayford to honor the conviction he had received in Toronto and to learn how to better lead his people to the heart of God. Since that time, Celebration Center has regained a new

¹Dan Simpson, interview by author, Berrien Springs, MI, 9 April 1996.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

start. According to Simpson, the membership has not yet grown, but it is steady (around five hundred) and "it is healthier than ever." As of February 1996, about a hundred persons come every Friday evening to worship, pray in small groups (for about half an hour), be refreshed through a short homily, and pray again collectively in the garden of prayer (as long as people want, one or two hours). When Simpson was asked how he envisioned the future and his old dreams, here are his words and final remarks for this dissertation:

I don't know. I have a picture in my head. But I don't know if it is God's picture in fact. I see people becoming Spirit-filled people and a certain portion of them gifted in healings and other miracles. I believe there is the coming of a time when the baptism of the Holy Spirit will take place. And the baptism of the Holy Spirit is about spreading the good news about Jesus, about giving a passion for weary people to rest. . . . I keep my old dreams on the shelves right now. I still have them. I don't know what to think about them. The Lord has not energized them in any way. At this point we, I believe it is the Lord's vision to teach Celebration Center to pray and encourage them to believe that God answers prayers. . . . What we have happening at Celebration Center now is new. It is new for me and anybody. God is doing a new thing.¹

¹Ibid.

Is there a thing of which it is said,
"See, this is new"?
It has already been,
in the ages before us.
The people of long ago are not remembered,
nor will there be any remembrance
of people yet to come
by those who come after them.

Ecc1 1:10-11
NRSV

APPENDIX

 CALLED TO

OREGON CONFERENCE
13455 SE 7TH AVENUE
CLACKAMAS, OR 97015-9065

INTERNATIONAL ADVENTIST WORSHIP CONFERENCE

Sunnyside SDA Church
10501 SE Market Street
Portland, Oregon
April 17-20, 1991

Workshop Information

1. **Making worship inclusive / PRESENTER: Monte Sahlin**

Age, gender and multicultural inclusiveness will be discussed. The needs and expectations of youth and their involvement in worship will receive special attention.

2. **Worship: The leadership team / PRESENTER: Hyveth Williams**

Hear from a successful SDA woman pastor how her worship leadership team at the Boston Temple is giving unified and dynamic direction to this congregation's worship experiences. How are they doing it? What leadership functions are involved?

3. **Strategies for worship revitalization / PRESENTER: Eoin Giller**

How can you become a worship renewalist? Which strategies have been found to be the most effective to facilitate responsible change and revitalization of a congregation's worship experience?

4. **Worship renewal in a youth-oriented church / PRESENTER: Greg Nelson**

Walking the tightrope of facilitating worship events that are relevant to young people (at Auburn Academy) without making other constituent groups in that congregation feeling disenfranchised, is what this workshop is all about. Hear about some of the innovative things happening at Auburn that have brought worship renewal to that church in recent years.

5. **Touching God through worship / PRESENTER: Don Jacobsen**

God is both the transcendent and immanent One. The former reflects

-more-

His holiness. The latter presents His friendly face. How may worship be facilitated so that worshipers are put in touch with both of these dimensions of His presence?

6. **The pastor/musician team / PRESENTERS:** Kathy Rosenquist, Bill Bossert & Kathy Manley

The relationship between the pastor and musician/s, their respective duties relating to the planning function for a worship event, and how they work together during the service to achieve an optimal worship atmosphere, will be discussed.

7. **Worship themes in Adventist theology / PRESENTER:** Gordon Bietz

Examine those theological foundations of Adventism that are particularly instructive to our practice of worship. Explore various possibilities of how these themes may be skillfully blended into our weekly worship services.

8. **Integrating Sabbath School and worship / PRESENTER:** Kevin Wilfley

Making the Sabbath School and worship events complementary to each other add strength to both. How may this be achieved? Models that have been tried and work will be presented and discussed.

9. repeat of #2

10. **Worship, the Holy Spirit and prayer / PRESENTER:** Garrie Williams

Some devotional aspects of worship will be discussed. Learn how a legitimate and sweet communion with the Holy Spirit can be experienced in corporate worship. How may a worshipping congregation's prayers be made meaningful and spiritually uplifting? Helpful and practical examples will be considered.

11. **Prelude to postlude: An integrated event / PRESENTER:** Craig Dossman

Craig believes that true worship is not a race to the sermon, but rather a total enjoyment of every inch of the journey. How may the various elements of worship be blended to facilitate this journey?

12. **The communion service as worship / PRESENTER:** Les Neal

Explore the possibilities of how this significant event may be transformed from a perfunctory ritual (which it has become for some worshipers), to a deeply worshipful experience for young and old alike?

13. **Worship styles: An ecclesiological perspective / PRESENTER:** Gary Patterson

Views on how we should worship -- whether consciously or

-more-

unconsciously -- are determined by our understanding of the nature of the Christian church in general and the Adventist church in particular. Explore six ecclesiological models that shape people's thinking about worship and that are instructive to the discussion on worship within Adventism.

14. **The pilgrimage of a celebration church / PRESENTER: David Snyder**

Walk with Dave Snyder over the terrain of his pastoral journey during the past six years. Let him share his insights with you about issues related to worship that have contributed to the growth of the Milwaukie Church, now known as the New Life Celebration Church - Seventh-day Adventist.

15. **Music in worship: the classical/traditional perspective / PRESENTERS: Charles White, Melvin West, & Harold Lickey**

Some people prefer a more traditional approach to worship as far as worship music and the use of musical instruments are concerned. What are some of the philosophical presuppositions that undergird these preferences? Their relevance for worship today will be addressed by the worship team of the Sunnyside Church.

16. **Ellen White counsels about worship / PRESENTER: Glenn Munson**

The most oft-misquoted, or controversial, as well as some very positive Spirit of Prophecy statements about worship will be examined and contextualized. The use of Ellen White's writings in the current debate about worship will be discussed.

17. **Baby Boomers and worship / PRESENTER: Monte Sahlin**

Make yourself aware of BB's needs and expectations about worship and how you can help to make their participation in it as meaningful as possible.

18. **What I've learned about worship at Willow Creek Community Church / PRESENTER: Joe Englekemier**

Hear a first-hand account from a moderate SDA pastor about what he has critically observed, but also believes SOAs can learn about worship from fellow Christians in this growing Chicago church.

19. repeat of #10

20. repeat of #4

21. **The heritage of Black worship / PRESENTER: Craig Dossman**

The theology of Black worship, its underlying presuppositions, and the dynamics that are peculiar to Black worship, as well as how these are facilitated by the worship leader, will be explored and discussed.

22. **Church art/aesthetics and worship / PRESENTERS: Darold Bigger & Tom Emmerson**

-more-

How may the worship environment enhance one's appreciation for the finer things of life? The kinds of things that can be effectively deployed as symbols of beauty will be discussed. Appropriate criteria and relevant principles will be examined. Ways in which a congregation may be sensitized in this area will be considered.

23. Worship patterns in the Psalms / PRESENTER: Doug Clark

Establish your worship leadership on a strong Scriptural foundation. Explore the rich variety of worshiping expressions in the Psalms. What are the worship motifs that inspired OT worshipers and can do the same for your congregation today?

24. Music, overheads, and slide production / PRESENTERS: Paul & Corleen Johnson

A show and tell of overhead transparencies and/or slides to project readable words of songs on screens during worship events will be featured. Learn about what's commercially available in this area. Selection criteria for building a repertoire of such materials, or producing your own without violating copyright laws, will be discussed.

25. repeat of #3

26. repeat of #5

27. repeat of #11

28. The worship service and the family / PRESENTERS: Harvey & Kathy Corwin

Discover how the notion of family, and leadership by, and involvement of families (including children), can be given expression in SDA worship services.

29. repeat of #14

30. Special and seasonal worship events / PRESENTER: Leslie Bumgardner

Learn from a successful SDA woman pastor with wide experience in this area how special and seasonal events can be transformed into very worshipful experiences in any congregation.

31. repeat of #13

32. How to assess and respond to different worship preferences / PRESENTER: Lloyd Perrin

Some theological and other criteria that people use to establish and defend their own worship preferences will be examined and analyzed. It will help you as a worship leader to assess and respond responsibly to different people's feelings and desires.

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Correspondence

Anonymous letters to each addressee are listed chronologically and under the addressee's name.

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