

**Lessons From Waco: A Sociological
Analysis of the Branch Davidians**

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The world watched in horror as a fatal inferno ended the standoff between an armed cult and U.S. law enforcement officers. The 51-day drama outside Waco, Texas, began on Sunday morning, February 28, 1993, when some 100 federal agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms stormed the Branch Davidian to confiscate illegal weapons. Cult members responded with gunfire that killed four lawmen. The ensuing siege climaxed in the fiery destruction of the cult's compound and scores of its members.

Shockingly those who fired back on the federal agents belonged to a *religious* organization. Whatever happened to "turn the other cheek" and "blessed are the peacemakers"? News reporters referred to the groups as "the Branch Davidians of Seventh-day Adventists. That preposition "of" raised great concern among Seventh-day Adventists. Concerns not only with possible connections to the group by the media, but more importantly concerns that the majority of the members of this group came out of Seventh-day Adventist churches. Why? Was the attraction of Adventists to the Branch Davidians unique? What can the church do to protect itself from the bad press that former members bring on themselves?¹ What can the church do to prevent giving rise to potential cult and sectarian members? What is a cult?² How does it differ from a sect? What gives rise to sects and cults? Is the process of this rise inevitable?

This article seeks to answer these and other questions by addressing the two concerns mentioned: the relation of the Branch Davidians to Seventh-day Adventists and avoiding the pain of separation. First, I need to clarify the confusion between the terms cult and sect. If one examines the newspaper and magazine reports of the incident in Waco,³ one discovers that some reports regard the Branch Davidians as a cult and others as a sect. The confusion can be clarified if one understands their relationship to the process of secularization.

Religion and the Process of Secularization:

When the Founding Fathers drafted the constitution of the United States of America, they prohibited congress from passing a law that would establish religion or prevent its free exercise. Learning from the experience of Europe, they did not desire the establishment of a state religion or a

state church. The result, which makes America unique in the world, is what Rodney Stark calls a "religious economy"—the vast market of diverse religious groups competing with each other to attract converts or clientele.⁴ This religious economy gives rise to *religious pluralism*, a large number of competing religious groups seeking to meet the spiritual needs of a diverse population. No one group dominates, since the market is unregulated.⁵ This stands in sharp contrast to what is found in other countries, a religious monopoly, where the state tends to primarily support one group.

In sociology the word *church* is most often used in a technical sense to refer to the one dominant religious institution in a religious monopoly, such as the Roman Catholic Church in Italy, Spain or Poland. In a religiously pluralistic market, such as the United States, what one finds is not churches, in a technical sense, but *denominations*, competing with each other, with no one group as dominant.⁶

While almost all religious faiths begin as otherworldly groups, conservative in both belief and behavior, in time these same groups adapt to the world, lose their religious fervor, and accommodate themselves to their societal environment. This move towards worldliness greatly concerned John Wesley as he discovered that a religious revival could not be sustained.

I fear, wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches. How then is it possible that Methodism, that is, a religion of the heart, though it flourishes now as a green bay tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionately increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away. Is there no way to prevent this—this continual decay of pure religion?⁷

What Wesley is describing here is the process of secularization, the process whereby the supernatural

declines in significance in giving meaning to life. Secularization gives rise to secularism, a way of life that negates the influence of the supernatural in both belief and behavior. However, this gradual process from sacred to secular is self-limiting in that the increased spiritual decline often will also give rise to revival and cult formation.⁸

During the 1960s the decline of religion in mainline churches, as measured by the drop in attendance and membership,⁹ and what appeared to many to be a loss of interest in religion in society, gave birth to the God-Is-Dead movement, which itself is now dead. What people failed to realize is that religious interest had not died, but shifted over to conservative churches, which continued to grow.¹⁰ What happened was that God, as Stark and Bainbridge suggest, merely "changed residences," all of which was part of the process of secularization.

The scholars in the heart of Christendom who proclaim the death of God have been fooled by a simple change of residence. Faith lives in the sects and sect-like denominations, and in the hearts of the overwhelming majority of individual persons. New hopes enter the marketplace of religion with every new cult movement . . . Far from marking a radical departure in history and an era of faithlessness; secularization is an age-old process of transformation. In an endless cycle, faith is revived and new faiths born to take the places of those withered denominations that lost their sense of the supernatural. Through secularization, churches reduce their tension with the surrounding sociocultural environment, opening fields for sects and cults to grow and, in turn, themselves to be transformed.¹¹

What Stark and Bainbridge are saying is that secularization "does not end the human need for religion," on the contrary, it encourages religious experimentation.¹² And this is where sects and cults come in, because "secularization means the transformation of religion, not its destruction."¹³ When religion becomes too secular, too worldly, revival will periodically break out in sect formation or in novel religious innovation such as in the emergence of cults. The two are different responses to secularization. *A sect is a religious group which claims to be the true expression of a traditional religious faith, and whose beliefs and behaviors place it in tension with society.* Sects are thus breakaway, schismatic groups that "present themselves to the world as something old. They

left the parent body not to form a new faith but to reestablish the old one, from which the parent body had 'drifted' (usually by becoming more churchlike). Sects claim to be the authentic, purged, refurbished version of the faith from which they split. Luther, for example, did not claim to be leading a new church, but the true church, free of worldly encrustations."¹⁴

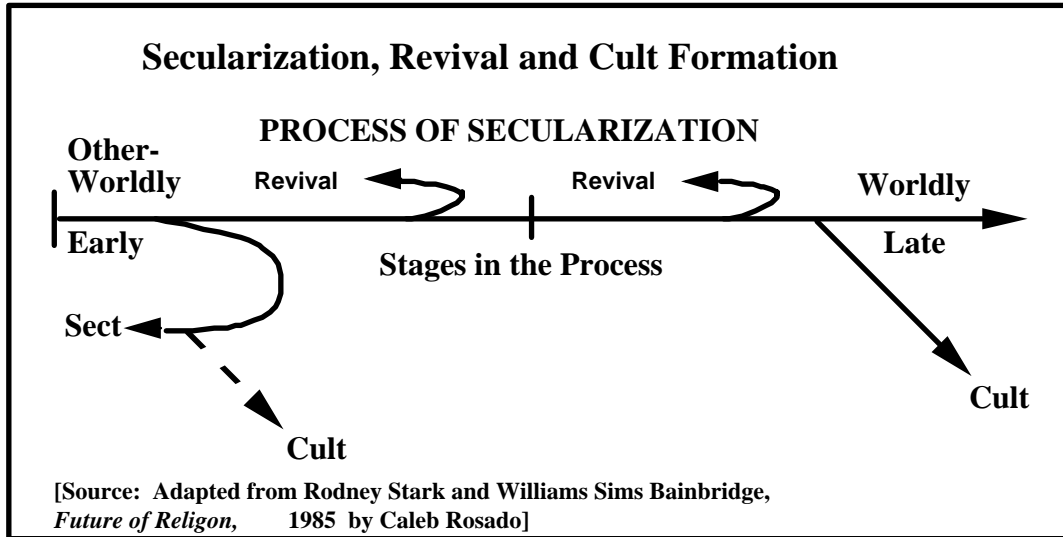
The same is true of most religious organizations. Take Seventh-day Adventists, for example. They began as a group of individuals that broke away from Methodist, Baptist and other mainline denominations to join the Millerite Movement, and, after the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844, separated themselves as a result of recovering biblical teachings, such as the second coming of Christ, the Sabbath, the judgment, etc., which they felt other churches were not including in their beliefs and practices. In fact, Christianity itself began as a sect of Judaism. There is nothing innately negative about the term sect, as the media and many Christians tend to regard the term. For H. Richard Niebuhr, the denominational aspect of a religious organization represents an accommodation to the world, "the church's confession of defeat and the symbol of its surrender."¹⁵ But God's true people are never totally at home on this earth. Why? Because the gospel is never in harmony with this world, but challenges it (1 Corinthians 1:18-31). Thus, a sect tends to be the purer form of religious expression, divorced from the world, so that in some cases, because of the beliefs that a sect recovers, it may represent the genuine expression of the true faith. Such is how the Seventh-day Adventist church, or "sect", if you please, views itself. Obviously, they are not the only ones to hold such a similar view.

A Cult, on the other hand, is a new religious movement, which represents a radical break from existing religious traditions. It is thus "the beginning phase of an entirely new religion."¹⁶ For example, while first-century Christianity was a sect of Judaism, it was a cult of the various religions in pagan Roman, such as Mithraism, which it replaced by the 4th century. Whether a cult is domestic or imported, it represents a new and *different* form of religious expression in society.

Four additional points about sects and cults need to be made. First, though sects and cults differ, they are not "functional alternatives" to secularization. Rather they are different responses to secularization at different stages of the process. "Sect formation is, in part, a response to *early* stages of weakness in the [religion] provided by the conventional churches. Cult formation tends to erupt in *later* stages of church [or denominational]

weakness, when large sectors of the population have drifted away from all organizational ties to the prevailing faiths"¹⁷ (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1



Second, because sects are concerned with revival, they tend to proliferate in areas where conservative religions are strongest. Whereas cults, as a response to secularization in its advanced stages, tend to emerge where secularization has had the strongest effect on religion, areas weak in traditional religion.¹⁸

Third, not all revivals result in sect formation. There may be occasional periods of spiritual renewal in an organization, to move it back from the brink of spiritual decline and secularism. Seventh-day Adventists have experienced several of these episodic revivals in overseas fields such as Africa, Asia and Latin America, and on college campuses in the United States. The fact that these have taken place in less developed societies and on college campuses is not coincidental, since change usually starts with groups that have the least invested in the prevailing system and therefore have little to lose but much to gain with spiritual change.

Fourth, it is also possible for a sectarian group to evolve into a cult. This is the significance of the broken arrow in the above graphic, showing that a sect can sometimes become a cult. This takes place when a sect's teaching ceases to be a return to "old truths," and becomes "new light," so that it moves the group completely away from past connections, resulting in the emergence of a "new religion."¹⁹ This was the case of the Peoples Temple and Jim Jones. It began as an emotionally charged Christian sect, affiliated with the Disciples of Christ denomination, that

evolved into a cult when Jim Jones began to regard himself as God and moved into extremes of doctrine and behavior.²⁰ The same is true of the Branch Davidians. It began as a sect under Victor Houteff and evolved into a cult under the leadership Ben Roden and then David Koresh.

Who Are the Branch Davidians?

As argued previously, Seventh-day Adventists are a sect, though it is becoming more and more accommodated to this world, in other words, more denomination-like, especially in areas where SDA institutions such as hospitals and colleges dominate. This is also where revivals usually break out, as mentioned earlier. Black and Latino Adventist churches tend to be more sectarian—in tension with the world and separatist—than our white, Euro-American churches. This is also partly due to the reality that society, with its racial and class hostility, is in tension with persons of color, who in turn seek refuge in the church.²¹ To say that the SDA church is a sect, is not to say something negative, but one reflective of its emergence on the American scene, its growth and development, and its doctrinal beliefs. A number of these doctrines places the group at odds with other Christian churches, primarily: the Sabbath, the State of the Dead, the Sanctuary and the Judgment, Dietary Principles, belief in an inspired prophet, etc. Adventists, using principles of biblical interpretation, believe that their position on these and other doctrines is the correct one. Thus, not only sociologically but also theologically, Seventh-day Adventists represent a break with contemporary Christendom and regard themselves as a "remnant," faithful to the teachings of Jesus, the prophets and apostles.

Because of their numerical growth, institutional presence and global organization, Seventh-day Adventists more specifically reflect the sociological typology of *Established Sect*. This category best describes Adventism, because the very name itself, "established sect," reflects a duality, a dynamic tension. William H. Swatos, Jr. describes this as a "seeming contradictoriness..., 'sect' indicating world-rejection yet 'established' connoting world-acceptance."²²

Figure 2 shows that there are degrees of sectarian tension. Sect and Church/Denomination are polar opposites. Between them are degrees of sectarian and denominational development.

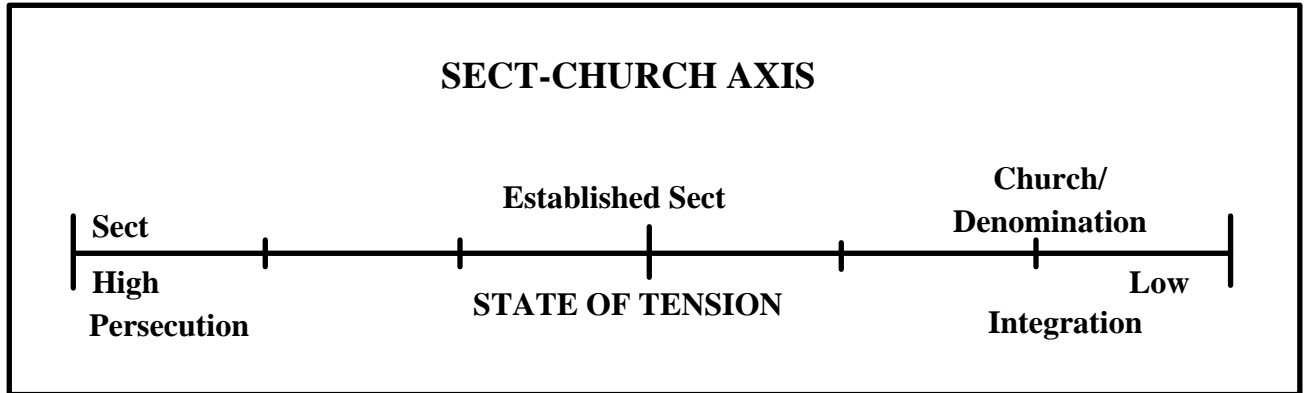


Fig. 2

Stark and Bainbridge tell us that: "The ideal sect falls at one pole, where the surrounding tension is so great that sect members are hunted fugitives."²³ Such was the case of the Early Church under Judaism and the Roman Empire, and then under the Spanish Inquisition. "The ideal church [or denomination] anchors the other end of the continuum and virtually is the sociocultural environment—the two are so merged that it is impossible to postulate a basis for tension."²⁴ Such was the position of the Roman Catholic Church during the middle ages, and the situation of many mainline denominations today in United States, and state churches in Europe.

In time as an other-worldly group progresses and becomes an established sect, on its way to becoming a denomination, schismatic groups will appear, or what Adventists call "offshoot organizations" or "apostate movements." These are sects that break away from the main sect, in this case the Seventh-day Adventist church.²⁵ Since the church's beginnings, several offshoot or other sectarian groups have emerged. Besides key individuals such as Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, A. T. Jones, D. M. Canright, A. F. Ballenger and Desmond Ford, there have been splinter groups such as: The *Messenger Party* (1853-1855), the *Hope of Israel and Marion Party* (1858-1863), the *SDA Reform Movement—German* (1915), the *Reformed SDA's—Rowenite* (1916), the *United Sabbath Day Adventists* (1930), and the *Shepherd's Rod movement*, or *Davidian SDA's* (1929).²⁶

As can be noted from the names of these various groups, and similar to Martin Luther's attitude towards Catholicism and William Miller's attitude towards Protestant churches in the 1830s and 40s, these groups were not interested in necessarily breaking with the church, but in reforming it. Each believed they had "new light," and were the "authentic, purged, refurbished version of the faith."²⁷ But because they were found to be wanting both theologically and

sociologically (in terms of behavior and attitude), relations were severed.

The Davidians emerged with the person of Victor Houteff, a Bulgaria and a member of a Seventh-day Adventist church in Los Angeles. In 1929 he began to espouse his teachings in a Sabbath School class he taught. In 1930 he published his teachings in a book entitled, *The Shepherd's Rod*, from which he took the initial name of the group. There is no space in this brief article to go into his teachings,²⁸ but all of it had to do with prophecies: those of Ezekiel, the kingdom of David (from which he drew the name Davidian), the end-time harvest, the sealing, the 144,000 and the second coming of Christ, all of which are important themes in Seventh-day Adventist theology. Essentially the group believed that God would restore the kingdom of David of which the Davidians were the core group, after God had slaughtered Seventh-day Adventists for rejecting the Shepherd's Rod message. "The 144,000 would be Seventh-day Adventists left over from the slaughter of Ezekiel 9."²⁹

Disfellowshipped in 1930, Houteff, his wife and 11 children moved to Waco, Texas,³⁰ a religiously conservative area, with at present some 200 churches, most of them fundamentalists. (Keep in mind what was said earlier about sects flourishing in areas where traditional religion is strong.) They bought property near the city and called their place Mount Carmel, after the biblical place where Elijah confronted the false prophets of Baal and was victorious.³¹

In 1942 the group took on the official name of Davidian Seventh-day Adventists, because of government regulations during world War II. Houteff died in 1955, leaving no successor as president of the Davidians, since he did not expect to see death. But already prior to his death, as is common with new sects, splinter groups were emerging because of disagreements with Houteff's teachings.³²

After his death, his wife, Florence Houteff, took over the leadership of the group. In 1959 she predicted that God would intervene in history and establish the kingdom of David. Some 1000 people sold everything and gathered at Mount Carmel to await the restoration of the kingdom, but the prophecy failed.³³ After the great disappointment, more splinter groups emerged, but the one founded by Benjamin Roden, the Branch Davidian became the largest and most important one. In 1962, Florence Houteff officially disbanded the Davidian Seventh-day Adventists,³⁴ though a number of Davidian groups continue to operate, who have nothing to do with the Branch Davidians in Waco, TX. They continue to infiltrate Anglo and Latino Seventh-day

Adventist churches in an attempt to gain converts. Their belief is that their mission is to cleanse the Seventh-day Adventist church.

It is at this time in the process of sect transformation that the sect, the Davidians, not only breaks up, but shifts over to become a cult, the Branch Davidians [the significance of the broken arrow in Figure 1]. The process of sect-to-cult shift takes place with the emergence of splinter groups that begin to espouse, not new/old teachings, as sects do, but radically new teachings, which fundamentally break with the Bible, basic Christianity, and Seventh-day Adventism. These are teachings that the leader now regards himself as King David, Jesus Christ, or both, or Yahweh (the Hebrew name for God) plus other extreme demands and behavioral expectations of the followers, as David Koresh holds.

Roden relocated the Mount Carmel center to its present location, not far from the original site. He claimed to be the antitypical David, but in 1978 he died. His wife, Lois I. Roden took over the group, and now stronger than ever espoused the teaching, which her husband had not supported, that the Holy Spirit was the feminine part of the Godhead. She began publishing a magazine called **SHEKINAH**, with emphasis on the SHE, where she also promoted the ordination of women.³⁵ An article written by a *Los Angeles Times* staff writer, and published in the *Dallas Times Herald*, declares: "When Lois Roden started preaching that the Holy Spirit is a woman, she nearly lost half her folk of Seventh-Day Adventists—the male half."³⁶

In 1981 Vernon Howell, a former Seventh-day Adventist, joined the group, and soon arrested leadership of the group from George Roden, son of Lois and Ben Roden, after an open confrontation which involved gun fire. Howell changed his name to David Koresh, as a result of his belief that he too was the antitypical David of the Bible, and Koresh for King Cyrus of Persia, of whom the Bible says, God would "direct all his ways," and he would rebuild the city of Jerusalem and let the captives free" (Isaiah 45:13). All of which David Koresh applied to himself. These and other teachings, such as: that he was a sinful incarnation of Jesus Christ; that because he was Christ, only he could have sexual relations with the women in the compound; that because he was Christ, only he could open the Seven Seals of the Book of Revelation, and many other teachings David Koresh applied strictly to himself. He exploited his profound knowledge of the Bible to suit his own interests and to manipulate his followers into submission to his will and purposes.

The Lust of Power:

More can be said about Koresh, but there are four things with which he was obsessed, that raise important questions. Why the obsession with the Seven Seals and the belief that he alone could open them? Why the centralizing of possessions and controlling the money? Why the obsession with graphic, promiscuous sex, which he alone could engage in? Why the obsession with guns and high-powered weapons?

While all four factors are on the surface vastly different, they all have one important common denominator—*power!* David Koresh, like most cult leaders, the likes of Jim Jones, Charles Manson and others, was obsessed with power. All of us desire power, for without power we are helpless, and there is nothing meaningful about a powerless existence. But the right use of power is based on *choice*, not coercion. That is how God uses power, without violating free moral choice.³⁷ So why these four areas?

In an age of rapid social and cultural change, where all social values are for sale, resulting in spiritual confusion, to be able to stand up and proclaim that one alone holds the key to unlock the future and give meaning to history and to people's lives is a rare but attractive commodity. And then to do it with charisma, persuasion and a profound knowledge of the Bible, is a tremendous source of personal power, generating much adulation and personal esteem from followers, many of whom are neophytes in Biblical understanding. Such is the significance behind the claim to be the only one to open the Seven Seals of the Book of Revelation, a complex series of prophecies not all Christians understand.³⁸

We live in a society where money is regarded as one of the greatest sources of power. According to the Apostle Paul, it is the love of money that lies at the root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10). By extension, wealth and possessions become a source of independence and a manifestation of self-will. When members join the group all forms of independence must be relinquished, including possessions and any funds or accounts people may have, so as to deprive people of outside influences. In this way the leader not only centralizes wealth to himself, but also controls the group, making it completely dependent on him. By centralizing resources to himself he has complete control and power over the group.

Sex has always been one of the strongest of human drives. But it has also been one of the most violent weapons used against women. One only needs to reflect on the use of rape as a weapon of war, with the most recent example being its use against the women of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Serbians. Couple this source of power with a biblical teaching that women must be submissive to men in all things, especially to a human Christ who needs to

experience sin in order to save sinful human beings (one of Koresh's teachings), and that if they do the women will be "queens in heaven,"³⁹ and one has one of the most powerful uses or abuses of power, to manipulate and control.

In a violent society such as ours, the ultimate source of power lies in the gun. Extreme cult leaders, like Manson, Jones and Koresh have bought into Mao Tse Tung's saying: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." Koresh's obsession with weapons was nothing more than a latching on to the final form of power—the ability to inflict death. For Jim Jones it was the power to convince people (assuming they all did it voluntarily) to willingly inflict death on themselves. That's power! For David Koresh, opening the Seven Seals, controlling the money and possessions, having unrivaled use of the women for sexual purposes, and possessing a weapons arsenal, comprised four levels of power, the ultimate form of which was the ability to control life and death. Thus, it is not who dies, but who determines the time, place and manner of death, that is the one with the power. To have all that within one's grasp is most seductive. This is because the most seductive force in the world is power. It is the one thing human beings crave the most, and in order to possess it the most heinous crimes are committed.

This ultimate form of power was dramatically displayed on Monday, April 19, when fire burned down the compound and allowed David Koresh to go out in a blaze of glory. While this may not have been the way he wanted to end things, since it looked like the FBI forced his hand, it did allow him to control how the siege—his own apocalyptic conflagration—would end. In the end, Koresh's thirst for power determined the final outcome, thereby preempting the FBI from having the final say. This is taking power to the ultimate limit.

So why would anyone follow a person like that? To this I now turn.

Who Joins Cults:

As law enforcement investigators sifted through the rubble of David Koresh's charred kingdom Christians—Adventists in particular—began their own autopsy of the tragedy. Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church had no connection whatever with the fanatical Davidian cult, the inescapable reality is that most of the members of the group came from an Adventist background, including Koresh himself.

What made these Adventists vulnerable to the fatal fire of fanaticism? Are there lessons people need to learn to be protected from future deceptions? Let us search for answers.

The Branch Davidians are a unique group among cults, in that they emerged from a sect, previously emerged from another sect. There are aspects of the group which are sect-like: strong Bible teaching, a sense that they alone have the "truth," and the belief that only they are the true followers of God. Other aspects, like Koresh believing himself to be Jesus, having multiple wives, his obsession with sex and weapons, are cult-like.

Because sects and cults are different responses to the process of secularization at different stages of the process, people who are attracted to sects are not always the same as those attracted to cults. Sects tend to draw people disproportionately from the lower socioeconomic classes, from among the powerless, the socially and spiritually deprived, and new converts. Successful cults, on the other hand, draw their members from the more privileged members of society, the educated, the unchurched, those uninterested in organized religion.

The Branch Davidians, because of its sect-cult status, seems to draw from both groups. Most of the members are drawn from Seventh-day Adventist churches, including Adventist colleges. Why Adventists? Who joins? Evidence from former members and research into cults provides an interesting picture. There are several reasons why Seventh-day Adventists are susceptible to a group like the Branch Davidians.

1. *Previous connections to Adventism.* The Branch Davidians are an offshoot of the original Davidians, who came out of the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1930. This historical connection is important, because the mission of the group is not to save the world, but to reform the Seventh-day Adventist church, which they perceive to be Babylon, and against whom much of their prophecies are addressed, such as the slaughter of Ezekiel 9. Thus, the concern with going after Seventh-day Adventists.

2. *A strong focus on apocalyptic prophecies.* Seventh-day Adventists, from their very beginning, have had a strong prophetic emphasis to their message, not only in the person of a prophetic messenger, Ellen G. White, but more importantly, they perceive themselves to be a prophetic movement—a movement that emerges in history out of an understanding of prophecy to call to the attention of the world the message of the end-time prophecies of the books of Daniel and Revelation. When this prophetic message is not given enough attention or emphasis in the preaching and writings of the church, because organizational or mundane matters end up taking more of the time of church leaders and their preaching, reformers will arise seeking to get the church back on track. Their desire is to return it to its "first love" experience. Currently the Seventh-day

Adventist church is being plagued by an increasing number of "independent ministries," not all deviant, since some are beneficial. But many see their sole mission as one of "reforming" the church.⁴⁰ The focus of most of these groups tends to be on what they perceive to be a correct interpretation of the prophecies. Since Seventh-day Adventists are one of the few churches in Christendom that emphasizes prophecy, especially the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, virtually all the people that are drawn to groups like this, including the Branch Davidians, are Seventh-day Adventists or persons with Adventist backgrounds.

3. *Persons marginal to the church and to society.* A large number of persons that are attracted new sects and cults are from the disgruntled and malcontent, those that have a gripe with "system," those whose view of the church and its leadership tends to be negative and hostile. Many of these marginal persons are individuals who in their lives experience a sense of social and spiritual powerlessness. Since they often are the ones with the least invested in the organization, they can be most critical of it, as they have the least to lose by leaving it, since also the system has invested little in them. This is why females, young people, persons of color and recent converts are often the ones most attracted to new sects and cults, because they have very little invested in the old, which they feel does not meet their needs nor has invested much in them. Those that have the least invested in society's rewards tend to be drawn to those forms of religion, which have the least invested in this earth.

However, the attraction is not just limited to them. Most sect followers come from ultra-conservative, disgruntled persons in church who are upset by the complacent, worldliness and liberal views and lifestyles they see in the church, which as far as they are concerned, has turned the church into Babylon. This secularization process has to be reversed, because the standards of the church have been lowered. While Christians should be concerned that the Gospel demands not be lowered, what differentiates these persons more than anything else from genuine Christians is their recalcitrant, inflexible attitude that they are right and all who do not agree with them are wrong. Thus, their focus is not on love, but on sin and its exposure. Their spiritual and socially marginal status in the church often results in a negative aura which usually engulfs these persons, because they are focused on perfectionism. When a new sect forms, such perfectionism leads to additional schisms, since perfect people cannot tolerate people who are not perfect like them. In this manner they are much like new converts, who in their

spiritual and moral growth are like children, stuck in an arrested stage of spiritual development, immature and susceptible to "every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14).

4. *Persons who lack strong personal attachments in their lives.* Sociological research on cults is pretty conclusive that, "the crucial factor leading to membership in a novel religion is the development of social bonds with person who already are members" of the novel religion.⁴¹ People often think that what attracts people to a group are its doctrines. And while there have been cases of such conversions, research shows that more often than not it is not doctrines that lies at the primary basis of conversion, but attachments.⁴² "Rather than being drawn to the group mainly because of the appeal of its doctrines, people [are] drawn to the doctrines because of their ties to the group."⁴³ Persons who lack strong friendships and bonds of interpersonal affection with members of a religious organization are the ones most open to recruitment by persons from a deviant group. These are not persons believed to be abnormal. The "brainwashing theory" behind cult recruitment, which turns people into zombies, does not hold up under objective research.⁴⁴ People who join cults, as well as sects, do so primarily because of spiritual needs which are not being met by existing organizations, who find the warmth and friendship of sect and cult members most attractive to their social and spiritual needs.⁴⁵ According to Stark and Bainbridge, brainwashing stories are popular in the media because they excuse people of having made bad judgments in joining a deviant group.⁴⁶ People who don't receive support for their ideas, and who especially are lacking in strong interpersonal bonds can be drawn away by deviant attachments.

5. *Persons who suspend critical thinking by turning authority over to a single person, usually a charismatic figure.* We live in a highly confusing age, which is also highly biblically illiterate. While there may be more Bibles in existence and purchased than ever before, this does not translate into a profound knowledge of the Scriptures. Than too people's understanding of the Bible and prophecies is often misaligned by distorted Hollywood cinematic portrayals. In such a period of great social change, with most spiritual and moral values up for grabs, people are searching for stability in their lives. But in times of social and moral upheaval, not only is life confusing, so also is *thinking*. The one thing the medium of television, movies, videos and advertisement help us to do is to stop thinking—others have the answers for us, since life is too complex for us to personally solve.

In times of great confusion and change, people have a need for strong moral leadership to give direction to their lives. This is the main reason why during such periods it is the *conservative* churches and not the liberal ones that grow. Dean Kelly says that "strong organizations are strict . . . the stricter the stronger."⁴⁷ This is because in a market economy, like in anything else, people value religion in terms of how much it costs—that which costs little is little valued, while that which costs a great deal (in terms of time, effort, investment, sacrifice) is greatly valued. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark spell it out clearly in the following proposition. "*Religious organizations are stronger to the degree that they impose significant costs in terms of sacrifice and even stigma upon their members.*"⁴⁸ Then they add:

People tend to value religion on the basis of how costly it is to belong—the more one must sacrifice in order to be in good standing, the more valuable the religion. A major reason people rate religion this way is that as religious bodies ask less of their members their ability to reward their members declines proportionately. Thus in terms of real costs and benefits, the more "mainline" the church (in the sense of being regarded as "respectable" and "reasonable"), the lower the value of belonging to it, and this eventually results in widespread defection.⁴⁹

What this means is that in times of great confusion, people want others to do the thinking for them. Why? It spares them the pain of having to make the wrong decisions. It takes away personal responsibility for their actions, they merely do what they are told. This is also the reason why, when people defect from a cult, they claim brainwashing, because again the sense of responsibility for one's actions is removed. People don't like to admit they made mistakes. In the movie, *The Wave*, a filmed experiment of how to make a fascist society, the leader declares to a friend: "It's amazing how much they like you when you make decisions for them." When a strong, persuasive leader, the likes of Adolf Hitler, Jim Jones or David Koresh comes along, the gullible, the non-thinkers, those searching for easy solutions to complex problems, those desiring quick fixes are easily seduced. Their decision is reinforced, when by joining they are led to believe that they now belong to a movement that will make a tremendous significance in world history. To belong to that which transcends the mundane is a most seductive force. People are willing to

die for that! This is witnessed in martyrdom, not only in the history of Christianity, but also in the final conflagration of the Branch Davidians.

6. *Level of education.* Most persons that join new sects tend to have low levels of education, and low socioeconomic status, and tend to come out of a working class background. These persons believe one does not need much education, especially from worldly schools, to understand the Lord's message. In fact, the less one is influenced by worldly philosophies and their humanistic views, the better one is, for true education is the one received directly from the Holy Spirit.

Those that join cults trend to be different, however. Since cults espouse a new religion and religious view, it tends to attract people that are marginal to organized religion, people who have given up on the church. Many of these persons are ones who are educated, from strong professional backgrounds, and many are financially well off. People turn to religion because science cannot answer the basic and ultimate needs of life, the most basic of which is immortality, the pursuit of life eternal. As Rodney Stark says, "In the face of some life's greatest questions, all human beings are deprived."⁵⁰ This is why both rich and poor need religion, to find a meaningful existence. When people give up on the church, religious innovation through cult formation steps on the stage of opportunity to meet people's spiritual needs. Thus, the socially comfortable who need something more in life than material abundance, turn to cults for new and innovative ideas to explain the mysteries of life. Prophecies and prophets are often exchanged for profit. To find someone who can specifically give you time and date for the end of the world with solid scriptural backing, when most people don't even know what tomorrow will bring, is something worth going for. It is not surprising, therefore, some financially well-off persons, a Harvard law school graduate, a lawyer, computer programmer and medical personnel were among Koresh's followers.⁵¹ All this is in line with the types of persons that are attracted to cults.

7. *An appeal to authority other than Scripture.* Persons concerned with reforming the church and straightening out the lives of others want a clear "Thus says the Lord" voice of authority in their lives. What is interesting here is that the straight testimony of the Word of God, the Bible, won't do. This is because the Bible is not specific enough, it is too open to interpretation. They thus want something more specific, more detailed, more unambiguous, clearly spelled out, and less confusing to the possible misunderstandings. For the Jews in Jesus' day it was The Mishnah, for the Mormons it is the book of Mormon, and for Seventh-day Adventists it is the writing of Ellen G.

White. People who find the teachings of sects and independent ministries appealing are more comfortable with the writings of Ellen G. White than with the Bible. Her writings are less open to misinterpretation and easier to understand. But it is a selective reading of her writings, those that go along with their interpretations.

When a sect evolves into a cult, as has happened to the Branch Davidians, even these writings become too open to misunderstanding and confusion. What is now needed is the *live* word of a true prophet, the cult leader, whose words and teachings are now held to be of equal, if not greater value than those of the Bible. And his interpretation of the Bible, which is nothing more than his own word, becomes now the new standard of behavior and doctrine. All others are discouraged from investigating the Scriptures on their own.⁵² The same was true of Catholicism during the Middle Ages, until Martin Luther translated the Bible into the German vernacular.

8. *A desire for power.* Persons who lack social and moral power in a respectable organization, often see in a sect or cult the opportunity to exploit the spiritual naïveté and hunger of people for personal material and social gain. These persons are the future potential leaders that unite themselves with a cult and seek to take advantage of every opportunity to shift the leadership of group over to themselves. These are the spiritual hustlers and religious conpersons, the likes of Jim Jones, Benjamin, Lois and George Roden and David Koresh, who lack much recognition and respectability in society and in the organization out of which they came, and turn to cults for their fifteen minutes of earthly glory.

9. *Small groups with no official leadership.* An interesting phenomenon observed is that many of the places where subversive doctrines and teachings find a receptive audience are small churches with no official spiritual leader, or if a leader is present, there is little confidence in his leadership. Long ago Solomon declared that where there is no vision, a people perish (Proverbs 29:18). The phenomenon of no official leader results in spiritual opportunists and religious con artists stepping into the gap to fill the spiritual void. Where there is no strong spiritual leadership, the result is what Paul speaks of in Ephesians 4:14, a crop of spiritual "children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming."

In view of these kind of dynamics present in people's lives, which make them susceptible to religious innovation, what can churches do to arrest the seductive influence of

cults and dissuade persons from blindly following spiritual pied pipers? Lets reflect on this.

Preventing Chaos—What Can Churches Do?

A clear statement of the problem as discussed above makes it easy to find the steps of action that a church must take to prevent spiritual chaos. Unfortunately, it is much easier to talk about these steps than to take them. But the steps are simple; it is we who make them difficult. Some suggestions.

1. *Turn up the heat in the local congregation.* Our churches are far too cold. H.M.S. Richard, founder of the Voice of Prophecy, used to say that too many of our churches are so cold that one could skate down the center aisle. And that was quite some time ago. Are our churches any warmer today? I don't mean heating up the physical plant. I mean heating up the human hearts, so that from the moment a person, seeker or member, drives into the parking lot, they are welcomed by a parking attendant, a door greeter, a bulletin/register person, a pastor(s) and church membership that are so warm and loving, and sincere about it, that it makes one reminiscent of the kind of welcome home reception the Waiting Father gave the returning prodigal in Luke 15. This is what Walter Douglas, my former First Elder at the All Nations Church and now its pastor, calls, "riotous loving!"

Among cult groups it is called "love bombing." There is nothing wrong with that, as long as it is sincere, genuine and from the heart. When was the last time in your local church you literally threw a party for returning prodigals? You say never. Maybe that is why so few return. In this year of reclaiming former members, lets make it a party-year, for my God loves to party. He is a party-throwing God, and the biggest one is yet to come. The invitations have already been sent out. You can read the notice in Revelation 22:17.

2. *Teach members how to form strong social attachments.* If the most crucial factor in the conversion process, from a human perspective, is the development of social bonds and strong attachments that draw people in, why should we let the cults become more adroit at this than us? Was not this the method of Christ, and the only one that will succeed? "Christ's method *alone* will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour *mingled* with [people] as one who desired their good. He showed His *sympathy* for them, *ministered* to their needs, and won their *confidence*. Then He bade them, '*Follow Me*'." ⁵³ The "formula for success" is a simple four-step one.

1. Socialize - "The Saviour mingled with [people]"
2. Sympathize - "He showed His sympathy for them"

3. Serve - He "ministered to their needs"
Socialize + Sympathize + Serve = Confidence
4. Salvation - "then He bade them, 'Follow'."

The combination of the first three steps results in confidence. Confidence is not a step, but a result. Once the result has been obtained, than salvation can be extended. Our problem is that we usually begin with Step. No. 4, without building friendships and bonds of attachment, and then wonder why people don't respond to us. People respond more to our methods than to our message. Once the method has arrested their attention and affection with friendship, then they are ready to listen to what we have to say. If we confuse this and turn it around, we fail. Isn't this what Ellen White meant by being tender hearted, courteous and kind?

Many people sit in our churches who are lonely, marginal, hungry for affection and personal attention. In an age of high tech, people need high touch! Who said AT&T should control the market on "reaching out and touching someone"? We need to go out and make the world a warmer place.

3. *Preach a strong, spiritually balanced message.* Preach the entire Gospel message. And especially in these last days, the church needs strong Christ-centered prophetic preaching. We must remember in our prophetic preaching, however, that the Book of Revelation, is the Revelation of *Jesus Christ*. Not of the "Beast," not of the "Mark," not even of the "Sabbath," but of Jesus Christ! People must walk away from our prophetic preaching with an understanding of Christ at the center of the message, and not some negative, depressing imagery, which leaves them hopeless and discouraged.

4. *Preach the Bible.* We don't have two authorities in the church, only one—the Bible. The writings of Ellen G. White are there to guide us to the Bible, but not to take the place of the Bible. In many Adventist pulpits and Sabbath School classes, visitors on any given Sabbath may hear more often the name of Ellen G. White than the name of Christ, and her writings are often more cited than the Bible. This is not right. We are to be foremost preachers of Christ, not Ellen! Her writings are there to lead us to Christ. On Sabbath mornings make Christ the central focus of all that the church does. During the midweek services hold classes to understand the Spirit of Prophecy and its importance to the well-being of the church, but not on Sabbath. When we make Ellen G. White the main authority in the church, not by what we say, but by how we use her, we are guilty of abusing her authority. Our young people don't know their Bible, they don't even bring it to church with them. Why should they, it is seldom used, nor its use

encouraged! We have gotten away from solid, relevant, timely, expository preaching, that exposes people to the beauty of the Gospel. The centrality of the Word must return to our pulpits. If we don't, there are numerous other David Koreshes waiting in the wings of our church foyers, ready to entice the next generation of young people with their understanding of the Bible.

5. *Teach people, especially the youth, to think for themselves.* The changing, confusing times in which we live not only call for people "who will not be bought or sold,"⁵⁴ but also for people who are thinkers. Long ago Ellen White gave the following charge. "Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. . . It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth *to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought.*"⁵⁵ Unfortunately, this counsel has not always been followed. Creator-power, "power to think and to do," is not a priority in the curriculum. More often than not, products of Christian schools have been more programmed in crucial regurgitation than in critical reflection. Youth are most often not taught to think for themselves and make independent choices, but to follow carefully prescribed rules and regulations. Thus, merely by obeying and going along with all the rules, a young man and woman, is perceived to be a decent Christian, when all along they may just be afraid to step out of line and not be a non-conformist, like the elder brother in Luke 15. Blind conformity does not necessarily lead to strong leadership. What it does lead to is to strong followers following blind leadership. This is why so many of David Koresh's followers were Adventist youth, recruited from Adventist colleges. What are we doing in our academic institutions that create minds receptive to deception? To be fair, it must be made very clear that the majority of our young people are not being led astray, but are solid in their commitment to Christ and to the church. Nevertheless, is the potential there? Do we dam up the ocean or do we teach our young people how to swim?

Our young people need to be taught to be individual thinkers, trained in principles of genuine spirituality and constructive critical reflection, who can assess the situation in the world today, and choose wisely.

6. *Develop a strong Mission Statement.* Every church must develop together a strong Mission Statement that arises out of the needs of the community the church seeks to serve, both within and without the church. This process must be the work of the entire congregation, not that of the pastor or of the church board. People will only take ownership of that to which they have given input. This statement must

become a working document and not a museum piece, merely to be displayed. All aspects of the church program must be a reflection of a working out of the Mission Statement in the ministry of the church.

The importance of developing a Mission Statement lies in the reality that churches, which are great incubators for disgruntled, potential cult members, are churches without a mission, without a purpose for existence. They have no strong program of witness, evangelism and ministry in their community. With a rudderless existence and no sense of direction to the spiritual energy of the congregation, this spiritual vitality will spend itself in one of three directions: dissipate into the spiritual blahs of inactivity and non-commitment; turn inward in criticism, division and factions; or worse yet, leave the membership wide open to the influences of persuasive, outside agitators with their own sense of mission, promoting doctrinal error and "new light." The best way to avoid such derailing influences is for a church to engage in a holistic ministry that emerges from a grasp of its mission.

7. *Create a worship style that arises out of the needs of the church.* Most Adventists worship styles, whether "traditional" or "celebration," are merely borrowings of what people like from other churches or denominations. This is an eclectic approach that is not inclusive of the needs of all members. The worship style for each local congregation must be unique to that congregation and its mission, and not something borrowed because somebody likes something that was done in another church. Somewhere I read that we need to become thinkers and doers, and not more reflectors of others.

8. *Develop an inclusive model of ministry.* For too long the church has been operating with exclusive models of ministry. Exclusive models divide, separate and move people away from the center which is Christ. When our focus is more on exclusion than inclusion, we drive people towards the waiting arms of spiritual deviants, who are more interested in separating than in uniting. An inclusive model unites, builds on diversity, moves people towards the center—Christ. Our goal is not uniformity, for not even God aspires to that; but unity in diversity in Christ. Collectively, learning from what each can contribute, we grow in understanding the richness of God's character, the reflection of which is our goal, in all that we do.

The church lives and functions in rapidly changing but dangerous, yet challenging times. Like the sons of Issachar, we need to have an "understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chronicles 12:32). Jesus predicted that false prophets would arise claiming to be Christ. For this reason we must understand the process of

change in society, and revival and spiritual growth in the church, using all the gifts available to the church, including the social sciences.

Around the turn of the century, a period also marked by dynamic change, the great Spanish-American philosopher, George Santayana, wrote about how people should respond to change. "Progress," wrote Santayana, "far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. . . . and when experience is not retained, . . . infancy is perpetual."⁵⁶ Infants and children have no memory of the past since they have no past to remember. This is why they make so many mistakes because they cannot call on memory, on "retentiveness," to avoid making the same blunders. Only mature adults can pull from the past that which allows them to avoid the same errors in the future. Santayana then goes on to declare perhaps his most famous lines, the dictum: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." The same is not only true of individuals, but also of institutions. Why should the same mistakes be continually made, over and over again? Can we not learn from the past, so as to have an unfogged future? Ellen G. White said we can, using words similar to Santayana's. "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history."⁵⁷

The church as an institution, as well as Christians individually, must move away from that stage of perpetual spiritual infancy, because "experience is not retained," to one of spiritual maturity, where we are no longer children, tossed about by every ill wind of spiritual deceitfulness, but adults in Christ (Ephesians 4:13,14). The closer we get to the year 2000 the more apocalyptic cults will we see emerge in society, claiming to be spiritual anchors in the midst of social storms. David Koresh was simply the 1993 model. What will the 1994 model look like? Will it too have Adventist connections? If it does, it might serve the church better in its mission to take the proactive posture of serving as intermediary and assist in the negotiations, than merely creating distance between itself and the group(s). Our future as a church can be very clear if we not forget the lessons from Waco and how to prevent chaos. I trust that this excursion into an understanding of the force of religion in society has given us a clearer vision of the church and its mission at the end of the 20th century.

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¹This question will not be addressed in this article since it is the topic of research I am currently engaged in for a paper, "The Sociology of Damage Control—The Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Branch Davidians of Waco, TX," I will be presenting at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, October 29-31, 1993, in Raleigh, NC.

²Because the term cults has such a negative connotation in popular thinking, sociologists often prefer the term "New Religious Movements." But Eileen Barker, one of England's leading sociologists on NRMs, and author of the book, *New Religious Movements: a Practical Introduction*, says: "Some are not new, some are not religious, and some are not moving at all." Quoted by Andrew Brown, "Over the Edge Into Collective Lunacy." March 4, 1993, *Independent* (a London, England newspaper).

³"Secrets of the Cult," *Newsweek* March 15, 1993, "In the Name of God," *Time* March 15, 1993, "The Evil Messiah," *People* March 15, 1993. The newspaper stories are too numerous to list, since virtually all newspapers carried the story during the first two weeks of March 1993 and beyond. The principal newspaper that published an important series on the group was the *Waco Tribune-Herald*. The four-part series was run on February 27-March 2, 1993.

⁴Rodney Stark, *Sociology*, 4th Edition. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992), p. 410. For a fuller elaboration of the religious economy paradigm see Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), and R. Stephen Warner, "Work in Progress Towards a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 99 (March, 1993).

⁵The mass suicide of the members of the Peoples Temple in Guyana, the World Trade Center bombing with connections to Muslim extremists, and the Branch Davidians standoff in Waco, is again raising questions whether religion ought to be regulated. For a discussion of this issue, see Thomas Robbins, William C. Shepherd, and James McBride, *Cults, Culture, and the Law: Perspectives on New Religious Movements*. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985.

⁶See H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*. New York: Henry Holt, 1929, for how denominations develop in response to their environment.

⁷Niebuhr, p. 70.

⁸See Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1985.

⁹See Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney, *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987.

¹⁰See Dean Kelly, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing?* New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

¹¹Stark and Bainbridge, p. 529.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 304.

¹³Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion*. (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), p. 279.

¹⁴Stark and Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion*, p. 25.

¹⁵Niebuhr, p. 265.

¹⁶Keith A. Roberts, *Religion In a Sociological Perspective*. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990), p. 196.

¹⁷Stark and Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion*, pp. 444-445.

¹⁸See both works of Stark and Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion* (1985) and *A Theory of Religion* (1987), as well Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990*.

¹⁹Stark and Bainbridge, 1987, pp. 186, 187.

²⁰See Jeannie Mills, *Six Years With God: Life Inside Rev. Jim Jones Peoples Temple*. New York: A&W Publishers, Inc., 1979. See also Mel White, *Deceived*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979.

²¹For the experience of the Black church, see C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Experience in Religion*. New York: Anchor Books, 1974; and, C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990. No comparable study has been written about the Latino church. Work, however, is underway.

²²William H. Swatos, Jr., *Intro Denominationalism: The Anglican Metamorphosis*. Monograph Series Number 2. (Storrs, CT: Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1979), p. 12. For an excellent study of this duality in Adventism see Gary Schwartz, *Sect Ideologies and Social Status*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970, and the most recent study by Malcolm Bull & Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism & the American Dream*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989.

²³Stark and Bainbridge, 1985, p. 23.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵"Church" used here in its more popular and non-sociological sense, as a religious organization.

²⁶For information on all these groups see the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*. Volume 10 of the Commentary Reference Series. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966.

²⁷See definition of a sect given previously.

²⁸Several documents were published by The Committee on Defense Literature of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists briefly delineating the teachings of the Davidians: *The History and Teachings of "The Shepherd's Rod": the Story of the "Shepherd's Rod"* (1955); *Some Teachings of the Shepherd's Rod Examined* (1956); *Report of a Meeting Between a Group of "Shepherd's Rod" Leaders and a Group of General Conference Ministers* (1959).

²⁹Marc Breault, "Some Background on the Branch Davidian Seventh-day Adventist Movement From 1955 to the Early Part of 1991." Unpublished manuscript, April 17, 1991, revised May 27, 1991.

³⁰The name Waco is an Anglicization of the Spanish word *hueco*, meaning "hole."

³¹1 Kings 18:20-40.

³²See *The History and Teachings of "The Shepherd's Rod": the Story of the "Shepherd's Rod"* (The Committee on Defense Literature of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1955)

³³Breault, 1991. For a discussion of how religious groups respond when prophecy fails see Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken and Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails*. New York: Harper & Row, 1956.

³⁴"Davidian SDA's—Shepherd's Rod," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*. Volume 10 of the Commentary Reference Series. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966.

³⁵See *SHEKINAH*, Vol. 1:1, Dec. 1980. The magazine, an 8 and a half by 11 newspaper format publication, consists, not only of articles by cult members, but also reproductions of articles on the teachings of the group from national and area newspapers.

³⁶Mary Barrineau, "Female Deity: Sect Says Holy Spirit is a Woman," *Dallas Times Herald*, October 27, 1980, published in *SHEKINAH*, Vol. 1:1, Dec. 1980.

³⁷See Caleb Rosado, "The Stewardship of Power," *Ministry: International Journal for Clergy*, April 1989.

³⁸For an understanding of David Koresh's teachings on the Seven Seals, see Marc A. Breault, "Vernon Howell and the Seven Seals," photocopied document, n.d.

³⁹Breault, 1991, p. 15.

⁴⁰*Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries*. Silver Springs, MD: North American Division, 1992.

⁴¹Stark and Bainbridge, p. 424.

⁴²John Lofland and Rodney Stark, "Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective." *American Sociology Review* 30:862-875, 1965.

⁴³Stark, *Sociology*, p. 86.

⁴⁴Eileen Barker, *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction*. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1989, and Stark and Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion*.

⁴⁵See the experience of Jeannie Mills, who was a former Seventh-day Adventist, and how she was led to join with the Peoples Temple, Jeannie Mills, *Six Years With God: Life Inside Jim Jones's Peoples Temple*. New York: A&W Publishers, Inc., 1979. Her story is retold in the book by Caleb Rosado, *Broken Walls*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1990.

⁴⁶Stark and Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion*, pp. 417-423.

⁴⁷See Kelly, 1972, p. 95.

⁴⁸Finke and Stark, 1992., p. 238, emphasis is the authors.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰Stark, *Sociology*, p. 430.

⁵¹Marc Breault, "Some Background on the Branch Davidian Seventh-day Adventist Movement From 1955 to the Early Part of 1991." Unpublished manuscript, April 17, 1991, revised May 27, 1991, pp. 14 & 22,

⁵²See Marc Breault for a discussion of this profess among the Branch Davidians.

⁵³Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*. (Mountain, View: Pacific Press, p. 143), emphasis supplied.

⁵⁴Ellen G. white, *Education*. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903), p. 57.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 17, emphasis supplied.

⁵⁶George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, Vol. 1. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1980 [first published in 1905]), p. 284.

⁵⁷Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1915), p. 196.