OUTLINE
of
ADVENTISM AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN SELHOOD

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[NOTE: The page numbers listed in the outline correspond to pages of the paper on which the outline is based. They are included to facilitate discussion of the paper.]

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2. This ideal constructed in opposition to lingering expectations of rule by an also pre-modern aristocratic elite to whom common folk defer and on whom they depend.

B. American Adventism arises out of the dissolution of the pre-modern order and the Victorian consolidation of the modern order. Five legacies of that historical process:

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2. An assent to the modern division of life into public and private spheres and the assignment of religion largely to the private sphere, an assignment sanctified by the ideals of the cult of domesticity and the eschatological commitment to the separation of church and state. [p4-5]

3. A doctrine of character perfectionism which encourages the individual's inward, privatizing turn away from the wider social world. [p5]

4. A pragmatic commitment to organization and activism, unsupported by ecclesiological reflection, which tends toward the sort of bureaucratic specialization and compartmentalization which is the counterpart of perfectionism's privatizing tendency. [p5-6]
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ADVENTISM AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN SELFHOOD

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To construct a self in modern society and culture is a stressful task. Is Adventism a help or hindrance to the effort? This is a vital, but elusive question to which answers will differ depending on who is speaking. Granting that my own perspective is limited and that I can give no definitive answer, I will still venture some observations which may at least clarify the question. My observations divide roughly into four sections. First, I make some preliminary comments on the meaning of the title phrase, "the social construction of modern selfhood." Second, I suggest how Adventism has involved itself historically with some of the modernizing forces in American society. Third, I consider some ways in which the local Adventist congregation in America, as I have known it, has helped construct modern selfhood by means of what I call a "status quest." Fourth, I observe the nature of the institutional structures Adventists have erected around and above the local congregation and mention some trends which are eroding the banks of what I call, somewhat whimsically, our ecclesiastical frog-pond. I conclude with a brief plea for the sort of reflection which I think may lead Adventism to become more a help than a hindrance in the quest for a faithful Christian self in modern America.

The first task is to clarify the title. What can it mean to speak of the "social construction" of selfhood, either ancient or modern? The title intends to convey the point that human selfhood in any age and in any group is an idea, a cultural construct born out of the social patterns of a particular society at a particular time. If self is a cultural construct, and if cultures of different places and times vary, then selfhood will vary depending on the culture in which it is situated. There are East Asian selves which, as a category, differ significantly from Latin American selves. Modern selves, by the same token, differ from ancient ones. Biblical scholar Krister Stendahl, for example, has shown that the modern western self bequeathed to us by Martin Luther and the Reformation is a more individualized, introspective, and guilt-ridden creature than the self which the Apostle Paul and the early Christians constructed out of the several cultures of the first-century Mediterranean world. Because of our introspective selfhood, Stendahl argues, we persistently misread the Pauline letters as anoydnes to existential anguish rather than as the evangels to the Gentiles Paul intended them to be (Stendahl, 1976).

To speak of the social construction of selfhood, furthermore, ought not to be so startling in a time when so many people engage in the intense social interactions of psychotherapy in order to modify their self-concepts. Therapy might be regarded as the social reconstruction of modern selfhood, something people do because they become dissatisfied with how the construction job turned out the first time around. Therapy works, when it works, because it is a specially controlled case of the general process by which we all come to a knowledge of ourselves: the process of looking at people looking at us. We see ourselves in the responses of others to us; we all have "looking glass selves." We remember, consciously and unconsciously, the responses of sig-
significant others to us and these patterns of response become the inner mirrors by which we know ourselves. When the therapist helps us, it is because our remembrance of him or her has modified our inner mirrors to render a more bearable reflection. It is a mark of the stressful nature of modern selfhood that we have had to invent a thing like psychotherapy.

Why is modern selfhood so stressful? One reason is that modern societies are highly compartmentalized and specialized. Modern social organizations, for the sake of efficiently achieving their specialized goals, abstract specific characteristics from the concrete whole of human personalities and deal with persons primarily in terms of those characteristics. Thus government bureaucracies design forms for "taxpayers", business bureaucracies market products to "consumers," educational bureaucracies credit units of knowledge to "students," church bureaucracies try to give away the truth to "souls," and employers of all types buy labor from "employees." A given person may be taxpayer, consumer, student, soul, and employee all at once, but the various specialized collectivities tend to respond not to the fullness of her personhood, but rather to the specific characteristics relevant to their organizational goals. The "mirrors" of modern society, then, require us to build selfhood out of fragments. If we seek an experience of whole personhood, furthermore, we must seek it on our own time, not in the marketplace and not on the job. The norms of social contact in such public locations require an efficiency and impersonality which discourage the sorts of expression and awareness which foster wholeness. To be a whole person, to experience a complete selfhood becomes a private endeavor. As a result we sense ourselves as beings apart from society rather than as members of society (Berger 1977: 70-80).

There is a bright side to this picture, of course. In such a society, taxes (and the avoidance of a relatively narrow range of illegal actions) is all you owe the government. As a consumer, you can buy the product you like and leave the others. You can attend the school you choose, adopt the truth you desire, and take the job that appeals to you. In short, you are free. This individual liberty may well seem more a delight than a dilemma.

Such delight, however, presupposes the existence of a strong self with a firm sense of identity and esteem which is capable of making the most of its options in light of clear criteria of choice. Such selves are not the products of nature; they are socially constructed. The necessary social and cultural context for their construction is some form of local community which, especially for its younger members, provides a relatively coherent set of responses out of which persons may construct themselves. The American Adventist sub-culture, to some degree in spite of itself, has provided such communities for some of us. The dilemma is that the compartmentalizing trends of modern society and culture, especially the widening gulf between public and private spheres of life, lead, in their logical extreme, to a mass society of isolated, anomic individuals governed by huge alienating bureaucracies. Intermediate communities like Adventism, which exist on the boundary between the public and private spheres of life, tend to be dissipated in the process. The loss of such communities, however, represents the loss of stable means of building a concrete moral consensus within which may be nurtured the identity, self-esteem, and virtue needed to take advantage of modern liberty (Berger 1977: 130-41). As such communities erode, moreover, interests and motives which they once helped hold in somewhat creative balance fall into conflict and excess. They then threaten to become a hindrance rather than a help to the task of constructing a full and faithful selfhood.

American's modern compartmentalizing and privatizing trends did not come into being overnight. They are deeply rooted in the nation's history, espe-
cially the history of the middle and late nineteenth century. This is also the time when the Advent movement arose and its Seventh-day Adventist remnant consolidated. The second task of this paper, then is to note some of the legacies from American Adventism's nineteenth-century beginnings.

Seventh-day Adventism, at its Millerite inception, partook of an historic Protestant emphasis on individual autonomy. The Millerites and early Adventists, furthermore, subscribed to an Enlightenment faith in the ability and right of the ordinary individual to discover truth for himself or herself by common-sense inductive study and reasoning. A social vision which puts the individual in tension with society, especially with society's accepted authorities, is implicit in this belief. Such a vision has a form similar to that of the split between privatized individuals and public bureaucracies which I have identified as one of the characteristic experiences of modern culture. It is a mistake, however, to assume the early Millerites experienced the same gap between self and society which modern Americans do. The gap which we sense was, for them, bridged by the culture of the New England town, a culture which Yankee migrants took with them into New York's Burned-Over District and the northern mid-west where Millerism and Adventism first flourished. The ideal self in this culture was a still pre-modern ideal of the independent yeoman farmer, neither rich nor poor, beholden to no man, but constrained by local community consensus and a devotion to the common good. This ideal self-image was at the heart of the Republican ideology which, in various forms, evoked the passions which fueled the American War for Independence. (Hatch 1984; Rowe 1987; Shalhope 1972, 1982; Zuckerman 1970)

The Millerite passion for autonomy and faith in the common man, then, did not have modern bureaucratic organization as a foil. These ideal self-images were constructed, instead, in opposition to the pre-modern expectation of rule by traditional aristocratic authorities. Such traditional expectation included the idea that authorities rule by virtue of being born to that order of human beings whom God and/or the very structure of creation ordains to rule. Such authorities constitute a social class which exercises executive, judicial, legislative, military, even religious and welfare functions in a relatively unspecialized manner. Members of this class are obliged by their privileged position to rule according to the ancient customs of their people, to nurture and protect their subjects as fathers care for their children, and to embody the ideals of their community. Their subjects defer to them, acknowledging their superior wisdom. Their subjects also depend upon their patronage even as the rulers bind the subjects into dependence by their control of the community's economic wealth and patterns of recognition (Isaac 1982: 20-22; Little 1969: 6-32; Weber 1964: 341-58).

Colonial American society and culture never embodied this type of traditional aristocratic order so fully as did England or the Continent, and the American Revolution might be interpreted as sealing its doom in America. Various aspects of it, however, lingered into the nineteenth century. The efflorescence of Victorian culture in the mid-nineteenth century catalyzed the final dissolution of traditional order and established the basic social order of modernity in its place (Brown 1975, 1976). Millerism was one of a bewildering variety of movements which arose in the transition between old the order and the new. As the little remnant which became the Seventh-day Adventist church moved from transition to consolidation, it created a legacy for the rest of us. At least five elements of that legacy are significant for my purposes: an ambivalent sense of community, an assent to the separation of public and private spheres of life, a commitment to individual character perfection, a pragmatic acquiescence to bureaucratic organization, and, finally, an assent to the culture of professionalism.
The Adventist sense of community was ambivalent in that it oscillated between two models: the model of universal fellowship, and the model of the in-group versus the out-group. The community of universal fellowship is, in principle, open to all humankind on the basis of a humble recognition of each person's generic humanity. The anthropologist Victor Turner has applied the term *communitas* to this sort of bondedness and pointed out that it is manifest typically at points of transition in social processes—as in the middle phase of rites of passage—or at points at the margins of established social structures—as among Franciscan monks or in hippie communes. In accord with its emphasis on universality, *communitas* discounts all distinctions between persons and affirms the fundamental equality and dignity of all human beings. In-group/out-group community, on the other hand, is a more ordinary form of solidarity which depends on the readiness of members to draw a boundary between themselves and others and assign different qualities of worth on the basis of this distinction (Turner, 1969, 1974).

Millerism, in its beginnings, attempted to transcend distinctions among persons, especially distinctions between denominations and distinctions between elite and common people in matters of religious authority (Rowe, 1987). Only in the face of rejection and persecution by the Protestant mainstream did the Millerites of 1843-44 finally fall into the "come-outerism" which they had previously rejected. In the name of a simple commitment to plain Scripture truth accessible to the honest, rational inquiry of the common person, Millerism constructed a message of cosmic import and built a community of persons from what seemed to be all persuasions, occupations, genders, and ranks. Millerite *communitas* also involved an intense religious sentiment in which the presence of God was palpably real to those who shared in the feeling. The Seventh-day Adventist remnant of this community constructed the doctrine of the sanctuary not simply to prove their arithmetic correct but also to validate their powerful experience of religious community (Rowe 1985; Butler 1987).

The early Adventist "shut door" doctrine, however, was an intensification of the late Millerite lapse into in-group solidarity. Only those who had heeded the Midnight Cry and undergone the travail of the disappointment, it seemed, could possibly know God's saving truth. By the time the shut door cracked open in 1852, the evangelical imperative to universal brotherhood remained qualified not only by the peculiarity of the sanctuary doctrine but also by the the Seventh-day Sabbath and the doctrine of Ellen White as the sole expression of the latter-day "spirit of prophecy." These doctrines and practices established permanent points of in-group/out-group distinction between the Seventh-day Adventist remnant and the rest of the world. The ambivalence between, on one hand, the openness and intimacy required for basic Christian fellowship and, on the other hand, the surveillance and suspicion which accompany boundary maintenance, is a legacy the American Adventist community has carried to this day.

The second legacy, assent to the public/private split, is another dimension of the effort to consolidate the American Adventist community. The consolidation coincided with an alliance of church and family which was widely promoted in nineteenth-century Christian circles (Douglas 1977; McDannell 1986). Among evangelicals, "Family" became a metaphor for both evoking and controlling the intense community of emotion and sentiment experienced in the religious movements of the Second Great Awakening (Sizer 1978; Schneider 1990). This alliance led church members to expect the church not only to support family life, but also to function something like a family in its own
internal social relations. Church and family, moreover, were set over against "the world" in Victorian Christian thinking to create the sentimental domestic ideology of the "haven in a heartless world." Within this haven the pious wife and mother exerted subtle but profound influence over the eternal destiny and temporal prospects of her husband and children. Adventism's acceptance and elaboration of this ideology and its eschatological legitimation of church-state separation represented its assent to one of central social processes of modernity—the division of life into public and private spheres.

Life in the private sphere is expected to be unlike life in the public sphere. Private sphere institutions are not to deal with persons in terms of businesslike efficiency in pursuit of a goal. They are not to house political power struggles. They are to accept and nurture persons in their wholeness, to provide relief and restoration from the ravages of a world ruled by the competitive demands of the market. The diffuse emotional closeness of the private sphere is to compensate for the rationally calculated contractual relationships of the public sphere. Private sphere institutions are also to provide arenas where idiosyncratic convictions about morals, lifestyle, religion, and the like may be expressed and supported without interfering with the efficient functioning of public sphere bureaucracies. This split creates difficulties for all sorts mediating communities; Adventism's participation in these difficulties will occupy further attention below.

The third legacy was the Adventist variant of another characteristic Victorian trend—a commitment to ideals of self-control and individual character development. With the dissolution of the traditional order and its characteristic modes of social control based on community consensus and a sensitivity to shame, came a new public order dependent upon internalized moral controls and susceptibility to guilt. Ellen White's testimony to a second generation of Adventists in 1859 paralleled this internalizing movement when she linked the delay in Christ's return not to the faithlessness of the rest of the Christian world but to the lack of character development among Adventists themselves (Butler 1987). Under the investigations of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary and the watchful waiting of the other worlds in the cosmos, individual Seventh-day Adventists ever since have labored to achieve that perfection which, ultimately, would result in their personal salvation and in the destruction of this world.

The social and psychological tendency of this withdrawal of doctrinal focus from Christendom to character has been an implicit assent to the privatizing processes of modern society. If the drama of the cosmos is located in the privacy of the individual soul, the public and collective realities of human life may recede in significance. The society and even the church tend to become identified with "the world," and the conscientious Adventist Christian implicitly understands that, in the end, this world will be burned as dross, while the individual character and its personal Savior will be all that last eternally.

At the same time she was bequeathing to us this privatizing piety, however, Mrs. White was also supporting her husband James in bringing us the fourth legacy of Adventism's later nineteenth-century history: an insistence that the movement become an organization. The rationale was pragmatic. The universalistic imperative to evangelism was beginning to swell the ranks of Seventh-day Adventism. Mrs. White was shown that God was pleased with order and system in the efforts of His people to do His work. Fears of becoming Babylon notwithstanding, the churches would be ineffective and have little future unless they did organize. James simply pointed out that unless the
church incorporated so that it, rather than private individuals, owned the various church buildings and, especially, the church press, one or more of the buildings might revert to a winery (Butler 1987). Within the next three decades, the growth of Adventist evangelism, missions, education, and health ministry created an organizational superstructure which cried out for legitimation. Our prophet obliged with yet another version of Adventist eschatology, one in which the Adventist people might hasten or retard the coming of the Lord depending upon how they labored in missions and in opposition to Sunday legislation (Butler 1974). Such labor, of course, demanded the organization.

This move to organization, like that toward character development, was in harmony with the mid-Victorian spirit. Both were manifestations of what Max Weber has called "rationalization" (Parsons 1963: xxxii-xxxv; Weber 1958: 24-26). The move to organize the Seventh-day Advent movement was not undertaken, however, with any long view of the theological meaning of church polity. Millerism had rejected the formal order of Catholic and Protestant ecclesiastical traditions as oppressive workings of priestcraft to enslave the minds and bodies of God's free people. With that rejection came also the neglect of centuries of ecclesiology, the reasoned effort to make sense of and legitimate or constructively criticize the irreducibly social existence which Christians share. Seventh-day Adventism, as it organized, did not reappropriate the ecclesiological traditions Millerism had rejected; it provided only an imperative to "finish the work" as effectively as possible. Church order came into being not so much as an expression of the sort of community Adventists believed Christians ought to be, but as the pragmatic instrument of a particular task Adventists set for themselves.

Driven by an apocalyptic eschatology and an individualistic soteriology, church organization became a sort of prototype of the traveling sales organization. One constant dynamic in its ethos has been to motivate individuals to serve the organization's promotional goals and thus rise within the organization or otherwise win the Adventist community's recognition. The sales training of the colporteur, the demands on pastors and laypersons for baptism and fund-raising statistics, and the story of the pioneering missionary all are examples of this ethos. (Perhaps this is one reason why so many Seventh-day Adventists are attracted to cults of free enterprise like the Amway Corporation.) Ultimately, however, the social and psychological pressures of the move to pragmatic organization move in the same direction as those of the commitment to character development. Consigning Church order to instrumental tasks rather than to the support of human life in its fullness encourages the identification of the church with that bureaucratically structured society which is separate from and ultimately alien to the human self in its wholeness. It then follows that true religion is felt to be a matter of individual solitude. Only the sense of in-group solidarity centered around Adventist distinctives and the sense of the church as an evangelical "family" has held these pressures in check.

In addition to these pressures which widen the gap between private piety and organized religion, there also seems to be an eschatological tension between the emphasis on character development and the emphasis on efficiently organized mission work. If one believes that the perfection of character among God's people is what will bring about the Lord's coming, the implication would seem to be a quietist preoccupation with the inner life. If one believes that the preaching of the Advent message to all the world will bring about the Lord's coming, the implication would seem to be an activist preoccupation with mission and evangelism. How has Seventh-day Adventism managed
to keep these two seemingly incompatible theological emphases from flying off into corresponding factions? The answer, I think, lies in the fifth legacy of our nineteenth-century history, our assent to yet another phenomenon of modernization: the culture of professionalism.

In concluding the book, *Education*, Ellen White provided a passage on "The School of the Hereafter" which harmonized the quietist/activist tension and which implied the ideals of the professions.

The life on earth is the beginning of the life in heaven; education on earth is an initiation into the principles of heaven; the lifework here is a training for the lifework there. What we now are, in character and holy service, is the sure foreshadowing of what we shall be. (p. 307)

Character, career, and salvation are merged in this passage as they are in the entire book. In the vision of Ellen White at the turn of the century, the Adventist Christian became one who mastered himself or herself as he or she mastered the knowledge and skills for a lifework. In the course of this process of self-mastery, the Christian also built a career of service which would result in ultimate recognition by God himself and in the rewards of all the wealth of heaven. Character was to be perfected more in action than in contemplation while God and the entire cosmos waited anxiously to see how long it would take for His chosen people to reflect His character, vindicate His law, and finish the work.

One is greatly taxed to think of a model of Christian vocation which might lend itself more thoroughly to the legitimation of the culture of professionalism. In that culture, the professional, through self-discipline, mastered an accredited course of specialized training to acquire a skill and a body of systematic knowledge which rationalized the practice of the skill. The skill and the knowledge, unlike the property of the stock-holder or the labor of the assembly-line worker, were intrinsic to the selfhood of the professional. The professional offered his skill in service to society and, in return, expected and received ascending levels of prestige and material comfort throughout his career. This prestige and wealth constituted a social recognition not simply of a job well done but of the very character of the person who had done the job. Most significantly, the professional exercised his skill autonomously, based on his specialized knowledge of the natural laws of a particular segment of human experience—what we would call "his field." The ownership and authority implied by the possessive pronoun allowed the professional to control the conditions of his/her labor. The professional, like the Yankee yeoman of old, was beholden to no man, but unlike the yeoman, had shucked off the constraints of community consensus about the common good. He was accountable only to his personal interpretation of the ethical standards of his/her profession, an interpretation which tended to confuse the interests of his clients with rewards of his career (Bledstein 1976; Larson 1977).

By its valuing of career over community and its commitment to individual autonomy within narrowly specialized fields of authority, the culture of professionalism abets the compartmentalizing trends of modern society and the concomitant dissipation of mediating communities. The logical tendency of the commitment to professional specialization and autonomy is to create a society of clients who cede independent judgment in most areas of their lives to an array of specialized professional authorities in return for the right to authority and prestige in their own fields. The standard arenas for making
and granting of prestige claims are the universities, professional associations, and the various other public sphere bureaucracies which employ or consult the professional. In all these settings, the bureaucratic imperative to specialization allows the professional ego to be gratified and inflated. It leaves unrecognized the human self in its wholeness, however, and it tends to dissolve the social contexts which nurture the self.

In the values of social and economic autonomy, self-discipline, practical education, the development of character and career in service to society, and the quest for recognition from society, Seventh-day Adventism found deep resonances with the Culture of professionalism. Adventists shared in the intense Yankee concern to control the conditions of one’s work experience, and professionalism allowed them to cling to that concern as the farm became less and less a viable platform for economic independence (Graybill 1979). The values of this culture and the practical economic opportunities it offered, then, allowed Adventists to cling to their sense of autonomy and unique selfhood in the face of the relentless incorporation of American lives into big business, organized labor, and urban anonymity.

The culture of professionalism demanded only a commitment to the vertical vision of career advancement. It did not create a competing community, but rather tolerated various remnants of regional or sub-cultural identity among its practitioners so long as these remnants did not interfere with career (Bledstein, p. 127). Professionalism offered no immediately apparent threat to Adventist clannishness and certainly encouraged its cloistering around its institutions of professional training and service. It must have seemed to many, therefore, that the seeking of professional accreditation for Adventist education involved little compromise of the essence of Seventh-day Adventism, particularly in light of the intent to incorporate most professional Adventists into the organized work of the church. The marriage of Adventism and professionalism did, however, lead to a certain confusion of religious and worldly vocations. I felt the irony of this confusion with particular clarity years ago when my college psychology professor remarked in passing that Adventist young people seem to prefer the medical profession because it allowed them to do the Lord’s work and to live well too.

This remark leads to the concerns of the third section of this paper. A certain ethos of local congregational life seems to reflect the five legacies of Seventh-day Adventism’s nineteenth-century experience and to have operationalized the confusion of vocations noted by the psychology professor. Elsewhere, I have described that ethos as a lonely quest for salvation which issues in an individualistic and competitive pursuit of prestige within the reassuringly circumscribed arena of the Adventist community. (Schneider 1984)

The loneliness of this quest seems to derive from Adventism’s Enlightenment myth of the common man discovering the truth by humanly unaided common-sense Bible study, our rejection or ignorance of much of historic Christian ecclesiology, and our emphasis on personal character development. Accordingly, no priest mediates for us; we have virtually no traditions of spiritual direction; nor have we ever made much sense of the Biblical metaphors of the church made up of interdependent organs of the Body of Christ. Popular preachers counsel us to shun the crowd, seek the closet, and rely on God alone for the living out of the Christian life. If we grow, we grow in our own autonomous, and isolated, pots of spiritual soil. Adventism echoes, in this model of how to be saved, a general middle class American insistence on individual responsibility and self-interest.
These norms and values of religious individualism could not thrive, however, apart from the paradox of a community which upholds and teaches them. We depend upon our community and sub-culture to tell us that we must depend upon no one but God in the quest for our own personal salvation. The local churches and schools mediate this message to us in the patterns of social recognition we have constructed within them. These institutions are, among other things, places to see and be seen; they provide the means to meet the universal human need for attention. People who create such social settings must answer the question, "On what bases may we claim attention here?" Those who are able to make the most successful claims for positive attention over time are those who command the most prestige in the community (Derber 1979). Seventh-day Adventist answers to these questions are directly related to the quest to perfect the character, do the Lord's work, and thus save the soul.

One of the bases on which attention has been claimed and granted is piety. The brother or sister who could quote the impressive Ellen White or Biblical passage in Sabbath School has turned heads and perhaps been asked to teach. Such a one may be understood as one who as actualized the myth of William Miller, one who has studied it all out for himself or herself and now has a right to respectful attention. Another manifestation of piety has been the person who could pray with appropriate devotional tone in prayer meeting or from the platform and draw murmured amens. Then there has been the one active in giving Bible studies or in pursuing higher ingathering goals. Such activists have often been invited to testify during the "King's Business" time slot and then, perhaps, selected for one of the more visible church offices.

In the selection of such officers, however, another basis for prestige claims has also been consulted. This basis is probity. I Timothy 3:1-7 best conveys the meaning of this term. The elder, says Paul, must be

... above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to much wine, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money ... must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect ... must not be a recent convert ... must also have a good reputation with outsiders.

It is to men like this that we have given the visible offices. They are the ones we have seen on the platform Sabbath after Sabbath, the ones to whom we have listened as they have made announcements, called for offerings, read scripture, and prayed pastoral prayers. The are also the men we have appointed to school boards and conference committees, where they have been able to make still further claims on the attention and esteem of more, and more important, people.

Very frequently, these men have been professionals, usually health-care professionals, whose visible demeanor and inferred career success provide models of aspiration to the rest of the congregation. They have seemed articulate, knowledgeable, and authoritative. They have appeared to be in command of their lives and circumstances in ways that the independent Yankee yeoman of old would envy. Their professional status has testified also to a long, hard pilgrimage through the school system, a pilgrimage which implies a self-disciplined, hard-working, and conscientious character. These professional men of probity and at least some piety, then, have attained a recognition of presumed inner merit in the arena of the local church. This recognition also has validated their outward occupational success in a way that qualifies Paul's stipulation that the elder be no lover of money. In our com-
munity, as in many others, he may not love money, but he cannot hate it either. Whose offerings, after all, have paid off the church building debt? Professionalism, then, is the third basis for claims to attention.

Now to be sure, we have been realistic enough to know that we cannot all be doctors or dentists, and we have held a place in our hearts for older occupational ideals—the self-made (small) businessman or farmer, for instance. Our various church-related institutions, furthermore, have needed a widening array of other professional specialties in order to carry on "the organized work." The unifying values underlying all our occupational ideals, however, seem not to have been an esteem for specialized professional knowledge as such, but rather the economic autonomy, practical service, comfortable living, and recognition, both social and "spiritual," which our jobs have made possible.

There has been a fourth basis of prestige claims which is implied above by my persistent use of the masculine pronoun in describing the church elder. That basis is patriarchy. In the Adventist community, as in American society generally, women have been expected to be primarily attention-givers rather than attention-getters. What prestige they have has generally been a reflection of their husbands' careers. If a particular patriarch has needed a little extra help to maintain the household, then his wife has taken a job. If the couple in question have been workers in one of the church organizations, then the extra paycheck has been a virtual necessity. Everyone has usually understood, however, that she has only a job; he has the career. The life of the local church has reflected this ranking by relegating women mostly to the less visible roles in the children's Sabbath Schools, the Dorcas societies, and the ranks of the Deaconesses. The relative lack of recognition notwithstanding, of course, these women have sustained the heartbeat of the local church.

Everyday life in the church, then, has been shaped by a self-interested salvation quest centered on character development. The outward manifestations of character have been piety, probity, professionalism, and patriarchy. The prestige which these traits have commanded from the Adventist community have provided a much needed validation of our lonely spiritual and economic efforts. The Adventist community has thus encouraged the development and display of a respectable middle class social character. It has stirred us up, if not to love, then at least to good works.

This individual pursuit of attention in local church life, furthermore, has taken place within a doctrinal horizon which bears the legacy of Adventism's nineteenth-century concern to recognize itself as an ultimate ingroup. Our peculiarity, we are told, commands cosmic attention. The universe awaits eagerly the revealing of a perfected people. The honest-in-heart of other Christian communions will notice us and join us before the close of probation. Even the uncomfortable attention spent on us by angry apostate authorities in the time of trouble will be recognition of our special status. In the meantime we are pleased to be noticed by celebrities who consent to appear on the cover of Listen magazine, or by media coverage of our medical advances. Even the more cosmopolitan of us are pleased to be recognized by various prominent persons in media, government, or academia who appear at conferences of Adventist professionals.

These allusions to medical advances and professional conferences point to the concerns of the fourth section of this paper: the superstructure of formal organizations which we have built around and above the local congregation.
This institutional horizon of the local church community has helped sustain the plausibility of the Adventist salvation/status quest. It has provided the relatively small-scale and familiar institutional arenas within which Adventist professionals, para-professionals, those aspiring to be professional, and those aspiring to make their children professional have gathered to pursue their jobs and their portion of the available prestige. By absorbing many professionally trained Adventists within itself, this institutional superstructure has, for many, undergirded the sense that one's occupation is also "the Lord's work." It also has kept the local churches in touch with "the worldwide work," thus lending credibility to the eschatological vision of our cosmic importance and to the eschatological imperative to finish the work.

The local church and its institutional superstructure, then, have provided our lives with an overall orientation in the cosmos and in the social order within which the universal human quest for attention and prestige can take a particular manageable form. In the context of the impersonal and unstable prestige system of wider middle-class America, the creation and maintenance of this Adventist community has been no small service. The quest for social identity and self-esteem in much of middle America has been described as approaching a "status panic" (Mills 1951). For a few generations, the Adventist community has given parents and children a fragile shield from this general social insecurity. We may be only small or middle-sized frogs, but our peepings and croakings carry very well in our small ecclesiastical frog pond.

Within this reassuringly circumscribed sub-culture there has been an emotional attachment to the church and its leaders, and to the value of being "in the work" which reflects the sense of church as "family" and the fear of "the world" bequeathed by the early Adventist legacy of ambivalent community. Laity, church-employed "workers," and ordained leadership all expect that the church and its institutions function like family, extending at least some form of recognition to the lowest of its children, provided they behave properly, and exerting its authority in a paternalistic fashion which distinguishes it from the coolly professional management of a worldly bureaucracy. These attachments and expectations tend to go unthematised in Adventist theology and thus avoid systematic theological critique, but they are powerful in the practical affairs of the church. The ordained clergy in the hierarchical line of authority from pastorate through General Conference are probably most sensitive and susceptible to these demands because, more than other Adventist professionals, they have built their careers on the practice of paternalism as both a means of management and a means of advancement.

The sense of family guarded by these fathers of the frog pond, however, is coming under increasing strain. The awareness has grown that church life replicates within itself the bureaucratic structures and professionalizing values of the world from which we have imagined ourselves to be so distinct. The ritual gripe session around the Sabbath dinner table includes more frequent mention that there is "politics in the church"—as if it were not supposed to be a political organization—or that it "sells the gospel" like "any other business"—as if it were not supposed to be a business. A certain bitterness and cynicism grows among "workers" and laity alike when the church fathers fail to take proper care of the children, or fail to respect their autonomy, or fail to manage in rational and competent fashion the affairs of the bureaucracy which their way up the paternalistic pastoral ladder never trained them to handle. Note that these examples of discontent point in various incompatible directions. The tensions among "family," professionalism, and bureaucracy lead to generalized headache and, sometimes, heartache.
These sorts of pains are unlikely to go away soon. The Seventh-day Adventist church has for generations and by various means contained the forces of modernity within itself and supported the wish for a church family of "peculiar people." Several trends are irreversibly eroding that containment.

One of the most obvious is that church institutions have not been absorbing the majority of our trained professionals for some time. Growing numbers of Adventists are being exposed to "the world" in their day-by-day work life and are discovering that they are not so peculiar after all, and that the peculiarities they do have are silly, trivial, or simply make good pragmatic sense for health, rather than religious reasons. This is a trend which can only intensify as the work experience of more and more Adventists becomes "socialized" into large-scale corporate bureaucracies. Adventists trained in fields like business and computer science have proliferated. They will find that their jobs constantly require them to work in partnership with "worldlings" in large-scale corporations. This growing employment in worldly corporate environments is likely also to apply to more and more Adventist physicians as they, who once embodied the Adventist ideal of economic autonomy and missionary vocation, find their profession being socialized, not by the government so much as by the American corporate economy.

These interrelated trends undermine not only the awareness and desirability of Adventist peculiarity but may also render irrelevant the traditional Adventist vocational ideal of the autonomous professional unentangled in mainline of American institutions and working for the apocalypse that will destroy them. It is important to ask what, if anything, the Adventist subculture may do to provide an equally compelling model of Christian vocation in this altered occupational environment. The coming generation of Adventist professionals steeped in Adventist subculture but committed to the corporate world will be asking questions about the meanings of their lives and careers in ways which will challenge a church which has legitimated a sense of calling in terms of self-sufficiency and/or church employment (Schwartz 1970).

The problems posed by the professionalization of Adventist training in Biblical studies, theology, and other aspects of religion is a familiar topic to a gathering such as this. One strand of these problems highlighted by the analysis presented here is the threat to the myth of William Miller. On this myth is founded the vision of a universal fellowship of common persons who have the right and ability to determine truth and appropriate grace for themselves without mediation by human authority and tradition. Professionalism in religion, as elsewhere, threatens that claim with the counterclaim that Scripture, the primary source of truth and means of grace for Protestants, cannot be properly interpreted apart from specialized learning over which only the professionally trained religion scholar may claim final authority. This counterclaim reverberates from the local church, where pious lay members may no longer so reliably win prestige or win arguments with their college-age children by means of Biblical or Ellen White proof-texts, on up to the highest levels of the church hierarchy, where church fathers hear and respond to the resentful cries of those frustrated by this new sense of impotence. Before we too readily side with the children and scorn the fathers in this example, let us remember that this experience of impotence is just one more imposition of modernity in which persons are made dependent clients of professional authority and deprived of the right to independent judgment. Only this time, from this perspective, it is our career quests and our profession, rather than those of the church hierarchy, which have circumscribed the liberty of the laity.
There is one more trend which may point a way beyond the thralldom to modernity which I have been describing here. When Victorian Christianity established Woman as the saint of the private sphere, it inadvertently placed women on a course which would eventually collide with the constraints of that sphere. The ideology of "Woman's Sphere" was, in part, an attempt to bottle and preserve the effervescent communitas of the Second Great Awakening. An essential implication of communitas, however, is the equality and dignity of all humankind. That affirmation has been breaking out of its domestic confinement in recent decades to inspire the Christian feminist demand for women's full and equal participation in all spheres of Church life. Again, the same Victorian middle class which established the doctrine of the spheres advocated equal, if distinct, education for both men and women in their separate spheres. It is educated professional women who are now in the forefront of the movement to dissolve the spheres. The realization of this demand, however, may require all of us to take the affairs of the private sphere, especially the rearing of children, as seriously as women have always had to. If we do take the long serious look at these matters that we ought to, we may find ourselves confronted by a difficult challenge to our love affair with professionalism: Can the whole of human life, including the demands of childhood and children, be comprehended and lived with integrity when dominated by a vertical vision of individual careers moving ever upward?

I tend to think not. I think that the time is well past when the patriarchal can leave to their women the tasks of forming the selves of the rising generation. I think the vertical vision of character perfection through career will not lead us to the sort of community in which strong selves can be constructed generation after generation. I think that we need a more horizontal vision of a community of Christians who, generation to generation, seek to know and be faithful to the Kingdom of God as Jesus announced and taught it. This community must take precedence over the culture of professionalism and qualify its vertical vision. In order to articulate the horizontal vision of Christian community, much less realize it, we must ask what is the nature of human beings that they need a church community and what is the nature of the church community they need in this age. Seventh-day Adventism, in its preoccupation with individualistic salvation and the imminent cosmic destruction of the world has neglected this reflection. It has made itself, therefore, an accessory of modern bureaucratic society and of the culture of professionalism. Can it become, instead, a prophetic presence to these principalities and powers of our age?

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