MONASH UNIVERSITY
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Sec. Research Graduate School Committee

ERRATA

p. 9: delete first two lines (repeated from previous page)
p. 16 1st para, line 9: remove comma after Siebert
p. 54 1st para, line 1: should read "In 1966.."
p. 59 1st para, line 1: "May", - change upper case to lower case
p. 62 1st para, line 1: change "is" to "are"
p. 62 1st para, line 2: change "impacts" to "impact"
p. 78 1st para, line 8: insert end parenthesis after 1995:37-8
p. 78 1st para, line 10: delete parenthesis after immersion
p. 106 2nd para, line 1: replace "is" with "was"
p. 121 2nd para, line 8: replace "that" with "for"
p. 122 1st para, line 2: add comma (,) after Monamona
p. 122 1st para, line 4: the words "in English" should be shifted to follow magazine
p. 122 1st para, line 7: change comma (,) after *Good News* to a semi colon (;)

ADDENDUM

p. 54 2nd para, last sentence: "church" should read, Adventist Church
p. 111 2nd para, line 1: insert "the" before *Review*
p. 119 3rd para, line 10: should read "Malay, Fijian, Tahitian, Cook Island and Maori languages (Hook, 1998:74).
p. 119 3rd para, line 11: delete "Hook could have added Maori to his list"
p. 121 2nd para, line 7: insert "it was" before case
p. 121 3rd para, line 2: insert "Church" after Adventist
p. 124 2nd para, line 1: add comma (,) after affirming
p. 326 2nd reference: add 1995 after "Brannen, Julia,"

Publish or Perish:
A Study of the Role of Print in the Adventist Community

Submitted by

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A thesis submitted in total fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Contents

Tables

List of tables in the body of the text

List of tables found in appendix C 300

List of tables found in Appendix D

Abstract

Despite the proliferation of various forms of media, print remains a popular choice for communication among voluntary, nonprofit organisations. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, with its print-rich heritage and a continuing print emphasis, proves ideal for a study of print in these kinds of organisations. Because of its emphasis on voluntary organisations, this study of print differs from most, which tend to investigate print within commercial mass media.

This study of the Adventist Church underscores the various ways print comes to embody the life and character of the organisation producing it. It shows that the major influences brought to bear upon print come from those who have been given authority within the church. During times of crisis or change, Adventist print tends to emphasise traditional beliefs and positions, with the strength of the response dependent on the perceived threat to the church. Print is found to aid in the development of a sense of community within a group, but this is dependent both on the print maintaining the core values of the group and the attitudes brought by members to its media. As the Adventist Church has grown and become more complex, there has been an attempt to position its print to the middle ground. This draws criticism from members outside the middle ground, particularly among those who could be called conservative Adventists.

This thesis presents its findings with reference to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but the principles are relevant to a broader context, that of print within voluntary, nonprofit organisations. The salient findings are presented to encompass this broader context.

Statement of authorship

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis presented by me for another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

[redacted]

Acknowledgments

This study was pursued as an own-time study project while working as chief editor at Signs Publishing Company. "Own-time study" sounds as if you work in isolation and without support. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, while agreeing to support me in this study, Signs added pressure in its own workplace, particularly on the editorial team. Only in allowing me the flexibility to take time when needed did this project become reality.

First, though, the idea of a study of print within a voluntary nonprofit organisation came in discussions with Harry Ballis. Insights from Harry's personal and research background were important in developing and strengthening both the research and the conclusions drawn. His and Parimal Roy's encouragement and critical expertise kept both myself and the thesis focused. Their supervision helped extend my thinking and challenged me to look beyond surface issues and responses.

I am grateful to the 31 Seventh-day Adventist church pastors who assisted and allowed me access to church members in their churches. For 21 of them that help extended to selecting the 41 who were interviewed and they then agreed to be interviewed and surveyed themselves. Thanks also to the 41 who were interviewed and the 78 who participated in focus groups. Their willing spirit was appreciated.

The study was undertaken with the approval of Signs Publishing Company and its board. Signs also took responsibility for most of the cost involved and allowed itineraries within Australia and New Zealand that either served double purposes in

combining work and study, or allowed me to extend itineraries helpful for my research. The managers of Signs during this time, Dale Williams, manager for most of the time and particularly through the research stage, and Warren Jones have both encouraged this study. Lester Devine guided an application that gained approval from the Advance Study Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Arthur Patrick's interest in and review of my work was appreciated. His suggestions and encouragement have been invaluable. His understanding of Adventist history not only saved me from embarrassment a couple of times, but helped bring greater balance in that area and meant he was able to direct me to several useful sources.

Fraser Jackson provided food and lodging, but also guidance and direction in areas of statistics and surveys. His advice early on, during the formulation of the survey for this research and then, later, in comparing surveys from earlier times proved incredibly helpful.

Robert Wolfgramm's insights and suggestions helped create a stronger, more complete document. His enthusiasm for the topic and his encouragement helped to also ease the burden of the final steps to completion.

The theory was that, because Signs Publishing Company works a 38-hour, four-day week with Fridays off, it should be fairly easy to complete an academic degree by working at it on Fridays and Sundays. The theory may have been sound if the work could be contained to 38 hours. The editorial team often held the work together, especially during the few months of completing the first draft of the thesis. I pay tribute and give thanks to Graeme Brown, Lexie Deed, Lee Dunstan, Kellie Hancock, Meryl McDonald-Gough and Brenton Stacey.

Jean Bedford's interest was welcome and her offer to act as a proof reader was enthusiastically accepted.

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Ethan and Ashton Goltz helped bring me back from my ivory tower to the realities of the everyday. The birth of Talyah Ellyse Manners near the end of the study became a delightful distraction. These are my grandchildren and may not belong here, but if they do not seem to fit, just be thankful I resisted the urge to include photos.

Then there is Margaret. I am grateful for her support. She has endured the loneliness of a wife whose husband seemed endlessly distracted. If this study was an Everest, we climbed it together. She loved, encouraged and listened as I worked through various issues related to the study. What follows is dedicated to her.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been described as "the sect with the largest and most diversified literary output" (Wilson, 1990:137). All churches in one way or another have used print as a medium of communication; however, few other organisations have made it such a significant mode of communicating with its members and with the public. Adventism grew out of a movement with a reliance on print media, developed print for its own purposes and adopted a print-heavy approach upon its arrival in Australia and New Zealand. From a historical perspective, print was the favoured means used by the church to influence people outside its church borders and internally. Butler (1987:204) suggests, "The history of Adventism had been a matter of 'publish or perish.'" His tongue-in-cheek comment actually articulates a truth that print has been a primary strategy of the church used to expand and establish a presence around the globe, and to inform and educate its own members.

Since its beginnings in Australia in the 1880s the Adventist Church has produced a variety of magazines and journals to promote its cause and continues to do so. Given its fascination with print, the Seventh-day Adventist Church provides an ideal setting to explore the role of print in a voluntary, nonprofit organisation. The church has had a long-term commitment to print, from its beginnings. *Record,* the case study in this research for instance, celebrated its 100th year in 1998. With this kind of history there is a chance to investigate the uses of print over time and to identify different strategies that

the church has used through print to respond to internal and external issues affecting the membership.

Print in organisations

Print is an obvious choice for communicating within a nonprofit organisation. This is despite the fact that there are now so many other forms of media available that have greater flexibility and even greater appeal. Considering the broad range of nonprofit organisations, from local clubs (such as sporting clubs) to international humanitarian organisations, even if they have email newsletters or web sites, print still plays a significant role. That role ranges in complexity from photocopied pages of a tennis club to regular magazines from an international aid organisation. For nonprofit organisations, print involves only a small investment in technology in preparing a document or magazine for publication, with a relatively low cost per copy. Print also has the advantage of becoming an easy reference source that can be simply and repeatedly referred to. A photocopied page can be hung on the fridge, or a magazine left on a bench.

Other communication media are more at the cutting edge of communication theory and practice, and most of them could be studied within the context of the voluntary, nonprofit organisation that is the focus of this research, the Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, print has a long history and the growth in the number of magazines and the continued publication of printed books suggest it has a future. Our world may be "one of digital communications, of computer mediated communication" (Lyon, 2001:23), but that has not made print obsolete. A 2001 report on e-books in academic libraries made this point, "Our task force concluded that all the elements that would make the e-book market viable are not quite in place" (Snowhill, 2001). The

report indicated a decision to wait for further development of technologies and standards before e-books would be "viable and sustainable." Lynch (2001) notes that "a whole group of disparate, long-simmering issues are converging around e-books." The fact that some web sites are turning to a printed version to increase income demonstrates some kind of linked future to print media (as does the reverse situation as magazines develop web sites). Then there is evidence of the continuing desire for print media. Skimial (2002) points out that "even though college campuses [in the United States] are some of the most wired places on Earth, printed versions of college newspapers remain far more popular than their online editions." That print still has a role is illustrated in Australia's Rural Women's Network and its newsletter *Network*, which has seen growth from a circulation of 4000 in 1987 to that of "around 13,000" in 1996 (Bailey, et al, 1996:18). In the Adventist Church in Australia and New Zealand, *Record* is the main means of communicating across the breadth of the churches. *Record* provides an opportunity to reflect on the role of print in voluntary and nonprofit organisations generally.

There are some 700,000 nonprofit organisations within Australia ranging from local clubs and football teams to international organisations. Many of them use some form of print media to communicate with their members that may range from a handwritten, photocopied note to a glossy annual report. What is attempted in this study is to discover what is effective through print in contributing to group connectedness and facilitating group cohesion and a sense of belonging.

The media has a huge impact on modern life. McLuhan's (1994:5) concept of the global village through the media, particularly electronic media, is more a reality now than when he first published it in 1964. The mass media, says McQuail (1994:1), is of "considerable, and still growing, importance in modern societies" not only for

information, but it also influences and entertains. Communication may involve "part skill, part art, and part science" (Severin and Tankard, 1992:3) in its production, but it also has significant outside influences that help form the final shape of the communication form. This study takes theoretical considerations of influences on print media to understand them in the context and reality of a particular print-media product within a community to assess the role it plays.

Print in the Adventist community

The primary purpose of this study is to understand the role of print in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and by implication on nonprofit and voluntary organisations. The qualifications "nonprofit" and "voluntary" are important because they assume some voluntary commitment by the reader to the organisation producing the magazine or newsletter and highlight that economic concerns may not be a priority. Using *Record* as a case study, this study outlines how print contributed in the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia and New Zealand, and the role it continues to perform in the Adventist community. *Record* is a weekly production that is distributed free to members in Adventist churches within Australia and New Zealand. Using data gathered from interviews, focus groups and a questionnaire survey completed by respondents, the study aims to discover the part print plays in connecting members to their church and whether it plays a role in consolidating the dispersed membership into a community.

Theoretical context

Little research has been conducted exploring the role of print within a voluntary, nonprofit organisation generally and the Adventist Church specifically. Many

references exist that focus on the history of print, but with only passing observations about print in the Adventist community. Wilson's (1990:137) claim that Adventism is the "sect with the largest and most diversified literary output" is important in this context. Hansen (1985:60) notes, "Seventh-day Adventists have always believed the distribution of denominational literature to be one of the most effective methods of sharing their faith." Butler (1987:204), in his "publish or perish" comment, further suggests that:

> The history of Adventism had been a matter of "publish or perish" since Mrs White envisioned "a little paper" that would cast its "streams of light" throughout the world. Such lofty spiritual vision, however, had led to the practical consideration of organization. As far as ecclesiastical bureaucracy was concerned, in the beginning was the word.

When the church entered the South Pacific, print continued to have a significant impact, as Lineham (1985:34-5) notes:

> At the outset the early Adventist preachers held few meetings. Their priority was the distribution of literature arguing their case. . . . So they began extensive distribution both of pamphlets and the two great Adventist apologiae, Mrs White's *Great Controversy* and Uriah Smith's *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation.* These books were often sold from house to house before meetings were begun in order to arouse interest in their message. The books did not always sell well but magazines had a ready market, and Stephen Haskell was able to persuade secular newsagents in all the towns he visited to stock the new Australian Adventist magazine, *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times.* By 1892 one critic admitted that Adventist literature had achieved blanket coverage in the north [of New Zealand].

This print emphasis was not limited to the early years of Adventism, as discovered by Ballis (1985:70):

> World War I provided a new impetus to both Adventist journalism and evangelism. A new Adventist literary genre came into being with the proliferation of books tracts and articles interpreting world events as the fulfilment of prophecy.

What is lacking, however, is both research and the development of theory of print within the Adventist Church. Knight (1977), with his analysis of several Adventist magazines as a part of his doctoral thesis, has provided seminal research in the area, but this was not his main thrust. While there has been ready recognition of the importance of print within the Adventist Church, the present study takes up the challenge of attempting to understand its role within the church. There is much research and theory for the mass print media or the commercial press, what this study does is add to the knowledge about print within a niche area. At the same time, the study has drawn on the wealth of literature produced on the role of print in the mass market to help identify salient features that influence and drive the commercial press. Attempts are then made to understand the research findings by drawing on this literature. Of necessity, then, the study is descriptive in orientation rather than seeking to test a particular theory about media. For this reason the study is qualitative in focus even though it draws on data gathered by means of a questionnaire survey.

Questions that undergird the study

A series of questions form the backdrop for this study. They include: What role does print play within the Adventist Church? Has a strategy been adopted that made print the preferred means of communication? What is the church's policy on the role of editors? If there is one, how did it develop? How has the church used print to respond to issues outside the church that are seen as threatening the church? Are there illustrations of these? What can be learned about the church's use of print as it deals with issues affecting the church internally? In what ways can print enhance a sense of belonging? Ultimately, print is a depository about the church. What can be learned about the church, its members and its values, and what implications does an analysis of print have

for the church and its future? Further, what can then be extrapolated about print within organisations generally, and in particular in voluntary, nonprofit organisations?

Motivation for the study

As someone nourished and nurtured by Adventist print, interest in this topic has increased with the 16 years, until March 2004, I worked as an editor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For 12 of those years one of my roles was as editor of *Record,* the case study for this research. The present study comes from a desire, as a practitioner of print communication, to understand what impact print has on readers who are members of a voluntary organisation. Of particular interest is the fact that print such as *Record* has a specific target and a specific purpose. The target is members of the group. The purpose is to unite them for the cause, whatever that cause may be. The target audience, as members, already have some kind of commitment to the cause, so should be sympathetic to print produced by *their* organisation. This, I have found, is not always the case. The question that began this quest is this: In what ways can print enhance a sense of community or belonging? Another followed this: How come it works for some and not for others?

As an insider, I bring familiarity to the task. I understand the processes, at least within the case study. I have first-hand experience, which helps to understand both the scope and limitations of preparing and producing a print product on a regular basis. This provided a strong base to attempt to understand the areas I lacked, the theoretical material and literature available, and to develop an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of readers.

The scope of this study covers the breadth of Adventist print with a particular emphasis on Australia and New Zealand, and specifically on the case study, *Record.*

While the research among members was conducted while I was editor of *Record,* almost all discussion and analyses of editorial or church administration decisions concerning print come from before my appointment to that role. This limitation is in place for two reasons, the first to distance myself and keep my involvement in these types of decisions to a minimum. More importantly, the second is that James Coffin, my immediate predecessor, brought change to *Record* and set a template that has seen little change since. At least from the editorial and church administrative involvement in the print process, print activities and emphasis in the Adventist Church in Australia and New Zealand are studied up to and including Coffin.

Structure of the study

The thesis is divided into four sections. The first section consists of three chapters that highlight the influences that shape print media and the methodology employed in this research. This section reviews the literature to demonstrate the kinds of influences brought to bear on the content of print-media products. The study draws on both quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interviews and focus groups) analyses to present a broad overview of members' attitudes to *Record* and the individual meanings they bring in their reading of print material.

The second section, of two chapters, presents a brief history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and shows the significant role print media has played in its development. This section notes that just as Adventism grew out of a movement with a reliance on print media, it developed print for its own purposes and adopted a print-heavy approach upon its arrival in Australia and New Zealand. The section outlines the variety of publications produced by the Adventist community over the years in Australia and New Zealand.

variety of publications produced by the Adventist community over the years in Australia and New Zealand.

The four chapters in section three focus on *Record*. This publication is used as a case study to investigate the role of print in the Adventist community. The chapters highlight the range of views among church members and examine the extent to which this publication is perceived to address the needs of the diverse membership. The section also highlights how a voluntary organisation's print is a window into the organisation itself.

The final section draws together conclusions and implications from the research.

SECTION ONE

Research Context

This study is about print and community within nonprofit organisations. In this first section the focus is on theoretical perspectives that drive the research and the methodology used. A number of influences are studied that place pressure on print media, particularly on its content. A significant influence is the type of organisation that produces the print product, in this instance, a voluntary, nonprofit organisation. Readers then add further complexity by bringing their own interpretations to the text derived from their own experience and connections to the organisation. "Community" is an emotive word that brings a sense of warmth and wellbeing between people, but it proves to be more easily described than defined. Almost as difficult is taking the sociological concept of church-sect typology and applying it to the Seventh-day Adventist Church to give definition to the kind of organisation or community involved in the case study. The methodology adopted makes readers central to the study as it aims at gaining a better idea of print's impact on those within a community.

Chapter 2

Factors Influencing Print Media

Print is not and cannot be value neutral. Before ink meets paper a variety of forces and decisions are brought to bear on the content, design and purpose of any print product. Print is also found in a variety of forms and styles designed to meet different needs. The national, state or city newspaper is quite different from that of the annual report of a major corporation or a regular club newsletter. Yet there are a number of common influences that are brought to bear, to a greater or lesser extent, on the content of print-media products. In this chapter the focus is on mass print media where these influences are most easily identified and best understood through the literature. In doing this, a norm is established from which comparisons can be made of other print-media products, in particular of *Record,* the print product in the case study.

This chapter is divided into three parts to investigate these influences. The first is the most extensive and examines five influences brought upon the content of mass print-media products: the power of print-media ownership, the pressure from those with authority, the impact of advertising, the role of the audience and the effect of societal values. The second part investigates nonprofit organisations and recognises that this type of organisation will bring its own influence to its print media. The final part considers the influence the reader brings to text. The aim of this chapter is to build a theoretical base and an understanding of general principles to better understand the specifics involved in this research.

Influences impacting on print media

Before a print-media product arrives at the production stage a whole range of decisions have been made about its content and look. Some of those decisions are based on mechanical processes and limitations imposed on the project (the type of press, the size of paper, cost and design are examples). These decisions will have their own influence on a print-media product, but in this part the influences under discussion are not related to the processes of printing, although they may have some impact on those processes. Five influences are readily identifiable as having at least a potential impact on print media: the owner(s), those in authority, advertising, the audience and societal values. They are each investigated here.

Power of print-media ownership

Chadwick (1989:xx) claims: "Media owners tend to own their empires personally, so their authority can be absolute if they choose." The suspicion of the truth of this statement is reflected in concerns in Australia that if ownership is limited to a few, the temptation to use that influence to serve their own ends will be too hard to resist. A Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee in 1942 met in response to "the danger of monopoly control that should be watched" (cited in Osborne and Lewis, 1995:74). Sinclair (1987:139) maintains there is a "notorious concentration of media ownership in Australia," and Brady (1989:v-vi, viii) senses that freedom of expression is endangered by those who control the media.

Windschuttle (1987:xi, 140-1) does not share these views. He believes media content is audience-driven rather than "proprietor-ruled," and argues that the concentration of ownership in the hands of a few powerful and rich "ruling-class

figures" has not led to a media filled with "ruling-class ideology." He sees market forces pushing a large volume of "working-class culture" onto its pages and screens. Henningham (1990:x) finds several influences with journalism "fettered and restrained by institutions, including defamation laws, parliaments and proprietors." It would be naive to believe owners have no influence, but the influence should not be overstated. In its report *News & Fair Facts,* the House of Representatives Select Committee on the Print Media (cited in Hurst and White, 1994:237) found the key issue is the separation of the legitimate business interests of the proprietor or management to run a business for profit from the editorial process of the fair selection and presentation of news. This separation may not be possible. Owners and managers give general editorial direction of the paper, and select editors who in turn have responsibility to maintain or increase circulation figures. The concentration of power has a "potential for harm" (Wallace, 1990:195), but the media must run as a successful business, or die. It is rare for a businessman to support a long-term, loss-making business.[1] Even Windschuttle (1987:264) admits that proprietors can influence news in various ways, especially in the kind of news being reported, because they determine: the target audience, the general editorial approach, print runs, distribution patterns, promotional campaigns, and pricing.[2]

Commercial media organisations are driven by two goals: revenue and non-revenue. There is general acceptance and a "high degree of unanimity" over the revenue goals, audience revenue or advertising revenue. Non-revenue goals are vague and can cause disagreement, particularly if they are cultural. "Revenue and non-revenue goals are mixed throughout the organisation and provide bargaining currencies between such groups as news gatherers and news processors differently involved in successive stages of news production" (Elliott, 1977:157). Revenue goals could be seen as one reason for

"monopolies" within the press as the capitalistic desire to expand and grow takes over (Windschuttle, 1987:93), especially with some newspapers being marginal concerns (Henderson, 1990:201).

Shortfalls in profitability can result in a re-evaluation of editorial policy. Barr (1977:60) illustrates this with the changes made to the *Australian*. Beginning in 1964, it claimed it would print "impartial information," "independent thinking" and be "tied to no party, to no state, and [have] no chains of any kind." Financially the newspaper made disastrous losses. In mid-1971, the managing editor was dropped. "Stories and features were cut, editorial became harmless, international coverage became bitty, issues were out and sport was in. Its editorial independence had been lost. Its financial performance had been disastrous." Barr (1977:60) admits this is an extreme case and adds: "Proprietors are, in fact, only rarely involved in the daily operation of the newspaper, which is how their staff want it to be."

A significant influence media owners may have is through their relationship with politicians and the political process. Media owners tend to have open access to politicians who are feted for business and political advantage. Yet it can be a love-hate relationship. The politicians need the media for their profile. Proprietors offer politicians potent, credible "propaganda tools," and often the politician will go over the heads of journalists and editors to owners (Chadwick, 1989:xix). There is distrust, but overall the history of government and media proprietors shows collusion. Media owners have found government support for their interests to a degree that few others could emulate (Windschuttle, 1987:140).

The influence of owners highlighted in a 1992 survey by the Australian Centre for Independent Journalism survey found that one-third of 105 business journalists agreed they would "not pursue a story that was potentially damaging to [their]

employer's commercial interests as actively as a story about an unrelated company." Another third rejected the proposition (Hurst and White, 1994:250). Conflict of interest can create a problem at the reporting level and journalists pick up a sense of what is and what is not acceptable (Chadwick, 1989:216).

The public may not receive an impartial coverage of a story where the proprietor has an interest. This is where the influence of the owner is found rather than in absolute, authoritarian control. Owners can certainly bring pressure to bear on editors and journalists, but they will be in trouble if they take no heed of financial realities. Profit expectations, as illustrated with Rupert Murdoch and the *Australian*, can bring stronger pressure to bear than the will of the owner. The influence of the owner is tempered by that of the audience and advertising, particularly when they impact on the bottom line, for profit or loss. Added to this is the influence already hinted at, of those with power in the community.

Pressure from those with authority

Those with power in society, in politics or business (and, to a lesser extent, celebrities) have influence over the media. These people are often newsmakers and sources of statements or opinions that appear in the media. Because they tend to have authority in an institution, hold public office or some other position, the media may accept a message in the form of a direct statement. The media may also request an interview or statement about a specific incident or plan. The fact that the message comes direct from someone in authority gives strength to this approach and adds credibility. A weakness, though, is that the report is not neutral. Mass communication has often been seen by those with power as an efficient device for getting a message to many people, whether as advertising, political propaganda or public information.

This "top-down" influence is not new. Soon after the development of printing during the late Renaissance, those in authority, not media owners, had the greatest influence in mass media. Truth was an issue and the "product" of a few wise men in a position to guide and direct their fellows. "Thus truth was thought to be centred near the centre of power. The press therefore functioned *from the top down*" (Siebert, et al, 1963:2). Siebert, et al (1963:17) show how this approach was used by church leaders at this time in their roles as "shepherds of mankind." Monarchies adopted this approach with the early history of mass media revealing thrones or rulers as the source of truth. Information was controlled. Siebert, et al, (1963:105-146) find a modern example of this approach in the media system under the communist government in what was the USSR, but the temptation to control media still operates.

> The control of information is a vital cog in the mechanism of social discipline. A top-down definition of information is a disciplinary one, and it hides its disciplinarity under notions of objectivity, responsibility and political education (Fiske, 1992:49).

Fiske (1992:45-6) further suggests that, in fact, the "power-bloc" of the West has taken over the media through various legal and fiscal measures to suppress "undisciplined news" with the economics of capitalism bringing the power-bloc and the media into close alignment.

The capacity of the powerful to control news is illustrated at its best (worst?) during war, when defence needs are universally recognised as important. Truth is a first victim of the propaganda machine as several case studies demonstrate. Fifty years after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, more information has become available that suggests the incident was a set-up (Severin and Tankard, Jr, 1992:102ff). The Falklands War and the Gulf War are more recent examples of how those in authority can put their own spin on the news (Eldridge, 1993:13).[3]

Herman and Chomsky (1988:2), in their "propaganda model," focus on the use of wealth and power to "filter" the news to allow the "government and dominant private interests to get their message across to the public." Their model is worth noting even if it has its critics. Schudson (1992:146) contends the "'propaganda model' is a blunt instrument for examining a subtle system, a system with more heterogeneity and more capacity for change than they allow." He argues that Herman and Chomsky can paint the news media in liberal societies as if they were being produced in authoritarian societies only because there has been a lack of serious study of the media in authoritarian societies. Lester (1992:51) admits the propaganda model gains support from evidence that shows more space devoted to news favourable to government and big-business interests. "But specifically omitted is a concrete discussion of the *discursive* strategies that make it so."

Herman and Chomsky (1988:176-177) claim that five filters[4] occur naturally in media, and news people are convinced that they are working objectively. However the constraints are so powerful that alternative bases for news choices are hardly imaginable. They illustrate their argument with specific instances during war or foreign policy crises where the media had not challenged the official line taken by the United States government. Media firms are large businesses controlled by the wealthy who have common interests with other corporations, banks *and* the government. "They are *among* the powers that be, and so have interests in common with them" (Lichtenberg, 1992:226; cf Lester, 1992:51). The fact that they are among the power groups will affect news choices (Herman and Chomsky, 1988:14).

The media may attack the government and the government may endeavour to curb the media. However, disputes are most often limited to issues that appear to depart from the principles that underwrite the allegiance of (usually unspoken) interests (Fiske,

1992:45). The government (and business) also "go to great pains to make things easy for news organisations." The government provides facilities for news gathering, gives out advance copies of speeches, schedules press conferences geared to news deadlines, writes press releases in usable language and organises photo opportunities. Accepting these news releases is, in a sense, entering into a business relationship because the supplier subsidises the cost of acquiring news materials (Herman and Chomsky, 1988:22). Supplied material is naturally biased toward the group giving out the information, but there are other pressures that make this "easy" news acceptable; in blunt terms, "the deadline and the news hole" (Tiffen, 1993:174). The "mechanical pressures" of work are significant and make it attractive to run with easy news (Schudson, 1992:142). If an editor is left with the option of a hole (blank space) or running a press release, there really is no choice.

Herman and Chomsky (1988:18) see the mass media "drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest. The media need a steady, reliable flow of the raw material of news." Links are formed between reporters and officials (Schudson, 1992:148) and the best use of resources dictates that news gatherers concentrate in areas where news information can be found. Windschuttle (1987:266-275) calls this the bureaucratic model where "the needs of newspapers for regular supplies of news from predictable sources lead to journalists developing rounds." The advantage is that "government and corporate sources also have the great merit of being recognizable and credible by their status and prestige." This not only helps "to maintain the image of objectivity, but also to protect [news gatherers] from criticism of bias and the threat of libel suits, they need material that can be portrayed as presumptively accurate" (Herman and Chomsky, 1988:19).

The heavy reliance on official sources for news is not a "conspiracy theory of the media," warns Eldridge (1993:10), it is "the very mark of professionalism that it has access to these sources." These links, though, limit dissent and create bias as news gatherers work to maintain a good relationship with authority figures, to keep access open. Preferred coverage is granted to institutional authorities because they have the resources to provide information (Lake and Scrunger, 1993:123). This gives these authorities influence on news content because of their position or through publicity strategies. Tensions and conflicts arise when one with authority wants positive coverage, but the newsworthy point is negative (Tiffen, 1993:173-6). A journalist's approach to the problem necessitates objectivity, and the journalist may use the information from one in authority in a negative way to overcome the appearance of bias. Credibility is largely dependent on confidence that the information is not influenced by partisan or vested interests (McQuail, 1992:73).

While there is evidence that those in authority have influence on the media, there is no longer the control evident in the early history of mass media. Control is still used during times of crisis (war, for instance), but Herman and Chomsky overstate the case in their propaganda model. The powerful within a community have greater access to the media because of who they are and, often, the impact of what they do. Skewing information within the media is under greater threat from the ease and cost-efficient process of using press releases or obtaining the quick quote from someone with authority than from power figures using their influence. The use of people with authority as sources may have "notions of objectivity, responsibility and political education" (Fiske, 1992:49), but if overused, or used in a way that causes a loss of credibility it could threaten the viability of the media product.

Impact of advertising

Two-thirds of mainstream newspaper revenue comes from advertising. This is an immediate and obvious influence. The main difference between a newspaper and most other products is that the purchaser pays only a fraction of the real cost (Windschuttle, 1984:3, 275; Sinclair, 1987:67). While advertising lowers the cost of a print-media product, there is the danger of another cost:

> Advertising being the lifeblood of commercial publishing, major advertisers are in a position of some potential power, particularly in relation to smaller media enterprises. Country and suburban newspapers and local radio stations are typically dependent on relatively few advertisers for their bread and butter. It is a brave, arguably foolhardy, country editor who consistently runs an editorial policy that threatens the interests of the blokes in the Rotary Club. A sustained advertisers' boycott could spell ruin for the paper and unemployment for the editor (Peter Cole-Adams, cited in Hurst and White, 1994:239).

Critics have a valid concern that advertising might place pressure on editors to suppress news unfavourable to their business (Sinclair, 1993:87). The Adelaide *News* lost advertising when reporting a controversial case (Barr, 1977:62). Businessman Alan Bond withdrew several million dollars worth of advertising from John Fairfax publications in 1986 because he objected to the *Sydney Morning Herald's* coverage of his activities. The Australian Press Council criticised both the New South Wales Wran and the Queensland Bjelke-Petersen governments for banning advertising in certain media outlets (Hurst and White, 1994:239-40). The loss of revenue is a threat to a media product's viability. At the same time, whether pressure to conform to their will comes from governments or business, "it is not in the interests of an editor to accede to such pressure because of the loss of credibility which the newspaper would suffer in the long run" (Sinclair, 1993:86). Credibility is necessary in any successful news medium.

Advertising, particularly persuasive advertising, by its nature attacks credibility. While there is some disagreement about the beginnings of persuasive advertising, it came into place at the beginning of the twentieth century (Craig, 1992:162; Sinclair

1987:6-7). Since then it has become "one of the most important cultural factors moulding and reflecting our life today. They are ubiquitous, an inevitable part of everyone's life" (Williamson, 1978:11). In her "classic text" (Windschuttle, 1985:196), Williamson (1978:8, 13, 48, 64) identifies the purpose of advertising as designed to make us feel we are lacking and can rise or fall and be given value through what we are able to buy: "Instead of being identified by what they produce, people are made to identify themselves by what they consume." Advertising "sells a way of life and as such forms part of the instrumental and material culture of twentieth century capitalism" (Lester, 1992:75). Williamson (1986:13) concedes that "consuming products does give a thrill," but says (Williamson, 1978:174) society is not naive about advertising, for advertisements are generally regarded as lies and "rip-offs." The consumer's response fits somewhere between the "playful willingness to be temporarily seduced and a hardened scepticism about every kind of communication in view of the selling job it is probably doing" (Wernick, 1991:192). That scepticism could impact on the media in which the advertisement is placed.

Advertorials can also impact on print media. First appearing in the 1960s, they fall into two categories: the promotion of a product sponsored by the media product; and advertisers using editorial space to promote their wares. When something is sponsored by a media organisation, the problem is not in publishing this kind of material, but in giving it the appearance that it is not advertising. Credibility and confidence in the media organisation is lost through this process. In the other form of advertorial, the advertiser presents articles in the style of the newspaper or magazine to give the impression it is a part of the normal copy. Because of the extra copy, these advertisements "bloom in times of economic recession" when newspaper staff numbers are limited (Cook, 1992:32). Again, the credibility of the newspaper or the magazine

comes into question and the media product could be seen as an extension of advertising, as Wernick (1991:100) found in his study of some television programs. Specialist magazines can have strong commercial pressures toward the creation of a "suitable environment for advertising," which can include layout and editorial ways of endorsing advertised products (Sinclair, 1987:76-7).

While the "best ads are successful bandits, raiding the borders of their accompanying discourses, but with the sense not to stay too long" (Cook, 1992:32), an experience from radio provides a prime example of blurring the edges between advertising and regular programming in the 1999 John Laws/Alan Jones/2UE "cash for comments" furore.[5] Rebecca Harris, lecturer in Public Relations at Sydney's University of Technology, told *The Media Report* (1999:4) she recognises there may have been short-term gain for those involved, but in the long-term, "the public could end up being more distrustful of the company in the future; certainly the public would regard the company differently."

Advertisements are positive in their approach to their topic (Wernick, 1991:42). They do not reflect on the negatives, nor do they give other options for the consumer to consider. It is the very nature of advertising to persuade, not inform. While many advertising eulogists admit that the more informative the advertising, the more persuasive it will be, says Barr (1977:178), this has not led to accurate information. "There are few ads on TV today [and other media] that even pretend to inform rather than persuade, cajole and manipulate." There is a basic lack of trust in advertisements to give accurate information: "promotional culture is radically deficient in good faith" (Wernick, 1991:194). If these "bandits" raid the borders of the other information in newspapers and magazines, there is danger that the other information, too, will be

distrusted. The influence of advertising in media, then, is not limited to a financial impact.

The financial impact is significant where advertisers seek a market that will respond positively to their product or service, which has a profound influence on media development (Sinclair, 1987:71-2). If advertisers feel a particular part of the media is not communicating with their market, they will not advertise, or will withdraw their advertising. London's *Daily Herald* was lost because, even with a readership of 4.7 million in its last days, it did not have advertising support (Curran, 1977:225). A *Guide to Advertisers* from 1851 claimed: "Character is of more importance than number. A journal that circulates a thousand among the upper or middle classes is a better medium than would be one circulating a hundred thousand among the lower classes" (cited in Curran, 1977:218-9). Westergaard (1977:102-3) agrees, claiming that the most important influence advertisers have on newspapers is to pay more to reach a body of wealthy readers. It is too simplistic to say all advertisers will naturally want to appeal to the wealthy, for that does not allow for the huge amount of marketing research undertaken to find, or create, a market. Some advertisers make no attempt to reach the wealthy. The variables in the selection of the advertising medium include geographic, demographic, socioeconomic and sociopsychological characteristics of potential consumers (Sinclair, 1987:97). Even then, advertisers still have a deep "bias towards the conventional and the most widely diffused." Advertising "meta-messages" affirm that the "pseudo-totality of a utopia" has already arrived. "In such a world, the safe compromise, the false unity of irreconcilable perspectives, is represented as our deepest and most natural desire. The soft sell which prevails in the market would enfold everyone in its happy embrace" (Wernick, 1991:42-3).

In one sense, the role of the media is to develop an audience for advertisers. If a newspaper or magazine can convince enough advertisers that they can supply them with their target audience, they will have financial viability. If they are unable to hold their advertisers, or if advertisers boycott them, the print product will suffer. In the ultimate, advertisers' choices influence both media prosperity and survival (Herman and Chomsky, 1988:14). Tension arises when, having captured the audience and the advertisers, the media must continue to meet the audience expectations to hold these audiences "for sale to advertisers" (Sinclair, 1987:75). In a promotional culture "deficient in good faith" (Wernick, 1991:194), if the boundaries between advertising and what is supposed to be objective information are breached, there is a resultant loss in credibility. If credibility is compromised too much or too often, the readers may no longer support the print-media product. This means that the audience brings its own influence to bear on media products.

Role of the audience

A media product will fail without an audience. Once an audience is established, the media product will want to keep it. Further, there will be a desire to increase this "collection of spectators, a group of individuals who are gathered together to attend a performance and 'receive' a message 'sent' by another" (Ang, 1991:33). Windschuttle (1987:405; xi) maintains that the audience is the main factor and influence on the media: "The media operate within a market situation and, by that very fact, the first criterion of their existence is that they satisfy the demands of their audiences." Under Windschuttle's (1987:262) "free market model," newspapers are in the business of satisfying the demand for news. The principal criterion of selection is public interest, what the public is interested in, and what is in the public's interest. The news media

have to "give the public what it wants," usually "human interest" or "largely trivial material," and to fulfil their duty to record the important events of the day.

Janowitz (cited in Stamm, 1985:74) recognises different types of audiences when he classifies readers of community newspapers as: fans who pay attention to the bulk of the paper, regular readers who read the bulk of the paper on a weekly basis, partial readers who pay attention to portions of the paper or read it periodically, and non-readers who give it partial or no attention. Media managers have a vested interest in their audience, which is often treated as a set of consumers whose behaviours are monitored for qualitative (ratings) and quantitative (content appreciation) research. Communicators, however, do not gain much from formal research, but tend to prefer to find their own informal "ways of coping with uncertainty, especially by way of self-constructed audience 'images' and personal contacts" (Stamm, 1985:74). Lobby groups that claim to speak on behalf of the audience or groups within it add to this information. The value of spontaneous feedback (mail, email and phone, for instance) is unclear, but probably has value for local media and for "small-scale media for special audiences" (McQuail, 1994:323-4).

During times of uncertainty within a community, such as change, disorder and conflict, the people's dependency on media information is high. Individuals also have degrees of interest in the media. Sports fans are likely to use the media for sport information; others will have more interest in the stock market, and so on. "To a large extent the user of mass communication is in control" and serves as an "antidote to the emphasis on passive audiences and persuasion that has dominated much earlier research" (Severin and Tankard, 1992:262-3). Financial realities and the natural desire to increase profitability will lead to endeavours to increase the size of the "paying

audience" from the "potential audience" and to keep the "paying audience" (McQuail, 1994:299). This can impact on the style of the newspaper.[6]

The "popular" press, Fiske (1989:186) argues, has more "relevance" to more people and is thus popular. More people are able to relate to the situations they read about, not only in the type of stories, but the "manner of their telling." The trend toward entertainment and the popular (away from education and social responsibility) has been defended: "After all, there is little point in applauding a socially responsible news service that nobody chooses to watch" (Fiske, 1989:192). The popular, by definition, belongs to "the people," and without considering the audience, "there is a greater likelihood that receivers will ignore the message, misunderstand the content, reject applicability to self, challenge claims with counter-arguments, or derogate the source" (Atkin, 1981:273).

Ang (1991:17-23) argues for two alternative, diverse configurations of audience: audience-as-market, and audience-as-public. He sees the audience-as-public fitting more the "transmission model" of communication where audiences are receivers of the message and there is an "ordered transference of meaning." Public-service broadcasting fits this category. The audience-as-market concept goes beyond that, it wants to attract attention for there's a market to be won. Audience measurement becomes an important indicator of success and, further, it gives advertisers some kind of guarantee they have not spent their advertising dollars for nothing. They need to be reassured that their messages have reached those for whom it was intended (Ang, 1991:53). In turn, the media has an interest in "delivering audiences to the advertisers" (Ang, 1991:ix).

Dervin's (1981:75, 76) "information-as-construction" concept maintains that information is a creation tied to the time, place and perspective of the receiver, and that more emphasis must be placed on the audience as individuals, if the audience is to be

reached. To help the audience, Dervin (1981:76-8, 84) suggests that the objective approach used by journalists may not aid the communication process because to do this, they remove themselves from the information. What could be more helpful is for "subjective clues" so individuals may be able to "determine the applicability of the message to their own context." This helps individuals in the audience become involved in "sense-making instances." The most important aspect of this approach is that "it looks through the eyes of the user (audience/receiver) rather than from the eyes of the source" (Dervin, 1981).

This emphasis on the audience calls for understanding how messages are received rather than how they are sent. Connecting with the audience is important and impacts on the style (and here is found a valid reason for tending toward the popular style, to connect with the larger audience). It has been well demonstrated that even a heavy flow of messages is not enough, on its own, to attract attention, and to get the message across.[7] Whatever form of media is used, if the needs and personality of the audience are not considered, it will struggle. The influence of the audience will always be strong as the media attempts to maintain or increase audience size. Media management, which looks for profit, and advertisers who want to reach the broadest possible audience means the audience will have a major impact. This impact will force continual audience assessment even if there is difficulty in knowing how to measure exactly what the audience wants.

Effect of societal values

In 1989 the *Bulletin* asked the question, "Why is our media 'on the nose?'" The *Bulletin* asked editors, journalists, politicians and business people the question in an

attempt to discover the answer. Hurst and White (1994:252) suggest that if they had asked the people, they would have received an answer something like this:

> Because they smell of hypocrisy. They say they work on our behalf. They say they tell the truth. But what they really do is give us the half truth. They sensationalise things, just to get us to buy papers and watch their shows. They talk about how to fight corrupt politicians and crims but they'd sell their grandmother for a good story. They barge in wherever they want to without so much as a by-your-leave. You could be injured or half-dead and they still won't leave you alone. They reckon they are the voice of the public. But when we complain, they don't want to listen.

While the media may push at the boundaries, it cannot go too far from what society considers an acceptable standard for it to still be credible and acceptable. Journalists do not deliberately insert values into the news, says Gans (1982:40-2), these values can be inferred although, as different people within the audience come to the news, they may infer different values from what they see or read. He notes that even when a news story deals with activities considered undesirable and whose descriptions contain negative connotations, the story implies what is desirable. For instance, a politician charged with corruption suggests immediately that corruption is bad and politicians should be honest. Gans (1982:40-42) suggests two types of values: First, topical values, the "opinions expressed about specific actors or activities of the moment. . . . These manifest themselves in the explicit opinions of news magazine stories and television commentary, as well as the implicit judgments that enter into all stories." Second, enduring values are found in many different kinds of stories over a long period of time. While these values can and do change, they change slowly and they help to shape opinions. Among these values are the desirability of economic prosperity, the undesirability of war, virtues of the family, love, friendship and the ugliness of hate and prejudice, sometimes called "motherhood values."

These values are enduring because the news judgment concerning them has not changed significantly over time; they are assumed societal values. The values are often not stated, but when the values are broken there is a story to report (Gans, 1982:197). Attitudes can change. "The cycle leading from opposition to defusion, from resistance to incorporation encloses each successive subculture. We have seen how the media and the market fit into this cycle" (Hebdige, 1979:100). Hebdige, however, refers to subcultures becoming accepted in the mainstream. Being accepted as an alternative within the mainstream does not make that subculture a part of the mainstream. While society's basic attitudes can change (the acceptance of new roles for women over the past 20 to 30 years, for example) these changes fit within Gans's proposal that these enduring social changes take time to be accepted.

For both advertising and the media, the audience is a critical factor. Both have to reach the audience in terms and with the societal values acceptable to the audience if they wish to gain a continued positive response from that audience. In their propaganda model, Herman and Chomsky (1988:298) argue that the "societal purposes" of the media are to "inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and state." The media does this, they say, through the selection of topics, distribution of concerns, framing of issues, filtering of information, emphasis and tone, and "by keeping debate within the bounds of acceptable premises." From Gans (1982:40-2), though, it appears that if there were a conflict between a privileged person or group and the values of a society, the values would eventually win out (the Watergate situation and President Nixon is a prime example). In this instance, while the privileged group may influence society's values they cannot control them.

The media may nudge at the edges of society's values, but if they attempt to challenge societal norms on a regular basis they will find themselves out of step with the public, their audience. These values may rarely be spoken, but they are understood. They may change, but the change will come slowly and if the media push too hard they will lose their readers. Often it is only when these enduring values are broken that there is a story to report, and by reporting the story, the media affirms the values. There is risk involved if the media wishes to challenge enduring society values.

The five influences in summary

Each of the influences examined above brings pressure to bear on mass print-media products. A successful publication will tend to see these influences as challenges to be addressed while at the same time keeping in mind the need for the appearance of objectivity and a healthy bottom line. For the audience, objectivity is a recognised essential, as is not straying too far from societal values. For owners, the need of advertisers and an audience for profitability helps temper their power. For those in authority, their need for exposure in the media does hold risks when issues of objectivity are considered. In a healthy mass print-media product these five influences tend to bring balance. Within a for-profit organisation, as seen in the case of the *Australian,* lack of profit will drive decision making. That is why, for this study of print media it is important to have an understanding of nonprofit organisations.

Print in nonprofit organisations

Understanding the differences between for-profit organisations, in particular, the type of organisation that produces mass media, and nonprofit organisations is important for understanding the different motivation and purpose between the two, which, in turn,

bring their influence upon print. The term "third sector" refers to organisations that are not part of the business or public sector. This term covers a diverse group of private not-for-profit organisations. "Private," "non-government" or "community" are terms often used in health and welfare. "Private" applies to education. "Charity" is sometimes used in the welfare field when, in its legal meaning, it encompasses religious, educational and public benefit organisations as well. "Clubs" or "associations" are used in sport and recreation, while "association" and "society" are used in culture and the arts, and to describe professional and trade bodies and advocacy groups (Lyons, 1994:1). There could be 700,000 third-sector organisations in Australia (Lyons, 2001:17).

Anheier and Seibel (1990:8) say "third sector" is "applied to all those organisations which, for one reason or another, do not readily fit into the dichotomy of for-profit sector versus public sector." They argue that the term "nonprofit" is less precise and refers to a "relatively well-defined organizational universe in the United States and perhaps the United Kingdom." Thus all organisations that are neither profit-making businesses nor government agencies or bureaucracies fit the "third sector" definition (Anheier and Seibel, 1990:7). Wolf (1984: 2) adds that the term "nonprofit" suggests what the organisation is not, not for profit, not what it is. To add to the confusion, nonprofit can be a contradiction in terms because a nonprofit organisation is not barred from making a profit (Crimmins and Kiel, 1990:315).

While appreciating these points, the term "nonprofit" still has value and will be used here (as does Lyons (1994:1) although, later Lyons (2001:30) also sees nonprofits as a subsection of the third sector).[8] However, in this study, nonprofit will have another descriptor, "voluntary," which gives better definition to the types of organisations under consideration. Having noted that, nonprofit is a useful term that helps identify the fact that a nonprofit organisation has as its goal something other than profits, usually to

provide service (Anthony and Young, 1990:216). It also helps in understanding a major difference in purpose between the media used as business and media used to communicate within these organisations.[9]

Nonprofit organisations tend to differ from for-profit organisations in several ways: Market behaviour does not influence decision making, and income is typically derived from multiple sources and not related to performance but fund-raising ability. Values, ideology and public policy have great influence on governance and management. The authority structure is an ambiguous hybrid of bureaucracy, voluntary association and informal social systems. Unpaid governing boards and executive leadership have more influence on policy than their clientele, with a potential for a power struggle between board members and staff. There is dependence for virtually all resources on the external environment. Their four major roles are: specialisation, advocacy, consumerism and service delivery; their principle vulnerabilities are: institutionalisation, goal-deflection, minority rule and ineffectuality. Unlike for-profit organisations, the nonprofits can suffer from the vagaries of public opinion and the whim of supporters. Dependence on voluntary help means limited control over their work (Kramer, 1990:261-2).

While an organisation may be not-for-profit, income is still vital for success and the primary sources are: private sources, such as gifts, foundations, contracts and payment for service; the general public, for instance, community fund-raising and subscription drives; members, membership fees or donations; and the public sector through grants, contracts and subsidies. "All of these influences affect the nature of the nonprofit organization, its management needs, and the type of manager who will succeed in it" (Gies, et al, 1990:207). Some nonprofit organisations operate business ventures to raise funds. Lyons (2001:179) illustrates this with the Seventh-day Adventist

Church in Australia and its Sanitarium Health Food Company. Another significant difference in the financial area is in depreciation, "Where many concede the relevance of accrual accounting, others stop short of full accrual for 'non-business' entities because they regard depreciation accounting as entirely inappropriate" (Hagan and Staunton, 1994:9).

A major difference in marketing between a for-profit and nonprofit organisation can be in the role and philosophy of creating a demand. While a toy company may hope to see one of its dolls in every household in the country, a nonprofit organisation caring for disabled children would not expect a time when they could serve every family. "Since much of the nonprofit world is devoted to dealing with the problems of humanity, it is not appropriate in many cases to think of creating a market for one's services" (Espy, 1986:58).

Measuring success and accountability in a profit-making organisation where the mission is clear, is relatively simple. In a nonprofit organisation "it can be a bewildering task to find the proper yardstick by which to measure success" (Wolf, 1984:4). Clotfelder (1992:9) asks, how do you measure or place value on those services provided by nonprofits for which there are no comparable services to be purchased in the market? The list of characteristics of a successful *voluntary* organisation developed by O'Connell (1976:195) shows that several characteristics are subjective and immeasurable. The list reads: A cause worth getting excited about, an ability to generate funds to do the job, programs that could do something for the cause, adequate attention to morale to keep the undertaking spirited and vigorous even when the immediate tasks were not, appropriate emphasis on increasing the number of citizens involved, ability to keep volunteers in charge even after the operation is staffed, flexibility to respond effectively to new problems and opportunities and to fit the profile of "ad-hocracy" that

must increasingly characterise the useful ongoing organisation, a capacity to keep the real mission in focus no matter how frenzied things become or how great the pressure to move into new areas. All important decisions are made with the organisation's reason for being clearly in the forefront: vision to see beyond the horizon, along with sensitivity to feel human needs, coupled with toughness to build an organisation capable of translating the vision and sensitivity into change.

Added to the problem of measurement of success is a less focused organisation in danger of a voluntary organisation's government by the "bright idea" (O'Connell, 1976:64) and a "notorious" lack of efficiency and responsiveness in nonprofit organisations (Seibel, 1990:107-8, 115). However, Seibel is not opposed to this inefficiency, arguing that this "peculiar organizational behaviour" is a prerequisite for nonprofit organisations even if it is not inevitable. In some cases, inefficiency is essential to the task, for instance, a nonprofit day-care workshop for handicapped people will not solve the problem, but it helps the situation. Because of these grey areas and the impossibility of measurement in terms of results in several areas, accountability becomes important in areas of: the proper use of money, fiscal accountability; following proper procedures, process accountability; quality of work, program accountability; and relevance or appropriateness of the work, priority accountability. This accountability must be managed by "funders, workers and committees" simply because it is often difficult to "hear" the voice of the users (Leat, 1990:152).

The nonprofit provision of health, education and social services have historically come from religious or other ideological groups. Their interest stems from their "hope to maximize faith or adherents rather than profits" (James, 1990:23). While there may be truth in that statement, there is evidence that church members, who make up various religious groups, are more disinterested in their giving than the comment suggests. US

figures show that more church members give to nonreligious charities than nonmembers (Biddle, 1992:122).[10] At the same time, religious groups have difficulty deciding on programs to be undertaken and in measuring the value of the services given (Anthony and Young, 1990:233).

Members of nonprofit organisations have a more permanent relationship with the organisation than an audience or consumer. These organisations (such as churches, unions and trade associations) exist to serve their members, who are their major consumers (Kotler, 1982:405). Members have rights and responsibilities that blur the distinction between the "helper" and the "helped," between the service provider and consumer. In a sense this is "consumerism in its purest form" (Knapp, et al, 1990:209). Congregations, for instance, rely on volunteer labour, although Kotler (1982:411) suggests that probably only about a third of members are "highly involved" and a small fraction of the membership will do most of the work involved in running any organisation. There is difficulty in calculating a volunteer's value in monetary terms and little incentive to adopt an efficient mix or to assign volunteers to tasks in which they would be most beneficial. Within the church situation, as a result of this expenditure of time and money, buildings are built, furnished and heated; hymns are sung, sermons preached, religious doctrines disseminated; the hungry are fed, the poor provided for, and the troubled are comforted; and opportunities are created for people to socialise (Biddle, 1992:107, 92). The "benefits of participation" (Knapp, et al, 1990:208) are found in the involvement, the opportunity to contribute and the satisfaction in the service offered.

A nonprofit's newsletter is usually created to help unite members and to identify how the organisation's goals serve the members. It provides information about what the organisation is doing. It shows volunteer and staff involvement. These members share a

specific purpose. So it helps members understand the significance of their efforts. The newsletter can be a "powerful and important tool" (Maddalena, 1981:184, 24). Much of the success of a voluntary, nonprofit organisation depends on effective communications among the people who care about the organisation (O'Connell, 1976:121). Effective communication is even more important during times of change, to help counter rumours and misinformation (Wolf, 1990:253).

The differences between for-profit and nonprofit organisations are quite marked, beginning with volunteers serving on governing boards. Income is dependent on fundraising or membership fees. Success is less easily calculated and the dependence on volunteer labour brings with it an inefficiency that would be unacceptable in a for-profit organisation. Even Leat's (1990:152) attempt at accountability does not take into account the customer (who has, traditionally, always been *right* within for-profit organisations), but those working within the organisation. The added classification to a nonprofit organisation as a voluntary nonprofit indicates more precisely that members choose to be a part of it and it functions with mainly volunteer help.

Maddalena (1981) identifies purposes for a nonprofit's newsletter that have a different objective than that for a for-profit magazine or newspaper. This will influence the newsletter, but there needs to be recognition that a nonprofit's newsletter also has many similarities to a for-profit print product. There may be a temptation to say newsletters produced by voluntary organisations tend to be self-serving, specifically aimed at building the organisations that publish them. Yet profit is also self-serving, and those working on a nonprofit newsletter will have a serious interest in the bottom line as they work within a budget. A voluntary organisation's newsletter may target a smaller, more finely-defined audience than, say, a state or national daily, but so do niche publications for profit (for instance, fishing, surfing and music publications). The

voluntary, nonprofit's newsletter comes from an organisation with a different structure and purpose to the for-profit magazine and newspaper. It is important to recognise that this, too, will have some influence.

Print and the act of reading[11]

Whereas various influences on the media affect the content or message of print media, another factor that has a bearing is how the audience reads the print, that is, the influence brought by the act of reading. While related to the audience influence already considered, the focus on the reader is not about how the audience may influence the shape and form of the print-media product, but how the act of reading is a factor that brings shape to print for the individual. Individuals who make up the audience are an active part of the communication process. "Social cognition theories generally assume that the person is mentally active, organising and processing stimuli from the environment rather than simply responding directly to them," but an individual within the audience will not have a "consistent disposition" and will be affected by prior experiences (Reeves, et al, 1982:289). Rather than being a blank upon which a media impression can be made, or a group of individuals who will respond in the same way to the same message, a real attempt must be made to see the individuality of those who comprise the audience.

Several centuries ago Nicholas of Lyra recognised that texts (biblical texts in this case) were open to four levels of interpretation: *litera, moralis, allegoria,* and *anogogia;* the literal, the ethical, the historical and the mystical (cited in Bruner, 1986:5). However, the interpretation of text by an individual is more complex than this. Readers do not have a "neutral relationship to the text that they read," but bring meaning to and create the text read (Denzin, 1989:131-2). The reading process is a

"dynamic *interaction* between text and reader," where "successful communication must ultimately depend on the reader's creative activity" (Iser, 1991:107, 112). Text is a product produced in the absence of the reader and read in the absence of the writer and those who read a text enter into a relationship with the agent who produced it (Schirato and Yell, 2000:149, 115). "For the reader, all is to do and all is already done . . . [the reader] reads and creates. . . . The writer appeals to the reader's freedom to collaborate in the production of his work" (Sartre, 1981:32). Foucault (1994:ix) searches for his "ideal reader" and (1989:294) sees the reader as an auditor of a course (who can tell when the writer has worked and when content to "talk off the top of one's head"). Kleinman (1999:28) invites "the reader in as a collaborator . . . to complete the story." Bruner (1986:36-7) has the reader construct a virtual map while embarking on a journey without maps, but with a map that gives hints.

No media product is free from the "corruption of culture" (Carey, 1992:31) or from the "specific social-historical contexts" of the reader (Thompson, 1995:39). Media reception, adds Thompson (1995:39, 40) is "fundamentally a hermeneutic process" involving an interpretative process by those who receive it where "individuals make use of symbolic materials for their own purposes." That the reading of text can bring different responses is shown in the Milton controversy between C S Lewis and F R Leavis. Wrote Lewis (1967:134), "It is not that he and I see different things when we look at *Paradise Lost.* He sees and hates the very same that I see and love." In this case, Lewis claims, "We differ not about the nature of Milton's poetry, but about the nature of man, or even the nature of joy itself." In understanding the impact of the text on a reader, the "actualisation" (Iser, 1991:21), "is clearly the result of an interaction between the two."

Having considered difficulties involved in understanding the reception of text, Umberto Eco offers some helpful theoretical insights. "In a communicative process there are a sender, a message, and an addressee" is how Eco (1979:10) simplifies communication. Often, the sender and addressee are grammatically linked with the message: "*I* tell *you* that. . . ." Of interest here is the relationship between the "I," the author, the "you," the receiver, and the message. Eco (1992:24) has no sympathy with modern theories of interpretation that assert that the only reliable reading of a text is a misreading, that a text, quoting Todorov, "is only a picnic where the author brings the words and the readers bring the sense." Even if it were true, Eco maintains that the words cannot simply be passed over "in silence" and suggests that between the "intention" of the author (which is difficult to discover and frequently irrelevant for interpretation) and the interpreter (who will beat the text into a shape to serve his/her purpose) there is a third possibility, the intention of the text (Eco, 1992:25).

> The text's intention is not displayed by the textual surface. Or, if it is displayed, it is so in the sense of the purloined letter. One has to decide to "see" it. Thus it is possible to speak of the text's intention only as a result of a conjecture on the part of the reader. The initiative of the reader basically consists in making a conjecture about the text's intention (Eco, 1992:64).

Eco further argues that a text is a "device conceived to produce its model reader." Eco (1979:7) defined a model reader as one "supposedly able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way the author deals generatively with them." A model reader is not one who makes the "only right" conjectures, but is entitled to try infinite conjectures. Eco theorises that the intention of the text is to produce a model reader able to make conjectures about it, and the "initiative of the model reader" is in "figuring out" a model author and that, in the end, coincides with the intention of the text (Eco, 1992:64; 1990:58).

Eco (1979:8-9) also develops the concept of open and closed texts that add to this a helpful dimension. Closed texts are those that are "immoderately 'open' to every possible interpretation." He illustrates closed texts with Superman comics and Ian Fleming's spy thrillers. Open texts occur when the author can see the "ideal reader" who is "able to master different codes and eager to deal with text as a maze of many issues." However, "you cannot use the text as you want, but only as the text wants you to use it. An open text, however 'open' it can be, cannot afford whatever interpretation." Further, while one can guess what kind of readers the authors of a Superman comic or a Fleming novel had in mind, it is not possible to define the requirements for a "good" reader. With open texts, though, one can extrapolate from the text itself the profile of, say, a "good *Ulysses* reader" "because the pragmatic process of interpretation is not an empirical accident independent of the text *qua* text, but is a structural element of its generative process" (Eco, 1979:8-9).

In following Eco, his theoretical perspective is helpful in a study of print media, in two ways. First, the concept of the "intention of the text" and "open texts" are closely related and should prove particularly helpful for a study of print media within nonprofit organisations, which would tend to have a more defined purpose or intention than mass media. Second, his thought that one can develop a profile of the reader from open texts raises interesting possibilities in relating readers to the text.

Summary

This chapter has looked at a variety of influences brought upon print media. The five influences brought upon the mass print media come from an abundance of theoretical material available in the literature and help establish norms that are useful for comparisons and contrasts in the study of the Adventist Church's *Record*. The five

influences give an understanding of print media generally to aid in understanding *Record* specifically. Nonprofit organisations have a different structure and purpose than for-profit organisations, and this introduces another influence with the expectation of differences to be found in print media within a voluntary, nonprofit organisation to that within mass print media. Perhaps the expectation of difference is of the kind that one editor felt within his voluntary organisation, the Anglican Church in Western Australia. The Reverend Canon Greg Harvey, long-time editor of the *Anglican Messenger,* said:

> I think the mainstream press's role is to report the church with its warts and all. But I don't think that's part of our place. I think [the church press] is a more comforting press (cited in Osborne, 2002:2).

Readers then bring their own influence to the text as they allow "the significance of each [word] to be understood " (Sartre, 1981:30).

This chapter provides background material as the study moves away from the usual macro approach to media, to a micro consideration of print media within a voluntary, nonprofit organisation, and the impact it has on readers in their place. This chapter helps provide a theoretical base for the study, the next considers print and community.

Endnotes

[1] To his credit, Rupert Murdoch supported the *Australian* for several years before it began to make a profit.

[2] Chadwick (1989:xxxiv, xxxv, 88, 168, 213-4) cites several examples.

[3] In this context, it is worth noting that George Orwell's description in *1984* of the minds of the masses being controlled by the few came out of his own experience as a reporter of the Spanish Civil War (Eldridge, 1993:6-7).

[4] Herman and Chomsky (1988:2) identify five filters: "(1) The size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business and 'experts' funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power, (4) 'flak' as a means of disciplining the media; and (5) 'anticommunism' as a national religion and control mechanism. These elements interact with and reinforce one another. The raw material of news must pass through successive filters, leaving only the cleansed residue fit to print."

[5] On July 12, 1999, the ABC's *Media Watch* program revealed a memo that Laws was being paid $1.2 million to comment positively about banks. The Australian Broadcasting Authority investigated whether there had been breaches of the Broadcasting Services Act (1992) where "advertisements broadcast by a licensee must not be presented as news programs or other programs" (Lyons, 1999b:32).

[6] The editor of an Australian daily (unfortunately, not identified) described how they attempted to become more popular after World War II: "We changed its format and contents, its type dress and its concept of news. We reduced its solid news, particularly overseas news, in volume. We introduced a more popular slant. We increased the human interest content of stories. We sought out the unusual personal story. We pepped-up makeup, increased size of pictures and size of heads. We went in for campaign stories—graft, corruption, civic betterment. We told the story of little people, families without homes, their little joys and triumphs, their big defeats and their terrible tragedies" (cited in Holden, 1962: 32). Barr (1985:86) notes how Rupert Murdoch has used a popular style to increase the readership of struggling newspapers: "There is a consistent formula to his approach. Buy a struggling paper, slash its expenses, replace staid news with sport, sensationalism and more 'readable' items, then embark on major advertising campaigns and add the News Corporation management style." Of course not everyone has been happy with this process. When Murdoch took over the *Chicago Sun Times* in 1982, one of its columnists, Mike Royko, left with the classic line "no self-respecting fish would be wrapped in one of Mr Murdoch's papers."

[7] A well-researched United Nations campaign flooded Cincinnati USA (about 1950) with messages. There was no question about the quantity, but there were questions about the quality. Atkin (1981:267-8) concluded that "the use of dull stylistic approaches and unimaginative slogans simply did not engage widespread attentiveness among uninterested segments of the audience." They did not connect with the audience.

[8] Lyons (2001:195) refers to third-sector organisations "or their various aliases: nonprofit organisations, NGOs, voluntary organizations, civil society or the social economy."

[9] Because there has been no consideration of government publications in the proposed models of the media, I have not considered the government sector in the discussion on nonprofit publications.

[10] A 1988 US survey found 57 per cent of church members gave to nonreligious charities compared to 48 per cent of nonmembers. A 1990 survey showed 66 per cent of church members gave to nonreligious charities compared to 58 per cent of nonmembers. Biddle (1992:93) adds that religious congregations are philanthropic organisations, using member contributions of time and money to provide or support the provision of goods and services to fill the needs of people who may have no formal association with the congregation.

[11] The title for this section is adapted from Iser's (1991) *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response.*

Chapter 3

Print Media, Communication and Community

Communication is essential for community. Beavis (2002:10) takes an even broader view: "Without communication there can be no such thing as society." It can be said that "community forms, as it were, along the trade routes of communication" (Horsfield, 1999:152). This immediately takes away any understanding that the concept of community must be limited to a group of people living within certain geographic boundaries. Groups and individuals separated by even great distance can have a sense of being part of a greater whole that could be termed community. Other ways, outside geographic boundaries, have to be found and defined to fit this circumstance. A trade route of communication fits all forms of communication, from that of the spoken word between individuals to that of mediated communication forms, but all have the potential to help build community. Over distance, it is the mediated forms of communication that have a significant role to play in linking individuals with each other.

As a form of communication, print cannot be understood in isolation. As seen in the previous chapter, print media has a number of influences brought to bear upon it, but within voluntary, nonprofit organisations it has strong connections not only with the people producing it, but also with those addressed because of the expected commitment made by those who are a part of voluntary organisations. The objective in this chapter is to explore the notion of community and to bring greater definition to the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a community.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first examines the concept of community as found in the literature. The second looks at church-sect typology to help gain a sociological understanding of the Adventist Church.

Understanding community

The concept of community has been defined by social scientists in a variety of ways. Bell and Newby (1971:21) note that while the term has been with us for more than 200 years, a satisfactory definition in sociological terms appears to be as remote as ever. They quote an unnamed editor stating that "community tends to be a God word. In many circumstances, when it is mentioned, we are expected to abase ourselves before it rather than attempt to define it" (Bell and Newby, 1971:15). Hamilton (1985:7-8) adds that in the 1950s there were more than 90 definitions of community, and that people believe in the notion of community either as an ideal or reality, sometimes both. This is not limited to the 1950s, though, with Hillery (1982:15ff) attempting to classify 94 types of community. The word itself "glows" with favourable connotations (Tinder, 1980:1). The notion of community retains an enduring appeal, even if it becomes an "empty vessel into which we can pour our images of the Good Life" (Crow and Allan, 1994:xi). However, it may be that community is one of those things we recognise chiefly in its absence (Cobb, 1996:186).

The appeal of community is enhanced in an age that insists on the freedom of the individual, but with a desire to enter into interpersonal relations with others (Kirkpatrick, 1986:137) and the emphasis on global control and systems for the management of global production (Sassen, 1991:324-5). Tinder (1980:1-2) warns that the ideal of community is alluring, but unattainable. However, he speaks about an ideal

of unity as represented in Plato and Jean Jacques Rousseau. On the other hand Weber (1947:41) suggests that the family is the type case for communal relationships.

In his classic study, Tonnies (1959:265, 270) sees community (*Gemeinschaft*) limited to the "house, village, and town" (all of which can be replicated within society (*Gesellschaft*), as seen in a city or state). Tonnies (1959:48-9) writes of community by blood (or kinship), community by location (neighbourhood) and community of mental life (friendship). The third "type of *Gemeinschaft* represents the truly human and supreme form of community. . . . The common bond is represented by sacred places and worshipped deities." He allows that those who travel may take a worshipped deity with them and that those who have a common faith feel, like members of the same craft or rank, united by a spiritual bond. At the same time Tonnies argues that the three types of community are closely interrelated in "space as well as time." Yet his argument for the traveller attacks the boundaries of space he wants to maintain. Add to the recognition that community is a "living organism" (Tonnies 1959:39, 253), with his emphasis on the mental or intellectual union, and those boundaries of space are even weaker. It should be noted that Bell and Newby (1971:16) argue that Tonnies' *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft* dichotomy revolves less around place than around the degree of human involvement.

It is boundaries that make communities. Chekki (1997:36) points out that the Latin root of the word "community" means "that which is surrounded by the walls." Some boundaries will be local, and this has been the area of most studies in community. For instance, in their New Zealand study of country communities, Hall, et al, (1983:171-2) discovered three sets of social relations in each locality that can provide a "basis for communion": relations to property, relations to propinquity (proximity) and relations of kinship. Two of these bases for communion are limited to local areas, only

kinship could break that boundary. Informal ties of solidarity, including kinship and friendship, occur over such a wide area that geographic conceptions of community cannot explain people's incorporation into the social realm (Crow and Allan, 1994:181). In fact the breakdown of traditional communities has made self-identification in non-geographical ways increasingly important (Cobb, 1996:188). Social boundaries (Barth, 1970:15) become more important than those that are geographic. This is well illustrated in Tall's (1996:107) experience when she describes her community as a widely scattered one where she has close friends all over the world, none of whom know each other. "Communities vary to the degree to which they are geographic, are interest based or imagined, or meet regularly" (Bouma, 1995:295).

The basis of community can be shared characteristics such as a common ethnic origin, religion, occupation or leisure pursuits, a "community of interest" (Willmott, 1986:83) or a community of meaning (Berger and Luckman, 1995:22). These groups can develop a "sub-community" (Hughes, et al, 1995:103) within a geographic community as, for instance, churches and professions (Goode, 1969:152-3). Cornwall (1987:46) maintains that the boundary of a religious group is best defined by the amount of "belief system commonality." Fairholm (1997:175) adds, "Community develops out of shared vision, beliefs, and values." In some denominations that is the local congregation (a congregational community within a denominational community). Within Mormonism, Fairholm says the belief system is "more appropriately delimited by denomination than by congregation" (a community larger than the congregational community). Those within the community are people with shared values who will tend to act in accordance with the way they expect one another to behave (Mills, 1970:39). Lee and Newby (1983:57-8) look to a sense of "commonality," "common identity" in their use of the word "communion." They claim that most references to a loss of

community point to a loss of communion or meaningful identity with other people and shared experiences.

Cohen (1985:12, 74) adds that community implies both similarity and difference. The members of a community have something in common with each other, but that which they have in common distinguishes them in a significant way from members of other groups. This creates a boundary that represents a mask by the community to the outside world, the community's "public face." However, those looking at a community group from without may attribute stereotypical features to those within the group that may be distorted, superficial and unfair. Those within the group who have the "private face" know the complexities within. Cohen (1985:117) notes that the decrease in the geographical bases of community boundaries has led to their "renewed assertion in symbolic terms," and any perceived differences between the community and the outside world can be rendered symbolically as a resource of the boundary.

The boundary is elastic and will stretch, but also pervious, allowing movement, more like a teabag than a balloon (Wallman, cited in Crow and Graham, 1994:187). Chekki (1997:38) not only suggests that membership in multiple communities may be fluid and subject to change, but the boundaries themselves may only be illusions necessary for our understanding of experience. Bouma (1996:71-2) reinforces the multiple communities concept: "There is no one community which observes me in all my dimensions." Community boundaries are a "fuzzy reality" (Wellman, et al, 1988:137).

Defining community then may be impossible; describing it has a better chance of success. Crow and Allan (1994:1) take the word "common" from community when they say, "Community ties may be structured around links between people with

common residence, common interests, common attachments or some other shared experience generating a sense of belonging." Kirkpatrick (1986:2, 207) develops a "trinity of models" that show a progression toward an increasing investment in human association. He starts with an "atomistic/contraction" model that sees individual atoms contracting with each other. Then he has the "organic/functional" model with independent organs functioning and serving the organic whole. Finally the "mutual/personal" model is idealised as individuals mutually relate through intentional love for each other. Shaffer and Anundsen (1993:10) travel a different path by arguing that community is a

> dynamic whole that emerges when a group of people: participate in common practices; depend upon one another; make decisions together; identify themselves as part of something larger than the sum of their individual relationships; and commit themselves for the long term to their own, one another's, and the group's well-being.

In its local congregational setting, the Seventh-day Adventist Church can be seen as being part of a broader geographic community. The congregational church's boundaries are quite different to the local professional community, academic community or table tennis club community. At the same time it will be connected to those communities through local coalitions and membership networks (Ammerman, 1997:360-2). The Adventist Church also qualifies as a community not limited by geographic boundaries, but by symbolic boundaries that make it a nationwide and a worldwide community. Munoz (1981:158) describes the ideal of communion and community within a church group in this way: "Christian people should find [communion] in a web of Christian communities that are woven together into a church that is truly communitarian."

An obvious boundary of the Adventist Church is its belief system (another way, says Selznick (1996:196), of forming community), where it resembles Cornwall's

(1987:46) description of Mormonism with a belief system "more appropriately delimited by denomination than by congregation." Knight (1985:31-2) sees this boundary as a symbolic rejection of the world between those who have "the truth" and those who do not. Other symbolic boundaries include tradition (Tinder, 1980:67), rituals (Cohen, 1985:50) and insider language (O'Neill, 1995:138-9). At the same time there needs to be recognition that individuals within the Adventist community may be a part of a professional community, an academic community or a table tennis club community. They will also be a part of Tonnies' kinship, neighbourhood and friendship communities.

From the literature, then, the concept of community has no firm definition and is often noticed more in its absence than its presence. Tonnies' important work helped define boundaries of community. The boundaries are now well expressed by Lee and Newby (1983:57-8) as locality, local social system, and type of relationship. While Tonnies emphasised the first two, modern society with its travel and communication has made it imperative to place a greater emphasis on the third. The boundaries are at best fuzzy because individuals will belong to a variety of communities and various communities may work with each other in coalition. For the Adventist Church there are real boundaries that set it apart from other parts of the community: for instance, the teachings of the church. There are also symbolic boundaries: for instance, the group's history and tradition. Either of these types of boundaries would make the church a community in its own right.

In this study, because community is difficult to define, the research in its various forms (interviews, focus groups and surveys) has used the concept of "family" as being a better understood term, but one that remains true to the ideals of "community." This

follows Weber (1947:41) and his suggestion that the family is the type cast for communal relationships.

In an attempt to understand better the community known as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the next step is to consider the sociological concept of church-sect typology, a well-recognised way of describing church groups.

Church-sect typology and the Adventist Church

Religious organisations differ significantly from one another and church-sect typology endeavours to register these differences. At a general level, sects differ from churches by their size and the fact that they are recent arrivals on the religious landscape. At a deeper level, the typology endeavours to differentiate religious groups according to where they position themselves in relation to society. Churches are more accommodating, whereas sects endeavour to maintain social distance.

Weber (1985:144-54) may be considered the founder of church-sect typology. He proposed what Parsons (1965:xxxvi-xxxvii) calls a "definition of the religious community," that of a "collectivity with a distinctive religious character," a sect or a church. It was Troeltsch, his student, who gave the typology greater definition. Hill (1973:47) suggests that the church-sect typology of Weber and Troeltsch was one of the most fruitful attempts to devise categories to analyse religious organisations. A limitation of Troeltsch's typology, though, was that he based it on church history until the eighteenth century; in fact, his major development of church type and sect type appears in the chapter entitled "Mediaeval Catholicism" (1981:331-349). It was at this stage of history that he thought a "clear and permanent fission between the two types emerged" (Hill, 1973:54). Troeltsch (1960:991, 1008) suggested that after the eighteenth century until the time of publication in 1911, the development of the church

"could merely be suggested," and he recognised that state churches were losing their power and the social philosophy of the Christian community had suffered "undeniable disintegration." He added, "The days of the pure Church-type within our present civilization are numbered." He had, however, set the basis for a continuum with sect at one end and church at the other.

Both Weber and Troeltsch recognised limitations to a church *or* sect position. Weber (1965:213) wrote of congregational religion losing its "initial sectarian drive." Hill (1973:55) sees Troeltsch's development of mysticism as a "synthesis of the polar type-concepts." Troeltsch (1960:725, 805) had also begun to categorise sect types into aggressive and non-aggressive sects. Then Niebuhr's (1967:19-22) introduction of denominations to the continuum helped fill the void for those nations, notably the United States, without a national church. More importantly, Niebuhr added a sense of movement along the continuum by arguing that the sectarian type of organisation is valid for only one generation.

Whether there has been a shift from church to denomination is rarely discussed in the literature, most have attempted to define various sects, or noted the shift from sect to church or denomination. Historically, though, the shift from church to denomination has been seen in the Presbyterian Church of England in the seventeenth century (Martin, 1962:14). In Australia, Bouma (1995:299) says Anglicans and Catholics have only recently and partially moved from seeing themselves as "churches" to seeing themselves as "denominations." Both have had to forfeit claims of being *the* Christian church in Australia. Modern, advanced industrial nations currently have competing religions and, in Western Europe, state-favoured churches and denominations are losing their special privileges, with low-tension denominations taking the place of the church (Bainbridge, 1997:40-2, 59). Secularisation and pluralism mean the church type is

perhaps only found in the developing world (South America, for instance), and even there it has a lessening influence.

Troeltsch's early classification of sects ("aggressive" and "non-aggressive") became fruitful soil for the development of church-sect typology. For example: Yinger (1967:148-54) lists six categories between church and cult; Clark (1967:421-3) identifies seven sect types in the United States; Eister (1967:86) reports on a survey listing more than two dozen sect variables; and Greeley and Rossi (1972:75-6) say the "jungle of types and definitions grows more complex" with every effort to accommodate border-line religious groups.

The significant work of Wilson (1975:22-6) in developing seven sect types, and Stark and Bainbridge's (1985:134-5) six scales of sect tension with society also attempt to redefine church-sect typology. The creation of these various categories, though, has not solved the problem, for there are groups that don't clearly fit into a designated category, or fit into more than one category. As Mol (1976:169, ix) has noted, church-sect typology has been "refined and elaborated in many directions," so much so that he makes the "bold accusation" that church-sect distinctions are outdated. Niebuhr (1996:xxxix-xl) also saw problems with the typology: "To what an extent the types are mental constructs to which no historic individuals conform completely becomes evident in any effort to classify the historic Christian groups into churches or sects."

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, sociologists have seen movement on the church-sect continuum. Schwartz (1970:44) saw the Adventist Church as a sect that expected to "move up in the world." Knight (1977:370) recognised the Adventist Church as a sect and sensed it followed Niebuhr's classic pattern of evolution from sect toward denominationalism. More recently, Knight (1995:45-6) acknowledges that the church has a "sectarian face" and a "modestly denominational face."

In 1996, Wilson (1966:196-8) classified the Adventist Church as a revolutionist sect. Almost 10 years later, in writing for an Adventist audience (1975:41) he recognised accommodation to the outside world, but argues that "Seventh-day Adventists have still some way to go before they are denominationalized." In a more recent work, Wilson (1990:140-1) writes that Seventh-day Adventists more than the other Adventist groups (Jehovah's Witnesses, Worldwide Church of God and Christadelphians) have gradually taken a less sectarian stance and come closer to a denominational position. He says the process is hindered by distinctive teachings such as the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath.

The most extensive study of Seventh-day Adventists is being undertaken by Ronald Lawson, who has interviewed more than 3000 Adventist leaders around the world. Lawson (1995a:375) claims that Adventists are best characterised as a "denominationalizing sect." In another place Lawson (1995b:339) calls it a "liberalizing sect" becoming more diverse and more comfortable with society. Lawson (1996:50) argues that Adventists have found it increasingly difficult to define precisely the wall of separation they are committed to defending. Even in the developing world, where Adventism is growing most rapidly, they are less separated from society than expected (Lawson, 1998a:657-8). In calling the Adventist Church a denominationalising or liberalising sect, though, Lawson is indicating the direction, not the position the church has on the church-sect continuum and it could fit any religious group following the typical route from sect toward becoming a denomination or church. There is a need to go to his description of the church to understand where he would place it on the continuum.

Bainbridge (1997:106-10, 118) goes a step further than Lawson and argues that Seventh-day Adventists (and Jehovah's Witnesses) "have taken their place among major Protestant denominations."

Within the Adventist community there is also evidence of movement toward denominationalism. The publication of the book *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (1957) is an indicator of this movement. Prepared as a response to questions from a group of evangelical Protestant scholars, the book established a new understanding of the Adventist Church among Protestants. Walter Martin (1965:359), one of the Evangelicals, said.

> Seventh-day Adventism as a denomination is essentially Christian in a sense that all denominations and groups professing Christianity are Christian if they conform to the classical mission of Christianity as given in the Bible and the creeds and counsels of the Christian church.

Questions on Doctrine was not welcomed by all within the Adventist Church; Pearson (1990:7) calls it a "controversial" book, "seen by many as a conscious attempt to lead the church away from the backwaters of sectarian religion into the mainstream of evangelical Protestantism." When it was released there was an immediate outcry from some scholars and others within the church that it downplayed historic Adventist belief.[1] Knight (2003:xiii) adds:

> *Questions on Doctrine* easily qualifies as the most divisive book in Seventh-day Adventist history. A book published to help bring peace between Adventism and conservative Protestantism, its release brought prolonged alienation and separation to the Adventist factions that grew up around it.

Despite this, the book was an important step in developing relationships with other churches, a step indicating at least the desire to be accepted among the denominations. Further evidence of a movement toward denominationalism is seen in friendly conversations that have taken place with the World Council of Churches (1973)

and, more recently a paper, "Adventist and Lutherans in conversation" (1998), was published after four years of discussion. One recommendation from the Adventist-Lutheran conversation was that "Lutherans in their national and regional church contexts do not treat the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a sect but as a free church and a Christian world communion."

Church leadership has given mixed signals. When Robert H Pierson (1978:10) retired as leader of the worldwide church (as General Conference president) he made an impassioned plea that the church remain a sect. He spoke of how "typically" a sect evolves into a church, an evolution that he believed would erode the Adventist reason for being. "The group [then] enjoys complete acceptance by the world. The sect has become a church! Brethren and sisters, this must never happen to the Seventh-day Adventist Church." His successor, Neal C Wilson, some eight years later, appears to say something quite different: "I would hope that as we as a church grow numerically and financially, and in terms of world acceptance and influence, we would meet the Lord's expectation for His church" (Coffin 1986:9). The dilemma from within is whether to maintain and reinforce the sectarian tradition or move toward accommodation. The former could mean increasing isolation from society, the latter, loss of identity (Land, 1986:208).

A study of the Adventist Church shows that it is not a religious group that sits comfortably into a particular typology. It is also a demonstration that time and place must be an element in deciding where a religious group should be placed on the continuum.

The sect type

The Seventh-day Adventist Church challenges classic sect type in a variety of ways. In its beginnings it did not break away from a particular church, sect or denomination as would be expected from a typical sect, but arose from a movement that impacted on most Protestant groups of the time (Wilson, 1975:39). Wilson (1990:51) also notes that the Adventist Church has strong links to society as seen in its health and education system, and food factories. Early in its history in Australia and New Zealand, Adventists acted in a most un-sect-like manner by demonstrating a willingness to be involved in community issues. They were at the forefront of the successful push to distance religion and state in the Australian constitution (Ely, 1976:44-5). As Ballis (1985:52) shows, in New Zealand they were willing to be both "in and out of the world" over issues such as prohibition, the Bible in schools debate and military conscription.

Sects reject a hierarchical structure of religious authority (Schwartz, 1970:59) and the Adventist Church argues that it has a "representative form of church government" (*Church Manual*, 1995:24), yet the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a well-defined structure with levels of authority. Churches belong to a conference of churches, several conferences combine to create a union of conferences; the union conferences create 13 divisions that are overseen by the General Conference. Each layer has its own administration, which is accountable to the one above it. The representative nature of the church is seen in the administration of the various levels being voted into position by representatives from levels below them. During a 1977 court case in the United States the Adventist Church used as a part of its defence that it is a hierarchy (Van Horne, 1977:24). Church leadership was quick to state that using this terminology in court did not change the structure of the church (Pierson, 1977:6), and the term is not normally used to describe the church system.

Lawson (1998:27) argues that the "growing ease" with which the church uses the legal system in the United States is another indication that the sect is becoming denominationalised. Wilson (1990:140-1) mentions that the teachings on the seventh-day Sabbath prevent the Adventist Church from moving toward denominationalism, but Bainbridge (1997:107) brushes aside the seventh-day Sabbath as a distinctive mark by saying it is "no longer deviant" in a society where there is little distinction between Saturday and Sunday. It should be noted that all religious groups will, at times, be at tension with their society in their teachings or activities. This is seen, for instance, in the comment of the Catholic Archbishop Pell (Lyons, 1999:30), "The great temptation for religion in our society is to just [merge] into the general cultural background. The bland leading the bland. That's a travesty of Christ's teaching."

Time and place

To say that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is situated on a certain point on the church-sect continuum only has meaning if it is given a historic (time) and geographic (place) reference point. It is far too broad a description to be accurate in every circumstance for a religious organisation with some 13 million adherents worldwide.

That a group will change over time is well recognised, movement along the church-sect continuum is now a basic assumption of church-sect typology. What has not often been highlighted is the importance of place, or environment (Johnson, 1963:543), in defining where a group belongs. Even with Bainbridge (1997:106-10, 118) saying the Adventist Church is a denomination, Bainbridge and Stark (1985:489) demonstrate recognition of the place factor by positioning the church in Europe "near the borderline between sect and cult." There is evidence that the Seventh-day Adventist Church

currently (time), in some parts of the world (place) May be considered a church, a denomination or a sect.

It is difficult to find a place where church-type would be an accurate description of the Adventist Church, Pearson (1990:13) ventures that some Caribbean island communities might be called the "established Church." The Adventist Church could be considered a denomination in Papua New Guinea where 185,000 of the 4.5 million (4 per cent) inhabitants are Seventh-day Adventists. More importantly there are strong links to society with the past (to the end of the year 2003) Governor-General a Seventh-day Adventist, as are several politicians (including one who was deputy prime minister for several months in 1999) and at least two judges. Finally, the Adventist Church could be regarded as a sect in the sociological sense where it stands in strong tension with society and, often, religious norms in several places, for instance: China, India and Muslim countries.

For a religious organisation not limited by geographic boundaries, both time and place are essential to have a real understanding of the group. Current definitions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church tend to be based on the church in the United States, but this is not the Adventist Church of certain Caribbean island communities, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan or even of Australia and New Zealand. Darroch (cited in Ballis, 1985:11) is an exception. He places the Adventist Church in New Zealand midway between evangelical Protestantism and sects on the basis that it holds to the core of Protestant belief, but at the same time it maintains variant theological positions.

In his useful study of the Mennonite Brethren's progression from sect to denomination, Kyle (1985:3) notes how few religious bodies correspond to the classic social types of church, sect or denomination: "Nearly all Christian groups have manifested a variety of these sociological distinctives throughout their existence."

Robertson's (1967:104) study of the Salvation Army in England discovered three strands within the group: the old guard, the acceptors, and the modernists. The old guard wished to retain the traditional features of Salvationism; the acceptors wished to retain the basic outlines, but took a pragmatic view; the modernists were mainly concerned with revitalising the Army. This response is typical of most religious bodies that have passed their first-generation mark and they will contain both church and sect elements once they have reached a certain size (Greeley and Rossi, 1972:78). This is certainly true within the Adventist Church.

There are sound arguments that the Adventist Church in Australia and New Zealand has denominational tendencies. For instance, there is a professional clergy, many congregations have educated professionals who often bring a secularised edge to these congregations, and there is closeness to the surrounding society in attitudes. Lawson (1995a:371-6) lists several trends within the church that signal a greater accommodation to and less tension with society that fit well into the Australian and New Zealand scenario. These include the upward mobility of members, the greater identification of leadership with corporate professionals, higher education and less apocalyptic urgency. On the other hand, there continues to be a fascination with and the public presentation of apocalyptic Bible teachings with an emphasis on both the Second Coming and withdrawing from society. That these presentations are more often for the public than for members within congregations may in fact show a divide between how many congregations perceive themselves (denomination-like, perhaps) yet allow these presentations as an acceptable reminder of the past.

Even though there are several weaknesses in, and the disintegration of, church-sect typology, there is currently no other sociological tool to explain the kind of religious community that makes up the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It does not fit

neatly into Wilson's types, nor into one of Stark and Bainbridge's scales of sect tension; and Lawson's "denominationalizing sect" refers to direction rather than position. A simpler solution is to focus on the continuum, allow for time and place, and say that the Adventist Church in Australia and New Zealand (place) is a community that is currently (time) more a denomination than sect. It still retains much of its sectarian heritage, but is pulling away from its past and becoming more involved in, and a part of, society.

If, as suggested, there has been movement within the Adventist Church in Australia and New Zealand along the church-sect continuum, that should also been seen in the church's print-media products.

Summary

This chapter provides background material for the study in two ways. First, the understanding of community as found in the literature helps provide information about the concept. Second, attempting to position the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia and New Zealand on the church-sect continuum helps provide a sociological understanding of the type of group and organisation involved in the case study. From church-sect typology, the Adventist Church in Australia and New Zealand can be called a denomination while still retaining elements of its sectarian heritage. However it does not sit comfortably within this sociological concept because in some ways the group is more church-like with its global spread and the stable characteristics of church organisation. The church's print program is reliant on this strong organisational structure. Yet it maintains a sect-like attitude as, for instance, it retains an apocalyptic theology that tends to keep it at a distance from society. In the following chapters, it will become evident that the tensions between evolving into a more church-like

organisation and retaining attachment to sectarian values is far from resolved and impacts on Adventist print.

With the first two chapters of this section offering theoretical background for the research, the next looks at the methodology used.

Endnote

[1] The book has recently been re-released (2003) with annotations giving a history of the conflict of the time.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

A variety of data-gathering techniques are used in the present study in an attempt "to increase the depth and quality of information" (Bouma, 1996a:180). Qualitative and quantitative information has been gathered; words and numbers both have their place in this study. The goal is to take the various types of information given by representatives of those who receive print media within their community to understand impact and potential for print within the group.

This chapter begins with a brief overview before discussing five aspects of the research. The first suggests that rather than consider arguments for and against qualitative and quantitative research, both have a role to play. The second explains the processes used in gaining and conducting interviews, with a consideration of the value of interviews. The third mirrors the second, except it looks at focus groups. The fourth comments on the survey completed by participants. The fifth notes the types of content analysis used as part of the research. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the problem of possible bias.

Overview

The data involving respondents for this research was obtained in four ways: interviews, focus groups, surveys and participant observation over a 12-month period during 1997 and 1998. All involved were attending members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Respondents came from 31 churches covering a wide geographic area, including every state of mainland Australia and the north island of New Zealand. Forty-one church members were interviewed at length, and 21 church pastors were involved in a brief phone interview. Seventy-eight church members were involved in focus groups. All participants were asked to fill in a survey.

The churches chosen had mainly Caucasian and English-speaking members, although several individuals involved were not Caucasian and English was their second language. An attempt was made to involve a wide variety of churches within the obvious limitations of time and budget. Fortunately geographic limitations were overcome because I was able to link my research with various itineraries for my work and, on a couple of occasions, create a work itinerary that allowed me to visit other areas during that period (the north island of New Zealand, for instance). In an attempt to involve as broadly a representative group of people as possible, other factors involved in the choice of churches included: their reputation as a conservative or liberal church, the average age of their membership, size, and the length of time they had been established. Usually several of those factors came into play.

After each interview and focus group, I wrote brief field notes to help give background and context to the recorded conversation. As has been well noted, conversation is more than words (Goffman, 1981:32), the field notes were an attempt to introduce another element into the research to add light to the recorded words. Patton (1980:157) sees them useful as a check against distortion by the emotional state of the respondent (was he/she angry? anxious? and so on); reactions of the respondent to the interviewer; and a check on what is reported in the interviews. An interviewer also sets certain contexts, sometimes deliberately, often unintentionally, that impact on the interview (Sudman, et al, 1996:81).

Wolfson (1976:204-8) argues strongly for observation, particularly in the research of variables (she relates it to her work on the historical present tense in speech). She differentiates between an interview as a speech event and natural speech. She calls for recognition that

> speech is socially situated, that the interviewer is socially defined and the interview is a speech event which has rules well known to everyone in society, [so] there can no longer be any excuse for the researcher to ignore these facts when he plans his sociological investigation (Wolfson, 1976:204-8).

The field notes were an attempt to take into account the social situation and to put down "field-generated insights" (Patton, 1980:164).

Before describing in detail the interviews, focus groups and surveys, the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research need to be understood.

Qualitative and quantitative research

While the research is overwhelmingly qualitative, all participants were also asked to fill in a survey (see Appendix A, page 291), which helped to add a quantitative dimension to the study. The time when supporters of quantitative and qualitative methodology were dug into two parallel trenches, from which they threw verbal hand grenades at each other, is probably over. Whether one should use one method or another has caused much debate over the past few decades, but that debate seems to have lessened now, for three reasons: (1) There has been a greater use of the qualitative approach, particularly in the social sciences. (2) There is now better defined and accepted methodology used in qualitative research and investigation, which has given greater credence. (3) Supporters from both sides have discovered that findings from the other trench can actually be helpful. "It [qualitative research] is no longer a Cinderella approach to social research" (Bryman, 1988:173).

Datta (1994:60-7) points out that both paradigms have to stand by how well they measure up to the three questions

> applied to most theoretical statements in the social and physical sciences: (1) Is there any internally consistent framework of assumptions, principles, and arguments? (2) Are the assumptions testable? (3) When tested, how well does the framework hold up?

Datta (1994) further argues that qualitative methods should be reviewed as thoroughly as those conducted under quantitative methods, with evaluation and approaches made "public with a transparent methodology." It is this kind of approach to qualitative research that has Maykut and Morehouse (1994:7) claim that qualitative research is "an acceptable way of doing science." Filstead (1979:42) adds that it is "a legitimate research style," and it can be "evaluated in terms of objectivity" (Kirk and Miller, 1986:73). The goal of qualitative research is to discover patterns that emerge after "close observation, careful documentation, and thoughtful analysis" of the research topic (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:21; cf Smith, 1994:38).

Perhaps the best sign of acceptance of qualitative methodology is in discovering that the "hard sciences" can talk about "qualitative calculus" (Nijkamp, et al, 1985:17). There is "great potential" in "qualitative methods of analysis" and it is unfortunate that "criticism of the conventional methodology of various social sciences has resulted from inappropriate choices of the level of measurement in statistical and econometric analysis" (Nijkamp and Wrigley, 1985:693).

The appropriate method of research, then, is the one that best answers the questions being asked. It is true that there usually is a trade-off in choosing one method over another. For instance in taking a qualitative approach one may sacrifice precision or breadth for greater depth of description (Hammersley, 1992:51; Patton, 1980:97-8).

However, this could be important, since quantitative data is unable to supply satisfactory answers to many of the qualitative questions being asked (Ianni, 1979:88).

This was well illustrated in a conversation during preparation for the 1997 *Record* survey. The *Record* Committee[1] asked Fraser Jackson (emeritus professor of Victoria University of Wellington, NZ) to conduct a survey to find an answer to the question, "Does the *Record* help your devotional life?" Jackson had difficulty in his quantitative survey of finding a way to ask the question so that it could be answered in a helpful way, yes/no does not give enough information. This is where the strength of qualitative research is found. Patton (1980:88-9) developed a checklist of 16 "evaluation situations" where qualitative methods are appropriate. It is the crossing of the trenches that can be helpful in gaining the best information. Reichardt and Cook (1979:11) allow that the combination of the two can be best suited to research needs.

Hedrick (1994:49) suggests the integration of methodologies. Hedrick sees not two, but three potential sources when considering how to conduct an evaluation study and pictures these sources as doors to workshops, each filled with the necessary tools. The investigator chooses which door will best help the study being undertaken. The first of these doors is quantitative research. The second is qualitative research, "Our studies may be greatly improved if we open doors 1 and 2 simultaneously" (Hedrick, 1994:49). The third adds a new element developed by Guba and Lincoln (1989:98) as "fourth-generation evaluation." They believe all data is time-bound: "Explanations are at best 'here and now' accounts that represent a 'photographic slice of life' of a dynamic process that, in the next instant, might represent a very different aspect" (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:98). This third approach for Hedrick (1994:49) is limited and the credibility of its findings is vulnerable, but he notes that it is helpful in assessing biases concerning how studies are planned.

Qualitative research attempts to understand a situation as it is constructed by the participants. This research attempts to capture what the people say and do as products of how they interpret their world. "The task for the qualitative researcher is to capture this process of interpretation" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:18). "Thick description," "experiential understanding" and "multiple realities" are expected in qualitative research (Stake, 1995:43; Vaughn, et al, 1996:15).

Denzin (1989:83) says "thick description"

> does more than record what a person is doing. It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion, and the web of social relationships that join persons one to another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard.

Stake (1995:47) agrees when he says that qualitative research is holistic and empirical. He adds that it is also interpretive as the researcher attempts to come to grips with the information uncovered. The goal then is to discover patterns that emerge from observation, documentation and analysis. In this regard Maykut and Morehouse (1994:21) make an important comment: "What can be discovered by qualitative research is not sweeping generalizations but contextual findings." Care needs to be exercised in taking the specific findings and attempting to make them general. That is why the process of sampling and numbers involved (below) is important for credibility and capturing the broad picture, to allow a process of moving from the "substantive theory" to the "formal theory" (Glasser and Strauss, 1967:77-99).

With a qualitative approach there must be an ongoing interpretive role from the researcher. As Filstead (1979:38) has observed, a qualitative researcher prefers the theory to emerge from the data as it is being gathered, there is a "concern with the discovery of theory rather than the verification of theory." This is contrasted with the

quantitative paradigm with its "lock-step model of logicodeductive reasoning from theory to propositions." A helpful comment comes from Stake (1995:39) when he notes that quantitative researchers tend to treat unique cases as "error" or outside the system of explained science. Qualitative researchers treat uniqueness of individual cases and contexts as important to understanding.

Grounded theory holds a central place in this process (Brannen, 1992:7). Glasser and Strauss (1967:viii), who developed grounded theory, state that, "We argue for grounding theory in social research itself—for generating it from data." More specifically they point out, *"Generating a theory involves a process of research"* (Glasser and Strauss, 1967:6). Having agreed that grounded theory does hold a central place, Brannen (1992:8) concedes that researchers cannot but be influenced by prior knowledge of the literature or lay knowledge and, "Qualitative work is to some extent always theory driven, though it is often criticised for being atheoretical." It should also be noted that grounded theory is sometimes criticised concerning its "apparent lack of interest in *testing* hypothesis" (Silverman, 1993:153; Bryman, 1988:85).

In social research, Silverman (1993:2) points out that, "Methodologies cannot be true or false, only more or less useful." It seemed that, in this research, predominately qualitative methodology would be more useful. The aim, though, is to use both quantitative and qualitative approaches to develop "the best and most innovative research" (Bouma, 1996a:172). Both have a role to play in this research.

Interviews

Forty-one church members, two each from 20 churches and one from another—and 21 pastors (the pastor of each church) were interviewed. All pastors and three church members were interviewed over the phone. One of these member was from an isolated

part of Australia. The second member phone interview came about by accident. Through a misunderstanding I was unable to find the home in an interstate city and when I was finally able to contact the interviewee I didn't have the opportunity to go back. The third phone interview was caused by a fog-delayed flight into another interstate city, which didn't allow time to keep the appointment. Most interviews were conducted in Victoria, for ease of access, but covered all mainland states and territories, and the north island of New Zealand (see Table 4.1). The table demonstrates the attempt to involve a broad spread of geographical situations and to involve urban and rural church members.

Table 4.1
Numbers interviewed by area

Area	ACT	NSW	NT	Qld	Vic	WA	NZ	Totals
Urban	4	6	—	2	6	6	2	26
Rural	—	2	1	2	4	—	6	15
Totals	4	8	1	4	10	6	8	41

The interview is a particularly strong method for research in the social sciences (Mishler, 1986:136). Caution is needed though, because an interview is not a natural conversation. Interviews are better described as "speech events" with the meanings of questions and responses "contextually grounded and jointly constructed by interviewer and respondent" (Mishler, 1986:34-5). It is, normally, a conversation with a stranger, and the presence of a tape-recorder must have some impact even if the respondent claims it does not. There are a variety of speech situations and the conversation with an interviewer will be quite different to one with a member of the family or a friend, at least in "speech form" (Wolfson, 1976:204).

While, for the sake of convenience, the pastors were interviewed over the phone (along with the three church members mentioned) there are at least two advantages in face-to-face interviews. The most important are the physical clues that can often lead to a better understanding of meaning behind the words being spoken. Eye messages and facial expressions, and body language can offer clues to hidden meanings (Douglas, 1985:77; Goffman, 1981:2-4). During a face-to-face interview, the interviewer is able to note these signs and ask follow-up questions that can help uncover the real message the respondent is giving. The other advantage comes from listening to the recorded voice after the interview. The timbre and inflection of the voice is not further distorted through a telephone connection. Sometimes the voice on the tape can give clues not picked up during the interview.

While there are no absolute methods for specifying what samples should be in any study (Douglas, 1985:49), in this case the church members were chosen by the church pastor. The pastor was asked to choose two of his church members for an interview on the basis that he considered one had liberal leanings and the other had conservative leanings, Patton (1980:100) would call this "purposeful sampling." While the objective was to interview "typical" church members who would have access to the *Record*, "typical" is too vague a description to be of any real value. "Liberal" and "conservative" are more easily defined and are terms commonly used within the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Knott, 1998:5; Guy, 1999:27-9).

During the interviews, church members were asked for their understanding of the terms and had already rated themselves on a liberal-conservative continuum in the survey. The church pastor interview (a brief phone interview, usually five minutes or less) took place after the member interviews. Each pastor was asked to give reasons why he had chosen the members he had, and then for his understanding of the terms

"liberal" and "conservative." He also rated himself on the liberal-conservative continuum in the survey. This topic was also raised during the focus groups in an attempt to gain further insight into how the terms were understood.

Two pastors admitted they had selected church members who were more extreme than "leanings" would imply, but there was a consistency in five areas: First, all chosen were mature, only one was under the age of 30. Most were in their 40s or older (see Table 4.2). Second, almost all were articulate, four pastors commented that they had chosen people who would talk freely, to help with data gathering. Third, males predominated (63 per cent). Fourth, a majority (82 per cent) of those interviewed were actively involved in the local church and held some kind of formal (elected) position ranging from working with children in Sabbath school[2] to serving as the senior elder.[3] Fifth, most had been members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for a significant amount of time, more than half (63 per cent) had been Adventists for more than 20 years. Only 3 (14 per cent) had been Adventists for fewer than 10 years. The pastors tended to choose articulate, mature leaders from within their churches; people who had been members for a significant period of time. This probably should be expected if the church pastor is asked to choose because he will naturally lean toward the ones he works with most and knows best. In the main, then, these are committed supporters of the church and, as readers of *Record,* they may simply bring that support to the church's magazine without being too critical. This is a reminder that any selection process that attempts to extract 2 individuals from a group of 5 (in one case) and from a group of up to 1200 people (in another case) will have weaknesses.

Table 4.2 indicates that the overall average ages of those interviewed were greater than either the general population or the Adventist population. As would be

expected, the focus groups, because the individuals were chosen in random order, came closer, but still tended to be older than both groups.

Table 4.2
Age comparisons between the general population, Adventist population, those interviewed and those involved in focus groups[4]
(in percentages)

Age (years)	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-64	65+
General population	9	19	20	18	13	20
Adventist population	9	13	16	19	22	22
Interview	—	5	12	20	32	32
Focus groups	1	13	16	23	30	17

The fact that the majority were male reflects that leadership within the local Seventh-day Adventist church tends to be male, unless they are dealing with children. For instance, even though women have served as elders in Australia and New Zealand since 1970, most elders are still male. Women are under-represented within leadership of the local church and the broader church. Vance (1999:221-3) postulates that for the Adventist Church this can be explained by the "sociological theory of sectarian development." Vance argues, as Weber asserts, that sectarian movements originally "allot equality" to women, but as sectarian movements become "bureaucratized and seek accommodation to secular society, positions of leadership and authority available to women diminish." During debates over the acceptability of the ordination of women since 1970 (as church elders, a lay position, the result was yes, in parts of the world that thought it acceptable), and through the 1980s and 1990s (as church pastors, a higher, salaried position, the result was no), traditionalists advocated a return to the socioreligious norms of the 1950s and 1960s where the woman's main role was in the home. There were warnings that feminism and liberalism were driving the ordination of

women agenda, and that gender equity was inconsistent with Adventism's historic tradition, which became, according to Vance (1999:221-3), a convincing argument.

Because the research is based on non-ethnic churches, the national or ethnic background of those interviewed held few surprises, with the majority (75 per cent) being either Australian or New Zealand Caucasian.

A significant majority of those interviewed (71 per cent) had gone through some kind of tertiary education (TAFE or CAE, or university). This was much higher than the Australian National Church Life Survey figure of 44 per cent of Adventists over the age of 15 having a trade certificate, diploma or university degree. While Adventists tend to pursue higher education more than the general population, 27 per cent over the age of 15 claimed "skilled vocational" or higher education in the 1996 Australian census,[5] there was a strong bias by pastors in choosing members with higher education for interviews. It is also worth noting that more than a third (39 per cent) of those interviewed had had some education in Adventist schools.

Interviewing was chosen as the main method of data collection because it allowed more flexibility and greater depth. As Douglas (1985:7) maintains, "The question and answer technique may be of some value in determining favoured detergents, toothpaste and deodorants, but not in the discovery of men and women." There was an endeavour to allow those interviewed to introduce what they regarded as relevant (Dexter, 1970:5). In the interview situation, there was the advantage of being able to restate questions that the respondent did not understand (Singleton, et al, 1993:261).

Sometimes a question did relate to the survey, often in the form of, why did you answer in this way? "How" and "why" questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case study, says Yin (1989:18). In a sense, several questions were

used in the "loose and liberal" way that Lazarsfeld (1972:193) calls for, but the emphasis was definitely "knowing what [the researcher] is trying to discover" rather than a specific way of asking the questions. The interview did not simply follow the survey, but followed a short list of "issue oriented questions" (Stake, 1995:65) that became the interview schedule. They formed the basis of the discussion, but the twists and turns of talk, the "dance in talk" (Goffman, 1981:73), often led down other paths. Because of this, respondents sometimes raised issues under study before the question needed to be asked, at other times they had to be drawn back to the issues. In a sense, each interview was an "interpersonal drama with a developing plot" (Pool, 1957:193).

The strength of this approach is that within the limitations of a formal interview situation, it attempts to make the situation as close to normal conversation as possible. That also creates a weakness: Because an interview of this nature is an interpersonal exchange, not a strictly structured question-and-answer event, there were times during reflection after the event that uncovered areas that could have been covered better, follow-up questions that could have helped clarify statements made. I am not the first to notice that the question that should have been asked often becomes clear after the interview (Patton, 1980:295).

Where appropriate, an attempt was made to ask open-ended questions that allowed respondents to comment on areas under examination. This encouraged discussion, allowed for opinions and allowed respondents to express themselves in their own way. The open-ended question approach "produces vignettes of considerable richness" and is an "invaluable tool when you want to go into a particular topic deeply" (Sudman, and Bradburn, 1982:150-1).

Sudman and Bradburn (1982:151) also note several disadvantages to open-ended questions: The data is much more complex, and thus needs to be coded into fewer and

simpler categories. This is time consuming and introduces the possibility of coding error. The questions take more time to answer and require greater skill by the interviewer in recognising ambiguities of response, and in probing and drawing respondents out, to ensure that they give "codable answers." The questions demand more psychological work on the part of the respondents, they have to think harder about the question, organise their thoughts to respond, even then their thoughts may come out haphazardly. The advantages, however, outweigh these disadvantages. The "dance of talk" did become more complex, though, for focus groups.

Focus groups

Ten focus groups were conducted with each one involving from 6 to 10 people; Morgan (1988:38) recommends 6-8 participants as best. The 78 who participated were chosen by a random sampling method from the church roll. The method involved dividing the total number of those on the church roll by 20 (double the number for the maximum, 10 wanted, only once was the number able to be contacted larger than 10 even though there were 20 on the list, with still only 10 or less able to attend). All church rolls were prepared in alphabetical order, and the selection process then involved beginning at a random name and counting off the result of dividing the number of members by 20. In order to take the "critical step in systematic sampling" of selecting the first case randomly (Bouma, 1996a:124), each first name was linked to time. The clock was considered to be divided into six (10 minute) or four (15 minute) quadrants, six for a smaller church, four for a larger church. Each minute within the quadrant was considered to be a number: 1 to 10; or 1 to 15. The first name was then chosen by counting down to whatever number was indicated by the clock when beginning to choose participants.

While using the church roll was an obvious way of selecting those involved, all church rolls were inflated with the names of people who no longer attended that church. They were either church members who no longer lived in the area or were now attending a nearby church, or they no longer attended church. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a person is voted into church membership by current members of that church. This usually follows a period of instruction and baptism, but, if the person has been a Christian in another denomination and has been baptised by immersion, it may also be by a "profession of faith" (*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual,* 1995:37-8. In practice, this is also available for those who are physically unable to be baptised by immersion).

Those who no longer attend a Seventh-day Adventist church or have not transferred their membership[6] may have their names on the church roll indefinitely. The *Church Manual* (1995:172) states plainly that "nonattendance at church services shall not be considered sufficient cause for disfellowshipping." While a local church may move to take a person off their roll ("disfellowship" is the term used) under specific listed circumstances (found in *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 1995:168-72), it was obvious from the church rolls that there are many who do not attend who had not transferred their membership, did not come under the listed categories for disfellowshipping or the churches have not acted to disfellowship them.

Because those involved in the focus groups needed to be church members who attended specific churches, and who, because they were attending church, had ready access to the *Record,* non-attending members did not qualify. The combination of the above factors meant that twice the 20 names chosen at random did not give even 10 names of attending church members. This problem was also noted by Townend and Jackson (1986:5-6) when preparing their 1986 *Record* survey.

While generally there was a willingness to be involved in the focus groups, some had other commitments and could not participate. There were two cases where younger people (late teens) did not want to be involved because they felt *Record* was not "for them." On two occasions the husband came instead of the woman chosen. In one instance the church clerk decided to attend as well (I worked closely with church clerks and they coordinated interstate and New Zealand focus groups).

One exception to this process in selecting participants for a focus group was a new group that had been meeting for some eight months. I was invited to a general meeting where the core of this new church (about 20 to 25 people) was meeting. The pastor made an alphabetical list (by first name) of those there and then randomly chose seven who formed the focus group. Table 4.3 gives the spread of the focus groups. (The New South Wales two were within 30 minutes drive of each other, one a large church of some 1200 members, the other a small and developing church of only 20 to 30 members.) What is seen again in Table 4.3 is an endeavour to involve people from a broad spread of geographical areas, and to involve urban and rural churches.

Table 4.3
Number of focus groups conducted by area

Area	NSW	SA	Qld	Vic	NNZ	Total
Urban	—	—	1	2	1	4
Rural	2	1	—	2	1	6
Totals	2	1	1	4	2	10

Focus groups were used to give a broader, rich source of information to complement the interviews. In this connection, Morgan[7] (1988:21) notes, "What focus groups do best is produce an opportunity to collect data from groups discussing topics of interest to the researcher." While many of the same issues were discussed during interviews and focus groups, there was, at times, an obvious diversity of opinions that

sparked counter-opinions within groups. The diversity added richness to the information being gathered.

Table 4.2 shows that, compared to those interviewed, the age spread of those involved in focus groups is much closer to the ratio of Adventist population. Even though the predominance of those involved were 40 years of age or over, there is a broader spread of age groups. Even chosen at random, those involved in focus groups who held positions within the church is high (77 per cent). Again, most of those selected had been members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for a significant amount of time, more than two-thirds (70 per cent) had been Adventists for more than 20 years. Only 9 (13 per cent) had been Adventists for fewer than 10 years. The national or ethnic backgrounds for the focus groups were wider than for the interviews, but the majority (78 per cent) were either Australian or New Zealand Caucasian.

Almost two-thirds (63 per cent) had gone through some kind of tertiary education (TAFE or CAE, or university). While this percentage is lower (by 8 percentage points) than those who were interviewed, it is still much higher than the norm for either the Adventist population (44 per cent) or the general population (27 per cent). The process of choosing those invited to participate in focus groups was sound, so there is no solid explanation for the difference. One could argue that within the church there is an emphasis on education and the census figures are skewed down by those who claim to be Adventists but who have no real or continuing attachment to the church and its education emphasis. Even so, the 20 percentage points remain a significant difference. Another surprising education result showed that more than half (55 per cent) of those involved in focus groups had attended an Adventist school at some time. This is much higher than the 39 per cent of those interviewed.

Although focus groups have been popular as a research technique in marketing for more than 30 years, its use has expanded into areas of communications, health, education and psychology (Vaughn, et al, 1996:2). Focus groups cannot substitute for the kind of research done well by either individual interviews or participant observation. "On the other hand, focus groups provide access to forms of data that are not obtained easily with either of the other two methods" (Morgan, 1988:15).

Johnson (1996:521-3), drawing on the work of Morgan, identifies five qualities of focus groups that attracted marketing researchers, but also open opportunities for the social scientist: The focus group can give the researcher access to "tacit, uncodified and experiential knowledge." One of the goals of the focus group is to learn from the group's experience, with the expectation that this learning experience will not only lead to better questions, but will bring to light previously unrecognised factors and even lead into the development of new lines of research.

The focus group can give the researcher the "opinions of the participants" (Johnson, 1996:521-3). The aim of a successful focus group is to gain the expression of views, feelings and experiences of the participants. O'Neill (1995:153, 169) develops the thought that each individual is simultaneously "ordinary person," "expert" and "well-informed citizen." An individual's knowledge is at once the tacit knowledge from the social locale and pieces of narrow specialist occupational/scientific knowledge. Focus groups encourage a range of opinions. These groups are not focused on consensus building, but in revealing a range of opinions. An active group encourages participants to express different points of view (Vaughn, et al, 1996:4-6).

A strength of the focus group is that it gives the researcher access to "actors' meanings" (Johnson, 1996:521-3). The tacit or experiential knowledge and opinions of the group by discussion can be placed in the wider framework of the world view of

participants. Morgan (1988:25) adds: "Focus groups are useful when it comes to investigating *what* participants think, but they excel at uncovering *why* participants think as they do."

The focus group gives the researcher the opportunity to study the individual not as an isolated person, but as "part of a collective." The aim of the researcher is a vibrant group discussion, not "controlled and contrived bilateral exchanges with the moderator but rich and meaningful multilateral conversations between themselves" (Johnson, 1996:522-3). When the focus group works well, the researcher can give partial control to the group and play the role of host and witness rather than interviewer. It is the development of this "groupness" that produces much of value and which cannot be obtained in other ways. The dynamics of group interaction can be used to "gain information and insights that are less likely to be gained through individual interviews or participant observation" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:104). This interactive process adds candour and has the potential to add depth to knowledge gained from the group (Vaughn, et al, 1996:16-19).

The focus group can be "combined with other methods" (Johnson, 1996:521-3). There is value in linking the focus group to individual interviewing, participant observation, surveys and experiments. The strength of focus groups lies in their ability to explore topics and generate hypotheses; their weakness is that the researcher has less control over the data generated, particularly in comparison to individual interviews (Morgan, 1988:30-38, 21). Morgan calls for information from focus groups to be strengthened from other sources.

While there is much to recommend the focus-group approach, a weakness was quickly discovered during group discussions. It was as if there were attempts to negotiate common ground among group members. This was done in a variety of ways.

For instance, a more forceful person may increase volume and urgency into the discussion to convince others of the rightness of the position taken; there could be put-downs of comments; and another may attempt to gain support or check how much support there is for an issue. While it is possible to hear individual voices, these can be tainted when this negotiated position becomes the group response.

Four focus groups were conducted in Victoria (two in suburban Melbourne, two in the rural areas), two in New Zealand, two in New South Wales and one each in South Australia and Queensland. Each group came from the one church with the assumption that this was a more "compatible group" than if church members were chosen from various churches to participate in a group. Vaughn, et al, (1996:62) have noted that compatible groups are more efficient because they spend less time on group maintenance.

All but one focus group was conducted somewhere within the church complex (a church hall or another room of the church building). This was done in an effort to conduct each focus group in a natural setting, a setting familiar to the church member, to help counter what Morgan (1998:20) calls a general weakness of focus groups, taking people away from their setting to be involved. The one exception to the focus groups being in part of the church complex was the new church where the meeting was taking place in a church member's home and those chosen to participate did so in a room of the house. However, this was still a natural setting for the group because they met every second Sunday in the house, and the focus group became a part of that particular Sunday's activity.

The qualitative process of interviews and focus groups was backed up with a quantitative process, a survey. The survey was not simply an add-on to the qualitative approach, but an integral part of the research.

Surveys

Each person interviewed was asked to fill in a survey (see Appendix A, page 291) before the interview. All who participated in focus groups and the pastors who chose those to be interviewed were also asked to fill in and return a survey form. The use of a survey in this research has proven helpful in several ways. It has supplied information that can be measured in a quantitative way; it meant that several details (such as age, education and marital status) about the individual were supplied efficiently; and it has supplied an extra check on comments made during interviews. During interviews it was particularly useful as a rough guide for the flow of the interview and helpful in drawing out any explanations and further comments.

A total of 125 surveys were collected, with Table 4.4 giving a statistical summary of numbers returned. The strong link of the survey with the interviews caused the 100 per cent response from those who were interviewed. Those involved in focus groups and the pastors received the surveys after their involvement in the groups or phone interviews. Those who did not respond within a reasonable time were sent a reminder and another survey form. Table 4.4 shows that a high percentage from all groups responded.

Table 4.4
Response rate of surveys from pastors, focus groups and those interviewed

Sources	Interviews	Focus group participants	Pastors	Totals
Surveys distributed	41	78	21	140
Surveys returned	41	69	15	125
Response Rates (in percentages)	100	88.5	71.4	89.3

A survey is an important tool and one of the main vehicles of quantitative research (Bryman, 1988:12). It is a useful device for measuring variables, a fact that cannot be over-emphasised, says Bouma (1996a:64), particularly about the individuals involved in the process, about attitudes and opinions. Filstead (1983:37) notes that a survey is a way of translating "observations into numbers." A survey's goal is often that it should be descriptive (Brannen, 1993:8). Unlike an interview or focus group, a survey rarely causes an extensive search of memory, even in survey interviews (Sudman, et al, 1996:71).

In this case the survey proved to be an aid during both the interviews and the focus groups. In both situations it was used as a rough guide for discussion, and has proved helpful in bringing "numbers" into what could have been only a qualitative discussion. This aids in giving breadth to the information gathered from both the interviews and focus groups. As Mishler (1986:24) suggests, "The set of assumptions embodied in statistical analysis reinforce the standard model of interviewing."

Content analysis

Two types of content analysis of Adventist magazines are used as part of the research. The first analyses themes and is used in chapter 6 during specific time periods. The second involves counting the frequency a variety of words, phrases, topics or references and is also used in chapter 6, and forms a part of the research for chapter 10 where the content of *Record* is studied over two one-year periods. Both approaches to content analysis are quantitative, with the first a type of "thematic analysis" (Ezzy, 2002:84) investigating the "thematic content of communication" aiming "to make inferences about individual or group values, sentiments, intentions, or ideologies as expressed in the content of the communication" (Sarantakos, 1993:211). Frequency analysis, in this

case, means "counting the frequency of the research question and comparing them with other elements" (Sarantakos, 1993:214). In this case, a comparison is made in chapter 10 of elements from the two one-year periods with previous content analysis on *Record* from 1977.

Content analysis of print, to "measure themes and tendencies in the message" (Thomlinson, 1965:75), is an "accepted method of textual investigation, particularly in the field of mass communication" (Silverman, 1985:149). Neuendorf (2002:xv) goes further, suggesting it is central to communication research, and sees it "closely related to the technique of survey research, it uses messages rather than human beings as its level of analysis" (Neuendorf, 2002:47). However, the choice of the themes and categories to investigate is key to successful content analysis. "Any sociological investigation must begin by defining a problem in terms of categories" and these categories will reflect the purpose of the research (Zito, 1976:31). "The effectiveness of the method remains dependent on the effectiveness of the theory that guides its choice of categories and this is true of all methods of measurement" (Easthope, 1974:129).

The methodology used is also important to tackle the criticism sometimes levelled at content analysis that it can involve subjective judgments that may "create data that are quantifiable but not valid" (Abercrombie, et al, 1988:50), or "trite" (Silverman, 1985:149). To put it another way,

> We cannot assume the significance of a content analysis only by virtue of its categorization and careful counting of items subsumed under these categories unless we know how the researcher decides what his categories are, how they are to be used, by reference to the theoretical presuppositions inherent in the method of analysis (Cicourel, 1964:156).

While the methodology will be spelt out in more detail where the research unfolds, it is worth noting here that for chapter 6, a series of crisis or change events are studied through the content of various Adventist magazines to discover how the

church's print handled them. The first looks at themes that are emphasised in relation to the Second World War, the second considers how the church's print handled issues highlighted during the 1960s, and the third seeks to understand internal challenges to the church with the dismissal of one high-profile employee and the demotion of another. The aim is to understand what is important to the church, as reflected through its print, during these times of change and crisis. The frequency analysis in chapter 10 takes its cues from Knight's (1977) research of *Record* that formed part of his doctoral thesis and uses his methodology to compare his findings with the *Records* of 1990 and 2002. These comparisons should prove helpful in noting trends within the church's print and, perhaps, within the church itself.

While strong arguments can be made for the methodology used in the research, there is another variable that needs consideration. I am both an insider to the group being investigated and also involved in the production of *Record*.

Insider versus outsider

While Berger (1979:21) warns of the extreme images of the sociologist as an "antiseptically neutral technician" or a "fiercely committed partisan," in the qualitative research tradition researchers become an instrument of research and have to attend to their own assumptions (cultural and otherwise) as well as the data. And the researcher is already working on the basis of certain values (Mills, 1970:196-7). In seeking "imaginative insights into the respondents' social worlds," says Brannen (1992:4-5), the investigator is expected to be flexible and reflexive and yet, at the same time, manufacture distance. Brannen thus promotes participant observation as the best qualitative research approach. Patton (1980:127-8) defines the participant observer as one who

> shares as intimately as possible in the life and activities of the program under study. The purpose of such participation is to develop an *insider's* view of what is happening. This means that the evaluator not only sees what is happening but *feels* what it is like to be a part of the program. . . . At the same time, however, there is clearly an *observer* side to this process. The challenge is to combine participation and observation so as to become capable of understanding the program as an insider while describing the program for outsiders.

In this study I am an insider on three counts: as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as a minister of the church (a position of status and authority) and as editor of the *Record.* Any or all of these factors could affect interviews or focus groups. In my case there are both advantages and disadvantages in being an insider and these will be discussed, with an approach that attempts to minimise the bias that this may bring to the research and to analysing the research.

Advantages as insider

An immediate advantage as *Record* editor was evident in the doors it opened easily for the research. I had ready access to Adventist readers of the *Record*, and it took only a brief phone call to church pastors to explain what I wanted and gain permission and their help or a church clerk's assistance. As Ballis (1995:60) found in his study of former Seventh-day Adventist ministers, being an insider was a "key factor" in making this research possible. While an outsider would probably have gained permission to do this research after it had been considered by an administrative church committee, church pastors or church boards could still have blocked access to members. I had no refusals from pastors, and only once did a church member decide not to be interviewed (for a phone interview from a small church group of five meeting in an isolated area).

Being an insider lessens the risk of "violating norms" of the group under study (Sanders, 1980:162). O'Neill (1995:139) makes the point that each of us inhabits small worlds on the basis of a command of language, but our worlds are broader than this. Not

only do our worlds include the "native language" of individuals or groups, but the organisation, the social world, the structure and process of the group must be included. These are problems every field worker must solve (McCall, 1980:146). Mishler (1986:24) is strong on this point: "A meeting between strangers unfamiliar with each other's 'socially organized contexts' of meaning—does not provide the necessary contextual basis for adequate interpretation." Insiders already have these contexts as a part of their world. For instance, Kapitzke (1995:xvii), a Seventh-day Adventist insider who based her study within her congregation, found that her "informed situation and personal standing in the community mitigated problems relating to 'culture shock,' which affect the observer, the observed, and the outcomes of the research."

As a member of the church and having been a part of the church long enough to know what has happened over the past 25 years, was certainly an advantage. There was often an understanding that, particularly during interviews, the mere mention of a name or a phrase would be immediately understood ("native language"). On occasions there was a sense of intimacy because we were together in this, sharing about events important to both of us. On those occasions, I believe, the depth of information given was far greater than it otherwise would have been.

One unexpected advantage of being an insider was discovered by Vance (1999:72) during her research within the Adventist Church. She found a problem in that she "was frequently the object of members' witnessing activities. Interview participants regularly used the opportunity provided by the interview to speak with an 'outsider' to express belief in the tenets of Adventist doctrine." This was not a problem I had to deal with.

The advantages of being an insider are also seen in the lengths some researchers will go to, to become part of a group under study. For instance, Kleinman (1980:171-9)

lived in a seminary for six months to study ministry students. Hoffmann (1980:46-7) discovered that being an insider opened doors for her research of members of boards of directors when several of those under study discovered there were social connections between themselves and her family. "Who I was or was perceived to be influenced the information to which I would be given access," she reports. They were willing to share a "sudden richness" of data.

Limitations of being an insider

Accepting these advantages, there are several disadvantages that should also be considered. The most important is that as editor of *Record* I may desire a certain outcome, consciously or unconsciously, and lead respondents instead of allowing them the freedom to give their own answers. The possibility of attempting to act like a mother protecting her baby is a reality, particularly when responses concerning *Record* are negative. Conversely, respondents may take the same approach, that *Record* is my baby, and try to please me rather than confront me with what they really think. Who wants to tell a mother her baby is ugly?

Another issue that needs flagging is that, through the pages of the *Record,* the respondents had already "met" me and made some kinds of judgment about me. These impressions they brought to the interview or focus group. Whether being known was an advantage or whether their judgment of me before the interview or focus group event clouded their comments is difficult to tell.

In writing of the qualitative research interview process, Mishler (1986:vii) says:

> An interview is the joint product of what interviewees and interviewers talk about together and how they talk with each other. The record of an interview that we researchers make and then use in our work of analysis and interpretation is a representation of that talk.

As seen, being an insider in that "joint product" is an advantage at many levels, but what if those being interviewed (or in focus groups) sees more than "we researchers" in those conducting the interview and focuses on other roles? Was I seen as an editor who can "fix" the *Record,* for instance? In several instances I was asked to answer questions that were of a technical or philosophical nature (such as when a certain article appeared, why we print certain letters, information about a writer and so on). Some questions could not be answered by someone not close to the *Record* and may not have been asked of someone else. This could be seen as part of the normal speech event, and in interviews all researchers will have some of themselves and their background come into the conversation. My responses to some questions (such as, Why do you print certain letters?) could impact on further responses to my questions about *Record* in a positive or negative way.

Lopata (1980:78) suggests there may be an eagerness to talk to an insider with authority (as in this case, the editor of *their* magazine) who has, or is perceived to have, the authority to make changes. This eagerness, though, does not discount the other concerns raised here.

At least three times my role as pastor came to the fore. Twice I was asked if I would pray with the individuals I interviewed; on another occasion, at the end of a focus group, I sensed an expectation that I should pray, which I did.[8] The attention at these times turned from my role as researcher to that of pastor. This demonstrates a recognition of talking to someone who held a certain standing within their church, a position of authority. This acknowledgement sends a warning that some may have attempted to honour the position by giving what they consider "correct" responses, or responses they believed I wanted to hear. These kinds of responses may be in short supply in Australia and New Zealand where there is the tendency to give frank

responses that will often pull down rather than build up, but there were only a couple of times when I sensed there was limited respect for myself and what I was attempting to do, so it remains an important consideration.

Those involved in the interviews and focus groups were unanimous in saying they would have responded in the same way to another researcher, and some quite emphatically. However, what I brought to the interview and focus group event has to be considered and a methodology developed to counter my own bias and the bias my other roles as an insider may have brought.

All researchers bring their biases to their research, unless they are "antiseptically neutral technicians" (Berger, 1979:21). Insiders can magnify those biases because of the knowledge and history they bring to the task. As an insider in this study and research, from the beginning there has been an attempt to allow respondents to have their voice. While I responded to questions and comments that involve my roles other than that of researcher, to help build "personal relations of trust" that help eliminate biasing influences, or minimise their effect (Johnson, 1975:118), I also brought the conversation back to the research area and intentionally limited my comments, to hear theirs. As will be seen in the chapters analysing the research I have again attempted to give the respondents *their* voice, not mine. This is done in an attempt to manufacture the distance Brannen (1992:4-5) calls for. There has been an attempt to gain a "critical intellectual perspective" and enable me to have the detachment of an "outsider" that Kapitzke (1995:xviii) aimed for within her Seventh-day Adventist congregation.

As an insider in a study of the *Record*, I must rely heavily on the appropriate methodology to ensure a sense of objectivity. In the final analysis, whether I have been able to distance myself enough to be as objective as I should is something that will be

decided by the reader. Understanding the likelihood of bias as an insider is the first step, as Douglas (1985:42) says:

> The creative interviewer recognizes his own humanity as the beginning of the understanding of all human beings. He does not hide his humanity, nor does he flaunt it. He tries to understand himself as the beginning of understanding anyone else. The minimal step is this negative one of finding his own weaknesses in observation, communication, and analysis.

Perhaps, in this thesis, the most difficult is not the participation or observing, but the times of "withdrawal and distance" Patton (1980:47) sees as an important element of qualitative research. Here is a warning not to lose sight of the big picture, to take a step back to allow a more objective approach to the research and analysis of the data.

Summary

This chapter has described the processes followed in collecting the information involved for this study. It has given a statistical overview of those who participated in the interviews, focus groups and the surveys. It has noted the "usefulness" (Silverman, 1993:85) of both qualitative and quantitative methods in research. While most of the research has been qualitative, both types will prove helpful in the research chapters. The interviews and focus groups give a depth of understanding that is not available from the survey, but the survey also has its place. In fact, it serves two purposes: a simple way of collecting personal information from participants, and for collecting a consistent form of data that can be used for a statistical overview of the respondents. Several earlier *Record* readers' surveys mean that there is an opportunity to compare the current survey.

The methodology has been designed around personal contact with *Record* readers to gain maximum input from them. The selection process attempts to find the most representative group possible under the restraints of cost and time. The geographic

and urban church-rural church spread again attempts to find a representative group. My involvement as a researcher who is both an insider in the organisation and involved in production of *Record* raises concerns that call for a heavy reliance on good methodology to safeguard the research's objectiveness and to guard against bias.

The next section turns from theory and methodology to consider the Seventh-day Adventist Church from its beginnings and to note particularly its use of print.

Endnotes

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[1] The *Record* Committee was a committee of church administrators and other appointees who had general oversight of the *Record*. This committee's main responsibility was to consider *Record* philosophy and had little to do with the day-to-day running of the magazine. It met every few years. The *Record* Committee ceased to exist in 2000 as one of several committees that were dropped in an attempt to limit the number of committees coming under the umbrella of the South Pacific Division office and officers.

[2] Sabbath school normally precedes the weekly worship program in a local church and involves Bible study classes for all ages, children through to adult.

[3] The senior elder (sometimes called "head" elder) is the senior lay officer within a local church and is the recognised authority when the pastor is not present. The local church elects elders to the position.

[4] Data for the general population are from the 1996 Australian census and the Seventh-day Adventist Church figures are from the Australian National Church Life Survey of 1996. There is an assumption here that the New Zealand figures would be similar, so there is no attempt to calculate the New Zealand factor because of the complexity of the calculations in combining the figures and the smaller number involved from New Zealand.

[5] The church life survey gives figures based on the level of education in five areas: did not complete secondary; completed secondary; trade certificate; diploma; or university degree (for those 15 years and older). The percentages from the 1996 census are worked out from the numbers of those over the age of 15 who have "skilled vocational" or higher education.

[6] When members move to another area or another church they are expected to go through a sophisticated system of transfer between churches, which involves correspondence between the church clerk (the title of the person who cares for church minutes and records, including membership records) of the new church with that of the former church. The transfer is considered by the church board of the former church before being voted on by the members of that church, usually during the main worship service on Saturday morning so that as many members as possible are involved. After the appropriate transfer documentation is completed, the board of the members' new church will consider the transfer before it will be voted on by the members of that church. Again this will usually be voted at the Saturday morning worship service (*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 1995:32-5).

This process in itself takes time (up to three months). Often the members who are transferring to another church will also take time before deciding if they will transfer to a particular church (especially if they are in a city where they have several options). The church clerks who spoke of this problem indicated it is not unusual to have someone transfer their membership 12 months to 2 years after moving. They also have instances where church members simply do not want to transfer to another church.

While church members can be encouraged to transfer their membership, they must either initiate or approve the transfer.

[7] Morgan has been credited for reclaiming the technique of focus groups for social science (Johnson, 1996:517).

[8] On one occasion at the beginning of an interview, the person being interviewed wanted to pray because he said, "Ultimately it does impact somewhere on the church and, for me, I don't want to speak unless I pray." After he had prayed I asked if he had expected me to pray before we started. He said, "No."

SECTION TWO

The Adventist Church and Print Media

The previous section provided a broad outline of theoretical and methodological dimensions of the present study. This section introduces the Seventh-day Adventist Church from a historical perspective, and shows the significant role print media has played within the church. The main emphasis is on history, but with a purpose, to show the development of the community known as the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its use of print media to help strengthen and enlarge its community boundaries. The two chapters outline the development of the movement and the important role of print as an instrument facilitating in both informing and nurturing those within and in presenting a message to influence those outside the group. Adventism's print also provides a window for understanding the group's relationship with the broader society.

Chapter 5

A Print-Driven Church

Print media has played a fundamental role in the growth, development and consolidation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church's teachings and emphases have been and continue to be perpetuated through print. The early Adventist discourse was defined by the printed page, beginning with the Bible and interpretations of the biblical text, which were often printed to share among themselves and to others outside the group in the hope they too would find the "truth" of Adventism. Until recent times, with the introduction of more visual forms of media, a high level of literacy was needed to be fully involved in and to have full appreciation of Adventism in developed parts of the world. Even with the use of other forms of media, the demands for literacy remain high. The Bible remains the basic text, members are encouraged to read the writings of Ellen White and Adventists maintain a strong publishing program.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church grew out of a movement with a heavy reliance on print, so it was natural for them to use and develop print for their own purposes. This chapter begins by considering the origins of the Adventist Church, then noting how the Millerites and, more particularly, Adventists used print to help confirm and instruct members in their Adventism and to create interest and then consolidate new followers. Stamm (1985:21) maintains that where members of an organisation are spread over a wide area, "devices such as organization newsletters become a chief means of maintaining ties with members." As will be seen, the Millerites and the

Adventists went further than Stamm suggests, with both developing print as a tool of evangelism, and Adventists using it to help maintain their distinctive approach to life. The aim of this historical account is to provide insights into the development of print in Adventism and to give a background to the church's usage today.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first considers the Millerite Movement and the origins of the Adventist Church. The next notes the place print media had in both their developments. Then the use of print in the early Adventist Church in the South Pacific is studied to discover the print-heavy approach used by the first Adventists in Australia and New Zealand. Ellen White's influence on the Adventist Church has been marked; and she wrote extensively about publishing and made comments about publishing in Australia. The fourth part considers her influence in the context of the Adventist publishing work in Australia, and what impact that brought.

The emergence of Seventh-day Adventism

Australia has not given birth to new religious movements within its non-indigenous population (Black, 1983:1-2), so, in Australia, the Adventist Church has its own story of what Bouma (1996:1) would call migration and settlement, arriving in 1885. Its origins, though, are found in the United States and were "urgently apocalyptic" (Lawson, 1997:209). Adventism grew out of "the most spectacular apocalyptic revival since the days of the Fifth Monarchy Men in England during the Civil War" (Linden, 1982:13). This movement predicted the return of Christ about the time of 1843 or early 1844. When that prediction failed to eventuate, a new interpretation and enthusiasm focused on October 22, 1844, as the date for his return. From that more significant disappointment emerged the Seventh-day Adventist Church, "an indigenous American denomination" (Plantak, 1998:11), one of the "American sectarian success stories"

(Butler, 1987:190). "In the Millerite Movement of the 1830s and 1840s lie the roots of a Seventh-day Adventist Church that, though small by comparison with the mainline Protestant denominations, today circles the world" (Dick, 1986:1).

William Miller, the Baptist farmer after whom the Advent Movement of the 1830s and 1840s is named, became convinced on the basis of his interpretation of Daniel 8:14 that Christ would soon return to earth: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary [the church (Miller, 1836:37-8)] be cleansed."[1] Historicists,[2] using a day-for-a-year understanding of the 2300 days, were convinced that the period began sometime between 457 and 453 BC[3] and would thus end between AD 1843 and 1847. Froom (1954:403-6) lists 68 historicists from four continents who took this position between 1768 and 1842.

Miller may have been colourless, lacking in glamour or magnetism, and his writings free of "rhetorical excess" and full of "plodding deliberateness" (Barkun, 1986:46-7), but his mathematical precision and predictions acted like a spell (Linden, 1978:51). "Apocalyptic timekeeping was the heart of Millerite exegesis" (Arasola, 1990:86), even if there were few elements outside orthodox thinking in Miller's preaching and teaching (Cross, 1950:291). Miller's success promised a new wave of religious fervour and brought invitations to preach from ministers who were often more interested in the fervour than the message (Rowe, 1985:24), but he still had limited exposure. In late 1839 Connexionist minister Joshua Himes became Miller's publicist, "one of the public-relations geniuses of the 1840s" (Knight, 1993:77). Through print, Millerism became a force to be reckoned with. Within five years the number of followers rose to about 50,000 (Sandeen, 1970:50), although Rowe (1985:47-8) suggests that whether the numbers were 10,000 or 1,000,000 is open to conjecture. Miller (1844a:196) claimed he had preached to over 500,000 people and conducted

4500 lectures in a 12-year period. Those preaching the Advent at this time have been numbered at 300 to 400 (Knight, 1993:113-14). The uneventful passing of October 22, 1844, the Great Disappointment, became the kind of failed prophecy that haunts apocalyptic movements (Robbins and Palmer, 1997:11). "The presses were silent. There was no *Advent Herald,* no *Midnight Cry.* There were no meetings to attend. In their loneliness few desired to speak, for they were still in the world" (Arthur, 1974:5).

"Moderate Adventists" (Knight, 1993:267)[4] including William Miller, gathered in Albany, New York, on April 29, 1845, in an attempt to refine doctrinal positions; investigate how believers were faring; and to decide how to deal with extremists (Linden, 1978:81). The Albany conference condemned extremist positions, "including the doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, the seventh-day Sabbath, and the manifestation of the spirit of prophecy in the person of Ellen G White" (Anderson, 1986:38). Yet it was these elements, the sanctuary, the Sabbath and Ellen White, that helped give new life to Adventism (Doan, 1987:204) and led to the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Key doctrinal developments

Doctrinal developments were important to help give definition to the emerging group. Seventh-day sabbatarianism, in particular, "set boundaries between it and other religious groups" (Butler, 1987:202). Ellen White (1946:30-1), in 1889, gave insight into the more significant doctrinal positions when she wrote of "landmark" doctrines that had been developed since 1844: the sanctuary teaching and second coming, the three angels messages, the law of God and the Sabbath, and the state of those in death.

With the failure of predictions surrounding October 22, 1844, there was a concerted attempt to make sense of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary in a way

that remained faithful to the historicist hermeneutic of Miller. For Damsteegt (1977:296-7) this was "one of the most important factors" in the emergence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. When Hiram Edson (undated:9) announced on the morning of October 23, 1844, that he believed Jesus had begun on October 22 a work of judgment in the heavenly sanctuary before coming to earth, Owen R L Crosier (1846:38-44), in typical Millerite fashion, turned to print to get the message out. A belief in a heavenly event that could not be confirmed was substituted for an earthly event that had not occurred (Foster, 1987:185). Settling on an alternative explanation allowed the group to move on from date setting more quickly than other millenarian groups of the time (such as Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses) to rapidly become a "largely stable, uniform organization" (Butler, 1987:199). The second coming remained an important element, still imminent, but delayed.

Found in Revelation chapter 14, the three angels' messages came to be accepted as the core of Seventh-day Adventist theology and purpose, a "distinct world view" (Steley, 1985:153). The various elements found in the messages, of gospel proclamation, judgment, commandment keeping (interpreted to emphasise the fourth commandment about the Sabbath), creation and remaining faithful to Jesus, in the midst of apocalyptic images made this a focal point that grew naturally out of the Millerite experience. The three angels' messages came to be seen as the last messages before the return of Christ, and thus an essential for Adventists. Adventists came to see themselves and their role in terms of the three angels' messages. They claimed it as their own, as their "explicit commission" (Patrick, 1987:313), to warn the world of judgment and the impending return of Christ, and to call for repentance.

While not unknown among Millerites, the seventh-day Sabbath received only passing mention in their publications.[5] Adventist preacher Frederick Wheeler met a

Seventh Day Baptist, Rachel Oakes, in the winter of 1843, and by March 1844 he was observing the seventh-day Sabbath. However, an article by Thomas Preble, another Adventist preacher, published in the February 28, 1845, *Hope of Israel* convicted Joseph Bates of the Sabbath. He shared his conviction with James and Ellen White; they joined him in keeping the Sabbath, and began to proclaim it (Froom, 1954:941-7). James (1821-1881) and Ellen White (1827-1915), with Bates (1792-1872), would become the "most significant cofounders" (Patrick, 2002) and early leaders of Seventh-day Adventism. "Nothing contributed more to the Adventist identity on a week-by-week basis than the casuistry of seventh-day sabbatarianism, the matter of when and how the day should be observed" (Butler, 1987:202).

An understanding of the state of humans in death differed from mainstream Christianity with this Adventist group taking a position variously described as "nonimmortality of the wicked" (White, 1946:30), "conditional immortality" (Guy, 1999:77) or soul-sleep. They believed that death was like a dreamless sleep, the sleepers to be awakened at the time of the second coming either to eternal life or eternal death, eliminating "the horrendous notion of a soul suffering in an ever-burning hell" (Guy, 1999:77).

The Albany conference may have condemned the manifestation of the "spirit of prophecy" in the person of Ellen White, but she became the most influential force within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Born in 1827, White (nee Harmon) was a teenage Adventist on October 22, 1844. She claimed to have her first vision in December, 1844. The Seventh-day Adventist Church accepted her as having "the prophetic gift described in the Bible" (Neufeld, 1996:873). "Adventists regarded Ellen White's charismatic role as confirmatory rather than initiatory; her testimonies related to the Bible as a 'lesser light to the greater light'" (Butler and Numbers, 1987:180).

Wolfgramm (1983:65) sees her as demonstrating her ability as she monopolised the "leadership and spiritual vacuum left by the Great Disappointment through subsequent visions." While Linden (1978:211) maintains that no historian familiar with her life will doubt that she had visions, Numbers (1992:15-16) suggests that to most Millerites her visions were another manifestation of the unfortunate drift toward fanaticism, and she was only one among several early nineteenth-century American seers. What set her apart was her "independence of thought and action" despite "formidable opposition from nearly every direction" (Burt, 2002:171-2).

White became the major driving force within her community, and the "most creative sabbatarian Adventist" (Patrick, 2002) within the church. Pearson (1990:6) regards her as the one "who held the movement together in the face of considerable turmoil in various phases of the first fifty years of its existence." Her presence was felt in a strong way as she emphasised a holistic lifestyle and during the establishment of the institutions that would support her passion for publishing, health and education. White has maintained an influence within the Adventist Church. Her role was questioned early. Her role still comes under question (see Butler, 1992:xxxiv, xlviii, li), but she remains the most significant voice within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Now separated from mainstream Adventists, these doctrines, with the influence of Ellen White helped create strongly-defined borders for the fledgling group. They had begun to build a community of their own.

Developing an organisational structure

Becoming a formal organisation was always going to be a problem for a group out of the Millerite Movement, which had an anti-sectarian emphasis. "No church can be organized by man's invention but what it becomes Babylon *the moment it is*

organized" was the counsel of George Storrs (1844:238) in the *Midnight Cry* early in 1844. This argument was repeated as the need for an organised body became more evident. By 1851 the first steps of organisation were taken when an individual was set apart with the "laying on of hands" for ministry (Anderson, 1986:48). In 1853, Ellen White (1882:97-104) wrote calling for "gospel order." The establishment of a printing plant in Battle Creek and its legal incorporation, the ownership and costs of operating evangelistic tents, the ownership of meeting houses and the authorisation of ministers (and their financial support) all became issues leading toward organisation (Anderson, 1986:50-1). By the early 1860s sabbatarian Adventists numbered 3500, another reason to turn "attention to establishing a church on earth" (Numbers, 1992:44). In 1860, at a General Conference in Battle Creek, the group decided to call themselves Seventh-day Adventists, one of several names they were known by; its first use seems to have been by opponents (Damsteegt, 1977:254). In their name they chose two of the elements that helped give the group definition: the Sabbath and the second coming (the advent). A General Conference in 1863 finally established a peak organisation with a constitution, 22 ordained ministers and 125 churches (Butler, 1987:204). Within 18 months the church used its new status as an organised entity to successfully approach the United States government on the issue of noncombatancy for Seventh-day Adventists in the Civil War.

White (1882a:305) encouraged "establishing institutions for the dissemination of the truth through the press, for the education of the young, and for the recovery of the sick." Her rationale was based on an apocalyptic urgency with "the end of all things at hand," and in order to prepare "for the great event before us." She urged stronger financial support for the various institutions. "With God's blessing, the power of the press can hardly be over-estimated." The press is "the right arm of our strength."

Schools were established to give "our youth and children" education and discipline to prepare them "for the searching test so soon to come to every soul." The Bible should be a principal subject with attention given to the development of the moral and intellectual powers. There was also a hope that the schools would help train "many earnest workers [who] may be prepared to carry the light of truth to those who sit in darkness." Health institutions should provide the "benefit of nature's remedial agents, instead of depending upon deadly drugs." "Many who thus find relief, will be ready to yield to the influence of the truth" (White, 1882a:305).

Quite openly, the rationale for these institutions is the perceived relevance as tools or, in the case of schools, a training ground for evangelism. White' interest in publishing was to generate a chain of publishing houses around the world, which would also create an inclination to use other mass-media tools. Her educational emphasis would see the development of the largest Protestant education system in the world, ranging from pre-school to tertiary institutions. Her health emphasis, which included a holistic approach to health, would give rise to church-owned health-food factories producing vegetarian foods, as well as clinics and hospitals. She was not alone in being the impetus for these institutions, but without her providing continuous encouragement during the early years, the emphasis may have died. A positive outcome from these institutions for Sabbatarian Adventists was the provision of employment without the requirement of having to work on the Sabbath.

In the second half of the 1800s, Adventists began to organise and to establish institutions that would support both their doctrinal and lifestyle emphasis. Each institution became a visible extension of their beliefs and a reminder in some way, at least to those within Adventism, of the community's purpose.

The place of publishing

Although printing developed in the mid-fifteenth century, the first steam-powered press did not appear in the United States until 1822. Ten years later the New York dailies began publication and with the introduction of "penny papers" New York City (population of some 300,000) had newspaper circulations totalling 70,000 in 1836 (Froom, 1954:429-38). The press had become a significant mass media tool.

Religious publications were popular. One clergyman noted in the *Religious Telescope* of 1839 that

> a well conducted religious periodical is like a thousand preachers, flying in almost as many directions, by means of horses, mailstages, steam boats, rail road cars, ships, etc, etc, offering life and salvation to the sons of men in almost every clime" (cited in Knight, 1993:77).

An 1850 New York State census found that religious periodicals exceeded a quarter of the total newspaper circulation (Cross, 1950:104). The Millerite Movement and the Adventist Church that grew out of it developed in a print-rich society. It was natural that they should turn to print to spread their messages.

Without print media the Millerite Movement would not have had the same impact, and they used print media to its full extent. "Probably no other religious movement or denomination ever produced so vast a quantity of printed matter at that period in so short a time" (Linden, 1978:20). Most publications were periodicals and tracts, but they also included apocalyptic commentaries and compilations from Second Advent Conferences. Millerite materials were also studied at Second Advent Libraries placed in many towns.

Miller used the secular press with a series appearing in the Vermont *Telegraph* in 1932. From these he created a pamphlet. In 1836 he published a complete set of his lectures, marking what Froom (1954:524) calls a "new era" in the expansion of the

growing cause. Wherever Miller lectured, his printed lectures were left behind for more study and they began to circulate where Miller never preached, creating more interest. In 1838 (March 13) the Boston *Daily Times* announced plans to reprint sections from his book and ran nine articles. His views were discussed in religious journals, not that all were supportive. The *Palladium* was supportive; *Zion's Watchman* and the *Union Herald* gave substantial space to discussion of Miller's theme. The *Baptist Register* "while temperately refuting Miller's chronology" urged study of his ideas and, on one occasion, gave the full front page to one of his charts (Cross, 1950:295).

His partnership with Joshua Himes, beginning in 1840, had the greatest impact. Miller's local success was transformed into a national movement under Himes (Sandeen, 1970:50) who had experience in promoting temperance, suffrage, and the non-resistance and anti-slavery movements. He was "well versed in the art of promoting an idea. He immediately embraced the nineteenth century technology available to him in an effort to tell the world about Miller's parousia" (Vance 1999:16). On March 20, 1840, Himes issued the first Millerite periodical, *Signs of the Times.* This endured as the leading representative periodical of the movement (Damsteegt, 1977:53). It began as a bi-monthly but, after April 1842, it became a weekly.

Froom (1954:621-625) heads one of his chapters "Unrivalled battery of Millerite periodicals," and illustrates this with a chart of known Millerite periodicals, their distribution area and circulation. He lists 44 periodicals on the chart, some with a second life under a new name. These journals included weekly, bi-weekly, monthly and a quarterly publication; and, for a time, *Midnight Cry* in New York was a daily. One, the *Advent Messages to Daughters of Zion,* was for women, prepared by two women preachers. The quarterly, *Advent Shield,* was a scholarly journal. Often a temporary publication was produced for a few weeks to publicise a series of meetings taking place

in a city, subscriptions were then transferred to a permanent journal. By May, 1844, Froom (1954:624-5) suggests 5,000,000 copies of these periodicals were distributed in the United States, a nation with a population of some 17,000,000 at the time.

The Millerites also developed a sense of mission for the world that depended on them sending their publications to "every reachable Christian community on earth" (Damsteegt, 1977:53). There is "some evidence" that Miller's exegesis was being studied in England before he had achieved more than a local reputation in the United States. England was targeted later. Miller and Himes are thought to have spent almost $US1000 supplying literature to inquirers from England and to Millerite preachers who had gone there to work (Billington, 1987:59). While Cross (1950:296) argues that the "propaganda of the journals" would have netted "few converts had the labors of itinerant preachers not enlivened discussion," the evidence is that these journals placed the topic of the advent firmly on the agenda, and that some were convinced by what they read.

This enthusiasm for print media was transferred to the foundling group that would become the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Several "ephemeral publications" appeared between 1846 and 1849 (Patrick, 1987:321). However, the enthusiasm was given direction by a vision of Ellen White (1915:125) in November, 1848, and she instructed her husband, James, to print a "little paper." She wrote, "From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear around the world." In July of the following year, James White produced an eight-page paper, *The Present Truth.* "In the individualistic style of primitive or restorationist organizations, a regular periodical was essential. *Present Truth* fulfilled that need" (Burt, 2002:380). Eleven issues appeared between July 1849 and November 1850. They placed "a major emphasis on the seventh-day Sabbath but also included an ardent defence of their view

of what the sanctuary cleansing really involved" (Neufeld, 1996:25-6). After the tenth issue, five issues of the *Advent Review,* so named because it reprinted and reviewed certain views from the Advent movement of 1844, appeared at irregular intervals.

In a revealing letter to "Beloved Brother Bowles" on November 8, 1849, James White (1849) tells of other Advent magazines, the *Herald* and the *Harbinger,* "falling back farther and farther" while those who have a "little strength" are rising never to fall again, a reference, one assumes, to his own magazines. He said he was sick of the Advent papers, and the Advent editors, "poor creatures. Lamps gone out, still trying to light their blind brethren to the Kingdom of God." Then he added that he had no ambition to be an editor, but it was already too late. "Unexpectedly, James White and the *Present Truth* had become the voice of Sabbatarian Adventism" (Burt, 2002:381).

In November, 1850, *Present Truth* and *Advent Herald* were combined and became the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald.* Now known as the *Adventist Review,* it played an important part in confirming the belief and instructing the seventh-day advent believers. For many years the *Review* was "the church," for most Sabbatarians were scattered and had no church buildings or regular preachers. It helped them gain "a sense of belonging" (Knight, 1993:323). Some readers said the *Review* was prized next to the Bible as it nurtured their spiritual lives (Anderson, 1986:49). It became a fortnightly magazine and by 1854 it appeared almost weekly. Its continued significance is noted in the masthead; from 1909 to 1961 it carried the identification: "General church paper of the Seventh-day Adventists." That was changed to "Official organ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church" until 1967 when it reverted back to the original. This indicates it is still considered to have a position of authority within the church worldwide (with a membership of 13 million) that seems greater than its weekly distribution figure of some 50,000[6] would seem to signify (some 300,000 of a monthly

North American issue are distributed free to church members in North America). However, it remains "a prime source for both the history and thought of Adventism" (Patrick, 1987:311).

By March 1852 James White (1852b:104) argued that *Review* should not be published in a commercial printing place. He had several concerns: that outside printers would print the *Review* on the Sabbath; that it would be cheaper to do it themselves; and that Sabbath-keepers would exercise more care in its production. On April 16, 1852, Ellen White (1915:142) wrote that they had "the press" (a hand press that cost $US652.93) in their house to save having to pay rent for office space. Soon the group was printing other magazines, tracts and books. From this beginning came the development of a worldwide publishing program for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As seen, publishing also played an important role in forcing the church to face the issue of organisation to legally incorporate the publishing work (Anderson, 1986:50). James White was the legal proprietor until 1861 and had been calling for incorporation so that the church, not a private party, would own the press. Butler (1987:204) suggests that the history of Adventism had been a matter of "publish or perish" and, "As far as ecclesiastical bureaucracy was concerned, in the beginning was the word."

Another magazine was *Signs of the Times*, a weekly with a name borrowed from the Millerites, launched in 1874. Produced in California it was "to aid in proselytizing the Pacific Coast" (Numbers, 1992:180). The name would be used in various other countries (and in some foreign languages), including Australia, for Seventh-day Adventist magazines with an evangelistic intent.

Ellen White's enthusiasm for print media, no doubt aided by the fact that she was a prolific writer, meant she encouraged the growth of publishing houses. She had a

global vision linked with her interest in health and education: "In all parts of the earth they (God's qualified people) are to establish sanitariums, schools, publishing houses, and kindred facilities for the accomplishing of His work" (White, 1902:51).

In this she encouraged an approach quite different to that of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Bainbridge (1997:89) links Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses in two ways: they are "two of the world's most vigorous denominations" and both have roots in the Adventist movement of the early 1840s. Even though Charles Russell, the Jehovah's Witnesses founder, was not born until 1852, he did have a connection with the "Second Adventists" (Reed, 1996:40). As Seventh-day Adventists began to spread around the globe, they established publishing houses on every continent. The 2003 *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* lists 55. These are autonomous, linked under the umbrella of the church, but each is expected to produce its own literature.

This stands in marked contrast with the Jehovah's Witnesses who are probably the premier religious organisation to use the printed page, but its publishing is centralised and controlled from the Brooklyn, New York, headquarters. Reed (1996:72, 153), a critic and former member, describes it as a "mini Vatican of thirty-odd buildings" with a Writing Committee that determines the content of publications. The publishing is substantial with more than a billion pieces of literature coming from their Brooklyn plant each year. One Witness publication, *The Truth that Leads to Eternal Life* has had a circulation of 115 million. Each printing of *The Watchtower* runs in excess of 10 million and must be one of the most widely circulated magazines (Botting, 1984:xxxiv, 153, 156, 183). Penton (1985:231-232) argues that because of the way that *The Watchtower* is distributed, vast quantities are never read, although Witnesses themselves are each expected to read some 3000 pages a year of their own literature.

There are almost 100 branch offices around the world, many have small or no printing shops, but they are centrally controlled from the US headquarters (Penton, 1985:220, 236).

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the formative years in the United States was dependent on literature distribution. A Tract and Mission Society, begun in 1870 under Stephen Haskell, expanded quickly with fund-raising and the placement of books and literature. With this distribution, by the mid 1870s reports came of Sabbath keepers in various European nations, southern USA, Mexico and Australia, with calls for literature from Scotland, Ireland, China and New Zealand, and publications sent to every mission station on the coast of Africa (Damsteegt, 1977:290). Haskell (1874:190) reported that "publications upon present truth are called for by individuals in almost every nation under heaven where civilization exists."

Adventist print enters the South Pacific

By the time the five Seventh-day Adventist "first fleeters" (with their families) arrived in Melbourne in 1885, the church's main emphases were settled. A news note in a June 28, 1885 Melbourne newspaper was correct in stating, "The members of the sect observe Saturday as the Sabbath and do not take alcohol or tobacco, as they are not deemed good for the health" (cited in Olds, 1993:83). They also came with a growing concern for religious liberty and for the separation of religion and state because a push in the United States to legislate Sunday observance had come to a head, and "significant numbers" of Adventists were imprisoned for Sabbath observance (Bull and Lockhart, 1989:149). Sending the small group to Australia and the South Pacific was part of a mission emphasis begun in 1874.[7] They came to the antipodes believing their raison

d'être was to herald the imminent Second Advent and to call for reforms in Christian doctrine and practice (Patrick, 1987:310-11).

With Ellen White as an enthusiast for print media, the endorsement of this charismatic leader is important in any consideration of print use by the Adventist Church. It is even more important in considering the church in the South Pacific because the instruction was quite specific. Before a large audience at the Battle Creek church, Michigan, White (1915:283) recounted a January 3, 1875, vision. She spoke of printing presses in many foreign countries, printing periodicals, tracts and books. Her husband, James, interrupted her to ask if she could name any countries. She said she could not name any because their names had not been given, except for one, Australia. It should come as no surprise that 10 years later the group of Adventists leaving San Francisco for Australia included a printer. In fact the first Adventists to land on Australian shores were print focused, with two of the five involved in literature printing or distribution. William Arnold's role was to sell Adventist literature and develop the colporteur (book selling) work. Henry Scott was to establish a publishing business. However, the initial thrust had every member of the team involved in literature distribution for several weeks (Hansen, 1985:60). Their interest was indicated in a report the group's leader, Stephen Haskell (1885:473), gave of their four-hour stopover in Auckland, New Zealand (June 1, 1885), enough time to discover there were 500 libraries. "We have reason to believe that every one of these would take our publications and periodicals, and appreciate them," he wrote.

The group landed in Sydney on June 6, but based themselves in Melbourne, one reason being that it had one of the largest libraries in the world (Goldstone, 1980:14). They established the Bible Echo Publishing House and by late 1885 a trial issue of *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times* rolled off Scott's press. In January 1886 the first regular

issue was published. In that first number, an editorial stated that many would understand its purpose from its name; for those who did not understand, it would be a thorough exponent of the Bible and a chronicler of events that marked times pointed out in prophecy. In case any were wondering, the second issue (February, 1886) assured readers that the Adventists had "come to stay" (page 32). Print media would be a major emphasis because, as Gates (1906:11) commented about the fledgling church's thrust into the Pacific islands, with a small number of workers, "It seems the part of wisdom to make use of the printing press as far as possible." These first Adventists in Australia were among those described by Herndon (1960:180) as "travelling salesmen":

> Though most of the men and women who first brought the new [Adventist] faith to distant lands were ordained missionaries and medical workers, they were also, in more than one sense of the word, travelling salesmen. Their line consisted of tracts and books published by the Seventh-day Adventist publishing houses.

However, these early Adventist publications were not the first to be found in Australia or New Zealand. Waggoner (1874:96) told of an interest that had been "awakened" by tracts sent from the United States to friends in New Zealand. And Alexander Dickson from Melbourne had attempted to create an interest in the city. In fact, he was responsible for the first "Adventist" literature produced in Australia. Dickson was a wealthy Melburnian who became a self-supporting missionary in Africa where he met Hannah More, another missionary. More had attended meetings taken by Haskell (in Eastford Connecticut, 1861) just before returning to Africa. They talked after the meeting and Haskell gave More a book on the history of the Sabbath and other publications. The meeting and the literature convinced her to become a Sabbath-keeper, which led to her dismissal from the Missionary Society in England. As she returned to England she shared her beliefs with Dickson. He in turn raised a group of 40 Sabbath-keepers in a west African French coastal village before returning to Melbourne to

introduce the Sabbatarian message there. He wrote to the Adventist General Conference requesting printed material for Australia but, with nothing forthcoming, he commissioned local printers to produce literature for him. Seeing no results, he became discouraged and moved to San Francisco. Later, several Melbourne businessmen said they had, for a time, closed their shops over the Sabbath hours (Goldstone, 1980:7-9). The first on-shore attempt at establishing some form of Adventist presence in Australia had involved print, but had seemingly failed.

Haskell, the "father of the Tract and Missionary Society" (Goldstone, 1980:14) had an interest in print evangelism and was soon developing agents for the *Bible Echo.* Often books did not sell well, but Haskell was able to persuade newsagents to stock *Bible Echo.* With the publication of pamphlets, and itinerant Adventist colporteurs in New Zealand, one critic complained in 1892 that Adventist literature had achieved almost blanket coverage of the north island (Lineham, 1985:34). By 1888, adds Patrick (1984:14), "Adventist publishing demanded a three-storey brick building" built in North Fitzroy.[8] Patrick (1984:17-8) estimates that in the same year (1888) more than 60 items were offered for sale through the pages of the *Bible Echo* in three categories: "Books," "Subscription Books," and "Books in Paper Covers."

A supplement to the September 18, 1899 *Bible Echo* reported that the Echo Publishing Company was outgrowing its capacity, even with nine presses running and the 81 employees were happy despite "the many requests to work extra time." The manager (G Petherbridge) reported that the company had built a good reputation extending "beyond Australia" among clients as a commercial printer (it was the State Government printer for a time). Book sales were up, with sales of 41,000 for the year. Their star performer was a best seller in the real sense of the word, selling more than any other book within 12 months of release to that time (Goldstone, 1980:166). *A*

Friend in the Kitchen sold almost 17,000 copies in the 12 months to June 30, 1899, and some 30,000 in total (almost 4000 in two weeks, claimed an advertisement in the August 8, 1898 *Bible Echo*). Magazine subscription sales were down, though, with the *Bible Echo* at about 6000 (the *Bible Echo* was a weekly from 1894, having been, for its first three years, a monthly then a fortnightly magazine, but with page numbers reduced from 16 to 8). *Herald of Health* was at 1800 subscriptions, down from 2300, and similar concerns were expressed for *Little Friend, Sabbath School Workers* and *Missionary Magazine.*

In the first 15 years in Australia, Adventists were found successfully supporting their thrust with a strong print media presence. To the magazines listed above (some imported from the United States) can be added other Australian publications such as the *Southern Sentinel, Our Australasian Youth and Sabbath School Guide, Our Young Friends* and *Youth's Instructor*[9] (the last three mentioned in *Bible Echo*—February 1888, page 32 and November 1, 1891, page 336—but, as noted by Patrick (1984:20), with no extant copies).

It was natural for Adventists to turn to print when they attempted to tackle the issue of religious liberty. When the first Adventists arrived in Australia, one battle line drawn between Christianity and secularism was on the issue of Sunday observance. It was a "symbolic issue" in the widening gap between secular society and the socially conservative religious establishment (Hogan, 1987:97). Phillips (1986:16-17) states:

> As far as Protestants in Australia were concerned, as in the rest of the Anglo-Saxon World, Sunday was the Lord's Day to be kept by all and upheld by the authority of the state. It was left to Seventh-day Adventists to take up the principles of religious liberty apparently discarded by denominations now united in the defense of Christianity.[10]

Adventists were committed to religious freedom, so much so that in 1889 they set forth a "Declaration of Principles" at the establishment of the National Religious Liberty

Association in Battle Creek, Michigan.[11] In Australia they attacked the issue early with an article in the *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times* opposed to Sunday-keeping legislation appearing in April 1886. The religious liberty issue became personal when, on May 7, 1894, two Seventh-day Adventists, William and Charles Firth of Kellyville, NSW, were sentenced to the stocks for working on Sunday.[12]

The Adventists organised two protest meetings in the Parramatta Town Hall (some 500 people attended both rallies). The formation of the Christian Elector's Association, in late 1893 by the Council of Churches, disturbed them even more. In response, they published a new quarterly, the *Australian Sentinel and Herald of Liberty* (later the *Southern Sentinel*), which they distributed widely to people of influence. "At the same time they assumed an additional and more exacting responsibility: watchdog over the religious portions of the Australian Constitution which was being drafted" (Hansen, 1986:35). Ely (1976:27) finds a natural link between the two issues; Adventists feared the recognition of God within the preamble of the new constitution would give the federal parliament power to legislate nation-wide Sunday observance. They were also strong supporters of a statement being inserted that guaranteed religious freedom. Although few in numbers, the Adventist Church became the "organisational pivot of the anti 'recognition' campaign" that found allies among secularists who feared sectarian conflict (Ely, 1976:130). Print was their weapon of choice. They failed to stop the recognition clause in the preamble, but they could claim "some direct influence" (Patrick, 1986:21) on the final shape of the constitution, especially with the insertion of Section 116 of the Constitution, which does not allow the federal government to prohibit the free exercise of religion. Ely (1976:44-5) pays tribute to the professionalism of the Adventist campaign and adds that despite their belief in the separation of Church and State, "Adventists played politics very well."

In a variety of ways, through print, Adventists gained a far broader impact than their numerical strength would suggest they should have.

The print emphasis was also seen in the first internal church print communication, *The Gleaner*. Begun in 1895, it had as its main role to report on literature sold. A monthly duplicated form, it was issued by the Australian Tract and Missionary Society. In January, 1898, it was superseded by the *Union Conference Record,* which included literature reports, but also reports on the church's work in Australia and New Zealand. While maintaining the word *Record,* there have been several name changes over time. The magazine became the *Australasian Record,* the *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey,* the *South Pacific Record* and, currently (from 1987), *Record*. While the main emphasis of the print-media thrust was based on the *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times,* it was to the *Record* that Adventists turned to discover how the work of the church was progressing.

During the report of the 1899 Bible Echo Publishing House balance sheet, in a supplement to the September 18 *Bible Echo,* a note was made of a gift to the Avondale School (near Newcastle, NSW) of a press and type "to the value of 60 pounds." The Avondale School print shop was used for a variety of tasks including printing labels and packaging for the developing health food factory on campus. It also produced limited supplies of tracts, magazines and books. From about 1899 it became a centre for publishing foreign language material, particularly for the island territories where the church was beginning to make an impression. Avondale became the centre for the production of mission hymnals, tracts, periodicals and books, and by 1906 material began to appear in Malay, Fijian, Tahitian and Cook Islands languages (Hook, 1998:74). Hook could have added Maori to his list. Literature was one of the most

important agencies for winning converts in the Pacific. So much so that print material for the islands was soon coming off small presses in the islands as well as at Avondale.

An illustration of Adventist use of print

Adventist enthusiasm for print is well illustrated in the mostly unsuccessful attempt to impact on Maoris from 1886 to 1915. In his study of this initiative, Ballis (1983) notes the desire to use print, a magazine specifically for Maoris, from 1885, but the first printed material was not produced until 1893 with the tracts *Ko Tewhea Ra e Whakatapungis Ana e Koe* ("Which day should you keep and why?") and *Te Karaiti to Tatou Kai-whakaora* ("The curse of the liquor traffic"). By 1901 several thousand copies of the 32-page Maori tract *The Second Coming of Jesus* were ready for distribution, and the translation of *Christ Our Saviour* was almost complete. More than 20 years after being mooted, the monthly publication of the *Karere o te Pono* ("Messenger of Truth") in July 1907 indicated a deeper commitment to this endeavour. Yet the church was facing a crisis with its Maori work because "the New Zealand administration was becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of results from Maori evangelism" (Ballis, 1983) so it appointed a successful evangelist, William Carswell, to take over the work in the same year (1907).

Carswell quickly discovered that the traditional Adventist evangelistic approach of the time, a series of meetings in a tent with a magic lantern and slides, had little impact. He turned to personal visitation and the promotion of *Karere o te Pono,* and increasingly involved himself in translation work. Carswell (1940:4) later reported that he felt handicapped because there was no Adventist school for Maori young people, but "we published monthly a Maori paper." He explained that sometimes they obtained subscriptions, but often the magazine was sent free. He was responsible for the

translation of the book *Christ Our Saviour* and then a volume of Bible studies, *Te Taro-O-Te-Ora* ("The bread of life"). After four years he was forced to return to Australia because of his wife's poor health. He noted: "When leaving the Maori mission work at the close of 1911, we felt that while no results were apparent, yet literature containing the message had been scattered."

The focused attempt to convert Maoris was over. "In the last few years the publication and distribution of the Maori paper [*Karere o te Pono*] was the only *visible* sign of the existence of an Adventist Maori mission, and its termination in 1915 no doubt sounded the mission's death-knell" (Ballis, 1983). This 30-year period of endeavour to establish an Adventist presence in the Maori community, with its well-defined boundaries, offers a microcosm of the Adventist approach at the time. Print alone did not automatically translate into evangelistic success. In this case a complicating factor, that while print had been a part of the Maori world beginning about the 1820s, theirs remained more an oral culture with a preference for face-to-face communication. Print required an audience sufficiently literate and with a desire to apply the printed word to their own situation.

This approach among the Maori people was not unusual. Steley (1986:166) reports about the beginnings of a Seventh-day Adventist in the Pacific and, in this case, specifically of the publishing work in Tahiti in 1893 and asserts that the "energetic start to the production of locally usable literature was typical of the vigour of Adventist belief in the efficacy of the literature work."

In contrast, print in local languages among Aborigines does not appear to have been attempted. In fact, there was no organised attempt to reach Australia's indigenous people until 1910. Litster (1985:188) puts this down to the American missionaries focusing first on those who spoke their own language, and that "among European

converts there was little sympathy or concern for the 'degraded' black race which lived in the more remote parts of the continent." The first mission, Monamona was established on the Atherton Tableland, in Queensland in 1914, but it was in Western Australia in the mid to late 1950s that the first magazine specifically for Aborigines, in English, was developed and limited to Western Australia. In mid-1982 an Australian-wide magazine, *Good News for Aborigines,* was published. It continues and is now better known simply as *Good News,* it is produced for Adventist Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, and friends.

The influence of Ellen White on Adventist print

Ellen White's interest in print media has been acknowledged, but what should also be noted is the influence she had on both the shape and form of print media and the institutions that produced them. A compilation of some of her material on publishing has been brought together in a book entitled *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (1946) and shows a broad interest in not only the writing and editorial function, but also in such things as book and magazine publication, content, illustration and writing style. She wrote a variety of public articles and private letters about the church's publishing work, giving messages of both encouragement and concern. Her attitude and influence is well illustrated by her comments concerning the publishing work in Australia and, in particular, the Bible Echo Publishing House in North Fitzroy, Melbourne. Her comments came mainly out of personal experience during her nine years (1891-1900) in Australia and New Zealand.

From the time, in 1848, when she urged her husband to produce a "little paper" White was a print enthusiast. For instance, "Publications must be multiplied, and scattered like the leaves of autumn. These silent messengers are enlightening and

molding the minds of thousands in every country and in every clime" (White, 1878:199). To her, the press was a "powerful means to move the minds and hearts of the people." She saw the "men of this world" producing "poisonous literature" and earnestly circulating books, tracts and papers of a "corrupting nature." The church then should be "more earnest to get reading matter of an elevating and saving character before the people" (White, 1875:167). "There is a world to be warned," she wrote to Colcord, the editor at Echo (White, 1897). While encouraging him to continue to promote the *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times,* there was also a work to do in producing leaflets and tracts containing short articles, messages of warning about the coming second advent, others about the Sabbath, and health subjects in "clear, forcible, spirited articles." She encouraged publication of a variety of types: books, magazines and leaflets inspired by a desire to promote the Adventist worldview with its doctrinal distinctives and holistic lifestyle.[13]

White (1983:42) saw the Bible Echo Publishing House as "God's appointed instrumentality, over which He has a constant, watchful care." In her time in Australia she saw it as the only institution to give "character" to the church's work, meaning that the schools and health program had not yet fully developed or achieved a major impact. Yet she saw Adventist initiatives in Australia, including its health endeavours, as a "sample of how other fields shall be worked" (White, 1899). The church members in Melbourne were to feel honoured that they had in their midst this printing office, which was representative of the "truth we claim to believe"; it was "God's instrumentality to send forth the messages of truth to the people in clear lines" (White, 1899a:5). On a personal level, White was pleased to gain the services of Minnie Hawkins who edited her articles for printing. Hawkins had been trained in the Echo office for several years (White, 1896). While White showed support for Echo, she called for publishing to also

be done at Avondale College because she sensed a need to have printed material readily available, without having to wait for shipments from the United States or from Echo. Additionally, this new publishing plant at Cooranbong would educate students in the art of printing (White, 1899b:8).

White was not merely affirming however. In an address to Echo shareholders, she (White, 1899c:9-11) called for a number of improvements. These included better education and training for those selling the books on a door-to-door basis (colporteurs). She encouraged more bookmaking. Every employee was asked to "stretch nerve, brain, bone, muscle, and sinew to make the publishing house all that God designed it to be" (White, 1899c:10). It was to be a training place for youth. Business was to be "conducted on high and holy principles," with "not a mean transaction in any business dealing . . . to be done, in behalf of believers or unbelievers." White (1892) also complained of a lack of proper planning, (White, 1899d) that those working at Echo had little insight into methods of success and they worked at cross purposes to each other. "The Echo office is sick, from the crown to the foundation," she wrote (White, 1899d). She urged management and staff to follow Christian principles. And after leaving Australia she (White, 1902a) wrote against the impression being given that Echo was attempting to deal "unfairly and dishonestly" against South African "brethren." She also occasionally commented on the content of publications, including, in 1896 (White, 1946:65), a call for the *Bible Echo* not to be "scathing" against Catholics and thus shut the door against them considering "the truth."

White expressed concern about the kind of printing Echo did for others, its "commercial work." She (White, 1898:1) gave some support to commercial work being brought in because to exclude all work from outside would "close an avenue through which rays of light and knowledge should be given to the world." However, it was to be

"cleansed from all that is offensive in character."[14] In a document about commercial work at the Echo, White (1898c) said commercial work should always come second to the church's own work. Novels and a "most objectionable class of literature" should not be taken in, and neither should the "calendar line," which was characterised by exaggeration and falsehood. There were other issues at Echo that caused her concern, but she did not explain what these were. She did say that even if commercial work ceased, the place would not be any more spiritual than it currently was. She was disappointed with some of the work Echo had been doing in that it would "cheapen the experience" of those who handled it. In summary: "Let it never be said that the press is doing a work which is against the truth which should go everywhere speaking in positive tones" (White, 1898c).

On September 21, 1903, a unanimous decision was made by the Echo board to cease commercial work and move out of the city. The problems perceived with both elements, commercial work and city living, influenced the decision. While White was not present, having returned to the United States in 1900, her influence was still a major factor. In the minutes of the meeting the advantages of "carrying on our work in the country were made very evident by the testimonies," with "the testimonies" being a reference to White's writings (cited in Holman, 2003:10). While she had expressed concern about certain types of commercial work, White had appeared to be open to some. Her son, W C White, in a June 1897 meeting at Echo also endorsed commercial work and "believed in it thoroughly" as long as it did not interfere with the church's work (cited in Holman, 2003:10). For Ellen White, her change in attitude appears to have come about in 1901 with premonitions that the Review and Herald Publishing Association buildings may be consumed by fire for printing "soul-destroying theories of Romanism and other mysteries of iniquity" (White, 1948a:91).[15] In December the

following year the Battle Creek, Michigan, publishing house was totally destroyed by fire. "Why? Because commercial work had been brought in, and God had been forgotten," she (White, 1903a) wrote after the event.

Summary

The experience in Australia and New Zealand helps verify Wilson's (1990:137) assessment that the Adventist Church is "perhaps the sect with the largest and most diversified literary output." From a historical perspective, print media was favoured as a means used by the church to influence people both outside and internally. Ellen White's input is important, not only because she promoted publishing, but she also gave direction and instruction concerning its role and content. Magazines particularly played a strong role, with special emphasis issues printed to tackle perceived problems or even, as illustrated in the case of *The Southern Sentinel*, new magazines developed to promote a particular cause. Print media was *the* mass media method available when the church was founded in Australia and New Zealand. The passion to establish and now continue to operate elaborate printing operations is one of the features that distinguish Adventists from most of their contemporaries. The next chapter explores the content of Adventist publications to identify how Adventists responded to key internal and external social issues.

Endnotes

[1] Commentators of Miller's time who considered this a predictive prophecy usually saw it fulfilled in 2300 literal days during the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus IV, Epiphanes (in the second century, BC).

[2] Historicists see the fulfilment of Bible prophecies, particularly of the books of Daniel and Revelation, extending through the Christian Era to the end of time. Preterists limit the fulfilment to a relatively short period in the ancient past, or deny the validity of predictive prophecy. Futurists place most prophetic fulfilments immediately before the coming of Christ (Neufeld, 1996:698-9). With the failure of the 1844 return of Christ "historicism gradually ceased to be the only popular method of interpretation. It was largely replaced by futurism and preterism" (Arasola, 1990:171).

[3] To get to this date, the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 is linked to another in chapter 9. Johann Petri, a German Calvinist, seems to have been the first to teach a close relationship between the messianic 70-week prophecy of Daniel chapter 9 and the prophecy of Daniel chapter 8 (Schwarz, 1979:25). He concluded that both time prophecies began at the same date, "from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" of Daniel 9:25 (Schwarz, 1979:25). This is taken as a reference to one of the decrees reported in Ezra (1:1-4; 6:1-12; or 7:1-26) that Jews taken captive and living in Babylon could return to Jerusalem. A variety of starting dates, depending on which decree was chosen and what dating method was used, led to a variety of ending dates. Miller chose the third decree and 457 BC as a starting date.

[4] Cross (1950:311) defines them as the "saner, more conservative crowd."

[5] James Begg (1841:3) from Scotland was published in *Signs of the Times* stating his preoccupation with the Advent and the "continued obligation of the Seventh Day as the Christian Sabbath." In 1844 *Midnight Cry* ran two editorials in September arguing against the seventh-day Sabbath ("The Lord's Day," 1844:68-9; 76-7).

[6] The 1999 "Statement of ownership" in the *Adventist Review* (December 23, page 30) lists the average copies distributed in the United States at 41,550. This does not include a monthly edition of some 300,000 distributed in the United States. In several places in the world (including in Australia and New Zealand) selections from the monthly world-edition *Adventist Review* are distributed.

[7] A former Catholic priest and self-appointed missionary Michael Czechowski did go to Europe in 1864, but the first official Seventh-day Adventist missionary, J N Andrews, was sent to Europe on September 14, 1874. Andrews had served as the third General Conference president (from 1867 to 1868) and was the church's leading theologian of that time. In 1876 he launched *Les Signes des Temps*, a monthly magazine. He died in Basel in 1883 at the age of 54 (Neufeld, 1996:68-9). John Matteson itinerated in Scandinavia, and John Loughborough evangelised in England before Stephen Haskell led a team to Australia (Clapham, 1985:13).

[8] In 1906 the publishing house shifted to Warburton in country Victoria. At that time the name was changed to Signs of the Times Publishing Association, to later be changed again to its current name, Signs Publishing Company.

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[9] The Australian *Youth's Instructor* should not be confused with the United States journal of the same name (see Patrick, 1984:20).

[10] The Lord's Day Observance Society, on the eve of the 1885 Victorian election, appealed to people to vote only for those who would support by law Sunday observance (Hansen, 1986:32). An 1890 New South Wales petition against the liberalisation of Sunday observance laws received a record number of signatures, 63,200. The Lord's Day Observance Society in Victoria and New South Wales campaigned against Sunday trains and the opening of cultural institutions on Sunday, on the grounds of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue and because it was an infringement of the Sunday Observance Act of 1677.

[11] The four resolutions directly related to religious liberty were:

> We believe in supporting the civil government, and submitting to its authority.
> We deny the right of any civil government to legislate on religious questions.
> We believe it is the right, and should be the privilege, of every man to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience.
> We also believe it to be our duty to use every lawful and honourable means to prevent religious legislation by the civil government; that we and our fellow citizens may enjoy the inestimable blessings of both civil and religious liberty (Neufeld, 1996: 431).

[12] The sentence could not be carried out because there were no stocks available.

[13] White (1893) warmed to the following experience as an example of what could happen with print products: "I have been deeply interested in the relation of a recent experience of Elder Daniells, who, on his way from Melbourne to Adelaide, stopped at a town called Nhill, to visit some young men who have been sending in orders to the Echo office for our papers and books. He found here a young man by the name of Hansen, a Dane, who chanced upon the *Echo* at a public library, and became an interested reader of the paper. The subjects of truth presented in its columns found a place in his heart, and he began to talk about them to a friend at the hotel where he was in service. This man, Mr Williams, also became interested, and they sent in orders for other publications, becoming regular subscribers to the paper. Elder Daniells found them eager for a better knowledge of the truth. Upon the table of Mr Williams was found *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation,* and several other books published by our people. They had seen but one man who was of our faith. They bought from Elder Daniells three copies of *Steps to Christ,* so that they might have one apiece, and another to give to a minister. Elder Daniells was pleased with his visit, and encouraged by his conversation with these inquirers after truth."

[14] White (1889b:8-9) could use the experience of "Sister Williams" to back her case: "A lady employed in Government House has taken the Sabbath. She is a matron in the laundry department. Sister Williams informed Lady Brassey of her change of views and she laid the matter before Lord Brassey. He said that he could not see that her keeping the Sabbath would bring any confusion.

"Lord and Lady Brassey were about to visit England, and Lord Brassey gave Mrs. Williams a vacation during their absence and allowed her wages to go on for a

period of six months. She referred Lord Brassey to the Echo Office for information concerning the faith. He said that was enough; he was having his Government work done at that Office, and was favorably impressed with the principles that were manifested by the managers and with the work that was executed in the office."

[15] White (1948a:91) wrote in this document read to the Review and Herald Board in November, 1901: "I have been almost afraid to open the *Review,* fearing to see that God has cleansed the publishing house by fire."

Chapter 5

Adventist Print During Crises and Change

Any group's mediated response to a crisis will give a distorted representation of the group. Under pressure, from within or without, the tendency is to focus on and exaggerate differences in the polemic of response. Attempting to understand a group using only this kind of information will give a one-dimensional picture that ignores the range of diversity, the highs and lows, peaks and valleys that help present a three-dimensional landscape and definition. Allowing for that shortcoming does not deny the value of studying a group in crisis or under stress and the responses made because, as will be seen in this case, of Adventists in times of crises, it gives an indication of what is important to the church through the strategic way print is used to keep members informed and to attempt to influence others, while at the same time moderating particular lines of Adventist discourse. Three distinct types of crises, the first two coming from outside the church, the third from within, are examined in this chapter to demonstrate how print was adapted to deal with specific situations. The chapter illustrates that print is a dynamic media tool.

The challenge of the Second World War

World War II presented a time of national crisis in Australia and New Zealand. The following considers the messages the Seventh-day Adventist Church gave through two of its magazines: *Record* and *Signs of the Times* (both weekly, at the time). This gives

an opportunity to see what the church was saying to the public through *Signs of the Times,* and to church members through *Record,* although that dichotomy does not fit exactly because *Record* was mainly a news magazine with limited teaching or instruction; and most church members read *Signs of the Times.*[1] All issues published from the beginning of 1939 to the end of 1945 are considered to include a few months before and after the war. The major war-related themes found are presented in a descriptive style followed by an analysis under "print and the second world war."

War was a concern from the first issue of *Record* for 1939. It reported the bombing of the church's China Training Institute in Chiao Tou Tseng, China, and then Anderson (1939:5) wrote of fear as nations armed themselves for "defence." There may have been "no crisis with the Lord" (News Notes, January 9, 1939:8), but there were several crises for the church and its members during the war years.

With the proclamation of war, the *Signs of the Times* editor wrote, "It is a tragedy that counsels of sanity did not prevail, and that the Fuhrer marched. Now, however, that war has come, may the forces of right prevail" (King, 1939b:4). War was not a surprise. King (1939a:3) recognised the possibility of another world war that would probably mean the end of civilisation as "we know it."

Support for the war effort and noncombatancy

In *Record,* Roenfelt (1939:7) wrote of uncertainty for the future, particularly what it meant for "our work." He called for prayer that leaders of "our Commonwealth and of our Empire" might know how to wisely handle this "grave situation." There was strong and open support for the war effort. "We must be loyal to our government," wrote Wilcox (1942:1). In several cases, though, support for the government had a deliberate link to the issue of noncombatancy. Hare (1939:6) reported plans to register

and train church members for noncombatant service under the governments' National Emergency Services to help make the church's approach on the "military question" a successful one.[2] In a show of support for the war effort, tents used for annual camp meetings were donated to the government and Sanitarium Health Food Company vans were fitted out to serve as temporary ambulances if needed (Ballis, 1987). Hare (1941:7) thought this a wise move and sufficient to "sweep away any doubt that may have been in the minds of those in authority over us."

There were limits to this generosity, however, as seen in rejoicing at the way the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital was "delivered" by God from becoming an American hospital (Brevities, August 10, 1942). The church negotiated exemption for theology students from service, and of exemption from military duties for Adventist servicemen on the Sabbath except in "grave" emergencies (Anderson, 1941b:12-14). This placed the church under "great obligation" to do all things possible without bringing individuals in conflict with God's will. Significantly, Adventists were discouraged from enlisting because the Sabbath was a "great disadvantage as a volunteer" (Watson, 1940:1-3).

The church distanced itself from the position of conscientious objection, defined as opposition to war. "We do not object to serving our country in time of war. Our objection is to the taking of human life" (Haynes, 1940:3). Haynes (1942:2-3) used the term "conscientious cooperators"[3] to explain the Adventist position. An internal conflict occurred over whether, as claimed (Anderson 1941a:3-4), the church had never taken a non-participant stance to war. The issue became a "pamphlet" debate in which Naden (1943:2-3) argued the church position, but called for respect for those whose consciences differed from this position.

Noncombatancy was not promoted strongly in *Signs*. Eleanor Roosevelt was quoted stating that conscientious objectors should be respected, and the bravery of Adventist medic, Orville Cox, was noted (Allum, 1943:6). In 1945 two stories of Adventist noncombatants who performed deeds of bravery under battle conditions appeared (Ferren, 1945:7; Thomas, 1945:5). After the war an article stated that the Adventist noncombatants' religion "impels them to go where danger is" to help the suffering; and "instead of sword and steel they carry the equipment of healing and relief" (Haynes, 1945:1, 5). The article revealed that 15,000 Adventist medics served the Allies during the war.

In *Signs of the Times,* the "forces of right" (King, 1939b:4) were identified: Britain, "our great Empire, raised up in the providence of God" (Edwards, 1940b:6), was lauded for its civil and religious liberty; democracy was upheld even as the "iron heel of brutality is seeking to crush the best that is in man" (Harvey, 1939:2). The origins and fundamentals of democracy were Christian based.

Support for the Empire led to condemnation of the enemy, with Nazism as a return to paganism (King, 1940a:6). Condemnation of the enemy continued after the war. After Hitler and Mussolini's "ignominious death here," Stewart (1945b:5) consigned them to "total annihilation in the hereafter." War crimes of the Nazis and Japanese were condemned with a call for "due punishment" (Hay, 1945b:3). Hay (1945c:2) called for "stern justice" against Japanese war criminals, for whom the "day of mercy has closed."

Heading toward Armageddon

Before and during the early months of the war, there was an expectation in *Signs* that the world was headed for the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16), "the last of

battles, the Waterloo of the world" (Urquhart, 1939:2). Adventist interpretation of Armageddon has been divided over whether this is a literal or a spiritual battle (Neufeld, 1996:109-13). Here it was portrayed as a literal battle on the Plain of Megiddo in Palestine, with Japan as a key player, in fulfilment of the Revelation (16:12) prediction that kings from the East would march westwards (Burns, 1939:11-13). Later, King (1940c:4) was cautious: "Whether the present struggle will merge into Armageddon or whether (after Germany has been defeated) it will be followed by an interval of peace and then Armageddon, no one can say." Further mentions were tempered by this caution.

Noncombatancy and Sabbath-keeping

In *Record,* E L Minchin (1943:1) wrote that even in "blood-drenched" Europe, there was "hunger for the living God," and "God is with His people." "His people" were encouraged to respond by being faithful to God, usually through experiences shared by a variety of writers. Early in the war, Adventists who served during World War I told of their stand for noncombatancy and Sabbath-keeping. Later, reports, usually letters, regularly appeared from Adventists in the armed forces. They often reported how faithfulness to the Sabbath was rewarded, with the "opportunity to witness for my faith" (Unknown, 1943:6). The same faithfulness was illustrated by those working in the war effort at home (Brown, 1943:5; Holmes, 1943:8). Harrison (1943:6) encouraged servicemen to learn submission from Christ in their service, but to take courage and assert their "God-given rights" when challenged to go against the authority of God. Stories of "native" faithfulness to God and the missionaries' cause through aid given to the Allied forces appeared, particularly from 1944. Faithfulness to God, often linked to Sabbath-keeping, was presented as a worthy goal for all during the difficult war years.

The personal impact of the war

The personal impact of the war on Adventists viewed through *Record* varied from a shortage of male staff at church headquarters, augmented "with young ladies" (Brevities, February 26, 1942), to missionaries fleeing the islands, to death. During 1940 the personal impact of the war began to be seen, although in a surprisingly limited way. An Adventist soldier returned to Sydney after being wounded at Tobruk (Brevities, May 12). The first weddings appeared with the groom noted as involved in the armed forces (this number grew during the war years). A report from South New Zealand (South New Zealand Conference, 1940:4) told of several young men serving overseas, and declared that "the Lord is caring for His own."

Several letters appeared in *Record* from Adventist soldiers overseas during 1942, but then a page was formally set aside in November for letters from servicemen and special articles for them. Entitled "With our boys in the forces," the page featured a banner: "Loyalty, honour, truth and purity." There is an indication of a pledge card for Adventist servicemen to sign (Hooper, 1942:3), but the content is not revealed. The war came close to church leadership with the torpedoing of a ship carrying the Australian Union Conference treasurer, who survived to write of his experience (Adair, 1943:3).

The first report of an Adventist death from war (in China) appeared in May 1939 (Longway, 1939:4). Deaths of Australian and New Zealand Adventist servicemen were recorded in both news and obituaries, although the numbers appear too low to be a complete list. A report of two British Adventists killed during air raids also presented a philosophy and theology to help cope with these deaths:

> It is well for us to know that we serve God not in order to be protected from harm, but because we love God and choose the way of truth, goodness, and righteousness as a preparation for the real life that is to come (News Notes, November 25, 1940).

The final year of the war brought reports of Adventists freed from prisoner of war camps, mainly in the Pacific and Asia. A reminder of the personal cost of the war came late in 1945: Missionaries E M Abbott, Trevor Collett and Len Thompson died when the Japanese ship *Montevideo Maru* sank in June 1942 (Unknown, 1945:5).

Reassuring the membership

In *Signs,* the attitude taken during the war tended to be, "How consoling it is, when wicked men are attempting to dominate the world, to know that there is One mightier than they keeping silent watch over international and individual affairs" (Dougherty, 1941:1). God was not the "author of the strife" and his peace was assured to the believer in the midst of turmoil and trouble (Madgwick, 1939:8-9). God was "behind the shadows" and would create a new order (Warren, 1941:1-2). "The terrible, topsyturvy conditions in our world are last-day conditions" leading to the second coming of Jesus (King, 1940b:6). Calls were made for personal piety, commitment to the Bible and its principles and conversion to Christianity. A pessimistic view of human nature led to a pessimistic view of the future. The next war (after World War II) was inevitable and would be more destructive (King, 1944:2; Neff, 1944:3).

The second coming of Jesus to set up his kingdom was part of a Bible prophecy emphasis that featured strongly. "The dangers that to the average person are a sign of impending doom, to the Christian are waymarks indicating that the journey is almost over, the port is just ahead" (Vance, 1939:1-2). Readers were confidently told, several times, that Hitler could not succeed in conquering and uniting Europe, on the basis of the prophecy of Daniel chapter 2 (for instance, Were, 1942:4-6). Leaders who had tried

to unite Europe and failed illustrated that the prophecy of Daniel had been proven true:[4] "The Word of God stands amid their ruins" (Haynes, 1941:2; cf Neff, 1939:11).

Those who rejected God's ways were headed for disaster. The theory of evolution (instead of God as Creator) was seen to have a direct influence on the war:

> The Germans, perhaps more than any others, swallowed the idea most greedily and carried it to its logical conclusion. Their doctrine that "Might is Right" is the natural outcome of the belief that man is but a transformed ape who has fought his bloody way upwards by striking down weaker opponents that lay across his path to power and dominion (DeAth, 1942:1).

The war was seen in terms of spiritual conflict, with only the power of God able to hold a nation together, and too many nations had forgotten God. The greatest battlefield was in the human heart (Thiele, 1941:7). War was the "ugly offspring" of sin (Edwards, 1940a:12), and, calling on the theme of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, invisible, satanic agencies were at work (Smith, 1940:1-2). This conflict, linked with human nature, meant there would always be conflict and war until the setting up of God's kingdom. Science should not be blamed for the destructive forces it helped unleash, that belonged to the "unregenerate heart" (Hay, 1944b:2).

The war also took on spiritual dimensions in *Record* with "Satan . . . trying to destroy not only Europe but the remnant [Adventist] church in Europe" (Belleau, 1939:2). A General Conference (1939a:1-2) statement called for church members, as ambassadors for Christ, to not allow the spirit of antagonism and partisanship that "divide men into contending camps." The Week of Prayer readings[5] for 1939 began with an article entitled "Omens of the coming day" (Christian, 1939:1-4) where, again, war was seen as a sign of the nearness of the Second Coming of Jesus. Ministers and members, parents and children were called to give their hearts to God and dedicate their powers to Jesus (General Conference, 1940:2). The Australian Union Conference (1940:7) added an appeal to "warn the world of the soon-coming Saviour."

Early reports from Europe did not deny difficulties, but demonstrated the church fulfilling its role despite them. Literature was produced, even some 10,000 *Steps to Christ* for German soldiers (Olsen, 1940a:8).[6] Successes at Ingathering (collecting money door-to-door for overseas mission work) were indicators that the work continued well in Europe and the British Isles. Only from France and Spain came reports of Adventists suffering (Olsen, 1940b:3).

The Australasian Union Conference (1942:4-5) called for greater evangelistic effort despite brownout or blackout conditions. Then in 1944, despite the war, the General Conference passed a resolution of gratitude and called for increased devotion to God and greater evangelism (Altman, 1944:2-3). As expeditionary forces returned to Europe, the message was to pray for the speedy liberation of oppressed people everywhere and to prepare for "God's hour of liberation" (White, 1944:1). With victory assured, there was a need for "wider, greater, and more aggressive evangelism" (Thrift, 1944:1-2).

Restoration, religious liberty and the Vatican

In 1943, *Signs* began to warn that unless the restoration was built on Christian, biblical principles it would fail. Socialism, for instance, was found wanting because it sought to "make man happy by changing his environment," a new heart is what is needed (Huenergardt, 1943:1-2). The Christian must be a social reformer living for the welfare and blessing of others (Gilson, 1943:6). Democracy is God's way claimed an unnamed "prophetic commentator" (1943:5).

Democracy encouraged religious freedom, it was divinely taught and divinely inspired (Barnes, 1940:2), and brought to the state a spirit of toleration (Warren, 1940:2). The call was for governments to protect freedom (Haynes, 1944:4). In

Australia, *Signs* strongly opposed a referendum designed to give the government increased powers for post-war reconstruction because "Freedom is too precious to risk, even for protection and prosperity" (Hay, 1944a:2).

Maintaining the separation of church and state was a concern, with the "Christian program" (churches involved in the political restoration process) a "most anti-Christian thing" (Longacre, 1943:2). However, the most oft-stated fear came from the possibility of Vatican involvement in the peace process. Democracy would suffer if the Vatican was involved (Hay, 1945a:3). Stewart (1945a:1, 3) warned that "the most emphatic message in the Apocalypse" was against the papacy. Its Dark Ages ambitions continued, and the pope's bid for a place at the peace table had to be resisted (Fordham, 1945:6-7, 12). "We may judge from the past how Rome, when the power is in her hands, will act toward those who refuse to bow to her decrees" (Hay, 1942:4). Hay (1943:4) became more strident later, calling the Roman Catholic Church an "intolerant, blasphemous power."

The end of the war

With the end of the war in sight, *Record* reported the General Conference president asking for $US5 million to help with rehabilitation of the work throughout the world, and far greater willingness from the members to spread the gospel (McElhany, 1945:1). The General Conference asked for greater commitment and funds, for a little time of peace may be "our one last opportunity to rise and finish the great work that He [God] has given us" (General Conference, 1945:2). The call was to "Evangelize! Evangelize! Evangelize!" (Stewart, 1945c:1).

The church's concern for religious liberty was demonstrated by presenting a statement to delegations attending the United Nations Conference in San Francisco in

April, 1945. Freedom of religion is a basic freedom that affects all other rights, said the statement, including the right to practise religious convictions and to change religion: "It includes freedom to rear and train children in their parent's faith, freedom to preach, teach, propagate, publish and carry forward missionary activities" (McElhany and Dick, 1945:2).

War had changed the world: physically, spiritually, and morally. Missionaries reported "very unpleasant changes in the native people" (Rudge, 1945:2). Further, the dropping of the atomic bomb was noted in *Signs* with the comment that the end of the world could come in such a fashion (Brown 1945a:3). Brown (1945b:2) added that the providence of God had drawn humanity back from the abyss. With the prospect that nations would be ready for full atomic war within five years, time was short: "Now is the day of salvation" (Hay, 1945d:3). The end of the war was welcomed, but the threat of the bomb hung heavy with warnings that real peace would be difficult to find, for, as after the first world war, the country may "disarm morally" (Brown, 1945c:2).

Print and the second world war

Although this crisis was outside the church, the war impacted on the church in a number of ways. *Record* engaged with the war issues to reinforce the group's theology and remained focused on the purpose of the church. Its support of the government and the war effort came on Adventism's own terms, with noncombatancy and Sabbath keeping in particular as non-negotiables. Despite open patriotism, with members encouraged to find ways of showing support for the war effort, one subtext saw this as helpful in gaining government support to accommodate the Adventists. The message to Adventist servicemen was that the Sabbath was worth taking a stand for, as a

demonstration of faithfulness to God, often presented in success stories from other servicemen.

The news reported during this period was often sombre with stories of war tragedies and setbacks to the church's work, and yet there was no sense of surprise. The *Record* reflected the church's belief that the war was an inevitable outcome of the great controversy between God and Satan. The second coming of Christ was seen as the only ultimate hope for a planet ravaged by war. Rather, with the war a sign of Christ's soon return, there was a sense of urgency about sharing the message of his return and in being ready for it, as seen in calls for greater evangelism and in personal commitment. These calls continued into the peace because of expectations that war would return.

While *Record's* main emphasis remained on the church's purpose, the war, with its restrictions and impact, provided an added challenge. At times it had to focus on the social issues brought by war and the relationship that needed to be developed with government bodies, but *Record* also indicated it had another agenda, its self-defined mission for God. During this period, *Record* continued to defend and support Adventism's distinctive teachings and endeavoured to build member support for them.

Signs demonstrated it recognised its role as one for a non-Adventist audience even if most Adventists read it. *Signs* gave a sense that only an apocalyptic solution to the war, the second coming of Jesus, would bring a final victory. A pessimistic view of human nature saw no chance of finding peace through human effort, and there was a natural link to the theme of the great controversy between good and evil, Christ and Satan, and an understanding that the war had satanic origins, with the world war secondary to the battle for the minds of humans. Yet there was optimism for God's work and he was seen as being in control. There may be peace, but it was not expected to last, at least not until the Prince of Peace (Christ) returned.

Noncombatancy demonstrated a major difference between *Record* and *Signs* with *Record* openly promoting this stance. *Signs* was more hesitant and, being a public face of the church the hesitancy is understandable with the majority within society not supportive of the position. Until there was evidence that noncombatants were serving as well as, and in as much danger as, others it was not emphasised.

Even before the Adventist Church worked at "drawing boundaries around how they would serve" the war effort (Morgan, 2001:96), it showed loyalty to the government in various ways. "The church embarked on an all-out campaign to convince community and the government of Adventist loyalty and cooperation in all matters, short of carrying arms and working on Sabbath" (Ballis, 1987). While it was generally successful in its quest, it demanded balancing loyalty to God and to the state. *Signs* (and *Record*) embraced the state's cause and delivered a supportive theology for the war effort. The question will remain unanswered whether this came from Adventist belief mixed with patriotism (and was the latter the stronger driving force?) or was it "collaboration," the term used by Blaich (2002:37-51) concerning Adventists in Germany and the United States during the war. Blaich notes that the same kind of loyalty was shown in Germany,[7] with the editor of *Der Adventbote* reporting that "God has inclined the scales of good fortune toward us" with the fall of France. Another German church leader could "sense the footfalls of God across the world. In quiet adulation we thank God who in his wise providence has given us the *Fuhrer*" (cited in Blaich, 2002:44-5). From both *Record* and *Signs*, the collaboration appears genuine and willing, even if for the sake of the church's work, but there was unprecedented support for the government.

> For the Adventists, the drive to present a united administrative front and maintain social cohesion, required them to harness the evangelical aspirations of their members, exploit the political situation with a self-initiated non-combatant

> endeavour, and finally [something not found in the magazines], ostracise its dissidents (Ballis, 1987).

The war was a distraction for the church and its work, but it did help focus the church's position and message for those times. With a theology that war is inevitable, war simply added to the challenge of following and promoting God's way. The church proved itself a loyal, if demanding, citizen; it strengthened its noncombatancy position with the governments of the day and argued against those within who opposed that position; the Sabbath was a centre point to be upheld no matter what the situation; and the mission of the church remained at the fore. Through history and through the crisis of war, God was pictured as interested and involved, with a watchful and predictive eye over events as he directed the world toward a climactic conclusion. There was a sense of despair at any human solution, but the response was constant, if retold in various ways: the need to turn or return to biblical ways, with the final solution to war being the second coming of Christ. These were the messages promoted through *Record* and *Signs*. By contrast, the church's print response to the cultural and social issues coming out of the 1960s highlight a different approach.

A revolution called the sixties

The 1960s brought unprecedented challenges to society and churches. This was a time when "truly new ideas were articulated and everything in our country was up for debate—from foreign policy to sex. Nothing except the need for change was taken for granted" (Albert and Albert, 1984:xv). Here, the sixties begin in 1960, the year of the contraceptive pill, the first popular report (*Time*, March 28) of LSD and the election of John F Kennedy. They end in 1970, the year of gay liberationists organising in Australia, and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*. At the beginning of the sixties,

Australia was in the last years of the "comfy-slippered Menzies era" (Cockington, 1992:ix). When Prime Minister Menzies resigned in 1966 he had presided over a change in the ideals of middle-class culture from the Puritan work ethic to the hedonistic ethic of consumerism (Horne, 1980:3). From the United States came a "ferocity of debate, a challenging of conventions, and a testing of visionary hopes that memory now sums under the phrase 'the sixties'" (Burner, 1996:3). What was happening in the United States and the United Kingdom impacted on Australia (Conway, 1985:100). Television was a "unifying synesthetic force" (McLuhan, 1994:315), with pop music and film leading to unprecedented international cultural exchange and youth culture dictating taste in fashion, music and popular culture (Marwick, 2000:vii, xviii).

The sixties began with the feel of Camelot and the decade witnessed overdue social advances, but then saw the assassinations of the Kennedys and Martin Luther King, riots that left a dozen cities in flames, a string of obscene murders (from those by the Boston Strangler to Charles Manson) and the drawn-out war in Vietnam (Coyne, 2000:71). Hope was shattered and youth protests became more militant (Bodroghkozy, 1997:207). Ellwood (1994:10, 20-1) sees the sixties as a transition from modern to postmodern times, but the lack of a clearly-defined enemy weakened postmodernism, giving it a muffled voice amid endless "ripples of private opinions in pluralistic puddles." By the end of the sixties, "With varying degrees of hesitation the Australian cities are beginning to adjust themselves to more permissive living" (Horne, 1971:237). Six issues arising from this era are considered here in relation to the Adventist Church's print produced in Australia. They are: protest movements, recreational drug use, changing sexual values, challenges to Christianity, music as a carrier of the new culture, and the women's movement. The sixties protests began with the civil rights movement in the United States, developing into protests on university campuses, and then against

the war in Vietnam. The era was noted for its protest against authority at various levels, from the World War III declared on parents (Neville, 1995:236) to being unpatriotic and against "the most legally declared of wars, which Vietnam was not" (Burner, 1996:8).

"The spread of drug-taking and the deification of the revelation it was alleged to induce" was a negative from the sixties (Marwick, 2000:xv). Anderson (1995:260) found evidence that the majority of the "sixties generation" (college and university students in the mid-sixties in the United States) tried marijuana.

Effective birth control devices and the legalisation of abortion, "contributed to the dramatic shift in many women's sexual behavior during the decade" (D'Acci, 1997:74). [8] Allyn (2000:4-8) tracks the sexual revolution through the sixties, beginning with the use of the Pill by white, middle-class, female college students; then encompassing the sweeping repudiation of literary censorship; moving to the scientific study of sexual behaviour; and, at the end of the decade, exhibiting a new candour in American culture, the acceptance of nudity on stage and in film.

Roof (1994:243) finds a "youthful revolt" against conventional religion in the sixties. Religious belief was in decline (Horne, 1980:9). Manning Clark (1987:266-8) asks, "Was this generation, stripped bare of all faith, to be left comfortless on Bondi Beach?" The sixties saw a growing fascination with Eastern religions and a determination to reject the world of the older generation (Gerster and Bassett, 1991:124-5). Forces within Christianity led to the Easter 1966 *Time* cover question, "Is God dead?" which "launched a thousand sermons that Easter Sunday" (Ellwood, 1994:122, 98). John A T Robinson's (1963) *Honest to God* put God "distinctively on the defensive" (Utley, 1963:96). Two World Council of Churches meetings (1961 and 1968) placed church unity and the ecumenical movement on the agenda even if the

meetings showed the organisation a "paper-clogged backwater" (Ellwood, 1994:304). Vatican II deliberated and brought the mass into the vernacular.

Music proved a willing message carrier in the sixties, with music styles giving their own message. "Seeing Mick Jagger felt like seeing a part of myself—as if the Stones and I, and all our mates, belonged to a secret tribe" (Neville, 1995:51). "Music created and defined a public. Music became a force not only for the destruction of conventions, but also for cohesion. In whatever way the decade is discussed, the music serves as a soundtrack" (Burner, 1996:6).

At the end of the sixties, women involved in protest movements concluded that the "language of liberation" was spoken on behalf of all the oppressed, except themselves (Albert and Albert, 1984:48). The first "powerful public demonstration of feminism" in Australia was a meeting at Sydney University early in 1970 (Horne, 1980:29-31). The movement developed into a variety of factions[9] and gained pace in the seventies.

A content analysis focusing on these issues is made of four magazines produced by the Adventist Church in Australia from 1961 to 1975, with comparisons made for the three five-year periods involved. These 15 years are chosen to assess immediate response to the six issues within the sixties, and to examine longer-term responses up to 1975. One response, *Telos*, was developed in 1972 and will be considered separately. In the analysis, no weight is given to the substance of an article, it merely records numbers of mentions of these topics, and if an article mentions more than one topic both are recorded. The intent is to discover if the issues were impacting through mentions in the church's print.

Each of the issues mentioned that came out of the sixties were threatening for evangelical Protestant groups, of which Adventism could be considered in the

conservative wing. The Adventism of the time had a comfortable sectarian position, shunning the things of "the world," and holding to the certainties inherent within sectarianism. These certainties were strengthened during the conflict between Modernism and Fundamentalism[10] in North America during the early decades of the 20th century when Adventists, by not wanting to identify with Modernists, retreated "more-and-more into the camp of the Fundamentalists" (Patrick, 2003c), a position maintained into the 1960s. Fundamentalism promoted the Bible as given word-by-word from God and thus to be taken seriously and literally. One should expect that attacks on positions of authority, the family unit through sex outside of marriage and threatening the role of the husband as head of the family, and to orthodox Christianity would be opposed, as would the music of the sixties as a rebellious, in tone and text, message carrier with what would be considered an unhealthy youth culture emphasis. Added to this, the Adventist holistic approach would see danger in the developing drug culture. The tables that follow in this part list the number of occurrences these topics occur in each five-year period, under the headings: "protest," "drug use," "sexual values," "challenge Christian orthodoxy," "music," and "role of women."

Signs of the Times

Signs of the Times, at this stage a 32-page monthly, began the sixties as a print-intensive magazine, but ended the decade with design and illustrations also a priority. This meant fewer articles, including a reduction from three to two editorials, an important drop in the context of this study because editorials often mentioned current issues. What is obvious was a strong emphasis opposing the ecumenical movement, with its perceived dangers to religious freedom. There was stronger motivation, though: "Adventism had originated as a prophetic call to come out of the established religious

bodies. To shelve doctrinal differences in the name of ecumenical cooperation would thus mean a dilution of historic mission and identity" (Morgan, 2001:135).

Table 6.1 illustrates a growing awareness of the issues of the sixties, with a strong emphasis on the challenges to Christian orthodoxy, which gradually became more important than the threat of ecumenism. Music and the role of women rarely rate a mention and more often appear in a news note (a denomination planning to ordain women, for instance, or, in the later years, in question and answer sections). Changes in emphasis appeared in two areas: First, with "protest," or challenges to authority, the early emphasis was on delinquency, later the emphasis was on the issue of public protest. Second, sexual morality concerns changed from dismay at the increase in the number of children born out of wedlock to the general decline in morality. Table 6.1 also shows a growing willingness to comment on the issues of the sixties, with a slight downturn in interest in them by 1974 and 1975.

Table 6.1

***Signs of the Times* (1961-1975) in relation to issues of the sixties**

Years	Protest	Drug use	Sexual values	Challenge Christian orthodoxy	Music	Role of women
1961-65	8	4	19	58 (28)*	4	6
1966-70	16	11	36	84 (42)	4	1
1971-75	16	10	35	63 (17)	7	5
Totals	40	25	90	205 (87)	15	12

*Numbers in brackets refer to the number of times the ecumenical movement is mentioned.

Record

During the sixties, *Record* was primarily a news magazine, which meant little space was available for comments on social or religious issues. The most significant change in this period was the appointment of Robert Parr as editor, in 1967. Previously the editor had been an administrator of the division, the secretary, and the magazine

partly prepared at the division office in Sydney. Parr, a former teacher within the Adventist system, was also an experienced editor (working outside the church) and writer. He introduced a regular letters to the editor column that gave church members a voice and increased significantly the number of mentions of various sixties concerns. Under Parr, in March 1968, the *Record* became a 16-page magazine, it had previously been eight pages and 16 pages every second week. Editorials now appeared every week. He also introduced more articles, which had previously tended to be precis of sermons. These factors increased the mention of sixties issues. Brief news notes appeared in almost every issue during the sixties, although they were gradually phased out. That means, for instance, that a brief note of a meeting of the World Council of Churches or the ordination of women within a denomination is included in this content analysis.

Table 6.2 shows the ecumenical movement gained strong attention at the beginning of the period, but faded to barely a mention by the 1970s. The first two five-year periods revealed strong suspicions concerning the actions of the pope and the Vatican councils. There were also strong expectations of forced Sunday worship. By the end of this period, the main emphasis was on the more general challenges to Adventist Christianity.[11] There was little movement about what was "acceptable" music, personally or in worship. By the mid-1970s, it seems that folk music was acceptable, but rock and jazz were certainly out.

Table 6:2

***Record* (1961-1975) in relation to issues of the sixties**

Years	Protest	Drug use	Sexual values	Challenge Christian orthodoxy	Music	Role of women
1961-65	1	—	3	40 (27)*	—	—
1966-70	11	2	30	47 (20)	6	2
1971-75	5	6	24	26 (1)	22	8
Totals	16	8	57	113 (48)	28	10

*Numbers in brackets refer to the number of times the ecumenical movement is mentioned.

During this time youth did not have a strong voice in the *Record*. In fact, when they did find a voice and question attitudes within the church ("Younger generation member," 1970:1; and Harlock, 1971:1) the letter responses attempted to show support, but were often critical. Standish (1973:5) condemned "worldly self-seeking" youth activities within the church, or sponsored by the church. He encouraged church leaders to show true love for youth by rediscovering the word, "no." Changing sexual values of the sixties were often linked to dress, especially the shortening skirt lengths, in articles and letters, yet the photographic evidence in *Record* shows that skirt lengths of younger women had shortened dramatically by the early 1970s. The mini-skirt issue illustrates a tension within *Record* during this time of change, with more emphasis was given to maintaining a code of dress and conduct, rather than tackling the problem of morality.

Being distinctive was important, and there was a strong attempt to maintain and strengthen the walls between the church and society, to the point of being isolationist. Forays into society's issues, mostly in editorials, generally brought the reader back to Adventist certainties. These certainties were also seen in articles and letters, and were defended with biblical texts or from Ellen White's writings. Almost all news about the church in *Record* was good news and, because the church was growing and developing, the news was good. Then two "Tell it like it is" articles in 1974 gave a different story: first, of financial deficits in the Pacific islands, and the termination of church employees because of a lack of funds (Lee, 1974:1). This was not a new message (see Raethel, 1971:1, 4), but the extent of the problem was far greater than previously. The second told of the closure of Aboriginal work in Western Australia (Adams, 1974:1-2). The following year, Parr (1975a:4) quoted a letter of concern "over all those (young and old) who 'leave the church.'" Certainties were being tempered with other realities.

Alert

Developed by the temperance department of the church, *Alert,* a bimonthly, was the only magazine of the four not edited by Robert Parr after 1967. Until 1969 it called itself the "voice of the Australasian Temperance Society." In 1969 this was changed to the "organ of the Narcotics Education Service." *Alert* specifically targeted smoking and alcohol use. During the 1960s it began to target street drugs as well. Table 6.3 demonstrates the growing emphasis and importance they gained in *Alert.* The other issues barely rate a mention.

Table 6.3
***Alert* (1961-1975) in relation to issues of the sixties**

Years	Protest	Drug use	Sexual values	Challenge Christian orthodoxy	Music	Role of women
1961-65	1	1	—	—	—	—
1966-70	1	62	—	—	1	1
1971-75	3	150	6	—	—	2
Totals	5	213	6	—	1	3

Good Health

Good Health, a monthly magazine, had a healthy living emphasis, which tended to show itself in articles about such things as weight loss, curing acne and handling that winter cold. More serious issues, such as alcoholism, were also handled, but it aimed at being a family health magazine. A significant change is reflected in Table 6.4 when a counsellor's page was added in 1971. The questions answered were often of a sexual nature, reflecting new sexual values coming through the sixties with subjects ranging from the Pill, to affairs, to masturbation, incest and venereal disease discussed. Several issues of the sixties were considered outside the thrust of the magazine.

Table 6.4
***Good Health* (1961-1975) in relation to issues of the sixties**

Years	Protest	Drug use	Sexual values	Challenge Christian orthodoxy	Music	Role of women
1961-65	—	—	1	—	—	—
1966-70	—	2	4	—	—	1
1971-75	—	6	41	—	—	—
Totals	—	8	46	—	—	1

Telos

Telos, a quarterly magazine produced from 1971 to 1974, began, says the editor, Gordon Box (2001), because "we really wanted something in the hands of our own young people, particularly our university societies and so on, that they could use with their non-Adventist friends." Box was the Adventist Church's youth director for the Greater Sydney Conference for most of the life of *Telos*. He points to an article in the first issue by Desmond Ford (1971, 8-14) about the moral argument for God, as an illustration of something that could be given to an "unbeliever." *Telos* looked at "live issues," issues coming out of the sixties.

The health writer for the magazine, John Knight (an Adventist medical doctor better known as media columnist and personality, Dr James Wright), also wrote for *Dolly*, which began during this period. Box sees strong connections between *Dolly* and *Telos*, with *Dolly* at the "leading edge of [youth] thinking." In *Telos,* Box developed a philosophy of, "This is what young people are talking about, so what is the Christian philosophy or Christian approach on this subject?" The magazine was more a general Christian magazine than one attempting to make Seventh-day Adventists out of its readers. The editorial in the final issue stated finances as the reason for its closure (Box, 1974:26). Box (2001) suggests, "We just run out of puff." He wanted to pull out as

editor and, in the same year, pulled out of Adventist ministry. Neither the money nor a replacement editor was found.[12]

Reacting to a revolution called the sixties

In its magazines, the Adventist Church did engage with the issues of the sixties, but on its own terms. Its strong anti-drug stand was a continuation of its vigorous polemic against alcohol and smoking. There was a delayed but open discussion of sexual issues in magazines intended for the public with the obvious intent of promoting sexual relations only within marriage. Challenges to the Adventist form of Christian orthodoxy gave the opportunity to present the Adventist position. Not until *Telos* was there a sense that the issues were being taken more seriously.

The changing role of women was rarely mentioned. The most significant was when the General Conference Annual Council of 1973 "took a close look at the ordination of women to the ministry, and backed off" (Townend, 1974:6-7). The lack of mention may come back to Parr being unsupportive of the women's movement. Parr (1972:26) argued for a "wife-mother" and a "father-provider figurehead" with this type of home a "sacred thing." During International Women's Year, in 1975, Parr (1975b:4) wanted equality for women, but referred to women as the "Second Greatest Sex" and, with a touch more of what would now be seen as condescension, as "gentle hearts." Surprisingly, there was no reaction in the Letters column, which may indicate that he spoke for the broader church, or that it was seen as a touch of humour, something for which he was well known. Yob (1975:6-7) called for women to attain "the sublimity of womanhood" through four "love-hearts": the heart of a child; the heart of a bride; the heart of a sister; and the heart of a mother. The women's liberationist, wrote Yob, does

not cry out from any of these hearts of love in demanding her rights, "true womanhood does not consist of these things."[13]

The issues of the sixties were a concern for the church because they challenged their Christian, moral and health presuppositions, but they tended to be used to help the mission of the church or as identifiers of separateness. While some of the journals (*Alert, Good Health* and *Signs of the Times*) attempted to persuade non-Adventist readers of the Adventist position, the views being promoted were also directed at reinforcing views and values of church members. Within the church, through *Record,* the issues were mostly either ignored or used to teach church certainties or standards. Only in *Telos* was there a serious attempt to engage directly with the issues. Threats from the issues of the sixties were being blurred by a greater factor, the church was going through a period of numerical and institutional growth, "boom" times worldwide and in Australia and New Zealand (Ballis, 1995:205). "In both civilised and primitive areas, right around the globe, the Adventist movement is onward and upward" (Peterson, 1967:1).

The steady membership growth in Australia and New Zealand, and larger growth in the Pacific islands, and the emphasis of being separate from "the world," gave the church, through its print, the luxury of using selectively or largely ignoring the issues of the sixties without impacting on its success. However, there is recognition of the issues and the church can be seen attempting to come to terms with them in its own way by drawing on Adventist values in response. In the early 1970s the niche publication of *Telos,* aimed at youth, showed a targeted print approach to the issues. Significantly, it was targeted at those who would be considered most "at risk," inside and outside the church, from issues often being driven by youth culture.

The church proved to be much more defensive in the way it responded to both a theological and an organisational crisis.

The downfalls of Ford and Folkenberg

In considering the second world war, the enemy was outside the church and quite well defined. During the sixties, the enemy had surrounded the church with some attitudes infiltrating through society. In the 1980s and 1990s the issues, the two events under study, were within. The first ripped at the heart of theology, the second at the heart of integrity and organisation. This part looks at how *Record* handled the dismissal of Desmond Ford in 1980 and the resignation of Robert Folkenberg in 1999. It also notes how print was used in different ways for each situation.

The dismissal of Desmond Ford

The January 14, 1980, *Record* informed the church that Desmond Ford had been given leave of absence to give full-time study to research and prepare a statement on the "sanctuary and related issues" (Franz and Parmenter, 1980:1). Ford's document was to be reviewed by scholars and church leaders some six months later.

Ford, an Australian theology lecturer, had been head of the theology faculty at Avondale College, an Adventist tertiary institution outside Newcastle, NSW, until his move to Pacific Union College, California. He was a popular speaker, but he had his critics, a minority of vocal, but "uninfluential" voices in the early 1960s that by the mid-1970s outnumbered supporters among church authorities (Ballis, 1999:131-7). These authorities were lobbied by a lay movement headed by retired pastors demanding that Ford "be called to account for his theology." These self-named "Concerned Brethren" desired that "Dr Ford be tried to the end for his answers" to questions they raised (J W

Kent, cited in Standish, 2001:951). Ford, in a 1979 forum meeting, challenged the church's traditional understanding of the sanctuary doctrine and, although he was an "Ellen White enthusiast" (Bull and Lockheart, 1989:74), he questioned "Ellen White's control of Adventist conclusions from Scripture" (Patrick, 2003c). This meeting became the catalyst that led to "the full eruption of Adventism's most significant theological controversy since the turn of the [twentieth] century" (Morgan, 2001:180). Ballis (1999:205) suggests the controversies of the 1980s, often centred on the teachings and influence of Ford, "exploded in the community with a ferocity and intensity that shattered the peacefulness of the sect and threatened to destroy it." Ford's presentation was "a threat to [Adventisms] uniqueness" (Plantak, 1998:145). Ford (interviewed in Ballis, 1995:389) suggests "Glacier View [where Ford's work would be reviewed] may have triggered many things, but it was still in a long line that had begun years earlier."

Record made little comment. A letter to the editor (January 28) commended Ford for his "excellent scholarship" in his book *Daniel* (Sperring, 1980:16). Because of the lead time involved it was written before publication of the January 14 announcement. However, it indicates that it did not seem inappropriate to publish such a supportive statement. Ford's articles continued to appear in *Signs of the Times* for a time with Parr (2000) defending the action to those "above" by indicating they had been written before Ford "had misspoken himself."[14] A letter to the editor in April expressed appreciation for church leadership allowing time to deal with the issue. It said the issues were real, but it was "very much the church's problem," not Ford's. Many "recognise the tension and conflict and are supportive of Dr Ford's attempts to reconcile the difficulty." There are no quick or easy answers, but "I am confident the church will deal wisely with this matter" (Valentine, 1980:13-4).

The July 14 (1980) *Record* announced a committee of 115, including eight from Australia, to meet at Glacier View Ranch (a youth camp) in Colorado on August 15 to assess Ford's 1000-page document[15] (Parmenter, 1980:1). The same magazine ran a letter thankful for "Ford's lectures on this subject of inspiration at Avondale College in the mid-sixties," and his defence of Ellen White's use of sources (McPhee, 1980:13-4). After Glacier View, a headline appeared in the September 8 issue headed "Ford document on sanctuary studied: variant views rejected." While recognising the need for continued study in certain areas, the committee "clearly confirmed the doctrinal positions" of the church (Parmenter, 1980a:3). On the following page and without naming Ford, Parmenter, the Australasian Division president, made obvious connections, warning of the devil trying to drive a wedge between scholars and the "common people" in biblical understanding. The church has a "God-ordained, committee representative system" through which every member can participate. He added that the provision of a free copy of *Record* to every member (begun earlier in the year)[16] ensured an informed membership (Parmenter, 1980b:4). In the same issue (September 8), an eight-page insert included three papers from the meetings. This report told of the deep spirituality of the conference, Ford's "Christian spirit" in his apology for inconveniencing the church, the vigour and forthrightness of convictions expressed, and the attempt "to draw [Ford] and his wife close to us" (Johnsson, 1980a:1-3; Wood, 1980a:3). Wood (1980a:3) also wrote of a letter presented to Ford setting "forth the changes in attitude and views that would need to be made by Dr Ford if he were to continue to carry his present responsibilities in the denomination." Urged to take his time to think about it, Ford responded that he did not need time, he could only stand by his positions.

A December 1 (1980) article commented on the interest journals such as *Christianity Today* and the "secular press" had shown in the deliberations at Glacier View. Johnsson (1980b:3) suggested, "We are glad that our distinctive doctrine of the sanctuary is being brought before the world." A reprint from *Adventist Review* was inserted in the December 8 *Record.* For the first time, mention was made that Ford had had his ministerial credentials withdrawn (on September 18, in Australia). The insert maintained there was "remarkable" unity among those at Glacier View (Wood, 1980b). The year ended with a letter in *Record* congratulating the church for the "refreshing change to see how cordial was the relationship between Dr Ford and the Glacier View committee!" (Waddell, 1980:12).

Vance (1999:83-4), who is not an Adventist, notes a different reaction, with Ford's dismissal causing divisiveness, and protests from pastors, academics and laity. Cottrell (1980:22) found a sense of betrayal by many scholars to Ford's dismissal. Thirty nine "pastors and scholars" from Andrews University saw Ford in basic harmony with consensus statements presented at the meetings and that Glacier View had become the trial it was not meant to be (Thirty nine, 1980:61-2). *Adventist Review* was criticised for its role as "polemical and apologetic and [being] willing to sacrifice credibility as a reporter of news" (Utt, 1980:64). Many turned outside *Adventist Review* and *Record* to gain information, to *Spectrum*, for instance. In the United States, *Evangelica* was established to promote Ford's views and, in Australia, an underground network of information sharing developed (Ballis, 1995:172-3). Among protesters was the "maverick former editor [Parr] of the *Australasian Record*" who accused church leaders of trying to "out-papacy the papacy in dogma" (Ballis, 1999:141). In July (1-5) of 1980 (the Glacier View meetings were in August), Parr's position came under review as part of the normal business at the Australasian Division session. He felt he might weather

the storm, but, "If I'd been more astute I would have said, 'This is the end for me because I'm known to be a friend of his [Ford] and I'll get the axe'" (Parr, 2000).

Geoffrey Garne, an editor from South Africa, replaced Parr at the end of the year. The suspicion that church administrators had orchestrated Glacier View extended to Garne's appointment and it was popularly thought he had been instructed to get the church back on track through *Record*.[17] Garne's (1981a:4) first *Record* editorial (February 2, 1981), "My mandate," helped fire those suspicions with his use of the counsel of Ellen White that church publications should strengthen every "pin and pillar of the faith," and his warning against "spurious doctrine." However, there had been no contact with church administration. Garne (2000) received his appointment "out of the blue." His editorial policy was based on his personal belief and values. Significantly, he eventually limited the letters page, sensing that he ought to devote the space instead to "what we want to tell the church about what's happening in the division."[18] The *Record* changed, but it was changed by the shape of the new editor behind it, not by church administration, an illustration of someone in authority, in this case the editor, bringing their top-down influence to bear on the print product.

During 1981, *Record* emphasised the fundamental and historic beliefs of the church. The reaction to Glacier View is obvious, with each president at the various levels of church administration in Australia and New Zealand writing to give personal affirmation to the church's beliefs. Ford was mentioned in a letter for his "timely and worthwhile contribution to the remnant church," but with the warning that "unless he clambers back on, too, will fit into the category of Romans 1:22" (Webster, 1980:13).[19] Garne (1981b:4) affirmed the church's beliefs and recognised that some "question and quibble over some of our beliefs." "Either they must decide that *they are* Seventh-day

Adventists and identify themselves with what the body believes, or they will come to the place where they will dissociate themselves from us." After Glacier View, many did.

The Ford issue was a serious crisis for the Adventist Church because it posed a perceived challenge to fundamental church beliefs. That it was taken seriously can be seen by the calling together of the 115 and the preparation for the Glacier View meetings. Fallout from the decision to defrock Ford was also significant with Adventist ministers and members leaving the church. Ballis (1995) has demonstrated an unprecedented loss of ministers in Australia and New Zealand during the 1980s, after Glacier View. Although not all should be seen as a direct result of the Ford crisis, the suspicion that developed between church administrators and ministers over the handling of the crisis made it easier for ministers to walk away from their calling. No similar study has been done of church member loss.

The hesitancy to publish before the Glacier View meetings is understandable because it was intended as a study of ideas. It is not as easy to understand the limited response after, nor the fact that almost all information was published in *Adventist Review* first. While Parmenter (1980b:4) indicated a desire for an informed membership, the *Record* published material about Glacier View that tended to be filtered through *Adventist Review* and limited, causing members to look elsewhere for information about what had happened, and other responses to the situation. *Record* during this time, on this topic, showed the hallmarks of a controlled print product, controlled through the influence of those with authority with Parr (2003) only printing supplied material after the event. More importantly there were few convincing reasons given for the decision to defrock Ford in the light of other information being readily available. *Record* had not developed as a print-media tool to handle effectively the kind

of crisis the church faced at that time. The use of the *Record* in reporting the resignation of a General Conference president stands in stark contrast to the approach with Ford.

A General Conference president resigns

On January 25 and 26, 1999, an ad hoc committee of 19 church leaders and church members met in Virginia, USA, with legal counsel of the General Conference to consider allegations and a lawsuit filed by James Moore against the General Conference president, Robert Folkenberg, the General Conference Corporation, the Inter-American Division, attorney Walter Carson and accountant Ben Kochenower. The allegations concerned a land deal Folkenberg and other church entities had entered into with Moore. As the church's attorney prepared to defend the case, "he discovered information that raised significant ecclesiastical concerns about Pastor Folkenberg's dealings with Mr Moore [the plaintiff]" (Medley, 1999:9). The ad hoc committee reported on January 27 to the General Conference Administrative Committee, recommending that "at the earliest opportunity, the General Conference Executive Committee be convened to hear this matter and to express itself on a question of confidence concerning Elder Folkenberg's continued leadership" (Ad hoc committee, 1999:11). A special meeting of the 268-member General Conference executive committee was set for March 1.[20] On February 8, Folkenberg announced his resignation, stating the controversy was "detracting from God's work," and "to avoid pain and conflict to my family and the church I love, I am removing myself from the controversy" (ANN, 1999:12). On March 1, Jan Paulsen was elected president of the General Conference.

The editor of *Adventist Review*, a member of the ad hoc committee, wrote that "before any reports began to appear in the press, leaders determined that there would be

no attempt at cover-up" (Johnsson, 1999:11). There was a strong effort to provide information, particularly through Adventist News Network (ANN), a General Conference email and website news provider, and the *Adventist Review* (*Record* used both sources). Folkenberg was given a voice when he complained that news releases from church sources and the public press left the impression that he had made personal gain from his dealings with Moore. He denied this (Medley, 1999:9). Comments from his resignation speech were mentioned and a statement that he planned to continue serving the church (ANN, 1999:12). Details concerning the causes of his resignation were limited, but a reassurance from the South Pacific Division president, Laurie Evans, that "the concerns raised were real," were backed up with a five-page document, available to church members on request, that listed the concerns. "This is not a confidential document," said Evans in *Record*, "but out of a pastoral concern for Pastor Folkenberg and his family we don't plan to publish it" (Manners, 1999:10).

Unofficial Adventist publications did not have the same pastoral concerns, with *Spectrum* (*Spectrum* team report, 1999:58-67) publishing details of a convoluted and disastrous association Folkenberg and other church entities had with Moore over land dealings in California. *Adventist Today* in both its web site and magazine was less inhibited in reporting "stories of [Folkenberg's] questionable business deals [that] abound" without naming their sources because of "high levels of fear" (Tinker, 1999:22, 24). While evidence was provided through official sources for action against Folkenberg (halted by his resignation), those who wanted specific details had to go elsewhere.

This experience demonstrated three things: The church could move at speed in a crisis, and that speed was reflected in getting information out quickly to the church membership through official channels. The crisis helped demonstrate a new array of communication media developed over the previous few years, and the commitment of

the Adventist Church to communication. The Internet became the main source of regularly updated news through ANN e-mail and postings on the General Conference website.[21] This crisis established ANN as an important news source within the church. That is a claim that Ray Dabrowski (2001), the communication director for the General Conference, denies. He believes ANN had been well established by then to be the "primary carrier of news during that time. Our 'openness' approach from the outset has built interest in its viability among our audiences and among the external media." In another demonstration of the use of new communication tools, a presentation by Paulsen was video uplinked live by satellite for a worldwide audience a few days after his appointment.[22] Finally, The lack of specific detail, for "pastoral" reasons, within the official news sources of the church was to be expected. Church membership may have appreciated the fact that not too much "dirty laundry" was aired. After the report in *Adventist Today*, one reader (Goffar, 1999:4) suggested renaming it *Adventist Enquirer*. Importantly, enough information and openness came through the official channels to allow church membership to sense the appropriateness of the action.

Comparisons from the Ford and Folkenberg situations

While useful comparisons can be made from these two cases, it is important to note first the most significant difference. Ford was perceived as challenging foundational beliefs of the Adventist Church and, in that sense, the church itself. For Folkenberg, the suspicion was of mismanagement with little long-term impact on the church due to his resignation and replacement, the perceived degree of danger was far less. For the individuals, theological deviation proved fatal as far as continuing church employment was concerned, mismanagement of church position was not.

To gain further information during both crises, church members went outside official church sources. In Ford's case it became a growth industry. For the Folkenberg case the complexities of legal agreements and confidentiality clauses made it difficult reading, unless it was in the *Adventist Today* tabloid version (although not all *Adventist Today* reports were in that style). During 1980 there was hesitation to share information through official sources. The official publications positioned themselves against Ford's theology while the Adventist underground press were generally for him. With Folkenberg there is a hint of the reverse. In 1999 information about the Folkenberg situation was quickly available, driven, perhaps, by the need to act "before any reports appear in the press" (Johnsson, 1999:11). Dabrowski talks about openness, and it seems that was the case, with information broadcast across a range of media, particularly the Internet. This in itself is a significant difference. The response to Ford was print driven; to Folkenberg it was multi-media, featuring the latest technology, some of it, the Internet, almost instantaneous. In both cases *Record* used sources from overseas in reporting these events. In the Folkenberg case that was out of necessity, but with Ford's roots in Australia and his dismissal formally voted in Sydney, it is surprising that there was little local comment. Finally, Ford had no voice in official sources after Glacier View, rather, both he and his ideas were condemned. Folkenberg not only had a voice, but could protest the handling of some information.

The 20 year period between the two events had seen dramatic growth in the availability of different media; the Internet particularly. Modern communication technology means information can be shared quickly and there is a sense that in 1999 it was felt imperative that this be used to get the church's viewpoint out before others did. By 1999, the communication department of the General Conference had been strengthened and expanded by Folkenberg and those working within the department had

a good understanding of communications and ready access to church leaders. In its print, the church showed a dramatic difference in its approach to the two crises. One was handled with minimal and unsatisfying levels of information. The other was handled with more openness and enough information for the decision to be accepted. The 20 years had made a difference, but the real test would have been another Ford situation that would have brought a far greater sense of threat to the church than the Folkenberg crisis.

Summary

When it comes to responding to crises and change outside and within the orbit Adventism, the church engages with the issues, but it gives its own peculiar response. In its response, the church emphasises its own distinctive purpose and theological interpretation, some harking back to its origins. The church's magazines consistently promote the distinctive beliefs, lifestyle and causes of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is to be expected of any community's print-media product. Outside influences, the second world war, for instance, became a distraction to the church's mission and purpose, but the church's print used them to confirm theological or prophetic positions, and to promote the church's position within and outside the church. When social issues came to the fore (in the sixties) there was little urgency to tackle them because the church was growing strongly during the sixties. When issues were tackled, they were approached on the church's conditions and from a well-established philosophy. The critic may interpret the church's response as reactionary, but it was consistent with both the church's philosophy and its historic stance, which were adapted to new social challenges. For internal issues, as seen in the Ford and Folkenberg crises, there was found a recent greater sense of openness, which will probably continue as the

church continues to value communication tools, and to train communicators in the best use of those tools. Whether these new communication tools will become a threat to the church's print is something the future will unfold. Currently it continues to maintain a strong place.

Endnotes

[1] The appearance of advertisements in *Signs of the Times* of this period for positions for Seventh-day Adventists indicates an expectation that Adventists are readers.

[2] By March, 1940, "the emergencies that some expected have not arisen," so those who had been trained were encouraged to use their new skills to help those in need (Halliday and Hare, 1940:6).

[3] The term "conscientious cooperator" was first used by a Fort Worth, Texas, newspaper reporter doing a story on Adventist non-combatants in training. Adventist spokesmen "eagerly latched onto the phrase" (Morgan, 2001:82).

[4] Daniel chapter 2 contains the story of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation by Daniel the prophet. The dream was of a multi-metal image of a man and the various metals (gold head, silver chest and arms, bronze stomach and thighs, iron legs, and iron and clay feet) were interpreted by Daniel as kingdoms. Although Daniel's interpretation about the feet was not specific, Adventist interpreters have seen this as the break up of the Roman Empire into the nations of Europe and, as iron and clay will not hold together, neither will Europe ever be one.

[5] Every year a Week of Prayer is part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's calendar worldwide with readings provided that can be used as an aid for the week.

[6] Book sales to May were up in Europe, with German book sales having the greatest percentage gains in the world during this year (News Notes, *Australasian Record,* October 21, 1940).

[7] Germany, with 43,000 Adventists at the time, had the largest church membership outside the United States.

[8] Rubin (1970:441) claims that during this time the back seat of the car became the first battleground in the war between the generations.

[9] This was similar to the United States where, in 1970, Durbin (1984:524) described it as an "alphabet soup" of the women's movement.

[10] The Fundamentalism of the early part of the 20th century was a theological position taken among Christians and should not be mistaken for the Fundamentalism of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, which is used to describe religious extremism.

[11] In 1973, for instance, there appeared an extensive series on speaking in tongues.

[12] Adventist university students, with church support, also produced two short-lived magazines during this time, *Scope* (1971) and *Right On* (1974), the latter intended for evangelism.

[13] Iris Yob would later become an advocate of women's ordination within the Adventist Church. In her 1988 book *The Church and Feminism: An Exploration of Common Ground*, she argued for Adventist women to "not only have equal standing to men, but

that their God-given gifts, possible contributions, and particular viewpoints are recognized, valued, and utilized by the church" (cited in Vance, 1999:205).

[14] Ford and Parr were good friends. Ford requested that Parr be invited to the Glacier View meetings, an invitation that was not approved (Parr, 2000).

[15] One person planned to read the document on the plane on the way to the meetings (Parr, 2000). With presentations and other papers, there were almost 2000 pages of materials (Wood, 1980a:2).

[16] Up to this time the *Record* was a subscription magazine, with about 7000 paid subscribers. The *Record* has been distributed free (sent in bulk to churches) since then.

[17] Parr (2000) recounted a story that gained strong currency, that the division president had met with Garne to sound him out and give instructions.

[18] During the interview Garne (2000) mentioned that he received "heaps and heaps and heaps of mail." "The CBs [Concerned Brethren] had a very, very strong burden, you know, that the beliefs were being threatened." On the other hand, "Others felt that there needed to be a lot more emphasis on the gospel rather than on the doctrines of the church." He laughed as he said, "I couldn't accommodate everybody, so I simply decided I wasn't going to accommodate anybody."

[19] Romans 1:22 reads: "Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools. . . ." (New International Version).

[20] A General Conference president is normally voted into office at a General Conference session (held every five years) during a process where some 2000 delegates from around the world vote on a name brought before them from a representative committee that meets during the session. Folkenberg had been voted into office in 1990 and re-elected in 1995. Between sessions the executive committee (also elected at a session) is the only body that can make decisions affecting General Conference elected leadership. The executive committee is drawn from church leaders and members worldwide and normally meets twice a year. A scaled-down executive, involving people on-site at the General Conference headquarters, meets more regularly for decision making, but major decisions, policy changes and church statements must be taken to the larger meetings.

[21] Adventist News Network was established in 1994 and received an "on-line face" with an Adventist Forum. In 1996 it became part of, and helped establish, the Internet website www.adventist.org and then an e-mail bulletin. In 2001 there were 18,000 subscribers to the free weekly bulletins.

[22] The irony of this should be noted. Folkenberg had been the driving force behind the development of this communication network. He had openly dreamed of an Adventist satellite network available 24 hours a day around the world, Hope-TV became a reality in late 2003.

SECTION THREE

A Case Study of Adventist Print

When communication ceases, "community is no longer a present reality" (Tinder, 1980:79-80). Communications systems in place today, including print, make possible a "kind of unity over great spaces" (Minar and Greer, 1969:xi). This is well illustrated in the vital role printing played in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. Without Gutenberg's development of movable type in the mid 1400s, the Reformation would have had limited and localised impact. Mellor and Shilling (1997:111) add that, "Protestantism encouraged new ways of imagining community. Printing allowed the Reformers to stimulate a common cognitive idea of Protestant sociality as the ideal model of human association." It also spread information that helped define symbolic and real boundaries to identify those within the Protestant community and those without.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church stands in that Protestant tradition. In this section, readers' perceptions are investigated to see if *Record* does assist in building a sense of community, to discover in what ways members make connections with their church and other members through its pages and if it is able to transcend differences among them. The first three chapters reveal an organisation in tension as it undergoes transition, the final chapter in the section considers the role print plays in both change and continuation within the church.

Chapter 7

Maintaining Community Through Print

Information output, no matter how dense, does not guarantee that individuals within a group will have an enhanced sense of belonging. An attempt to be directive within a print product may be appreciated by a few, but it should be expected that an involving approach and style will have broader appeal and promote greater confidence. The group's administrators and those involved in producing the printed work may have a sense of what is successful, but it is only in the response of readers that the success of their efforts can be measured.

This chapter investigates *Record* within the Adventist Church across the geographic area of Australia and New Zealand and its endeavours to enhance group cohesion. According to Adventist academic Rice (2002:14),[1] there is already a recognisable sense of community among Adventists, but that does not deny the necessity of maintaining or developing it further. The chapter is divided into three parts and explores the role print plays in enhancing a sense of belonging among members and non-attenders, and whether print has a role in developing spirituality within a church group.

Print and community building

From the survey, there is strong support for the notion that "the *Record* makes me feel like I'm part of a community that's bigger than my local church." When asked if

respondents agree with this statement as indicated by a "yes" or "no" response, 94.4 per cent say "yes." That level of agreement is evidenced in Table 7.1 where 88.8 per cent of *Record* readers say the magazine helps keep them in touch with the broader Adventist family. As mentioned in the methodology chapter (chapter 4), because "community" is such a complex term, the concept of family was preferred in the survey as a better understood term with strong connotations of community or, using Weber (1947:41), family is the type case for communal relationships. Table 7.1 shows that 91.2 per cent find it important that *Record* keeps them informed about what is happening in other parts of the church. This linking with other events, people and places within the broader church is an important element in building community. Finally, and from a different perspective, 84 per cent of *Record* readers (strongly agree/agree) say the magazine helps them feel they belong to a larger family than they have at their local church. Table 7.1 reveals that the information *Record* supplies about what is happening in other parts of the church helps the majority of readers keep in touch with the broader Adventist community and helps build a sense of belonging that's larger than their local church.

While there is strong majority support for the notion that *Record* helps build "family" or community, the weakness in considering these survey responses alone is that they give little information about dissenting voices. The "search for negative and complicating information" and for "disconfirming evidence" is important in gaining the complete picture in all its "complexity and diversity" (Becker, 1998:210-1). Minority voices have a role to play and, in this research, the aim is to hear these voices as well from information found in the surveys and from the interviews and focus groups. These minority opinions will gain greater clarity as this and the other research chapters unfold.

Table 7.1
***Record* as it builds a sense of "family"**

(N=125)	Strongly agree/agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree/disagree	No response	Total %
Keeps me in touch	88.8	7.2	2.4	1.6	100
Keeps me informed	91.2	4.0	4.0	0.8	100
Feel part of family	84.0	7.2	6.4	2.4	100

The full statements in the survey were: 1) The *Record* keeps me in touch with the broader Adventist "family." 2) It's important that the *Record* keeps me informed about what is happening in other parts of the church. 3) The *Record* helps me feel as if I belong to a larger church family than I have in my local church.

Boundary maintenance and print

It is the boundaries of a community that define it. In the case of the Adventist Church those boundaries have been identified as being real and symbolic. Among the real boundaries are the teachings of the church, which impact on both the belief and lifestyle of church members. The teachings of the church are chosen for consideration because the Seventh-day Adventist Church grew out of several streams of theological understanding that led to the belief of a holistic approach to life. Adventist lifestyle is thus shaped by its theology. Guy (1999:viii-ix) positions Adventist theology as Protestant rather than Catholic and generally more conservative than liberal (as the terms are commonly used). Plantak (1998:128) sees the Adventists' holistic approach to theology and life elevating the "idea of personhood" that has influenced Adventist scholarship to focus on the well-being of people and concentrate on eliminating things that would prevent the development of physical, emotional, economic, mental and spiritual abundance people can have here and now. Vance (1999:53-4) found that the health emphasis became a lasting ingredient of the Adventist way of life because it was integrated into their theology. There is also a strong theological element to early

prohibitions (often called "standards") on gambling, card playing, novel reading, theatre attendance, immodest dress and the use of cosmetics and jewellery, even if, as she notes, younger Adventists are "redrawing the behavioural boundaries." Pearson (1990:43) writes of these boundaries in this way:

> [These restrictions] related to easily observable behaviour and provided convenient criteria for distinguishing the "good" member from the less faithful, the Adventist from the non-Adventist. They functioned, together with Sabbath observance, as powerful markers of Adventist identity, and as such were strongly endorsed by Ellen White. Many of these prohibitions remain quite firmly in place, while others have been subject to some erosion.

Standards are mentioned because during the interviews and focus groups there is often little differentiation between core theology (or fundamental beliefs) and standards, with some bemoaning the way the church no longer promoted the church's fundamentals, but when asked what they meant they are speaking of standards, not fundamental beliefs. Perhaps this should be expected for, as Guy (1999:35) suggests, "Every denominational community, including our own [Adventist community], tends to make its distinctives the very centre and soul of its spirituality and theology."

Another element, "the apocalyptic reading of history" has "functioned to draw boundaries around and infuse meaning into a separate Adventist identity" (Morgan, 2001:210). It has also prevented Adventists from making an easy transition from sect to denomination, from being an exclusive "remnant" set against society, to being a denomination viewing itself as one among many religious options (Morgan, 2001:210). The concept of remnant, that the Adventist Church is God's remnant church that would remain faithful at the end of time when other Christians would accommodate to the secular world, has caused pain within and outside the church because of its sense of exclusivity. Adventist academic Pearson (1990:23) explains that this position does not maintain that salvation is only available to Adventists, although some conservative

members come close to that view. "Rather, it is held that Adventism is, so to say, the grit in the oyster around which the pearl of the remnant church will be formed." While Poehler (2000:107, 142) notes a trend toward a "more functional ecclesiology" and the movement to a more denominational stance, and Morgan (2001:178) can title a chapter about the Adventist Church "A pluralistic remnant, 1976-2000," elements of apocalyptic and remnant ideology come through from respondents as core Adventist thinking. Thus Adventist theology and the resultant social behaviour place members marginal to the mainstream.

The survey findings indicate that a majority of readers believe that *Record* upholds the church's fundamental beliefs with 79.2 per cent responding positively. The number who believe *Record* promotes Adventist lifestyle is more than 10 per cent lower at 68 per cent. Almost 20 per cent (19.2 per cent) recorded a "no opinion" response about whether the *Record* promotes Adventist lifestyle. This uncertainty may reflect a reality of editorial policy that does not allow articles and, more importantly, letters that attack the church's fundamental beliefs. That same restriction does not apply to Adventist lifestyle issues and letters or articles have appeared challenging some accepted practices. This is confusing for some respondents because *Record* is a denominationally endorsed medium of communication.

Several argue that *Record* should guard the theological boundaries of Adventism more vigorously. David [148][2] is one of them. He is not Australian born, but has strong connections with people in the church in Australia and overseas. In his 60s, he says *Record* goes too far in allowing freedom of expression and refers to a published letter that he believes implied support for active homosexuality. He thinks letters like that, if published, should be answered with an editorial comment because very often it "makes people angry and then people are confused not knowing what we stand for." He

suggests a novel concept that if these kinds of letters are published they should come under a regulator who is the chairperson who will "put that right." Putting it right would involve a "Bible-backed, Spirit of Prophecy [Ellen White]" response to "keep it in context and we can reach a conclusion."

Heather [126] who is in her 50s is far happier with *Record* and she enjoys reading it to see people "finding the truth." She talks of unity in diversity and calls for unity in doctrine, but expects members to see the fringe areas differently: "You've got to have the diversity, we're not clones of each other, but . . . at the same time we all, we all have the same beliefs or the same core of beliefs and that's important." She adds, "Outside the core . . . we're allowed to think differently about things." She expects *Record* to be supportive and to supply this core material and chides *Record* for not having much in the doctrinal area recently, she says there has been a bit of a "famine." While critical in this area, Heather had marked "strongly agree" to survey questions about *Record* upholding the church's fundamental beliefs and promoting Adventist lifestyle.

The following discussion during a focus group [FG1] summarises well the kinds of arguments that emerge during both the interviews and focus groups. Except for one who came out strongly and said she has "had it up to the eyeballs with doctrine," and that, she admits, because of a strict, conservative Adventist upbringing, there is an expectation that *Record* will maintain the boundaries of Adventist theology.

> **Xavier:** The paper [*Record*] really should be the stand that the church has, not an individual as what they view. I mean, a letter to the editor, maybe the members have their right there, but as an article it should be what the church actually teaches and upholds.
> **Noelene:** I believe the church does have a standard on almost every issue. I can't see how it can't because the code of Christian living comes into it and, you know, whatever the subject is there's a Christian standard.
> **Xavier:** What do you see as the role of the church? To tell us what we should believe as believers? Or is it just a body which binds together people with similar beliefs . . . if that's the case, it's not the job of the *Record* to tell us what

> we should believe, it's our job to find out and study it for ourselves. It can raise issues definitely . . . but rather than drawing conclusions and saying, "This is what you should believe," inspiring you to look into it and research it and find the answer for yourself. . . . I mean they can raise an issue and I think, OK, what does the Bible actually say about that? As long as the articles in the *Record* inspire me to make me dig a little deeper.
> **David:** It gets back to, though, what if the magazine is picked up by a non-church member. They say, "Hey, this is a Seventh-day Adventist piece of literature, so therefore, what's in there is what the church believes." And it may not necessarily be in there in this way. You can't have a too broad . . .
> **Xavier:** I'm not saying that we should raise issues that are absolutely against what's in Scripture. . . .
> **David:** No, definitely not.
> **Xavier:** Because that's not the role of the *Record.*
> **Noelene:** But you see that would be covered by Viewpoint [articles] and the church's disclaimer of it not necessarily being the views of the church.

The significance of doctrinal issues should not come as a surprise from those within a group that developed its distinctive doctrines within the recent past (some 150 years) and more recently, in the 1980s, suffered a theological crisis with the Ford controversy, which also focused in doctrinal issues. What is important here is to note how theological issues are woven with print to maintain group cohesion.

Frank [143] is openly hostile and disappointed with *Record,* but he has stronger anger at the church and wants to see something that "actually upholds the teachings of the church." In this, a few are with him because when they do not find what they want at their local church they expect *Record* to fill that gap or bring the church back into line. Frank complains that most sermons are what he terms "social gospel," designed to make everyone feel at ease.

> Rather than say, "Let's not offend anybody," like I haven't heard a sermon on the Mark of the Beast from the pulpit for years. . . . If you believe something why be ashamed of it, if it is controversial? The things that Christ said were definitely controversial. That didn't stop him from saying it.

His comment about the Mark of the Beast takes the discussion into areas of apocalyptic understanding. Frank then moves on to his perception of how there has been a "watering down of our standards," with specific reference to drums in the church and a lack of

reverence. "What goes on in the church today wouldn't be accepted 20 years ago," he says. In these kinds of comments he and some others transfer their desires for their local church on to *Record,* expecting it to give a clarion call to bring back these former times.[3] This does two things: it raises the question of whether a purpose of *Record* is to reflect the church in its current form, or is it an organ to present an idealised (and, in some minds, a past) form of Adventism?

One reader describes *Record* as fulfilling its role when he speaks of it fitting well as a part of a family that is being open and honest, and having to deal with a range of viewpoints. "When a visitor comes," he adds, "there's an expected way to behave and some stuff doesn't get aired. You know when it's not appropriate. But to me, the *Record* [belongs] in the family room with your shoes off." Those who say *Record* should be a stronger defender of Adventist belief and standards also demonstrate recognition of the role *Record* can play as a builder of their church's boundaries, but they want stronger boundaries, they want *Record* to lift these fences higher than they are.

Print as a tool for linking people

An important perceived role of *Record* is that of providing links between people and various parts of the church. The idea of church members being "connected" (a term used often by respondents) through *Record* is common during the interviews and focus groups. "Keeping connected," is how one explains this aspect of the *Record's* role, "Keeping the different levels, you know the administration and the ordinary bod . . . the [Pacific] islands and Australia and to some extent the rest of the world, connected." Another speaks of *Record* performing a "gluing process" that is designed to "glue us all together, even with our different attitudes." He feels it would be a "catastrophe of the

highest order" if the church did not have *Record* because "you lose a connection, don't you?" There is a sense that readers are being connected with their "family." "There's different cultures, different people and sometimes just the photos of the different brethren [church leaders] . . . we're all brothers and sisters in Christ. . . . part of the body of Christ," is how one describes it. "It's your cousins, it's your relatives isn't it? You feel like you really, you're all together," says another.

Edna [118] is over 65 and attends a small church on the edge of a city. She tells of how *Record* helps a "lonely" Adventist:

> I want to be bigger than 40 people in our local church. . . . I don't mean by that, by being puffed up or proud, but it's God's working in the whole wide world and the *Record*, well you can see God working through this one and that one and [an]other . . . I think that's really good, because I suppose it's part of my upbringing. When I grew up, I went to a solely girls' school, it was in [name], I was the only Adventist in that school of over 300 kids. When I went to university for a little while, I was the only Adventist . . . and you feel kind of lonely. And my father wasn't an Adventist, my brothers left the church at an early age and so to be part of a worldwide church sort of undergirds your faith.

This response contrasts to the experience of a retired minister, Quincey [FG8], who also finds connections through *Record,* but of a different type. He says, "I've been reading it for 50 years, I guess, but I like it as a family paper, it seems to keep in touch with the Adventist family, especially if you've been around a bit." He refers to people he has met in his work within the church. His experience is similar to one who says,

> When you've gone through, say Avondale [College, the Adventist tertiary institution in Australia] and worked for the organisation, [*Record*] does keep you informed as to former workmates, schoolmates, what's happening with their families and, certainly when you've moved from a number of different churches, you see that the folk from former churches, you see where they've passed away and so forth. It does keep you up to date with former contacts, and I think that's important.

So, while Quincey has a sense of connectedness to individuals he knows, Edna has not had the opportunity to know such a variety of Adventists. For instance, she attended university, not one of the Adventist tertiary institutions. For her, the connections are not

as personal, but they are just as real even if expressed in terms of "God working through this one and that one," which helps in building her faith.

The connections are real, but tend to be interpreted in terms of the individual's experience. Denis [136], who is in his late 30s and attends a medium-sized city church, explains his situation this way:

> [Wife's name] and I, and even in our circle of friends, if you start to lose that feeling of connectiveness then the little local irritations and personalities start to become a bigger deal. And the *Record* helps to remind me that there's not just made up of these fragments or these sorts of people, there's a wider cross section. And not everyone thinks that way, there are people that think like I do ... and I feel connected again.

Another who senses *Record* makes her feel like she is part of a larger family enjoys the sense of security this brings. When asked how it does this, she responds, "Oh, just being in a community, safe, secure." Others, involved in their church, want to know what other churches are doing and if they can learn from what they are attempting. One speaks of the difficulties his church had experienced with "CBs" (Concerned Brethren, a distinctively conservative group within Adventism) who had recently withdrawn from his church and were meeting separately. They had taken some church members with them and it had obviously caused pain in the church. He comments that despite what had happened, the CBs should receive *Record* because they are still part of the church. He adds the wistful hope that *Record* might help them to "lighten up."

If a voice was heard attempting to sum up the sense of connection *Record* is perceived to bring to most readers, it would sound like Damien's [134], a 30-something who attends a major city church. He points first to *Record* reporting comments from church leaders, and thus creating a link with them, and how it is particularly helpful when they address specific issues. This demonstration of organisation is helpful in showing that "we" are not "just a little offshoot group." He sees the contact with other Adventists as an encouragement, something that brings enthusiasm whether things are

going well or poorly for these individuals. He says the weddings and births (there are death notices, but no birth notices in *Record*) show "we're a church that's alive." The obituaries show, "We're a church that's being going for a long time and we've got people who have been holding to the faith for a long time."

> It's just, we're a community of people, you know. . . . I believe extremely much in our message and I can see there are people around Australia who believe likewise in that message, you know, and we can all work together.

In Damien's final comment he brings together these elements of community, the "message" or theology and connections to other people in the church. These now need to be examined further to gain a better understanding of the whole. Regardless of how one interprets these "feel good" statements or overlooks them as exaggerations, for a majority of respondents the printed text performs a role in consolidating group solidarity.

Group definition and print

Boundaries make and help define communities. Chekki's (1997:36) understanding of the Latin root of community implies "that which is surrounded by walls," emphasising the concept of boundaries. The evidence is that a majority of respondents claim that, for them, *Record* helps underscore the defining lines of Adventism. Some, though, want the walls to be higher and tend to follow Knight's (1985:31-2) understanding that a significant boundary of Adventism is the symbolic rejection of the world for the sake of "the truth." This position reflects Wuthnow's (1998:49) comments about fundamentalist churches creating "high walls between themselves and the secular culture." None of the respondents suggest *Record* should be without boundaries and all expect it to advocate the "enduring values" (Gans, 1982:42-

69) of the church. There are, as one expresses it, "core" expectations and readers comment on these in various ways.

The discovery of the importance of *Record* for readers in finding and developing connections is significant. While Adventist theology and lifestyle help define the boundaries, comments about connecting with people gives the theology a new kind of meaning. *Record* delivers to readers through both text and pictures people who have chosen to live within the same boundaries, have similar theology and lifestyle; and tells them what is being done, what is happening in the lives of fellow church members. Over time, *Record* creates a web of connections that reinforces identity and shared experiences (cf Lee and Newby, 1983:57-8).

Most respondents see *Record* as strengthening Adventist's values. However, theology and standards are not the main element that creates for them a sense of belonging to a community through *Record*. They find a sense of community more through Adventist theology at work as seen through actions and comments relating to people, than through theology presented in text or concepts. This does not diminish the role of theology, but demonstrates that, for *Record,* the theology and these connections are closely linked. Community building is bound in both.

The role of print for non-attenders

So far this chapter has looked at the role of *Record* for those who attend church. This section asks whether *Record* is perceived as contributing to those who have had church connections, but no longer attend. Two scenarios are suggested in the survey: that of "Mrs Smitherton" who became a church member in her early 20s, but she's now 75 and unable to attend church. The other is of "James Timberton" who has been a regular church attender, but has chosen not to attend for the past two months. The survey

questions and subsequent discussion during interviews and focus groups centred on whether there was value in getting *Record* to them.

Some 96.8 per cent mark in the 1 to 3 range, on a seven-point scale, with 1 being "very important," for a question asking how important it was for Mrs Smitherton to receive *Record*. The main reasons given for a positive response are: to keep her in touch with what is happening, to keep her informed and to keep the church connection. A significant response, mentioned several times, is that providing *Record* gives members an excuse to visit her. They suggest *Record* could be, and is, used as the icebreaker, as well as indicating that her church is still interested in her.

One suggests that with so little time for contact and opportunity for personal interaction within the Adventist community, *Record* offers multiple contact points with Adventists through its writers and the people mentioned. Another agrees, "If that person cannot come to church, these people can come to her even if they are in pictures [photos] in *Record*." There is an expectation that Mrs Smitherton will have memories of people who may be mentioned in *Record* and she will recognise their names. A few tell stories of people unable to attend church who have *Record* taken to them, and a few do this personally. These stories tell of appreciation from those who receive *Record* in this way. One respondent says that taking *Record* is better than having some of the church fringe groups visiting with their literature. Those who do not see value in taking *Record* to her tend to feel the magazine needs a stronger doctrinal emphasis and wonder whether it would do any good, but several of these do see some value in the connections that individuals make.

When it comes to James Timberton, 90.4 per cent of respondents (a slightly lower number) feel there is value in getting *Record* to him, with 60.8 per cent saying *Record* provides a "helpful excuse" to visit him. The idea of using *Record* as an excuse

to visit is stronger than for Mrs Smitherton, but many of the same elements mentioned concerning visiting her reappear here. They include, for instance, he may still want to know what is happening, it is a point of contact that allows him to keep in touch and it provides a link with the church. Other thoughts include: Letters may reveal similar problems to the ones that caused him to leave and that could be helpful as the issues are discussed; his roots are still Adventist and *Record* may be able to reach him; he will probably recognise a name sooner or later, which could soften his determination to stay away; and it is a connection to the church that he can choose to read or not. Two respondents describe *Record* as a useful "outreach tool" for people like James Timberton. Several tell stories of how former-Adventist friends or relatives, or "fringe" Adventists, love to read *Record* when they visit.

At the same time, some respondents believe taking *Record* to James Timberton would not be helpful for several reasons. They include the consideration that he has chosen to step away from the church. It may even reinforce the reason he left because *Record* is a part of the church culture. It may be a reminder of conflict or disagreement that led to him leaving, and he probably left for reasons *Record* is unable to fix. Besides, adds one, he is probably weak in the faith and he wouldn't be helped by articles that the respondent believes question doctrines or present alternative views.

Frank [143] is in his late 50s and had left the church for a number of years. Visits from a friend with *Record* helped him return. His story is of particular interest because Frank is very critical of *Record*. This is how he tells his story:

> You know how close the church is and you can walk there in two minutes. And [name], the fellow who gives me the *Record*, he was the only one in seven years that came to me. And he actually dropped in a couple of *Records* at that time and what I liked is the fact that it sort of shows you, yes, this is your church and it's a physical [reminder]. If a person comes to see you, [then] it's over. But if they leave the *Record* it's like leaving a flag . . . [and] that little flag [says] you do belong. . . . It's a token of Adventism and there are things in there that you can

> come back to you [and] read that give you that sense of belonging to God's church.

Frank is unhappy with the content of *Record,* yet when he was a nonattender it helped give him a sense of belonging to "God's church." It could well be argued that it was the person calling by with *Record* that had the major influence in bringing him back to church and it would not have mattered if he was being given the *Women's Weekly.* What this does is reinforce the concept expressed by several respondents that *Record* can provide an excuse for visiting a non-attender and an excuse that is church related. While the personal contact or friendship may have been the most significant factor in persuading him returning to church, Frank recognises *Record* as having a role as a "token of Adventism" that he could go back to after the person who brought it had gone. It is something to read to "give you that sense of belonging to God's church." However minor, *Record* did play a part. Most respondents hope that giving *Record* to a former attender will help bring them back to church.

In response to the Mrs Smitherton scenario, two respondents compare taking *Record* to her to taking the church to her. They see *Record* as a definite link to Adventism. The *Record,* to those who can no longer attend church, is a reminder that they are still a part of and in touch with their church. For those who have left the church it serves as a reminder of the group that was once an important part of their lives. Comments about facilitating "community" and "belonging" highlight one of the differences between a commercial publication and a church magazine. Commercial publications similarly attempt to evoke connectedness by printing stories with which readers are, in some way, able to identify (these include favourite media celebrities, royalty and sports stars). However, as the response of interviewees show, this element features even more powerfully in a church magazine.

Print within a spiritual community

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is not simply another voluntary, nonprofit organisation, it is a spiritual community. Provision was made during interviews to ascertain whether and in what ways *Record* may contribute to Adventist spirituality.

"Spirituality" is a difficult term to define. It has been described as "a broad concept referring to the ways in which people seek, make, celebrate and apply meaning to their lives" (Hughes, et al, 1997:7). In a society with growing uncertainties and ample choices, people will need to spend more time reflecting on deep values that make life worth living, and it will be "increasingly difficult to determine precisely what spirituality means" (Wuthnow, 1998:14). Kurtz (1997:223) adds that, though the term "spirituality" has been carefully analysed and dissected it has meant all things to all people and is often used in a vague and ambiguous way, or is (Jones, 1986:xxii) a vague word often used with no clear meaning or with wide and vague significance; and (Petersen, 1994:vii) a word that is "hardly more than a hint, a 'hint followed by guesses.' And the guesses proliferate exponentially." Brummett (2000:122) argues that there is instability in what spirituality means and therefore what it is. Spirituality has become a "proliferation term" with a "clutter" definition (Roten, 1994:104). Tacey (2000:17) admits that a definition is difficult, "but we can talk around the subject and provide some hints and descriptions."

While respondents give a variety of responses, demonstrations of spirituality may be subsumed under three broad categories: demonstrations of spirituality through a connection with God; demonstrations of spirituality within the personal life; and demonstrations of spirituality within relationships to others (for further discussion on respondents understanding of spirituality see Appendix B, page 296).

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While respondents give a variety of responses, demonstrations of spirituality may be subsumed under three broad categories: demonstrations of spirituality through a connection with God; demonstrations of spirituality within the personal life; and demonstrations of spirituality within relationships to others (for further discussion on respondents understanding of spirituality see Appendix B, page 296).

The survey shows 55.2 per cent of respondents, strongly agree/agree that *Record* helps in their spiritual life. However, in a follow-up question in the survey, when asked what sort of contribution the material in *Record* makes to their spiritual life and growth, the highest response, 42.4 per cent, indicated only a "minor" contribution. Some 16.8 per cent felt it made a "significant" or "major" contribution and 28.8 per cent said some material had been very important to their spiritual life and growth (totalling 45.6 per cent finding more than a minor contribution to their spiritual life from *Record*). These figures show *Record* has a limited influence on individual spirituality. The same is true when the question is asked about contact with those outside of the church (and related to the third demonstration of spirituality above): "Does *Record* help or encourage you to speak about Jesus or witness for him?" Three responses call for a positive answer: "It provides information I have used," 30.4 per cent; "it provides good examples I have tried to follow," 8.8 per cent; and "it provides real encouragement and help in witnessing" 12.0 per cent. A total of 51.2 per cent indicates a low impact.

Table 7.2 takes figures from the survey and focuses on the first and second demonstrations of spirituality above and shows that *Record* helps build some readers' spirituality in several areas. Few, less than 25 per cent, pray in response to what they read in the *Record.* It is not seen or used by many as a tool in their prayer life, nor does it gain a majority (only 43.2 per cent strongly agree/agree) when it comes to be used as an aid to readers' devotional lives. There is stronger support for the notion that some articles inspire readers to be a more spiritual person (78.4 per cent, strongly agree/agree). This is a far higher positive response than the 55.2 per cent indicated in response to the question about *Record* playing a spiritual role in readers' lives. The reason for the increase is found in going from the general, the whole *Record* playing a spiritual role, to the more specific, "some articles."

Record rates higher (82.4 per cent) in helping readers feel they are a part of a larger spiritual family. This response is almost identical (at 84.0 per cent) to the response to the survey statement, "The *Record* makes me feel as if I belong to a larger church family than I have in my local church." The descriptor "spiritual" is secondary to the concept of larger family, or "spiritual" may be interpreted in a loose way, which is quite common.

Some 84 per cent see God at work through *Record.* While this is noted here as a spiritual dimension of *Record,* support for this is found as respondents show an eagerness to know what is happening in the church. Some express the concept in terms of the news in *Record* showing God working within the church. Yet seeing God at work in the church translates into a sense of feeling closer to him for only 55.2 per cent of respondents (strongly agree/agree). There is no strong connection or follow through from one to the other.

Table 7.2
The spiritual role of *Record*

(N=125)	Strongly agree/agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree/disagree	No response	Total %
Pray about	23.2	20.8	48.8	7.2	100
More spiritual	78.4	7.2	12.0	2.4	100
Spiritual family	82.4	8.0	5.6	4.0	100
God at work	84.0	8.8	5.6	1.6	100
Devotional help	43.2	20.8	32.0	4.0	100
Close to God	55.2	24.0	16.8	4.0	100

The full statements in the survey were: 1) I often pray about what I read in the *Record.* 2) Some of the articles in the *Record* inspire me to be a more spiritual person. 3) The *Record* helps me feel I am part of a larger spiritual family. 4) The *Record* helps me see God at work in his church. 5) The *Record* helps me in my devotional life. 6) What I read in the *Record* often makes me feel closer to God.

From the survey, most *Record* readers believe the magazine helps them feel they belong to a larger spiritual family. In this, the word "family" is key. There is a consistently high positive response to the *Record* bringing a sense of being a part of a

larger or wider family than the local church. Readers are less certain that the elements of self-identified spirituality form strong boundaries for their community, and the results are far weaker than for that of the perceived role of theology and lifestyle as Adventist boundaries.

The recognition that *Record* plays a role in giving a sense of feeling part of a larger spiritual family or community should not be discounted. Wuthnow (1998:17) encourages "practice-oriented spirituality," which requires the setting aside of space in which to meditate, to pray and to worship. He calls for places of worship "that define their primary mission as one of strengthening the spiritual discipline of their members." Just as Adventists come to worship in such a place, *Record* as an extension of the church can play a role in encouraging the growth of spirituality.

The survey responses demonstrate that while *Record* is perceived to embody and promote Adventist social values and theological views, contribute to strengthening group solidarity and promote a sense of belonging, respondents stop short of attaching to it strong connotations of spirituality. Even for the most devout Adventists, however noble its intentions may be, *Record* is valued more for the instrumental function it performs and not as an aid to worship.

Summary

Printing "encouraged new ways of imagining community" (Mellor and Shilling, 1997:111), but there is strong evidence that print media can also aid group cohesion. Those who sense a need for a stronger doctrinal emphasis demonstrate recognition of *Record's* role in boundary maintenance. *Record* is seen to establish connections with other Adventists, people who support an Adventist theology and lifestyle similar to their own. While connections are strongest with reference to people *Record* readers know,

there is a gradual build-up of connections of other people or groups of people that can be worldwide because they are "family" or "cousins," and "we're all brothers and sisters in Christ."

Record is perceived to facilitate links with nonattenders and demonstrates that it does not have to be a part of the local church to perform that role. It is worth noting the surprising absence of contrary opinions from respondents. The strongest opinions are voiced by those calling for *Record* to exercise even tighter control so that its columns promote not only a uniform Adventism, but also one more in line with its sectarian past. The responses confirm that the membership maintains strong attachment to sectarian values even though some church authorities see value in and promote a more inclusive outlook.

The concept of members being connected through print has been touched on briefly in this chapter. The next chapter takes a more in-depth look at these connections.

Endnotes

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[1] "A strong sense of community is one of the first things people notice about Adventists. Our extensive educational system and our centralized world organization keep us in touch with each other all over the world. Consequently, if you visit an Adventist church almost anywhere, there's a good chance you will run into someone you know. And if you don't, you will almost certainly find someone who knows someone you know" (Rice, 2002:14). Rice argues that Adventists do not lack in a sense of community, but need "a carefully developed understanding of community," which he sees as a "doctrine of the church."

[2] The names given are fictitious, but the numbers in square brackets after the names are a personal aid for identification and to help link individuals, their survey responses and field notes. Individual responses from those involved on focus groups are identified by the letters "FG" and a number that identifies the focus group they participated in.

[3] This is also a part of the struggle between the "revisionist Left" and the "dissident Right" within Adventism. "Meanwhile, the centre strives to hold together two disparate and sometimes contradictory strands of the Adventist heritage" (Morgan, 2002:211).

Chapter 8

Making Connections Through Print

The transmission of values and beliefs is increasingly dependent on forms of interaction that involve media products. These media products provide a way of sustaining "cultural continuity despite spatial dislocation" and can play an "important role in the maintenance and renewal of tradition" (Thompson, 1995:195, 203). Thompson (1995:231-2) argues for "commonality" that is no longer linked to sharing a common locale and the "overlapping of life trajectories," but with "common access to mediated forms of communication." Giddens (1991:4) adds, "Mediated experience, since the first experience of writing, has long influenced both self-identity and the basic organisation of social relations." At the same time, any group identity formed may depend less on the content (which, as noted with the *Record*, may bring a negative response) and more on the fact that each reader knows other readers are reading the same thing (Chwe, 2001:92).

With reading there occurs a "dynamic *interaction* between text and reader" (Iser, 1991:107) and in a community the reader can be expected to respond to the text produced within the community in a way that assists the media product in achieving its goals. Just as each group develops its own special language, contains codes, sets of rules and the language of its historical and institutional heritage (Denzin, 1989:79), so the "mediated experience" within the group is aided "enormously" by the "stored narrative resources and its equally precious tool kit of interpretive techniques: its myths,

its typology of human plights, but also its traditions for locating and resolving divergent narratives" (Bruner, 1990:68). Bruner elsewhere (1974:7-8) writes of "cues" for perception picked up by readers. Berger and Luckman (1995:26) note that "society is unthinkable without common values and shared interpretations of reality." While no text can possibly "incorporate all the possible norms and values of all its possible readers" (Iser, 1991:152), a community will have more common values and a greater number of shared interpretations of reality than "society."

This chapter seeks to understand the types of connections respondents may have with *Record*. It is divided into three parts, with the first part asking what readers seek in *Record*'s pages in an attempt to discover what they are attempting to connect with within Adventism. The second part looks at *Record* as a part of the ritual related to the reader's church life. In this section, Durkheim's concept of ritual will be used and then broadened to include symbolic elements of ritual as a way of connecting to the church. The third part briefly considers the concept that some connect with *Record* as if it were an icon.

Connecting through the text

Respondents go to *Record* for a variety of reasons, which tend to fit into three categories: searching for news, as a forum for issues and opinions, and to confirm Adventist beliefs. This does not mean that readers choose to limit themselves to any one of these categories or do not read for other reasons, but it is a helpful way of considering the majority of responses. The responses considered here come primarily from interviews, rather than focus groups, because it is easier to follow through individual responses. There is some dissonance, however, between the survey responses about reasons for reading *Record* and those reported during the interviews and focus

groups. Asked to choose 1 of 10 response options in the survey to indicate the most important reason respondents read *Record,* 40.8 per cent indicated that they read *Record* "to be informed about the church's activities in the South Pacific Division." With 21.6 per cent choosing not to respond to the question, this was by far (almost four times greater than any other) the largest response to that particular survey question. Yet this did not translate into any readers in the interviews going first to the news areas, and only 27 per cent, in the focus groups, said this is what they "liked" about *Record* (a soft question asked during the initial voice check for recording in focus groups).

Table 8.1 demonstrates a different priority to news, with the editorial, the cartoon and Noticeboard (weddings, obituaries and advertisements) rating high. While this gives an appearance of impression management in the sense that the answer to the survey may have been given to communicate the right impression, it became clear during the interviews and focus groups that the news in *Record* is very important to readers, particularly if the term "news" is understood in broad terms to include information found in Noticeboard, which includes obituaries and weddings.

Table 8.1
What readers habitually look for in *Record*
(in percentages)

	Other	Editorial	News	Features	Letters	Cartoon	Noticeboard	Total
Interviews: Where go first? (N=41)	39.0*	31.7	—	2.4	7.3	4.9	14.6	100
Focus groups What like? (N=84)	16.7	16.7	26.2	14.2	2.3	16.7	7.1	100

*Of the 16 who make this 39.0 per cent, eight scan through the magazine to choose what they want to read, seven read the *Record* from front to back, and one did not answer the question.

Searching for news connections

A significant role of the *Record* as perceived by the readers is keeping them informed about people they know, several state it in terms such as, "I glance through it just in case there's a name there I recognise." This female reader is specifically referring to the Noticeboard section, but others say the same about the whole of the *Record.* Two found friends they had not heard from for about 12 months: he "turns up in WA," says one and proceeds to give an account of knowing the person had remarried, but not knowing where he had gone. Those who had served overseas, usually in the Pacific islands as missionaries or on fly'n'build projects,[1] are interested in both the places and the people where they had worked, but particularly the people. Those who had been through the Adventist school system tend to recognise more faces and names in *Record.* "If you've been through [Avondale] College or you've lived in different states, you've got a lot of friends," says one, and she finds *Record* a way of placing where these friends are now. Another finds it helpful for discovering where a favourite pastor now works.

Several go to the weddings and obituaries section to check for names of people they know. One, at the age of 65-plus, says she is too old to recognise the names anymore, but she checks out the weddings for the names of the parents, is interested when it shows that they were divorced (with the mother of the bride or groom having a different surname to the father) and the range of nationalities now in evidence. On the other hand, another person says now that he is older (40-49), he is beginning to recognise more names. One church clerk (the person who keeps the church records) reads the weddings and obituaries to check for former or "missing" members (people who had shifted but did not transfer membership from their local church). While most speak of finding people they know in terms of it giving them some sort of contact point

(a few wrote to people they had not seen for many years), one goes a step further: "I know them and they're also in the same church and follow the same God that I do. So I guess that exposure to people I know of or know personally gives me that sense of belonging."

Most respondents see *Record* as the main source of information for what is happening in the church in Australia and New Zealand and the Pacific islands. There is recognition of other news sources (Adventist News Network, for instance), but such sources are generally based overseas and do not have a strong South Pacific element. This local emphasis is seen as a strength of *Record*, as one says, for instance:

> I don't mind reading about what's happening in the US or anywhere else. I mean it is a global church. I like the fact that if it's anything significant globally it's in [*Record*], but it does focus on the South Pacific and I think that is legitimate because this is basically where we are. This is part of the world we're most connected to and, therefore, while you want to be a part of a big family it's impossible for you to be too big because you lose.

There is a sense that readers want to know what is happening in other churches, for various stated reasons. What is happening in other churches could happen in their's, with a particular interest on mission or outreach work. For another it helps him to check how their church rates, whether it is too old-fashioned, is how another stated it. Or it simply enables them to keep up to date with what is happening.

Some express the view that they want more openness in reports that appear in *Record*. One illustrates this by referring to reports from local churches about the success they had had, without mentioning the difficulties of, say, finding the volunteers or the finances to run the program. The reports, he says, sound too good to be true. Others go deeper, one with a message to church administrators that it is helpful for them to be open about what is happening and how they are handling it: "The general members of the church want to know what's going on with the church." Better to get the news from them than through the grapevine, he adds. A message to *Record* is, you might as well

tell us the truth, good and bad, but there is this reservation, "It doesn't have to be on the front page . . . it doesn't have to be a bad-news paper because it should be a good . . . uplifting paper."

Respondents feel that knowing what is happening in the worldwide church is important to help readers see the "bigger picture" of the church, and that there is a growth and mission emphasis. There is limited interest in what decisions the church makes overseas, at the General Conference and elsewhere, or with people from the South Pacific working in other parts of the world, unless they are known personally. The respondents portray the feeling that the growth of the church overseas helps to validate their own sense of belonging to something successful, even if they are not personally involved. Several contrast the lack of growth of churches in Australia and New Zealand with reports of strong growth in other areas in, say, Russia or the opening up of new church work in places like Siberia. One sums up the feelings in these terms, "We are not just a little insignificant group, but God is working with all these people in many different ways." Another says, "We belong to a group, a large group of people who are working for Christ in many different ways in many parts of the world." Several say this is exciting or inspiring and shows the church as missionary-minded. "It's important to have this sense of being part of a . . . movement, I suppose," is how one explains it.

A minor theme in relation to news raised by a minority (six from interviews and focus groups) is worthy of mention because it draws attention to a theological-apocalyptic theme and sees in news headlines signs of the Second Coming of Christ. *Record* is applauded for giving information (although limited) on what is happening with church union, a particular article about where Protestantism is heading and reporting on Evangelicals and Catholics signing an agreement in the United States is

mentioned. One chides *Record* for not reporting a claim about a delegation meeting with then-US president Bill Clinton or one of his advisors about the "coming introduction of Sunday laws." The one raising the issue admits that he is unsure how much substance there is to the claim. Another who feels he can form his own opinions about what is in the news and can "read between the lines of what's happening," suggests that if *Record* could keep the church up-to-date with religious-political movements around the world "it might wake some of our people up a bit." They are calling for, as another puts it, news that is "current, up-to-date and showing where we are in time . . . how short time really is in relation to, you know, God's perspective."

The news connections respondents seek in *Record* range from the personal type of information found in weddings and obituaries to that of information about the church, particularly in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, and then around the world. A few want the news to go further, into the political-religious sphere and then to "read between the lines" to confirm the church's apocalyptic understanding.

A forum for issues and opinions

Luke [125] attends a suburban church in a capital city. In his early 40s, he is married and has two children. He prepared himself for the interview with samples of articles he wanted to show me. He is articulate and opinionated, and a self-labelled conservative who tends to see his religion in black and white terms. He illustrates the position taken by those who prefer to see *Record* put strong limits on opinions, particularly in the Letters page. He speaks of a particular Letters page:

> This Sabbath there were a number of letters to the editor that were published in connection with the Sabbath and what was legitimate to do on the Sabbath and what wasn't. And, for example, one letter that springs to mind was a person writing in, and I gathered from what they said, he was a policeman and that he was a Seventh-day Adventist and saw no harm in doing their shift on Sabbath. Now the General Conference, I think it was, put out a tape a number of years

> back on Sabbath observance, back in the 80s I think it was . . . and that definitely takes a viewpoint at variance to that. It encourages people to make sure they find employment where there is no requirement to do that type of work with exceptions, of course, like nursing. . . .
>
> I wouldn't want the letters that are published . . . to give the impression to an outsider that what the church is teaching is not what the membership is believing. . . . I wouldn't want to be giving non-Adventists an incorrect perception, or even Adventists for that matter, an incorrect perception.

While this respondent takes what would be seen as an extreme position among the majority of those involved in this research, there is some support of his position. Some suggest that allowing people to express their views is helpful only if there is an editorial response to support the church's position, "an editorial putting the facts right" is how one says it.

In contrast, Bryan [132], who is a few years younger than Luke and also a member of a suburban church, but in another capital city, takes a different approach that illustrates the majority opinion:

> I'd agree that the *Record* is to unite people, but it's not to make them the same. It's not to put an editorialised version of Adventism for the people to agree with. It's to bring in this vast array of opinions and to display them before the people and say, "This, by the way, is what other people think. What do you think?" And 10,000 letters later, you get a reasonable opinion of what the balance of it in the church is.

Overall, most respondents see the Letters page as a healthy part of *Record*. The "feedback side" is part of the game, says one, even if some are disappointed by some of the negative letters or some people's attitudes. Most agree that opinions should be allowed even if they are "unbelievable." There is a sense that the letters show that the church is not a "closed group," is how one put it. Another speaks of the Letters page in terms of allowing freedom of choice and freedom of speech. While another encourages the proposition that all voices should be heard, there is the caution that the *Record* is a good forum if done in a moderated way. Still another, who enjoys reading a variety of

points of view to see "whether they agree with mine," feels these points of view should be within "core Adventist principles." Most respondents take the view that some kind of limits are necessary on the Letters page and the closest anyone comes to speaking against "Adventist principles" providing those limits is the woman who says she does not think people should read *Record* to find what the church believes. She says, "I think the letters can challenge people and help them grow and develop their own ideas and responses."

When it comes to going to *Record* to read about issues affecting society Bryan and Luke do not see their importance, but for different reasons. Bryan sees other denominations covering this area, and he mentions the Uniting Church and the Salvation Army. He sees *Record* as a church paper that should be limited to church issues, he can buy *Time* magazine or the newspaper to read about other issues. Even moral issues he sees as "essentially divisive" because people have strong opinions on either side and "generally don't come to a discussion ready to change their opinion." He uses the issue of abortion as an example. The illustration of a church issue that could be addressed is related to the Desmond Ford issue considered in an earlier chapter:

> We have major tearing at our heart in the Adventist Church. There are the leftovers of the 70s, 80s discussions and problems. And people, I don't feel have resolved those, and I would see those as being the major issues up for discussion within the Adventist Church. There are other avenues for discussion for things out there, outside the church.

Luke brings his concerns about the church's fundamental beliefs to his consideration of this topic. If it is not a doctrinal position and "hazy" he does not sense there would be too much interest. If it is a minor issue why would anyone bother? he asks. He is concerned that the *Record* and the Adventist Church is picking up issues that are "hot topics" from "the world" or other Christian churches. In that sense Adventists are

followers rather than leaders. He would prefer to see the church working in areas of strength, such as "health reform and good diet."

There is some agreement for this position from another person who says that the Salvation Army should be left to handle some issues: "I see that as their ministry, in a sense." A few feel that *Record* should publish material on issues, but from a biblical basis, or present both sides and then give the church's position. Again, the majority feel *Record* should tackle some of these issues. The topic of homosexuality illustrates the problem that approaching issues presents. Three mention this topic: the first says it is a very difficult topic; the second that it should not be mentioned; and the third that it should be confronted, from a biblical perspective. Other issues raised that respondents suggest should be discussed are: sexual abuse, wife abuse, gambling, divorce and abortion. One claims there is a lack of discussion within the church about contemporary issues, another says *Record* discusses issues that are not discussed anywhere else. Another issue is raised, with political implications, but in a historic area for Adventists, that of religious liberty: "I'm talking about something that might impinge on the independence of the church or the freedom of the church, I would expect that the *Record* could have those sort of things too."

Table 8.2 demonstrates the importance respondents place on *Record* as a forum for issues and opinions. The survey made four statements in this area and asked questions for one of five agree or disagree responses. While there is some uncertainty (at 50.4 per cent strongly agree/agree and 21.6 per cent being neutral) about using *Record* as a vehicle of social comment on public and social issues, the support for the *Record* to be a point of discussion and opinion is stronger. As seen in Table 8.2, the percentage who consider *Record* as a forum for discussing issues is at 83.2 per cent (strongly agree/agree). This is matched by the percentage endorsing opinions in letters

to the editor, 88.0 per cent (strongly agree/agree). Most support the notion that *Record* should be a forum for various viewpoints, but it is less than that given for issues facing the church or opinions in letters, being 73.6 per cent (strongly agree/agree). The majority expectation from readers is that, despite apprehension from some quarters, *Record* will provide a forum for discussion and opinions of issues within the church. There is division of opinion about engaging with issues within society.

Table 8.2
The *Record* as forum for discussion and opinions

N=125	Strongly agree/agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree/disagree	Other	Totals %
Church issues	83.2	6.4	9.6	0.8	100
Forum	73.6	8.8	14.4	3.2	100
Opinions society	50.4	21.6	26.4	1.6	100
Opinions letters	88.0	4.8	5.6	1.6	100

The full statements in the survey were: 1) A major task of the *Record* is to encourage discussion of issues facing the church; 2) The *Record* should provide a forum for discussion of various viewpoints; 3) The *Record* should voice strong opinions about issues affecting society; and 4) Even though I may disagree with some of the opinions expressed, the chance to speak candidly in the Letters section is healthy.

One of those interviewed says he often has discussions with older more conservative members, and, "I read the *Record* then to find out where, not the church stands, but where individual Christians stand on particular topics." Most do not want quite that much freedom and express the wish that *Record* would take some kind of Adventist rather than individual oversight of the discussion. Bryan idealises the role *Record* could play as it takes a lead in discussion in this way: "It needs strength of opinion without being opinionated. It needs strength of character without being liberal or conservative. It needs forcefulness without victimisation."

Group solidarity

There is confirmation of Adventist connections in two ways, the perceived need and acceptance of material presented by church leaders, and in supporting and proclaiming Adventist teaching. Robert Folkenberg, as the General Conference president at the time of the interviews and focus groups, is mentioned several times because he had a monthly column appearing in *Record.* Some read everything he wrote and find it a spiritual, Christ-centred message, but one found it a bit boring. Another says he might read something by Brenton Stacey (an editorial assistant at the time), but is more likely to read Folkenberg. Folkenberg should be in the *Record* because of who he is says one, and there is general agreement. Statements from leaders are important, particularly "when there are problems, [they] are very worthwhile and good, and it should leave the congregation in no doubt as to the church's stand on certain things and that action is being taken." Significantly, in the survey, when respondents are given two choices out of eight options about what they would miss if they did not have the *Record,* "I would feel less a sense of communication from church administration" received the second highest response at 44.8 per cent.[2]

The survey reveals that most sense that *Record* supports the church's doctrines or fundamental beliefs, but only one person chose doctrine as the most important reason for reading the *Record* from a choice of 10 options. Several raise the issue of doctrines, though, with Luke taking the position, "I would see [*Record*] primarily as a publication that produces good doctrinal issues based on what the church's doctrinal position is . . . so it's not presenting new views or controversial views or conflicting views." One calls for "basic doctrines" to appear in *Record* so people don't have to go looking elsewhere, but she weakens her cause by referring to a reasonably obscure and disputed teaching about the sixth trumpet in the biblical book of Revelation. Another calls for the

promotion of the "pillars of the faith" and then expands his thinking to what he calls the standards of the church, with the church not being what it was when he first came into it in his mid 20s (he is now in his mid 60s). These are warnings that respondents are working with loose definitions of what makes up the core doctrines or fundamentals of the church. That said, several call for more doctrinal articles for such reasons as: to help bring about unity of faith, because church youth don't know the doctrines, the 27 Fundamentals are all we have outside of the Bible, a call for definiteness, and sermons today are "fairy floss." One longs for "foundational Adventism" and suggests a stronger doctrinal emphasis: "I just look back at when Adventism was first Adventism . . . you know, 1844 and that, and it was so desperately urgent for people to understand what they believed."

Table 8.3 shows majority support (at 79.2 per cent, strongly agree/agree) for the notion that *Record* upholds the church's fundamental doctrines. What is significant is that 18.4 per cent of respondents express uncertainty or disagree, 3.2 per cent of them strongly disagree. These respondents are either suspicious that *Record* does not support the church's fundamentals or are convinced it does not. Again it should be noted that readers do not differentiate between the presentation of core fundamental beliefs and those of lifestyle or standards within *Record.* What these respondents see is an attack on Adventism. A smaller majority, at 60.0 per cent (strongly agree/agree) perceive that a major task of *Record* should be that of bringing unity of faith with almost 20 per cent (19.2 per cent strongly disagree/disagree) indicating that this is not necessary. Then 72.8 per cent (strongly agree/agree) declare that the *Record* mix meets the needs of the overall spectrum of readers. While a majority indicate satisfaction with the levels of support for the fundamental beliefs and the editorial mix, there is a significant minority among respondents who disagree. They are countered, in one way, by those who say

that *Record*'s task is not about bringing unity of faith and would allow for a variety of opinions. What is noticeable is the sense of slightly stronger support for a discussion of issues and opinions within the church in *Record* (see Table 8.2) than for *Record* to uphold the fundamental beliefs, yet these issues and opinions may challenge the church's beliefs.

Table 8.3
Perceived role of the *Record* in promoting Adventist beliefs

N=125	Strongly agree/agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree/disagree	Other	Totals %
Bring unity	60.0	15.2	19.2	5.6	100
Upholds beliefs	79.2	8.8	9.6	2.4	100
Meets needs	72.8	12.0	13.6	1.6	100

The full statements in the survey were: 1) A major task of the *Record* is to help bring about unity of faith; 2) The *Record* upholds the church's fundamental beliefs; and, 3) The editorial mix of doctrine, Bible study, practical Christianity, opinion and news meets the needs of the spectrum of readers.

Several say they feel they already understand the doctrines of the church or tend to go to other sources than *Record* to find them. There is an overall expectation that *Record* will support the doctrines and, if something appears contrary to the 27 Fundamentals, there should be an editorial comment. Another admits there are some things still to be resolved in the fundamentals and there should be discussion: "I'm tolerant enough to expect to see a variety of views. . . . [but] there are some things in my mind that are not negotiable." Another will only read doctrinal articles "if written from a good perspective," while someone else says there is already enough written about church doctrines, she wants the church and *Record* to be more "mission minded."

Print and ritual

While it is true that "there is no clear and widely shared explanation of what constitutes ritual or how to understand it" (Bell, 1997:x), that does not mean that the concept of

ritual has no value. As a concept, ritual has several meanings and works at various levels. The first, according to Durkheim, concerns religious rites or rituals. Durkheim (1995:386) saw "ritual duties" quite separate from the "profane life," with rituals allowing people to return to the profane life with "more energy and enthusiasm" because they had been in contact with a "higher source of energy" and lived, for a few moments a life "less tense, more at ease, and freer." These ritual duties are rites that "belong to the serious side of life" or "rules of conduct that prescribe how man must conduct himself with sacred things" (Durkheim, 1995:38). While Durkheim (1975:107) allowed for "variations in ritual" and for rites to be experienced in different ways, he also noted that all rites have some degree of the sacred about them (Durkheim, 1975:114). Within Christianity there is an expectation to see ritual because it is a "ritual-rich" religion and rituals play an important role in the maintenance of "religious institutions, the religious community and religious identity" (Hassan, 2002:104, 90). Durkheim's concept of ritual is too limited, though. Cohen (1985:50) notes, "As both theory and ethnography have since proliferated, anthropologists have come to see ritual as very much more complex, and as having a far greater range of competences than Durkheim imagined."

Giddens (1998:128-9) describes traditions as multi-faceted, involving: ritual, repetition, implying a notion of "ritual truth," always collective, and a form of collective memory. Traditions may have existed over hundreds of years or be recent, and may be invented or reinvented throughout their history. Importantly, tradition is a medium of identity, personal and collective (Giddens 1994:80). Ritual can also help create "unity in experience" (Douglas, 1970:2), and that can be broader than a religious or sacred experience. Further, ritual "confirms and strengthens social identity and people's sense of social location," it is an important means for people to "experience community" and

occupies a prominent place in the "repertoire of symbolic devices" that affirms and reinforces community boundaries (Cohen: 1985:50). Chwe (2001:74) sees ritual as a collective event, or what Douglas (1970:62) calls "social rituals." Stark and Glock (1974:15) say that ritual tends to be formalised and "typically public," but what they term "devotion" (for instance, private prayer and Bible reading) is informal and "typically private." That distinction is blurred with a media product that is publicly available, but privately or individually experienced. It is possible that families and individuals develop weekly or day-to-day habits that become rituals, although that does not mean that all repetitive behaviours become a ritual because rituals usually have some kind of symbolic meaning (Kelley, 1995:78, 72). There is an understood difference between ritual-like behaviour, as seen in a boxing match or live theatre, compared to the ritual seen in Sunday church services or wedding ceremonies (Bell, 1997:139, 164). Both sacred and symbolic meanings are important in the approaches that *Record* readers take in receiving and reading the *Record*.

For Adventists, what is done on the Sabbath[3] (Saturday), including church attendance, can be seen as part of the ritual that keeps a connection to the church.[4] Sabbath reading can become one of those rituals. Responses to the survey indicate this with one-third (33.6 per cent) stating that if they did not receive the *Record* every week they "would miss the *Record* as Sabbath reading." In this case, respondents were asked to tick only two of eight options, so Sabbath reading rates highly. With those who read it during or between Sabbath school and church (4.8 per cent) and those who read it Sabbath afternoons (60.8 per cent), two-thirds (65.6 per cent) make it a part of their Sabbath day. That does not deny that the 25.6 per cent who read it at another time do not or cannot treat it as a part of their church life, but the link to the Sabbath is significant and is stated in a variety of ways: "Part of my Sabbath is to get the *Record*

and have a read then go for a walk. It's great!"; "Sometimes I look at [the articles] and I think I should really read that, but once the Sabbath is gone I don't look at it again"; and the opposite response, "If I don't get to read it on Sabbath afternoon, when I go to bed I'll read a page here and there. . . . I feel a little bit lost if I don't get to finish it."

As noted, *Record* is received on the Sabbath[5] and at church. This means that, for readers, not only is *Record* produced by their corporate church, but it is a part of their local church experience and an extension of their church that they take home with them. Even receiving *Record* is part of their church ritual. Some churches place the magazines in pigeon holes or racks with church members' names on them. Others have *Record* secretaries who hand them out to church members, often with the local church announcement sheet. Some place them on a table with names on them, and others simply leave a pile of them on a table. Several respondents indicate that *Record* is an important part of their church life by commenting that they made sure their *Record* is put aside for them if they are away. One comments that he picks up back issues to "catch up." Another says, "We have to make sure we've got it," and told of how she checks with family members to see if they have picked it up if she has been unable to do so. One suggests that his mother-in-law would "think it's the end of the world if she couldn't get the *Record.*" Another takes it upon himself to take *Record* to a couple of people when they do not come to church; something that one suggests is "taking the church to [them]." *Record* is seen as a part of church or, at least, as one says, a part of going to church.

Two instances of a negative reaction help illustrate the role the *Record* plays as part of the ritual within the church. Katherine [114], a pleasant, but strong-minded grandmother living in a rural area, does not like *Record.* Her main complaint is that it does not promote strongly enough the doctrinal positions of the church. It doesn't help

her feel like she belongs to a wider church family because, "I feel that I belong wherever I go." *Record* articles are not "solid" enough, she says. Yet she wants to share it with people who are missing from church and has actively campaigned for her church to set up a program to have it delivered to them.

> I've brought it up two or three times in the [church] board meeting and it falls on deaf ears. . . . I did it for these friends who no longer come; it's just so simple because most people enjoy the *Record* [laughs]. There are people who are odd who don't enjoy it [a reference to herself], but I just think it is a wonderful medium to keep in contact.

Grapeway church [5] is a small church in the country, within half-an-hour's drive from the outer suburbs of a major city. The church has a reputation for being conservative, with some of its members travelling long distances through the city to attend because of their desire to be with like-minded, conservative members. The church was chosen for a focus group because of its conservative reputation. During the voice recognition process for taping, where each person is asked to give their name and one thing they like about the *Record,* there was general agreement that the *Record* had "lost the plot" and there was little to commend it. One person brought 20-year-old copies of *Record* to illustrate how the current *Record* had departed from what it was 20 years ago with the suggestion that it should return to that model. At times the focus group became an inquisitorial process: "I'd be happy if you could tell us what the objectives are of the *Record,"* said one. "Is it a paper to lead people or is it a paper to follow opinion?" There was consensus in the group that *Record* did not maintain what they saw as the church's position in various areas because it did not attempt to give their perception of the church's position if a letter to the editor or an article ran counter to that position.

What became evident, though, was that almost all in the focus group could speak intelligently about articles and news items that had appeared in the previous few

months. The evidence is that they are regular readers of *Record.* Katherine may "mostly disapprove" of *Record,* but she reads it regularly and suggests that it can be useful to others, particularly if they are not attending. The members of Grapeway are even stronger in their opposition to much that appears in *Record* with one suggesting that if he were sick and someone brought him *Record* he would only feel sicker.[6] Yet they also read *Record.* For Katherine and these members of Grapeway, *Record* may remain a part of their church and personal ritual even if, for them, it is not an affirming experience.

The *Record* ritual contains the elements mentioned above: the sacred, a shared experience and symbolic meanings:

As already seen, the sacred is found in the direct links to the church because *Record* is produced by the church organisation and received in the local church. Added to this, it is received in sacred time, on the Sabbath, and considered Sabbath reading. Until 1980, *Record* was only available on a subscription basis. Since then it has been available free at churches each week, which means reading *Record* has become a shared experience for the majority of Adventists. While readers approach *Record* in various ways, there is awareness that information through *Record* is being shared across Australia and New Zealand, at the same time. That proved to be important to 85.6 per cent of readers who marked 1 or 2 on a 1-7 scale on the survey (where 1 means very important and 7 means of no importance) to the question of whether it was important that all church members receive *Record* on the same day. Even the joke or guilty admission (often triggered from the cartoon in the survey) that came up regularly about sneaking a look at the *Record* during worship time if church became boring is a response that illustrates a shared experience.[7]

Most respondents see *Record* as an extension of their church and a symbol of a church much larger than their local congregation. As will be seen, some elevate it to an icon of the church, not as an object of worship, but a representation of their church in the broader sense. They also bring their own meanings and interpretations, and use *Record* in a symbolic way, as a contact point with church leadership, building a sense of oneness with other Adventists around the world and as a reference for people they have known. Most see it as *their* magazine even if they had little input or control about what went into it. Again it is a symbol of their church.

Print and community

The strongest point to come from the surveys and the interviews is that, for the majority, *Record* helps generate a sense of belonging. Readers may disagree with some things published in *Record,* particularly in the letters, but most will strongly defend the right for a variety of opinions to be published.[8] The majority sense that *Record* helps them feel a part of a larger spiritual community, and to see God at work in his church.[9] The best way to illustrate *Record* as a symbolic device to build community is to ask what an outsider to Adventism would see in it.[10] To paraphrase Eco (1979:9) no outsider would make a "good *Record* reader." They are not part of the joint experience of the church, nor have they made any commitment to it. They may question the basic philosophy, including theology and lifestyle emphases. They have no history with the church to call on. Any symbolic meanings would have little import for the non-Adventist. They approach the text on a different level. The words may make sense, but if there is no history or commitment to the group, the message does not have the same depth of meaning. Even if *Record* does not attempt to build boundaries, or does not attempt to build them as high as readers like Katherine (who wanted Adventist

distinctive teachings emphasised much more) would like, it only has full depth of meaning to Adventists and either confirms them in their beliefs and practices or, at times, challenges those beliefs and practices.

Almost all readers had formed habits in approaching *Record.* Kelley (1995:68, 72) notes that not all repetitive behaviours acquire ritual status because rituals usually have symbolic meaning. As seen, *Record* itself has symbolic meaning for many readers and so it is reasonable to see the approach to *Record* as part of the ritual. Table 8.1 shows where individuals habitually begin in the *Record,* but there is more data with several commenting on where they go next, having plotted an approach that feeds their interest or is their systematic approach to its pages. There is some, although limited, evidence[11] that this can be broadened to include where it is read, from one who always sits in the conservatory of his home with an outlook over the garden, to the woman who reads it while Sabbath lunch is preparing, to a few who leave it beside their bed for night reading.

Print as icon

The building of group identity and the shared "mediated experience" is in evidence among *Record* readers, but there is another element that needs further consideration: *Record* as icon. The word "icon," from the Greek *eikon,* originally meant "image" or "portrait." Within Orthodox Christianity it is an image recognised as: a "deified prototype"; a "liturgical image"; something that "conveys spiritual reality"; a prayer; and a marker "on our path to the new creation" (Ouspensky, 1978:39, 191, 202, 211, 228). *Record* should not and cannot be recognised as an icon in any of these senses. It is not an object of worship even if some use it as an aid for worship in, say, prayer and reflection. It can be seen as an icon, though, or a sign that "establish[es] synchronicity,

in the dumb desire to make one event correspond to another" (Read, 1955:21). Read (1955:21) also makes strong links with ritual and a "system of signals" needed to develop them, "gestures elaborated into dances, images materialized as plastic symbols." *Record* is the plastic symbol that gives meaning to the ritual discussed in the previous part of this chapter.

Allowing that sociologists and theorists are well aware of the constraints imposed on language and engage in "processes of linguistic gymnastics (or linguistic mud-wrestling)" (Spencer, 1999:160), there are three understandings of the concept of icon. The first is in the classic sense, as understood within the Orthodox Church. The second is in the technical sense of the word as "a sign or representation which stands for its object by virtue of a resemblance or analogy to it" (Delbridge, et al, 1992).[12] Finally, icon is understood in the popular sense, in the way Ansett airlines may have been seen as an icon as suggested in the title of a video production after its demise: *Ansett: The Collapse of an Australian Icon* (Ansett, 2001), but *Ansett* does not fit the technical sense of an icon as a representation of the object it stands for. On the other hand, the Australian flag, as in the title *The Australian Flag: Colonial Relic or Contemporary Icon?* (Foley, 1996), is a representation of Australia.

The symbolic meanings and invisible connections that many readers give *Record* create for it the status of icon in the technical sense. It becomes a printed artefact, or a symbolic artefact within the Adventist Church. This status is something that would be difficult for a mass media product to achieve. The *Age* newspaper in Melbourne may be seen as an icon of newspapers in Victoria (or Australia) because of its supposed serious approach to news, its perceived independence and its connections with history, elements that led for a call for Victorian government funding when it

struggled for survival a few years back. It may be considered an icon in the popular sense, but not, for most, in the technical sense.

The evidence, particularly from the interviews, is that *Record* is perceived to rate highly for some of its readers at least as serving them in providing "maintenance and renewal of tradition" (Thompson, 1995:203) and as an aid for self identity. There is a partnership between the reader and the text in drawing out "shared interpretations of reality" (Berger and Luckman, 1995:26). The evidence also leads to the conclusion that *Record* has achieved a higher status among some readers, that of icon. The links of *Record* to ritual and tradition, and the fact that it is freely available to all who wish it, at church, makes it a part of, and a symbol of, the church. In other words, it has become an icon in the minds of some readers in the technical sense, as a representation of its source, the church. For these same readers it could be considered an icon in the popular sense of the word as well, even if that is not a term that any used. For those who treat *Record* as icon this means the magazine has gained a different status to most print-media products. At the same time it must be admitted that seeing *Record* as icon says little about print media because there is no expectation that print should play that kind of role. Neither is there an expectation that only print can be an icon. What is found is that some have elevated their connection with *Record* to the level and role of icon.

At its base level, *Record* is a magazine with an ultimate destiny that will see it placed in the recycle bin, used to light fires or put at the bottom of a bird cage. In its connection with the readers there are a variety of responses that range from disagreement with its basic thrust to use of it to enhance a church member's life within the Adventist community. For some, their connection with *Record* elevates it to the role of icon.

Summary

Record is more than an extension of the church or its message; it is part of the experience of church. In this sense it fulfils Bell's (1997:xi) claim that "the fundamental efficacy of ritual activity lies in its ability to have people embody assumptions about their place in a larger order of things." This signals a difficulty that must be taken into consideration when exploring what can be learned from the case study (of *Record*) compared with other print-media products in voluntary, nonprofit organisations. For instance, even if club members had to go to the club house to receive their newsletter and it shared information from club houses across the nation, it is difficult to perceive the same elements of the sacred coming into play. For many *Record* readers, the magazine is part of their church, made available during their weekly church attendance and on the day they consider holy or sacred. This lifts it above the "profane" (Durkheim, 1995:386) and reinforces the link to the church no matter when it is read.

Because *Record* is seen as an extension of the church, many members who read *Record* tend to be the "ideal reader" of Eco (1979:8-9), "able to master different codes and eager to deal with text as a maze of many issues." They are ideal readers because of the investment they have made in the organisation and the magazine is an extension of the organisation. This is *their* organisation, *their* church and *their* sense of ownership impacts on the ritual and the reading of *Record*. Having made the link between church and the *Record*, it is valid to say that just as readers approach church with certain expectations, so they approach *Record*. The difference is that most church members (in the cities) can choose a church that best suits their approach to church life from, say, one perceived to be conservative to another perceived to be liberal, but they cannot make that choice with the *Record* because it is the same for every church.

The expectations of members of the Grapeway church are quite different from those of most readers. Grapeway members may go to *Record* hoping for something different to what would normally appear, rather than having high expectations. For them and others like them *Record* is not an enhancing experience. Any sense of ownership seen in the Grapeway members involved in the focus group is diminished by the sense of disappointment they express when *Record* does not fulfil the role they perceive it should. They want to protect their church or their perception of the church through their church magazine. They want to attempt to reinforce community boundaries either theologically or socially, the latter through promoting their understanding of Adventist lifestyle practices, and they are frustrated that it does not happen. Any ritual involved for these kinds of readers is not a positive experience and does not draw them closer to the church that is represented in *Record*. Instead, *Record* becomes a symbol of a church that has lost its way. The challenge, as they see it, is to restore the church and *Record* to what it was perhaps 20 years ago (as illustrated by the one who brought in copies of old *Records*). There are several responses to *Record* that range from those who are "ideal readers" and use it as an affirming ritual, to those for whom it only has a passing interest, to those who see it promoting a form of Adventism that disturbs them. For the majority of respondents, *Record* is part of a ritual that is a confirming part of Adventism.

The data in this chapter demonstrates that in several instances differences of opinion are expressed by respondents. The next chapter takes this further and considers the impact difference has within the community, as seen through the eyes of *Record* readers, and the perceived role(s) of *Record* when there are differences.

Endnotes

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[1] Fly'n'builds are part of a volunteer program run by the Adventist Church in the South Pacific. In 2002 there were about 1000 volunteers working in Australia and New Zealand and the Pacific islands, most of them involved in short-term projects, with 150 serving in a long-term way (usually for 12 months). About 60 were involved in fly'n'builds where a group from Australia and New Zealand flew to a Pacific island and led out in building a school, clinic or church.

[2] The highest response, at 62.4 per cent, came to the statement, "I would feel less a sense of belonging to the wider family of Seventh-day Adventists."

[3] A direct link to the sacred is found in the Sabbath when almost all church members receive and, usually, read *Record*. For a Seventh-day Adventist, the 24 hours of the seventh-day Sabbath are important as a reminder of the "majestic conclusion of the creation event" and a symbol of redemption (Bacchiocchi, 1980:61, 133). While, as Christians, they distance themselves from "the rabbinical model of Sabbath-keeping" (Bacchiocchi, 1977:318), they do follow Orthodox Jews in considering time holy (or sacred) from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday as the Sabbath (and are thus *Seventh-day* Adventists). For Adventists, the Sabbath is a sign and seal of their relationship with God that goes beyond its Judaic significance: "Like everything else that is touched by the gospel, it is radically transformed. . . . The Sabbath marks not only the completion of Creation Week, but also the completion of Passion Week" (Guy, 1999:237-8). Adventists, then, do not follow the Jewish *melachot* (39 forbidden works on the Sabbath), but they attempt to disengage from business and commerce, and the secular, to focus on God and worship, strengthening family ties and relationships, and service (Dederen, 1982:303-4). They would agree with Heschel (2000:10):

> The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of the things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to *holiness in time*. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.

[4] Adventist theologian Fritz Guy (1999:35) recognises the "spiritual and sociological significance of the potluck dinner as a Sabbath ritual."

[5] Since October 2002, *Record* has been online in full on the South Pacific Division web site. It is too early to assess what long-term impact this may have, but it consistently receives the most "hits."

[6] Another in the group did suggest that it could be helpful, and the one who had made the comment about being made sicker by the *Record* did concede, "A lot of elderly people like the last pages [marriages and obituaries]. They're looking for their colleagues and friends."

[7] As for the cartoon in the survey, 64.8 per cent saw it as humorous, with 9.6 per cent not giving an answer.

[8] For instance, in the survey, 88 per cent marked 1 or 2 (where 1 means strongly agree and 5 means strongly disagree) to the statement, "Even though I may disagree with some of the opinions expressed, the chance to speak candidly in the Letters section is healthy."

[9] For "The *Record* helps me feel I am a part of a larger spiritual family," 62.4 per cent marked 1 or 2 (where 1 means strongly agree and 5 means strongly disagree). On the statement "The *Record* helps me see God at work in his church," 79 per cent marked 1 or 2.

[10] The use of the word "outsider" immediately assumes a barrier or boundary.

[11] Unfortunately, this information came only from an aside in conversation rather than from intentional prompting. Only in reviewing the interviews as a whole was any significance noted.

[12] Recognition is given to the fact that using a dictionary definition means selecting one of several understandings of the word "icon."

Chapter 9

A Diverse Readership

Community implies both similarity and difference. Members of a community have something in common with each other that distinguishes them from members of other groups. The boundary that this creates represents a mask by the community to those outside, its "public face," to which the public may attribute stereotypical features. Those within the group who have the "private face" know that there may be a myriad of complexities and differences (Cohen, 1985:12, 74). This complexity and these differences impact on the reception of any group's print media. The challenge for print within a voluntary group is to seek to engage members in ways that transcend these differences. This chapter focuses on *Record* as a medium of communication catering for the diverse outlook of its readers.

Minority religious groups are typically presented, even in research literature, as monolithic and uniform in outlook, being governed by members' strict adherence to the group's doctrines. However, the reality is that religious minorities demonstrate a great variety of outlooks and attitudes that members endorse and defend even more passionately than what can be observed in larger denominations. One of the distinguishing features of a sectarian community from its denominational counterpart is the enthusiasm with which adherents promote and defend individual interpretations of the group's beliefs. Responses during interviews, focus groups and survey findings confirm this diversity with Adventism, even if the range of views are typically

conservative. By drawing on classifications of "conservative" and "liberal," the chapter seeks to identify the different ways church members read *Record,* and the extent to which the publication achieves addressing the needs of both extremes.

Diversity in organisation

Berger and Luckman (1969) provide a useful theoretical background for considering knowledge sharing and difference within institutions they describe as "symbolic universes." They point out that all institutions, regardless of size or history, embrace roles that in time are absorbed into the organisational structure and become a part of institutionalised conduct. Non-compliance to defined role standards is not optional, with sanctions that may vary in severity (Berger and Luckman, 1969:92). The presence of full-time personnel for "universe maintaining legitimation" carries with it potential for social conflict and can lead to rival "definitions of reality" with the appearance of new experts with new definitions (Berger and Luckman, 1969:135-6). Institutional segmentation with "sub-universes of meaning" result in competition between these groups (Berger and Luckman, 1969:102-3). The threat of deviant versions that seek to modify the institution or symbolic universe is an ever-present reality (Berger and Luckman, 1969:124-5). Those within the institution often have to confront "traitors," who alternate between worldviews discrepant to their own (Berger and Luckman, 1969:190).

Adventism began with few organisational trappings and became institutionalised as a "symbolic universe" in the Berger-Luckman sense of those words. Roles developed and, although the word may not be favoured within Adventism, a *hierarchy* also developed with administrators having the most powerful role, and descending authority within the institution being on church pastors, other church employees and church

members. It is anticipated that differences among *Record* readers would result in rival "definitions of reality."

Church administrators and members: perceptions about *Record*

Church administrators are, in Berger and Luckman (1969:135-6) terms, part of the full-time personnel in the institution engaged in "universe maintaining legitimation." They are the keepers and promoters of orthodoxy. They have been given authority for their role, and authority is a political concept "as soon as it is applied to the life of *any* community" (Williams, 1982:92). Administrators provide the most significant "top-down influence" on *Record.* Their position and the authority given them place them in a different position to that of most *Record* readers. This difference is investigated in two ways: first, on the issue of "ownership" of *Record* and, second, on the perceived role of *Record* as understood by administration and lay readers.

Finding "ownership" of Record

The issue of "ownership" of *Record* was not introduced until the 13th interview, and then as an aside. Its significance was noted and then included in most of the following interviews. The concept of ownership here carries different connotations from its usual meaning of owning something through purchase. Here it could be argued that "the church" owns *Record* on the basis that it is funded by church members who support the institution called church. The same could be said for almost any voluntary organisation. What is being investigated here is the sense of ownership and whether church administration has been able to fulfil the desire it had in 1986 (according to Walter Scragg (1999), the South Pacific Division president of the time) to transfer a sense of ownership to members, aided by the appointment of a new editor.

Of the 26 interviewees who did address the issue of ownership, a majority (N=16) felt *Record* belonged to the members. Four respondents reported the perception that church administration had ownership of the magazine. The editors were seen as the owners by three others.[1] The perception of church administration in 1986, attributed to church member comments (Scragg, 1999), was of a lack of member ownership. There is no data available to quantify that assumption. The most that can be said from the present study is that more than half of the interviewees claim that the members own *Record,* which may indicate a shift in ownership toward members.

The responses are verbalised in a variety of ways. One woman says that God owns everything, but the people who appoint the editors give them ownership by putting them in charge. "When I open the *Record* to read it," says another, "I very seldom think of the leadership, although the leadership is there, they must be." Here is a concession that leadership is in the background, but this respondent is also definite about church member ownership. "The church owns the *Record,*" is another response. One calls it "our paper" produced with the backing of the South Pacific Division, the conferences and the publishing house. Another suggests the administration owns *Record* through controls they place on it by deciding what stories and letters are printed. Then another suggests more editorial licence, but with support from church administration on issues that could be a threat to "the system, the administration." Two are of the view that there has been a shift in ownership, with one expressing it this way:

> I think the people [own *Record*]. Maybe if we went back a few years people might have looked at it as an administration paper. . . . You've got to have the connection there to the [South Pacific] Division, it is the official church paper. And I suppose you've got to edit it as a church paper and not how you see things personally yourself. You may be tempted, you know, but you've got to. Oh no, I definitely see it as the people's paper because that's what it's for.

With no hard evidence of perceptions of ownership from earlier times, what is currently found is recognition that church administration and the editors both have a role and influence, but that a majority of respondents claim ownership for the members. In 1986, the South Pacific Division president promoted the idea that the *Record* should be "owned by the whole church and you have your right to have your voice heard . . . even though it wasn't something the editor or church leadership agreed with" (Scragg, 1999). Opening up the magazine more fully to members, particularly the letters page, was the most significant step in establishing a base for a change of ownership. The newly-appointed editor in 1986, James Coffin (1999) introduced a more candid and open magazine, particularly with fewer what he calls "pontifical statements," which helped closed the gap between administrators and the members. What should also be emphasised is his attempt to make provision for various groups within the church to dialogue through the pages of *Record*. This took the emphasis away from church leaders having the main voice to church members not only being heard, but also, at times, setting the agenda.

Perceived roles of *Record*

The purpose of the *Record* is spelled out in South Pacific Division policy in this way:

> The *Record* is the official paper of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division. Its role is to nurture, to educate and inform church members within the division.[2]

The roles are given more detail within policy, but this is the basis of the statement accepted and promoted by church administration. The survey sought to identify the extent to which the stated role of *Record* is a reality among members.

Record readers give a supportive response (on a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 signalling "very well" and 7 "not at all") of more than 75 per cent for each element. Differences are shown among those who mark at the highest level, at 1. Some 14.5 per cent agree that *Record* nurtures "very well"; only 4.8 per cent say it educates "very well;" and 25.6 per cent feel it informs "very well." From this response, it is apparent that there is stronger recognition of the magazine's role in keeping readers informed, but minimal recognition at this highest level of educating them. This provides some evidence that *Record* is perceived as having a significant role in informing, and that could be seen through news, letters, marriages and death notices. It is perceived as having less of a role in nurture, and a limited role in educating. That picture changes with the addition of those who responded by ticking points 2 and 3 as well. Again there is strongest recognition that *Record* informs well, at 93.6 per cent. The levels of nurture (at 77.4 per cent) and education (at 76.0 per cent) are almost even, but about 18 per cent lower. From the survey, then, the evidence is that respondents believe *Record* does far better at informing than at either nurturing or educating church members. Church administration may well be disappointed with this response, particularly when, in its policy, "nurture" is linked to Adventist belief and "educate" is linked to Adventist doctrine and lifestyle. What can be assumed here is that respondents would interpret the survey questions as referring to nurture and education in Adventism in its broad sense. Almost 25 per cent were not convinced it nurtures or educates well.

During the interviews and focus groups, the perceived role of *Record* was fleshed out more, but with most respondents limiting their comments to one role, there is even stronger support for "informing" against other roles. The word "inform" is a regular term used to describe the role they see *Record* playing. The same concept of presenting information is spoken of in other ways, such as communication, keeping in

contact or up to date, knowing what is going on and reporting about the church. Other responses include, "to uplift Christ," build up an ongoing sense of identity and belonging, to encourage one another, as a spiritual club newsletter, seeing how God works in others and to bring church members together. Two persons see *Record*'s role as strengthening church members in the fundamentals of the church, or where the church stands. One becomes biblical when he says that *Record* is to "sound the trumpet in Zion" as a warning to members that the church is failing. Another suggests a role of *Record* is to keep members informed as to "where we are on the timeline of prophecy." Teaching gains a mention, and one feels *Record* could challenge people with strong spiritual direction from church leadership. The role of *Record* as a forum for discussion is picked up by a few. One who sees it playing that role adds that he senses it should also inform people of what church adminisuration is doing, as a report to shareholders, and to analyse issues facing the church.

While a variety of roles for *Record* come through during the interviews and focus groups, the main role is seen as informing. This response is best understood when viewed in relation to the importance to *Record* readers of facilitating connections within the community. Those connections are found in the information coming through in articles and news by and about those personally known or who feature regularly, and in areas such as the weddings and obituaries that make reference to family details. The other areas of "nurture" and "educate" are emphasised in minor ways, but they do not take centre stage during interviews or focus groups. In the surveys, the appearance of these elements in printed form is a reminder and they are then recognised by the majority as valid roles for *Record*. The survey indicates that most *Record* readers understand the role of *Record* in a way that is similar to the formal understanding given by church administrators, and particularly in its role of informing.

The recognition of the majority of readers and the administration having a common understanding of the purpose of *Record*, and the suspicion that there has been a change of ownership demonstrates a coming together on this point even if members and administration are not in perfect step. This reflects Isenhart and Spangle's (2000:xiii) claim that "communities and businesses are moving from discussion of *rights* to *interests*, and from *forcing* to *negotiation*."

Having considered the similarities in perceptions between those who have the top-down influence (administrators) and the readers, the discussion turns to differences found between members who are *Record* readers.

Identifying difference among *Record* readers

Berger and Luckman (1969:102-3) note that, within time, an institution will have occasions for social conflict and segmentation with "sub-universes of meaning" leading to conflict or competition between the groups. The concepts of conservative and liberal are used as labels for groups within the Adventist Church. The terms "conservative" and "liberal" were chosen to assess differences because these terms are used by Adventists. Adventist systematic theologian Fritz Guy (1999:27-9) senses that within the Adventist "community of faith," the term "conservative" "implies a preference for orthodoxy, a scepticism and even hostility toward heterodoxy, and a suspicion of the claims of secular knowledge that raise questions about traditional belief." The term "liberal" "implies a willingness to move beyond orthodoxy, a comfortability with heterodoxy, and an interest in bringing secular knowledge into a constructive relationship with Christian belief." Both, Guy suggests, indicate a serious interest in truth. For conservatives it is to maintain the truths already possessed, embodied in a tradition they trust. For liberals it is to seek new truths or new interpretations of old truths. "The good

news is that 'so long as both see themselves as engaged in this joint quest their disagreements are necessary and fruitful'" (he quotes from Basil Mitchell's *Faith and Criticism*). Guy adds that whatever the context, conservatives and liberals reflect tendencies, emphases or concerns on a continuum accommodating an indefinite number of intermediate positions and combinations. Guy (1999:29) then offers a warning: these terms, and others, "quickly become mischievous if they are used normatively, judgmentally, and polemically rather than objectively and descriptively."

Even with a conservative membership, Adventism demonstrates shades of types within, as can be seen in their self definitions. To an outsider this may be too elusive to find, but for insiders it is understood and influences how they engage with their print media.

Conservatives and liberals

In the surveys, respondents were asked to indicate to which of five categories they belonged: Liberal, middle of the road with liberal leanings, middle of the road, middle of the road with conservative leanings, or conservative. Of the 41 persons interviewed, the respondents were weighted toward being conservative with 17 (41.4 per cent) marking themselves as either conservative or middle of the road with conservative leanings. This contrasts with 12 (29.3 per cent) who marked themselves as liberal or middle of the road with liberal leanings. Respondents were reticent to rate themselves as liberal, only three (7.3 per cent) did so. Another three (7.3 per cent) did not respond in a way that could fit clearly into any category. To better understand these self-classifications, all those interviewed were asked what they meant by the classification they had given themselves. Several comment on how difficult it is to decide where they actually belong.

Only those who were interviewed have been considered here because individual discussion was essential to clarify the meanings respondents gave to where they placed themselves among the five categories on the liberal-conservative continuum. This type of discussion was too difficult to attempt in a focus group setting. However, it needs to be noted that those selected for interviews self-classified themselves as more conservative than those who were chosen at random from church rolls for focus groups. For respondents in interviews (N=41), the largest group (41.4 per cent) identified themselves as middle of the road with conservative leanings or conservative. In contrast, only 29.3 per cent self-classified themselves as liberal or middle of the road with liberal leanings. These findings are skewed toward the conservative end of the continuum compared to those involved in focus groups (N=69), Some 37.6 per cent among focus-group respondents claimed to be liberal or middle of the road with liberal leanings and 27.5 per cent indicated they were conservative or middle of the road with conservative leanings. It appears that the selection process for those who were interviewed created a more conservative group.

From those interviewed who called themselves "liberal" (N=3) one feels the church is 20 years behind the times. He is willing to experiment, particularly in outreach, but not with the principles that brought him into the church. Another has a number of non-Christian friends and visits other churches. He is open to accept others as they are, without compromising his own beliefs. The third says he is the opposite to conservative, which he illustrates by saying he did not plan to have everything ready for the Sabbath by sunset Friday, have evening worship or close of Sabbath.

From those who call themselves "middle of the road with liberal leanings" (N=9), one who marked himself at this position says he likes to keep up with the "state of play," he will go to a hotel for business, but, while there, drink orange juice. He

follows the church's fundamentals, but is happy for "kids" to play guitars in church, and for a ball to be thrown on the Sabbath. One woman grew up in what she calls an extremely conservative Adventist home and warns against extreme conservatism. Another respondent pushes for contemporary, not charismatic, worship and music, and helps with puppets and clowning. One says he is middle of the road on the church's fundamentals, but we should not conform to the pattern all the time because we live in a different society to 20 years ago. Another could not live with his former "ultra-conservatism" and is now tolerant, allowing for alternative views and room to grow. Wearing jewellery and a bit of "lippy" "doesn't make any difference to the Lord," says one respondent, who adds she is a bit conservative when it comes to music in church. The fundamentals grind on her, she says, but, by her comments, she refers to standards rather than the fundamentals. Another, who had attended a state school, feels his schooling helps him stand for principles. He wants to head his church into a more contemporary style of worship. He feels his movie attendance makes some think of him as a liberal. "Look, I believe in paying tithe and all that sort of stuff," he says, "but because I mix with a lot of non-Adventists, people probably see me as being more liberal."

Among those who say they are "middle of the road" (N=9), several mark themselves in this classification because they want to be balanced in their approach to Adventism. They do not like "extremes of position," or to stand on a soapbox. One respondent describes liberals as those who reject the health message and have no problem with occasional Sabbath work; conservatives are those who are overly legalistic, and both are wrong. Another says she does not mind what the youth are doing and does not hanker for the old days. There is an admission of some conservative and liberal leanings among the group. For instance, one swapped churches to find quietness

and reverence in worship, while another claims to hold radical views. There is a sense that those who mark themselves as middle of the road do so because they desire to walk the middle road. In stating their position they are more likely to contrast it with their perceptions of liberal or conservative positions.

Those who are "middle of the road with conservative leanings" (N=10), refer to theology more than the other groups already considered. "I believe what the Bible says," one comments. The virgin birth, the state of the dead and the Sabbath are mentioned. Another is not prepared to accept the "new theology" and adds that women should not be ordained (although, as if to demonstrate some liberal tendencies, this respondent is happy with a band and drums in church). There is fear from one regarding liberals who are "tossing Sabbath out" and saying you do not need to keep it from sunset to sunset. Another sees the damage done by ultra-conservatives, but believes liberals are doing far greater damage with their "anything goes" attitude. One claims he retains a certain amount of his English (he originates from England) conservatism and illustrates this by saying he prefers conservative music in church. Comments on worship and music tend to illustrate a less contemporary approach.

Among self-labelled "conservatives" (N=7) there is a certainty, based on theology, that is lacking in the other groups. One says she has no grey areas and would like to get back to the era of Burnside because he knew what was going on and was so positive (George Burnside was a successful Adventist public evangelist in Australia and New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s). Luke [125], mentioned in the previous chapter, claims he is conservative "in the sense that I accept what the truth is as historically taught." Another agrees that historical theology is a key, she has found some of Desmond Ford's theology "disturbing." Adventism has a "wonderful message" adds another respondent. Luke believes new light can only be built on old light and the new

things in the church are really old errors. He illustrates this by suggesting the church needs to go back to a position that supports the sinful nature of Christ (that Christ was born with a sinful nature like other humans, a concept that does not find support in mainstream Christianity and has gone out of favour in the Adventist Church and its publications since the 1940s).[3] One points to her belief in the writings of Ellen White as an inspired source of instruction as evidence of her conservatism. Another quotes Ellen White, saying that the rostrum is a sacred place, a concept he thinks is missing in his church.

There are obvious limitations with a process of this type because the end results are descriptive categories of conservative and liberal self-ascribed by respondents rather than empirical categories grounded in objectivity. While the desire is to discover perceptions of respondents about liberal and conservative from within *their* community, there is little that is concrete to back up those perceptions. Guy's (1999:27-9) observations do not provide this, but they are helpful because he writes as one within the context of the Adventist Church yet as one who is outside the group of respondents and at a distance (writing from the United States) from them. In broad terms, what is found is general agreement with Guy's (1999:27-9) summation of "conservative" as those with a "preference for orthodoxy, a scepticism and even hostility toward heterodoxy." What is also in evidence is the "suspicion of the claims of secular knowledge that raise questions about traditional belief." There is also, in general terms, agreement of how Guy understands the term "liberal" as it "implies a willingness to move beyond orthodoxy, a comfortability with heterodoxy," with a hint of "interest in bringing secular knowledge into a constructive relationship with Christian belief."

What is important from Guy is his postulation of a liberal conservative continuum accommodating an indefinite number of intermediate positions and

combinations. Within the survey a five-point continuum was a step in that direction, but what is noticeable from the interviews is that respondents support the notion of a broad continuum because they do not create well-defined boundaries between the various categories.

What is found from the respondents interviewed is that as individuals place themselves closer to the conservative end of the five-point continuum there is a growing awareness of the significance of an authority outside of self coming into play. The Bible and the writings of Ellen White are more inclined to be mentioned as authoritative sources at the conservative end. However, this should not be read to indicate that there is no belief in an outside authority and the importance, particularly of the Bible, at the liberal end of this continuum. Adventism, even at its liberal extreme, tends to be a conservative movement compared to some mainstream Christian groups. Liberals affirm church beliefs, but without the intensity or certainty seen at the conservative end of the continuum. There is a sense of moving from uncertainty (at the liberal end of this continuum) to certainty. This certainty is based on the black and white authority of the Bible and Ellen White. This certainty is also linked to a past Adventism. There is tension over issues of church standards (which include lifestyle choices of health and dress), and worship and music styles within the church. For some these were the issues used in attempting to define conservative and liberal.

What comes through strongly in the interviews is that respondents have a strong awareness of the concepts of conservative and liberal and, mostly, they have little difficulty in articulating the positions even if they have difficulty in placing themselves on the five-point continuum. Having illustrated a range of positions on the conservative-liberal continuum, the next task is to turn to the surveys to consider how those in the various self-identified categories relate to *Record*.

Conservatives and liberals, and disagreements

From the surveys, with 125 respondents, 12.0 per cent identify themselves as liberal, 24.8 per cent as middle of the road with liberal leanings, 24.0 per cent as middle of the road, 24.8 per cent as middle of the road with conservative leanings, 7.2 per cent as conservative, and 7.2 per cent gave a response that could not be classified in any of these ways (two suggested they fitted more than one category). The first thing to notice from these figures is that the majority (73.6 per cent) consider they are middle of the road or middle of the road with liberal or conservative leanings. Only 19.2 per cent place themselves at the peripheries possible on this continuum. (The word "peripheries" is used deliberately because the word "extremes" does not fit. All involved should be considered as fitting within the confines of Adventism.)[4]

The majority of respondents (80.0 per cent) have some formal position within the church that ranged from 74.2 per cent for middle of the road conservatives to 90 per cent for those who say they are middle of the road (see Appendix C, Table 9.1, page 300). Some 60.8 per cent say they are very involved in their church's activities (marking 1 or 2 on a 1 to 7 scale where 1 means very involved and 7 means not very involved, see Appendix C, Table 9.2, page 300). The first two points on the scale were chosen to make sure respondents had made a clear decision (with 3, 4 and 5 tending to be "middle" figures). In this case the figures throw up an unsuspected anomaly. Of the conservatives, only 44.4 per cent mark themselves as being involved at this level. This is an anomaly in the sense that it would be assumed that conservative members of an organisation would be more heavily involved and committed to the organisation. What has been seen from some conservatives (in chapter 8) is anger at the direction in which the church is heading, with them wanting to go back to the old paths. A sense of

dissatisfaction may be seen here with slightly less involvement (or involvement going in another direction, outside the mainstream of the church). "Slightly" is used because when point 3 on the 1 to 7 scale is added, the sense of involvement rises by almost 20 per cent to 79.2 per cent for all those surveyed, but for the conservative group it jumps about 55 per cent to 100 per cent. The other groups have a broader spread across the range with liberals claiming the lowest involvement at 60.7 per cent total for points 1 to 3. This is what would be suspected and expected, but the fact that conservatives do not place themselves higher on the involvement scale may be seen as a protest vote by some conservatives to a church that is not heading in the direction they believe it should.

The expected is found when the sense of attachment to the Adventist Church is marked (see Appendix C, Table 9.3, page 301). Using a seven point scale ranging from very attached to not very attached, 80.0 per cent marked 1 or 2, with 1 meaning very attached. The conservatives are at 100 per cent (with 77.8 per cent marking 1), with the liberals at 66.7 per cent. Conservatives also led the way in feeling "terrific" about being an Adventist at 66.7 per cent. Then, 58.1 per cent of those who consider themselves middle of the road with conservative leanings felt "terrific" about being Adventist came next with liberals following at 46.7 per cent (see Appendix C, Table 9.4, page 301).

Areas of disagreement

In broad strokes, these figures from the survey give a feel for the respondents on a range from conservative to liberal on the five-point continuum. This now leads to potential areas of conflict between the groups over *Record* content and emphasis as found in the survey. Some areas chosen have already been touched on, but here is an attempt to bring some statistical analysis to the *Record*'s role in areas of bringing unity of faith, encouraging the discussion of issues, providing a forum for discussion,

upholding church fundamentals, promoting Adventist lifestyle and allowing candid opinions, particularly in the letters page. It relates these roles to those who have identified themselves as being in one of the five categories from conservative to liberal.

Conservatives gave the strongest support (77.8 per cent, strongly agree/agree) to the notion that a major task of the *Record* is to help bring about unity of faith (see Appendix C, Table 9.5, page 301). Liberals (53.3 per cent, strongly agree/agree) and middle of the road with liberal leanings (45.2 per cent, strongly agree/agree) do not have the same expectations. While it would be anticipated that conservatives would push for unity that is based upon Adventist theological and lifestyle choices, there is strong support by conservatives for use of the *Record* to encourage discussion of issues facing the church (see Appendix C, Table 9.6, page 302). Conservatives show an 88.9 per cent (strongly agree/agree) support for this kind of discussion. Only those who are middle of the road with liberal leanings come in higher at 93.5 per cent (strongly agree/agree). Liberals (80.0 per cent, strongly agree/agree) and those who claim middle of the road (83.3 per cent, strongly agree/agree) are lower.

The question not asked is what kind of issues facing the church should be discussed. Comments from conservatives in the interviews suggest that they want issues discussed that will help bring the church back to where they perceive it should be, that is, discussion that would bring back the certainty in the doctrines and standards they want emphasised. There is far less support for the discussion of issues facing the church in *Record* to be in the style of a forum, with various sides giving input (Appendix C, Table 9.7, page 302). Conservatives, at 66.7 per cent (strongly agree/agree), still show a majority in favour of a forum approach, but the enthusiasm is not as great (only 11.1 per cent strongly agree). However, all other categories have the same hesitation at about the same percentage (all in the 60s per cent levels, strongly agree/agree) in endorsing the

concept of using the *Record* as a forum, with the exception of middle of the road with liberal leanings at 90.3 per cent (strongly agree/agree).

There is evidence from the survey of a progression of a sense of attachment to the church according to where individuals mark themselves on the continuum (see Appendix C, Table 9.3, page 301). Liberals have the lowest sense of attachment (66.7 per cent marking 1 and 2, very attached, on the seven point scale). Middle of the road with liberal leanings is higher at 70.1 per cent (marking 1 and 2). Middle of the road (86.7 per cent at 1 and 2) and middle of the road with conservative leanings (80.1 per cent at 1 and 2) give a slight reversal of the trend, but conservatives give a dramatic conclusion to the trend with 100 per cent marking 1 and 2. While *Record* makes most readers feel more enthusiastic about being an Adventist, only 44.4 per cent (strongly agree/agree) of conservatives claim it makes them feel more enthusiastic about being Adventist, and an equal percentage disagree (see Appendix C, Table 9.8, page 302). In this case there is no trend along the continuum; instead, the middle of the road with conservative leanings group records the highest percentage among those who say *Record* makes them feel more enthusiastic about being an Adventist, at 71.0 per cent (strongly agree/agree).

The strongest disagreement is found in areas of how *Record* handles the church's fundamental beliefs, Adventist lifestyle and the letters page. These three matters deserve more detailed consideration.

A significant difference is found between the conservative readers of *Record* and others when it comes to the church's fundamental beliefs. To the statement that *Record* upholds the church's fundamental beliefs, only 55.6 per cent (strongly agree/agree) of

conservatives compared to 90 per cent (strongly agree/agree) in the middle of the road category or the others (all in the 70s per cent, strongly agree/agree, see Table 9.1). This low percentage among conservatives is reinforced by 44.4 per cent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the notion that *Record* upholds the fundamental beliefs. Here again concerns are expressed by conservatives and some others that *Record* is not supportive of the fundamental beliefs, with almost 10 per cent (at 9.6 per cent strongly disagree/disagree) of respondents maintaining that position. What does play a part here is the number of those who are neutral, or have "no opinion." Some 19.3 per cent of those who are middle of the road with liberal leanings mark "no opinion." Then 13.0 per cent of middle of the road with conservative leanings have "no opinion." This sense of uncertainty when "no opinion" is marked is a significant result in these two categories for it suggests questions being asked about *Record* supporting fundamental beliefs. Again, this may be tempered by the fact that there tends to be a blurring of the lines between what are fundamental beliefs and church standards, which needs to be recognised in any discussion about the church's fundamentals. That does not diminish the perceptions that are found here, and the disagreement between respondents, with 79.2 per cent (strongly agree/agree) finding that *Record* upholds the church's fundamentals and 20.8 per cent holding a different opinion.

Table 9.1
***Record* and perceptions of upholding fundamental beliefs**
(The *Record* upholds the church's fundamental beliefs.)

N=125	Strongly agree/agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree/disagree	Other	Totals %
Liberal	8.8	—	1.6	1.6	12.0
MOR liberal	19.2	4.8	0.8	—	24.8
MOR	21.6	0.8	1.6	—	24.0
MOR con	19.2	3.2	1.6	0.8	24.8
Conservative	4.0	—	3.2	—	7.2
Other	6.4	—	0.8	—	7.2
Totals %	79.2	8.8	9.6	2.4	100

Key: MOR Lib: Middle of the road with liberal leanings. MOR: Middle of the road. MOR con: Middle of the road with conservative leanings.

Conservatives had an even stronger reaction against the view that *Record* promotes Adventist lifestyle (see Table 9.2). Only 33.3 per cent strongly agree/agree with this view. Adventist lifestyle can include healthy living and church standards, the "behavioural boundaries" (Vance, 1999:53-4). Because *Record* does allow some breadth of discussion in these areas it would be expected that responses to *Record* support of Adventist lifestyle would not be as strong as for the fundamental beliefs. What is of significance here is a strong note of uncertainty or indecision (or of not wanting to make that kind of judgment) demonstrated in the 20.0 per cent of the total who mark "no opinion" to the concept. Most conservatives do not have this uncertainty, with 55.6 per cent disagreeing with the thought that *Record* promotes Adventist lifestyle. Liberals, interestingly, demonstrate the next lowest agreement with the concept at 60.0 per cent (strongly agree/agree), although the percentage is almost twice that of the conservatives (at 33.3 per cent). Those claiming a middle of the road position have the highest agreement with the view that *Record* promotes Adventist lifestyle at 76.7 per cent (strongly agree/agree).

Table 9.2
***Record* and perceptions about the promotion of Adventist lifestyle**
(The *Record* promotes Adventist lifestyle.)

N=125	Strongly agree/agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree/disagree	Other	Totals %
Liberal	7.2	3.2	—	1.6	12.0
MOR liberal	16.8	6.4	1.6	—	24.8
MOR	18.4	4.8	0.8	—	24.0
MOR con	16.0	4.8	2.4	1.6	24.8
Conservative	2.4	0.8	4.0	—	7.2
Other	6.4	—	0.8	—	7.2
Totals %	66.2	20.0	9.6	3.2	100

Key: MOR Lib: Middle of the road with liberal leanings. MOR: Middle of the road. MOR con: Middle of the road with conservative leanings.

The letters page was often discussed in interviews and focus groups. While 87.2 per cent (strongly agree/agree) believe that the opportunity to speak candidly in letters to the editor is healthy (see Appendix C, Table 9.9, page 303), some consider the letters as controversial because of the variety of opinions allowed. A response was asked for the statement, "Sometimes I find it hard to believe that those who write letters to the editor are Adventists." The purpose of this statement was to discover how *Record* readers respond to something in *Record* that tests the edges of what some would consider orthodoxy. The implication in the question is that these letter writers sometimes seem to write something quite out of character with mainstream Adventism. Conservatives, with 77.8 per cent (strongly agree/agree), have the greatest difficulty accepting these letter writers as Adventists. More than half (51.0 per cent, strongly agree/agree) of those who are middle of the road with conservative leanings have the same difficulty. In this case, the trend is that the closer the person is to the conservative end of the continuum, the more difficult it is for them to recognise Adventists who have radically different views as fellow church members. For the others (see Table 9.3), the total is around 40 per cent of those who strongly agree/agree with the statement. Again there is a strong "no opinion" response, in this case 20.8 per cent of the total.

Table 9.3
***Record* and perceptions about the orthodoxy of letter writers**
(Sometimes I find it hard to believe that those who write letters to the editor are Adventists.)

N=125	Strongly agree/agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree/disagree	Other	Totals %
Liberal	4.8	2.4	2.4	2.4	12.0
MOR liberal	9.6	4.8	10.4	—	24.8
MOR	9.6	8.0	5.6	0.8	24.0
MOR con	12.8	5.6	5.6	0.8	24.8
Conservative	5.6	—	1.6	—	7.2
Other	4.8	—	2.4	—	7.2
Totals %	47.2	20.8	28.0	4.0	100

Key: MOR Lib: Middle of the road with liberal leanings. MOR: Middle of the road. MOR con: Middle of the road with conservative leanings.

The conservative-liberal continuum in relation to *Record*

There are some marked differences between where *Record* readers place themselves along the conservative-liberal continuum and the comments they make about what they understand by those positions. Simply put, all respondents work from their own definitions and interpretations, not neatly packaged concepts. While there is evidence of some general acceptance of what liberal and conservative mean, and these can broadly fit into Guy's (1999:27-9) understandings, several, in their comments, have not been able to avoid the "mischievous" judgmental or polemic approach he warns against. There may be a general understanding of liberal and conservative, but the flexibility of interpretation increases when individuals are asked to locate themselves on the continuum. So, for instance, a respondent can mark themselves liberal because they are flexible in outreach techniques, but they are far more conservative in attitudes to doctrinal and lifestyle issues. There may be a range of reasons why individuals place themselves at any point on the continuum.

At one level there is seen a general, majority perception that *Record* is supportive of Adventism, with the two ends of the liberal-conservative continuum tending to be out of step with that perception. The conservatives are those who have the greatest difficulty seeing *Record* supporting their position in the community. At a deeper level there is a significant minority across the continuum that does not find, or are uncertain about, the strength of support *Record* has for Adventism, in some ways.

Limitations of *Record*

Among those interviewed, 7 of the 12 conservatives rate *Record* low in the tables above. This part returns to the interviews of these seven to find what elements are still helpful to them and if it is possible to assist them to build a sense of community

through those elements. The aim is to take a lead from those who are most critical to discover what these elements may be.

Luke [125] and Katherine [114] both find little value in *Record* for themselves. Luke can find little there for anyone else either because he believes it lacks doctrinal certainty and introduces too many diverse ideas that appear to downplay the certainty he seeks. Katherine strongly supports getting *Record* to others who no longer attend church (whether they are former members or members who are unable to attend) to keep a connection with the church. She has pushed her church board to set up a systematic approach to making sure former attendees receive *Record.* Luke would not give it to members who choose not to attend because he feels *Record* questions rather than affirms church doctrine, and this would not be helpful for them. He concedes that it would be helpful for members unable to attend church because it would help keep them in touch with what is going on in the church. *Record* does not help him develop a stronger sense of belonging to the Adventist Church, but he does recognise that it "might" for others. Luke's concern is that *Record* does not support the church fundamentals or what he calls "historic Adventism."

Luke and Katherine both read *Record.* For Luke it is what he calls a brief and quick read to see if there is anything he should read in depth. During the interview he was aware of what had appeared in *Record* that concerned him. He is able to tell of letters and articles he felt should not have appeared. Katherine reserves *Record* for Friday night. She claims she has very little time with the phone ringing constantly at her home and even on Friday evenings she cannot always get to *Record.* She has awareness, though, of what has appeared in *Record.* Then she admits to reading letters and obituaries and weddings, and she watches out for news of people and places she knows; her husband spent some time in Tonga, for instance, and she has an interest in what the

church is doing there. She is critical of the weekly cartoon and sometimes finds it offensive, but always checks it out. To her it is a reminder that her children (she is a grandmother) have not developed as "deep a sense of spirituality as we grew up with," otherwise they would know the importance of not making light of the spiritual.

In contrast, Gary [128] is an avid reader. He has written and had published letters to the editor and news reports (several years ago now) in *Record*. He calls himself conservative because he is opposed to contemporary worship styles and also the ordination of women. He wants to know what is happening in the church. He views *Record* as a club newsletter that lets everybody know what is happening in the "best club in the world." He reads letters to find what people are saying, and this is important for him. He is moved by stories of people going through hardship, with some of the "heart-rending articles" helping him in a spiritual way, and aiding him to understand the broader church. *Record* is a source of ideas for him and his church, and is valuable for those who are unable to attend church. Gary says that as far as he is concerned, *Record* is a part of the church.

During his interview, Andrew [131] was determined to get his view across, and most of the time was spent dealing with issues he raised, which were more about the church than *Record*. Andrew admits that he is conservative in his views and critical of *Record* for not facing up to the worship issue within the church by printing articles supportive of older forms of worship. He wants discussion of these kinds of issues, but there is a sense that the discussion needs to agree with his emphasis. He is supportive of *Record* in a couple of ways: he takes *Record* to a member who is no longer able to attend, and he says *Record* keeps him in contact with what is happening in other parts of Australia and the Pacific.

Ingrid [129] thinks *Record* has some "fantastic articles," but calls for more articles on church fundamentals. She says these articles should not be heavy doctrine, but "truthful" to the old teachings. For her, *Record* demonstrates to those outside the church that Adventism is not a cult, but is much larger than that description would suggest. Her family has followed an example given in *Record* and have used it to set up a Bible study group in her home, and this encourages her. She knows that "our old people love it," because she works with elderly people in an Adventist institution. The connections *Record* gives her with Adventists overseas is "wonderful." *Record* helps give her a sense that she is part of a larger community.

Zelda [133] does not appreciate it when *Record* goes against church standards, but her overall response is positive. She confesses to reading everything. She enjoys seeing "how the Lord is working in the church" because this lifts her spirits. She enjoys reading about people or seeing articles by people she has known in the past. She reads the editorials for the spiritual information they contain. She also sees *Record* as an instrument to bring church members together, including former members. For herself it makes her feel part of a much bigger church.

Finally, Peter [135] admits to being conservative, something that comes with age, he claims (he lives in retirement). As a former church employee, he finds *Record* useful for keeping connections with people he has known in the past. *Record* is a "big communication paper" where you keep in contact with people, he says. He finds the marriages and death notices of interest. He can name regular letter writers to *Record,* and suggests he knows what some of them will say before he reads their letters. He supports a variety of opinions being offered in the letters page: "I think, you know, if you're a member of the church, you've got a right to speak, you've got a right to say something." He does not mind if he disagrees with articles that appear because, "I know

what I believe. I know what I think, but I could be wrong. And my attitude is, God says, 'I will lead you into all truth.'"

For Luke and Katherine, *Record* does not help draw them into the Adventist community. Luke particularly seems to read *Record* with a desire to be critical, and he expects to find the negative. The openness within *Record* to a variety of voices causes concern. Both see a role for *Record* for those unable to attend. For Luke this is a concession, to keep them in touch; for Katherine, she has a mission to get it to them and also to those who choose not to attend. Katherine also brings expectations of the negative to *Record,* the cartoon is an example, but she makes connections with people she knows through its pages.

Except for Gary and Peter, the rest state a weakness of the *Record* is a lack of support for church doctrines (or fundamental beliefs) or standards. This is the strong theme coming through, with Peter giving a hint of agreement even if he does allow for the "right to speak." During the interview he expressed grave concerns about the direction of the church, emphasising music, worship style and dress.

For all conservatives, there is the belief that giving or taking *Record* to a member who cannot attend has some value. This is perceived as a link to the church community. Only Luke is against giving it to a member who chooses not to attend. Luke's concession for those who cannot attend is a significant statement that this link to the church can be helpful.

If Luke and Katherine are taken out of the picture, the others find that connections made with other people through *Record*'s pages is important. While the main emphasis is on people who are known to them, it also extends further, Ingrid speaks of connections overseas. For Peter, who has worked for the church, it appears

that he studies the *Record* to find or remember these connections. The other area of agreement is in keeping in contact with what is happening in the church.

Gary and Zelda both report receiving spiritual help by reading *Record*. Gary also uses *Record* as a source of ideas that he implements in his local church, so he sees it as a source for practical ideas. Ingrid's comment that *Record* shows that the Adventist Church cannot be seen as a cult should be interpreted in the context of her conversion from a major church (Roman Catholicism) and her continued connection with friends within her former church. She has a desire to demonstrate that Adventism is a broadly-based movement, and *Record* aids her with that.

From the conservative group, then, even the most opposed find an effective use for *Record*. The perceived lack of a strong doctrinal element is a concern for them, but, overall, keeping up with personal and broader connections through *Record*'s pages and knowing what is happening in the church are elements that *may* transcend that perceived shortcoming in helping to maintain Adventist community.

Summary

The focus of this chapter has been on understanding how respondents with different Adventist leanings view and read *Record*. The view that readers bring their own meanings to text is an underlying assumption of the chapter, the extent to which *Record* addresses their needs is its corollary. Several conclusions may be drawn from the detailed analysis of the questionnaire survey and respondents' comments during interviews regarding theological outlook and attitudes to *Record*. First, within Adventism, members range themselves along a continuum ranging from liberal to conservative and in doing so demonstrate that the church is a complex organisation. Second, as should be expected, those who rate themselves as conservative are loudest in

calling for a stronger defence and definition of their organisation in print. They demonstrate a longing for less complexity and a conservative position to be enunciated in *Record.* Third, regardless of whether or not church members accept *Record* as belonging to them, there is an expectation that *Record* will communicate views and promote positions that correspond with the outlook of mainstream members and church authorities.

Endnotes

[1] Table 9:4 gives a statistical overview of responses given to perceptions of ownership of *Record*. In the "other" responses, one felt *Record* was owned by the Publishing Department under whose umbrella printing and publishing within the church comes. The other three had no answer to the question.

Table 9:4
Perceived ownership of the *Record*

(N=26)	Church administration	Church members	Editors	Other	Total
Percentage	13.5	59.6	11.5	15.3	100
Actual	3.5*	15.5*	3	4	26

*One respondent felt administrators and church members both "owned" the *Record*.

[2] The *Record's* purpose statement reads in full as follows:

Purpose: The *Record* is the official paper of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division. Its role is to nurture, educate and inform church members within the division.

To nurture:

Christian faith
Seventh-day Adventist belief
Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle
Seventh-day Adventist community

To educate:

in biblical faith
in Seventh-day Adventist doctrine
in Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle

To inform:

of decisions impacting on the church and members
of events within the South Pacific Division
of the progress of the worldwide church
of challenges to the church
of news with relevance to the church.

[3] The 1957 publication of *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* made a significant stand on the sinless nature of Christ. It stated, "In both [Christ's] natures, the divine, and the human, He was perfect; He was sinless. That this was true of His divine nature there can be no question. That it was so of His humanity is also true" (*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 1957:54). This was one of several issues that helped *Questions on Doctrine* "easily qualify as the most divisive book in Seventh-day Adventist history." Published to help bring peace between Adventism and conservative Protestantism, "its release brought prolonged alienation and separation to the Adventist factions that grew up around it" (Knight, 2003:xiii). While Knight (2003:xxix) may claim in the introduction to the recently released annotated edition that the book was almost entirely "clear restatements of traditional theology," that is not how it was seen then or is seen now by a vocal minority.

[4] As if to emphasise this point, one marked "liberal" and then wrote, "but very Bible grounded/Christ centred."

Chapter 10

Continuity and Change

In 1986 an attempt was made to transfer a sense of ownership of *Record* from those in authority to the members. The decision, in effect, was to turn away from what could be called an authoritarian approach in print to a more communitarian focus. The decision provides an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of that policy. This study has shown that church members mostly appreciate the new policy and resulting changes in *Record*, but at the same time highlight a longing for earlier times by some church members. Chapter 7 noted that some members are disappointed with the current *Record* and its failure to maintain and strengthen traditional Adventist boundaries. In chapter 8 there is an undercurrent of disapproval by a minority, and a longing as one member of a focus group put it, for the *Record* of 20 years earlier. Chapter 9 highlighted areas of conflict by noting that conservative members disapprove of how *Record* now handles the church's fundamental beliefs, Adventist lifestyle and the letters page. The year 1986 is a useful reference point because there was an intentional and administratively initiated move to make *Record* a more inclusive publication.

This chapter has two main aims. The first is to note how the change of policy toward *Record* has been played out and what it can tell us about print in the Adventist Church and about the church itself. A second aim is to examine the role of the editor and that of church authorities in *Record*. In the past three decades *Record* has been the focus of a number of studies. In some of these studies *Record* was drawn upon in an

illustrative way to highlight aspects of the church at that particular time. Other studies were initiated either by church authorities or by the editors and sought to ascertain the readership of *Record* and to solicit from members their views on how to make the publication more effective and useful as an instrument of communication. When taken together, the various studies provide a wealth of information for assessing not so much *Record* itself, although that information is also useful, but more to highlight attitudes to changes in policy and to understand what these attitudes tells us about changes in the Adventist community more generally.

Transition as seen through social research

One of the earliest examinations of *Record* was conducted in 1977 by John Knight as part of his doctoral study on Seventh-day Adventists when he examined *Record* along with *Signs of the Times, Scope* (published briefly, 1971-1973) and *Spectrum* (the only magazine in the group to be published in the United States). Knight (1977:152-90) conducted a content analysis of *Record* consisting of a random selection of one issue a month from 1970 to September 1975. He analysed 1180 articles including letters to the editor, but ignored verse, wedding and funeral notices, and advertisements. He considered *Record* as the "most authentic representation of SDA culture" (Knight, 1977:140) among Adventist publications and an "internal sectarian newspaper" (Knight, 1977:160). He described *Record* of that era in the following way:

> The *Record* contains information on SDA-related events in the area, overseas mission and evangelistic happenings, doctrinal articles, and in late years has added a very popular feature: letters to the editor. One of the major functions of the *Record* is to unite the members of the Australasian Division [now the South Pacific Division], giving them a sense of common brotherhood and purpose as part of the "Great Advent Movement." Through its pages, the hierarchy can present important issues to the laity and mould the opinions of members. It is an agent for the construction of Adventist reality in sect members (Knight, 1977:153).

Knight found *Record* "highly religious (92 per cent), fundamentalist (87 per cent), conservative (88 per cent), and world-rejecting (86 per cent)." "In religious type, the magazine is very sectarian (86 per cent), and the denominational or secular [usually health or social welfare] articles occur . . . in the remaining 14 per cent of articles" (Knight, 1977:164). He estimated that almost all articles are "normative" with dissonant articles or letters being "far less than 1 per cent of the total." Despite this restriction, he noted that a number of older members had expressed personal discomfort and dislike of any dissent or debate among God's "remnant people" (Knight, 1977:164).

His findings, particularly those that indicate sectarian tendencies, are various. The Sabbath had a frequency score of 28 per cent, reflecting, said Knight (1977:161), "its importance as an ethnic boundary for the sect." "Adventist prescriptions for lifestyle, particularly diet and health" received a similarly high score at 26 per cent (Knight, 1977:161). The "sectarian concern" for the second coming was seen in 27 per cent of articles where a reference is made to eschatological issues. He found taken-for granted terminology describing the second coming and events as understood by Adventists surrounding that event, such as "the blessed hope," "the investigative judgment" and the "close of probation." This discussion was often used to urge readers to greater effort and activity to bring about the "end of sin and suffering" (Knight, 1977:161). The importance of Ellen White as a "charismatic and inspired authority within the sect" was seen in references to her and her work in about one-fourth of the articles, which was "just more than one-half the frequency or reference to or usage of the Bible." She was commonly called "the messenger of the Lord" or "the Spirit of prophecy," which demonstrated "the extent to which belief in her visions undergirds the whole of Adventism" (Knight, 1977:161-2). He discovered that she was quoted as an equal authority to the Bible, and the taken-for-granted authority on doctrine and social

behaviour as indicated by these "sectarian euphemisms" and others, including "the servant of the Lord" and "God's special messenger for these last days."

> Indeed, one might infer that her de facto authority is greater than Scripture, since no such terms are commonly used for biblical prophets such as Jeremiah, Daniel or the Revelator, who are referred to by their given titles (Knight, 1977:166).

Knight (1977:170-3) returned to two issues of importance in discussing sectarian attitudes: the Adventist understanding of current events before the second coming, which leads to "sectarian exclusiveness," and Adventist rhetoric. The exclusiveness restricted the sect members' contact with the world to necessary economic transactions in the market place, developing a "them" and "us" attitude, and "they" are the "outsiders." "'They,'" he suggested "are corrupt, immoral, and deserve destruction, while 'we' are a separate people, holy, God's peculiar treasure." Technological, social and political issues that threaten the world's survival became simply a "sign of the times" and reinforced the concept of the imminent advent of the Lord. The reliance on divine action rather than stressing active political and social commitment to change the world meant a passive, not activist, approach to world and community issues. In Knight's view, the Adventist worldview was of a closed culture in a society of which they disapprove and from which they wish to partially withdraw.

Adventist rhetoric became an important symbol of sectarianism. "By constant reading of these terms in sectarian literature and by their repetition in social interaction in the sectarian community, members give meaning to the world." Some of the terms are mentioned above, but he found others, such as "remnant people" or "remnant church," "the last days," "God's last warning message" and "the right arm of the message" [a reference to the health emphasis]. He labelled these "readily recognisable phrases" that are "particularly evident in *Record*" as "sectarian SDA." These were an

"ethnic boundary" between members and non-members, presenting the "idiom of a closed culture" (Knight, 1997: 170-3).

Knight's study provides a useful opportunity to reassess whether there has been any change since the mid-1970s, as seen through the pages of *Record*. Taking cues from Knight several of his findings are compared with *Records* of 1990 and 2002. There are no specific reasons why 2002 was chosen; it was the most recent full year at the time of writing and 1990 was the last full year James Coffin served as editor. I have attempted to replicate the methodology Knight used, as I understand it, with the exception that every issue of the chosen year is considered.[1] The whole year is used rather than a random sampling because there are special emphasis issues each year, two of which have significance to the outcome: the health week and the spirit of prophecy day issues. In this comparison the number of times the following are mentioned is quantified: Sabbath, Adventist lifestyle issues, the second coming, Ellen White or her writings used, and also references from and to the Bible, and the number of times the terms Knight mentions as Adventist rhetoric appear. In addition, the number of times involvement in society or with other community groups and denominations appear are also considered, as a test of non-sectarian activity.

Knight considered in total 1180 articles and letters in his study. In this study a total of 1931 articles and letters were found in the 1990 *Record,* and 1282 in the 2002 *Record.* Of these, 1044 (54.1 per cent) in 1990 and 619 (48.3 per cent) in 2002 were Flashpoint news articles, which are brief news notes. Following Knight, these are included in the analysis. Some articles do emphasise more than one of the issues under investigation so it should not be presumed that each count is independent of the others.

The Sabbath, including events that are noted to be on the Sabbath (although this is rare because usually, now, only a date is recorded without mention that it was a

Sabbath), is found 135 times (7.0 per cent) in 1990 and 54 times (4.2 per cent) in 2002. The second coming is found 83 times (4.3 per cent) in 1990 and 34 times (2.7 per cent) in 2002. Distinctive Adventist lifestyle issues found a stronger emphasis with 196 (10.2 per cent) mentions in 1990 and 124 (9.7 per cent) in 2002, with the vast majority of them related to issues of health.

The 1990 *Record* contains 889 references (46.0 per cent) to the Bible or Bible quotations; the 2002 *Record* contains 456 references (35.6 per cent). Quotations from or references to Ellen White's writings appear 249 times (12.9 per cent) in 1990 and 92 times (7.2 per cent) in 2002. Where Knight found that Ellen White was quoted or mentioned more than 50 per cent of the number of times compared to the Bible, the figure is much lower in 1990 at 28.0 per cent and, in 2002, at 20.2 per cent. In investigating the "readily recognisable phrases," a search was made of 12 phrases Knight referred to. Thirty-one (1.6 per cent) are found in 1990, with 17 (1.3 per cent) instances in 2002. The "spirit of prophecy" (a title for Ellen White) gains 17 (1990) and 13 (2002) mentions. The "messenger of the Lord" (another title for Ellen White) gains one mention (1990). The "close of probation" is mentioned four times (1990) and once (2002); with the "remnant church," "investigative judgment" and "God's last warning message" all mentioned once in both years. Only seven of the 12 phrases Knight referred to as "ethnic boundaries" are found, and they appear on an average of once every 1.6 issues of *Record* in 1990 and once every 2.8 issues during 2002. Comparisons between the *Record* during the years of 1970 to 1975 and that of 2002 can be seen graphically in Table 10.1.

Table 10.1
Comparison of sectarian tendencies in *Record* (1970-75 and 2002)
(in percentages)*

Type of reference found	1970-75 N= 1180	1990 N= 1931	2002 N= 1282
Sabbath	27.8	7.0	4.2
Second coming	27.2	4.3	2.7
Adventist lifestyle	26.3	10.2	9.7
Bible	44.7	46.0	35.6
Ellen White	25.3	12.9	7.2
Usage of Ellen White compared to the Bible	56.6	28.0	20.2

* Numbers are in percentages of the total numbers of articles, but may not add up to 100 per cent because some articles contain more than one reference.

Added to this, during 1990, there are 113 (5.9 per cent) and in 2002, 176 (13.7 per cent) mentions of Adventists being involved with people or groups (including community groups and other denominations) outside the Adventist Church in a non-evangelistic sense. Even when the 64 mentions (3.3 per cent) in 1990 and 58 mentions (4.5 per cent) in 2002 of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (the Australian, New Zealand and overseas welfare agency of the church) are omitted on the grounds that one could argue these are performed as outreach for the church[2] that still leaves 49 (2.5 per cent) references to these activities in 1990 and 118 (9.2 per cent) mentions in 2002. Knight sensed that the *Record* of the early 1970s saw welfare work as part of the church's evangelistic program by linking welfare and mission, and found it a central thrust with a mention in 46.3 per cent of the articles.

In 2002, only the number of mentions of the Bible or Bible references suggests a close relationship to that found in Knight's 1970-75 research. The writings of Ellen White still play a role, but the figures indicate they do not have the same significance of earlier times, and the usage of her writings compared to that of the Bible is far lower.

The figures show a continued dependence on the authority of the Bible, but lesser a dependence on that of Ellen White.

This comparative analysis of *Record* shows quite a change in attitude from 1970-75 to 1990, and a change that can be demonstrated to continue through to 2002. If we can assume that the number of references to Adventist theology and practice can be interpreted as suggesting a bias either toward sect or denomination, and if Knight (1977:140) is correct in claiming that *Record* is the "most authentic representation of SDA culture" in print, the evidence not only suggests a significant shift in *Record,* but also in Adventism in Australia and New Zealand. The *Record* of 1990 and of 2002 shows less dependence on its sectarian heritage. Adventism still retains much of its sectarian heritage, but it appears to be pulling away from its past.

From the 1980s, though, a series of surveys have been conducted in an attempt to better understand *Record* readers and the impact of *Record* on those readers. The reader surveys are useful for assessing the attitudes of members to *Record.*

Reader surveys of *Record*

Six reader surveys have been conducted since *Record* became available free to church members in 1980, the first being in 1983. Finding change in *Record* through the surveys proved to be frustrating and difficult because the surveys did not have a consistent approach to sampling or in the questions asked. For these reasons the surveys proved to have limited value in addressing the research question, but are discussed in more depth in Appendix D, page 304. They are briefly mentioned here because a few findings are pertinent.

There is some validation from the other surveys concerning the ages of those involved in the current survey. A difference is shown in the gender mix found in the

current survey, which comes from the selection process. There is a fairly consistent attachment to the church from respondents through all surveys. The survey findings appear to suggest a trend of acceptance of greater diversity of belief and a lowering of expectations of unity of faith. They appear to provide evidence of a growing belief that *Record* should be a forum for a variety of viewpoints and indicate an increase in appreciation for the relevancy of articles in *Record*. Openness in print about issues within the church gained support, as did support for a variety of opinions in letters to the editor. The surveys also highlight that *Record* was proving less successful at supplying the mix of articles to meet the needs of readers, or to help keep the enthusiasm of readers about being Adventist at a high level.

The surveys do indicate some shifts of position in readership opinion about *Record*. The evidence of movement indicates that *Record* needs to be a dynamic, changing communication tool if it aims to meet readership needs. It also needs to be alert to these needs. The trend toward greater diversity and openness may already be seen to be happening with *Record* not as successful now in supplying the mix of articles to meet readers' needs. The one constant is the uncertainty about the accuracy of church news, which may be related to the suspicion that the news is not objective, but is given a positive emphasis.

McQuail (1994:323) notes that communicators "do not gain much from formal research" and prefer their own "informal ways" of understanding their audiences. However, the richness of data to come from these surveys can be helpful for plotting trends and discovering reader opinion in some areas. What is lacking in the *Record* surveys is consistency in the type and style of questions asked.

Thus far the focus of the chapter has been on understanding changes occurring within the content of *Record* and from these to generalise possible changes occurring in

the Adventist community generally. The remainder of this chapter examines the role of the editors and church administrators in shaping *Record*.

Strategic role of the editor

In its 106 year history *Record* has had numerous individuals who have performed editorial functions for the paper. However, it is in the past three decades, particularly during the years leading up to and following the crisis over Desmond Ford that the editor of *Record* has assumed visibility as someone capable of influencing opinion on issues being debated and thus playing a strategic role in the Adventist community. In the context of the role of the editors in the past 25 years further consideration of the Ford issue cannot be avoided.

The Adventist Church in Australia and New Zealand was in crisis leading up to and after the dismissal of Desmond Ford in 1980. Ford's challenge for the Adventist Church to forego some of its interpretations of the prophecies and downplay the role assigned to Ellen White in Adventist theology divided the membership. From one side the push was to maintain the status quo. From the other side came pressure to take on board new understandings that could deny long-held beliefs. Complicating the situation was Ford's charisma. His lifestyle demonstrated a commitment to Adventism that few could match and in his presentations he was a convincing orator. While there was a considerable middle ground within the church among those who wanted to avoid the conflict or not be involved, or were awaiting the outcome, the evidence is of pressure tending toward a "state of anomy" (Durkheim (1951:254-5). Following Durkheim (1933:368), the Adventist community had moved away from any "lively and continuous sentiment of their mutual dependence" to one more akin to open warfare in which the "state of anomy is impossible."

That the Ford situation impacted on *Record* may be found in the timing when, in early 1980, it was made available free to all church members to ensure an informed membership (Parmenter, 1980b:4). It also had an effect on the editors: Robert Parr (2000) believes his friendship with Ford cost him his position as editor and he was replaced by Geoffrey Garne. Garne (2000) discovered that neither the "Fordites" nor the "CBs" (Concerned Brethren, a conservative group within the church) would "own him" and the division president, Walter Scragg (1999), desired to change *Record* through the appointment of James Coffin in 1986 to move on from the Ford issues. The build-up to the Ford dismissal and its fallout were running as background noise during the editorships of Parr (1967-1980), Garne (1981-1986) and Coffin (1986-1991). Whether Ford caused change or was simply the catalyst of change can be debated. He is certainly the most referenced and visible agent of change from that period. Indeed, the Ford situation was the most dramatic reminder that the church was facing a challenge that would necessitate major changes in the organisation. During this period the editors illustrate the strategic role they play in print.

Three *Record* editors

Robert Parr is perhaps the only *Record* editor to have had editorial experience outside the church.[3] He edited academic books for some seven years for the Packer publishing conglomerate in Sydney before being appointed to head the editorial work at Signs Publishing Company. A former Adventist school and Sydney Grammar School teacher, he was a regular contributor to church publications before his appointment. At the time of his appointment, *Record* was partly produced at the church's headquarters in Sydney by a retired minister. Parr offered to "look after it," an offer that was accepted.

Record of the time merely reported material sent in from churches and given to it by church leaders. Parr (2000) suggests that there was not a lot of creativity or innovation coming from "chaps in high places. . . . So I just went back into my shell and tried to keep it afloat and tried to brighten it up a bit." He introduced an editorial of more substance than previously and he also included his own style of writing which was "brighter than some." "Brighter than some" is a modest assessment. In reality, his force of personality and the inclusion of humour, particularly with his back page news notes, made *Record* a must read for many church members. Subscriptions increased under his tenure until it became free for all church members. In his editorial techniques there was little editing of articles except to correct errors of logic or grammar. He was also hamstrung by the expectation that anything sent in would be published. However, this added to the effect that it was like a letter from home that shared even the inconsequential and the gossip among friends. More than any editor before or since, Parr developed a strong personal following as he developed a chatty, inclusive style in *Record* that carried the magazine despite some of the other content.

His approach was what would be called conservative, at least by today's standards. However, his style gave popular appeal to *Record* that drew in more readers while maintaining support for the church's core values and lifestyle positions. Beginning the role as a "lay person" (he had been out of church employ for about 14 years) he expected to be given some guidelines. In fact, there were none and few contacts from church administration, "But you knew that Big Brother was watching you, and you didn't [do things] that might rock the boat" (Parr, 2000).

Where Parr had brought a common touch to *Record,* Geoffrey Garne brought a more authoritative approach and was immediately perceived to be more conservative than Parr. As already noted (Chapter 6), Garne brought his own values and beliefs to the

role in a difficult period of the church's history. He (Garne, 2000) tells of receiving "heaps and heaps and heaps of mail":

> The CBs [Concerned Brethren] had a very, very strong burden, you know, that the beliefs were being threatened. . . . Others felt that there needed to be a lot more emphasis on the gospel rather than on the doctrines of the church. . . . I couldn't accommodate everybody, so I simply decided I wasn't going to accommodate anybody.

Parr offered to take on *Record*, but Garne did not originally realise this was part of his role. He edited the South African *Signs of the Times* and believed, when offered the position in Australia, that his main task would be to edit the Australian *Signs of the Times*. With hindsight, he (Garne, 2000) says, "I think being thrown in at the deep end was possibly the best way. . . . I don't suppose that I would, if I had the experience over again, want to be forewarned." Despite being "thrown in at the deep end," there was no consultation or brief given to him by church administration.

Garne adopted the philosophy that *Record* was the mouthpiece of the Adventist Church for members and his approach was flavoured by his growing up in an Adventist home, being part of a small country church, attending an Adventist tertiary institution and working as a minister within the church, including seven years in church administration as a conference president. As editor, "I felt it my duty to simply reflect and present the values that were precious to me and the teachings that I personally believed in, and I simply went on doing that" (Garne:2000).

He sensed that neither the "Fordites" nor the "CBs" particularly wanted him in his role. This he shrugs off, but is disturbed by memories of "certain pastors" who regarded him with suspicion or who were not sure of his position. He was never sure whether he had the support of many ministers. Some showed clear support:

> And there were others who sort of held me at arms length. I found this very disturbing. But looking back, I realise that many of these men had been students who had sat at Des Ford's feet, and held him in high esteem, so they kind of felt that anything that Des said and did must be right. (Garne:2000)

Garne continued an editorial style similar to Parr's. While he did not demonstrate the same flair as Parr in his writing style, it is doubtful that it would have been received in the same way because the Ford issue had changed the church landscape dramatically. Members were openly taking sides, with their magazine perceived to be taking a conservative stance in response. During this period, despite the issues, *Record* maintained the letter from home approach that served it well under Parr.

During Garne's tenure, the South Pacific Division president, Parmenter, retired and Walter Scragg was appointed. Garne (2000) says, "I just had a hunch . . . as soon as ever Brother Scragg took over the reins that he would want a change in editor. I just knew from the moment he came that my days were numbered." Garne was replaced at the next division session in 1985 and he left what he called the "hot seat."

When James Coffin came to Australia in 1986, he came with a plan for *Record*. He had been in negotiations with Scragg (see Appendix E, page 317) and he (Coffin, 1999) wanted to develop a magazine that was journalistically sound, selective in what was printed, spending more time on editing and rewriting, if necessary, material to make it more readable. He argued for a more candid and open publication. He saw one of the problems *Record* faced was in the type of statements released by church administrators in a "pontifical statement" style.

> It was *the* official, absolute, comprehensive statement. . . . The problem was that the people would go through that pontifical statement with a fine-tooth comb, rip it apart and there was no way [administrators] could distance themselves from it (Coffin, 1999).

He persuaded administrators that with *Record* staff reporting the information as journalists, they could distance themselves from statements and *Record* would at least appear to be far more open and there would not be an expectation that all the details would be printed, only the most important.

Coffin was sensitive to the Ford crisis. He had been an assistant pastor at Avondale Memorial church (from 1978 to 1981), a large church on the drive into Avondale College where Ford had been head of the theology faculty, during the time when the theological issues promoted by Ford had gained prominence and he had been defrocked.

> That was an interesting place for me to be at the time. . . . Because we had college teachers who were members of our church [which is not the college church], we had college students who were members of our church, and we had about 40 retired pastors who were members of our church, plus a large group of old-timers. . . . and I saw the kinds of tensions that existed there (Coffin, 1999).

He set out to attempt to initiate dialogue between the various groups through the pages of the *Record*.

> My goal was to try to support the 27 Fundamentals of the church, but at the same time allow people a significant amount of latitude to express views and opinions and try to use this as a sort of catharsis to help bring healing. . . . It was a slow process for people to catch on to the fact that no longer was everything that was printed in the *Record* supposed to be absolute[ly] orthodox (Coffin, 1999).

To this he added an attitude that downplayed the triumphalism "inherent within the *Record*." He tried to be a "little less flamboyant in how we congratulated ourselves, without taking away the inspirational component." While taking a "more objective view of ourselves as a denomination [and] as congregations" by printing the positive and the negative, he also moved away from presenting other denominations in a bad light.

Scragg (1999) told Coffin that he expected there would be those who would not understand what they were trying to do, but that he would protect him where possible. Scragg says there were occasions when he had to do just that, particularly with some administrators who had lost access to *Record* in a form they were used to, and he came "under fire from some of my fellow administrators" over the letters page in particular. Some even suggested it was time to remove the preparation of *Record* from Warburton in Victoria back to the division office in Wahroonga, NSW, to gain control.

Soon after making some of these changes, Coffin received letters that were "very, very strong. They were vindictive, hateful." During the time he was editor (a little more than five years) he detected an evolution taking place among many who had at first opposed the changes. Even if they were still opposed, he sensed there was a change of tone, a "general respect" developing.

In contrast to both Parr and Garne, Coffin left on his own terms, resigning from his position in 1991 to return to the United States to pastor a church in Orlando, Florida.

Editors as agents of change

In commercial print, particularly the mass media, the personality and style of the editor is not expected to be on show. In a church's print each editor's personality and emphasis is on open display. There is a reshaping of *Record* to their will and style and, in a sense, *Record* comes to fit the shape of the editor. This goes against expectations within a religious minority where a homogenous press would be anticipated. Yet Parr brought with him a style and understanding of editing that had developed outside the church which, it could be argued, helped him bring a livelier feel to *Record.* Garne, on the other hand, had served as an editor within the church and, having played both ministry and administrative roles in the church, brought those kinds of concerns and backgrounds with him. The difference between the situation with Parr and Garne, and that of Coffin is marked. Parr and Garne changed *Record* to their style and approach. The changes they brought came from their own initiative. Coffin was introduced as an agent of change, a change negotiated with church authorities.

From their work, each of the three editors can be placed at different sites on a liberal-conservative continuum. Parr and Garne are both within conservative ranks producing a controlled magazine that reflected both Adventist core values and Adventist

lifestyle values. Parr had introduced a livelier magazine, but not one that allowed much dissent; he sensed Big Brother was watching and acted accordingly. Garne was perceived as taking the magazine down a more conservative path than Parr. Coffin was encouraged to shift *Record* to a centrist position. From a sociological perspective, *Record* was more effective as a tool for shoring up the church and its boundaries under Parr and Garne, for it spoke with certainty, it walked in step with the church's sectarian roots and supported the status quo. It may have had little impact on those who were more progressive (liberal), but it served an expected diet every week. It represented orthodox Adventism and defended it with vigour. From a communication perspective, if changes had not been introduced, *Record* may have been gradually marginalised and seen as irrelevant by the majority in a church trending away from these positions.

Coffin attempted to shift *Record* into a more centrist position and to allow more freedom in the views expressed while supporting the fundamental beliefs of the church. He (Coffin, 1999) says it took time for people to realise that not everything printed in *Record* was absolutely orthodox. The difficulty he had, as he explains it, is that the "liberals" complained about the "right-wing presentations" allowed in the magazine and the "conservatives" complained about the "more open presentations." The conservative wing could also complain about the loss of what can be described as the church's sectarian roots, and the liberal wing about the sense that *Record* had not gone far enough. More significantly, the middle ground was left with questions rather than the certainties of previous times. Then there were those at the extreme ends of the conservative-liberal continuum who rejected *Record*'s position completely. He (Coffin, 1988:2) explained the dilemma he faced in an editorial (see Appendix F, page 319, for the full text) written specifically about letters to the editor, but also referring to articles appearing in *Record*. He hoped readers would keep the "diversity of readership in mind

when they encounter material that is not catering to their specific needs." However, he acknowledges that this would not impress those at the extreme edges of the church:

> A small percentage on the far left have written the editors off as mere stooges of the administration. They think we are programmed to do what we are told, when we are told—that we never have an original thought of our own.
>
> On the far right, a small group have written us off as apostates because we even admit that we are trying to minister to a broad spectrum. There is only one way (their way), a narrow way, and anything that doesn't fit within these narrow parameters is anathema.
>
> We've accepted defeat in trying to minister to these two groups. There's no way we can win. But we do try to keep the other 90 per cent of the church constantly in mind, seeking a blend of articles within and between issues that will meet the needs of the total spectrum (Coffin, 1988:2).

Each editor became an agent of change for *Record* and, at least for Parr and Garne, the change followed the fit of the editor. Coffin was encouraged to shift ownership away from church administrators and help it reflect the membership. This was a much more intentional and dramatic change, and caused a strong reaction from some members. While Coffin may have produced a magazine that appealed more to the majority of church members across a broad spectrum, he found it impossible for it to be acceptable to all members. Coffin (1999) may have sensed that a "degree of respect" from both sides that grew out of the process of change introduced into *Record*, but the acceptance of diversity led the church's print product away from its sectarian roots.

Keepers of the traditions

Where editors play a strategic role and prove to be agents of change, those who hold positions of authority are keepers of the traditions. They have been appointed with "universe maintaining legitimation" (Berger and Luckman, 1969:135-6) and given the authority to do that. So, while there is change, there is also continuity that reinforces the

organisation's reason for being. Here, again, the concept of ownership needs to be considered.

For the mass media, ownership is usually easily defined and limited to an individual or individuals (major shareholders, perhaps). *Record* is the self-proclaimed official publication of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division. So the church owns it. It can be argued that, theoretically, all 60,000 or so church members in Australia and New Zealand are the owners. Funding for *Record* comes from church members and from church institutions established by the church through church members. Some members have different roles and authority may be given to them within the church, but they still fall under the category of church member. *Record* readers may have a stronger sense of ownership than in the past, but this should not be interpreted as ownership in the sense of control. The 60,000 members as "shareholders" of *Record* have little or no input into or influence upon *Record,* unless it is through their role as the audience.

The idea of members as owners and audience or, rather, the entire audience being the owners signals a significant difference between *Record* and print in the commercial media. Among the owners, as among any shareholder group, some voices are heard above others. However, with shareholders in a public company, authority tends to come with the number of shares held by the individuals. If ownership of the *Record* belongs to all church members, this group is too large to have a well-defined influence as owners. In the case of the church where each shareholder is, theoretically, equal, that equality has little impact when it comes to *Record.* That comes from those with position or influence within the church. There are those who are given the authority to act as owners. That authority is shown in a variety of ways.

The appointment or reappointment of an editor is where the top-down influence by those in authority is seen at its greatest. In the most recent case (2003) a search committee of five was appointed. All except one were senior church administrators (and, with one exception, male). They reported back to a nominating committee (who nominate a name for consideration), which also has a predominance of church administrators. The name of the individual decided upon was presented to the South Pacific Division executive committee for approval, a committee of some 60 members that meets twice a year. This is a representative committee from Australia, New Zealand and island nations in the Pacific that come within the borders of the division. The majority on this committee are church employees. The procedure allows for heavy input from church administrators, again the top-down influence. They also expect that the editor will have a track record of support for the church and have played a positive role within the church.

Once appointed, an editor is normally expected to serve for five years, but then faces review or replacement.[4] The editor has not been specifically targeted in any particular way by this process of appointment that, with variations, is the same for senior church administrators and church department directors. As seen by the "hunch" Garne had about his continuing tenure, the system allows newly appointed or reappointed administrators to have a strong say in who should be editor.

A senior church administrator, the secretary of the division, is a consulting editor and is a liaison between church administration and the editor. Contact normally tends to be limited, but the secretary's role is to act as an advisor, to give counsel and to make contact if there is a perceived problem. There is also an expectation that the editor should be alert to current emphases and positions taken by the administration on issues. Administrators expect to have access to church membership through *Record* if they

sense a need, or can give direction as to what issue or story should be followed through. On "sensitive" issues they, or a representative, will want to see the final text before it is printed. It should be added that this is not unusual for a denominational or church paper, nor for many voluntary, nonprofit organisations.

Church administrators have authority within the church community. Their power is different from those who have top-down influence in society who want to use mass media to influence people toward their cause, for these people come from outside the media organisations. Church administrators tend to have authority to use *Record* as if they were owners because their appointment gives them influence inside an organisation with a print-media arm. There is an expectation that *Record* and church leaders will be working to achieve common outcomes rather than working against each other, and that *Record* will support leaders' positions, even if letters from members may challenge a position a church leader takes. Few of the powerful in the broader community have the kind of influence over the mass media that authorities within the church have, for two reasons: the authority given to church administrators allows them to act as owners, and a church paper is a "more comforting press" (Osborne, 2002:2). This does, however, place *Record* in danger of losing credibility. In this case, letters to the editor play an important role in allowing dissent and add credibility to the concept of openness and of input from members.

Record readers have usually made some kind of personal commitment and personal investment in the Adventist Church that produces the magazine, which can, of course, lead to a more passionate response for or against what is published. The audience can attempt to influence *Record* in several ways. This can be done directly through letters to the editor. Pressure is sometimes brought to bear through personal correspondence to the editor. Occasionally, a group of individuals, sometimes through

their congregational church board, will write to make their point. Often these individuals or groups of people will also send copies of letters to church administrators in an attempt to bring into play the top-down influence. In this process there is little difference between what happens with *Record* or mass media where individuals or groups (lobby groups, perhaps) attempt to influence the media. In the outcome, the audience of *Record* can have far greater results because the smaller size of the church means that some kind of personal contact can more easily be made with those with the authority to make changes. Again, the outcome is dependent on those with authority.

However, just as the mass media is limited in the extent to which it can push the boundaries of society's values without creating a reaction, there are certain expectations from an in-house publication. When these expectations are not met, or perceived not to be met, the reaction can be quite strong; for instance a June 2003 letter to the editor called for an apology from a writer and the editor "for allowing such an article to be published in *Record*" (Nevell, 2003:12).[5] A sense of anger and betrayal is understandable when an individual or group of individuals feel let down by the print media of the organisation in which they invest effort and resources. Individuals within a group will have different senses of where various boundaries should be placed or whether the "debate" has been kept "within the bounds of acceptable premises" (Herman and Chomsky, 1988:298). The risk for the print-media product in challenging its society's values within a well-defined group is greater than that for the commercial media, but neither dare challenge overarching values in a sustained way.

While there is also room for the dissonant voices and a greater variety of opinions within *Record,* there is no indication from respondents of a desire to have a completely open press without limitations on that which is published. In fact, there are regular calls for limits to be placed on comments, particularly in the letters section. The

evidence is that most respondents have, generally, a common understanding with administrators concerning the purpose of *Record.*

That there has been change in *Record* is obvious. However, that needs to be balanced with the fact that there has been a continuing promotion or defence of the fundamental beliefs and the core values of Adventism. Without these, the church loses its reason for being and if its print does not support them it breaches its own purpose. In this, those with authority serve as the keepers of the traditions and, even though some members may want to draw the borders of the traditions differently, there is general support from them for those in authority to serve in this way.

Summary

The chapter highlights a number of aspects about change in the Adventist Church particularly as it relates to its print activities. First, despite the church's long history in using print to promote its activities and beliefs to the public, it did not have a fully developed strategy regarding the role of print for influencing church members. Material was gathered and published, and so long as it appeared to promote Adventist activities and attitudes and the church members did not complain, publication was not contested. Complaints that may have been received regarding material appearing in the *Record*, for example, would have been moderated by the fact that the publication was overseen directly by the leading Adventist authorities. Second, numerous individuals over the years had carried out the role of editor of *Record* and it would appear that the primary criteria for appointment to the role of editor was that the individual was a committed Adventist and could write. Where Parr had been a teacher and an editor, the three who followed were Adventist pastors. The most recent (2004) appointment, Nathan Brown, has a background in law and literature, but with an impressive list of published articles

in the Adventist press. Success in the role as editor was measured by their ability to articulate the views of the church and a capacity to report on the activities of the churches across the South Pacific Division. Successful editors had extensive and well-worked Adventist networks, and established relations of confidence with pastors and key authorities in the organisation. Third, the Ford controversy highlighted the important role that the editor can play in influencing opinion in the Adventist Church. The relatively quick succession of three different editors during the Ford years (Parr, Garne and Coffin) illustrate the evolution of an intentional editorial policy in the Adventist Church (which would lead to a formal statement of purpose in 1996), the capacity of editors to influence the opinion of members on issues being debated within the church, and the idiosyncratic styles of editors and how these affected the publication of *Record*.

Endnotes

[1] The same exclusions as for Knight are in force: verse, weddings, obituaries and advertisements. Two other exceptions should also be noted: During 2002, a monthly *Record/Review* was produced that included an eight-page *Record* and a 24-page issue of the *Adventist Review*. Only the *Record* is considered because the *Review* material comes from the United States. The other exception is the first *Record* in September, which is a series of Week of Prayer readings, also produced in the United States.

[2] The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) prides itself on "disinterested" service to others. It also has the confidence of AusAID, the Australian Government's overseas aid funding agency, and is a regular recipient of AusAID funding.

[3] James Coffin did work at the *Washington Post* for a time, but on a limited basis while employed as an editor on *Adventist Review*.

[4] The editor's role is considered a "sensitive" position and my predecessor warned that, from his experience, the discussion on reappointment would take more time than most other positions because of the profile of the editor. My experience of undergoing this procedure of reappointment twice has confirmed what he said. Put it down to the fact that the editor's sins are seen in *Record* on a weekly basis.

[5] This kind of reaction to articles in *Record* is rare, but in this case an article about drought, prayer and God was outside the letter writer's expectation of how God worked.

SECTION FOUR

Conclusion

Kapitzke (1995:90), an Adventist academic, recognises *Record* as the "most influential periodical published by the church" for church members. Her assessment is based on its free availability and the fact that *Record* engages with issues of relevance to Adventists. Her investigation led her to the conclusion that "Seventh-day Adventists need critical literacy skills" (Kapitzke, 1995:279), although this observation came not from the examination of print, but of literacy in Adventism, specifically within a Queensland congregation. This study has also shown that *Record presents* a mirror of the Adventist Church, the organisation that publishes it. The organisation as well as its print have become a part of the research. The study has highlighted a church organisation that has grown dramatically during its 150-year history and the pressures that a changing church context bears on its print. In the chapter that forms the conclusion, the main aim is to underscore the key findings and spell out some of the implications regarding print within voluntary, nonprofit organisations.

Chapter 11

The Role of Print in a Changing Adventist Environment

This study on the role of print in the Adventist organisation has highlighted that print does not have a life of its own, but acquires life from the organisation that produces it. The products of print are given shape and form by those with influence within the organisation, by those involved in its production and, in a limited way, by its readers. Any group's print communication will reveal many things about the group. Cohen (2004:64) suggests that the "ideal newspaper should be like a portrait of a small town: the dark streets and the shanties and the mansions all visible at once." A newspaper for the mass market will only have a minor interest in the everyday, but given time it will give some view also of the society in which it is produced. A voluntary, nonprofit's newsletter will produce a portrait of its organisation, but it is one that is more easily controlled than the mass media by those who have influence and it may be shaped to their will.

This study of print within the Adventist Church underscores the various ways print comes to embody the life and character of the organisation producing it. To understand print within the Seventh-day Adventist community, it is necessary first to understand the community. An organisation is often shaped by its origins and history, particularly if these have helped give the group definition. This will be reflected in its print products. During times of crisis, within or outside the group, there is a tendency to defend or promote the basic philosophies and beliefs of the group. The strength of the

defence depends on the strength of the perceived threat. A successful organisation may not realise or take time to realise the full extent of the threat coming from outside and will tend to use tried and true, and tested approaches from the past in responding through its publications.

In the Adventist Church, the major influences brought to bear upon print are from those who have been granted authority within the group. They may choose to take a directive approach that does not allow for dissent. In some organisations this may be tolerated, but it would not work for most within a pluralistic society. On the other hand, if those with authority attempt to move too far from principles, philosophies and core values of the group or, in some instances, from the position of the founders of the group, members will protest.

The findings of this study have been presented mainly with reference to Seventh-day Adventists in Australia and New Zealand, yet the principles are relevant in a broader context. The salient findings of the study are presented in the following sections as propositions highlighted in italics.

Research process

The research methods used in the present study were mainly qualitative in orientation. The study draws on data from interviewing 41 *Record* readers and conducting 10 focus groups. A further 21 church pastors were interviewed by phone concerning liberal and conservative tendencies. Those who participated also completed a questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to gather personal information and opinions and helped facilitate the interviews and to a lesser extent, the discussion in the focus groups. The methodology used aimed to identify the role of print in readers' lives by using *Record*

as a case study. This has been augmented by content analysis to gain a greater understanding of themes and emphases within Adventist print.

Print and organisation structure

A key finding of the present study is that *whether intentionally or unintentionally a voluntary organisation's print embodies many of the characteristics of that organisation. Print mirrors the organisation.* With regards to *Record*, the focus of the case study, Knight (1977:140) described it as the "most authentic representation of Adventist culture" in print. One would anticipate that if someone without prior knowledge of the Seventh-day Adventist Church came across a bundle of recent issues of *Record*, even from a cursory glance they would learn much about the organisation that produces it. The numerous references to institutions, including hospitals, schools, a health food company, bookshops, aged-care facilities, publishing and other media productions, with advertising for services and products as well as positions vacant, would lead them to conclude that the Adventist Church places high priority on its institutions.

The same reader would quickly identify the socio-economic mix of the Adventist community and other demographics about the members. The magazine is replete with images of white-collar, middle-aged, middle-class people, and while women are not exempted, the temptation would be to see the church as a male-dominated organisation. Adventists have extensive operations in developing parts of the world, but it would be easy for the reader to conclude that the energy source is from middle-class people and that the Adventist organisation seeks to identify with the middle classes. Moreover, the reader would discover that the language used in the text demonstrates an expectation that readers have a high level of literacy, which is an

extension of the emphasis that this organisation places on education. From a cursory reading of *Record,* this hypothetical reader would also note occasional references to politicians at key church events such as the opening of buildings, suggesting a group courting community support.

The group has made a strong commitment to communication through print with its financial support of a free, weekly magazine. Here is an organisation that believes communication plays an important role in promoting and supporting its purpose. However, from the diversity of information available, the reader would have difficulty in knowing exactly who *Record* is pitched at other than to say, in general terms, members of the church, those with interest in the organisation. The study has shown that there is a close interrelationship between organisational features and print. The correlation between a group and its print products is far greater in voluntary, nonprofit organisations than in commercial publications because there is no intention that the organisation behind mass media, for instance, should be on display.

Continuity and change

A second key finding of the present study is that *changes within a voluntary organisation are reflected in its printed material, as are its core values.* If a reader without prior knowledge who has seen a cross-section of current *Records* was also given copies from 25 and 50 years ago they would immediately note some significant changes in the organisation. At a general level some changes in *Record* would be obvious, such as more photographs and illustrations, and greater immediacy of news in current magazines. More significantly, the reader would observe a change in style from a "chatty" approach from earlier magazines to the more formal approach of today.

Perhaps the reader would encounter, through the pages of Adventist print, an organisation that is currently much larger and more complex than its precursor.

Fifty years ago the church could boast 803,000 members (31,000 in the South Pacific; 22,000 in Australia and New Zealand), 25 years ago it was 2.9 million (122,000 in the South Pacific; 47,000 in Australia and New Zealand), currently it is 13 million (358,000 in the South Pacific; 62,000 in Australia and New Zealand). This growth has been reflected back into the church's print pages, showing a church of greater complexity with a larger variety of voices now detected. With regard to *Record,* for instance, one could argue that because of this increase in church membership, the publication out of necessity had to become more inclusive and accessible. However, the present study has shown an ambivalence and uncertainty as to how best to handle through the printed page issues the church faces. The data from respondents indicates a desire for more openness and yet uncertainty about where the boundaries of that openness should lie. Organisations in transition inevitably generate conflicting signals of what is occurring and it is only with the passing of time that the lasting significance of those changes can be judged. It could be argued that what is being illustrated is a maturing of the organisation and its leadership.

There is evidence in Adventist print that the Adventist Church is seeking to be more embracing or understanding of those outside the church and of those who differ within it. The sense of triumphalism of earlier times is not as pronounced in its publications and there are more references to Adventists engaging with other groups in humanitarian or social work. The letters to the editor make some allowance for dissonant voices in ways not apparent in earlier years. Letters and articles have been published that question certain understood church lifestyle positions or "standards." These challenges to accepted interpretations and disparate reports test bonding. The

changes evident in Adventist publications like *Record* also demonstrate greater accommodation and growing complexity within the organisation. Here is a group under pressure to embrace its diversity.

At the same time, the hypothetical reader would come across some things that have not changed. There is no change, for instance, in the purpose of *Record*. The core values and Adventist beliefs are a "no-go zone" and are not challenged. In fact, one of the most salient findings of the present study is the sense of uncompromising commitment to Adventist core beliefs.

What a reader with no prior information would encounter in Adventist publications is an organisation in transition. Some sociologists may interpret these changes as evidence of movement along the church-sect continuum toward becoming a denomination (Wilson, 1975a:34-43). However, it is difficult to gauge with any degree of accuracy the extent of these changes. A significant number of respondents in the present study are aggrieved with what they find in *Record* and see it as attacking core values even if others suggest that only non-core values are being questioned.

Ownership and control of print

A third finding of the present study relates to the issue of ownership and control of print. Those who have authority within a voluntary organisation are the guardians of the traditions and have responsibility for deciding how best to use the group's print media. In simple terms the choice ranges between following an authoritarian model, where communication by those in power is produced *for* the members, or adopting an embracing model, where communication is produced *by* the members. As the case study has shown, *Record* embodies both models. In its history, *Record* has been generated by those in positions of power *for* the people, but with attempts made to transform it into a

newsletter *of* the people. These attempts culminated in an intentional decision in the 1980s to make it *of* the people.

The present study suggests that church authorities still retain the greatest and most immediate influence on print notwithstanding changes in the rhetoric about ownership. This influence, through the appointment of the editor, setting the purpose statement, having free access to the organisation's print media, and being able to call the editor to account, demonstrates that church authorities retain the rights of ownership. That said, attempts to shift ownership of *Record*, for instance, with the introduction of stronger journalistic standards and a greater emphasis on the reader, make good communication sense for a more interesting and embracing magazine and allow readers a stronger voice within its pages. However, the study has shown that readers perceive and welcome the need for ownership and openness, but with limitations. With core values they demand a more authoritative stance. There is no strict demarcation but an overlapping of that which is *for* the members and that which is *of* the members. The study has highlighted that *in a voluntary organisation, tension develops when those with authority and who have control over print desire to transfer ownership to its members.* Conservative-minded members resist this change because they expect Adventist publications to endorse the beliefs and values of the organisation. Liberal-minded readers are cynical of claims of transferring ownership to the members when in reality organisational control has not changed. This is an ongoing tension that may never be resolved in a voluntary organisation.

Voice for members

A fourth finding is that *as more voices are introduced in print within a voluntary organisation, the tension between individuals adhering to the past and those engaging*

with the present intensifies, and the demand for the publication to defend core values becomes more deliberate. The opportunity for members of a voluntary group to have a stronger voice in their print product may satisfy the expectations of most, but will only partially meet the needs of some and fail in its communication task with others. In the examination of *Record,* for example, the attempt to shift ownership to members gave them greater freedom to comment and disagree with articles and concepts published, and with decisions made by those in authority. This helped balance out the level of top-down influence perceived by members, but at the same time there is no free flow of information because controls are in place to protect against any attack on core values.

Lifting some controls over member input increased the number of dissonant voices being heard. However, this proved threatening particularly to conservatives who prefer to see *their* magazine supporting *their* understanding of Adventist theology and lifestyle. What also became evident in the present study was the complexity of viewpoints and positions, and the variety of factions within the Adventist Church. This finding confirms that minority organisations are more complex than is assumed by observers from outside. The more opportunities provided for individual voices, the more this complexity is demonstrated and the greater the tension found in the group, particularly as those on the extreme edges are permitted to have their say. The study revealed that while a minority may rejoice in the diversity within the Adventist Church others found the diversity unsettling for themselves and the organisation.

While allowing more opportunities for the voices of members in Adventist publications makes good communication sense, those in positions of authority are now confronted by two realities. The first is that tensions and disagreements between church members are more easily managed by adopting a more authoritative stance. The second is that, by allowing these new voices, those in positions of authority place themselves

under greater scrutiny and accountability because their decisions and their comments can be called into question.

The research data regarding *Record* indicates that readers are of a view that while the church has drawn a line around core beliefs, members draw their own individual lines that differ in emphasis and without the preciseness of the organisation. So while core values may be sacrosanct, what is interpreted as core is in dispute. For some in conflict with *Record*, for example, the views expressed in *Record* appear to attack values they consider as being central to the Adventist Church. They appeal to the past for an authoritative style that provided stronger management of information. This kind of tension will never be resolved so long as a variety of voices have their place in a voluntary organisation's print.

Promoting core values and beliefs

A fifth finding regarding the role of print in organisations emerged from the content analysis of *Record*. The study highlighted that *the more an organisation perceives itself to be under threat, the more it will seek to protect its core beliefs in its publications.* While the Adventist Church encourages discussion of issues regarding organisation and structure and welcomes debate, it is very protective of the fundamental beliefs or core issues on which the organisation stands. There is no place for revisionism in this area, but for reinforcement, with no mechanism through print to discuss these issues even if members want to. There is common consent by respondents in the present study that there should be limits to discussion in Adventist publications even if they are not specific or differ about what those limits are.

The study highlighted that during periods of crisis, external or internal to the group, it is to these core values that the church turns to defend its position and to nurture

its members. Where there is a perception that core beliefs are being attacked by members, these members are dealt with, sometimes harshly. The examination of *Record* in times of crisis illustrates the types of responses found. During the second world war the crisis was outside the church and while the external difficulties of the war caused problems for the church, these were not perceived as a threat to the organisation. The response of the church during the war years was to nurture its members and to encourage them to remain faithful. During the 1960s the threat was both outside and inside, as the church adapted to pressures brought about by the sixties issues. With society and the church to a lesser extent in a state of flux, there was no real plan of response. While hindsight has recognised the full seriousness of the changes of the sixties, the uncertainty of what was happening at the time and the perception that these issues were not threatening to the church meant few efforts were made to articulate an Adventist response. By contrast, the Ford and Folkenberg crises illustrate altogether different strategies applied to those perceived as a threat to the organisation. Robert Folkenberg, the General Conference president, was accused of breaking a core value of fiscal integrity and was demoted, but there was no sense that this would shake the foundations of the church. Desmond Ford, the lecturer in theology, attacked some cherished beliefs and was not permitted a continuing role within the church. In the Adventist press, the strength of the responses came from the strength of the perceived threats. The perceptions of the threats may have proved correct because after both the Ford and Folkenberg crises there were periods of consolidation and regrouping, but the fallout from Ford's dismissal was far greater.

The study has highlighted that print within the Adventist Church is faced with a double dilemma: first, responding to social circumstances and, second, doing so in ways

that continue to receive the support of constituents, many of whom are wedded more to an idealistic past.

Strategic role of the editor

The study has highlighted that *the editor plays a strategic role in the print of both commercial and voluntary organisations, but the personality and stamp of the editor are even more critical in the latter.* The study has shown that both the personality and personal biases of the editor are highly visible in the print products of a voluntary organisation. This was seen, for example, in *Record,* when the appointment of different editors brought new emphases and styles.

In one sense the higher visibility and the personality of the editor coming through should not come as a surprise. A voluntary organisation's print product will normally have limited resources and the editor, of necessity, will be more of a driving force and be featured more often. What is surprising is that this individuality is contrary to what one would have anticipated of a religious minority. The expectation is of a more constrained and homogenous press. Yet, as seen with *Record,* the three editors studied, Robert Parr, Geoffrey Garne and James Coffin, brought their own agendas to the task, which are easily identifiable in both the direction they took the magazine and the content. It could be argued that one of the reasons why the Jehovah's Witnesses' *Watchtower* has remained basically unchanged over the decades is that it has no editor as such, but a committee that has oversight of the magazine. For the Adventist press, the choice of editors is a factor resulting in diversity.

The study has shown that the choice of editor has both positive and negative results because, even if the editorial style and approach is supported by the majority, it will not please the desires of all. The editor will be seen as supporting one group over

another. This is illustrated in Garne, who was seen to be supporting a conservative stance, and in Coffin who attempted to take the middle ground, but by his own admission was vilified by some conservative members and those at both extremes. The role of editors in a voluntary organisation is such that they are able to become agents of change within the organisation, more than editors of commercial publications within society.

Manifest and latent functions of print

A surprising finding of the present study is that *print can have unanticipated positive consequences in voluntary organisations.* The interviews revealed that while the *Record* was intended by church authorities to promote Adventist beliefs and values to members, it also functioned in a symbolic way to enhance the experiences of members with their church and their experience of community. Respondents indicate that *Record* enhanced their sense of belonging to a movement with purpose. For some members, accessing the *Record* was part of the ritual of belonging to the church, perhaps limited to the knowledge that they were involved in a shared experience in all churches in Australia and New Zealand. For these readers, *Record* evoked memories of people they had known in the past, encouraged belief and faith, and cultivated a sense of belonging. For other members *Record* was simply an information newsletter. It is difficult to measure the individual meanings people attach to a print document, but the importance that some readers place on the symbolic value of *Record* is a finding that should encourage any organisation and needs further exploration.

Nurturing community

Not surprisingly, the study confirms that *what distinguishes publications in a voluntary organisation from those of commercial enterprises is that they exist for and in community.* The study has shown that boundaries, real and symbolic, in a voluntary organisation's print help define that community. Tacey may be correct in stating,

> The art of community is the art of the soul, and community is what happens when deep, invisible bonds are shared, and when deep meanings are communicated between people, especially in the act of public ritual and in the presence of the sacred. (Tacey, 2003:217-8)

Print on its own does not do this unless the reader cooperates by bringing a desire to find and share in these invisible bonds and deep meanings that cannot be easily communicated in words and pictures. An aim of a voluntary organisation is to have its members, those who have already made a commitment to its cause and are readers of its print, experience this sense of belonging. The commercial publisher aims at more pragmatic and more easily measured results, which include providing information, entertainment and sales.

The attitudes of church members to the print product are an important part of the communication process and also of community enhancement. The examination of *Record* showed that members may choose not to read the newsletter. Others may have specific and limited reasons for reading it. Some will invest more of themselves and their resources into their church than others, which will impact on how they perceive *Record.* Members' sense of belonging may be enhanced when the print agrees with their vision of and for the group. For others it can become a part of their ritual and, as seen, *Record* may even take on icon status.

Those who belong to a voluntary organisation have already taken steps to creating community in a localised way. What print does is provide connections between like-minded people over distance. The study of *Record* illustrates how a publication can

enhance a sense of belonging to an organisation that is far greater than their local group. It can reinforce beliefs and goals that drew them into the group and remind them that they are part of a bigger purpose. Over time, a voluntary organisation's print creates a web of connections that reinforce identity and shared experiences (Lee and Newby, 1983:57-8).

Implications for *Record*

What is evident from the research is the broad range of opinions held by readers, an indication of the complexity found within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Coffin (1988:2), a previous editor of *Record,* found that "There's no way we can win" in "trying to minister to [the far right or the far left]," and concluded that *Record* will not be a useful tool for all members. In fact, some church members critical of *Record* may use the present study as evidence of a church in decline. The study makes it clear that while the Adventist Church is in transition and while most respondents agree with the current positioning of the church as they find it within its print, the complexity now within the church will make it difficult for *Record* to meet all perceived needs.

The study has shown that *Record* is guided by two forces: those of its core values, and decisions made by those who have been given authority as keepers of the traditions. Individual members may disagree over particular interpretations of Adventist belief, but these remain important for the church and ultimately set the boundaries for what is published. They help identify the church and it should be expected that *Record* would aim to promote and defend them. This is a major role of print in a voluntary organisation and for *Record* to do otherwise would separate it from the church, its source organisation.

The temptation for church authorities and the appointed editors, in the light of conflicting opinions about *Record,* is to bring it under greater control and turn it into a "safe" and conservative tool. The consequences of this would be to diminish the effectiveness of *Record* as a communication tool and the loss of the perception that even dissonant voices have a place in its pages and within the organisation.

Implications for the Adventist Church

The present study highlights a church in transition and this has implications for the Adventist community in Australia and New Zealand. The trends noted in this study could be interpreted as amounting to loss of sectarian commitment. A past General Conference president's fear that the Adventist Church could lose its sectarian heritage (Pierson, 1978:10) may be accurate. The church can be seen in its print as becoming more accommodating: by endeavouring to make the church more appealing to contemporary society, by becoming more professional in its print, by seeking to make provision to reflect more outlooks, and by establishing more formal links with other like-minded social organisations. With these kinds of accommodation there is always the possibility that the church could lose its distinctiveness and enthusiasm from members. It could be accused by some of lowering the boundaries, real and symbolic, which define the church as a community. Its print reveals a church heading down the track of becoming an established denomination with the potential that it could lose its central place in the lives of members and be reduced to an organisation of convenience. While it is difficult to anticipate the full consequences of these changes, the probability is that the Adventist Church will continue to exist but in a form different from the one members experienced in the past.

One could also anticipate the possibility of more tension between conservatives and liberals over the importance of doctrinal and prophetic interpretations. If this is the case, the task of Adventist publications such as *Record* will prove more difficult as conservative members become more vocal in calling for a return to positions that closely replicate the past. At the same time there will be calls for more openness in the Adventist press, as those with more liberal outlooks push for a contemporary church. Under these circumstances, the Adventist Church and its print would be faced with the dilemma of attempting to decide how best to nurture those who are committed to Adventism despite tensions between the groups. While social history reveals that any trend within an organisation may be overturned by a variety of intentional or unintentional forces, the future for the Adventist Church appears to be increasingly complex with two broad streams, conservative and liberal, in evidence in the organisation. Peaceful coexistence will continue to prove a challenge.

In its early years the Adventist Church acted as if it must publish or perish. Print and publishing became a continuing and core part of its activity for both outreach and nurture. This demands a high level of literacy among members, something this study does not attempt to analyse, nor does it attempt to understand the competency of members in this regard. Publishing generated growth, but now, as seen in *Record,* it also generates dissent. For Adventism, the protection of its core values in print will not allow it to reach the place where it could become a case of publish *and* perish, but the tensions within what has grown into a complex group will continue.

Print as promoter of community

This study on the role of print in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has demonstrated that print remains an obvious choice for communicating within voluntary, nonprofit

organisations. It has also shown that any examination of an organisation's print product reveals much about the organisation behind it. The study has shown the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be more diverse and more accommodating than presented in the literature. It reveals a print media that both embodies salient features of the organisation and at the same time allows dissonant voices to be heard, even if limits are placed upon the types of dissonance. Its print is embraced by members as upholding, defending and nurturing the core beliefs by the majority of members, even though some are critical of the content of the publications. This study further demonstrates that print can be a promoter of community within an organisation as it supports the group's core values, makes connections with members and enhances the group's symbolic and real boundaries.

Limitations of the study

However, as with other works of research, the present study has its limitations. It was noted that the interviewees were more conservative than those chosen at random for the focus groups. A random selection process may have avoided this bias among respondents. However, random selection would not have been practical in attempting to understand the diversity within the church. The "purposeful sampling" (Patton, 1980:100) approach targeted individuals with different outlooks. In the give and take of any selection process, the advantage in purposefully gaining the perspectives of respondents in different geographic locations outweighed the skewed outcome. Moreover, the conservative outlook of respondents possibly reflects accurately the attitudes and outlooks of members and pastors on the role of print in the Adventist community.

The issue of my role as editor of *Record,* the magazine that formed the case study, may also be conceived as a limitation. There is an obvious possibility of bias from my double roles as editor and researcher. Respondents may have understated negative evidence or downplayed criticisms of the organisation because they were being interviewed by the editor. There is also the possibility that my insider status influenced my role as researcher and my interpretation of the data. I believe the overall thrust and findings will stand scrutiny, and it is up to the reader to assess the extent to which I have succeeded in presenting an impartial account of the research findings.

Appendix A

Record survey

The following is a copy of the survey used in this study. Some questions used were either from or adapted from James Coffin's 1991 and the Fraser Jackson 1997 unpublished surveys. Jackson proved a helpful consultant in the preparation of the survey. The 41 interviewed, the 78 involved in focus groups, and the 21 pastors who selected those to be interviewed were asked to complete the surveys.

M O N A S H U N I V E R S I T Y

Record Survey

This survey is part of a post-graduate thesis "Constructing community through print media: Adventists and the *Record*," for a research degree at the Master of Arts level at Monash University and has been approved by the Standing Committee on Ethics in Research on Humans of Monash University (project 97/335). This research also has the approval of the Advance Study Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—May 30, 1997. This is an own-time research degree being undertaken by Bruce Manners. All information will be treated in strictest confidence.

Information about the *Record*

1. How long have you been a *Record* reader?

A. ☐ Less than one year
B. ☐ 1-2 years
C. ☐ 3-10 years
D. ☐ More than 10 years

2. How often do you read the *Record*?

A. ☐ Every issue
B. ☐ Most issues
C. ☐ Once a month
D. ☐ Sparodical
E. ☐ Almost never

3. How long do you normally spend reading an issue?

A. ☐ Less than 15 minutes
B. ☐ From 15 to 30 minutes
C. ☐ From 30 minutes to 1 hour
D. ☐ From 1 to 2 hours
E. ☐ More than 2 hours

4. In addition to yourself, how many others read your copy of the *Record*?

A. ☐ No-one else
B. ☐ 1 other person
C. ☐ 2 or 3 other persons
D. ☐ 4 or 5 other persons
E. ☐ More than 5 other persons

5. What are your reasons for reading the *Record*?
Place a TICK in a box describing the most important reason, and a CROSS in a box describing the least important reason.

A. ☐ To be informed about the church's activities in the South Pacific Division
B. ☐ To be informed about the church's activities out side the South Pacific Division
C. ☐ To learn more about Adventist doctrine
D. ☐ To gain insights into practical Christianity
E. ☐ Because it is suitable Sabbath reading
F. ☐ To help me understand the Bible
G. ☐ To be spiritually uplifted
H. ☐ To get news about people I know
I. ☐ To become aware of other Adventists' opinions.
J. ☐ Other (please state)

6. When do you normally read the *Record*?

A. ☐ During/between Sabbath school and church
B. ☐ Sabbath afternoon
C. ☐ Other times (please state)

7. The following statements seek to discover some of your opinions about the Record.
Please circle the appropriate number to indicate your reaction to each of the following statements (1—strongly agree; 2—agree; 3—no opinion; 4—disagree; 5—strongly disagree).

A. 1 2 3 4 5 A major task of the *Record* is to help being about unity of faith.
B. 1 2 3 4 5 A major task of the *Record* is to keep Adventists informed.
C. 1 2 3 4 5 A major task of the *Record* is to encourage discussion of issues facing the church.
D. 1 2 3 4 5 The *Record* should provide a forum for discussion of various viewpoints.
E. 1 2 3 4 5 The *Record* upholds the church's fundamental beliefs.
F. 1 2 3 4 5 The articles in the *Record* are generally relevant to the present needs of the Adventist Church.
G. 1 2 3 4 5 The *Record* should voice strong opinions about issues affecting society.
H. 1 2 3 4 5 The *Record* promotes Adventist lifestyle.
I. 1 2 3 4 5 The *Record* makes me feel like I belong to a wider church family.
J. 1 2 3 4 5 The news in the *Record*, as it relates to the church, is accurate.
K. 1 2 3 4 5 Even though I may disagree with some of the opinions expressed, the chance to speak candidly in the Letters section is healthy.
M. 1 2 3 4 5 The editorial mix of doctrine, Bible study, practical Christianity, opinion and news meets the spectrum of readers.
N. 1 2 3 4 5 The *Record* helps me in my spiritual life.
O. 1 2 3 4 5 Reading the *Record* makes me feel more enthusiastic about being an Adventist.

8. Where else do you go for information about the Adventist Church?

A. ❑ *Adventist Review*
B. ❑ Conference newsletter
C. ❑ *Spectrum*
D. ❑ *Remnant Herald*
E. ❑ Internet
F. ❑ Other (please state)

9. How important is the *Record* to you?

A. ❑ Very important
B. ❑ Important
C. ❑ No importance

10. If you did not receive the Record each week, TICK the TWO items from the following list that would be most important to you.

A. ❑ I would miss the Record as Sabbath reading.
B. ❑ I would feel a lesser sense of communication from church administration
C. ❑ I would feel less a sense of belonging to the wider family of Seventh-day Adventists.
D. ❑ I would miss the nurturing of my Christian faith.
E. ❑ I would miss the development of my understanding and Christian faith.
F. ❑ I would miss the development of my understanding of Seventh-day Adventist doctrine.
G. ❑ I would miss the encouragement to outreach for non-Christians.
H. ❑ I would be pleased about the reduction in cost to the church.

11. What do you use for devotional reading (tick more than one if applicable)?

A. ❑ Bible
B. ❑ Sabbath school Bible study guide (lesson pamphlet)
C. ❑ Devotional book of the year
D. ❑ Reading books by Ellen White
E. ❑ Magazines (please state name of magazines)

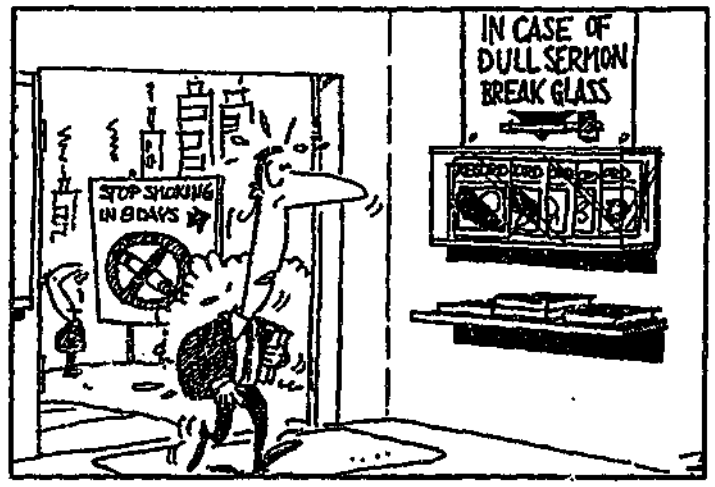
12. What sort of contribution does material in the *Record* make to your spiritual life and growth?

A. ❑ No contribution at all
B. ❑ A minor contribution
C. ❑ A significant contribution
D. ❑ A major contribution
E. ❑ Some material has been very important to me

13. Does the *Record* help or encourages you to speak about Jesus or witness for Him?

A. ❑ It does not have that effect on me
B. ❑ It provides some information that is hard to apply
C. ❑ It provides information that I have used
D. ❑ It provides good examples I have tried to follow
E. ❑ It provides real encouragement and help in witnessing

Cartoon for Comment



Do you find this cartoon amusing?

❑ Yes ❑ No

State briefly why you answered in that way.

Now state briefly the role you think the Record *should* play in your church.

Imagine This

James Timberton was once a regular attender at your church, but he has chosen not to attend. It has been two months since he was last at church. Would you:

❑ Leave his copy of the *Record* at church in case he should come back?
❑ Hope someone is calling by with a copy of the *Record*?
❑ Mail the *Record* to him?
❑ Use the *Record* as a helpful excuse to visit?
❑ Other (please state)

Is there any value in giving the *Record* to James?

❑ Yes ❑ No

If yes, which of the following comes closest to your reason for saying yes?

❑ So he can feel he's still part of the local church.
❑ To keep contact with him.
❑ To remind him that he is a part of a broad (Australia-New Zealand) church family.
❑ Hope that he will find something to encourage him to come back to church
❑ Other (please state)

14. Spiritual role
Please circle the appropriate number to indicate your reaction to each of the following statements (1—strongly agree; 2—agree; 3—no opinion; 4—disagree; 5—strongly disagree).

A. 1 2 3 4 5 I often pray about what I read in the *Record*.
B. 1 2 3 4 5 Some of the articles in the *Record* inspire me to be a more spiritual person.
C. 1 2 3 4 5 The *Record* helps me feel I am part of a larger spiritual family.
D. 1 2 3 4 5 The *Record* helps me see God at work in His church.
E. 1 2 3 4 5 The *Record* helps me in my devotional life.
F. 1 2 3 4 5 What I read in the *Record* often makes me feel closer to God.

15. Being part of a larger church
Please circle the appropriate number to indicate your reaction to each of the following statements (1—strongly agree; 2—agree; 3—no opinion; 4—disagree; 5—strongly disagree).

A. 1 2 3 4 5 The *Record* helps me keep in touch with the broader Adventist "family."
B. 1 2 3 4 5 It's important that the *Record* keeps me informed about what is happening in other parts of the church.
C. 1 2 3 4 5 The *Record* has helped give me a broader perspective of some issues.
D. 1 2 3 4 5 The *Record* helps me feel as if I belong to a larger family than I have in my local church.
F. 1 2 3 4 5 Sometimes I find it hard to believe that those who write letters to the editor are Adventists.

16. Have you ever written a letter to the editor?
A. ☐ Yes B. ☐ No

Imagine This

Old Mrs Smitherton became a church member in her early 20s. She's now 75 and because of poor health she's housebound.

Suggest three roles you think the Record could play in her life?

1.

2.

3.

Rate how important you think it would be for her to receive the *Record*? (1 means very important, 7 means of no importance.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very important — No importance

Imagine This

Dale Belfrew has been a supportive church member for 10 years. He enjoys reading the *Record*, but he doesn't like the cartoon. "I've trained my eyes to avert themselves from that corner of the page," he tells anyone who will listen.

What would you say to him (you may choose more than one response)?
☐ "I agree!"
☐ "There are others who like the cartoon."
☐ "It's just as well we're all different, isn't it."
☐ "How boring if the *Record* only appealed to one person's taste."
☐ Other (please state)

How important is it that the *Record* appeals to different tastes? (1 means very important, 7 means of no importance.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very important — No importance

17. Have you ever written an article for the *Record*?
A. ☐ Yes B. ☐ No

18. The *Record* is currently weekly (49 times a year). What frequency would be best?
A. ☐ Weekly
B. ☐ Fortnightly
C. ☐ Monthly

19. How important is it that every church in Australia and New Zealand receives the Record on the same Sabbath. (1 Means very important, 7 means of no importance.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very important — No importance

Information about you

20. Sex
☐ Male ☐ Female

21. Age
☐ 19 or under ☐ 20-24 ☐ 25-29 ☐ 30-39
☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-64 ☐ 65 or over

22. What is your national or ethnic background?
A. ☐ Australian (Aboriginal)
B. ☐ Australian (Caucasian)
C. ☐ Australian (Asian)
D. ☐ Australian (other)
E. ☐ New Zealander (Maori)
F. ☐ New Zealander (Polynesian)
G. ☐ New Zealander (Caucasian)
H. ☐ Pacific island national
I. ☐ Other

23. Marital status
A. ☐ Never married
B. ☐ Married
C. ☐ Widowed
D. ☐ Separated
E. ☐ Divorced

24. Education: Last level at school?
A. ☐ Primary school
B. ☐ High school
C. ☐ College—including TAFEs or CAEs
D. ☐ University

25. What type of schools did you attend?
A. ☐ Only Adventists schools
B. ☐ Mostly Adventist schools
C. ☐ Adventist and non-Adventists about equally
D. ☐ Mostly non-Adventist schools
E. ☐ Only non-Adventist schools

26. How long have you been a baptised member of the Adventist Church?
A. ☐ Not a baptised member
B. ☐ Less than one year
C. ☐ 1-3 years
D. ☐ 4-10 years
E. ☐ 11-20 years
F. ☐ More than 20 years

27. Do you have a formal position/s in your church?
☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please state what it or they are:

28. How involved are you in your church's activities? (Please circle an appropriate number, with 1 meaning "very involved" and 7 meaning " not very involved.")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very involved — Not very involved

29. How closely attached do you feel you are to the Adventist Church? (Please circle an appropriate number, with 1 meaning "very attached" and 7 meaning "not very attached.")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very attached — Not very attached

30. How do you feel about being an Adventist?
A. ☐ Terrific
B. ☐ Good
C. ☐ No feelings, I just am
D. ☐ Uncomfortable

31 As a Seventh-day Adventist, which of the following descriptions do you think describes you?
A. ☐ Liberal
B. ☐ Middle of the road with liberal leanings
C. ☐ Middle of the road
D. ☐ Middle of the road with conservative leanings
E. ☐ Conservative
F. ☐ None of above

Thank you for answering these questions. Please place the completed survey and the Informed Consent Form into the envelope and mail it back (no postage needed).

Quotable

"Let every article be full of practical, elevating, ennobling thoughts, thoughts that will give to the reader help and light and strength. Family religion, family holiness, is now to be honored as never before."

This was written about Adventist Church publications more than 100 years ago. Choose from the following responses the one that is the closest to your reaction to this statement.

☐ This statement is out of date and should not influence the *Record*.
☐ These principles should be followed in the *Record*
☐ I think the *Record* already follows these principles
☐ I wish the *Record* was more like this statement.

As you consider the above statement rate how close you see the Record to the statement. (1 means very close, 7 means not close at all.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very close — Not close at all

"The Record is the official paper of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division. Its role is to nurture, to educate and inform church members within the division."

Rate how well you think the Record does at "*nurture*" (with 1 meaning very well, and 7 meaning not at all)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very well — Not at all

Rate how well you think the Record does at "*educating*" (with 1 meaning very well, and 7 meaning not at all)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very well — Not at all

Rate how well you think the Record does at "*informing*" (with 1 meaning very well, and 7 meaning not at all)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very well — Not at all

Is there anything you would like to add to nurture, educate and inform?

"The Record makes me feel like I'm part of a community that's bigger than my local church."

This is a comment made by a church member.

Do you agree?
☐ Yes
☐ No

Appendix B

Demonstrations of Spirituality

Record readers gave a variety of understandings in response to the question, "How would you define a spiritual person?" Several had difficulty in answering the question during the interviews, while those involved in focus groups tended to bounce concepts around the group. Follow-up questions were particularly helpful, asking if respondents knew someone who they sensed was a spiritual person? and what was it about that person that made them feel this way? These questions helped clarify their thoughts. While those involved were Adventist, responses were not limited to concepts of spirituality within Adventism or Christianity, and four looked for descriptions of spirituality or a spiritual person within a variety of religious bodies, citing "Eastern religions," Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Within Christianity, illustrations were not limited to those within the Adventist Church, for instance, Mother Teresa and a Baptist pastor were mentioned (the pastor, though, as an illustration of one who did not demonstrate spirituality). One surprise was that only eight involved in the interviews and focus groups specifically linked spirituality to the "fruits of the Spirit." This term comes from the Apostle Paul in Galatians (5:22-4), where he wrote of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (including love, joy, peace and patience) developing in those who belong to Christ, and it seems an obvious link for persons with biblical knowledge. Several referred to these kinds of elements within the life of a spiritual person, but without making any direct connection. In one focus group, when one person responded that a

spiritual person has the fruits of the Spirit, another retorted, "What a cop out!" Perhaps others felt the same way.

While the respondents gave a variety of responses, demonstrations of spirituality may be subsumed under three broad categories: demonstrations of spirituality through a connection with God; demonstrations of spirituality within the personal life; and demonstrations of spirituality within relationships to others.

Demonstrations of spirituality through a connection with God

This concept was also expressed in terms of a connection or a relationship with Jesus. Because of the nature of this relationship, these demonstrations are subjective. They range from a spiritual person being one who believes in God and has complete trust and dependence on him, to having the sense that Jesus walks with them, or that they walk close to God. This relationship is personal and is described in terms of a love relationship involving the heart, mind and soul that is open, places God first and central and leads to obedience in response. This relationship has an impact on the life, with spiritual people knowing that God has changed their lives, they want to live the life Christ would live and this leads to the "image of Christ" or a reflection of God in their lives. It is expected there will be some excitement about this relationship and, when there is trouble, thoughts will turn immediately to God. A practical and measurable response will be found in a devotional life that includes prayer and Bible reading, which can be understood as spending time with God every day.

Demonstrations of spirituality within the personal life

As noted, an active devotional life is expected as a personal result of a spiritual connection with God. Other expected spiritual attributes may include humility,

sincerity, tolerance, gentleness, compassion, integrity and caring for others. Spiritual people will be easy going and cheerful, but firm when they want to be and have their life "together." Their life will be an "open book." While you may recognise them as a spiritual person when you meet them or "pick them out in a crowd by the way they speak," they will tend to go about quietly living saintly lives. The spiritual life is of central importance and spiritual people will talk naturally about spiritual matters without making another person feel out of place. In fact, they will talk openly about their prayer life, devotional reading and devotional life. There's a sense of peace about spiritual people, and a consistency in their lives, there is no "Saturday [Sabbath] face" that is differentiated from a week-day face. They have a value system, but are non-judgmental and supportive of others. They stand up for what they believe, have high principles, but are able to look honestly at their own battles and victories, and realise that Jesus is the answer to their problems. They are able to recognise and accept failure in their own lives and in those of others. They have a deep appreciation for spiritual things, something you can see in their lives because it impacts everything they do. You feel good when you are with them because they make you feel inspired, a little closer to God.

Demonstrations of spirituality in relationships with others

There are practical consequences to spirituality, say the respondents, because the love relationship with God becomes a priority and it shows itself in practical ways in relationships with others. Respondents see spiritual people wanting to reach out to others as Jesus did. Spiritual people will not be self-focused, but have an active faith. They will be seen doing more than praying. They will be in tune with people around them and accept people as they are without being judgmental. They will have a social

consciousness and a passion for people and helping others. In spiritual terminology they will be a "blessing" to those they come in contact with and be active in their church. Two illustrations were given of women who, though suffering deprivation, demonstrated their spirituality through helping others. Spiritual people are practical in their faith and in what they do.

This composite picture painted by respondents idealises spiritual people, making them "nice to know," as one woman comments about a friend she feels is a spiritual person. She also notes that everybody is different and some persons are more practical in demonstrating their spirituality, an important recognition that allows for differences within the experience and outworking of spirituality. Having attempted to illustrate Adventist spirituality in this way leaves us with precisely that, an illustration, not a definition. Lacking definition, we have done what Tacey (2000:17) suggests, talked "around the subject and provide[d] some hints and descriptions." Perhaps one respondent is correct when she says of spirituality, "It's indescribable. It's something you can't define, but it's there."

This reflects several realities: Spirituality is a slippery concept without any set definition, which makes it difficult to construct an understood, concrete boundary. Unlike some of its theology, there is no distinctive Adventist understanding of spirituality. In fact, some respondents openly talked of spirituality outside of Christianity and Adventism. Added to this is evidence that there is little that is distinctive between denominations in concepts of spirituality, or at least not in the terminology used (McGrath, 1999:13-14). Finally, spirituality, a relatively recent term within Protestant Christianity (in the past 50 years), would be expected to rate lower than theology or lifestyle, which has a far stronger tradition within the Adventist Church.

Appendix C

Tables Measuring Differences on a Conservative-Liberal Continuum

Table 9.1
Formal involvement in church
(Do you have a formal position/s in your church?)

N=125	Yes	No	Other	Totals %
Liberal	9.6	0.8	1.6	12.0
MOR Lib	19.2	4.8	0.8	24.8
MOR	21.6	2.4	—	24.0
MOR Con	18.4	6.4	—	24.8
Conservative	5.6	0.8	0.8	7.2
Other	5.6	1.6	—	7.2
Totals %	80.0	16.8	3.2	100

Key: MOR Lib: Middle of the road with liberal leanings. MOR: Middle of the road. MOR con: Middle of the road with conservative leanings.

Table 9.2
Amount of involvement in church
(How involved are you in your church's activities?

N=125	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Other	Totals %
Liberal	6.4	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.6	0.8	—	12.0
MOR Lib	10.4	4.8	4.8	2.4	1.6	0.8	—	—	24.8
MOR	6.4	7.2	6.4	2.4	0.8	—	0.8	—	24.0
MOR Con	10.4	4.8	2.4	1.6	2.4	3.2	—	—	24.8
Conservative	3.2	—	4.0	—	—	—	—	—	7.2
Other	4.8	1.6	—	0.8	—	—	—	—	7.2
Totals %	41.6	19.2	18.4	8.0	5.6	5.6	1.6	—	100

Key: 1 means very involved; 7 means not very involved. MOR Lib: Middle of the road with liberal leanings. MOR: Middle of the road. MOR con: Middle of the road with conservative leanings.

Table 9.3
Attachment to church
(How closely attached to you feel you are to the Adventist Church?

N=125	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Other	Totals %
Liberal	5.6	2.4	1.6	—	—	2.4	—	—	12.0
MOR Lib	6.4	11.2	4.8	—	0.8	—	—	1.6	24.8
MOR	15.2	5.6	0.8	1.6	0.8	—	—	—	24.0
MOR Con	15.2	4.8	3.2	0.8	—	—	—	0.8	24.8
Conservative	5.6	1.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	7.2
Other	4.8	1.6	—	0.8	—	—	—	—	7.2
Totals %	52.8	27.2	10.4	3.2	1.6	2.4	—	2.4	100

Key: 1 means very attached; 7 means not very attached. MOR Lib: Middle of the road with liberal leanings. MOR: Middle of the road. MOR con: Middle of the road with conservative leanings.

Table 9.4
Feelings about being an Adventist
(How do you feel about being an Adventist?)

N=125	Terrific	Good	No feelings	Uncomfortable	Other	Totals %
Liberal	5.6	4.8	0.8	—	0.8	12.0
MOR Lib	8.8	12.8	3.2	—	—	24.8
MOR	9.6	12.8	0.8	—	0.8	24.0
MOR Con	14.4	8.0	1.6	—	0.8	24.8
Conservative	4.8	2.4	—	—	—	7.2
Other	4.8	1.6	0.8	—	—	7.2
Totals %	48.0	42.[illegible]	7.2	—	2.4	100

Key: MOR Lib: Middle of the road with liberal leanings. MOR: Middle of the road. MOR con: Middle of the road with conservative leanings.

Table 9.5
***Record* and unity of faith**
(A major task of the *Record* is to help bring about unity of faith.)

N=125	Strongly agree/agree	No opinion	Strongly disagree/disagree	Other	Totals %
Liberal	6.4	1.6	2.4	1.6	12.0
MOR Lib	11.2	8.0	4.8	0.8	24.8
MOR	17.6	2.4	2.4	1.6	24.0
MOR Con	14.4	3.2	5.6	1.6	24.8
Conservative	5.6	—	0.8	0.8	7.2
Other	4.0	—	3.2	3.2	7.2
Totals %	59.2	15.2	19.2	6.4	100

Key: MOR Lib: Middle of the road with liberal leanings. MOR: Middle of the road. MOR con: Middle of the road with conservative leanings.

Table 9.6
***Record* and discussion of issues**
(A major task of the *Record* is to encourage discussion of issues facing the church.)

N=125	Strongly agree/agree	No opinion	Strongly disagree/disagree	Other	Totals %
Liberal	9.6	0.8	0.8	0.8	12.0
MOR Lib	23.2	—	1.6	—	24.8
MOR	20.0	3.2	0.8	—	24.0
MOR Con	18.4	0.8	5.6	—	24.8
Conservative	6.4	—	0.8	—	7.2
Other	5.6	0.8	0.8	—	7.2
Totals %	83.2	5.6	10.4	0.8	100

Key: MOR Lib: Middle of the road with liberal leanings. MOR: Middle of the road. MOR con: Middle of the road with conservative leanings.

Table 9.7
***Record* as a forum for discussion**
(The *Record* should provide a forum for discussion of issues facing the church.)

N=125	Strongly agree/agree	No opinion	Strongly disagree/disagree	Other	Totals %
Liberal	8.0	0.8	1.6	1.6	12.0
MOR Lib	22.4	1.6	0.8	—	24.8
MOR	15.2	4.0	4.8	—	24.0
MOR Con	16.0	1.6	6.4	0.8	24.8
Conservative	4.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	7.2
Other	6.4	0.8	—	—	7.2
Totals %	72.8	9.6	14.4	3.2	100

Key: MOR Lib: Middle of the road with liberal leanings. MOR: Middle of the road. MOR con: Middle of the road with conservative leanings.

Table 9.8
***Record* and enthusiasm for Adventism**
(Reading the *Record* makes me feel more enthusiastic about being an Adventist.)

N=125	Strongly agree/agree	No opinion	Strongly disagree/disagree	Other	Totals %
Liberal	6.4	0.8	4.0	0.8	12.0
MOR Lib	16.0	4.8	4.0	—	24.8
MOR	16.0	4.8	3.2	—	24.0
MOR Con	17.6	2.4	4.8	—	24.8
Conservative	3.2	0.8	3.2	—	7.2
Other	3.2	1.6	2.4	0.8	7.2
Totals %	62.4	15.2	21.6	0.8	100

Key: MOR Lib: Middle of the road with liberal leanings. MOR: Middle of the road. MOR con: Middle of the road with conservative leanings.

Table 9.9
***Record* and expression of opinions**
(Even though I may disagree with some of the opinions expressed, the chance to speak candidly in the Letters section is healthy.)

N=125	Strongly agree/agree	No opinion	Strongly disagree/disagree	Other	Totals %
Liberal	8.8	0.8	0.8	1.6	12.0
MOR Lib	23.2	0.8	—	0.8	24.8
MOR	20.8	1.6	1.6	—	24.0
MOR Con	23.2	—	1.6	—	24.8
Conservative	5.6	0.8	0.8	—	7.2
Other	5.6	0.8	0.8	—	7.2
Totals %	87.2	4.8	5.6	2.4	100

Key: MOR Lib: Middle of the road with liberal leanings. MOR: Middle of the road. MOR con: Middle of the road with conservative leanings.

Appendix D

A Study of *Record* Surveys

Including the survey conducted as a part of the research for this thesis, six reader surveys have been conducted since *Record* became available free to church members in 1980, the first in 1983. Editors conducted three, with one conducting two surveys at the same time, one for readers, another for ministers in a variety of roles and Adventist schoolteachers. L Fraser Jackson, now emeritus professor of Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, was involved in two surveys funded by *Record,* but independent of *Record.* Merolyn Coombs, as a partial requirement for a Master of Applied Science in Information Studies, conducted a limited survey in Sydney.

The surveys are here described according to the person(s) who conducted them and the year the findings were published:

Geoff Garne (1983) placed four copies of a brief readership survey into *Record* and readers were asked to fill one in, clip it out and return it. Many were bulk mailed from churches. The results were published in the February 5 and 12, 1983 *Record.* The aim of the survey was to gain some indication of readership habits relative to how often it was read, what was being read, when and where, and by whom else. Information about respondents included what other magazines they read. The returns totalling 3597 readers responding, are significant, but with 25,500 magazines shipped out each week and with multiple copies of surveys in each *Record* there was the possibility that families would work on this project together. The weakness of this method is that

respondents were self-selected with no safeguards to assure a broad cross section of the church.

The self-stated aim of the M G Townend and L Fraser Jackson survey (1986) was to gain a measure of opinion from church members about *Record*. It was designed to gain information from members that "would help the editors clarify appropriate goals for the magazine and shape the *Record* in a way which would better fulfil their readers' expectations." Further, it was designed to provide an understanding of the readership, their expectations and needs (Townend and Jackson, 1986:2-3). The importance of this survey is found in its breadth and the recognised sampling procedures used. Some 420 usable responses were received from 41 churches in Australia and New Zealand.

James Coffin (1991) published another reader survey in *Record*, which was quite extensive, covering three pages in *Record*. Further, readers were encouraged to copy the survey if other family members wanted to fill it in as well. Whether the size of the task was more daunting or other factors came into play, only 1368 readers responded (compared to 3597 for the Garne survey). The same problems as with the Garne survey are seen here. Importantly, surveys were posted to all ministers and teachers in Adventist schools in Australia and New Zealand (including departmental directors and administrators) and expatriate teachers in the South Pacific islands. Of the 1085 surveys sent out, 342 (32 per cent) responded.

Merolyn Coombs's (1996) survey was of members from three churches in the Sydney area. She sent 200 surveys to people chosen at random from the church rolls of these churches. She had a usable response rate of 51 per cent (102). The stated aim (Coombs, 1996:21) was to determine the level of importance church members have "for particular topics of religious information to support the church and its beliefs" and to determine perceptions of "how well the church provided information to answer these

needs through the two major official publications." Unfortunately, the survey has two weaknesses. It is limited, with only 102 responses, and it relates to two magazines, *Adventist Review* and *Record.* This caused some confusion among respondents (Coombs, 1996:30) and while she makes the assumption that the two publications are closely related and serve the same purpose for her study, the fact that two magazines were involved is not helpful for this study. Statistical data from her survey are used in a limited way.

L Fraser Jackson (1997) conducted a survey the year before the 100th year of publication of *Record,* in which a sampling of 41 churches in Australia and New Zealand were chosen to be involved. All attending secondary school or older were asked to fill in a survey during church time. Of the 41 churches, 36 returned a total of more than 1500 survey forms.

Comparing the surveys

A serious weakness in the attempt to do comparisons between the surveys is the lack of common material carried from one survey to the next. While personal details are asked for in each (to varying degrees), few other questions are common to the surveys. This is unfortunate for it makes it difficult to track trends. It appears that each survey has been prepared with little consideration of previous surveys, or that they have each been prepared with a certain task in mind that is outside what has been previously investigated. This section will concentrate on relating previous surveys to the current one where there can be cross referencing to discover common results or significant differences.

Table D.1 compares the ages of those involved in the surveys. Coombs has almost one-third (31.4 per cent) or her respondents in the 40-49, which only Coffin's

employees come near matching (at 30.7 per cent). Both these are out of step with the other surveys. The current survey, with more than half (51.2 per cent) of its respondents over the age of 50, is similar to Garne's (51.1 per cent), but below those of Coffin's readers (59.8 per cent) and Jackson's 1997 survey (55.6 per cent). Coombs has 41.1 per cent of her respondents 50 years of age or older, a lower figure brought about by the larger group in the 40-49 age group. All surveys, except Coffin's employees and Jackson's 1986 survey, have about 70 per cent of their respondents above the age of 40. Thus, the majority of respondents are middle aged or older. Coffin's employee survey shows only 30.1 per cent over the age of 50. This can be explained by the fact that there are only 2.0 per cent over the age of 65, retirement age. While his employee survey shows a weighting toward the older age group, with almost 60 per cent (58.8 per cent) over the age of 40, because they are still working there is little representation in the over 65 age group.

Jackson's 1986 survey highlights a quandary because its 50-and-more age group is significantly smaller than almost all the others at 38 per cent and it cannot be explained like the Coffin employees survey, or like the Coombs survey with a large 40 to 49 year old group nudging at the borders of the next age group. Jackson (Townend and Jackson, 1986:5) may say that in the 1986 survey the younger members are "under represented," but there is a far greater problem in Jackson's 1997 survey where 55.6 per cent of respondents are over the age of 50. That is 17.6 per cent higher than the 1986 survey. In this case Jackson (1997:6) wonders if "younger persons were busy keeping children quiet and did not fill in survey forms." The first survey was sent to randomly chosen individuals on church rolls. The second was sent to randomly selected churches for all attendees high school age and older to fill in. Did the group involvement add peer

pressure to younger people not to participate? Could they not be bothered? Or is the age of those attending greater than those whose names appear on the church roll?

Overall, with the noted exceptions, the surveys indicate that the age groupings found in the current survey are similar to those found in earlier surveys. Significantly, most are middle aged or older. Table D.1 also shows that Jackson's random selection processes finds age groups that are closest, in general terms, to the Adventist population with the second survey weighted more toward an older age range.

Table D.1
Age comparisons in *Record* surveys from 1983 to 2004
(in percentages)

Age	Garne 1983 N=3597	Jackson 1986 N=420	Coffin 1991 N=1368	Coffin 1991 employ N=342	Coombs 1996 N=102	Jackson 1997 N=1500+	Current 2004 N=125	SDA*
> 20	5.1	8	2.9	0.3	2.9	7.4	0.8	8
20-29	9.2	14	6.8	9.3	8.8	7.1	10.4	13
30-39	14.8	22	11.3	28.7	14.7	12.8	13.6	16
40-49	13.9	16	18.0	30.7	31.4	17.3	24.0	19
50-64	16.9**	19	28.5	28.1	22.5**	29.4	31.2	22
65+	34.2**	19	31.3	2.0	18.6**	26.2	20.0	22
Total	94.1***	98	98.8	99.1	98.9	100.2	100	100

*Adventist population from the Australian National Church Life Survey, 1996.
**These two surveys have a different age break. The percentages given in the 50-64 years category are for 50-59; in the 65+ category the figures given are for 60+.
***While the other figures seem a reasonable allowance for no response to this survey question or for the variation caused by rounding up or down to the decimal point (giving, for instance, Jackson's 1997 survey a 100.2 per cent total), this seems unusually low.

Where the current survey is out of step with the others (except Coffin's employee survey) is in the area of gender (see Table D.2). It is expected that Coffin's employee survey would be male dominated (81.6 per cent male respondents) because of a male-dominated ministry among employees within the Adventist Church, but the current survey is also male dominated (at 59.2 per cent). In fact, it is almost the reverse, in percentage rate of male and female participation of all the other surveys except

Coombs's. The main reasons are twofold: the surveys include responses from 15 church ministers (12.0 per cent of the whole), all of them male, and there was a tendency for these ministers to choose males to be interviewed. Of the 41 interviewed (32.8 per cent of the whole), 26 (63.3 per cent) were males. The gender mix involved in focus groups who returned survey forms presents a slight female majority (50.7 per cent), but not to the levels of the other surveys. This gender bias toward males does not accurately reflect the Adventist Church membership in Australia and New Zealand with 54.7 per cent females and 45.3 per cent males (Salom, 2002:50).

Table D.2
Gender comparisons in *Record* surveys from 1983 to 2004
(in percentages)

Gender	Garne 1983 N=3597	Jackson 1986 N=420	Coffin 1991 readers N=1368	Coffin 1991 employees N=342	Coombs 1996 N=102	Jackson 1997 N=1500+	Current 2004 N=125
Female	58.6	58	62.2	17.5	51.0	58.3	40.8
Male	38.5	39	36.5	81.6	47.0	41.8	59.2
No answer	2.6	2	1.3	0.9	2.0	—	—
Total	99.7	99	100	100	100	100.1	100

There is a stronger sense of attachment to the church from those involved in the current survey than in the other surveys, with the exception of Coffin's church employees. This is one question that is a constant in five surveys, beginning with Jackson's 1986, then his 1997 survey, Coffin's two surveys and the current survey. The question is asked: "How closely attached do you feel you are to the Adventist Church?" A choice of seven points along a continuum was given from "not very attached" to "very attached" (although the current survey reverses the order). What is evident in all surveys, although to a lesser degree in Jackson's 1986 survey, is that the majority of respondents do have a sense of attachment to the church. The percentages for the top

two "very attached" points in each survey are: Jackson (1986), 64 per cent (much lower than the others); Coffin (1991, readers), 77.9 per cent; Coffin (1991, employees), 80.4 per cent; Jackson (1997), 76 per cent; and the current survey, 79.2 per cent. At the other end of the continuum, the top two "not very attached" points percentages are: Jackson (1986), 6 per cent; Coffin (1991, readers), 6.4 per cent; Coffin (1991, employees), 4.7 per cent; Jackson (1997), 4 per cent; and the current survey, 3.2 per cent. In a sense of attachment, then, respondents to the current survey mostly fit well with those in the earlier ones.

One question in Jackson's 1997 survey is echoed in the current survey, with a slight difference. The current survey asks "What sort of contribution does material in the *Record* make to your spiritual life and growth?" Jackson's survey has the same wording except the word "Christian" replaces "spiritual." Importantly, both surveys ask for the same responses. Table D.3 shows the differences in those responses. Almost half (48.8 per cent) of the respondents to the current survey say *Record* has only a minor or no contribution to their spiritual life and growth. For Jackson's 1997 survey, 34.5 per cent say *Record* has a "significant" or "major" contribution to their Christian life. The current survey has half that percentage (at 16.8 per cent) of respondents saying *Record* has a "major" or "significant" contribution to their spiritual life. Having shown these differences, they should not be teased out too much because the differences between the two questions are marked. While the words "spiritual" and "Christian" may be related for the respondents, they do not have the same meaning. As seen in chapter 9, attempting to define "spiritual" is difficult and the word has flexible meanings. The word "Christian" does not have the same flexibility. So, while the questions are similar and the responses asked for are identical, the question speaks of different concepts with one of them, "spiritual," being quite rubbery.

Table D.3
Comparison of contributions to spiritual and Christian life
What sort of contribution does material in the *Record* make to your spiritual ["Christian," Jackson, 1997] life and growth? (In percentages.)

Surveys	Nil	Minor	Significant	Major	Some material important	No response	Total %
Jackson 1997 N=1500+	4.5	26.9	27.7	6.8	34.1	—	100
Current N=125	6.4	42.4	13.6	3.2	28.8	5.6	100

There is a close relationship between six questions asked in Jackson's 1986 survey and the current survey. Three of these questions also appear in the Coffin survey. First, though, an explanation of procedure is needed. While the current survey asked for a response on a five-point continuum (strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, strongly disagree), Jackson (1986) offered three responses (agree, no opinion, disagree). Coffin offered a five point continuum, the same as in the current survey, but in pulling the statistics together combined the strongly agree and agree responses, and the strongly disagree and disagree responses. Following Coffin's lead, in comparing these surveys, responses will only be shown as agree, no opinion or disagree. Further, in the questions where Jackson's survey is involved, he has a comparatively high non-response rate (ranging from 9 to 25 per cent, compared to a high of 5.6 per cent in one response in the current survey). This high non-response rate may come from the fact that Jackson's respondents were randomly chosen rather than the willing participants of Coffin's survey or the nurtured (through personal contact) respondents of the current survey. Jackson's survey included 10 per cent who only had occasional access to *Record* and 1 per cent who had no access. Importantly it included 6 per cent who did not read *Record* and 38 per cent who spent less than 15 minutes with *Record*. In order to make

reasonable comparisons, when Jackson's survey is involved the non-response figures are dropped from all surveys and the percentage figures are adjusted accordingly.

In the three questions that had similarities between Jackson's 1986 survey and the current survey, responses show a significant difference of almost 10 per cent in each case. There is less need, according to the current survey, for *Record* to work at developing a unity of faith: the response rate that agrees with the notion that developing a unity of faith is a "major task" of *Record* has dropped from 72.3 per cent in the Jackson survey to 63.6 per cent in the current survey; the number disagreeing has risen from 10.8 per cent to 20.3 per cent. Three influences may be read into this change. The first is the diversity of belief that has been growing within the Adventist Church since the 1970s, the second is the impact of uncertainties brought by theological controversy within the church in the 1980s and the third is the influence coming into the church with the general acceptance of postmodernism within society.

There is less of a desire to express strong opinions about issues affecting society, dropping from 60.8 per cent who agree that *Record* should give these strong opinions in Jackson's survey to 51.2 per cent in the current survey. Added to this is an increase of those with no opinion, while the percentage disagreeing rises from 20.3 to 26.8 per cent. There is a rising sense that this is not what *Record* is about, perhaps signalling the desire that it should concentrate on the internal. The sense that *Record* should keep readers informed rises from 90.4 per cent agreeing in Jackson to 99.2 per cent in the current survey.

The three questions asked in the Jackson (1986), Coffin and the current surveys focus on *Record* providing a forum for viewpoints, being relevant to present needs and reporting news accurately. While 82.9 per cent of Coffin's employees agreed that *Record* should provide a forum for the discussion of various viewpoints, only 69.8 per

cent of Coffin's readers felt that way. This was matched by Jackson's survey at 67.9 per cent. The current survey finds 76.3 per cent agreeing. What is evident is that church employees in 1991 were more enthusiastic about *Record* providing a forum for viewpoints, with the others less persuaded at that time or in the 1986 and current surveys, which contain both ministers and members. There appears to be a slight trend of stronger agreement that articles in *Record* are generally relevant to present needs within the church (see Table D.4). In Jackson's survey, 62.3 per cent see the relevancy of the articles. In Coffin's both readers and employees raise it to the high 70 per cent level. The current survey takes it to 80.6 per cent. There is not a great deal of movement from Coffin's survey to the current survey, but the movement is more dramatic from Jackson's 1986 survey.

Table D.4
Articles in *Record* are generally perceived as relevant to present needs
(in percentages)

Surveys	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Jackson 1986 N=420	62.3	21.2	16.5	100
Coffin 1991 readers N=1368	78.4	11.3	10.3	100
Coffin 1991 employees N=342	77.6	14.3	8.2	100
Current N=125	80.6	9.2	10.2	100

What has proven consistent is the strong sense of uncertainty about the accuracy of news reports appearing in *Record.* While the majority believe that church news is reported accurately (see Table D.5), about a third demonstrate their uncertainty by giving a "no opinion" response. The indication is that, as reflected in comments in Coombs's research, some believe *Record* manipulates the news. Perhaps what is found here is the suspicion, but not the evidence (and thus the uncertainty) that the "top-down

influence" is having its impact. Despite the trend showing slightly more confidence in news accuracy, this issue is something that is important for *Record* to address.

Table D.5
***Record* perceived to report church news accurately**
(in percentages)

Surveys	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Total
Jackson 1986 N=420	53.7	32.9	13.4	100
Coffin 1991 readers N=1368	58.8	33.0	8.2	100
Coffin 1991 employees N=342	61.9	29.9	8.2	100
Current N=125	62.5	30.2	7.3	100

A series of other questions in Coffin's 1991 surveys are repeated in the current survey. From these, there is continued support for the notion that *Record* is to encourage the discussion of issues facing the church (more than 80 per cent agree in all surveys). There has been a shift concerning whether *Record* upholds the fundamental beliefs of the church. In the 1991 survey, 83 per cent of employees and readers agreed that this was so. Four per cent of this (down to 79 per cent who agree in the current survey) has drifted to disagree, and where it was 6 per cent in the 1991 survey, 10 per cent disagree in the current survey. At the same time, there is stronger support for the relevancy of *Record* in the current survey (see Table D.4). While 90 per cent of Coffin's employees agreed that even if respondents disagree with the opinions expressed, the chance to speak candidly in letters to the editor is healthy. Coffin's readers were less certain about that, at 81 per cent, but the current survey found 88 per cent agreement.

That the editorial mix met the needs of the readers found higher acceptance in Coffin's surveys with 86 per cent of employees and 78 per cent of readers agreeing. The current survey rated lower at 73 per cent and the percentage of those who disagreed was

markedly higher at 14 per cent (up from 7 per cent for Coffin's readers and 4 per cent from employees). This result appears to be at variance to the responses that found articles in *Record* were generally relevant to present needs. It may be that what is indicated here is recognition that the church is increasing in complexity.

Finally, the trend appears that for current readers, *Record* makes people feel less enthusiastic about being a Seventh-day Adventist than it did in 1991. Some 73 per cent of Coffin's readers agree that it made them feel more enthusiastic about being Adventist; 67 per cent of employees did the same but, in the current survey, it is down to 62 per cent with a definite shift to a disagree response at 21 per cent (Coffin's readers disagreed at 12 per cent and employees at 10 per cent).

That there are several qualifications needed in comparing these surveys has already been stated. The weakness of readership surveys is found in the self-selection of the respondents with few controls on the sample. Coffin's survey of church employees attempted to include all of them, but this is a limited or specialised, albeit important, readership group. Only Jackson's two surveys had the controls needed to give the sampling strong validity. The Coombs survey used valid sampling techniques, but failed to provide a large pool of respondents and by including another magazine in her research has proved less helpful.

Some weaknesses of the current survey, the limited number and the selection process for most surveyed, have been mentioned, but there is another question, already hinted at, about what influence my personal contact with each of those who responded had on the results. For ministers it was two phone calls, the first to arrange for them to select people for interviews, and then the follow up to ask why they had chosen who they had before sending the survey. For the interviews, those being interviewed knew the researcher was going to visit and talk to them about their survey. Those involved in

focus groups were given surveys at the end of the group sessions where there had been a variety of exchanges during the hour-and-a-half together. The impact this had is difficult to judge.

Appendix E

Planning for Change in *Record*

In mid-1986 James Coffin became the editor of *Record* after a period of discussion with church administrators from Australia, particularly the South Pacific Division president, Walter Scragg. Coffin, originally from the United States, had studied for ministry at Avondale College, NSW, and served as a pastor in New South Wales before returning to the United States where he also worked in a pastoral capacity until his appointment as an associate editor of *Adventist Review*.

Scragg (1999), an experienced communicator, says he and other senior church administrators felt *Record* had lost its ability to communicate to a wide range of church members. He wanted *Record* to help the church move on from the theological issues that had impacted the church with the Desmond Ford crisis and to present a more balanced perspective on these issues. He was concerned *Record* had taken too conservative a stance on issues to the point where many were saying, "We don't own this paper, it's the voice of very conservative Adventism."

Scragg was keen to have Coffin come as a "younger mind, [he was] probably the youngest person [in his mid-30s] we've had as editor of the *Record*." Coffin was instructed to "make it contemporary" and to enliven it in a "deliberate attempt to move down a generation." Importantly,

> Jim [Coffin] was given freedom to use the letters to the editor column, not just to support the church, but also to give a platform for those who wanted to attack some of the church's decisions. In other words, we tried to make *Record* more

> representative of the whole church, not just the administration. The idea was that we should convey the idea that the *Record* is owned by the whole church and you have your right to have your voice heard. . . . even though it wasn't something that the editor or the church leadership agreed with (Scragg:1999).

Not only was this transfer or "ownership" expected to give *Record* a better chance of a more effective role in communicating to more members, it indicates a more open approach away from controlling sectarian attitudes. At the same time there was an expectation that church leadership would have a better vehicle of communication for their particular message. This is a significant change point for *Record* and set a model that is currently still followed. An attempt had been made to reposition *Record* to what Morgan (2001:211) calls the "centre," away from the "dissident Right" without moving into the camp of the "revisionist Left."

Appendix F

James Coffin Responds to Reader Concerns

In the editorial appearing on the next page, James Coffin attempts to answer critics concerning letters to the editor and the cartoon that appeared each week with the letters. The letters appeared on page three, which explains the reference to page three in the text.

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South Pacific Division

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Cover: Pastor Tony Campbell spoke at 15 evangelistic meetings while in Raglampun. Bonny (left) acted as interpreter for him.
Photo: Tony Campbell.

EDITORIAL

Dear Editor

Whenever one of the RECORD editors takes an informal poll concerning which section of the RECORD is read first, page three wins every time—overwhelmingly.

But page three is also the most disliked section of the magazine by some readers.

I scarcely need tell you that not everyone is fond of Berto's cartoons. And perhaps it's just a coincidence, but the letters, which appear on the same page, are the second-most-complained-about RECORD feature.

While the complaints about the letters account for a rather small section of the mail to the editor, they do arrive in sufficient quantity that perhaps I should outline our rationale.

As editors, we feel we have been called to minister to as broad a spectrum of people within the Adventist Church as possible. And the church really does cover a broad spectrum—educated, uneducated; old, young; long-time Adventist, new convert; conservative, liberal; New Zealander, Australian, South Pacific islander; Queenslander, Tasmanian.

A small percentage on the far left have written the editors off as mere stooges of the administration. They think we are programmed to do what we are told, when we are told—that we never have an original thought of our own.

On the far right, a small group has written us off as apostates because we even admit that we are trying to minister to a broad spectrum. There is only one way (their way), a narrow way, and anything that doesn't fit within those narrow parameters is anathema.

We've accepted defeat in trying to minister to these two groups. There's no way we can win. But we do try to keep the other 90 per cent of the church constantly in mind, seeking a blend of articles within and between issues that will meet the needs of the total spectrum.

Invariably, if an article adequately meets the needs of one group, we can rest assured that it will not be appreciated by another group. We would hope readers will keep the diversity of readership in mind when they encounter material that is not catering to their specific needs.

Because we feel communication is a two-way street, we have made the Letters section a major feature. And in the letters, as in the editorial content, we want to cater to the entire spectrum. We try to give a fair sampling of the kind of mail we receive.

Some readers complain that the letter writers are extremists. And they are—for, after all, an extremist is anyone who strongly holds an opinion differing from your own.

Admittedly, a few of the letters we print primarily because we as editors have a sense of humour. But for the most part, we believe that the letters reflect positions sincerely held—and often strongly held.

By letting the spectrum of Adventism have its say, we are trying to say that we value opinions, that diversity of thought is healthy, and that we don't all have to see eye to eye to love each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

One of the main concerns about the letters is that they will have negative impact on new Adventists or non-Adventists. Our reply is threefold:

First, while non-Adventists will from time to time read the magazine, it is an in-the-church-family publication, and we will not fail to meet the needs of the family simply because some who aren't family members might read it.

Second, let's not try to whitewash the church when presenting it to others. People appreciate honesty, particularly in these days of misleading advertising. Allowing ourselves to be seen warts and all early in the piece preempts a lot of disillusionment further down the line, but doesn't frighten as many people away as we often think.

Finally, the spirited comments in the RECORD can actually be used as a major selling point. Doesn't the Letters section reflect a high degree of openness? And wouldn't most Adventists prefer that their church not try to muzzle its members, and that it not listen only when comments agree with the party line?

James Coffin.

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