

Looking Below the Surface: Church Leadership and the Multiple Futures of Adventism in the 21st Century

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Forget about the independent church movement in Adventism. Ignore the present concern over liberal versus conservative faculty on our colleges campuses. Pay no attention to the current debate over the inspiration of the Bible and methods of biblical study. Don't fret over whether or not women should be ordained as pastors. Dismiss the conflict between proponents of traditional versus evangelical Adventism. Don't worry about the present state of race/ethnic and gender relations in the church. If you really want to get a handle on the current controversies raging within Adventism, especially in terms of their impact on the future of the church in the 21st century, look below the surface in all of these areas to the underlying "belief systems" operating within the various groups and key persons.

Current critical issues in the Seventh-day Adventist Church—from members slaying members in Rwanda to the congregational movement in the United States—are surface symptoms of deeper level decision systems out of which these surface controversies emerge. All the issues mentioned above plus an unending list of other issues, such as styles of music and worship, norms and standards, jewelry, what constitutes "Adventist" preaching, etc., can best be sorted out by defining the relationships between deep-level belief systems and the surface-level depiction of loyalty to church and Scripture. Unfortunately church leaders, pastors, laity, and committee and board members at all levels of church life are caught up with these surface manifestations of differences, while underneath the conflict and struggle rages on without any hope of solution in sight. Yet any hope for effecting change can only come by looking below the surface to the deep-level belief or value systems within.¹

Value Systems:²

A "belief" or "value system" is a worldview, a set of perspectives, a paradigm, a mindset, an organizing framework for deep-level thinking at the bottom-line—the threshold of no negotiation. It serves as a magnet around which our "stuff" clusters and our life is aligned. It determines *how* people think rather than *what* they think about. It is the sum total of the invisible forces that drive our human perceptions, lifestyles, and sense of what is right, wrong, and appropriate.

Thus, for example, while Seventh-day Adventist Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda shared many of the same biological gene pools and cultural norms in terms of historic memories and myths of origin, their respective value system profiles were significantly different, because of the impact of colonization and ethnic, political, and economic interests. And even though the Gospel came to them, albeit en masse, its foundation was not sufficiently strong enough to withstand the historic ethnic-cultural antagonisms that clashed in genocidal wars. Proponents for the ordination of women and opposers of the same tend to express similar ways of thinking (the *how*—self-righteousness from the left versus self-righteousness from the right) even if the content of their beliefs (the *what*) are millennia apart. Conflict between individuals or groups can be *between* Memes (sacred Blue vs. secular Orange, such as Islam vs. the West) or *within* Memetic domains (two sacred systems at holy war, such as Blue Protestant vs. Blue Catholic in Ireland, or Closed Blue historic Adventism vs. Open Blue evangelical Adventism).

At the core of what I call a “Belief” or “Value System” is a ^vMEME or ValueMEME (pronounced vee-meem). The word “meme” was coined by English biologist Richard Dawkins in his 1976 book, *The Selfish Gene*, to represent a unit of cultural information that impacts human development. In the same manner that genes shape our biological makeup, memes give form to our cultural and social formation. Both carry coded information that reproduce their instructions in the bodies and minds that serve as hosts. Genes transmit through chemical systems and biological tissue in human bodies; memes spread their messages like viruses, through word-of-mouth, printed and electronic media, and cyberspace—using the human mind as a host.

Value Systems are like super-memes. Once a new Value System is awakened in culture or in the collective life of a group, it will spread its instructional codes and life priority messages throughout that culture’s or group’s surface-level of living. It impacts beliefs, economic, political, and spiritual arrangements, psychological and sociological theories of living, styles of worship, forms of musical expression, views of human nature, our future destiny, and ways of expressing one’s humanity. It doesn’t just impact *what* people think and believe; it also alters *the way* they think and set priorities. A shift in ^vMEMEs is a shift in basic human nature and way of seeing the world. These belief or Value Systems shape surface-level thoughts, beliefs, and actions. They explain why things happen and to whom. They assign life’s priorities. They determine who is and who is not a “true believer” and member of “the remnant,” and write the scripts for future scenarios. Like migrating tectonic plates, these core ways of thinking are grinding against each. These deep rubs echo in major eruptions at the surface. And the shock waves are rocking the church by resurrecting old styles of leadership that recreate factions and schisms, redraw theological boundaries, redefine evangelistic markets, realign relationships, and rewrite futurists’ scenarios for Adventism in the 21st century. These socio-religio quakes reverberate within the church in areas of geopolitics, theological schisms, gender relations, racial/ethnic conflicts, education, church-hires, and in ongoing questions about lifestyles, morality, values, and what is right.

Ninety-five percent of all attempts at group reconciliation, conflict resolution, motivational training, workshops on church leadership, diversity training, and seminars on ministry focus on these surface differences rather than on the operating value/beliefs systems within. Values Systems are complex Coping Systems—decision making motivators and ways of thinking—that emerge in response to Problems of Existence. There are nearly 6 billion people in the world today, and though we all come from some 100,000 genes—ALL of us—we share only a few basic Value Systems. Eight have emerged thus far (see table), as a result of bio-psycho-social-spiritual research, which impact human behavior, shape culture, and give structure to belief systems.³

QUICK SUMMARY OF VALUE SYSTEMS CODES

MEMES	COLOR	THEME	FOCUS	THINKING	VALUE SYSTEMS	LIFESTYLE
Level 1	BEIGE	SurvivalSense	“Me”	Automatic	Group bands together to stay alive	Lives for survival
Level 2	PURPLE	KinSpirits	“We”	Animistic	Sense of family/tribe with time-honored traditions	Lives for group
Level 3	RED	PowerGods	“Me”	Egocentric	Power-driven, exploitative, no boundaries	Lives for now
Level 4	BLUE	TruthForce	“We”	Absolutistic	Purposeful, authoritarian, “one-right-way”	Lives for later
Level 5	ORANGE	StriveDrive	“Me”	Materialistic	Entrepreneurial, strategic, success-driven	Lives for gain
Level 6	GREEN	HumanBond	“We”	Humanistic	Community, harmony, equality, relativistic	Lives for harmony
Level 7	YELLOW	FlexFlow	“Me”	Systemic	Flexibility, spontaneity, competence supersedes status	Lives for mutuality
Level 8	TURQUOISE	WholeView	“We”	Holistic	Compassionate, spiritual, intuitive, interconnected	Lives for wisdom

A color scheme best identifies in a simple way the outward and inward transformations taking place as a group matures from birth to adulthood. The significance of the colors is only to identify the systems and has no symbolism beyond that. Notice how the Focus alternates between dominance of ME-oriented *Express-the-self* (warm colors) and WE-oriented *Sacrifice-the-self* (cool colors) life focus. Note also the differences in what is valued in each system as they flow from survival (Beige), to safety and security (Purple), to raw power and instant gratification (Red), to purpose in life (Blue), to strategies for success (Orange), to community awareness (Green), to alternative forms (Yellow), to global village (Turquoise). At each level there is a different Lifestyle, from living for survival to living for wisdom. The levels are open-ended, there is no final stage of development, as the ideal that God sets before us is “higher than the highest human thought can reach.”⁴

Here’s the essence of the idea. Not only different nations, societies, cultures, and subcultures, but different groups and entities within Adventism, are at different levels of psycho-social-spiritual emergence as displayed within these evolving levels of complexity. What moves one from one level to the next is a change in one’s Life Conditions (Times, Place, Problems, Circumstances), coupled with an awakening of our Mental Capacities (our neurological system in the brain) that respond to these changes. Life conditions *outside* interact with latent thinking capacities *inside* the mind to awaken the next MEME level. It is an ever increasing and widening spiral of development as people move through the various levels of bio-psycho-social-spiritual complexity. Every time people move from one level to the next, they undergo a major paradigm shift, a different window through which to look out on the world, a transformation of their basic value system. This is a key aspect of what makes each level different, for the complexity of the thinking must match or exceed the complexity of the problems of existence. Yet, and here is a critical concept, the previously awakened levels do not disappear. Rather, they stay active within the value system stacks, thus impacting the nature and content of

the more complex systems. A person can be at more than one memetic level in different areas of their life, even though one value system dominates their outlook. Thus, while their overarching ^vMEME may be a conservative Blue, especially in terms of religion and the church, in relation to their family they may be Purple (tradition-driven), at work they may be Orange (success-driven), in sports they may be Red (power-driven), and in relation to others they may be Green (people-driven), but their basic paradigm and way of seeing the world is still Blue (order-driven).

Many of the same issues and values we as a Church confront in the conversion process—the Red to Blue transition zone—can also be found in constituency and committee meetings, where Red to Blue is also active, when people disagree and tempers flare, in spite of claiming to be converted. One can experience the animistic, spirited (Purple) worldview at a Black church worship service in Washington, D.C. as well as in Mexico City. Matters brought before a local conference committee in Oregon to discuss the celebration style of worship and local church autonomy (the Orange to Green to Yellow zone) are not unlike the debates before an African Division council to discuss national leadership and a more contextualized method of evangelism and expression of the Gospel. Third World areas of the world field of the Seventh-day Adventist church are dealing, for the most part, with issues within the Level 1 to 3 zone (Beige through Red), thus higher rates of violence, poverty, and cultural challenges to the Gospel, which tends to be primarily Western in its expression and propagation. Staying alive, finding safety, and dealing with tribal kinship matter most under feudal age conditions in many world areas. The church in Second World societies—much of Eastern European, Asia, and Latin America—is characterized by authoritarian (Blue, Level 4) cultures and church politics, resulting in thinking that is heavily Blue and absolutistic.

The church in First World nations and groupings (North America, Northern Europe, and Australia) has achieved high levels of education and affluence with lower birth rates and more expansive use of technology for communicating the Gospel. While centered in the strategic, free-market driven, and individual liberty focused perspective—all traits of the Level 5 (Orange) worldview—new value systems (Green, Yellow, and some Turquoise, Levels 6 to 8) are emerging in the “post-modern” age, and are strongly challenging the “by-the-book” Blue mentality of much of the church’s leadership in these sectors of world society, Northern Europe, for example.

Examining the first six of these value/beliefs systems, some belief systems are merely concerned with survival—how do we make it from day-to-day (Beige). Others are focused on group preservation, and the safeguarding of values and traditions sacred to the group (Purple). Some belief systems are apparently driven by a self-indulgent belief system that makes its adherents feel all-powerful, and invincible, like they are the center of the universe and all others should kowtow to them (Red). Still other belief systems are concerned with right and wrong, and “one-right-way,” and have a self-regulating valve that will flood our psyche with guilt or shame when we mess up (Blue). Others challenge us to seek success by climbing the mountain of adversity instead of camping-out in the foothills of despair (Orange). And still others are focused on concern for others, inclusiveness, and the creation of a caring community of believers that transcend differences (Green).

In seeking to understand these levels of existence the focus is on *how* we think, not *what* we think. Movement from one level to the next results in a different way of

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seeing reality and viewing the mission of the church and the role of the believer within the same. Different times result in different minds. Belief systems can, indeed, change whenever the older ones wear thin or fail to equip us for a world in constant upheaval. Thus, as our world changes and becomes more complex, and as our minds have the capacities to cope with these changes and complexities, we will gradually or sometimes radically change. Minds change with the times. Thus, new times produce new thinking. The result is that “you are not You.”

You Are Not YOU:⁵

Change is a given. No person nor church can be fully fathomed in a single snapshot. Let me illustrate.

You are not YOU!

You^[age 15] are not You^[age 25]

You^[age 35] are not You^[age 45]

You^[age 55] are not You^[age 65]

Or another way

You^[1948] are not You^[1958]

You^[1968] are not You^[1978]

You^[1988] are not You^[1998]

Have you stayed the same from when you were at age 15 to your present age? How about when you were living in the 1940s or 1950s or 1960s, are you now the same as you were then? No, because times change, and You are not You. As Alice says in her return Wonderland, “I can’t go back to yesterday, because I was a different person then” (Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*). Neither can any religious community go back to yesterday. No religious movement is as it was when it first began, not even the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Adventism^[1861] is not Adventism^[1901]

Adventism^[1941] is not Adventism^[1961]

Adventism^[1981] is not Adventism^[2001]

Change is a moving picture that connects the historic time-line—past, present, future. As the environment and the challenges of existence change, so thinking patterns and values change. Therefore, any organism, individual, or institution that remains the same in a changing world soon ceases to exist with any semblance of viable, relevant life. What it does is that it turns inward on itself and focuses all its energy on those within resulting in self-destruction or at best, in a crippling of its mission.

The Spiral of Belief Systems:

Emerging belief systems, or MEMEs, have shaped the life-history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from its very beginning. After the great disappointment in 1844, the band of believers went from an instinctive need to survive (1844-1945), to a

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bonding together as a small, spiritual, exclusive tribe/family seeking direction from God (1845-1863), to a group that began to take a stand against other religious groups over doctrines and on social issues (1863-1874), to an organized hierarchical institution that began to reach out to the world outside its national borders with a message of righteousness (1874-1960s), to church preoccupied with its own success (1960s-1990), to a global religious institution now concerned with a global mission (1990 - present). As the life conditions changed for the church at each stage or level of existence, a corresponding belief/values systems emerged within that helped explain and give impetus to what was happening externally.

These developmental belief systems, or ^vMEMEs, which lie at the core of individual and group differences and dynamic social change, explains what is happening in Adventism today. People at these different levels of existence view God, the Bible, the church, its beliefs, its organizational structure, its mission, what is important and what is not (in other words, its values) differently. Each feels that its perspective is the right one. And because these Belief or Value Systems reflect a person's threshold of no negotiation, any challenge at this level is perceived as a "death-threat." For it is the death of a person's basic frame of reference and who they are—their present worldview. That is why they are so closely guarded. The following table is a comparison of various worldviews or Value Systems in Adventism. Notice how each ^vMEME or level of existence or belief system differs in its view of God, the Bible, the church, and its mission. Beige will not be discussed since very few people in the church are at an instinctual, survival level, even though it is the level at which ADRA does much of its work.

MEME	GOD	BIBLE	CHURCH	MISSION
PURPLE Safety Driven Sacrifice-Self	A Patriarch, a Father, a Supreme Being to be obeyed and not questioned	The Holy Writings, the Sacred Scriptures	The Remnant, the Advent Movement, the fold, an ark of safety, a fortress; Primitive or Historic Adventism	Protect family from evil, preserve our identity, sacrifice self in service to others
RED Power Driven Express-Self	Supreme Commander of Heaven	A Rule Book, a Field Manual,	The Army of the Lord, Warriors for Jesus; the Church Militant	Do battle against evil in the “Great Controversy”
BLUE Order Driven Sacrifice-Self	The Lawgiver and Judge, Exclusive, Transcendent, the Lord of the Vineyard	A Codebook, The Holy Word of God, a Doctrine Book	A Body of Workers, the Body of Christ, the True Church, a Hierarchical Structure; Institutional or Mainstream Adventism	Sow the Gospel Seed, Bring in the Harvest, Preach the Commandments of God, proclaim Three Angels’ Message
ORANGE Success Driven Express-Self	The Chief Executive, the Wonderful Counselor, Personal Friend, Immanent	An Operating Manual, a Spiritual Guidebook, a Sourcebook for personal counsel and growth	A Corporate Body, a global business, a Christian Fellowship, a Congregation of Believers; Congregational or Evangelical Adventism	Market the Gospel via high-tech, lift the down-trodden, reach the burned-out, the bruised, and the broken
GREEN People Driven Sacrifice-Self	The Compassionate One, the God of the Oppressed, the Just One, Inclusive	A Casebook, the Word of God, but subject to cultural understanding	A Caring Community, a Diverse Body of Believers, a Clinic, a Hospital; Progressive or Information Age Adventism	Heal a broken world, restore justice and equity to the land, proclaim liberation to captives

The above table shows why Adventism is currently undergoing crisis and conflict. Being that we are such a diverse, global body of believers, representing in many ways a cross-section of world society, to expect everyone to believe, think, worship, and practice their understanding of the Three Angel’s Message in exactly the same way is to take a “Flatlander” perspective. In his elegant little 19th century book, *Flatland: A Fantasy in Multiple Dimensions*, Edwin Abbott described a civilization that exists in only two dimensions. Flatland’s can see left and right, but have no sense of up or down. They move from side to side, front and back, but that’s all. They refuse to believe that any other direction is possible. Anyone who argues for a third dimension is either criminal or insane. “Flatlanders” are persons unable to recognize the vertical, spiral structure of human existence, and thus focus on superficial differences, rigid categories, simplistic types, and on labels to put on people. They put everyone through the same car wash, one-size-fits-all approach, paint only with broad horizontal brush strokes, as “flavor-of-the-month” consultants who project their own values, fears, and prejudices on others. The result is an insensitivity to the needs of individuals, groups, organizations, and nations at different levels of existence.

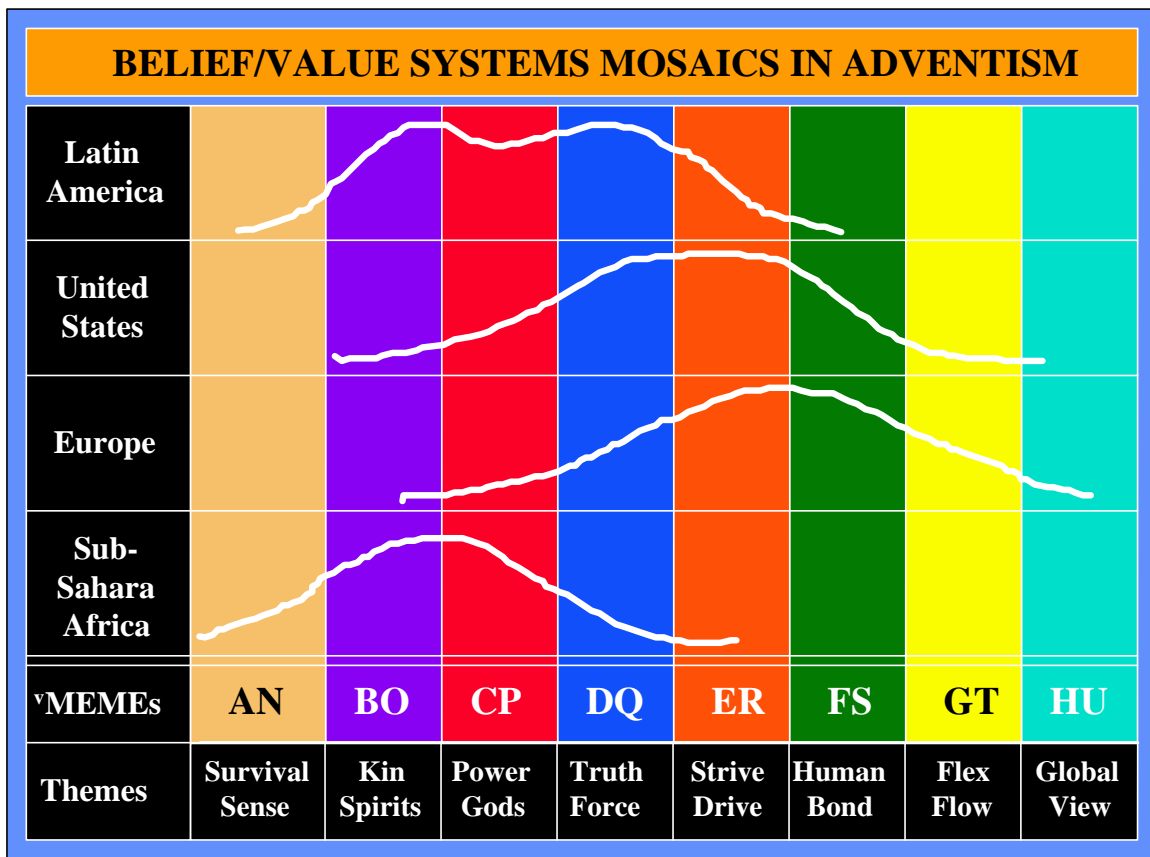
Without an understanding of the spiral dynamics of human existence, one will judge everyone else from one’s own narrow perspective. Whether it be at the Purple level, focused on rigid roles, rules, security, and “thus speaks the Prophet”; or the Red level, focused on power and “what’s in it for me”; or the Blue level, concerned with absolute values, saintliness, and “we alone have *the* Truth”; or the Orange level, focused on achievement, success, and “image is everything”; to the Green level, focused on equality, inclusiveness, community, and “we are in this together”; each sees reality differently. And because each lacks an understanding of the deeper memetic forces at work, they only focus on the surface differences, the Horizontal dimension, the outward

trappings of the *container*—the what, the surface memes—the color of skin, gender, the actions, the choice of lifestyles, the mode of worship, the taste in music, the use and view of the Bible, etc. To focus on these surface differences, the *little memes*, is to miss the larger picture, the Vertical dimension, the *why* and *how* of human action—the *contents*. This is the area of Value Systems, the big memes or ^vMEMEs—the core intelligences, conceptual schemes, worldviews, and frameworks for beliefs and behaviors, from which emerge the visible, surface differences, the little memes. Our struggle in the church is not with human *types*. The problem is not that we are White or Black, male or female, believe Christ had a sinless nature or a sinful one, First World or Third World, believe women should be ordained or do not, liberal or conservative. It is the ^vMEMEs within us that are at war. Since ^vMEMEs are deep decision systems *in* people, not *types* of people, they transcend race, gender, age, class, culture, and societies.

Memetic Clashes:

Take *racism*, for example. Racism is a meme—a contagious idea—that infects individuals, organizations, entire cultures, and societies. And, like a deadly virus, it has contaminated all areas of life. What divides us in society, however, is not our *genes*, but our *memes*. We look different because of our *genes*; we think and act different because of our *memes*. Our genes are only Horizontal differences. It is the memes on the Vertical axis that attract and repel humanity. To correct the problem of racism in society and in the church, we must begin to move beyond surface differences of skin color and phenotype, to the operating values and beliefs systems within people, the way they think about their world and others in it, and the way this manifests itself in outward behaviors. In other words, the key issue is not the color *of* people, but the color *in* people.

Thus in Rwanda, it was Purple against Purple, tribal warfare, biologically related against biologically related but from different tribes, ethnic factions, and political ideologies. In the United States we went through a similar genocide in the Civil War, when families were divided by political tribes and ideologies. In the battle over the inspiration of the Bible, it is Blue against Green. Rigid self-righteousness from the right, with its “one true way” of interpreting Scripture, against inclusive, communitarianism, self-righteousness from the left. One way of illustrating the current state of the church is by examining the “Belief/Value Systems Mosaics in Adventism,” see graphic.⁶ Much of Latin America and Africa is Purple to Blue, with a strong dose of Red. Adventism is doing well in these societies because both the church and its message is Blue/Purple. North American society, while having population groups in all the levels, is largely Blue to Orange to Green. Adventism in North America, on the other hand, with its vast diversity, is primarily institutional Blue, with a growing number of Orange churches, a small number of which are becoming congregational and even independent. Another growing sector is Green concerned with equity, justice, and inclusiveness, while the immigrant church (Latinos and Asians) and most Black churches are Purple/Blue. The problem Adventism is facing in Europe is that much of European society is operating at the Orange and Green levels, especially Scandinavia which is very Green and immersed in New Age religions, while the church is entrenched in Blue, the level where most religions find themselves. By the way, Green is not New Age, but New Age finds a niche in Green. When all these groups face off over issues, such as the ordination of women or modes of worship or music, the result is that they all see RED!



The rise of *congregationalism* is another example of shifts in levels of existence in Adventism. For a long time sociologists, psychologists, and theologians believed that secularism was on the rise and eroding faith. Without a Spiral Dynamics™⁷ perspective it is easy to come to this conclusion. However, the reality is that as one moves from Red to Blue in the conversion process, one moves from an autonomous express-self to a group focused sacrifice-self orientation, with a sense of purpose, and “one-right-way” guilt-driven approach. It is a very secure and meaningful level that gives one a purposeful existence with hope in the hereafter. But as one’s Life Conditions change and the Blue value/belief system no longer explains all of one’s reality, experience, or circumstances that one encounters, a mental need to break away from this “paradigm paralysis” rises. The result is a shift to Orange, an express-self move but at a higher level, focused again on autonomy, but also on strategic growth, success, achievement, accomplishment, and happiness without the guilt. One is no longer focused on nor concerned with the collective religious guilt of Blue, nor is the organized expression of religion a priority in one’s life, but rather one’s own personal growth and material development. It is this shift that gives the superficial investigator the idea that secularism—the lessening of the influence of the supernatural—now holds sway over society or a person’s life and that religion is waning. But the reality is that the person may still be very religious, but not in a sacrifice-self manner, within an institutional context, but in an inward, “what’s-in-it-for-me” form of “feels-good” spirituality, what some call the “celebration” church. The is a religious expression that is more concerned with an experiential—“tell me more about me”—multiplistic form of personal spirituality, concerned with the Orange here-and-now

of one's personal growth, than with the Blue there-and-then of institutional expansion. The result is a lessening of "brand-loyalty" and an increasing in independence, as evidenced in the non-denominational growth of community churches. The Willow Creek Community Church (WCCC) is the standard bearer in this area. And thousands of local congregations throughout the world are modeling themselves after Willow Creek, including an increasing number of Adventist churches. Celebration and congregational/independent churches are not necessarily synonymous, but are different expressions of Orange. In some cases they are the same. And while this seems to be the direction many churches in Adventism are heading,⁸ it should not mean an automatic severance with the institutional (Blue) church. The break with the church has been initiated in just about every case by the Blue denominational church rather than by the Orange autonomous-seeking congregation. It is a repeat of history, in that the Orange Martin Luther did not seek to sever ties with the Blue Roman Catholic Church. It was the latter that forced the split on the former.

Several lessons can be learned here. One, there is a natural progression of human development that leads from Blue to Orange and on. The church needs to recognize this and not see such developments as a threat to its leadership. Two, the church needs to learn the lessons of history and not fight change but adapt to it. The Catholic Church recognized this in the rise of the various Orders that, in effect, were mini-schisms in the church. But instead of rejecting and excommunicating them—after all they were each seeking for a purer expression of the Gospel in the face of the human condition—the church broadened its tent's stakes and absorbed them, thereby keeping each emerging Order in the fold and maintaining its relevance in changing times. Adventism can learn the same lesson and do likewise. Third, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is too diverse for just one memetic level of existence and one style of church leadership. Within the world church, as well as in North America, we have local churches and church members at all the various levels of existence of the memetic spiral—from Purple, to Red, to Blue, to Orange, to Green, and some even at Yellow, with some individuals exploring Turquoise with its planetary theology. The majority of church leaders at all levels of the church's hierarchy tend to be at Blue. Some are Open, some are Closed, and some are Arrested in terms of their attitude and action toward change. It is the Closed and Arrested styles of leadership that result in schisms and autonomous churches becoming independent. We need a leadership that is Open to change and able to see the full flow of the spiral, and thus the need for a diversity of expressions of worship, proclamations of the Gospel, and even forms of local organization.

Fourth, for the independent churches and those leaning in this direction, recognize that without a sound Blue foundation, what one may be left with is a gushy form of me-oriented Orange worship that can be rather self-seeking under the guise of spirituality. This is what James W. Fowler calls a "*causa sui* henotheism"—"our worshiping at an altar on which sits the faintly smiling image of our own ego."⁹ Blue gives meaning, purpose, and stability that transcends the present and the mundane. It is an essential foundation on which to build for eternity. That is why it is the memetic level of most religions. Fifth, the Willow Creek Community Church model, as good as it is and we can learn much from it, is not the model for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a global body of believers. It is a "we" rather than a "me" form of religious/faith expression. It is a family, a global family, a worldwide movement

inspired and raised by God, with a holistic message. Like money, it may be far from perfect, but it is way ahead of everything else that is in second place. Willow Creek is a “me” model, independent, autonomous, self-supporting, and focused on its own organization, programs, and single structure. The two models, while both strong, are incompatible as far as organizational structure is concerned. As I said, we have much to learn from WCCC—the way to reach the unchurched, contemporary and relevant forms of worship, multiple forms of local ministry, etc. But a local, non-denominational church model is not a model for a global, denominational church. Therefore, garner what you can from the Orange WCCC, but apply it to a Blue, Orange, Green, and even Yellow expression of Adventism. The All Nations Church that I founded in Berrien Springs in 1979 was a Green/Yellow congregation, focused on humanitarian care and the social implications of the Gospel, in an inclusive manner that flattened the organizational pyramid by not caring for position but for competence (Yellow). But it was also a model well within the boundaries of Adventism, and with freedoms to express its organizational structure, worship style, and mission freely. This was largely due to a conference leader, in the person of Dr. Charles Joseph, who himself modeled a Green/Yellow form of nonthreatened leadership, and therefore saw the need for such a church.

The Orange congregational/celebration movement in the Adventist church needs not be an independent movement breaking with Adventism. If denominational leaders can only learn to anticipate change and that “the forces that most influence organizations come from outside the organization, not from within,” as Peter Drucker (*Forbes*, Oct. 5 1998) declares, then what presently appears to be a crisis within Adventism can become an opportunity for inclusive change. In Chinese, the word for “crisis” is *Wei-Ji*, and is composed of two picture-characters, *Wei* meaning “danger” and *Ji* meaning “opportunity.” How one responds to life’s experiences or crises makes a big difference in the final outcome, for the same experience can be seen either as a danger or as an opportunity.

Solution Is From Above:

The solution to these conflicts will not come from the First Tier six levels—the “subsistence levels”—*memes of the flesh*, which are focused on their own agenda. It comes from above, from the Second Tier or “being levels,” *memes of the spirit*, levels seven and eight, the Systemic and Global levels of human development and understanding. This is because research shows that the Being stages at the Second Tier are a “recycling” of the Subsistence stages of the First Tier, not in a circular motion that returns to where one started, but rather, in an ascending spiral to more complex levels. Yellow, thus, corresponds with Beige, but now concerned with the survival of the planet not just the individual. Turquoise corresponds with Purple, but not just focused on individual tribes or families, but on Planet Earth as a global village and earthly family. Coral, the ninth level waiting in the dim unknown, corresponds with Red, and so on up the spiral. The nature of the Second Tier ^vMEMEs is competence overriding differences in a global context. But this is a discussion for another time.

When the Apostle John wrote, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,” that was love-action from levels 7 & 8 seeking to address the needs of human beings at levels 1-6. At levels 7, Yellow (FlexFlow), and 8, Turquoise

(Worldview), the concern is not with superficial human differences, but with global needs and with what each person and group can contribute to the overall natural flow of the system—the church, the organization, the society, the planet—irrespective of who they are or what they are. Belief systems at these levels transcend the usual human barriers, to create a global community in harmony with all forms of life (divine, human, and natural) in a single spiritual ecosystem based on wisdom. This, of course, is what heaven is all about and is the goal toward which the Holy Spirit is leading us, if we are teachable.

Thus, to concentrate efforts only along the horizontal axis, is merely to catalogue biosocial traits and inventory cultural and religious differences. To bring about change in human systems in the church requires managing both axes, the horizontal with its surface differences and the vertical with its deep-level belief systems, in cooperation with the leading of the Holy Spirit. This is the new direction for leadership and the mission of the church in the 21st century. What the church needs for the Third Millennium is “Spiral Leaders”—spirit-led persons who are able to see the whole spiral of human development within the church and can speak the “psychological languages” of a global church family at their respective levels of existence, while at the same time enabling them to see their next step in spiritual growth. This is leadership at the Yellow and Turquoise levels. The new kind of leader needed in the church for the 21st century is a “Flowstater”—one who is aware of the “natural flows” of human development and the dimming and brightening of MEMEs.

Keep in mind, however, that the spiral is *continuum* depicting “ways of thinking about a thing.” It is not about personality traits or human types. It is about “systems in” people, not about a “Red” person or “Blue” and “Green” individuals. The appearance of separateness is more a function of graphics than theory. The spiral is not about discrete categories or rigid boxes, but is a continuum with mixes and merges of Value Systems.¹⁰

Multiple Futures:

While the ultimate future for the church will be the heavenly kingdom, the intervening future of the church in the 21st century will be multiple ones. There is therefore no *single* future for the church, just as there is no single memetic level at which all of humanity is located. What the future holds for the church is one of *multiple* futures depending on the memetic level where members find themselves. Since various segments of the church are at different memetic levels of existence throughout the world, each will experience a different future, depending on their next level of spiritual and social development. Because of this memetic diversity of thinking and Value Systems, church leaders need to plan for *multiple futures*, not just a single one. Thus, the need for Spiral Leaders.

Albert Einstein, in seeking solutions to the world’s problems, once declared: “The world that we have made as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far, creates problems that we cannot solve at the same level as they were created.” There is much wisdom in these words, for solutions cannot come from the same levels that created the problems. This is because “today’s problems are yesterday’s solutions” (Don Beck). May God, the One from above and from Whom spirit-led leadership flows, grant the Seventh-day Adventist Church the much-needed visionary leadership to recognize the wisdom in Einstein’s word. It will be a spiral leadership that will lead this diverse church

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in the 21st century, not by “managing diversity,” but by “awakening the natural flows,” the next level of spiritual development of the world church family. New times demand new minds . . . and new methods. Welcome to the future, Church!

Word Count: 6,196

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¹ For the purposes of this article, the concepts “belief system” and “value system” are used interchangeably. This article is an introductory piece to a Church Leaders Seminar, “Mission, Ministry, Millennium—The Multiple Futures of Adventism in the 21st Century,” available to church groups and church leaders.

² The basic framework for this section is from Don E. Beck “Spiral of Complexity: Cultures and Civilizations in the 21st Century.” A paper presented at the National Strategy Forum, “Who Belongs? Citizenship in Conflict in the 21st Century,” sponsored by the Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation, Chicago, IL, June 25, 26, 1998.

³ See Clare W. Graves, “Human Nature Prepares for a Momentous Leap.” *The Futurist*, April 1974, pp. 72-87; and Don E. Beck and Christopher C. Cowan, *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership, and Change*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1966.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Education*. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1952), p. 18.

⁵ This is a communication technique proposed by Alfred Korzybski, *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics* (Lakeville, CT: The Institute of General Semantics, 1950), which I garnered from Don Beck and Graham Linscott, *The Crucible: Forging South Africa’s Future* (Denton, TX: New Paradigm Press, 1991).

⁶ This graphic is adapted from a similar graphic in Beck and Linscott, *The Crucible*. The letter scheme at the bottom of the graphic [AN, BO, CP,] is the code Clare Graves used to identify the various Value Systems. Now these same systems are identified through a color scheme [Beige, Purple, Red, etc.], as it is easier to remember and is not hierarchical.

⁷ Spiral Dynamics™, the theoretical perspective explained in this paper, is a registered trade of the National Values Center, Inc., in Texas. It describes the developmental theory originally developed by Dr. Clare Graves, late emeritus professor of psychology at Union College in New York.

⁸ Alita Byrd, “The Year of SDA Congregationalism.” *Spectrum*, January 1998, pp. 3-10.

⁹ James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1995 [1981].

¹⁰ Chris C. Cowan, “MEMEs: Systems in, Not Types of People.”

http://www.spiraldynamics.com/documents/systems_not_types.htm, October 27, 1998.