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Seventh-day Adventist Mission to Immigrants from 1920-1965: An Exploration of Immigration Trends, Laws, and the Church's Missional Response

As I have testified for years, if we were quick in discerning the opening providences of God, we should be able to see in the multiplying opportunities to reach many foreigners in America a divinely appointed means of rapidly extending the third angel's message into all the nations of earth. God in his providence has brought men to our very doors and thrust them, as it were, into our arms, that they might learn the truth, and be qualified to do a work we could not do in getting the light before men of other tongues. (Ellen White 1914:4)

Introduction

For nearly fifty years, Ellen White advocated, spoke, and wrote about the importance of reaching immigrants coming into America during her lifetime. I wrote in a recent article (Wells 2019:185-199) about the correlation between the waves of migration, Ellen White's comments on the matter, and the response of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in evangelizing the new arrivals. The quote above is her summary statement on the matter at the end of her life.

In the previous article, there were three key items discovered in the research. First, as the church grew in its ministry to other language-speaking immigrants in North America, the ideas of mission also grew. Second, there was a repeated call over the course of fifty years for more laborers to work with foreigners in America. Finally, the mission strategy began with

tracts and publications. As conversions grew, young people were educated and equipped to work in ministry for the multiplication and expansion of ministry (198).

Some of the questions posed in the previous article (2019:198) will be considered in this paper, namely, how did the North American Foreign Department change and adapt to the trends of immigration? What advances were made in the department's mission to immigrants? What were the models of ministry that were utilized by the North American Foreign Department? This research is a follow-up to that article in that it explores the trends of immigration, immigration law, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church's missional response to immigrants between the years of 1920 and 1965. Understanding the societal context surrounding immigration and immigration law can help inform how to understand the mission strategy for reaching immigrants.

Researching this extensive time period will be conducted in four specific stages. The first section considers immigration trends and statistics from 1920 to 1965. This will help inform the context and setting for understanding the Seventh-day Adventist response to immigrants. The next section is an overview of the immigration laws during the nearly five decades of immigration. In the third section, a review looking at the development and history of the North American Foreign Department seeks to explore and understand how the SDA Church adapted to the changing times. The last section attempts to discover what the mission strategy was for the Foreign Department.

When considering this topic of research there are a few delimitations that need to be specified. First, numerous books have been written on the socio-cultural trends, which prompted the imposition of immigration restriction (Bayor 2016; Daniels 2004; Hartmann 1979; Kennedy; 1964; Krautt 1982; Reimers 1992; Soerens and Yang 2018; Tempo 2008; J. Yang 2020; P. Yang 1995). Much more can be written on this, but due to the complexity and depth of the trends and history, I will be limiting the discussion about the socio-cultural context that prompted the immigration laws to brief highlights and summaries of key forces behind the laws and what the laws did to impact immigration. Another delimitation to this study is that it is primarily looking at European immigration coming into North America. This view is admittedly rather Euro-centric. One factor for this delimitation is that western hemisphere immigration did not become a growing concern until World War II (WWII) (Reimers 1992:31-36). Western hemisphere immigration has a deep and rich history and is vital to understanding American history and should not be neglected. However, the focus of this article will not place as much emphasis on western hemisphere immigration because it was not codified into law until 1965 (García

2016:67-85; Reimers 1992:37; P. Yang 1995:14-15). Between the years of 1920 and 1965 there was also a significant migration of Blacks from the southern parts of the US to the northern states. This is an important area of study. Although this paper will be limited to matters of eastern hemisphere immigration (primarily Europe), it is important to at least mention the significance of African American migration within the U.S. Joe Trotter points out that between 1920 and 1965, that there were two great Black migrations. Some three million Blacks migrated from the rural and urban south to urban centers in the north and west before WWII and another three million moved north and west by the 1970s (2016:90, 93). Much more can also be learned about Asian immigration and the Asian experience in the U.S., but this paper is unable to incorporate all of these details in a short article. Brief mentions will be made about Asians more generally, but since their exclusions to citizenship and barred entry by the Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882, the Gentlemen's Agreement, 1907, and the Barred Zone Act of 1917 where all Asian migration was finally and fully barred entrance, except Filipinos, the place and role of Asian immigration does not come into view until the 1940s and 1950s (Hsu 2016:53-57; Soerens and Yang 2018:52, 55; P. Yang 1995:10-12). It is important to note that the presence and role of Asian immigrants in the United States is another area of great research and one of great importance in U.S. immigration history.

A major limitation to the study is that there are not enough written documents about the North American Foreign Department and its subsequent changes to provide enough material for a thorough understanding. With the main sources being books on general SDA history, General Conference Committee (GC) Minutes, General Conference (GC) *SDA Yearbooks*, and one publication by Louis Halswick in 1946 about the history and role of the North American Foreign Department, enough has been gleaned to get a general understanding of the Foreign Departments growth and changes. Another limitation is that missiological understanding on immigrants and diasporas have made great gains in understanding migration since the 1960s. Given the advancement in understanding and changes in missiological approaches, it can be seen how the Adventist Church's missional considerations of reaching immigrants reflect the evangelistic and mission models present at its time. Finally, out of consideration, much of SDA work with immigrants leading up until 1965 appears to have a general "whiteness" to it, in that the dominant focus was on northern and western Europeans. Just as will be observed below, southern and eastern European immigrants were not welcomed publicly and, while mission efforts were made to reach them with the Adventist message, the primacy and focus of such are relegated to a simple clause of "miscellaneous languages" under the departmental organization (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1922:15; 1930:9).

Immigration Trends and Statistics: 1920-1965

Throughout U.S. History, numerous waves of immigrants have flowed into the “new world.” In reality, a fair understanding of the history of the United States is incomplete without considering the numerous and varied trends of migration. The first major wave of immigration, often called “old immigration,” is commonly referred to as happening from 1820-1860, and totaled about 4.9 million persons (P. Yang 1995:10; Hoerder 2016:42). The second wave of immigration began in 1860 and ended in 1880, with about 5.1 million total immigrants (P. Yang 1995:10). Between 1880 and 1900, again a third major wave of immigration occurred which totaled some 8.9 million persons. And then the last and largest of the waves of immigration, often termed “new immigrants,” occurred from 1900 to 1915 in which some 13.4 million people immigrated to the United States (P. Yang 1995:11; Hoerder 2016:43, 44). These migration waves are marked as such because the numbers of immigrants peaked into the hundreds of thousands and millions in different decades, with the later waves being far greater in terms of total numbers. They are also noted as being different in the make-up of the people who immigrated to the U.S. The early waves (1830-1880) of migrants were mostly northern and western Europeans and Protestants, namely German, English, Scotch, Irish (Catholic), Danish, and Scandinavian (P. Yang 1995, 10; Hoerder 2016, 42). The later waves (1880-1915) were mostly Southern and Eastern Europeans, for example: Italians, Slavic peoples, Romanians, Russian Jews, Polish, and Ukrainians, who were predominantly Catholic or Jewish, and of vastly different cultural backgrounds than the more predominantly white Northern and Western Europeans (P. Yang 1995:11; Hoerder 2016:43, 44). The differences in migration patterns noted above are important to understanding how immigration laws developed. These changing dynamics of who was immigrating into America also impacted how the SDA Church responded in its mission activities.

With a brief review of the various waves of migration, it is time to consider what migration looked like beginning in 1920. In table 1, the total number of immigrants entering the U.S. are tabulated for each decade. In the decade leading up to the first immigration restriction law, total immigration was very high. Just as previous decades saw large numbers of immigrants, this decade was no different. The vast numbers of immigrants arrived primarily before World War I. Hoerder points out that immigration was largely on hold during the war years (see table 2) (2016:46, 47). When the first immigration laws began to take effect in the 1920s not only did the total number of immigrants decrease, but the identity of migrants shifted from southern and eastern Europe back to northern and western Europe, the more favored and preferred nationalities (P. Yang 1995:13).

Table 1: Immigration by the Decade into the United States: 1911-1970

Decade:	Total Number:
1911-1920	5,735,811
1921-1930	4,107,209
1931-1940	528,431
1941-1950	1,035,039
1951-1960	2,515,479
1961-1970	3,321,677

Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000*, U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, DC, Table 1, 18.

Table 2: Yearly Immigration: 1911-1970 (in millions)

1911: (5.7)	1921: (4.1)	1931: (0.5)	1941: (1.0)	1951: (2.5)	1961: (3.3)
'11: 878,587	'21: 805,228	'31: 97,139	'41: 51,776	'51: 205,717	'61: 271,344
'12: 838,172	'22: 309,556	'32: 35,576	'42: 28,781	'52: 265,520	'62: 283,763
'13: 1,197,892	'23: 522,919	'33: 23,068	'43: 23,725	'53: 170,434	'63: 306,260
'14: 1,218,480	'24: 706,896	'34: 29,470	'44: 28,551	'54: 208,177	'64: 292,248
'15: 326,700	'25: 294,314	'35: 34,956	'45: 38,119	'55: 237,790	'65: 296,697
'16: 298,826	'26: 304,488	'36: 36,329	'46: 108,721	'56: 321,625	'66: 323,040
'17: 295,403	'27: 335,175	'37: 50,244	'47: 147,292	'57: 326,867	'67: 361,972
'18: 110,618	'28: 307,255	'38: 67,895	'48: 170,570	'58: 253,265	'68: 454,448
'19: 141,132	'29: 279,678	'39: 82,998	'49: 188,317	'59: 260,686	'69: 358,579
'20: 430,001	'30: 241,700	'40: 70,756	'50: 249,187	'60: 265,398	'70: 373,326

Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000*, U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, DC, 2002. Table 1, 18.

Finally, as the 1920s move into the 1930s, migration was impacted by the Great Depression. As can be seen in the two previous tables, total migration dropped significantly. This was partly due to the passing of the Johnson-Reed Act, which is also known as the National Origins Act or the Immigration Act of 1924. It began enforcement in full force in 1929 (Soerens and Yang 2018:56; P. Yang 1995:13; Zolberg 2006:258-263). Though

the Johnson-Reed Act limited immigration, the most important causes for fewer overall immigration numbers is because of the national and international impact of the Great depression and WWII (P. Yang 1995:13-14). Not until the 1940s, and mostly after WWII, does migration into the U.S. begin to increase. This was due to a changing of numerous policies under President Truman and the effects of displacement that took place during WWII. The restrictionist laws of the 1920s were still enforced in the late 1940s during which a wave of new migrants, refugees, and displaced persons, were resettled under presidential orders, thus evading immigration quotas (Daniels 2004:81; Reimers 1992:22-24). Finally, the 1950s and 1960s saw a return to more consistent flows of immigration into the U.S. These were the result of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, which both reaffirmed the quota's set in the 1920s and granted the ability for Asians, beyond Filipinos, to migrate again into the U.S., although in limited quantities (P. Yang 1995:14).

The peak decade with the highest number of foreign-born persons living in the United States was 1910 with 14.7 percent of the total US population identifying as being born outside of the US. Due in part to WWI and then the Immigration Acts of the 1920s, the percentage and ratio of foreign-born persons steadily declined until it bottomed out at only 4.7 percent of the U.S. population in 1970. Even though immigration was beginning to rebound in the 1960s (see table 2), numbers were much lower than what had been experienced before. Table 3 below charts those changing trends. With each decade the changing trends of immigrants and the pace at which they acculturated into the stew pot of American culture resulted in diminishing the "foreignness" of persons in America as well as the nature in which the SDA Church conducted its outreach. Daniels notes that the significant reduction in foreign-born population is because many immigrants were older when they arrived than in previous years and fewer entered between 1930 and 1970 (2004:4). Moreover, more people entered in the first decade of the 20th century, 8.8 million, than in the four decades leading up to 1970 which only totaled 7.3 million (4).

Both the trends of immigration and sheer numbers changed significantly between 1920 and 1965. By 1965, when the Hart-Cellars Act was passed and finally took effect in 1968, immigration was opened up based upon fair treatment of every nation and no longer upon the restrictionist arguments, which informed the earlier immigration quotas based on race (P. Yang 1995:15). For the first time in nearly 100 years, America's doors were opened again to immigration from Asia, Africa, and beyond.

Table 3: Foreign-Born population and their Percentage of the U.S. Population, 1910-1970

Year:	Foreign-Born Population:	Percent of U.S. Population:
1910	13,515,900	14.7
1920	13,920,700	13.2
1930	14,204,100	11.6
1940	11,594,900	8.8
1950	10,347,400	6.9
1960	9,738,100	5.4
1970	9,619,300	4.7

Source: Gibson, Campbell, and Kay Jung. 2006. Working Paper No. 81, Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850 to 2000. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau. Table 1, 26.

Immigration Laws Influencing Migratory Flow

Entire books have been written on the subject of immigration law and its development and changes in U.S. History (Bayor 2016; Daniels 2004; Hartmann 1979; J. Yang 2020; Kennedy; 1964; Krautt 1982; Reimers 1992; Soerens and Yang 2018; Tempo 2008; P. Yang 1995). This research is not intended to be comprehensive in detail but to provide a succinct yet accurate reflection of the development of laws restricting immigration from 1920 to 1965.

To be fair, the first discussions about immigration occurred in the very early years of the United States (Zolberg 2006:85-87). As immigration grew in waves during the 19th century, leaders, politicians, political groups, and business leaders began to speak about the issue. The first immigration restriction law was passed in 1882. It was called the Chinese Exclusion Act and effectively barred any further immigration of Chinese laborers (Soerens and Yang 2018:52; P. Yang 1995:10-12). This was prompted because of the fears and prejudices of those on the west coast of the United States. This exclusion was enacted for ten years at a time and was renewed every decade until 1943. The second major move to restrict immigration was the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 which forbade the entrance of Japanese laborers into America and, shortly after, Koreans. Following these restrictions, another major move was the 1917 Immigration Act, also known as the Literacy Law, which created the Asiatic Barred Zone that prevented all Asian immigration from East Asia to the Middle East from

entry. In 1924, the Johnson-Reed Act “prohibited the entrance of aliens ineligible for citizenship” which was in agreement to the 1790 Nationality Act which limited citizenship and naturalization to “free white persons” (Hsu 2016:54; P. Yang 1995:10-12). Other than Filipinos, who had a small immigration quota because they were a colony of America, all Asians could not enter the U.S.

The rise of anti-Asian, -southern, and -eastern European immigration arose from the presence of xenophobia, bigotry, racism, and the pseudo-science of eugenics as it related to white race superiority (J. Yang 2020:30-32, 35-39; Soerens and Yang 2018:56). As the restrictionist or nativist (which is how the movement of race superiority, bigotry, and xenophobia was commonly referred to) movement grew to promote anti-immigration laws, their efforts eventually won out resulting in the following laws: 1917 Immigration Act, Immigration Restriction Act of 1921 and 1922 and the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 (Daniels 2004:45-50; Soerens and Yang 2018:55-56).

When the 1921 Immigration Act was passed it set a benchmark for immigration at 3% of the corresponding nationality according to the 1910 census. This resulted in an annual ceiling of about 358,000 persons. Some 200,000 slots were for northern and western Europeans and 155,000 for southern and eastern Europeans. The remaining quota was divided between African and other countries that were not barred in 1917 and had status as European colonies. Although the law was temporary and was set for one year only. It was renewed in 1922 and then extended to 1924. This law was the beginning of the quota system that would play a significant role in the era of immigration restriction. (Soerens and Yang 2018:55-56; P. Yang 1995:13-14; Zolberg 2006:258-263). Though immigration slowed down significantly after the temporary restriction laws, it was not enough for some who desired stronger restrictions (Reimers 2016:16). In 1924, congress took up measures to further limit immigration. The Johnson-Reed Act, or National Origins Act, made the quotas permanent until 1965. This new immigration law did two things. First, it changed the percentage of those able to enter the country from 3% to 2%. Second, it changed which census the percentage would be based on, from the 1910 census to the 1890 census. Although it was passed in 1924, it went into full effect in 1929 (Daniels 2004:49-53; Reimers 2016:16; P. Yang 1995:13-14). Daniels points out that this law is of great importance and “hard to overemphasize” (2004:49). Philip Yang describes how the 1924 law limited total migration to 154,227 persons per year. Of that total number, 82% of the visas (126,466) went to northern and western European nations, 14% (21,592) to southern and eastern European nations, and 4% (6,169) for all others, which was a 100-person maximum for every other country outside of the previous designations (1995:13).

During the 1930s, the Great Depression put a near halt on immigration. No further laws were put in place. Even western hemisphere migration dropped significantly (García 2016:73). What is important to note is that the quota system focused primarily on eastern hemisphere migration, not western. Thus, there was less attention to the matters of the southern border until WWII. During the 1940s changes in immigration policy and practice began to take place. In 1943, the Chinese Exclusion act was repealed. Four key reasons for this change include changes to foreign policy, namely, the alliance between China and the U.S. to oppose the Japanese. Second, American public opinion shifted because many Chinese Americans contributed to the war effort. A third reason for the change came from the lobbying efforts of special interest groups. Finally, as the economy began to boom and grow, there was less fear about immigrants taking job, thus less resistance to the idea of allowing more immigration (Bayer 2016:6; Daniels 2004:91, 157; P. Yang 1995:11, 12).

By the late 1940s, changes to immigration began to happen. Philip Yang points out that in 1946 an India Bill was passed which allowed South Asians the possibility to immigrate as well as up to 100 Filipinos based on the assigned slots available. The only Asians not excluded by the Barred Zone Act were Filipinos. In 1934 they were granted a quota of 50 persons per year to immigrate to America (1995:6, 7, 15). In addition to allowing more Asians, President Truman took action through his presidential power to allow entrance for refugees from Europe. In 1948 the Displaced Persons Act would allow up to 400,000 refugees over the next four years. These were in addition to the quota's already set (Reimers 1992:22-24). In 1953 and 1957, laws granting the further support of European refugee resettlement and Chinese refugee resettlement allowed for additional persons to immigrate beyond the specified quotas. By 1960, some 700,000 refugees had been resettled in the United States and were mostly from Europe (24, 25). Another important piece to immigration law in the 1940s was the Bracero program. It operated from 1942-1964 and brought about 400,000 laborers from Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean to work in the U.S. (39-41). At first, this was to meet agricultural and industrial needs during WWII but because it provided cheap labor, it was continued until 1964 (Soerens and Yang 2018:57, 59; Reimers 1992:39-46). Other changes in the 1940s include the War Brides Act of 1945 (updated in 1947) which permitted spouses of servicemen from other countries to immigrate with their husbands to the U.S. (Reimers 1992:21, 22).

Besides the Displaced Person's Acts in the 1950s other major changes to immigration would be made. In 1952 the McCarran-Walter Act, or also known as the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, was passed. It reaffirmed the principles of the national origins quota system from 1924 and

maintained the immigration ceiling based upon prejudice of the restriction era (Reimers 1992:20). However, it did do away with all immigration and naturalization exclusions for Asians. Even though Asians were now allowed to immigrate to the U.S., their quotas were stricter than compared to those coming from Europe. This law introduced four main visas that could be granted to each country. This law, like those before it, did not address migration in the western hemisphere. Thus, the concern was primarily about Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Levant (Middle East) (Reimers 1992:20, 21; P. Yang 1995:14).

In the last decade leading up to 1965, the most significant and substantial change to immigration took place. The National Origins Act, the McCarran-Walter Act, and the quota systems that dominated U.S. immigration policy were overhauled and replaced by a system of immigration, which treated equally and fairly all nations of the world. Though it was passed in 1965 and signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, it would go into effect in 1968 (P. Yang 1995:15). Much has been written by David Reimers on the Immigration Act of 1965, which is also commonly referred to as the Hart-Cellar Act (1992:61-91). It is important to summarize a few key points about this law. First, it was based on a set of preferences, where each preference was allotted a percentage of the whole. Second, yearly immigration limits were set for 290,000 people. Of this number, 120,000 were set aside for western hemisphere immigration. Third, this law was based on a first come first serve basis, where no country in the eastern hemisphere had a quota but each was set with a maximum of 20,000 persons allowed to immigrate until either the 20,000 limit for a country was filled or the maximum allowable persons able to immigrate for the year was filled. This cap was only subject to those, as Daniels puts it, to numerical limitations (Daniels 2004, 138). Thus, the quota system was abolished. Western hemisphere countries had no limit for any country except for the stated 120,000 persons allowed. Fourth, some 6% of visas were reserved for refugees. Finally, family reunification was permitted and was under a non-quota statute in the law which allowed entry for spouses, parents and unmarried minor children, which had no influence or effect upon the total number of allowable immigrants (Daniels 2004:133-138; J. Yang 2020:259-260; P. Yang 1995:15; Reimers 1992:80-81; Soerens and Yang 2018:59-61).

Having an understanding of these changes as it relates to migration trends is important for numerous reasons besides just national or historical. What they reveal is how immigration from southern and eastern Europe was effectively cut off in the 1920s and Asians before that. Through the changing trends and global movements, U.S. immigration began to reopen the golden door of opportunity. This meant that the flow of people

from Asia, African, Middle East, and South American were granted the opportunities to either reunite with family or immigrate to America based on the preference systems (J. Yang 2020:264). President Lyndon B. Johnson summarizes it best with the following, “This bill that we sign today is not a revolutionary bill. It does not affect the lives of millions. It will not reshape the structure of our daily lives, or really add importantly to our wealth or our power” (Daniels 2004:135). In the same speech he also noted that “the days of unlimited immigration are past. But those who do come will come because of what they are, and not because of the land from which they sprung” (Soerens and Yang 2018:60). Jia Lynn Yang accurately points out that the law’s impact and transformation on immigration would take years to see and understand, which were only seen and felt in later decades (2020:264).

Development and Change to the North American Foreign Department

Seventh-day Adventists are not the only ones to respond to the influx of immigrants and the ministry opportunities possible in sharing the Advent message. After numerous appeals by Ellen White to reach the foreigner with the Advent message, the SDA Church responded by creating the North American Foreign Department in 1905 (Wells 2018:193, 197). During the first decade at least six new nationalities had their first churches established in North America (198). One thing to note about the North American Foreign Department was that besides the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbooks* and a handful of General Conference Committee notes and general Adventist History books, only one publication, published in 1946, is dedicated to explaining and understanding the role and activities of the SDA Church in reaching immigrants in North America. Louis Halswick wrote his book, *Mission Fields at Home*, as a means of bringing awareness and attention to the matter (1946). The research and insights below are an attempt at bringing together these few resources in order to create a clear understanding of SDA mission to immigrants.

For comparison sake, another Christian writer, Howard B. Grose, published *The Incoming Millions* in 1906 with the express purpose of recruiting Christians to minister to the incoming foreigners. In his book, he details the difficulties and problems that immigrants have and then provides a sampling of what various Christian denominations, namely, women’s ministries in Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Episcopal churches, around the country are doing to reach the immigrants (150-172). Both Christians and Adventists sought to accomplish a similar goal and end purpose, the evangelization of the nation’s coming into America.

The development of the North American Foreign Department takes a fascinating journey after its formation. First, G. A. Irwin was appointed as secretary in 1905, with a handful of undersecretaries which were responsible for more specific management of specific language work (Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:317; Spalding 1962:3:312). In 1909, O. A. Olsen was appointed as secretary and served until 1915. The department started by focusing primarily on German, Danish-Norwegian, and Swedish immigrants (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1915:15, 16; Spalding 1962:3:312).

By 1918, when under the leadership of L. H. Christian, the department was reorganized and renamed the Bureau of Home Missions. Greater emphasis was also given to expand its ministry to the French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Jews (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1919:7, 9, 13; Spalding 1962:3:312). However, it was not as if these groups were being reached for the first time (Wells 2019:193-196), but greater emphasis and awareness was placed upon these groups by creating an under-secretary position which managed “miscellaneous languages” (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1919:7).

Table 4: Development of the North American Foreign Department: Secretaries and Name Changes

Year	General Secretary	Department Name	Source
1905-1909	G. A. Irwin	North American Foreign Department	Spalding 1962:3:312
1909-1915	O. A. Olsen	-	General Conference (GC) of Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) 1915:9, 13; Spalding 1962:3:312
1917-1919	Steen Rasmussen		GC of SDA 1917:12, 15
1919-1920	L. H. Christian	Bureau of Home Missions	GC of SDA 1919:7, 9, 13
1920-1924	P. E. Broderson	-	GC of SDA 1920:15
1925-1932	M. N. Campbell	-	GC of SDA 1925:14-15; 1932:9-10
1933-1936	W. H. Branson	-	GC of SDA 1933:13; 1936:13
1937-1939	M. N. Campbell	-	GC of SDA 1937:13; 1939:13
1940-1942	H. T. Elliot	-	GC of SDA 1940:13

1942-1950	L. Halswick	Home Foreign Bureau	GC of SDA 1942:10; 1950:9
1951-1952	W. B. Ochs	North American Home-Foreign Bureau	GC of SDA 1951:15; 1952:15
1957	???	North American Missions Committee	Cooper 1968:117
1964-1965	???	-	GC of SDA 1964:23; 1965-1966:23

O. A. Olsen's management of the North American Foreign Department saw the creation of schools specifically designated for training workers in specific language fields. Seminaries in French, German, Danish-Norwegian, and Swedish were in full operation by 1910 and 1911 (Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:321; Spalding 1962:3:313, 314). During WWI, ministry to minority groups was hampered because of the rise in prejudice against Germans and other foreigners from Europe (Schwarz and Greenleaf 200:321). Following WWI ministry resumed, publications were distributed, and the departments focusing on mission to reach immigrants in North America was back on track. One glimpse into how the department worked in post WWI years can be observed in the General Conference Committee Minutes of 1919. Though not much is said, these committee minutes record how ministers with language specific skills were called and directed by recommendation of the Bureau of Home Missions to be appointed to certain regions of North America. For example, notes from May 6, 1919 recommend that all conferences should focus work for foreign speaking persons in their territory and that specific workers were appointed to work with Syrian, Russian, and Polish groups in New York, Chicago, and Detroit respectively (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists [GC] 1919:300-305). From this reference, it can be inferred that throughout the duration of the department's operation, the appointment of ministers to language specific groups were conducted through similar means until it was dissolved in 1951.

By 1920, the Bureau of Home Missions was in full operation with five main undersecretaries managing work among the French, Germans, Danish-Norwegians, Swedish, and miscellaneous languages (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1919:7). In 1922, a Spanish undersecretary was added to the Bureau and the miscellaneous languages committee was divided in two, east and west of the Mississippi, so that the other languages scattered in those areas could receive greater attention

from two undersecretaries (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1922:15). Even though this decade saw the decline in immigration and the passage of laws limiting such, the statistics indicate above that there was still a very large body of first-generation immigrants with several hundred-thousand arriving yearly. Yet, as noted above, the immigration restrictions focused on limiting southern and eastern Europeans and allowing a greater portion of northern and western Europeans. It seems that from the data gathered from archived materials and Adventist history books, that the primary focus of the Bureau of Home Missions was towards the larger population of immigrants who were allowed to enter the U.S.

With the Great Depression in full swing during the 1930s and immigration at an all-time low, the Bureau of Home mission continued with its mission. But by the end of the 1930s there was a consolidation of the departments and a reduction in staff. During the latter part of the decade, the Spanish undersecretary added Portuguese and Native peoples to their field of labor. The French and Jewish departments were dropped, and all miscellaneous languages were under the Management of the Danish-Norwegian undersecretary (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1940:13). Schwarz and Greenleaf point out that during this decade European interest had largely dissipated, but that evangelistic activity and growth moved towards Hispanic populations (2000:321).

When Halswick published his book in 1946, he included a keen summary of the history behind working with migrant populations. In 1942, the Bureau of Home Missions was again renamed and changed to the Home Foreign Bureau. By the mid-1940s, Adventist work was being conducted in twenty-five different language groups with 160 foreign-speaking language workers working full-time with these different nationalities. He estimated some 15,000 believers with an average of 1,000 baptisms per year and more than one million given in tithe in 1943 alone (23, 25). It is astonishing that with such growth and activity in nearly forty years of ministry that not more is written upon the matter. The only other report given of a similar nature is on October 14, 1919 where L. H. Christian notes that in 1918 there were 311 churches of foreign-speaking peoples in North America that had a combined membership of 11,791 persons. In 1919, there were 330 total churches with 13,632 members. Furthermore, work was being conducted with Lithuanians, Slavic speaking nationalities, Polish, and Italians (GC 1919:439, 440). Spalding notes the specific language groups that were being ministered to in the 1940s. He lists: Armenian, Chinese, Czechoslovak, Danish, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Icelandic, Indian, Japanese, Jewish, Yugoslav, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Romanian, Spanish,

Slovak, Swedish, Ukrainian (1962:3:312). Beyond these two summary statements in 1919 and 1946, very little is mentioned about the sheer numbers of growth and activity. And though Asian and other language groups are mentioned, the department retained a mostly Eurocentric focus in its mission. This is simply in keeping with the trends that were summarized above. Yet two questions surface when comparing the statistics from 1919 and 1946. Did membership from foreign-born persons ever reach more than 15,000? If so, what were the factors behind the gain/loss or steady consistency of less than 20,000 total members?

After WWII, immigration began to pick up again. Refugees from Europe were being resettled. War Brides from other nations were coming back to the U.S. with servicemembers. However, most immigration was with Europeans, except for the Bracero program which brought temporary workers from predominantly Mexico. By 1951, the Home Foreign Bureau had run its course. Emma Howell Cooper (1968) makes mention that the Home Foreign Bureau was discontinued in 1951 as a department of the GC. The North American Missions Committee was set up in its place to manage, in cooperation with Union Conferences, the work with foreign language speaking groups (116-118; Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:321, 513, 514). According to the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, the Home Foreign Bureau experienced another name change. It is changed to the North American Home-Foreign Bureau (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1951:15). By 1952, it disappears altogether until 1957 when the General Conference Committee Minutes mention that the Home-Foreign Committee¹ is to be changed to the North American Missions Committee and will officially include once again work for the Native American tribes (GC 1957:879). The North American Missions Committee continued to operate but with little mention or record of its presence or activity until the 1964 and 1965-1966 *SDA Yearbooks* where, once again, it is supervising the work with Jewish immigrants, Eskimos, Native Americans, and the Deaf (Cooper 1968:118; General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1964:23; 1965-6:23).

What began in response to the pressing and urgent needs of reaching immigrants in 1905 slowly dwindled until 1965. The robust strength and energy of the North American Foreign Department urged into action by the direct encouragement of Ellen White continued unabated until the effects of immigration began to impact the population size of foreign-born migrants living in North America. As seen above, by 1970, only 4.7% of the U.S. population was foreign-born. The North American Foreign Department and its subsequent names continued its work after its reorganization in 1951. It is important to consider the strategies adopted by this department in order to see how its legacy continued between 1951 and 1965.

Exploring the Mission Strategy Towards Immigrants Between 1920 and 1965

The mission strategy towards immigrants seems to have a shared and common thread from the earliest days when Ellen White made her appeals in the 1870s until 1965. In previous research, it was pointed out how White's appeals for working with immigrants called for the publishing of tracts and books as well as equipping workers to go teach and preach (Wells 2019:189). Implied in the teaching and preaching of foreign-speaking peoples is the idea of education. Educating new laborers to work with the foreign-speaking immigrants was critical to making progress in sharing the Advent message. Beginning in 1905 with the creation of the North American Foreign Department, not much is mentioned about its strategy for evangelizing immigrants. It appears that in keeping with past actions and urgings for publishing and distributing tracts and books, that much of the same strategy continued into the early 20th century. Halswick notes the use of literature, trained Bible instructors, and public evangelism as the key means for rapidly expanding the knowledge of the Advent message (1946:23, 127). When Olsen became general secretary in 1909, the prominent role of education and the training of language specific ministers took shape (Spalding 1962:3:313). Essentially, the very way in which ministry to foreign-speaking migrants in North America began in the 1850s and again urged in the 1870s (Wells 2019:188, 189) seems to have continued into the 1960s.

To understand the strategy of the North American Foreign Department, later called the Bureau of Home Missions, Spalding points to the creation of language specific seminaries for the training of Bible instructors and ministers. Three of these schools began in 1909. Olsen started with creating German, Danish, and Swedish language seminaries. They were named, Clinton German Seminary (Clinton, MO), Danish-Norwegian Seminary (Hutchinson, MN), Broadview Theological Seminary (Chicago, IL) (1962:3:313). By 1918, Broadview College, added additional departments for training in Italian, Romanian, Russian, Yugoslavian, Ukrainian, Hungarian, Czechoslovakian, Polish, and Finnish. By 1934 all of the language specific seminaries closed and were incorporated into Emmanuel Missionary College. Any students needing language specific education were sent to attend schools in the respective countries (3:313, 314). M. E. Olsen (1926) points out that a French seminary was in operation at South Lancaster Academy, MA and a Russian seminary at Harvey Academy, ND, both beginning in 1911 (694, 695). Not much is ever mentioned about what happened to the French school in its later years. It must be assumed that it also closed eventually due to the lack of need sometime in the 1920s

or 1930s. Little is mentioned about the schools and their impact in later years, the fact that they were in operation until 1934 points to the reality that there was a significant work accomplished. The increased use of the English language with immigrants led to the eventual phasing out of each northern European language seminary (Spalding 1962:3:313). As Louis Halswick was quoted in the previous section, some twenty-five language groups had about 160 active workers. The role of education and training Bible instructors, pastors, and evangelists did extend the Advent message with immigrants (Olsen 1926:687-697).

The use of publishing and literature has been a fundamental cornerstone to the spreading of the Advent message. The clearest indication made about the use of literature in reaching foreigners is made by Louis Halswick. At the end of his book he summarizes the success of the work that came from the use of the printed page and literature distribution (1946:126). He continues to note that because of the central role of literature in mission strategy, the International Publishing Association was created in 1904. It was later adopted by the Pacific Press and renamed the International Branch of the Pacific Press with headquarters in Brookfield, IL. By 1944 the following languages were being printed yearly: Armenian, Bohemian, Chinese, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Ruthenian, Serbian, Sioux, Slovakian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Syriac, Ukrainian, and Yiddish (126). That is twenty-eight languages in total being sold and distributed across North America. In the GC Committee Minutes of 1919, a handful of other languages are referenced as having been published at one point in time. They include Bohemian, Japanese, Chinese, and Serbian (GC 1919:424, 425). Later GC Committee Minutes in 1964 and 1965 point to the fact that German, Ukrainian, Italian, and Yugoslavian were still being printed (GC 1964:832, 833; 1965:1131). To summarize simply, from the inception of the North American Foreign Department until the North American Missions Committee in 1965, the use of literature and publishing played a central role. While space does not allow to give details, Halswick outlines in his book several examples of how the use of literature opened opportunities for ministry with migrant groups and then spread it far and wide (1946).

Some of the last observations made about strategies of working with foreigners in America are best summarized in the GC Committee Minutes of 1964. While it is not a statement of a mission strategy, the fact of its formation points to probably the most succinct mission strategy in reaching immigrants with the Advent message after Halswick's book of 1946. Although brief, the North American Missions committee was directed to handover its foreign language Bible correspondence program to Faith for

Today (FFT) and Voice of Prophecy (VOP) (GC 1964:832). Very little is recorded about the reason for the transfer. Other than a capacity issue, since the North American Missions Committee was small with few workers, nothing more can be said about the transfer of managing Bible study materials. In addition to this switch, the primary goals outlined for this small committee are to create and encourage branch Sabbath school and VBS programs in other languages; use radio and Bible correspondence materials for the specific language groups located in each local conference; encourage ministers, Bible workers, and church members to increase the distribution of foreign language publications through radio and newspaper ads; VOP and FFT will manage foreign language Bible correspondence courses; VOP will produce German and Yugoslavian Bible correspondence materials and manage the schools; and finally, foreign-language churches need extra help from departmental leaders from the conferences and unions so they can have the guidance and assistance necessary to operate (833, 837). The addition of radio, VBS, and branch Sabbath schools (small groups) is about the only new shift in the strategy of reaching foreign-speaking persons in America.

Considering the more than 100 years ministry to immigrants in America, for which the above is but a brief synopsis, the overall strategy to reach immigrants does not appear to change very much. The focus has been on literature production and distribution, education, public and personal evangelism, and radio. By comparison, Howard B. Grose (1906) outlined his strategy of ministry to migrants. Of course, his premise is that working with migrants is only a women's duty and should be limited to women only because the assumed level of influence of women is greater upon the home (109-112). To summarize briefly he points to medical missionary work, personal evangelism, education, and friendship (106-129). Though the comparison is not entirely identical nor the same decade, yet similarities and differences can be observed. Throughout SDA literature related to reaching migrants in North America, nothing has yet been found relating to the use of friendship evangelism or medical missionary work. An argument from silence is not sufficient to rule out the lack of these two activities which very well could have been in practice on the field but not recorded. What seems to be the most important discovery when looking at the mission strategy between 1920 and 1965 is that it was fairly consistent with the methods adopted beforehand. With the exception of the introduction and use of radio broadcasting, branch Sabbath schools, and language specific VBS programs, the strategy for reaching migrants stayed basically the same.

Conclusion

This article explored the trends of immigration, immigration law, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church's missional response to immigrants between the years of 1920 and 1965. Immigration changed significantly between 1920 and 1965. In the first two decades of the 20th century, the dominant immigrants were southern and eastern European and were commonly called "new immigrants." As public opinion increasingly moved in opposition to the massive influx of immigrants, immigration laws were put in place to stem the tide of immigration and revert it back to being predominantly northern and western European. These changes in society impacted the nature and activity of the North American Foreign Department or Bureau of Home Missions.

As to the question asked above about the adaptation of the North American Foreign Department to the trends of immigration, changes did occur. During its total years of operation, from 1905 to 1951, and then re-organized into a committee and continued until 1965, much of the mission focus was on reaching Germans, Danish-Norwegians, French, and Swedish, all of whom were northern and western European. Even though the department worked diligently to share the Advent message with other language groups, including Spanish, Portuguese, Native Americans, Russians, and Ukrainians, many of the other foreign languages did not have their own organized committee lead by an undersecretary. Granted there was a "miscellaneous languages" segment under the operations of the Bureau; however, little was written about it. Outside of Louis Halswick's single volume giving a detailed history of ministry and mission being expanded until 1946 and Spalding's record in 1962, which is a short summary, numerous details can still be added to how the department learned, grew, and adapted to the historical and socio-cultural influences of the time.

The North American Foreign Department went through several re-namings and reorganizations. The first and most significant was in 1918, when it became the Bureau of Home Missions. Beginning with L. H. Christian and ending with Louis Halswick, that title stayed with the department for 24 years. In 1942, it was renamed as the Home Foreign Bureau under Halswick's supervision. Just before the department was phased out it was renamed the North American Home-Foreign Bureau. And finally, from 1957 on it became known as the North American Missions Committee. For how long this committee continued to operate and influence mission work with immigrants in North America is still unknown by the author. This prompts further questions, such as, what happened next? How did this committee continue to grow, change, or adjust to the changing circumstances of immigration?

But probably the single most important discovery that this article discovered was seeking to understand the mission strategy with immigrants between 1920 and 1965. What was learned through the materials accessible for research was that the initial strategy of literature, personal and public evangelism, and education, continued to be the four main means by which immigrants were reached in the United States. Other than the one comment in 1964 about the use of branch Sabbath schools, VBS programs, and radio broadcasts to the overall strategy, not much really changed. In many ways, the overall strategy observed through the decades seemed to match the general trends already in practice by the Seventh-day Adventist church during this time. As both Halswick and Spalding summarized above, there had been an expansion of both churches and numbers of foreign-born believers in the SDA Church. But as questioned above, did the total number of foreign-born members in the Adventist church ever exceed 15,000?

There are many more questions that need to be considered. Besides the few mentioned above, there are gaps in the materials relating to working with immigrants between 1920 and 1965. It would be important for further and more detailed research to be given to this end. Where can additional information be found? What more is hidden and waiting to be discovered that can add greater depth and richness to this study? What happened to the North American Missions Committee after 1965? Who did it work with? When did foreign-language radio and publication cease to be of any importance? Since immigration trends changed dramatically after 1965, in what ways did the committee shift in working with the new arrivals who came from countries beyond Europe? Did the influx of refugees affect in any way the strategies and missional practices of the committee and North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists? And finally, as new immigrants were starting to come predominantly from oral and collective cultures, what challenges did those pose to the long-practiced strategies? These are all questions which, if explored and answered, would help to lay the foundation for understanding how the Seventh-day Adventist Church perceives and strategizes working with immigrants in the 21st century.

Though much has changed in the make-up of immigrants in the United States between 1920 and 1965, one thing remains—there are still several million foreign-born people who have immigrated to the United States, which suggests the continued need to reach them with all the fervor and energy that existed in previous years. In the words of President Johnson, “the days of unlimited immigration are past” (Soerens and Yang 2018:60, yet it can be seen that the future holds a multitude of opportunities among the new and often vastly different migrants coming to live in America.

Endnotes

¹ The Home Foreign Committee was also called the Home-Foreign Work Committee in some locations. Tracing the name, operations, committee chair, and activities of this former department becomes challenging after 1951. Few publications include any comment or reference to this committee beyond mere hints. Likely more information lies within the General Conference Committee Minutes. No other published documents and Adventist history from the 1980s to present include comments about the Home Foreign Committee (North American Foreign Department) besides Richard Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf in their book *Light Bearers* (2000).

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