When Immigrants Take Over: The Impact of Immigrant Growth on American Seventh-day Adventism's Trajectory from Sect to Denomination

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The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United States has been following a well-defined trajectory from sect toward denomination for the past century: it has reduced tensions with its surrounding environment by removing antagonisms between itself and the state and other religious organizations and as its members have become less peculiar in their lifestyles and beliefs and more integrated into society. However, over the past 30 years it has received an influx of immigrants from countries of the developing world who, generally, are more sectarian in their beliefs and behavior and more confrontative of other religious groups than is the typical American Adventist today. This process is especially advanced in some metropolitan areas such as New York, where Adventism has been transformed from a church of Caucasians and African Americans to a body where nine out of 10 members are now "new immigrants." This paper poses the question of whether the influx of immigrants will reverse the trajectory of Adventism in North America, making it generally more sectarian. After considering data gathered primarily in metropolitan New York, it concludes that the flow of immigrants has resulted in a temporary slowing of the movement from sect toward denomination at the local level where the immigrants are concentrated, but that the process of immigrant assimilation ensures that the dominant trajectory will continue.

INTRODUCTION

Sects, according to Stark and Bainbridge, are marked by a high "state of tension" with their "surrounding sociocultural environments" (1985: 23). Tension is characterized by difference, separation, and antagonism, for a sect and its surrounding society "disagree over proper beliefs, norms, and behavior" (1985: 49). Tension can be a product of the beliefs and lifestyle of members when these are viewed as peculiar within the society, thus creating a strong separation from it, or of institutional relations with the state or other organizations, such as influential religious groups, when the sect is perceived as uncooperative, threatening, confrontational or otherwise unacceptable, and elicits antagonistic responses.

I have argued elsewhere that during the past century American Seventh-day Adventism has moved a considerable distance from sect toward denomination (Lawson 1995a, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1998a). The process is now so advanced that the Adventist profile imitates that of mainline Protestant denominations in important ways: for example, the demographics of its American-born members have changed to the point where this segment is now declining, parallel to the patterns found in mainline churches.

However, the Adventist membership in the United States has been swelled over the past 30 years by an influx of "new immigrants" from the developing world who are seen by their American-born counterparts as more conservative — that is, more sectarian — than themselves.[1] In recent years, 75% of the new members added to the North American Division [NAD] of the Adventist Church, which includes both the U.S. and Canada, have

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been immigrants from countries in the developing world.[2] According to the General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics, the number of Hispanic members in the NAD increased by 127.1% between 1980 and 1990, those of African descent (a category that does not distinguish between African Americans, West Indians, and Haitians) by 71.1%, and Asians by 62.4%. In contrast, Caucasians grew by only 4.9%, and their proportion within the membership of the NAD declined from 72.2% in 1980 to 60.2% in 1990; they were estimated as 52% in 1996, and are expected to become a minority — 47% — by 2000 (Sahlin 1997; Vasquez nd: 3).[3] This paper raises the question of whether their influx will reverse Adventism's trajectory from sect toward denomination.

The long-term impact of the immigrants will depend on whether they remain sectarian and transmit their stance to the rest of the North American church as their influence there waxes. If, alternatively, they assimilate over time to the increasingly denominationlike North American church, it is likely that they will have little lasting impact on Adventism's trajectory.

Immigrant Adventists have concentrated especially in certain urban regions, such as metropolitan New York, where the face of Adventism has been transformed dramatically: what was once a church of Caucasians and African Americans is now almost 90% new immigrants, drawn from a multiplicity of racial and ethnic groups from different parts of the globe, and especially from the Caribbean.[4] This paper uses metropolitan New York as a test case in assessing the impact of the new immigrants on Adventism's trajectory from sect towards denomination.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research reported here is part of a large study of Seventh-day Adventism, which has included well over 3,000 in-depth interviews with church administrators, teachers, hospital administrators and medical personnel, pastors, students, and leading laypersons in 55 countries in all 12 divisions of the world church. The general theme that has emerged from the data is that Adventism has been following a trajectory from sect towards denomination, first in the U.S., but also in most of the developed and developing world (Lawson 1998b).

Since I am an Adventist and have lived in metropolitan New York for 26 years, I was well aware of both the demographic changes taking place in Adventism in the region and of the tensions flowing from increased diversity. I ultimately decided that these were so dramatic and relevant to my general research theme that they warranted focused study.

In an endeavor to secure data on the racial distribution of Adventists in metropolitan New York, I approached the headquarters of the two overlapping Adventist conferences based there in the fall of 1996, but found that no reliable data were available. However, both conferences provided me with lists of congregations, the language used by each for worship, their official membership, and the phone numbers of their pastors.

Armed with these lists, I phoned the pastor of every English-speaking congregation to ask that either he or the clerk (1) go through the membership roll and place every baptized member in a racial/ethnic category and then give me the total for each, and (2) that they omit the missing members from this process so that I could correct the church's official membership total. As I had expected, most pastors referred me to the church clerks, the women who keep the membership rolls for their congregations. They are typically long-term participants who know the membership well. Since the pastors had referred me to them, the clerks proved eager to help, and I achieved a 100% response rate.

I had completed in-depth interviews with the leadership of both conferences and a broad sample of their pastors in 1985, and had remained aware of the changes there through follow-up interviews in the years since that time. While awaiting for the church

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clerks to tabulate the requested statistics, I carried out another wave of interviews with conference leaders and with long-term pastors from all major racial/ethnic groups. In these interviews I focused explicitly on the dynamics and impact of the racial changes. I also ascertained that the membership of the non-English-speaking congregations was homogeneous — those attending Spanish-speaking congregations were Hispanic, those attending Francophone congregations were Haitian,[5] those attending Korean congregations were Korean, etc. This meant that there was no need to phone the clerks of these churches to ask about the ethnic breakdown of their congregations — which was just as well, since many would not have spoken sufficient English. I asked the pastors of the non-English speaking congregations to estimate the number of missing members on their rolls, generalized these to each language group, and subtracted the figures so obtained when I totaled the number in each category in order to obtain comparative membership totals. Since the territories of both conferences extend beyond metropolitan New York, I excluded the congregations in those segments of the conferences from my study.

Other research drawn on for this paper includes interviews with minority women pastors and with administrators in both the Southeastern California and (upstate) New York conferences, and interviews with administrators concerning racial change within Adventism in Los Angeles, Toronto, and Montreal. Sources used in the discussion of the movement from sect toward denomination in the U.S. include secondary historical accounts, official Adventist statistics, official and independent Adventist books and periodicals, and a broad range of interviews, focusing on both oral history and the current situation, in the U.S. A similar range of sources was used in exploring the same process in the Caribbean and Latin America.

In order to keep the confidentiality of interviewees, as was promised them, the convention adopted in this study is to refrain from citing the names of interviewees when they are quoted except when they are major figures in the church.

FROM SECT TOWARD DENOMINATION IN THE U.S.

High Tension during the Early Decades

Seventh-day Adventism emerged from the Millerite movement, which had preached throughout the American Northeast that Christ would return in 1844, after the parent movement fragmented following the "Great Disappointment." The new sect was marked by considerable tension with its surrounding culture. It rejected the American Dream, for it continued to predict the imminent return of Christ and the end of the world as we know it. It developed a markedly different lifestyle, which included the observance of Saturday as the Sabbath in a society where it was a normal workday, diet prohibitions, the rejection of much of popular culture, a plain dress code for women members, and the rejection of medicine as then practiced, especially the use of drugs, in its "sanitariums." Their lifestyle set Adventists apart and made it difficult for them to associate with others.

These barriers were reinforced by the close ties that developed among members, whose lives typically centered around their church, the subculture it created, and its mission. Many Adventists "prepared for service" by attending church schools, while many more chose to settle in the "Adventist Ghettos" surrounding church schools, sanitariums and publishing houses.

Not only were Adventists different and separated from the surrounding society, but their beliefs also fostered antagonism between them and others. They viewed themselves as "God's Remnant People," the true church charged with bearing God's final warning message in the last days. The Roman Catholic Church was identified with the persecuting "beast" of the book of Revelation, while Protestants had become "the whore of Babylon." Adventist

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evangelists developed an aggressive style, denouncing Sunday-keepers as "commandment breakers" who risked receiving the "Mark of the Beast" and, ultimately, damnation.

A unique interpretation identified the American Republic with the second beast of Revelation 13, which, although it had "two horns like a lamb," would now speak "like a dragon." In this dragon phase it would breach the constitutional separation of church and state, joining together with the apostate Roman Catholic and Protestant churches to persecute the Remnant immediately before Christ's return, not allowing them to "buy or sell." Adventists seized on the fact that some of their members, usually farmers, were facing arrest under the "blue laws" of several states for working on Sunday as proof that the expected persecution was already waxing.[6] That is, the Adventist apocalyptic enshrined tension with the state. This tension increased during the Civil War, when Adventists, facing conscription, took a position against involvement in military service: members who participated in the war were disfellowshipped (Graybill 1978: 26).

Reducing Tension over Time

Adventism's state of tension with both the U.S. government and the broader society has been greatly reduced during the past century. The growth and accreditation of its educational and medical institutions have encouraged participation in society and provided opportunities for upward mobility. It has modified the urgency of its apocalyptic, transformed its position on military service, and pursued good relations with the state. Adventist medicine has become orthodox, its hospitals have prospered and won friends, and many of its lifestyle prohibitions have been relaxed. Meanwhile, Adventism has become increasingly at ease with the courts, its public evangelism has become less confrontational in tone, and it has begun to build better relations with other churches. That is, American Adventism and Adventists are less peculiar and separate than they were, and the mutual antagonisms which previously characterized the relationships between Adventism and the state, other churches, and the broader society have diminished (Lawson 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1998a). American Adventism has moved a considerable distance from sect toward denomination.

Racial/Ethnic Change in Adventism in Metropolitan New York[7]

The demographic profile of American Adventism has changed during the past 30 years as large numbers of new immigrants have been added to its ranks. Since these immigrants are perceived to be typically more conservative — that is, sectarian — than most American Adventists, many of the respondents interviewed have speculated concerning the ultimate impact of this influx on the direction of the American church. This paper focuses primarily on the New York metropolitan area, one of the regions where the new immigrants are heavily concentrated, as a case study.

The extent of the racial/ethnic transformation in metropolitan New York is seen most clearly when the membership figures for 1945 are used as a baseline, for in that year the Adventist Church in most of the U.S. was reorganized along racial lines. Until the end of 1944, Adventism was organized geographically, so that the U.S. was subdivided into local conferences which were in turn clustered in unions. Although Adventism had grown steadily among African Americans to that point, none of their pastors had been promoted to administrative positions. By 1944 their demands for such opportunities had become so urgent that the Church's totally Caucasian hierarchy chose to defuse the discontent — not by opening positions in the existing structure, but by creating separate conferences for black congregations where African Americans could occupy leadership positions. These "black" conferences overlapped geographically with what now became "white" conferences. The

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membership statistics for the reorganized units provide excellent data concerning the racial distribution of the membership at that time.

Until the reorganization, all Adventists in the New York metropolitan area fell under the Greater New York Conference [GNYC], which had 4,499 members at the end of 1944. However, when the new race-based structure was inaugurated in January 1945, the African-American congregations were removed from GNYC and placed in the new Northeastern Conference [NEC]. The GNYC retained the Caucasian congregations. Since congregations were highly segregated along racial lines, the separation was complete. A total of 1,817 members were transferred from the GNYC to the new NEC.[8] Almost all of these would have been African Americans, for few black immigrants had entered from anywhere else up to that time. The GNYC was left with 2,682 members. The vast majority of these were Caucasians — the first Hispanic congregation was just organizing. The new "black" conference encompassed two-fifths of the Adventists in the region.

Adventism continued to grow in metropolitan New York during the following decades. The earlier pattern continued initially, with most of the members being Caucasians and African Americans, although the latter gradually outstripped the former in number. However, New York began to attract a flow of immigrants from the Caribbean and other parts of the developing world,[9] and once that became a wave after 1965, the membership profile became increasingly diverse.

Adventists inevitably appeared among the new immigrants because of the rapid growth of Adventism in the developing world. Adventists had sent out the first of what became a steady stream of foreign missionaries in the 1870s, who had established a presence on all continents and in most major countries by the turn of the century; the foreign membership surpassed that of North America during the 1920s. The world membership finally passed one million in 1955, but three million in 1978, six million in 1989, and nine million in 1996. The proportion of the total membership in the developing world increased from 55.5% in 1960 to 86.0% in 1995, while that residing in the NAD declined from 26.7% to 9.5% (General Conference 1961, 1996).

By the end of the second quarter of 1996, the official membership of the GNYC in the metropolitan area had increased to 15,164, and that of the NEC to 29,369. The combined membership stood at 44,533, almost 10 times that of 51 years earlier. However, the membership of both conferences, and especially that of the NEC, is inflated because missing members remain on the rolls.[10] After excluding missing members as described above in the segment on methodology, I arrived at an estimated real membership of 20,908 in the NEC and 13,572 in GNYC, for a total of 34,480. Table 1 shows how the total membership subdivides racially and ethnically: the two categories used in 1945 have now been replaced by great diversity.

The immigrant groups among the Adventist membership grew initially because the flow of newcomers from those regions included a steady stream of Adventists. Especially large numbers of Adventists migrated from Jamaica, Guyana, and other English-speaking islands of the Caribbean, the Dominican Republic and parts of Central and South America, and Haiti. However, as time passed, these groups expanded also because of the evangelistic zeal of many of their members — a zeal which was so successful that the conferences fostered it by transferring resources to immigrant evangelism.[11] Moreover, because most immigrants were young, their fertility was high and consequently their congregations soon included many children and youth.

Meanwhile, the growth rate among American Adventists — both Caucasian and African American — had slowed and then become negative. The number of Caucasian members in the region had climbed to about 3,500 in 1970 (interviews), but has since plunged to fewer than 1,000, barely one-third of their total in 1945 and only 2.7% of the total membership. While African Americans in the NEC in the mid–1970s equaled the

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English-speaking West Indians in number, today they are barely one-fifth of the latter and they comprise only 8.0% of the total Adventist membership in the region. Both groups have lost their zeal and effectiveness in evangelistic outreach. Also, their constituencies have aged because of their failure to retain a large proportion of their youth, resulting in low fertility. Moreover, they have experienced flight and out-migration as their members have found themselves in congregations where they are outnumbered by immigrants. All the formerly English-speaking "white" congregations are now very mixed racially, and only three of the 56 English-speaking congregations in the NEC, where African Americans were previously dominant, now have African American majorities — and all three are small, with memberships of less than 100.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MEMBERSHIP, METROPOLITAN NEW YORK, 1996

RACE/ETHNICITY	Total	%
West Indians (English-speaking)	16,122	46.8%
Hispanics	6,523	18.9
Haitians	5,884	17.1
African Americans	2,761	8.0
Caucasians	947	2.7
Africans	668	1.9
Black Central Americans	572	1.7
Koreans	430	1.2
Brazilians	233	0.7
Filipinos	170	0.5
Southern Asians	82	0.2
Chinese	75	0.2
Other	13	0.0
TOTAL	34,480	

The decline of the two groups that were dominant in 1945 and remained the largest groups in their conferences as recently as 1970 has been dramatic — both relatively and absolutely. Today almost 90% of the Adventist members in the region are immigrants or youthful members of immigrant families.[12]

A More Sectarian Population

Because of the rapid growth of Adventism in much of the developing world in recent years, most of the members there, and consequently most of the immigrants to the U.S., are first generation converts. Church-sect theorists have long held that religious groups where adult converts predominate are likely to be strongly sectarian (Niebuhr 1929). We would therefore expect the immigrants to be more sectarian than American Adventists, who are much more likely to have an inherited religious identity.

However, in a recent paper, which explored the development of Adventism in the developing world, with special attention to Africa, I gave six reasons why Adventism there was less sectarian than might be expected (Lawson 1998b). Since my concern here is to establish whether the Adventist immigrants in New York are more sectarian than Adventist Americans and, if so, in what ways, I must ask to what extent this argument holds true among Adventists in the Caribbean and Latin America, which are the sources of a great majority of the Adventist immigrants to New York.

Adventists in these regions have been especially successful in removing tensions with the state: Adventism has become a political presence in the West Indies, especially in

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Jamaica and Barbados, where a number of church members have held cabinet posts and risen high in government departments; moreover, the Adventist Church successfully established exchange relationships with many of the recent military regimes in both Latin America and Haiti (Lawson 1996b). Consequently, the immigrants moving to the U.S. are comfortable with Adventist relations with the state here, and have not done anything to increase tension.

However, Adventists in these regions continue to show high commitment to traditional church doctrines and behavioral standards. In spite of their recent rapid growth, they have continued to socialize converts much more effectively than in Africa because of the heavy involvement of laity in evangelism. Because Adventism is more legalistic in the West Indies and especially in Latin America, it places more emphasis on the observance of behavioral norms. Consequently, Adventists there have avoided any widespread pattern of compromise in, for example, Sabbath observance, unlike members in much of Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe. Moreover, because of the political dominance of Catholicism in Latin America, and also a pattern, until recently, of standing aloof from Evangelical Protestants, Adventism there has been much more separate than in Africa, where all mission churches were originally treated equally by both the colonial power and the populace (Lawson 1998b). Although the development of a large network of schools, hospitals and clinics, and publishing houses encouraged upward mobility, such opportunities have been increasingly limited by weak economies, widespread poverty, and rapid membership growth in recent years. The forces integrating Adventists into society have consequently not been so strong.

This background makes the immigrants more sectarian at the personal level — in their beliefs, norms and behavior — than the average American Adventist today; they are therefore more likely to be labeled as different and separate from the broader society. Their high commitment to traditional Adventism and their church communities is illustrated by AVANCE, a study of Hispanic Adventists in North America administered to 3,306 members present at church services, which found that 95% attended church one or more times per week — a rate much higher than that of American Adventists, where less than 50% of all members are present each week (Hernandez 1995: 36). All immigrant pastors interviewed saw their members as more literalistic in their hermeneutics and more conservative in their beliefs than American Adventists. These assessments are supported by the finding that 95% of both the adult and youth samples in the AVANCE study agreed with orthodox statements concerning such Adventist doctrines as the Sabbath, a six-day creation, Ellen White's status as a prophet, a pre-advent judgment,[13] and the Remnant. The questionnaire defined the latter doctrine as holding that the Adventist Church is "the true, last-day church with a message to prepare the world for the Second Coming of Christ," a claim that many American Adventists would now regard as extreme and embarrassing (Hernandez 1995: 35).

The new immigrants also tend to be more urgent in their apocalyptic and much more involved in evangelistic outreach within their communities than most American Adventists. Hernandez found that 92% of the AVANCE Hispanics had encouraged someone to believe in Jesus Christ during the previous year, and 74% had encouraged someone to join the Adventist Church. He concludes that Hispanic Adventists in the U.S. are imbued with "a strong evangelistic fervor that accounts in large measure for the exceptional growth now being experienced" (1995: 36). Large numbers within the Haitian and West Indian communities show similar commitment.

Given the history of religious tensions in their homelands, especially between Adventism and Catholicism, and their continuing sectarianism, it is not surprising that immigrant evangelism is often confrontational toward other religious groups. For example, a tract distributed on the streets of Manhattan by members of a Haitian church highlighted statements made in the nineteenth century by Catholic bishops and priests which claimed

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that the Catholic Church had transferred the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday, and that since Sunday observance has no biblical foundation, it is in effect a tribute to the authority of that church. The tract also compared an abbreviated form of the Ten Commandments, taken from a Catholic catechism, with the biblical text in order to show that the specificity concerning which day was to be observed had been removed. Public evangelistic outreach by immigrants is also likely to proclaim that the Adventist Church is God's "true church" and to warn of coming persecution when the other "false" churches coalesce with the state to attack Sabbath-keepers (interviews).

The immigrant groups are also much stricter in their observance of certain behavioral norms than are most American Adventists today.[14] The immigrant pastors interviewed often expressed frustration because their youth had found that the behaviors proscribed by the immigrant churches were often accepted in English-speaking congregations. For example, the immigrants continue to reject much of popular culture, proscribing movie-going, Christmas trees, and popular music, especially their own popular music, such as reggae. However, the pastors noted that many Americans attend movies and talk about what they have seen, have Christmas trees, and allow popular Christian music in some churches. Haitian pastors explained that they refuse to conduct marriages in which the woman is pregnant or one of the parties divorced, but that such members are often successful in arranging for a ceremony at an English-speaking Adventist church. All immigrant groups had brought strict dress codes for women members with them to the U.S.: no wedding rings or other jewelry, no straightening of hair, an insistence that they wear hats in church, and no wearing of slacks, no matter how cold it is. However, West Indian pastors commented that they had found that the African American women in their congregations often wore slacks, straightened their hair, and failed to wear hats to church. Some Haitian pastors try to deal with the clash between norms by explaining that these rules are cultural, not from the Lord — but they then risk being branded as liberals; others endorse the traditional norms, declaring that American laxness results in crime and delinquency (interviews). Although the keeping of strict behavioral standards is in the end a personal issue, their proclamation and enforcement by the immigrant congregations means that they are directly involved in maintaining them.

Sex roles are more separated among the immigrants than is common among Americans. Fusing their literalistic hermeneutic with their cultural traditions, most immigrants regard the ordaining of lay women as elders — a practice which has been common in North American congregations since the 1970s — negatively. Most of the immigrant pastors interviewed also strongly opposed ordaining women as pastors, a subject that has been the center of debate within the international Adventist Church in recent years. It is supported by the NAD but strongly opposed within the Inter-American and South American Divisions. The AVANCE data show strong opposition among lay Hispanics to the ordination of women as both elders (73%) and pastors (78%) (Hernandez 1995: 34).

Hernandez comments that the strength of the immigrant communities "is maintained when churches protect the boundaries of their belief system and communal identity by removing or purging the 'free riders' " (1995: 36). The practice of disfellowshipping those who do not measure up is still especially common among Hispanics. During the first quarter of 1996, Hispanics in the GNYC dropped 110 members for apostasy while, at the same time, they added 149 through baptism. During this same period the rest of the conference baptized 114 but disfellowshipped only nine. A Hispanic pastor explained that "we get rid of those who do not identify totally with the teachings and standards" (interview).

The strict observance of behavioral norms by immigrant Adventists, and their commitment to their peculiar doctrinal system, especially their urgent apocalyptic, thus have the effect of making the immigrant communities stand out as both different and separate from society. For example, 78% of the sample of youth in the AVANCE study

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admitted that they worry about not being ready for Christ's return and 65% about failing to be faithful during the "time of trouble" that is predicted to precede that event (Hernandez 1995: 38). The separation of the immigrant groups is also strengthened because their congregations are often the centers of their communal life, "providing an environment of safety, security, and cultural affirmation from the threatening forces of the larger community" (Hernandez 1995: 36). Furthermore, their belief that the Adventist Church is God's true church in the "last days," the aggressive and often confrontational thrust of their evangelism, and their continued isolationism have the effect of maintaining a degree of antagonism and distrust between them and other churches in their communities. That is, the level of sectarianism among the new immigrants in these respects is considerably higher than what is now common among American Adventists.

A Lasting and Increasing Sectarian Impact?

What will be the long-term impact of the influx of sectarian new immigrants on American Adventism's trajectory from sect toward denomination? Will the newcomers remain sectarian and export their stance to the rest of the North American church as their influence there waxes or, alternatively, assimilate over time to the increasingly denominationlike North American church? This segment of the paper weighs the evidence of current trends.

Upward Mobility of the Migrating Generation

It was noted above that because of Adventism's emphasis on education, and also because of the openings for career advancement in its hospitals and other institutions, North American Adventists have experienced considerable upward mobility. This has, in turn, had the effect of incorporating them within the dominant culture, and therefore of decreasing the tension between them and their environment, thus making them less sectarian. This same pattern has been repeated in many other countries, both because of the educational and career opportunities that Adventism has made available there, and also because Adventism has often had the effect of breaking the kinship ties and obligations of its members, thus preparing them for an economic individualism that has readied them for success in the new capitalism within the developing world (Lawson 1998b). However, the degree of upward mobility realized has varied with the strength of local economies. Since Adventism has encouraged ambition among its members, those from weak economies have seized opportunities to migrate to the U.S. in relatively large numbers (Lawson 1998c). That is, the immigrants come to North America hoping for upward mobility, and participation in the Adventist Church here typically fosters at least some degree of success in this.

West Indian immigrants are often in a position where they can improve their lot because they arrive with education (often a primary degree) or skills, have no language difficulties, place first priority on obtaining further education, and are helped and encouraged towards this within their congregations. In this their pastors provide an excellent example, for they usually arrive in the U.S. with a B.A. in religion and then eagerly pursue every opportunity for further education. Almost 70% of them have earned an M.Div. or M.A. and 30% a doctorate. They have become the best educated group of clergy in either conference, far surpassing the Caucasians (interviews).

Although West Indian laypersons often have to drop some notches in the status ladder compared with the posts they held "back home" in order to find initial employment, they then usually rise. However, those who are illegal immigrants — estimated to me as about one-third of their number — are forced to struggle. As a whole, these Adventist immigrants

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are ambitious, hardworking, and frequently pursue education or work skills at night. Some of their pastors help motivate them, sponsoring career days and seminars on how to study and make good grades, and assisting illegal immigrants to become permanent residents. As these immigrants experience upward mobility, tension between them and the American environment inevitably relaxes, rendering them ultimately less sectarian.

The experience of first generation Hispanics and Haitians has usually been quite different from that of West Indians because of language difficulties and the fact that most arrive with little education and often face considerable difficulty finding unskilled jobs which allow for Sabbath observance. Not only are most without a high school education, but many are also illegal immigrants. Because of their lack of skills, the Hispanics typically learn on the job and hope for promotion there. Although Adventism did relatively well in Haiti, where some members had political connections to the various dictatorial regimes, most of those who fled were the poorest members. A surprising number of these drive taxis in New York City. However, the ranks of Haitian immigrants also include some who fled when "Baby Doc" Duvalier fell because of their connection to his regime. Nevertheless, Haitians give by far the lowest per capita tithe in GNYC — $228, only 35% of that given by Hispanics.[15]

In spite of the difficulties faced by first generation Hispanic and Haitian Adventist immigrants, the pastors interviewed stated that members of both groups are usually successful in moving from poverty to stability. The way is thus prepared for the rise of their children through education.

Greeley, in trying to account for conversions of Hispanic Catholics within the U.S. to conservative Protestantism, points to General Social Survey data indicating that the latter are better educated, make more money, and have higher status occupations than the Catholic majority; moreover, Protestantism seems to have an upwardly mobile effect, especially on adults who have been raised as Protestants (1990: 120-21). Although questions have been raised concerning whether this conclusion is true of all conservative Protestant groups, it is supported in the case of Adventists by data which show that they are more likely to be found in higher income brackets than the general Hispanic population: 34% of Adventists earn $25,000 or more compared with 16% of all Hispanics in Bureau of Census tabulations. Moreover, AVANCE data show that 61% of the most wealthy Hispanic Adventists — those earning more than $75,000 — have been Adventists since childhood. However, recent converts also tend to feel that they have been placed on the upward escalator since becoming Adventists: 63% of those baptized during the previous five years perceived their personal SES as better than before they became Adventists (Hernandez 1995: 31, 32). Nevertheless, with 66% of Hispanic Adventists earning less than $25,000 per year, this does not suggest widespread affluence by American standards.

Many of the families of converts from Catholicism to Conservative Protestantism perceive such conversion as a betrayal of family and cultural identity (Elizondo 1990: 14). This supports Greeley's case that the conservative Protestant sects are vehicles for the Americanization process. That is, as Hispanic converts to Adventism experience upward mobility, they too become less different and separate, and therefore less sectarian. Thus, it is the congregations dominated by longer-term immigrants — who are mostly Puerto Ricans and Cubans — that are less sectarian, less concerned with the traditional rules, while those where newer immigrants cluster, such as Dominicans and Colombians, attempt to enforce the rules with a heavier hand.

The evidence of upward mobility among the Adventist immigrants, then, suggests that many are already following the path blazed by American Adventists.

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The Americanization of Second Generation Adventists

The ultimate impact of the immigrants on American Adventism will depend in large part on subsequent generations — on the extent to which they remain in high tension with their environment or, alternatively, accommodate to it. In the words of Portes and Rumbaut, scholars of the "new immigration," American history " is not so much the history of its immigrants as of their descendants, for it is they who, as citizens and full participants in the culture, have had the heaviest role in the evolution of American society" (1996: 233). The following sections therefore focus on the dynamics at work among the second generation immigrants.

Educational achievements. It was noted above that Adventist immigrants give high priority to providing educational opportunities to their children. All the groups discussed are being successful in this to varying degrees, so that many of their children are gaining upward mobility through education. The smaller immigrant groups also exemplify this pattern. For example, although Korean Adventist immigrants are usually quite poor when they arrive in the U.S. and are excluded from some of the usual means used by their peers to gain upward mobility (such as operating vegetable markets) by their Sabbath observance, they nevertheless manage to rise with time and work very hard to send their children to college. A large proportion of the latter then go on to medical or law schools. Even Haitians, in spite of their relative poverty, succeed in furthering the education of many of their offspring. Indeed, those in one Manhattan congregation are so ambitious for their children that many of them have opted to enroll them in Catholic schools, which are considered superior to the troubled public schools of New York City, in order to improve their chances of gaining admission to better colleges (interviews). Given the fact that their eschatology leads them to expect persecution from Catholics, this is a surprising choice for Adventists (Lawson 1996c).

The data show that second generation Hispanic Adventists achieve more educationally than their peers, and that participation in Adventist parochial education has a very significant effect in promoting their educational aspirations and achievements: "Those with some Adventist education are six times more likely to have a graduate degree than those who never attended an Adventist school" (Hernandez 1995: 32). Gaining a graduate degree is also related to having been an Adventist since childhood — and the latter are more likely to have attended Adventist schools. It is not surprising then, given both these data and the high commitment of Hispanic Adventists to their church, that they report strong support for the concept of church schools. However, only 21% of the AVANCE sample currently in school are in Adventist schools because many Hispanics find them too costly (Hernandez 1995: 32). Nevertheless, the educational ambitions of both Adventist youth and their parents carry increasing numbers of the former to those colleges that they can more easily afford.

When education leads second generation Hispanics into careers, such as teaching and social work, which take them further into the broader society, then they often become less involved in their church and less sectarian in their behavior and outlook. However, those who enter technical fields may remain more traditional. Some of those who become detached from their church as they further their education later return to what they know when they need to decide how to train their children. The latter are likely to search for less sectarian congregations where their lives will be under less scrutiny (interviews).

Hernandez argues that the evidence shows that "the Adventist subculture reinforces a series of mores, values, and educational aspirations that greatly enhance the socioeconomic level of Latin Adventists" (1995: 31). The interviews on which this paper is based suggest that this is true for the other immigrant groups also: indeed, the West Indians have risen furthest because of the better education of the first generation. However, given the exit rate

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from Adventism among second generation immigrants, it should be noted that this pattern applies to those raised as Adventists, seemingly regardless of whether or not they remain active members later.

Upward social mobility results in an embracing of the dominant culture, and the second generation has risen further and faster than the first. However, there is resentment in the immigrant congregations when Hispanics or Haitians who have been educated choose to attend English-speaking congregations, and sorrow when those who go away to college fail to return. The Koreans commented that once their youth leave to attend college, they largely disappear from the church in New York.

Intergenerational Tensions

Although immigrant parents and their congregations are proud of the educational achievements of their youth, the fact that the latter Americanize at a much faster rate than their parents often results in a high level of tension between generations within both congregations and households. Tensions in the congregations are heightened by the fact that the pastors of immigrant congregations are almost all immigrants — they were born, trained, and did their early pastoring "back home." All 18 Haitian pastors, all 5 Koreans, 28 of the 31 Hispanics serving Spanish-speaking congregations, and 50 of the 52 West Indians serving the two conferences were born abroad. That is, both conferences have preferred to employ more seasoned pastors who have already completed their initial training to sponsoring the theological education of youth who have grown up in North America. However, such pastors often have considerable difficulty understanding or empathizing with the American-born or -raised youth in their congregations.[16] This can be an acute problem because immigrant parents often feel threatened by the cultural differences between their Americanizing children and themselves. Such differences frequently result in conflict, especially over language, music, behavioral norms, and discipline. These conflicts are all signs that the second generation is less strict, less sectarian, more Americanized.

Language skills. The problems with youth are exacerbated in the case of Hispanics, Haitians, and Koreans because of language differences between the generations, for the youth are often much more comfortable with English — a sure indication that they are embracing the new culture. While some congregations have English Sabbath School classes for youth, there has been little attempt to create worship services that the youth will understand clearly. The situation is even worse for Haitian youth because three languages are involved: the youth usually know English best, have some familiarity with spoken Creole, but very little knowledge of French. However, the church bulletins and part of each sermon are in French (to maintain the status Haitian Adventists felt this gave them in Haiti), with part also in Creole; English is not used. It is difficult to introduce English into worship in any of the foreign-language immigrant congregations because few of the pastors are fluent in it and members of the parents' generation are committed to using their native tongues in order to keep them and their native culture alive. They also rationalize the continued use of their own languages on the ground that this is necessary if they are to attract non–Adventist immigrants to their congregations. They thus place evangelizing new immigrants ahead of the needs of their own children.

A consequence of the failure of the immigrant congregations to meet the need of the youth for services that they can fully understand is that many of the latter gravitate to English-speaking congregations; many more would follow them if their families allowed them the option or if they felt less distance from these congregations as a result of their experiences in the broader society. The discontent that the language issue engenders contributes to heavy losses of youth from Adventism altogether once they reach an age of greater independence.

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In 1996, a Hispanic congregation in Manhattan, recognizing at length the problem it was facing, initiated a monthly bilingual worship service for youth. When this venture was publicized, it initially attracted youth from other Hispanic congregations also. However, the service declined and finally lapsed because the pastor's English was inadequate and it proved difficult to recruit other speakers with the needed language skills. In 1997 two other congregations began similar monthly services, but their pastors were then moved to other congregations as part of widespread reassignments, throwing the future of these services into jeopardy.

The retention of West Indian youth appears to be higher than among Hispanics, Haitians and Koreans because of the absence of a language problem between generations (interviews). This may be a key to the greater West Indian growth rate.

Popular culture. Music has proved to be a special focus of intergenerational tension among West Indians. Because of their origins in a region where Anglicanism is the most prominent religious group, many of the members feel that Anglican-style music is the only music acceptable in church. Reggae music is considered taboo among Adventists in the West Indies, especially in a church setting. However, because the ensuing conflict between generations and the loss of interest among youth were linked to this issue, some New York congregations changed their policies, inviting youthful musical groups to perform gospel and even reggae religious music, which they now acclaimed as representing their roots. These innovations raised the stakes as the various English-speaking congregations found they were competing with one another for youth. Eventually even the premier West Indian congregation in Brooklyn, where earlier the senior choir had considered even a spiritual out of bounds, was induced to change its musical offerings to the point of incorporating drums, "played softly so as not to annoy their parents too much" (interview). Nevertheless, strong divisions over music continue among congregations with West Indian majorities in both conferences.

There are similar conflicts also in both Hispanic and Haitian congregations, and there they are often more bitter still because the older generation is less flexible. A Haitian pastor commented that there seemed to be no solution to the music problem: he is likely to alienate one generation or the other no matter what he does.

Behavioral norms. Tension between generations over Adventist behavioral norms spills over from the congregations, which teach and endorse them as "church standards," to homes, where parents attempt to enforce them. Americanized youth often resent, and attempt to circumvent, rules prohibiting attendance at movies or dances, restricting the music they may listen to, labeling jewelry and certain clothing and hair styles as inappropriate, and governing relationships between the sexes (interviews). The AVANCE study of Hispanic youth revealed deep tensions in this area. In his review of these data, Crane concludes that "while Latino Adventism in North America is largely influenced by its foreign-born membership (70%), which shapes its conservative and sectarian attitudes towards doctrine and lifestyle, . . . the conservative trend is not being reproduced in the second and higher generations of most Latino ethnic groups. The data show significant departures from community norms in the lifestyles and attitudes of second and third generation youth" (forthcoming).

Immigrant parents, for their part, are frequently intransigent, especially when they are less educated. A Haitian pastor explained that when youth question the rules they are seen as disrespectful, and if a pastor fails to support the parents completely he is regarded as betraying the traditional values. As a result of such conflict, is has become increasingly difficult to retain loyalty to Adventism among youth, for they feel alienated both in their homes and at church.

Corporal punishment. The most bitter conflict between generations concerns discipline of Americanized youth by their immigrant parents. The parents had been taught in their

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homelands, where corporal punishment was used frequently, that the Bible endorses such methods of discipline. However, their children have learned from their peers at school that these are illegal and considered child abuse in New York. Several pastors told of having to mediate with the police after children had called the emergency police number following beatings at the hands of their parents. The AVANCE data show that 39% of Hispanic Adventist youth worry over the possibility that they could be beaten by their parents to the point of being badly hurt (Hernandez 1995: 33).

Enculturation. The intergenerational conflict discussed in this segment of the paper illustrates the forces at work to modify the immigrant church: the Americanized second generation thinks differently from its immigrant parents — it is less sectarian. The AVANCE study, utilizing a scale that measures degree of acculturation, found that it is the highly acculturated from among those of immigrant stock — both youth and adults — who are more likely to question and behaviorally challenge traditional prohibitions. It is the better educated, longer-term Adventists who are more likely to fall into this category (Hernandez 1995: 40–41). That is, there is a dissonance within Adventism. On the one hand, it desires conformity to its norms, and uses its schools as one avenue of inculcating them. On the other hand, it encourages its members to achieve educationally and, in its schools, it provides one means to do this. However, education gives students the tools with which to question teachings and the motivation to act independently concerning church prohibitions.

Changes over Time in Immigrant Religion

The pastors representing the various immigrant groups all recognize that their communities are changing and are already more liberal than Adventists "back home." That is, they are becoming less sectarian. They are evolving, in spite of the intransigence of many in the first generation, in an attempt to remain relevant to their Americanizing children and as they are impacted by American Adventism.

The greatest changes have taken place among West Indians, for they speak English, were exposed to American Adventists in the congregations they joined, and have achieved the most educationally. They have become more liberal in music, dress, liturgy, and church discipline. One pastor explained that if he had found, when he was a pastor in Jamaica, that a church member had attended a play, he would first have issued him a warning, and then, if the offense were repeated, banned him from holding office in the congregation; however, in New York he would not regard such an action as something he should bother about (interview). Many West Indian congregations in New York have consciously changed their church culture to give their youth major space: they have incorporated them into church positions and given them prominent speaking parts in the liturgy. They no longer talk of the youth as being "the church of tomorrow," but treat them as part of the church today. The Americanized youth have thus been provided with more room for influence.

The NEC Family Life Department offers seminars, which are directed mainly to its English-speaking segments, aimed at helping members assimilate to the U.S. culture. Their goal is to help members understand their Americanizing children, cope with the different sex roles in the U.S., etc.: "a lot of men really struggle with those things" (interview).

The racial/ethnic groups that worship in languages other than English are exposed far less to American Adventists and have had fewer opportunities for upward mobility through educational attainment. The changes they list are therefore much less dramatic than among West Indians. Hispanic pastors reported, for example, that their children ride bicycles on the Sabbath in New York, their women have begun to use makeup and nail polish, and that it has become more acceptable to date non–Adventists. The major change reported by Haitian pastors is decreased attendance at the all-age Sabbath School and at Wednesday

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night Prayer Meeting — both of which have also declined sharply among Americans in recent years.

The role of women. Because the issue of the role of women is at the center of current conflict within the international Adventist Church, the actions and attitudes that bear on the issue provide an excellent measure of changes in the immigrant communities. As in many other denominations, positions of power, both in the local congregation and in the church hierarchy, were long reserved for males. In the early 1970s, as a result of initiatives taken in the wake of the women's movement by congregations in the U.S., the General Conference opened the way for women to be elected as elders within their congregations. While women elders have since become common in North America and parts of Europe, the practice is still rare in the developing world. Women have attended seminary in the U.S. and Europe in increasing numbers since the late 1970s. Many of these graduates were appointed as pastors, initially in a few more liberal conferences, and then gradually further afield. However, although their responsibilities were broadened over time until they matched those of male pastors in almost every way, the fact that they have not been eligible for ordination has limited them to serving in a second-class category without access to positions of power. In both 1990 and 1995, when business sessions of the General Conference[17] rejected American initiatives to allow the ordination of women as pastors, delegates from the developing world provided the bulk of the negative votes. They drew on both their cultural biases and biblical literalism in affirming that such a change would be an affront to God. On the other hand, those who had advocated the change saw the outcome as a perpetuation of injustice and a refusal to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit (Lawson 1995b). The position taken on the ordination of women thus became a key indicator of where the various segments of the Adventist Church in the U.S. fell on the sect-denomination continuum.

Some of the immigrant congregations within the two conferences of metropolitan New York have in recent years appointed women as elders. These congregations are mostly among those dominated by West Indians: about one-third of the 53 such congregations in the NEC and a somewhat higher proportion of the 21 in the GNYC have elected women elders. However, only two of the 38 Hispanic and two of the 25 Haitian congregations have made such appointments; since the Koreans continue to reject the concept, none of their five congregations has done so. The appointment of women as elders has often been made after bitter debate and division. Even though there are in fact a few women elders in Jamaica, the practice was sufficiently rare in the Caribbean for the issue to become a major dispute when the subject was first raised in West Indian dominated congregations in New York. Both of the Haitian pastors who championed the cause in their congregations more recently were engulfed in deep conflict as a result. The majority of the members in the two Hispanic congregations with women elders are Puerto Ricans, who tend to have been in New York longer than other Hispanic groups.

Neither conference has appointed any women pastors. When I asked why this was so, Caucasian pastors replied bluntly that it was impossible, given the dominance of immigrants within both constituencies. This analysis is supported by AVANCE data, which shows low support (21%) for women in ministry among adult Hispanics (Hernandez 1995: 34). However, there is no evidence that American Adventists in New York, either Caucasian or African American, have pushed firmly for the appointment of a woman pastor either. Adventism there is socially conservative and does not match the liberal city. In fact, no woman candidate has been considered seriously by the executive committee of either conference.

I am aware of one woman who tried to gain the attention of the administrators of the NEC in the hope of being appointed as a pastor. She is a West Indian who had, without the encouragement of any Church official, completed an M.Div. at New York Theological

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Seminary and then proceeded with work toward a doctorate. When she let the conference administrators know about her highly successful yearlong internship in a West Indian Pentecostal congregation, where she had worked on bridging a gulf between generations,[18] they showed no interest in employing her or even in tapping her expertise in what is surely an issue of great relevance to the immigrant communities within Adventism in New York (interviews).

This is not to say, however, that immigrants are irrevocably opposed to women pastors. For example, there are two women serving as associate pastors in Hispanic congregations in the liberal Southeastern California Conference, which has more women pastors than any other. Although the Conference's Spanish Coordinator in the late 1980s was favorable to the idea of appointing a woman pastor and had contacted a suitable candidate with that in mind, he proved to be too timid to take the risk in spite of the supportive environment in the Conference. The first Hispanic woman pastor was appointed in 1990 at the initiative of the congregation to which she was appointed: when it was in need of a youth pastor, it decided that the best candidate was a woman serving as a teacher in its school, and demanded that she be appointed. After this breakthrough, the Conference, acting through its secretary, who was Hispanic, took the initiative the following year in sponsoring a second Hispanic woman, who was graduating from an Adventist college with a major in religion, to complete an M.Div. at the Adventist Seminary with the guarantee of an appointment to a congregation afterwards. These two women have each served two Hispanic congregations, and have found good acceptance in three of them. (The experience of the woman sent to seminary in her first congregation suggests that immigrant congregations need to be prepared carefully for a woman pastor in advance of her taking up the post.) Meanwhile, in 1996 the same conference called a West Indian woman pastoring a mixed congregation in Boston to be the senior pastor of a large, but declining, rather conservative Caucasian congregation. This appointment attracted a great deal of positive attention, which resulted in an influx of members from other congregations (interviews).

The initiatives taken by the New York Conference, a small "white" conference headquartered in Syracuse and covering upstate New York, also provide an interesting contrast with the situations in the two conferences centered on metropolitan New York. This conference appointed two women as associate pastors in 1996: one, a West Indian, to a racially mixed congregation in Albany, the other, a Caucasian, to a mostly Caucasian congregation in Buffalo. This conference is so poor, and therefore short-staffed, that it was willing to make use of programs that subsidize the appointment of women as pastors. It placed both of them in positions where they were instructed to plant new congregations. The first has already accomplished this in the city of Troy, outside Albany, and has thus proved her worth; the other is attempting to plant a congregation closer to downtown Buffalo in a metropolitan area where the only congregation attached to that conference is several miles out in the suburbs (interviews).

The evidence of their stands on the position of women suggests that the various immigrant groups in metropolitan New York are at different stages in undergoing a process of Americanization and of assimilation to the increasingly denominationlike North American Adventist Church.

CONCLUSION

This paper began by arguing that (1) the North American Adventist Church has for the past century been following a well-defined trajectory from sect toward denomination, and that (2) over the past 30 years it has received an influx of "new immigrants" from countries of the developing world who are more sectarian in their beliefs, behavioral norms, and separation from society than are most American Adventists today. It then posed the

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question of whether the impact of this influx will be to reverse the trajectory of Adventism in North America, making it generally more sectarian.

When the development of the immigrant groups was examined, it was found that two contrary forces are at work. On the one hand, the influx of new immigrants continues, rendering North American Adventism increasingly diverse along the racial/ethnic dimension and introducing increasing numbers of Adventists who are more sectarian than the current norm. Hernandez, for example, noting that Hispanics are more conservative than the Adventist mainstream in the U.S., concludes that "the browning of Adventism will strengthen the strains of conservatism in North America" (1995: 45). On the other hand, the immigrants are concurrently experiencing upward mobility, their youth are becoming highly enculturated, and their churches are assimilating — the English-speaking congregations more quickly than those isolated by language. Indeed, in noting that the second generation is likely to be educated and to rise socially and therefore to question the church standards and positions (1995: 41), Hernandez surely points to a process that is undermining his conclusion.

Even with the bellwether issue of women's ordination, the AVANCE study of Hispanic Adventists in North America finds that the greatest variations are generational: youth (37%) are more favorable than adults (21%), and the highly enculturated (35%) than those with low enculturation (22%) (Hernandez 1995: 34; Crane forthcoming). That is, if even this community, which is drawn from countries that are extremely rigid on this issue and has been isolated in its congregations in North America because of language, is showing change on this measure, it suggests that as time passes and the process of assimilation continues among all immigrant groups, the latter force is likely to dominate. Evidence for this progression can be seen in the high rate at which the congregations in which West Indians have become dominant have appointed women elders.

Nor is it likely that the second immigrant generation will inject sectarian enthusiasm into the mix. Of the youth raised as Adventists, many exit, and those who remain in the church fold often become Americanized and, like Americans, lose much of their evangelistic fervor. Moreover, because their non–Adventist peers have also Americanized, the latter are much less open to proselytizing: only 7% of recent converts in the AVANCE sample are second or subsequent generation Hispanic Americans (Hernandez 1995: 35).

If the flow of immigrants continues at the present rate, the range of immigrant congregations is likely to continue to become more diverse, moving towards matching American Adventism in this. Some foreign-language congregations are likely to continue to orient primarily toward newcomers, and will therefore remain sectarian in beliefs, behavioral norms, and their isolation from the broader society. Other such congregations will introduce bilingual services in order to try to retain their Americanized youth and will become more relaxed about their behavioral norms. This means that these ethnic segments will become internally diverse, rather than islands of sectarianism, so that newcomers attaching themselves there will be increasingly exposed to enculturating or enculturated members. The experience of these Hispanic, Haitian, and Korean immigrants will then increasingly approximate that of the West Indians. Finally, some members will switch to English-speaking congregations because their children need English and prefer the greater resources available there for children's programs, and the parents will be more comfortable in a situation where there is less intrusion into their lives than in most foreign-language congregations. That is, while immigrants who have been in the U.S. for some time will pass through the transition of enculturation, sectarianism will concurrently be reinforced by the continuing flow of immigrants. If that flow should slow considerably, then the group of conservative congregations will gradually diminish in strength, while the process of transition continues for the others.

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When the evidence of declining fertility among American Adventists and the exit of their youth is considered, it seems evident that the further growth of American Adventism is likely to be dependent on a continued flow of immigrants. As the proportion of members of new immigrant stock increases, their political influence will wax: the NEC elected a West Indian as president in 1988, and the GNYC a Hispanic in 1997 (Lawson forthcoming). However, those who gain leadership positions are likely to be drawn from the ranks of the more assimilated, and to receive considerable socialization from the existing cadre of leaders, which is often referred to as "the old boys' network." Moreover, the presence of conference leaders drawn from the ranks of immigrants who worship using foreign tongues will help bridge the gulf between the immigrant congregations and the conferences — the sense of "us" and "them" — easing enculturation and perhaps giving the immigrant youth less reason for rebellion, and therefore more room to remain Adventists and to make the transition to broader Adventism.

The influx of new immigrants has resulted in a temporary slowing of the movement from sect toward denomination at the local level where there are large numbers of immigrants. The process of enculturation ensures that the dominant trajectory will continue: "long term rather than merely episodic change in denominations and congregations will be defined by the second generation" (Crane forthcoming).

NOTES

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[1] The term "new immigration" is used to refer to migration to the U.S. after the passage of the Hart-Cellar Immigration Act of 1965, which fostered a flow of immigrants that was much less European than previously.

[2] This datum was supplied the author by Monte Sahlin, director of the North American Office of Church Information and Research.

[3] However, given the tendency in recent years to retain many of the missing members on the membership rolls, there is no doubt that the number of Caucasian members with whom the church is in contact is actually declining steadily.

[4] For the purposes of this paper, metropolitan New York is defined as New York City and the four suburban counties located in New York State — Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, and Rockland.

[5] Immigrants from Guadeloupe and Martinique are forced to attend English-speaking congregations because they do not understand the Haitian patois.

[6] By 1892 about 50 members had been convicted and 30 of these imprisoned.

[7] The data summarized in this segment are taken from Lawson 1998c.

[8] The NEC had a total of 2,228 members, for its territory extended to Boston and Buffalo; however, this paper limits itself to the New York metropolitan area.

[9] The first Haitian congregation was organized in 1956, joining the Spanish-speaking congregations that had already been formed. West Indians immigrants were joining existing English-speaking congregations, mostly in the NEC.

[10] There is much less pressure on pastors to "clean the rolls" than there was 50 years ago. However, such pressure continues within the Hispanic culture.

[11] Data from a study of Hispanic Adventists in the U.S. indicate that 75% of first generation Hispanic Adventists were baptized in the U.S. (Hernandez 1995: 35).

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[12] Adventist children are usually baptized around the age of 10 or 12, and are only then counted as members. I instructed the church clerks to count the baptized youth in immigrant families as immigrants because they were unsure which of them had been born in the U.S.

[13] Which is believed to be currently taking place in heaven.

[14] On the other hand, there are some mores, notably the injunction to be a vegetarian, which these immigrants rarely adhere to.

[15] Per capita tithe, which supposedly represents 10% of income, varies not only with income levels but also with the extent to which the practice is followed strictly within a community. While respondents were in agreement that the so-called "multiethnic" congregations (which include the former Caucasian congregations, all of which are now very mixed but which tend to attract the most acculturated persons, including many professionals, from among the racial minorities, together with a Ghanaian congregation and a small Chinese congregation) have the highest income, their per capita tithe ($935) falls far short of that of the five Korean congregations ($1,422), which continue to stress that failure to tithe is "robbing God." Professional Adventists are increasingly behaving in an independent fashion in their giving: many, for example, are directing a goodly portion into projects which meet the needs of their local congregations rather than labeling it tithe, which is funneled to the conference, where it supports the hierarchical structure of the Church as well as the salaries of pastors. West Indians, Hispanics, and especially Haitians show a different kind of independence when they choose to send their tithe to the churches in their homelands, where they regard the need as greater, rather than following the rules that state that it should be submitted to the congregations where they are members. Nevertheless, it is safe to conclude that the Haitians' low per capita tithe indicates that they are the poorest of the Adventist communities in the GNYC. It should be noted that these per capita figures are based on the official membership statistics, which include missing members.

[16] This is less true of the West Indian pastors because of the socialization received during their continued education in the U.S.

[17] When delegates from throughout the world gather for a General Conference Session, this speaks with the highest authority possible within the world church.

[18] I became acquainted with this woman after her professors, knowing that I was an Adventist, told me enthusiastically about her "breakthrough" in the internship.

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