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# *Journal of Adventist Archives*

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## **Foreword**

**Roy K. Kline, Editor**  
**Michael F. Younker, Managing Editor**

We're glad to bring you the fifth volume of the *Journal of Adventist Archive*, just before the 2025 General Conference Session. Before our Church makes new history, we share about what has been done in the past. We hope our readers enjoy the articles in the present issue, and that they will encourage their continued study of Adventist history.

In this 2025 issue, we have articles from Merlin Burt on the origins of Conditionalism in the early Millerite Adventists, and also an important article illustrating how complex it can be to unravel the past with Dan-Adrian Petre's article on the origins of Adventism in Romania, highlighting the role of Michał Belina Czechowski.

We're also including a trio of *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventist* articles on an important organization and figures from our past in preserving our history, notably the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians (ASDAL), previous General Conference Archivist Berton Haloviak, and Adventist historian Emmett Kaiser Vande Vere. We thank Keith Clouten, Gil Valentine, and Brian Strayer for their research.

We in the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research at the General Conference wish you good reading this summer! Also, again, as a friendly reminder, we invite our readers and their fellow Adventist historians and other scholars doing relevant research to submit articles for publication in *JAA* to our managing editor of *JAA*, Michael Younker, at [younkerm@gc.adventist.org](mailto:younkerm@gc.adventist.org). We welcome your submissions for potential future publication!

## **Articles**



## **Millerite Conditionalism: A Doctrine Adopted by Seventh-day Adventists**

**by  
Merlin D. Burt**

The biblical idea of death being an end of all life, including an independent separate-from-the-body “soul,” has been held by Christians since the time of Jesus. Closely connected is the belief that hell and the destruction of sin and evil will be finished or ended rather than continue without end. At its core, this view, referred to as Conditionalism, teaches that immortality is a gift of God and not an intrinsic part of the sinful human nature (see 1 Tim 6:16). The good news of the gospel is that through the resurrection at the Second Coming of Jesus, God will give immortality to the redeemed as a gift (see 1 Cor 15:53-54; Rom 2:7; 2 Tim 1:10).

D. M. Canright, while still a Seventh-day Adventist, nicely summarized a progression of publications in New England during the first decades of the nineteenth century, that influenced some who would become Millerite Conditionalists. Elias Smith, a founder of the Christian Connection, influenced thousands of Christians through the *Herald of Gospel Liberty*; the published sermons of the Unitarian minister, Aaron Bancroft, also played a role; J. Sellon, in Canandaigua, New York, wrote a book that impacted some people in western New York; the books of Walter Balfour in Massachusetts during the 1820s and Calvin French’s 1842 book *Immortality, the Gift of God* were also important.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> D. M. Canright, “Immortality of the Soul,” *Review and Herald*, June 12, 1879, 185; later published in D. M. Canright, *A History of the Doctrine of the Soul among All Races and Peoples Ancient and Modern Including Theologians, Philosophers, Scientists, and Untutored Aborigines*, 2<sup>nd</sup>

Henry Jones was another American Conditionalist somewhat related to Millerites.<sup>2</sup> There were Conditionalists in England and other parts of the Christian world who are referenced by Isaac Wellcome and LeRoy Froom among others.<sup>3</sup> But most important was the influence of George Storrs and those connected to him. It is his experience and teaching that figured most prominently for Millerites and the various groups and denomination that would emerge from them.

William Miller, as a Baptist, remained opposed to conditionalism throughout his life. Both his Baptist faith and his experience with Deism made him particularly resistant to any form of “annihilationism.” Before his conversion, he had found the Deistic idea of eternal oblivion for all humans after death to be both fearful and unsatisfying. Perhaps, based on his experience, Miller viewed Conditionalism as too similar to this view. Other key leaders in the Millerite movement would also reject Conditionalism. Up until 1844 Conditionalism would remain a minority view that transitioned to a majority view but continued to exclude key leaders like J. V. Himes, Josiah Litch, and William Miller.

The teaching of the unconscious state of the dead and the final destruction of the wicked would transition from relative obscurity before 1843 to be a major issue in structuring the organization of the post-1844 Adventists. It would also be the baseline view for

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ed., rev. (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing, 1882), 175-176; Calvin French, *Immortality, the Gift of God through Jesus Christ: To be Given those Only Who have Part in the First Resurrection* (Boston: The Author, 1842).

<sup>2</sup> Henry Jones, *The Scriptures Searched: or Christ's Second Coming and Kingdom at Hand, including the Resurrection, Day of Judgment, End of All Things, New Heavens, and New Earth; Together with a Glorious and Everlasting Millennium, with Present Fulfilling Prophetic Signs that Now, it is Near Even at the Doors, No Man Knowing When the Time Is* (New York: Gould, Newman & Saxton, 1839).

<sup>3</sup> Isaac C. Wellcome, *History of the Second Advent Message and Mission, Doctrine and People* (Yarmouth, ME: I. C. Welcome, 1874), 516-517; LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers: The Conflict of the Ages Over the Nature and Destiny of Man*, 2 vols. (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing, 1966).



### 3 – Burt: Millerite Conditionalism: Doctrine Adopted by SDA

Sabbatarian Adventists who later became Seventh-day Adventists. This transition was largely initiated by George Storrs who was influenced by Henry Grew. Storrs then influenced Charles Fitch and together they made Conditionalism a major point of discussion during the year 1844.

#### **The Experience of George Storrs**

George Storrs (1796-1879) was born into a “wealthy farmer” family in Lebanon, New Hampshire, the youngest of eight children. He was first a congregationalist and then a Methodist. He remained a Methodist minister until 1840 when he withdrew because of his abolitionist views.<sup>4</sup>

In 1837, Storrs read an early work of Henry Grew (1781-1862) and adopted the view that the lost would be annihilated in the fires of hell. Storrs’ biography is presented in the third person:

In 1837—three years prior to his [Storrs’] withdrawal from the M. E. Church—his mind was first called to a consideration of the subject of the final destiny of the wicked men as being, possibly, an entire extinction of being and not endless preservation in sin and suffering. This was by a small anonymous pamphlet put forth as he learned, by Henry Grew, of Philadelphia. He read it to pass away a leisure hour while passing from Boston to New York.<sup>5</sup>

Henry Grew wrote on such subjects as the Trinity, Sabbath, the unconscious state of the dead, and the destruction of the wicked in hell. A brief overview will provide some understanding of his theological emphasis. Between 1824 and 1855 Grew published three editions of a tract opposing the doctrine of the Trinity and arguing that Jesus was the divine “first and only begotten Son” of God the Father and thus originated and inferior.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> George Storrs, *Six Sermons on the Inquiry Is there Immortality in Sin and Suffering? Also, a Sermon on Christ the Life-giver; or the Faith of the Gospel* (New York: Published at the Office of the Bible Examiner, 1855), 5-9.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Grew, *An Examination of the Divine Testament Concerning the Character of the Son of God* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Merrihew and

His view is very similar to what many Sabbatarian Adventists and early Seventh-day Adventists would believe during much of the nineteenth century. Grew also wrote at least two tracts on the subject of the Sabbath. In 1838 and 1850 he published *The Sabbath* and in 1844 he rebutted aspects of Amos Phelps' 1841 book *An Argument for the Perpetuity of the Sabbath*. Grew did not advocate for keeping the seventh day of the week, but rather supported Sunday.<sup>7</sup>

Because of Storrs' influence, Grew is best remembered for his belief in the non-immortality of the soul. His 1837 anonymous tract, mentioned by Storrs, led to two other important tracts, *The Intermediate State* (1844) and *Future Punishment, Not Eternal Life in Misery but Destruction* (1850).<sup>8</sup> Grew would later connect with the "age to come" Adventists during the 1860s. It is interesting to note that many of the tracts by Grew were owned by Seventh-day Adventist ministers, including J. B. Frisbie and J. H. Waggoner. They made various book-margin notes in response to Grew's views.<sup>9</sup> Thus, Grew's interaction extended directly to Sabbatarian Adventists apart from his indirect impact through George Storrs.

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Thompson, Printers, 1841), 3; idem, *An Examination of the Divine Testament Concerning the Character of the Son of God* (Hartford, CT: n.p., 1824); idem, *An Examination of the Divine Testament Concerning the Character of the Son of God* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Merrihew & Thompson, 1855); see also Henry Grew, *The Atonement* (Philadelphia: Merrihew and Thompson, 1847).

<sup>7</sup> Henry Grew, *A Review of Phelps' Argument for the Perpetuity of the Sabbath* (Philadelphia: Merrihew and Thompson, 1844); A. A. Phelps, *An Argument for the Perpetuity of the Sabbath* (Boston: D. S. King, 1841); Henry Grew, *The Sabbath* (Philadelphia: Stereotyped at W. M. Preston's Foundry, 1850).

<sup>8</sup> Henry Grew, *The Intermediate State* (Philadelphia: Merrihew and Thompson, 1844); idem, *The Intermediate State* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Stereotyped at Mogridge's Foundry, 1849); idem, *Future Punishment, Not Eternal Life in Misery but Destruction* (Philadelphia: Stereotyped at Morgridge's Foundry, 1850).

<sup>9</sup> See Center for Adventist Research, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.



**George Storrs' *Six Sermons* and *Intermediate State of the Dead***

The development of George Storrs' presentation of his views on the non-immortality of the soul began through a series of three letters written to a Methodist minister colleague beginning December 17, 1840. These were then published in 1841 as *An Inquiry: Are the Souls of the Wicked Immortal? In three Letters*.<sup>10</sup> This was followed by an expansion during the spring of 1842 to six sermons that he presented in Albany, New York. These six sermons were then first published as *An Inquiry: Are the Souls of the Wicked Immortal? In Six Sermons*.<sup>11</sup> These sermons were then repeatedly reprinted in his paper, the *Bible Examiner*. Storrs would report in May 1843 that 15,000 copies of his *Six Sermons* had been published.<sup>12</sup> He continued to revise and publish his *Six Sermons* during 1843 and 1844 with many thousands of copies printed and distributed in New York City, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Ohio, and in the state of Indiana.<sup>13</sup> In the 1880 memorial issue of the *Bible Examiner* it was reported that "nearly, if not quite, 200,000 copies" of *Six Sermons* had been circulated.<sup>14</sup>

While the emphasis of both Grew and Storrs was to reject an eternally burning hell, the basis was the unconscious state of the human soul between death and the resurrection. They referred to this period as the "intermediate state." Following his *Six Sermons*, Storrs added another article, *Intermediate State of the Dead, or State from Death until the Resurrection*.<sup>15</sup> Thus his *Six Sermons* are directly connected the state of the dead with what might be considered a seventh sermon or discourse, though he did not describe it that way.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 11; George Storrs, *An Inquiry: Are the Souls of the Wicked Immortal? In Three Letters* (Montpelier, VT: n.p., 1841).

<sup>11</sup> George Storrs, *An Inquiry: Are the Souls of the Wicked Immortal? In Six Sermons* (Albany, NY: W. and A. White and J. Visscher, 1842).

<sup>12</sup> George Storrs, "Bible Examiner," *Bible Examiner*, May 1843, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Storrs, *Six Sermons*, 1855, 13-14.

<sup>14</sup> "Notices of the Press," *Bible Examiner*, Memorial Issue, March 1880, 404.

<sup>15</sup> George Storrs, "Intermediate State of the Dead, or State of from Death until the Resurrection," *Bible Examiner*, May 1843, 15-16.

### **Content of *Six Sermons***

In light of the importance of Storrs' *Six Sermons*, a brief overview is provided of the 1843 presentation of his views in the *Bible Examiner*. His presentation appealed to Scripture, reason, and logic, as well as experience.

The content of Storrs' *Six Sermons* began, in the first sermon, by challenging the idea of "an eternal state of conscious being in misery" or an eternally burning hell for the lost. He addressed the arguments Christians have use for an immortal soul and then presented biblical commentary. Observing that immortality is only ascribed to God (1 Tim 1:7), he showed that humans can lose their souls (Matt. 16:26, Mark 8:36). He then defined death as the "extinction of life" and that the "wicked" would "utterly perish in their own corruption" (2 Pet 2:12). He finally answered some questions including how to understand the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), ending with the idea of an eternal or everlasting hell applying to the effect rather than the duration.<sup>16</sup>

The second sermon focused on the punishment of the wicked. The sermon text "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen 4:4) was the first lie of Satan in the Garden of Eden. In this discourse he essentially contrasts many of the Scriptural words for the death of the wicked (perish, destruction, burn them up, perdition, second death, etc.) with the life of the redeemed (eternal life, "put on immortality," etc.). He ended by comparing the resurrected redeemed over whom the "second death has no power" who will live in a "new heaven and a new earth" after the "first heaven and the first earth have passed away" (Rev 20:6; 20:14; 21:1).<sup>17</sup>

The entire third sermon answered two major issues—the "forever and ever" torment of Rev 14:9-11 and character of God and justice. In addressing the second angel's message of Rev 14, he connected it to Rev 18. Babylon is "utterly burnt with fire" (Rev 18:8) and "thrown down, and shall be found no more at all" (Rev 18:21). He applied Rev 14 to the judgment of Babylon and those living in the present world and not the "punishment of the wicked in a future state." He saw both Rev 14 and 18 represented as

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<sup>16</sup> George Storrs, "First Discourse," *Bible Examiner*, May 1843, 2-5.

<sup>17</sup> George Storrs, "Second Discourse," *Bible Examiner*, May 1843, 5-6.

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occurring upon this earth before the restoration of the New Earth which will be the home of the saints. He concluded that, because of this, there cannot be an eternally burning hell. He used the second half of his sermon to address the character of God and justice, including the unreasonableness of the idea of “infinite punishment” for all of the lost—whether a child “who has just arrived to the years of understanding” and “dies impenitent” or as Storrs named, someone of great wickedness like Voltaire. Storrs argued that only an “utter extinction of being” with varying “degrees of torment prior to that event” “according to the degrees of guilt of the transgressor” can be reasonable justice. He concluded with a presentation of the hope of eternal life through “Christ, the soul’s Physician.”<sup>18</sup>

In the fourth sermon Storrs continued with the second part of the third sermon answering the argument that “endless torment” must be true because the church fathers taught it. His answer was an exposition on the teaching of the New Testament. He used six witnesses against unending punishment: John the Baptist (Matt 3:10); Jesus (Matt 5:29-30; 7:13-14, 19; 10:28; etc.); Peter (Acts 3:23; 8:20; 2 Pet 2:1, 12; etc.); James (James 1:15; 5:29); John (1 John 2:17; Rev 14:14-15; 21:8); Jude (Jude 6); and Paul (Rom 1:32; 6:21-23; 8:13; Gal 6:8; 1 Thes 5:3, etc.). This Bible study was ended with a final appeal, “O, come to Christ and live.”<sup>19</sup>

Storrs’ fifth sermon continued answering objections. He discussed the idea of “spiritual death” and considered it be the effect of sin. Not to be confused with the “destruction of being” as the final punishment for sin. Also, the idea that most Christians teach an eternally burning hell and therefore it must be true. He responded that all denominations have truth and error in their teachings. Some reject an idea because it is a “new” understanding, to which he replied that if it is in the Bible it is not new. He also showed that there were some very old errors. He ended with a response to Joseph Benson’s sermon, *Future Misery of the Wicked*, published in 1791.<sup>20</sup> He quoted Benson’s vivid description of God presiding over hell:

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<sup>18</sup> George Storrs, “Third Discourse,” *Bible Examiner*, May 1843, 6-8.

<sup>19</sup> George Storrs, “Fourth Discourse,” *Bible Examiner*, May 1843, 8-11.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Benson, *Four Sermons on the Second Coming of Christ and Future Misery of the Wicked* (Leeds, England: J. Bowling, 1791), 52.

God is present in hell, in his infinite justice and almighty wrath, as an unfathomable sea of liquid fire, where the wicked must drink in everlasting torture. . . . As heaven would be no heaven if God did not there manifest his love, so hell would be no hell, if God did not there display his wrath. . . . God is, therefore, himself present in hell, to see the punishment of these rebels against his government, that it may be adequate to the infinity of their guilt: his fiery indignation kindles, and his incensed fury feeds the flame of their torment, while his powerful presence and operation maintain their being, and render all their powers most acutely sensible; thus setting the keenest edge upon their pain, and making it cut most intolerably deep. He will exert all his divine attributes to make them as wretched as the capacity of their nature will admit.<sup>21</sup>

Storrs attributed these remarks to “horrible doctrines” based on “imagination” rather than Scripture and instead described the “second death” in the final “lake of fire” with these words: “O, that sinners make awake to see their danger, and fly from the doom that awaits them. O, the thoughts of the anguish that a dying soul must feel! An anguish kindled up by a sense of guilt, a sight of what, to them, is lost forever, and the curse of the violated law, which will cause their souls to perish, without recovery, and without hope.” He saw this as more consistent with the Scripture and a correct view of both the love and justice of God.

The sixth and last sermon countered the idea that biblical words such as “die,” “death,” “destroy,” “burned up,” “perish,” etc., were to be taken literally when referring to the “destiny of wicked men.” Like the fourth sermon, this final sermon contains a Bible study. He strongly opposed “making the terms life and death mystical or figurative.” His texts included: Deut 30:15; Ps 16:11; Matt 19:16; John 3:15-16; 5:28-29; 8:12; 11:25-26; Rom 5:17. Storrs ends his series of sermons with two simple points: (1) humans inherit from Adam “a dying nature” and are “destitute of immortality” and (2) for those who will choose and even those who

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<sup>21</sup> George Storrs, “Fifth Discourse,” *Bible Examiner*, May 1843, 12.



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cannot choose, “God has given his Son Jesus Christ, to die for us, that we might not perish” but have “eternal life.”<sup>22</sup>

The net effect of these sermons was to present a scriptural view of death and the destruction of the lost with an effective appeal for a correct understanding of the loving and just character of God. Nearly all that Storrs presents in his 1843 *Six Sermons* would be consistent with current Seventh-day Adventist beliefs.

### **Content of *Intermediate State of the Dead***

George Storrs (and Henry Grew) treated the state of the dead and the resurrection as separate topics from the eternal life of the redeemed in the new earth and the destruction of the wicked in hell. Storrs central point was “that the doctrine of an intermediate state of conscious being, after death, and before the second coming of Christ, has led to a denial of the resurrection of the body.”<sup>23</sup>

In this article, Storrs gave careful Bible evidence for his position that the soul does not have existence apart from the body. He used such texts as Gen 2:7; Ps 146:4; Eccl 9:5, 10; 1 Cor 15:17-18; 1 Thes 4:13-15. He answered various objections including Jesus’ statement to the thief on the cross that “today, shalt thou be with me in paradise” Luke 23:43. Using texts like John 20:17 and John 5:25 he demonstrated that Jesus was not in paradise the day He died and that the dead are waiting to hear the voice of Jesus at His second coming. Other popular ideas used to support a conscious state in death were answered, such as Paul being out of the body; Jesus seeing Moses and Elijah; souls under the altar (Rev 6:9); and the rich man and Lazarus.

Storrs concluded the article with a Bible study on the resurrection. After discussing various texts, he summarized his understanding:

The period, however long from death to the resurrection, is as no time; because perfect unconsciousness annihilates the time to the person asleep, and it is precisely the same to them as though they had been glorified, body and soul at death; and with this additional happiness, that all the redeemed, not already raised, will wake up together. Blessed hour—glorious day, when death is

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<sup>22</sup> George Storrs, “Sixth Discourse,” *Bible Examiner*, May 1843, 13-14.

<sup>23</sup> George Storrs, “Intermediate State of the Dead, or State from Death until the Resurrection,” *Bible Examiner*, May 1843, 15.

swallowed up in victory, and the whole company of the saints shall shout the triumph at once!

While often overlooked by those who review Storrs' *Six Sermons*, his material on the "intermediate state" is vital and must be given due consideration to adequately round out his overall teaching and influence on early Sabbatarians and Seventh-day Adventists.

### **Conditionalism and the Dividing of Millerite Adventism**

George Storrs' writing on the intermediate state and destruction of the wicked produced a broad response in the Millerite movement. Some who read his writings were already Conditionalists including some from the Christian Connection. Elias Smith, who has already been mentioned, had taught views similar to Storrs early in the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

Many were converted to this view by Storrs. Most notable was Charles Fitch. Fitch had helped Storrs to accept and preach the Millerite Advent Doctrine beginning in 1843, but it was not until January 1844 that Fitch accepted conditionalism. Fitch wrote on January 25, from Cleveland, Ohio, where he lived and ministered: "As you have long been fighting the Lord's battles alone, on the subject of the state of the dead, and of the final doom of the wicked, I wrote this to say, that I am at last, after much thought and prayer, and a full conviction of duty to God, prepared to take my stand by your side."<sup>25</sup>

Fitch's new advocacy greatly expanded the discussion among Millerites. Josiah Litch engaged in a debate with Fitch and went so far as to publish a response in an 1844 single-issue periodical, the *Anti-Annihilationist*.<sup>26</sup> William Miller wrote a letter on May 7, 1844, declaring "I disclaim any connection, fellowship, or sympathy with Br. Storrs' views of the intermediate state, and end of the wicked."<sup>27</sup> After the fall 1844 disappointment, the conflict

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<sup>24</sup> See Michael G. Kenny, *The Perfect Law of Liberty: Elias Smith and the Providential History of America* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 221-226.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Storrs, *Six Sermons*, 1855, 15.

<sup>26</sup> Josiah Litch, *The Anti-Annihilationist*, April 15, 1844, 1-32.

<sup>27</sup> William Miller, "Letter from Mr. Miller," *Midnight Cry*, May 23, 1844, 355.

over the state of the dead would continue until “mainline” or non-Sabbatarian Millerites were split into various groups.

Nineteen-century Advent Christian historian, Isaac Wellcome, observed that as a result of Fitch’s support “in a short time a large number of the Advent ministry embraced the above views [Storrs’ and Fitch’s], and commenced preaching and writing them. Wellcome then named 27 people and concluded that “the number has continually increased, until perhaps seven-eighths of the [Advent Christian] body now believe them [the view of Storrs and Fitch].”<sup>28</sup> David Dean observed, “The ever-growing number of Conditionalists believed the Advent Message could not be preached properly if the Bible teaching on the destiny of the wicked were excluded.”<sup>29</sup>

#### **Four Divisions of Mainline Adventists**

Various historians, both Seventh-day Adventist and Advent Christian, have helpfully described the complexity of Millerite divisions following the May 1845 Albany Conference. This fragmentation was greatly influenced by disagreements over Conditionalism.

During the five years after the 1844 expectation, the leading Adventist paper—the *Advent Herald*—under the firm leadership of J. V. Himes, strongly opposed conditional immortality. David Dean observed that “the usually scholarly and gentlemanly periodical. . . . descended into vindictive, personal attacks; bitter and sarcastic tirades. . . . Conditionalists gradually concluded that the *Herald* was clearly opposed to the views held by the majority of Adventists on the ‘immortality question.’”<sup>30</sup> The *Bible Advocate*, an alternative Adventist paper, was started to allow Conditionalists and others who disagreed with Himes and the *Advent Herald*, to communicate their views. Though the *Bible Advocate* ceased publication toward the end of 1848 and merged

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<sup>28</sup> Wellcome, *History of the Advent Message*, 517; See also George R. Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Study of Millerite Adventism* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1993), 195-199.

<sup>29</sup> David Arnold Dean, “Echoes of the Midnight Cry: The Millerite Heritage in Apologetics of the Advent Christian Denomination, 1860-1960,” (Th.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1977), 124-125.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-118.

with the *Advent Harbinger* in Rochester, New York, “conditional immortality” Adventists continued to meet regularly. “Union” campmeetings were held in North Wilbraham, just east of Springfield, Massachusetts, beginning in 1849 and continuing into the 1860s.<sup>31</sup> After the passing of the 1854 time-expectation, Miles Grant and his *World’s Crisis* also played an important unifying role for Conditionalists.

The final result was organizational separation. First, the American Evangelical Adventist Conference formally organized in 1858 and included the *Advent Herald* publishing office with other formal aspects of denominational organization.<sup>32</sup> This group would continue until the 1880s when their only unique doctrinal distinctive—a personal, pre-millennial Second Coming of Christ—would be widely accepted by American Protestants. Thus there remained little reason for a separate existence. The final remnants of Evangelical Adventist activities would end during the 1920s.<sup>33</sup>

The second group became the Advent Christian Church. Miles Grant had refused to join Evangelical Adventists and with other Conditionalists met in 1860 and formed the Christian Association which was soon renamed the Advent Christian Association.<sup>34</sup> Though many refused at first to acknowledge that a denomination had been formed—due to anti-organizational sentiment—it has endured to this day and retains a Conditionalist view.

The third group was the Life and Advent Union. Miles Grant, editor of the *World Crisis*, modified the Conditionalist view of the Advent Christian group to reject that the wicked would ever be resurrected. George Storrs abandoned his previous view and theologically joined with Grant. In 1863, Storrs became the president of newly formed Life and Advent Union group. Storrs also began a new paper, the *Herald of Life and of the Coming Kingdom*. By 1864 Union members were no longer allowed in the

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 128; “Adjourned Meetin[g] of the Nineteenth Annual Conference,” *Advent Herald*, November 20, 1858, 369-372.

<sup>33</sup> Clyde E. Hewitt, *Midnight and Morning: An Account of the Advent Awakening and the founding of the Advent Christian Denomination, 1831-1860* (Charlotte, NC: Venture Books, 1983, 270, 272.

<sup>34</sup> Dean, 133-135.



### 13 – Burt: Millerite Conditionalism: Doctrine Adopted by SDA

Advent Christian Association. But by 1920 the Advent Christians and Union Adventists were exchanging delegates at each other's General Conference meetings. The diminishing numbers of the Union Adventists ultimately led to their merger with the Advent Christian Church in 1964.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, a fourth group emerged, which were popularly called "Age to Come" Adventists. This Conditionalist group shifted their expectation to a temporal earthly kingdom at the return of Christ with the restoration of Israel as the kingdom of God and head over the Gentile nations—a very different view from the Millerite movement. Joseph Marsh, editor of the *Advent Harbinger and Bible Advocate* was joined by George Storrs, Henry Grew, J. B. Cook, and O. R. L. Crosier in a loose organization through the last decades of the nineteenth century. In 1921, though remaining congregational in polity, they finally organized a headquarters in Oregon, Illinois, referred to as the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.<sup>36</sup> Today the group calls itself the Church of God General Conference (COGC) and focuses its ministry through the Atlanta Bible College in Atlanta, Georgia. It connects with non-trinitarians who also include those who still hold the name Church of Abrahamic Faith and Church of the Blessed Hope.

#### **Sabbatarians and Conditionalism**

Storrs' Millerite-era Conditionalist views directly influenced those who would later become Seventh-day Adventists. In his autobiography, James White wrote that Storrs' *Six Sermons* were "widely circulated among Adventists." He hinted at his acceptance of Storrs' view when he observed that "the doctrine of man's unconsciousness in death and the destruction of the wicked, was being adopted by some and regarded with favor by many." He believed "the time had come, in the providence of God, for this question to be agitated."<sup>37</sup> As early as 1847 James White had integrated Conditionalism into what would become the Seventh-

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<sup>35</sup> Hewitt, 267.

<sup>36</sup> See Gary Land, "Church of God General Conference," *Historical Dictionary of Seventh-day Adventists* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 62-63; Knight, *Millennial Fever*, 1993, 283-292.

<sup>37</sup> James White, *Life Incidents in Connection with the Great Advent Movement, as Illustrated by the Three Angels of Revelation 14* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing, 1868), 154.

day Adventist framework of eschatology in *A Word to the "Little Flock."* In the last section on the final judgment, White was clear on the unconscious state of the dead and the final destruction of the wicked. He wrote that at the Second Coming, the Son of Man will "raise the sleeping saints." Referring to the lost at the Second Coming, he continued, "the wicked are to remain silent in the dust, all through the 1000 years." He concluded with the "execution of the judgment." "Then God will have a clear universe; for the devil, and his angels, and all the wicked, will be burnt up 'root and branch.'"<sup>38</sup> This tract also included content from both Ellen White and Joseph Bates.

Ellen White recollected that about 1843 as a teenager in Portland, Maine, she overheard her mother speaking with another Christian friend about a sermon they had recently heard that the "soul had not natural immortality." When Ellen expressed surprise and concern that people would not be converted, Eunice Harmon responded, "If the love of God will not induce the rebel to yield, the terrors of an eternal hell will not drive him to repentance. . . . The love of Jesus attracts; it will subdue the hardest heart."<sup>39</sup> For a few months Ellen thought about it and then heard a sermon on the topic herself that settled her thinking on the topic.

There are various memory statements from Seventh-day Adventists who had been Millerites and accepted conditional immortality through the publications by Storrs and others. Two examples are provided:

In 1843 I was handed a paper containing Bro. Storr's six sermons on the final destruction of the wicked. This was as much as I could stand, having always been taught the old theory that the wicked would live eternally in hell, or that they would die the second death and be destroyed, but yet live and never die.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> James White, "The Judgment," *A Word to the "Little Flock"*, May 30, 1847, 24.

<sup>39</sup> Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915), 48-49.

<sup>40</sup> Alvarer Pierce, "From Bro. Pierce," *Review and Herald*, April 18, 1854, 102.

## 15 – Burt: Millerite Conditionalism: Doctrine Adopted by SDA

In 1844, I got possession of the works of Elds. French, Fitch, and Storrs, on the Life and Death question. I read, and saw that man had no immortality by creation, or at least, he lost all claim to it at the fall.<sup>41</sup>

Storrs' Conditionalist foundation was combined with Seventh-day Adventist eschatology. The eschatological framework would become even more important with the rise of modern spiritualism. Seventh-day Adventists understand the book of Revelation to teach that Spiritualism is a significant part of the last deception of Satan before the second coming of Jesus.

### Conclusion

While there were various advocates of Conditionalism during the first half of the nineteenth century, it was George Storrs who played the most important role in the Millerite movement. He influenced many, including those who would later become Sabbatarian Adventists and Seventh-day Adventists. When Charles Fitch embraced Storrs' Bible teaching, it raised the profile of Conditionalism to prominent status. Through Fitch's and Storrs' influence, the majority of post-disappointment Millerites would become Conditionalists. The exceptions were certain key leaders of the movement including William Miller, J. V. Himes, Josiah Litch, and those connected to the *Advent Herald* in Boston. Though they would be the first to organize the American Evangelical Adventist Conference in 1858, the denomination would cease to be distinctive by the turn of the twentieth century and lost all of its Adventist advocates.

Three other Conditionalist mainline Adventist groups would form. The Advent Christian Church in 1860 and the Church of God General Conference in 1921 have remained to this day, though with limited membership and influence. The Life and Advent Union, which had a variant view that rejected the resurrection of the wicked for a final judgment, would emerge in 1863 and continue until it finally lost adherents and reintegrated with the Advent Christian Church by 1964. George Storrs modified some aspects of his view as a Conditionalist and would play an important and progressive role, first with the Advent Christians,

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<sup>41</sup> G. W. Mitchell, "A Sketch of Experience," *Review and Herald*, November 3, 1868, 226.

then the Union Adventists, and finally with the Church of God “age to come” Adventists.

Seventh-day Adventists followed a different course than the four groups connected to majority or mainline Adventists. Mainline Adventists rejected the prophetic significance of 1844 shortly after the fall 1844 disappointment, while “Bridegroom” Adventists continued to believe the date was important. The two groups went separate ways following the Albany Conference and subsequent conferences beginning in May 1845.

“Bridegroom” Adventism was followed by Sabbatarian Adventism which then became the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the early 1860s. Like many mainline post-disappointment Adventists, Seventh-day Adventists were Conditionalists and have remained consistent in holding to a non-immortality of the soul view and the destruction of the wicked at the final judgment. For Seventh-day Adventists, George Storrs’ and Charles Fitch’s pre-disappointment views have essentially remained normative as a part of Seventh-day Adventist fundamental belief and have been integrated into their eschatological framework.

## **Crafting the History of Adventism in Romania: The Challenge of Michał Belina Czechowski's Mission to Romania**

**by  
Dan-Adrian Petre**

### **Abstract**

Michał Belina Czechowski (1818–1876), a former Polish priest turned Seventh-day Adventist, played a pivotal role in the early development of the Adventist movement in Romania. The account of Czechowski's mission to Romania is primarily available through the narrative provided by Dumitru Popa (1927–2019), the former president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania (1975–1990). Despite Popa's significant role, there remains a gap in the current historical narrative, lacking an in-depth exploration of Czechowski's biography and the implications of his work for the Romanian Adventist Church.

This paper addresses this gap by providing a comprehensive review of sources related to Czechowski's mission to Romania. These sources include George Butler's report, Dumitru Aslan's testimony, Petre Paulini and Ștefan Demetrescu's accounts, Graur's project, Popa's eclectic approach, and other contemporary perspectives. This research aims to provide an overview of this subject and to highlight the innovations, challenges, and opportunities that characterize the writing of Adventist history in Romania.

### **Introduction**

In May 1976, Dumitru Popa (1927–2019), the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania (1975–1990), presented at a conference in Warsaw a paper on the activity in

Romania of the former Polish priest, converted to Adventism, Michał Belina Czechowski (1818–1876). The paper shed light on the less-known, final part of Czechowski's life and was later published in the bilingual volume of the symposium.<sup>1</sup> While the paper itself, available at the library of the Polish College of Theology and Humanities (Podkowa Leśna, Poland),<sup>2</sup> had a few in-text references, it failed to mention one important detail: that he received 12 pages of a typed manuscript from a former pastor and administrator, Gheorghe Graur (1912–1997), passionate about the history of Adventism, which detailed the last five years of Czechowski's activity in Romania (1869–1875).<sup>3</sup> When comparing Graur's description in his posthumous book on the topic, one can easily see that Popa heavily borrowed from Graur's material.<sup>4</sup> With

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<sup>1</sup> Dumitru Popa, "M. B. Czechowski in Romania," in *Michał Belina Czechowski, 1818–1876: Results of the Historical Symposium about His Life and Work Held in Warsaw, Poland, May 17–23, 1976, Commemorating the Hundredth Anniversary of his Death*, ed. Rajmund Ładysław Dąbrowski and B. B. Beach (Warsaw, Poland: Znaki Czasu, 1979), 326–351.

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to my colleague, Łukasz Romanowski, for providing me with a copy of Popa's paper.

<sup>3</sup> Cornelius Greising, "O punte între generații: dialog cu pastorul Gheorghe Graur [A Bridge between Generations: Dialogue with Pastor Gheorghe Graur]," in *Adu-ți aminte*, ed. Mircea Diaconescu and Cornelius Greising, vol. 8 (Aachen: Cornelia și Mircea Diaconescu, 1995), 165–166.

<sup>4</sup> Gheorghe Graur, *Istoria Bisericii Adventiste din România, povestită de pastorul Gheorghe Graur [The History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania, as Narrated by Pastor Gheorghe Graur]* (Pantelimon: Viață și Sănătate, 2019). The publishing of the book was coordinated by Graur's daughter-in-law, Margareta Graur. Gheorghe Graur notes, "Before going to Poland, being invited to this symposium, Brother Dumitru Popa, the president of the Romanian Union, earnestly asked me to provide him with a copy of the book I wrote, titled *The History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania as Narrated by Gheorghe Graur*, specifically the chapter 'Czechowski in Romania,' more precisely, the section 'Toward other horizons.' Thus, I gave him a copy of the requested twelve pages of the chapter to complete the biography of Czechowski through the report of activities during the five years of his work in Romania" (56). For Graur's presentation on Czechowski's activity, see pages 46–53 of his book. Refer below for



few exceptions, the rest of the church would consider Popa the originator of this material, given also the fact that the editor-in-chief of the Romanian *Adventist Review* (*Curierul Adventist*)—who was none other than Popa—wrote in the autumn of that year that *his* paper was “received with keen interest.”<sup>5</sup>

In the last edition of his history—in addition to the symposium volume mentioned above and the materials gathered by others<sup>6</sup>—Popa uses some primary sources indicating his further study of the topic,<sup>7</sup> but his approach is mainly hagiographic, presenting Czechowski’s inner thoughts, motives, or prayers.<sup>8</sup> Despite Popa’s efforts, the current historical narrative lacks an in-depth exploration of Czechowski’s biography and the implications

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additional information regarding Popa’s extensive use of borrowed material.

<sup>5</sup> Dumitru Popa, “Simpozionul advent international: Mihai Belina Czechowski [The Advent International Symposium: Michael Belina Czechowski],” *Curierul Adventist*, September–October 1976, 25.

<sup>6</sup> Popa mentions that in 1955, the Romanian Union Executive Committee decided to form a commission to gather materials on the history of Adventism in Romania. Responsible for the 1870–1910 period was Ion Bătrâna-Voivodeni (1910–1974). Dumitru Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste de Ziua a Șaptea din România: 1870–1920* [Pages from the History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania: 1870–1920] (București: Viață și Sănătate, 2008), 33–34. It appears that Bătrâna-Voivodeni gathered some material on that period (see Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 196 for proof that Popa was aware of that material) but, as of now, this material is not available. No wonder that Gheorghe Modoran who taught history at Adventus University of Cernica, Romania, for many years, decried the missing documents which, according to him, were almost ready in 1965 (Gheorghe Modoran, *Rezistență și compromis în adventismul din România în perioada comunistă [1944–1965]* [Resistance and Compromise in Romanian Adventism during the Communist Period [1944–1965]], vol. 1 of *Biserica prin pustiu roșu* [The Church through the Red Wilderness] [Pantelimon: Viață și Sănătate, 2013], 12).

<sup>7</sup> Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 285–294.

<sup>8</sup> Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 196, 279. Cf. Modoran, who argues that Popa’s approach to history “leaves aside many important aspects and events that do not fit into the author’s positive and heroic view of history” (Modoran, *Rezistență și compromis*, 12).

of his work for the Romanian Adventist Church. This paper addresses this issue by providing a broad review of sources related to Czechowski's mission to Romania. This review serves as a starting point for future investigations into this subject and highlights the challenges and opportunities that face the writing of Adventist history in Romania.

### **Butler's Report on His Visit to Romania**

When it comes to the beginning of Seventh-day Adventism in Romania, one of the first written reports comes from George I. Butler (1834–1918), the president of the General Conference at that time, who visited the country in 1884.<sup>9</sup> Butler was the younger brother of Anna Eliza Butler (1824–1868),<sup>10</sup> an Advent Christian, who worked with Czechowski between 1864 and 1868. Butler visited the city of Pitești, where they stayed “about four days” in the “company of seven who observed the Sabbath of the Lord, and quite a number of others who are much interested.”<sup>11</sup> Receiving his information from the Aslan family, the first converts of the former Polish priest, Butler notes that Toma G. Aslan (ca. 1845– ca. 1897) became acquainted with “the Sabbath and many of the doctrines which we held as people” when he invited Czechowski to teach him French.<sup>12</sup> In a report published in *Les Signes des Temps* in May 1884, Butler does not mention Czechowski.<sup>13</sup>

After Butler returned from his trip to Italy and Romania, he sent a letter to W. C. White on 27 April, 1884, from Basel,

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<sup>9</sup> George I. Butler, “Visit to Romania,” *Review and Herald*, 20 May 1884, 328–329. Butler knew about the believers in Romania. He writes in December 1883 that “there is a small church in Roumania [sic], which embraced the Sabbath from hearing M. B. Czechowski some years ago. Bro. Thomas G. Aslan has acted as leader among them.” Geo[rge]. I. Butler, “Encouraging Items from Europe,” *Review and Herald*, 11 December 1883, 777.

<sup>10</sup> For details on Anna Eliza Butler, see M. B. Czechowski, “From Br. M. B. Czechowski,” *Voice of the West*, 6 October 1868, 34–35.

<sup>11</sup> Butler, “Visit to Romania,” 328.

<sup>12</sup> Butler, “Visit to Romania,” 329.

<sup>13</sup> George I. Butler, “Une visite en Italie et en Roumanie,” *Les Signes des Temps*, May 1884, 368.

Switzerland. Butler briefly mentioned Czechowski, indicating that the latter gave French lessons, and that Toma G. Aslan started “to learn something of present truth.”<sup>14</sup> He also noted that Aslan “felt that it was the truth, and ~~though the example and life of Czechowski was anything but creditable~~ he retained these thoughts of the truth until he began ~~commenced~~ to keep the Sabbath.”<sup>15</sup> The crossed-out words appear to be part of the editing done for the article that appeared in *Signs of the Times*.<sup>16</sup> The article mentions that “Czechowski came there [Pitești] the latter part of his life to teach French, to earn something on which to live, he [Aslan] became interested, while taking lessons, to learn something of present truth.”<sup>17</sup>

Butler’s report is a first-hand account of the spread of Adventism in Europe.<sup>18</sup> Butler’s personal opinion of Czechowski is that of a damaged reputation. Nevertheless, he recognizes that the former Polish priest preached aspects of the Adventist teachings, including the Sabbath, that led to the formation of a small group of Adventists in Romania in 1870.

### Paulini’s Brief Account

In 1924, Petre P. Paulini (1882–1953), then the president of the young Romanian Union,<sup>19</sup> wrote a report in a special number

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<sup>14</sup> Geo[rge] I. Butler to W[illiam]. C[larence]. White, Basel, Switzerland, 27 April 1884, 6, <https://ellenwhite.org/correspondence/270328>.

<sup>15</sup> Butler to White, 27 April 1884, 6.

<sup>16</sup> [George I. Butler,] “From the Continent, Europe,” *Signs of the Times*, 22 May 1884, 314–315.

<sup>17</sup> [Butler,] “From the Continent, Europe,” 314.

<sup>18</sup> I am using here Denis Kaiser’s four categories of Adventist historiography: (1) first-hand accounts; (2) traditional hagiography; (3) secularist criticism; and (4) “New Adventist History.” Denis Kaiser, “Historiography and the New Adventist History: A Historian’s Perspective,” in *The Word: Searching, Living, Teaching*, ed. Artur A. Steele, vol. 2 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2022), 280.

<sup>19</sup> For details on the development of Adventism in Romania, see Adrian Bocăneanu and Daniel-Adrian Neagu, „Romania,” *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, 21 October 2020, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=GAHR>.

of the Romanian *Signs of the Times* (*Semnele Timpului*):<sup>20</sup> “it has been fifty years since Mihail B. Czechowski, a Polish former Catholic priest, first preached the threefold angelic message from Rev. 14:6–12 in Romania.”<sup>21</sup> Paulini knew that Czechowski came to Romania in 1870 and that he began to hold “religious conferences in Pitești.” Nevertheless, notes Paulini, Czechowski “knew only in part our teaching, being sent by the First-day Adventists, but he also preached about the second coming of Christ and about the sanctity of Saturday.” As a result of his conferences, he “won for the Gospel faith one Armenian-Romanian called Toma Aslan, who was baptized that year together with his younger brother.”<sup>22</sup>

After citing a report from *Signes des Temps* from 1881, Paulini concludes that, by 1881, the basis for the “preaching of the final warning of the eternal gospel in Romania” had already been laid,<sup>23</sup> and “began anew when, in 1891, a number of German Adventists came from the Crimea.”<sup>24</sup> Paulini’s account presents the viewpoint of a second generation of believers who did not directly witness Czechowski’s mission. Despite this, Paulini writes as an active participant, representing the second generation of workers. His narrative is not hagiographic; instead, it is focused on precision and accurate details.

### **Dumitru G. Aslan’s Testimony**

The new Archive of the History of Adventism in Romania holds a written testimony of Dumitru (Mitică) G. Aslan (1851–

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<sup>20</sup> Petre P. Paulini, “Cincizeci de ani de lucrare misionară în România: jubileul nostru de aur [Fifty Years of Missionary Work in Romania: Our Golden Jubilee],” *Semnele Timpului*, *Ediție specială*, September 1924, 3–7.

<sup>21</sup> Paulini, “Cincizeci de ani de lucrare misionară în România,” 3.

<sup>22</sup> Paulini, “Cincizeci de ani de lucrare misionară în România,” 3.

<sup>23</sup> Paulini, “Cincizeci de ani de lucrare misionară în România,” 3–4. On the same page, Paulini recalls that “when I became a member of the Evangelical Church of the SDA of Bucharest, from the initial organized group of believers in Pitești, I could find only two persons: the wife of the deceased Toma Aslan and his brother.”

<sup>24</sup> Paulini, “Cincizeci de ani de lucrare misionară în România,” 3–4.

1837), the brother of Toma G. Aslan, dated 8 March 1937.<sup>25</sup> I have several observations regarding this document.<sup>26</sup> First, considering that Dumitru G. Aslan recounts events from 1870 to 1937, there are instances of memory lapses. For instance, he erroneously recalls that Butler stayed in Romania for two or three weeks, while Butler himself indicates less than a week. Discrepancies also arise when comparing Aslan's mention of Andrews with Butler's mention of Whitney as his companion. Notwithstanding these lapses, Aslan accurately recalls events that impacted him, like the double translation of Butler's message from English to French and then to Romanian.

Second, amidst the memory lapses, Aslan emphasizes certain aspects: (a) Czechowski arrived in Pitești in 1870 in a state of poverty, accompanied by Wilhelmina (Eliza) and two young children; (b) various details about Czechowski's life are outlined, including his journey from America via Switzerland, his association with the Advent Christians, challenges with sponsors, and business and financial struggles; (c) Czechowski provided French lessons; (d) he converted and subsequently baptized several members of the Aslan family, including Toma and Dumitru in 1870; (e) Czechowski stayed in Pitești for two years; (f) the small group of believers was visited by three church leaders, Butler, Bourdeau, and Conradi. Third, based on the details

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<sup>25</sup> Mitică [Dumitru] G. Aslan, București, 8 March 1937, Adventus University of Cernica, Romania.

<sup>26</sup> Within the context of this paper (see the annex), the manuscript is presented in a new translation. Although it was partially published in a collection of sources, one significant detail—the age of Czechowski's two children—was omitted, along with other minor details. Vasile D. Cojea, *Vechi cărări advente [Old Advent Paths]* ([Bucharest]: CARD, 1998), 310–315. CARD stands for the Adventist Center of Resources and Research (Centrul Adventist de Resurse și Documentare), the precursor of the current archive of the Ellen G. White Research Center located at Adventus University, Romania. The similarities with the story told by Graur and Popa indicate that they knew about Dumitru G. Aslan's testimony. Popa cites Dumitru G. Aslan's testimony (Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 423). Graur's description of Czechowski's meeting with Toma G. Aslan reflects his indirect knowledge of Dumitru G. Aslan's testimony (Graur, *Istoria Bisericii Adventiste din România*, 46–54).

presented by Dumitru G. Aslan, it becomes apparent that he may not have been aware of the broader context of Czechowski's life, particularly his other family and children. Alternatively, if he was aware, he chose not to mention it. Fourth, considering Dumitru G. Aslan is the sole witness who left a written narrative of his encounter with Czechowski, his account assumes a pivotal role in comprehending the Aslan family's perspective on Czechowski. Nevertheless, while Dumitru Aslan's account is invaluable, it should be corroborated with other sources to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how Adventism took root in Romania.

### **Ștefan Demetrescu's Account**

The details of Dumitru Aslan's testimony resurface in a machine-typed manuscript in the Ștefan Demetrescu collection found at the archive of the Ellen G. White Research Center (Adventus University, Romania). The internal evidence points to Demetrescu as the author.<sup>27</sup> The manuscript has only four pages—missing the next ones—yet follows closely Dumitru G. Aslan's story. After providing details about the Aslan family in the first two and a half pages, Demetrescu introduces Czechowski and presents his interaction with Aslan and the subsequent Bible studies. Next, Demetrescu presents Czechowski's background, his marriage in Switzerland with a young lady who worked with

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<sup>27</sup> [Ștefan Demetrescu,] "Primele începuturi ale lucrării advente în România," Adventus University, Cernica, Romania, folder 7, file 2, pages 9–12. The page numbers used are those written with the pencil by the person who organized the collection. In the finding aid for this manuscript, the archivist credits Ștefan Demetrescu (1882–1973) as the author. The internal evidence confirms it. The author mentions that he is very much connected to Pitești by memories "of very beautiful years of my childhood and adolescence" ([Demetrescu,] "Primele începuturi," 9). This is corroborated by the evidence from another manuscript that Demetrescu did his high-school studies at Pitești ("Câteva date anterioare anului 1910 [Some Dates Before the Year 1910]," Adventus University, Cernica, Romania, 24 June 1958, folder 8, file 3, p. 15–16). In a manuscript—that I was not able to locate—transcribed in Vasile D. Cojea, *Vechi înscrisuri advente [Old Adventist Writings]* (Bucharest: [Viață și Sănătate], [?2003]), 372, Demetrescu writes that he got the information from Margareta Aslan, Dumitru Aslan, and the two children of Dumitru Aslan.



Czechowski in publishing *L'Évangile Éternel*. “The fact that Chekowski [sic] was active in Switzerland for at least five or six years was understood by the brothers Aslan from the fact that, when they arrived in Pitești, his children were of such ages: the elder boy was five years old, and the girl was three years old.”<sup>28</sup> Demetrescu continues his narrative echoing Dumitru Aslan’s testimony. He does not detail Czechowski’s interaction with the Advent Christians as Dumitru Aslan but details Czechowski’s interaction with Fotache Tomescu. Demetrescu intersperses some moral lessons in his description regarding God’s care in providing for Czechowski’s family needs.<sup>29</sup> Demetrescu ends his account of Czechowski’s life on a positive note:

Although he brought a completely unfamiliar doctrine, the work of Chekowski [sic] and his wife was blessed from the beginning in Pitești. In addition to the two Aslan brothers—Toma and Mitică—their older immediate brother, Tache, was also won over, along with the wives of all three and several other souls, totaling around ten at first, and soon after even 15 souls. Toma and Mitică were baptized by Chekowski [sic] into the faith of the Holy Gospel soon in the year 1870. Their brother, Tache, and his wife, Olga, were baptized two years later.

The foundation of the work had been laid. Chekowski worked in Pitești for over two years, until the year 1872–1873. After that, he went to Vienna, where he soon passed away.<sup>30</sup>

Demetrescu’s manuscript closely aligns with Dumitru Aslan’s narrative, serving as a valuable source despite Demetrescu not being a direct witness. He had acquaintance with members of the Aslan family who had interactions with Czechowski. Interestingly, Demetrescu’s account seems to have become somewhat standard,

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<sup>28</sup> [Demetrescu,] “Primele începuturi,” 11.

<sup>29</sup> [Demetrescu,] “Primele începuturi,” 12.

<sup>30</sup> [Demetrescu,] “Primele începuturi,” 12.

as evidenced by its inclusion in Jacques Frei's compilation of documents in 1971, albeit in an abbreviated form.<sup>31</sup>

### **Gheorghe Graur's Project**

There is no evidence that Gheorghe Graur was aware of the testimony written by Dumitru G. Aslan. He knew of material Jacques Frei published in *Advent Echo* in 1972.<sup>32</sup> However, Graur points out that Frei does not provide a comprehensive account. In the manuscript that served as the foundation for his posthumous book, Graur outlines his sources before presenting the information:<sup>33</sup>

The details {described} were provided to me by Brother Stefan Demetrescu, {(an ethnic Romanian pioneer of the Advent Message in Romania)}; {information that} he had from Professor {Ion} Dumitriu, the first presbyter of the first Adventist Community in Bucharest ... [who] had learned the details about Czechowsky [sic], from Brother Toma Aslan, his {earlier} friend, and the one who had converted him to Adventism; and Brother Toma Aslan,

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<sup>31</sup> Jacques Frei, "Recueil de documents concernant Michael Belina Czechowski," 1971, 38. Frei's documents are available online on the website of Bibliothèque Alfred-Vaucher (Collonges-sous-Salève, France), <https://www.bibavaucher.net/opac/catalog/bibrecord?id=2630466013914354638>.

<sup>32</sup> For details on Frei's series of articles, see "Bibliography of Writings by or about M. B. Czechowski," in Dąbrowski and Beach, *Michał Belina Czechowski, 1818–1876*, 539.

<sup>33</sup> Margareta Graur, the daughter-in-law of Gheorghe Graur, provided me with copies of two sections from a more extensive manuscript and granted permission to incorporate them into the current research. The initial copy encompasses chapters 4–11, intended for a projected volume one, and the second copy includes chapter 16, intended for a projected volume 2. The first copy is numbered twice: once in black (starting at 48) and once in red (starting at 1). The second copy is exclusively numbered in black (except for the initial two pages). For citation purposes, I will use the volume numbers and the black page numbers (e.g., 1.48 signifies volume 1, page 48).

had learned all these particulars, directly from Brother Michael Czechowsky [sic].<sup>34</sup>

Having established his sources, Graur presents his account of Czechowski's arrival and mission to Romania.<sup>35</sup> Graur's account has several characteristics. First, Graur points out that his main source of information is Ștefan Demetrescu. Second, although he is aware that Czechowski was married and left his family in 1869,<sup>36</sup> probably wanting to protect Czechowski's reputation, Graur does not mention that Czechowski came with a wife and two children to Romania, as both Dumitru Aslan and Ștefan Demetrescu do. Third, Graur provides a physical description of Czechowski, which neither Aslan nor Demetrescu have. Fourth, Graur outlines a detailed dialogue between Czechowski and Toma Aslan. Fifth, Graur leaves the apparent impression that Czechowski left Romania in 1875 because he went to visit Italy and Switzerland.<sup>37</sup>

Apart from these aspects, Graur also mentions his surprise to read about the Warsaw symposium on Czechowski, in the *Curierul*

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<sup>34</sup> Gheorghe Graur, "Solia Adventă în România [The Adventist Message in Romania]" (unpublished manuscript, n.d.), 1.142. Graur repeats that Ștefan Demetrescu was his source regarding the Aslan-Dumitriu connection. See Graur, "Solia Adventă în România," 2.85 and 2.95. Graur focuses on establishing that Ion Dumitriu was baptized around 1885 by Toma Aslan, thereby demonstrating a direct link between Czechowski and Dumitriu. The latter subsequently introduced Petre P. Paulini and Ștefan Demetrescu to Adventism. Graur asserts that Dumitriu was a colleague of Toma Aslan at an unspecified university, receiving a publication called *Adevărul Present* [*Present Truth*], which Toma Aslan was editing (Graur, "Solia Adventă în România," 2.87–88).

<sup>35</sup> These details are summarized from Graur, "Solia Adventă în România," 1.143–152.

<sup>36</sup> Graur, "Solia Adventă în România," 1.133. Graur notes that Czechowski remained a widower with two children, likely placed under the care of their mother's relatives (Graur, "Solia Adventă în România," 1.133–134).

<sup>37</sup> Giuseppe De Meo also mentions this detail but, as he participated at the Warsaw symposium in 1976, he probably took this information from Popa, who borrowed it from Graur who, in turn, took it from Demetrescu. Giuseppe De Meo, *"Granel di sale": un secolo di storia della Chiesa Cristiana Avventista del 7° Giorno in Italia (1864–1964)* (Turin: Claudiana, 1980), 70. De Meo cites Popa on page 89.

*Adventist* report published by Dumitru Popa. He notes that Popa asked him for a copy of the “Czechowski in Romania” chapter of his book project. Graur did exactly that, “providing him with a copy of the twelve single-spaced pages, after the requested chapter, to complete the biography of Brother Czechowski through the report of the activity he carried out during the five years of ministry in Romania.”<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, finding out that Popa’s presentation was published in a book in 1979 without mentioning “Graur—the one who gathered the material and edited that chapter,”<sup>39</sup> Graur, indignant, rightfully points out that “by signing the relevant report as ‘D. Popa,’ Brother D. Popa not only committed an indiscretion but also violated editorial and journalistic ethics by not mentioning a single word about his former editor-in-chief, G. Graur, who, at his persistent insistence, handed him the material.”<sup>40</sup>

This reaction highlights the importance of meticulous care in historical research. While Graur was dedicated to indicating his sources and uncovering as many details as possible, his historical interpretations sometimes fell short, leaving some aspects of the historical context less explored or analyzed. His former editor, who in 1975 was elected Union president, attempted to address and rectify these limitations in the historical narrative.

### **Dumitru Popa’s Eclectic Approach**

Whereas in 1975 Popa was designated to write a history of Adventism in Romania,<sup>41</sup> he only realized the importance of Czechowski during the Warsaw symposium in 1976.<sup>42</sup> If Popa’s

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<sup>38</sup> Graur, “Solia Adventă în România,” 1.156.

<sup>39</sup> Graur, “Solia Adventă în România,” 1.157.

<sup>40</sup> Graur, “Solia Adventă în România,” 1.159.

<sup>41</sup> Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 35.

<sup>42</sup> Popa already mentions this in his short biography of Czechowski (a revision of the articles he published in *Curierul Adventist* between 1977 and 1979). After listening to all presentations regarding Czechowski, “It became clear to me,” writes Popa, that a history of the Adventist work in Romania could not be complete without an understanding of the biography of this amazing but controversial servant of the Gospel.” Dumitru Popa, *Pagini de istorie adventă [Pages of Advent History]* (București: n.p., 1982), 3. Cf. Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii*

presentation on Czechowski, borrowed from Graur, had a traditionalist-hagiographic style, his later work revised the content of the presentations—which he received from the symposium’s presenters—in a long series of articles about Czechowski. These were published as a book in 1982, in another book published in 1997, and included in the 2008 first volume of his history of Adventism in Romania.<sup>43</sup> This last book, where Popa presents

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*Adventiste*, 36. In 1971, Popa briefly mentions that “Mihail Czechowsky [sic], a former Polish Catholic priest, who arrived in Switzerland from America in 1864, came to Romania in the year 1870. Upon his arrival in the country, Czechowski settled in Pitești, where he held a series of religious conferences and founded the first group of Adventist believers. This group included the Aslan brothers and engineer Lucian de Prato, along with his wife Ana de Prato (born Pigueron)” (Dumitru Popa, “Biserica Adventă din România la un secol al existenței ei [The Adventist Church in Romania at a Century of Its Existence],” *Curierul Adventist*, May–June 1971, 12).

<sup>43</sup> Dumitru Popa, “Studii biografice: Mihai Belina Czechowski [Biographical Studies: Michael Belina Czechowski],” *Curierul Adventist*, January–February 1977, 8–11; “Mihai Belina Czechowski: II – Viața și activitatea sa pe continentul american (1851–1864) [Mihai Belina Czechowski: II—His Life and Activity on the American Continent (1851–1864)],” *Curierul Adventist*, March–April 1977, 5–8; “Mihai Belina Czechowski: III. Activitatea în Italia [Mihai Belina Czechowski: III. Activity in Italy],” *Curierul Adventist*, May–June 1977, 19–21; “M. B. Czechowski: IV. Activitatea sa în Elveția [M. B. Czechowski: IV. His Activity in Switzerland],” *Curierul Adventist*, September–October 1977, 9–10; “M. B. Czechowski (V): activitatea sa în Elveția (2) [M. B. Czechowski (V): His Activity in Switzerland (2)],” *Curierul Adventist*, November–December 1977, 21–23; “M. B. Czechowski: Scrisori din Ungaria [M. B. Czechowski: Letters from Hungary],” *Curierul Adventist*, January–February 1978, 16–17; “M. B. Czechowski: Scrisori Transilvane [M. B. Czechowski: Transylvanian Letters],” *Curierul Adventist*, March–April 1978, 8–9; “M. B. Czechowski: Scrisori Transilvane [M. B. Czechowski: Transylvanian Letters],” *Curierul Adventist*, May–July 1978, 19; “M. B. Czechowski: probleme familiale [M. B. Czechowski: Family Problems],” *Curierul Adventist*, July–August 1978, 22–23; “M. B. Czechowski și E. G. White [M. B. Czechowski and E. G. White],” *Curierul Adventist*, September–October 1978, 18–20; “M. B. Czechowski și E. G. White (II) [M. B. Czechowski and E. G. White (II)],” *Curierul Adventist*, November–December 1978, 20–21; “M. B. Czechowski și organizația Bisericii A. Z. Ș. [M. B. Czechowski and the S. D. A. Church

Czechowski, is divided into three parts. The first deals with Czechowski's biography, using mainly the sources from the Warsaw symposium materials. The second part presents Czechowski's work in Romania and the subsequent developments until 1900. The third part deals with the 1900–1920 period.<sup>44</sup> Popa's account follows closely the structure of Dumitru G. Aslan's testimony, embellished with details that frame Czechowski's arrival to Romania as providential.<sup>45</sup> He introduces his narrative by stating that "other valuable pieces of information were provided by persons from the Aslan family, like Grigore Aslan, son of Dumitru (Mitică) Aslan, Margareta Aslan, wife of Toma Aslan, Dumitru Aslan, Olga Aslan, wife of Tache Aslan, and also by sister Victoria Epurescu, neé Nurihanian, who was personally acquainted his wife, Margareta Aslan, and also by Elena Drăgușin, neé Hintermeier."<sup>46</sup> Whereas Popa refers to or cites parts of

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Organization],” *Curierul Adventist*, January–February 1979, 9–10; “M. B. Czechowski în România [M. B. Czechowski in Romania],” *Curierul Adventist*, March–April 1979, 15–16; “M. B. Czechowski,” *Curierul Adventist*, May–June 1979, 18, 20; “M. B. Czechowski în România [M. B. Czechowski in Romania],” *Curierul Adventist*, September–October 1979, 18–19; “M. B. Czechowski: epilog [M. B. Czechowski: Epilogue],” *Curierul Adventist*, November–December 1979, 13, 21. In all these articles, Popa uses the presentations from the symposium volume on Czechowski. In 1982 he published his series of articles as a book (Popa, *Pagini de istorie adventă*), which was later revised and enlarged (Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*). He also published details about the Aslan family, where he includes details about their interaction with Czechowski (Dumitru Popa, *Biografii ale pionierilor Bisericii advente din România [Biographies of the Pioneers of the Adventist Church in Romania]* [Bucharest: n.p., 1997]). While Popa mentions in the preface of this last book that there is a volume one published in 1995, dealing with Czechowski, I could not find such a volume. Given that the 1982 book deals with Czechowski, it might well be that Popa republished it as the first volume. One clarification is needed here: technically, the books published in 1982, 1995 and 1997 do not have an ISBN, nor a publication place.

<sup>44</sup> Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 35–38.

<sup>45</sup> Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 276–292.

<sup>46</sup> Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 355. Cf. pp. 275–276 of the same book.

Dumitru G. Aslan's testimony concerning Czechowski's story,<sup>47</sup> he cites all other individuals solely in connection to Toma G. Aslan.<sup>48</sup> Popa acknowledges that, on occasion, the information may not be accurate.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, in describing his encounter with Czechowski, Popa follows closely Graur's account and order of ideas, at times summarizing the latter's narrative or enlarging it with moral lessons or imaginative details.<sup>50</sup> The similarity between the two accounts is striking, indicating that either one copied the other or both drew from the same source. Yet, as Graur pointed out, it seems that Popa borrowed his material from Graur. There is cumulative evidence to support Graur's claim. First, Graur was working on a history of Adventism in Romania after the Communist regime removed him in 1959 from all church-related responsibilities.<sup>51</sup> This was several years before Popa wrote his first article on the beginning of the Adventist Church in Romania in 1971, where he briefly mentions Czechowski.<sup>52</sup> It was only after the 1976 Warsaw symposium that Popa began to publish his series of articles.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 274, 354, 423.

<sup>48</sup> Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 321, 367, 386, 387, 417–427.

<sup>49</sup> Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 427.

<sup>50</sup> Graur, *Istoria Bisericii Adventiste din România*, 46–53.

<sup>51</sup> Modoran, *Rezistență și compromis*, 558; [Adrian Bocăneanu] "Obituary: Gheorghe Graur," *Curierul Adventist*, October 1997, 24. Cf. Margareta Graur, preface to *Istoria Bisericii Adventiste din România*, by Graur, 13.

<sup>52</sup> Popa, "Biserica Adventă din România," 10–13.

<sup>53</sup> There is also a synthesis of a report on the development of the organization of Adventism in Romania, presented by Popa at the Romanian Union elective meeting held in December 1975, where he was elected Union president. Comitetul Uniunii [Union Committee], "Spicuiuri din Raportul Prezentat la cea de a XI-a Sesiune Ordinară a Adunării Generale Elective a Uniunii de Conferințe A. Z. Ș [Excerpts from the Report Presented at the 11th Ordinary Session of the General Elective Assembly of the SDA Conferences Union]," *Curierul Adventist*, January–February 1976, 7–10.

Second, Popa was not consistent in his usage of primary and secondary sources.<sup>54</sup> This seems to be Popa's writing style, occasionally treating secondary sources as primary ones, and often omitting reference to these secondary sources. This practice leaves the reader with the impression that Popa's narrative represents an authoritative account of events, built on primary sources.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> One of Popa's books illustrates his approach. In *Eben-Ezer* (2003), a book on the history of the Labirint Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bucharest, he borrows Graur's interview of an early Adventist woman, Anna Klör, in full. He introduces it with the words, "This is how, around 1939, Sister Klör [sic] describes her acceptance of faith" (Dumitru Popa, *Eben-Ezer* [Bucharest: Viață și Sănătate, 2003], 24) and then, for five pages, he cites an article written by Graur in 1939 with minor modifications. At the end of the material which is not marked as a citation, there is a reference in parentheses: "G. Graur, C. M. nr. 8/1939" (Gheorghe Graur, "Vă scriu vouă, tinerilor [I Write to You, Young People]," *Curierul Misionar*, vol. 19, no. 8 [1939], 9–11). The same material is reproduced in the 2008 book of Popa. But in this book, he mentions, "On April 21, 1971, as she fondly recounted these memories, Sister Klör [sic] resided in Bucharest, on Ion Nona Otescu Street, No. 29, Sector 7 (Salt Road)." Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 437. Popa's writing style gives the impression that the material he borrowed from Graur was a result of a personal interview with her. While it is possible that Popa also interviewed her, his approach seems to convey a misleading notion that Graur's material is common knowledge, readily available for any writer to appropriate.

<sup>55</sup> Similar to the previous observation comes a third. Popa is inconsistent in giving proper credit to his sources. For example, Popa criticizes Jean Vuilleumier's account of Czechowski's final years, correcting inaccuracies in the years provided by Vuilleumier. The footnote references Vuilleumier's material and an article from *World's Crisis*. Subsequently, Popa cites information from the Warsaw symposium book edited by Rajmund L. Dąbrowski and Bert B. Beach, but without explicitly stating that the information pertains to a different person (Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 192. The source is Jacques Frei-Fyon, "M. B. Czechowski in Switzerland," in Dąbrowski and Beach, *Michał Belina Czechowski, 1818–1876*, 270). This illustrates his practice of incorporating materials from the mentioned book. While Popa acknowledges using this resource for Czechowski's life (Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 44), he employs references cited by the authors as if he directly consulted them.



This apparent tendency becomes prominent when Popa argues for continuity between the Pitești group and the first believers in Bucharest. After citing Paulini's report from *Semnele Timpului*, that Czechowski's work in Pitești did not bring forth the expected results, Popa notes that "This idea is further supported by some information that appeared later in our publications. Thus, in the pages of *Curierul Misionar*, we read under the signature of Brother Gh. Graur" that "in the city of Bucharest, the Adventist message entered in the year 1902. Until then, there had not been any Adventists in Bucharest."<sup>56</sup> Popa then adduces evidence that there is continuity between Pitești and Bucharest, given that several members of the Aslan family moved to Bucharest and were part of the nucleus of the first Adventist group in the Romanian capital.<sup>57</sup> The issue with this quote is that Graur does not use the words attributed to him by Popa. Since Popa accurately cites Graur's material elsewhere,<sup>58</sup> while in a previous publication with similar content, there is no reference to Graur's article,<sup>59</sup> one might question why Popa would seek to discredit previous reports, such as Graur's, especially when the latter advocates for continuity between Pitești and Bucharest in his posthumous book.<sup>60</sup>

Popa's pursuit of crafting an authoritative account of Czechowski's mission in Romania and rectifying perceived limitations in his predecessors' work faced an ironic setback due to his reliance on Graur's material. This dependence not only compromised the originality and independence of Popa's historical perspective, but also introduced a layer of inconsistency. Moreover, Popa's tendency to align predominantly with the authors of the Warsaw symposium reveals a narrative that lacks nuanced interpretations. Rather than providing fresh insights, Popa appears to revert to a more traditional version of the history of the beginning of Adventism in Romania.

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<sup>56</sup> Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 416. Popa mistakenly refers here to Graur, "Vă scriu vouă, tinerilor," 9–11.

<sup>57</sup> Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 423–424.

<sup>58</sup> Popa, *Pagini din istoria Bisericii Adventiste*, 679.

<sup>59</sup> Popa, *Biografii ale pionierilor*, 102.

<sup>60</sup> Graur, *Istoria Bisericii Adventiste din România*, 105.

### Other Approaches

In addition to Vasile D. Cojea's efforts to transcribe and publish available manuscripts regarding Romanian Adventist history,<sup>61</sup> several other authors dealt with Czechowski's mission to Romania. Two are worth mentioning here.<sup>62</sup> First is Corneliu-Ghiocel Fitzai's dissertation (2007) published in 2018.<sup>63</sup> He mainly uses the information found in the symposium volume edited by Dąbrowski and Beach and corroborated with details from Popa; a report from Jean-David Geymet in *Revue Adventiste*; and an article from John N. Andrews in *Review and Herald*.<sup>64</sup> Fitzai does not provide new details regarding Czechowski's mission to Romania, and, at times, he is not accurate in using his sources. He mainly follows Popa's version of the narrative, embellished with an imaginary description of the Aslan family baptism and communion.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Cojea, *Vechi cărări advente*; Cojea, *Vechi înscrisuri advente*.

<sup>62</sup> Other accounts are succinct. In an article appearing in *Revue Adventiste* based on the testimony of Anna de Prato (1852–1939; neé Bitto [later Pigueron]), she mentions that in 1869 Czechowski was already in Hungary for several months, while his family of five children was scattered. From there, he went to Romania where he founded a small group of believers. Anna de Prato, "Origines du 'Sabbatisme' ou plutôt de l'Adventisme du Septième Jour en Europe," *Revue Adventiste*, 1 December 1922, 303. Cf. P[eter]. Hermann, "Studiu istoric: solia adventă în România [Historical Study: The Adventist Message in Romania]," *Gazeta Slujbașilor* [*The Workers' Gazette*] 9.7–9 (1941): 12, or Gheorghe Modoran, "Începutul mișcării adventiste de ziua a șaptea pe plan mondial și în România [The Beginning of the Seventh-day Adventist Movement Globally and in Romania]," *TheoRhēma* 3.1 (2008):175–217.

<sup>63</sup> Corneliu-Ghiocel Fitzai, *Mișcarea adventistă de ziua a șaptea din România* [*The Seventh-day Adventist Movement in Romania*], trans. Laura Maftei (Pantelimon: Viață și Sănătate, 2018).

<sup>64</sup> Popas *Biografii ale pionierilor Bisericii Adventiste din România*, vol. 1 (București: Grafix, 1995); J[ean].-D[avid]. Geymet, "Petit commencements," *Revue Adventiste*, 15 May–1 June 1922, 117–118; J[ohn]. N[evins]. Andrews, "Editorial Correspondence: Switzerland," *Review and Herald*, 23 September 1875, 92.

<sup>65</sup> Fitzai, *Mișcarea adventistă*, 203–204. The sources themselves offer minor details regarding Czechowski. For example, a notice of Andrews in his *Review and Herald* letter, dated 29 August 1875, that Czechowski

The second is Daniel-Adrian Neagu. Based on his dissertation on the history of Adventism in Romania (2013),<sup>66</sup> he wrote an article on Czechowski's heritage in Romania.<sup>67</sup> Neagu uses Demetrescu's narrative, and Dumitru Aslan's testimony published in Cojea's book.<sup>68</sup> In addition, he also researched the archives in

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"has been for several years a resident of Roumania [sic]" and that he heard that Czechowski "has recently lost the sight of one eye, and his hearing in part" thus suffering "much affliction" which, Andrews wished, "may it cause him to return to God with all his heart" (Andrews, "Editorial Correspondence: Switzerland," 92). Geymet notes that Czechowski "one day abandoned his family and went to Germany with Miss S., whom he married. Little is known of what became of him, except that he fell ill and spent the rest of his life in a Vienna hospital, suffering from cancer of the throat and haunted by the idea that it would be difficult to be forgiven" (Geymet, "Petit commencements," 117). Fitzai uses some of his sources inaccurately. For example, when citing Andrews's article, he puts the footnote at the end of a sentence that includes not just the details regarding Czechowski's partial blindness and deafness, but also that Wilhelmina Schirmer accepted to marry Czechowski and that they had two children (Fitzai, *Mișcarea adventistă*, 202). Additionally, Fitzai writes that Czechowski was attacked by a band of robbers on his way to Vienna, experienced a shock, was discovered unconscious on a street in Vienna, and passed away alone there (Fitzai, *Mișcarea adventistă*, 205). Yet, the Geymet report lacks some of these details. It is not clear whether Fitzai had other sources or he was just embellishing his narrative.

<sup>66</sup> Adrian Neagu, "Istoria Bisericii Adventiste de Ziua a Șaptea din România și impactul ei asupra societății românești 1870–1932 [The History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from Romania and Its Impact on Romanian Society 1870–1932]" (PhD diss., University of Bucharest, Romania, 2013).

<sup>67</sup> Daniel-Adrian Neagu, "The Family of Thomas Aslan and the Heritage of Mihail Belina Czechowski in Romania" (paper presented at the International Conference on the 150th Anniversary of Michał Belina-Czechowski's Return to Europe, Polish College of Theology and Humanities in Podkowa Leśna, Poland, 18–20 May 2014). I am grateful to my colleague, Łukasz Romanowski, for providing me with a copy of Neagu's paper.

<sup>68</sup> Cojea, *Vechi cărări advente*, 38–43, 310–315. He also refers to Günther [sic] Gehann, *Întreita solie în Austro-Ungaria și România 1869–1938* (Cernica, Romania: Graphé, 2008), the Romanian

Pitești for details on the Aslan family,<sup>69</sup> and the *FamilySearch* website, where he found a record in a church in Bucharest on Frieda Setha Czechowski, born on 27 October 1870, whose parents were Michael Belina and Emma Mina Czechowski.<sup>70</sup> While interacting critically with Fitzai's work, Neagu is more cautious with his sources, drawing his tentative conclusions more carefully. Nevertheless, given the lack of resources, he limits himself to providing mainly chronological details to Dumitru Aslan's testimony and concludes that Czechowski's departure to Vienna was for medical reasons.<sup>71</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The invaluable testimony provided by Dumitru G. Aslan is key to understanding Czechowski's mission in Romania. Aslan's first-hand account offers a personal perspective into the early days of Adventism in Romania, shedding light on the challenges faced by Czechowski and his successes. Demetrescu's account further strengthens the historical narrative by aligning with Aslan's witness. The convergence of these accounts adds credibility to the overall historical understanding of Czechowski's work, building a more robust and nuanced depiction of the events.

Gheorghe Graur's dedicated effort in documenting Czechowski's mission deserves commendation. His meticulous research has enriched our understanding of the development of Adventism in Romania. It is also important to recognize the unethical approach taken by Dumitru Popa in his historical account. The similarities between Popa's work and Graur's, along with evidence of material borrowing, raise questions about academic integrity and also reveal a struggle to control Romanian

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translation of Günther Gehann, *Predigt das Evangelium* (Gehann Musikverlag Kludenbach, 2001). Gehann does not offer new details on Czechowski's visit to Romania.

<sup>69</sup> Neagu, "The Family of Thomas Aslan and the Heritage of Mihail Belina Czechowski," notes 3, 7, 16.

<sup>70</sup> Neagu, "The Family of Thomas Aslan and the Heritage of Mihail Belina Czechowski," [6].

<sup>71</sup> Neagu, "The Family of Thomas Aslan and the Heritage of Mihail Belina Czechowski," [6–7].

Adventist historiography. Acknowledging this discrepancy is crucial for maintaining scholarly standards and ensuring a more accurate representation of historical events.

For future research, a multifaceted approach is needed to deepen the understanding of various aspects related to Czechowski's mission in Romania. First, given the conflicting statements regarding the year when Czechowski left Romania, finding more details about his movements between 1873 and his death would greatly benefit further research. Second, conducting further investigations into Wilhelmina, Czechowski's wife, may unveil crucial details about her role, experiences, and contributions to the mission. For example, the examination of reports from the Anglican school where she worked, or finding her grave, could provide a more complete picture of the Czechowski family's challenges and successes. Third, delving into more details about Toma Aslan is essential. Exploring his life and contributions further could provide additional perspectives on the early Adventist community in Romania and the influence of Czechowski. In this regard, establishing connections with the Union of Armenians in Romania holds promise for uncovering potential historical links and cultural insights that may enhance the broader context of Aslan's mission. Also, scrutinizing the records of the church where the Aslan family was buried could offer details about their religious affiliations, social connections, and the broader Adventist community in the region. By pursuing these avenues of research, a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of Czechowski's mission and its broader implications in Romania can be achieved.

### **Annex: Dumitru Aslan's Testimony**

A selection from Dumitru Aslan's eight-page, pencil-written testimony is provided below. In square brackets are my comments, and in curly brackets are the corrections appearing in the manuscript. The strikethrough text is also crossed out in the manuscript, and the ellipses appearing do not replace any omission but indicate an intentional interruption of the train of thought.

[The first three pages present details about Dumitru G. Aslan's father and brother. Toward the end of the third page, he gives details about Czechowski]

While we were searching {Toma and Mitică} for a brighter light, suddenly a new person appeared in our shop, asking for *tapi[s]* in French, meaning furniture fabric. He recommended himself as Belina H. Checovsky [sic], a French language professor. [p. 4] In the year 1870, we asked him to come and give us French lessons. Although Brother Toma knew French well, he still saw something mystical in Checovsky [sic]. His inner spirit told him that this man was a messenger of God. On that same evening, he arrived at 8:30 as agreed—8:30–9:30—but sometimes stayed until 2 or 3 in the morning. The first lesson was the “Eternal Gospel,” beginning with the vision of Daniel Nabogodon [apparently unfinished word for Nabucodonosor, or Nebuchadnezzar]. He had left Switzerland for Vienna, where he met a boyar [member of the old aristocracy in Romania] named Fotache Tomescu who promised to help him open a factory for asphalted objects and bricks, articles that Checovsky knew how to manufacture in America. Coming to Pitești, the boyar changed his mind and did not fulfill his promise. Poor Checovsky [sic] was left to chance. His belongings, bed, and chairs, were on the way, following him to Pitești. He had three more persons with him: his wife, Eliza Checowscha [sic], and two children, Eli and Seta. He became a French teacher. What could the man do? He was starving. He found a few clients, including us. When his baggage arrived, we gave him money to retrieve it. The bed and chairs were worth less than what we paid for the transport from Vienna to Pitești. He stayed in Pitești for 2 years from 1870 to 1872, during which we formed a group with about 10–15 adherents, some of whom were sadly destitute [the text is not clear; or, *some of whom resorted to begging*].

Chehovsky [sic] had stayed in Switzerland for several years, where he got acquainted and married Eliza, a former teacher and a lady very [p. 5] cultured. They had two children in Switzerland. Also, in Switzerland, he published the “Eternal Gospel,” a paper in the French language. Evidence that he stayed in Switzerland for several years is that when he came to Vienna and then Pitești, the children were older; the girl was 3 years old, and the boy was about 5 years old, proving that he stayed in Switzerland for 5–6 years.

I heard something whispered in my ear. I don’t remember from whom or how. But it seemed to be directly from his own mouth. He was sent from America by the Seventh-day Adventists to Europe, choosing Switzerland, Bazel, the city of Bazel [sic], as the center. He was paid v. well. On the way, he met a 7th-day Adventist missionary. That’s when he began to preach on the 7th day as well. After some time, the 1st-day Adventists, upon hearing that Checovski [sic] was preaching on the 7th day, cut his (portion) pay. Upon learning that a 7th-day Adventist church (assembly) had formed in Switzerland, the 7th-day Adventists also sent a missionary. When he arrived, he intrigued and, the little he was given was suspended, leaving him almost starving. Then he decided to go to Vienna.

It is clear that in Vienna, he could not make significant conquests, so he had to come to Pitești. But here is the mystery... Because God leads and watches over His own under the mystery of His foreknowledge. The world sees and does not understand the essence of this Divine work... Because it is the deepest mystery, which it [the world] denies to nothingness! After 2 years and some months in Pitești, he left for Vienna, where he died.

[p. 6] [I skip the half-page where Dumitru G. Aslan presents (a) the support provided to Czechowski’s wife, Eliza, in her husband’s absence, (b) the visit of colporteurs, one of whom indicated a job for Eliza in Bucharest at the Anglican School; (c) the mentioning of Eliza dying in Bucharest, and that no details could be found about the children]

We followed on with the faith. Toma and I were baptized by Brother Checovsky [sic] in the year 1870. Our older brother, Tache, who passed away 12 years ago and is married to Olga from R. Vâlcea, was baptized after 2 years. I think it was in the year 1874 {1884} or 1875. We were visited by missionary brothers from America, namely, Buttler [sic], who was then the president of the

Adventists in America, Andrews, and Miss Edith. Edith was an interpreter. She knew both English and French. Butler and Andrews only knew English, and Edith translated into French, while Brother Toma translated into Romanian. We invited all our acquaintances. [p. 7] They stayed for about 2–3 weeks. Brother Conradi also came in passing. He traveled throughout Europe, assessing the situation of all Adventist assemblies. Later, around the year 1880–1881 {1885–1886}, Brother A. C. Bourdeau came. He stayed for several months with us in Pitești. We had gatherings, as well as large meetings, in one of our shops that was empty at the time. We made benches like in school. At 8 in the evening, the room was full. Bourdeau spoke in French and Brother Toma {in} Romanian.

[The testimony continues for one and a half pages with details less relevant to the current research].



## **Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians (ASDAL)**

**by  
Keith Clouten**

The Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians (ASDAL) is an international organization for individuals interested in SDA librarianship. Since its inception in 1981, ASDAL has functioned as an active and energetic professional association, enhancing communication between SDA libraries, and promoting and operating library services to SDA institutions worldwide. The association holds an annual conference, publishes a newsletter as well as a professional journal, awards the D. Glenn Hilts Scholarship, and is a cosponsor of the Adventist Digital Library. ASDAL also maintains a Listserv for its members.

*ASDAL Action* began publication in 1982 as a simple newsletter, but has developed into a colorful online magazine with feature articles, preconference information, postconference reports, reviews of new publications, job openings, and news briefs.

The annual conference, meeting for five to seven days, is held on a different college or university campus each year. It functions as ASDAL's annual business meeting, receiving reports from officers and committees, acting on recommendations, and planning new programs or services. Professional papers and guest presentations are interspersed with tours to local cultural institutions and tourist sites. Until 2014, preconferences or postconferences typically focused on SDA library resources and topics of interest to school and academy librarians. Beginning in 2015, programming organized by the Archives and Records Management Steering Committee (ARMS) and the Adventist

Resources Steering Committee (ARS) has been integrated into the main conference schedule.

In 2016 ASDAL launched the *Journal of Adventist Libraries and Archives* (JALA). This peer-reviewed online journal publishes both research and theoretical articles that address issues common to SDA libraries and archives. It aims to foster and enrich professional practice in these two distinct but conceptually related services to the SDA Church.

ASDAL continues to contribute significantly to the academic quality of SDA college and university programs internationally. Membership in library networks and shared access to important databases magnifies the association's value to the church's educational institutions.

## **History**

The earliest known meeting of SDA librarians occurred at Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University) in February 1951.<sup>1</sup> At intervals from the 1950s through the 1970s, librarians from North American SDA colleges and universities met formally, always in conjunction with sessions or conventions of church academics. Besides giving opportunity for librarians to get to know each other, these meetings allowed them to discuss a variety of current professional issues—collection development, library instruction for students, building and space needs, censorship of library materials, conversion of collections from the Dewey Decimal System to the Library of Congress Classification, training of academy librarians, and areas of cooperation. Between the late 1950s and 1980 a *SDA Library Newsletter* was produced irregularly and circulated mainly within North America.

In June 1981 nearly forty librarians, representing eight SDA colleges and universities across North America, met independently at Pacific Union College in California. In response to a felt need for a professional association, the group voted ASDAL into existence, with Lawrence Onsager, then library director at Union College, as its first president. The first issue of *ASDAL Action* was produced in January 1982, and the first annual conference was held in the

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey Brenneise, "Meetings of SDA Professional Librarians Prior to the Formation of ASDAL," *ASDAL Action* 11, no. 2 (Winter 1992).

summer of 1982 at Columbia Union College (now Columbia Adventist University).<sup>2</sup>

### **Access to Periodical Content**

Before the advent of today's information and communication technologies, librarians struggled with the challenge of providing access to the content of SDA periodicals for students and researchers. As early as the 1930s and 1940s, two librarians, Theofield G. Weis at Washington Missionary College (now Columbia Adventist University) and D. Glenn Hilts at La Sierra College (now La Sierra University), created their own card indexes to selected SDA periodicals, but their potentially valuable indexes were not accessible beyond their respective campuses. A stint at cooperative indexing, involving distribution of carbon copies from a central office, was tried in the 1960s, with limited success.

In 1971, after much discussion and unsuccessful lobbying for funds, George Summers, director of Loma Linda University libraries, initiated and largely financed the first volume of the *Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index* as a printed product. Financial issues disrupted production until June 1981, when urgently needed support for the *Index* became the main agenda item for the foundation meeting of ASDAL at Pacific Union College. With energy and determination the new organization addressed the financial crisis, securing an initial budget from the SDA General Conference. In 1993, production of the *Index*, now managed by ASDAL, was moved from Loma Linda University to Andrews University. The *Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index* continues to be a valuable research tool, now as an online database with links to the full text of articles in several SDA journals.<sup>3</sup>

### **Adventist Resources Steering Committee (ARS)**

Of special relevance for ASDAL is the collection and preservation of SDA publications, in both print and digital

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<sup>2</sup> *ASDAL Action*: 25th Anniversary Commemorative Issue 25, no. 1 (Summer 2005).

<sup>3</sup> "History of the SDA Periodical Index": Papers presented at the 21st ASDAL Conference at Pacific Union College, June 2001 (Part 1, 1932–1971, by Marilyn Crane; Part 2, 1971–2001, by Keith Clouten).

formats, and making them accessible to anyone anywhere. This last aspect involves identifying, describing, and classifying the items so that they may be effectively organized, stored, retrieved, and accessed by users. Beginning in 2015, an Adventist Resources Steering Committee has provided programming as part of the ASDAL conference.

From 1983 the annual conference included a preconference or section committed to issues and questions regarding SDA resources. Topics included physical preservation of materials, local collections, compilation of bibliographies, an index to obituaries, and bibliographic access to dissertations and theses. Since 2010 a major focus of ASDAL has been the creation of an Adventist Digital Library as a combined initiative of the General Conference Archives, the Ellen G. White Estate, and the Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University.

#### **ALICE (Adventist Libraries Information Cooperative)**

The Adventist Libraries Information Cooperative is a service of ASDAL to provide member libraries with enhanced database access opportunities at reduced costs through collective efforts and resource sharing.

Subscription databases in a wide range of subject areas made an appearance during the 1980s, first utilizing the compact-disc format, but quickly advancing to online access with the arrival of the World Wide Web. Because individual libraries were hit heavily with the rising cost of database subscriptions, ASDAL developed the concept of an SDA library network to negotiate price reductions. In 1986 ALICE was born as a consortium of libraries in North American SDA institutions, but it was soon enlarged to accommodate institutions abroad. In 2018 ALICE had 18 member libraries in eight countries, with licenses for more than a dozen relevant databases.

#### **Archives and Records Management Steering Committee (ARMS)**

In 2014 the General Conference Archives in Silver Spring, Maryland, hosted the ASDAL conference. Presentations focused on the special needs of archivists and records managers, both within libraries and church administrative units. Beginning in 2015, ASDAL conferences have included an ARMS section.

### **Automation**

Application of computer processing in SDA libraries began in the 1960s. It culminated in the installation of online public access catalogs (OPACs) during the 1980s. Library application of computer technologies was an important emphasis at several ASDAL conferences. A trend away from print to digital resources, especially for expensive print journals, became evident by the year 2000. Conversion of extensive SDA print and photographic resources to digital continues to take place at several member institutions, leading toward the creation of the Adventist Digital Library in 2016.

### **Internationalization of ASDAL**

When ASDAL launched in 1981, membership and participation was almost entirely North American. Within two years this began to change, with 10 overseas members. A committee was established in 1986 to study the needs of SDA libraries abroad; this led in 1991 to the appointment of an overseas library coordinator as an officer of ASDAL. Special services to libraries abroad included provision of books, assistance with periodical subscriptions, and cataloging assistance.

The 2000 ASDAL conference at Andrews University saw a significant attendance of librarians from Europe, Asia, and Africa. Rapid growth in the number of SDA universities in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and South America led ASDAL into becoming a truly international organization in its membership and focus. By 2019 one third of membership is outside North America, with representation from 13 countries. These members are increasingly active participants and presenters in the annual conferences.

The first international conference of ASDAL was held at Newbold College, England, in 1995. Subsequent conferences convened in Mexico (1999, Universidad de Montemorelos), Argentina (2002, Universidad Adventista del Plata), South Africa (2007, Helderberg College), Philippines (2012, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies), and England (2017, Newbold College).

### **Professional Issues**

In 1984 ASDAL appointed a standing committee on academic rank and tenure for librarians. Surveys of existing practices at North American institutions were conducted, with recommendations that all professionally qualified librarians should have faculty rank and tenure. ASDAL has also fostered a philosophy of Christian librarianship, exploring ways in which librarians can be Christlike in attitude and service to their clients.

### **Scholarships<sup>4</sup>**

The D. Glenn Hilts Scholarship is offered by ASDAL. The scholarship was established by Margarete Hilts in memory of her husband, Glenn Hilts. It was first awarded in 1985 to recognize excellence in scholarship and to encourage individuals with leadership potential to seek employment in an SDA library. To qualify, applicants must be Seventh-day Adventists in good standing who have been accepted into a library school accredited by the American Library Association, and expect to study at least one full academic year on a full-time basis. Applicants not attending a library school in the United States or Canada must be accepted into an overseas graduate library school recognized by the International Federation of Library Associations.

### **School and Academy Libraries**

SDA librarians have always been concerned with the quality of school and academy libraries. This includes meeting standards for collections and services recommended by the American Association of School Librarians (a division of the American Library Association). ASDAL established a School Libraries Section at its 1983 conference, and subsequent conferences until 2013 included a preconference or postconference for school and academy librarians.

### **Seventh-day Adventist Library Classification System**

A Classification Scheme for Adventists and Ellen White was developed at Canadian Union College (now Burman University) in 1980 as an expansion of the Library of Congress BX 6100

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<sup>4</sup> “D. Glenn Hilts Scholarship,” accessed July 3, 2019, <http://www.asdal.org/hilts-scholarship>.

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classification schedules to better accommodate materials by and about Ellen White and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. ASDAL adopted the scheme in 1984, appointing an editor and a standing committee to manage the classification, making changes, additions, and modifications as they become necessary. The classification scheme is now accessible as an online service from the ASDAL website, and is widely used by libraries in North America and abroad.<sup>5</sup>

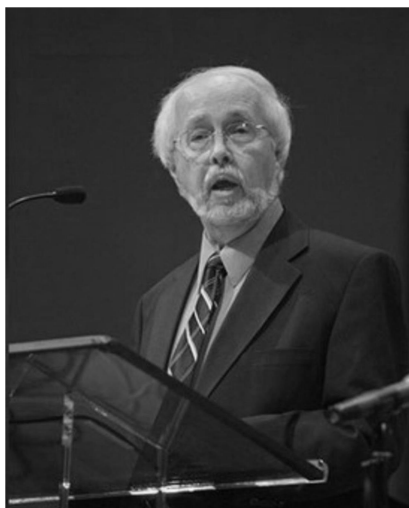
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<sup>5</sup> Felipe E. Tan, ed., *A Classification Scheme for Adventists and Ellen G. White: A Modification of the Library of Congress Religion Schedules, BX 6101–6189*, 2011 ed. (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians, 1980), accessed July 3, 2019, <https://www.asdal.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/documents/classification2011.pdf>.

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## **Berton Basil Haloviak (1937–2022)**

by  
**Gilbert M. Valentine**



Bert B. Haloviak, notable Adventist historian, served at the General Conference headquarters in the Office of Archives and Statistics (now known as the Office of Archives Statistics and Research or ASTR) for 35 years, including 12 as director. During his tenure, Haloviak pioneered the digitization of archival resources to make them more publicly accessible to researchers, authored several groundbreaking historical studies and also taught history and religion classes at Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University). In his various roles in the



Archives, he was instrumental in helping develop the systems and processes that continue to be the foundation of the work of ASTR.<sup>1</sup>

### Early Life and Education

Born in Newburgh, New York, on December 7, 1937, Bert Haloviak was the eldest child of Basil and Estella Irene (Jennings) Haloviak and brother to three sisters, Marie, Jean and Eleanor. His grandparents on his father's side migrated to the United States at the turn of the century from eastern Slovakia, occupied at the time by Russia and now known as Western Ukraine. The family settled at first in the coal mining district of Hauto, in the Pennsylvanian Appalachians, before moving to New York. His maternal grandfather, Charles R. Jennings of Burnside, New York, became an Adventist in his youth and spent 30 years as a successful literature evangelist in New York, introducing many new members to the church in Pearl River, New York, where he served as elder for many years.<sup>2</sup> His maternal grandmother, Bertha Jennings (nee Bach) was of German ancestry.<sup>3</sup>

Bert attended public elementary school and then Newburgh Free Academy for his secondary education where he excelled in mathematics and music and loved playing little league baseball for local Newburgh teams. His musical gifts, his interest in sports and his wry sense of humor made him a popular though shy student. A music prodigy, he flourished under a gifted piano teacher and at

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<sup>1</sup> "Adventist Review Remembers Leaders Who Passed Away in 2022," *ARH*, January 18, 2023, accessed August 11, 2023, <https://adventistreview.org/news/adventist-review-remembers-leaders-who-passed-away-in-2022/>.

<sup>2</sup> Bert Benson, "Charles R. Jennings obituary," *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, August 5, 1969, 22.

<sup>3</sup> "1900 US Census: Orange County NY," [https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/56188598:7602?tid=&pid=&queryId=ofb4ea9db71eb1f4045751fd185b14f4&\\_phsrc=1b6-474183&\\_phstart=successSource](https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/56188598:7602?tid=&pid=&queryId=ofb4ea9db71eb1f4045751fd185b14f4&_phsrc=1b6-474183&_phstart=successSource); "Bertha Bach Jennings," *Find A Grave*, Memorial ID 178387861, April 14, 2017, accessed August 28, 2023, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/178387861/bertha-jennings>.

the age of 13 with the encouragement of local church members, began playing for services at the local Newburgh Seventh-day Adventist church. He was soon also invited to play for services at the local Unitarian church. After reading Ellen White's *The Great Controversy* in his early teens he decided to be baptized and became an Adventist.

In 1956 Haloviak attended Atlantic Union College (AUC) on a music scholarship and majored in piano performance and history. Though he resided off campus, boarding in nearby Clinton with his Adventist grandmother, Bertha Jennings, his music interests kept him very involved in campus life. Fellow student James Londis recalls arriving on campus as a new student and, as he proceeded for the first time through the imposing entrance of the Thayer Hall Mansion men's residence, hearing the soaring music of an accomplished pianist in the ornate Walnut Room. Londis was immediately impressed by "the wiry freshman," he later recalled, because "no male my age in my scrappy neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, could play anything but chopsticks."<sup>4</sup> The two became friends and Londis recalled of his fellow student that he "had an infectious laugh, an unflappable 'coolness' about most everything, and a razor-sharp mind and wit." As a student, Haloviak excelled in recalling the details of history. "Getting an 'A' was almost impossible even for the best of us," recalled Londis, but Haloviak "swallowed those history tests without even chewing them." While he was "smart as a whip," Londis also observed that Haloviak was "soft spoken" and "quick to chuckle and give you that special twinkle in his eye."<sup>5</sup>

Disappointed during his senior year with the way a teacher had been treated with regard to employment, Haloviak quit college, decided against a career in music and instead took an appointment in the publishing activities of the Adventist evangelistic center in Times Square, New York City. Later he worked at the *New York Times* as a linotype operator.

Through his involvement in the outreach events at the evangelistic center, Bert became acquainted with Mary Bidwell, a fifth-generation Adventist of South Lancaster, Massachusetts, who

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<sup>4</sup> James Londis email to Kendra Haloviak November 16, 2022. Copy in author's possession.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

was the organist for William and Virginia Fagal's *Faith for Today* telecast. Common interests in music drew the couple together. Mary's great-great-grandparents in Johnson, Vermont, Belinda and Reuben Loveland, had been personal friends and generous supporters of Ellen and James White and had received several letters from Ellen White.<sup>6</sup>

Bert and Mary wed on June 16, 1963, while Bert was on a summer leave from service in the U.S. army. He had been drafted in September 1962 and, as a conscientious objector to combatant assignment, served in the U.S. Army Medical Corps, first in Texas and later in the Washington, D.C. area, as part of the Operation Whitecoat project.

Upon his discharge from military service in 1964, Haloviak began a decade of employment as a senior linotype operator for the *Washington Post*. Mary had secured employment as a senior administrative assistant at the General Conference, then in Takoma Park. The couple soon became widely known around the Washington, D.C. area for their keyboard duets, Mary on the organ and Bert at the piano. Each Sabbath they played for Adventist worship services accompanying innumerable soloists and choirs. For many years Mary also played for a Lutheran church's Sunday service. Throughout their lives they were also sought after by Adventist couples desiring them to provide the music at their weddings.

Bert completed his bachelor's degree in history at Columbia Union College in 1967 and a master's degree in history from the University of Maryland in 1974. During these years of deep involvement in their local churches, first at Sligo and then at Beltsville, two children arrived to enlarge the family, a daughter, Kendra, in December 1966, and a son, Brent, in December 1969. Besides cultivating in his children a keen interest in baseball, a pastime he inherited from his father, Haloviak also encouraged a family interest in the treasured stamp collection that he started in his teen years.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Ellen White Letters and Manuscripts with Annotations: 1845-1859*, Vol. 1, ed. Timothy Poirier (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2014) 246-251, 263-267, 274 -276, 311. See also "Loveland, Reuben (1807-1898) and Belinda (Boutwell) (1812-1906)," *The Ellen. G. White Encyclopedia*, eds Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald. 2013) 452.

### **Church Archivist**

In 1975 Haloviak was called to the Department of Archives and Statistics of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists where he initially took on the role of research assistant under archivist F. Donald Yost. As well as helping organize the archival materials, his role required him to undertake research projects for church officials and various church agencies leading to his authorship of more than 30 substantial studies or commissioned reports. He would eventually serve at the Adventist world headquarters for 35 years, becoming Director of Archives and Statistics in 1998 following the leadership of William Cash. As director, Haloviak was responsible for managing the rapidly growing collection of archival materials as well as overseeing the publication of the annual *Seventh-day Adventist Church Yearbook* (1,100 pages in 1998), and the annual statistical reports for the church. A large part of Haloviak's archival work also involved helping a growing number of scholars from the church's expanding graduate studies programs access the collection for their research. He assisted many doctoral students researching for their dissertations as well as other researchers utilizing the archives for their individual projects. His familiarity with denominational documentary sources made him an invaluable resource and guide for Adventist historians.

Church leader Reinder Bruinsma, for example, who undertook doctoral research on Adventist relationships with Roman Catholics while serving as secretary of the Trans-European Division, recalled that Haloviak's "phenomenal knowledge of the church's past" enabled him to readily access materials, some not yet catalogued, that facilitated his research.<sup>7</sup> Bruinsma recalled Haloviak handing to him a large box he called "my 666 box" with the assurance that "there's bound to be something of your liking."<sup>8</sup> Bruinsma found that indeed, the files contained much that was helpful. Norwegian Terje Johannessen, pursuing research on the fifth person to serve as General Conference president, Ole

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<sup>7</sup> Alex Aamodt, "Bert Haloviak, Renowned Archivist and Adventist Scholar Dies at 84" *Spectrum*, October 19, 2022, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://spectrummagazine.org/news/2022/bert-haloviak-renowned-archivist-and-adventist-scholar-dies-84>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

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Olsen, recalls Haloviak handing him three large boxes in which he found letters written in the Norwegian language that were of large historical significance and immensely helpful to his project. The discovery led to involuntary loud whoops of joy. Haloviak spent the next three hours discussing with Johannessen the joy and the importance of his discovery.<sup>9</sup> Ever curious, Haloviak genuinely enjoyed and shared in the enthusiasm of his visiting researchers delighting in the discovery of new materials, new insights, and new perspectives. Researchers found his enthusiastic engagement with their projects to be thoroughly contagious. Historian Michael Campbell remembers interacting with Haloviak at the beginning of Campbell's scholarly career. "He guided me through the research process, helping me to locate historical documents and whetting my appetite for research—he even suggested writing an article, one of my first." Infused with Haloviak's passion for Adventist history and enthused by his skill in "historical sleuthing" Campbell observed, "I will always be profoundly grateful for his influence in my life that encouraged me to pursue a vocation of preserving and promoting our Adventist past."<sup>10</sup>

Much of Haloviak's work during his early years in the church's archives focused on appropriately organizing the archival materials. Beyond this, he provided a distinguished contribution to the church by pioneering the development of internet access to the church's archival sources, making 1.5 million digitized pages available online. To achieve this, he created four websites for accessing the content: [adventistarchives.org](http://adventistarchives.org), [adventistyearbook.org](http://adventistyearbook.org), [adventistdirectory.org](http://adventistdirectory.org) and [adventiststatistics.org](http://adventiststatistics.org). This was "no easy feat," observed David Trim, who succeeded Haloviak as ASTR director in 2010, for it "required patience, perseverance, and dedication." Haloviak's adoption of optical character recognition technology, noted Trim, enabled researchers to search church records by keyword for the first time, providing "an immense boon" to Adventist scholarship.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Terje Johannessen email to Gilbert Valentine September 1, 2022. Copy in author's possession.

<sup>10</sup> Aamodt, "Bert Haloviak."

<sup>11</sup> "Adventist Review Remembers Leaders Who Passed Away in 2022."

## **Historian**

As a widely respected Adventist historian, Haloviak also served as an adjunct professor at Columbia Union College regularly teaching classes in Adventist history and on the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation which involved the historicist approach to interpretation. Students appreciated his spirituality and humor in the classroom. A deeper understanding of righteousness by faith during the late 1970s proved transformative for Haloviak's theological perspective significantly shaping his life and work thereafter. He became known for his advocacy of "the gospel."

Haloviak authored numerous important public contributions to the field of Adventist studies. His groundbreaking analysis of the 1919 Bible Conference, for example, was the first scholarly study of the recently re-discovered transcripts of the conference. It has been widely cited.<sup>12</sup> In 1980 he undertook an authoritative scholarly analysis of the writings of A. F. Ballenger for the Glacier View Sanctuary Review Conference that took place in Colorado in August of that year.<sup>13</sup> In the late 1980s, in connection with the centennial of the historic 1888 Minneapolis Conference, Haloviak wrote extensively on the theological and contextual issues surrounding the watershed event.<sup>14</sup> He believed that his most

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<sup>12</sup> "In the Shadow of the 'Daily': Background and Aftermath of the 1919 Bible and History Teachers' Conference," paper presented at the Adventist Society for Religious Studies, New York, NY, November 14, 1979, full text at SDAnet, accessed August 29, 2023, <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/books/1919bc/hal-o.htm>.

Abridged version: Bert Haloviak with Gary Land, "Ellen White and Doctrinal Conflict: Context of the 1919 Bible Conference," *Spectrum* 12, no. 4 (June 1982): 19-34.

<sup>13</sup> "Pioneers, Pantheists. And Progressives: A. F. Ballenger and Divergent Paths to the Sanctuary," June 1980, ASTR Online Archives/Resources/Other Resources/Archives, Statistics, and Research: research papers and reports, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Resources/Papers/Ast1980.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Bert Haloviak, "A Time of Opportunity to Reaffirm Justification by Faith," *ARH*, October 20, 1988, 6-8. See also "After Minneapolis, 1889 - 1899: Three Views of Salvation," Unpublished, 1988; "Three Paths to

significant documentary discovery was a set of previously unknown, fully transcribed camp meeting sermons by Alonzo T. Jones on the subject of Righteousness by Faith published in a Kansas newspaper, *The Topeka Daily Capital*, May 2-27, 1889. He saw that the discovery provided important new insights into the soteriological debates generated at the controversial 1888 conference.<sup>15</sup> In addition, Haloviak was among the first to realize the major significance of the Christian Connection movement for Seventh-day Adventist history and the first to explore the implications of this important aspect of the nineteenth century context in which the church originated.<sup>16</sup> He also wrote a number of frequently cited studies on the church's organizational development. After researching the involvement of women as licensed ministers in early Adventism, Haloviak became a passionate supporter of a wider role for women in Adventist ministry and wrote extensively on the topic and on the tangled history of women's ordination.<sup>17</sup> His report on the influence of

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Minneapolis: The Adventist Struggle for Righteousness," Unpublished, 1988. Copies in possession of the author.

<sup>15</sup> Haloviak wrote up the report of this discovery and its implications in his incomplete manuscript, "From Righteousness to Holy Flesh: Judgement at Minneapolis," [1983] 39, 40, ASTR Online Archives/Resources/Other Resources/Archives, Statistics, and Research: research papers and reports, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Resources/Papers/JAM1987.pdf>; see also <https://www.adventistarchives.org/from-righteousness-to-holy-flesh.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> "Some Great Connexions: Our Seventh-day Adventist Heritage from the Christian Church," May 1994, ASTR Online Archives/Conferences and Seminars/Other Conferences/Unspecified Conferences, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/conferences/Docs/UnspecifiedConferences/SomeGreatConnexions.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> See for example, Bert Haloviak, "Ellen White Endorsed Adventist Women Ministers," *Spectrum* 19, no. 5 (July 1985): 33-38; "The Adventist Heritage Calls for Ordination of Women," *Spectrum* 16, no. 3 (Summer 1985): 52-60; "Ellen White, The Australasian Ministers and the Role of Women Preachers," *Spectrum* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 61-67.

United States taxation policy on Adventist theology and practice regarding the ordination of women had a significant impact.<sup>18</sup>

### **Final Years**

In 2011, following his retirement, Haloviak and his wife moved to Riverside, California, to live near their children and grandchildren. They became involved in the Azure Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church, with Bert leading out in a Wednesday morning Bible study and Mary providing musical accompaniment for the song service. In 2015 Bert was awarded the Charles Weniger Award for Excellence in recognition of his contribution to the work of the church and his studies in Adventist History.

Haloviak lived with rheumatoid arthritis since his 60s and in his later years was diagnosed with a severe lung disease that increasingly restricted his movement. Still, he found joy in local church Bible study groups and various research projects, in classical music concerts, in his stamp collection and in the activities of his family. He died in Riverside, California, on October 18, 2022. The funeral service was conducted at Azure Hills church and he was interred in the Montecito Cemetery, Colton, California.

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<sup>18</sup> Bert Haloviak, "The Pit Dug for Women Ministers," *Spectrum* 40, no. 4 (Fall 2012): 35-38. See also "The Internal Revenue Service and the Redefinition of Adventist Ministry," *Adventist Today*, May-June 1996, 12-15.



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## **Emmett Kaiser Vande Vere (1904–1989)**

**by**  
**Brian E. Strayer**



Emmett Kaiser Vande Vere was a historian, author, educational administrator, history professor, historical consultant to university presidents, and promoter of the narrative interpretation of Adventist history.

### **Early Life**

Emmett Kaiser Vande Vere was born on May 2, 1904, in Hennepin County, Minnesota, to Adventist parents Charles Vande Vere, a machinist, and Dorothea K. Vande Vere, a housewife. In

1918 at the age of fourteen, he was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>1</sup> He completed the elementary grades in Hutchinson, Minnesota, and then enrolled at Maplewood Academy (1918-1922) in Maple Plain, Minnesota, receiving his diploma in May 1922.

Vande Vere entered Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1923 and majored in history with minors in German, English, education, and religion. He earned top grades in all his courses except typing and gym. In June 1927 he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in history. In 1928 Emmett married Margarete Carter Hayes, a graduate of the Music Conservatory at Union College. They had one child, Wayne Elmer Vande Vere.

### **Academy Teaching and Graduate Studies**

From 1927 to 1932 Vande Vere served as dean of boys and history teacher at Plainview Academy in Plainview, South Dakota. In 1932 the family moved to Hutchinson, Minnesota, where Emmett was history teacher (1932–1941) and acting principal (1940–1941) at Maplewood Academy while taking graduate courses in American and European history at the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis (1937–1939). In 1939–1940 he taught history and political science courses at Union College while pursuing his Master of Arts degree in history at the University of Nebraska, completed in the summer of 1941. His master's thesis was titled "Medical Service in the Union Army, 1861–1865."

That fall the Vande Veres moved to Walla Walla, Washington, where Emmett was a history teacher and principal at Walla Walla College Academy (1941–1943) and then a history and Bible teacher at Auburn Academy (1943–1947) in Auburn, Washington. During this time he also took advanced coursework at the University of Washington in Seattle. He graduated in 1948 with a Doctor of Philosophy degree in history and a minor in political science. His dissertation was titled "History of Irrigation in Washington."

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<sup>1</sup> Emmett K. Vande Vere Biographic Information File, Andrews University Archives, Center for Adventist Research (hereafter cited as CAR), James White Library, Andrews University.

### **College Professor and Author**

Before completing his dissertation, however, Vande Vere accepted a faculty position at Emmanuel Missionary College (EMC) in Berrien Springs, Michigan, where he became chair of the Department of History and Political Science in 1947. He taught courses in Adventist, United States, and American frontier history and continued to serve as department chair until 1963, when the institution was expanded and renamed Andrews University (AU). He remained on the history faculty at Andrews until 1980. During his 33 years at EMC–AU (1947–1980), Vande Vere taught courses year-round except for short leaves of absence during the summer of 1948 (to complete his PhD degree), the summer of 1960 (to accompany a Reformation lands tour), and the winter quarter in 1970 (to work on writing the history of the university).

He was also active in the American Historical Association, the American Society of Church History, the History Teachers' Council (of which he served as chair in 1954 and secretary in 1958), and the National Education Association, and he read papers at their conferences. The titles of his presentations indicate the wide range of his research: "Water or Your Life" (1950); "Physiological Reform" (1954); "Early Educational Reform" (1955); "Early Sabbath Reform" (1956); "The Career of Dr. John H. Kellogg" (1958); "A Theology of History" (1962); and "The Civil War: An Interpretation" (1962).

### **Historian of Adventism**

By the late 1960s, however, Vande Vere began focusing his attention on Adventist history. His major works, published by Southern Publishing Association, included *The Wisdom Seekers* (1972), a history of Andrews University; *Windows* (1974), a collection of readings in Adventist history; and *Rugged Heart* (1979), a biography of George I. Butler. Between 1972 and 1982 he wrote several articles in the *Review and Herald* and a lengthy series on Adventist history in the *Lake Union Herald*.

### **Teaching Style**

As a professor, Vande Vere preferred narrative history. He filled his lectures with anecdotes, stories, and humor. His quiz questions were often based on riddles (example: What institution, like an octopus, spread its tentacles across the U.S. after the Civil War? answer: the railroads). In addition to teaching and writing,

Vande Vere served as a historical consultant for university presidents Floyd Rittenhouse, Richard Hammill, and Joseph Smoot; History department chair Richard Schwarz (who called him the Dean of Adventist Historians), and archivist Louise Dederen. During his tenure Vande Vere supported adding faculty in Middle Eastern, African, and Asian history; increasing the department's library budget to \$6,000; offering a course in Adventist Church history; reimbursing faculty who had paid for their own doctorates; restoring Founders' Day celebrations; and preserving rare Adventist artifacts. He also suggested in 1959 that the campus church be called Pioneer Memorial church, which it is to this day.

### **Later Life**

During the 1970s Vande Vere taught part time, giving greater attention to his writing. Visitors to the Vande Vere home at 108 Rose Drive often saw him typing his manuscripts on a manual typewriter using only his two index fingers. In June 1980 he and Margarete retired to live in Ooltewah, Tennessee, near their son, Wayne Vande Vere. In December 1982 Emmett and Margarete gave \$5,000 to establish the Vande Vere Endowed Scholarship in History to benefit history graduate students at Andrews University. Emmett K. Vande Vere died on August 23, 1989, at age 85 in Collegedale, Tennessee.

### **Contributions**

Emmett K. Vande Vere's contributions to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and to the profession of history in general include his impact on hundreds of academy students, history majors, and history graduate students he taught at six Adventist educational institutions. Many of those students would themselves go on to teach history in both secondary and higher education around the world.<sup>2</sup>

He advanced scholarship in Adventist history with the many articles and three books that he wrote promoting the narrative interpretation of that history and in the boxes of rare Adventist source materials he donated (and persuaded others to donate) to the Adventist Heritage Room at Andrews University. In frequent

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<sup>2</sup> Emmett K. Vande Vere to Joseph Smooth, April 11, 1983, CAR.

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letters to Vande Vere, Richard Hammill thanked him for his “efficient and dedicated service,”<sup>3</sup> his “effective and creative life,”<sup>4</sup> and the “good influence you have exerted in the lives of other people,” and affirmed that the “contribution you have made to the university and to these young people is indeed a significant one.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Hammill to Emmett K. Vande Vere, March 19, 1963, CAR.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Hammill to Emmett K. Vande Vere, May 18, 1970, CAR.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## **Book Reviews**

Poirier, Timothy L. (ed.), Stanley Hickerson and Denis Kaiser, annotators. *The Ellen G. White Letters & Manuscripts with Annotations, 1860-1863*. Volume 2. Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald, 2024. 1152 pp.

This volume represents the second release by the Ellen G. White Estate of an annotated edition of Ellen White's previously unpublished letters and manuscripts, covering the years from 1860-1863. Timothy L. Poirier, archivist and vice-director of the Ellen G. White Estate, continued as primary editor for this volume. As indicated in the book's introduction, "this series marks the first effort to publish in chronological order all of Ellen White's previously unpublished writings. . . Nor have they previously appeared with historical annotations providing the reader with basic information about the persons addressed and issues raised" (12). The substantial efforts involved in this process resulted in a ten-year span of time between the release of volume 1 in 2014 and the publication of this volume in 2024. While some initial contributions were made by Roland Karlman, annotator for volume 1, Stanley D. Hickerson, longtime pastor and Adventist historian with a particular focus on Adventist history in Michigan (the primary location for most of the White's activities during this period), took primary responsibility for the preparation of this volume. However, due to his untimely death in 2016 (early in the process), the annotation work for this volume was completed by Denis Kaiser, associate professor of Church History at Andrews University, who had worked with Hickerson on the project prior to his death.

Following an introduction to the volume by Merlin Burt (11-12), a series of introductory articles provide background for the letters of this time period. The first essay is a biographical summary of Ellen White's life during the time of the volume by Denis Kaiser (13-33). This essay covers the travels of the Whites,

reconstructed primarily from travel notices in the *Review and Herald*. This survey deepens the understanding of this period. The sketch also reviews major developments during the time of this volume, including church organization, navigating the Civil War, and the development of the health message along with the expanding publishing work of Ellen White. A survey of biographical resources is also presented.

Of tremendous value is a succinct list of key dates in Ellen White's life during this time, with numerous maps showing the various regions that the Whites traveled during this time (34-45). This hidden gem is one of the major strengths of this volume, visually plotting the travel schedules for the Whites during this time. Unfortunately, the table of contents does not indicate the presence of these maps. To find them without reading straight through, one would have to navigate to page 108 to find a second index for the maps and illustrations.

Next, the volume does an in-depth examination of key historical developments during the period. An essay on the struggle toward church organization is provided by Barry D. Oliver and Denis Kaiser (46-67), followed by an essay on the American Civil War and the role of Ellen White and Seventh-day Adventists in that event by Jud Lake and Kevin Burton (68-84). Finally, an essay on Ellen White's early health reform and its nineteenth-century context is provided by Wendy Jackson (85-103). These articles could be viewed as an expansion on the themes of the biographical sketch, though by different contributors, and each provides a valuable perspective on the time in which Ellen White was writing. The introductory articles conclude with an explanation of the methodology for annotation and editing for the series, along with a list of illustrations and maps, and a chronological index for the letters (104-122).

The main part of the volume is devoted to the chronological presentation of the unpublished letters and manuscripts (123-988). Each letter features, where it can be determined: dating, the location of the writing of the letter, recipient and their location, an abstract of the document's contents, along with notes for historical detail, archaic terms, biographical background, and theological explanation. These notes are of great value, and their contribution to further understanding Ellen White's letters cannot be understated. Want to know the context for what Ellen White meant when she told Harriet Smith that "you messed with Carrie"



along with who Harriet and Carrie are? It is there (153, 164). Need the context on why critics of Ellen White were referring to her as Jezebel? It's there too (179). At the same time, the notes indicate where further details could not be discovered. The annotations will frankly inform the reader that "It is not clear when Joseph Frisbie and John Andrews traveled together to Convis" (697). At the same time, in countless instances, both the time and location have been discovered through examining relevant primary sources. Variant letters have areas of difference noted and explanations of changes where possible. A particularly nice feature of this section is the inclusion of historical artifacts, including pictures, diary entries, and obituary notices, to enrich the experience of each document.

Individuals referenced in the documents, whose identity can be determined, receive overviews in the biographical sketches section (995-1105). Those with a sketch are indicated in the letters and manuscripts by the bolding of an individual's name in the text. These increase context and understanding for the individuals, their families, and major events that can be determined relative to the documents. Wherever individuals referenced have a biographical sketch occurring in the first volume, a note is given in the biographical sketches section referring them to Volume 1. The final elements of the book include a family tree (992-993), a bibliography of works cited (1106-1110), a list of the correspondence (1111), and a general index (1113-1152).

There are many resources in this volume that will facilitate the expansion of understanding of the context for the historical time period, the situations going on in the White's lives, the theological background to less clear comments, and numerous other areas. However, there are a few areas that might present some difficulties for readers. Some of these are unfortunately unavoidable for the type of academically rigorous investigation that this volume undertakes. The first challenge is that this is indisputably a scholarly work. Footnotes are detailed, and citations are many. For those unused to this type of format, navigating the information among all the documentation could occasionally pose challenges. For readers, the section on "Annotation and Editorial Methodology" (104-107) will serve as a crucial map for navigating the various notations found in the book. A second, opposite but related, challenge for readers who want to dive deeper may be the change in citation process between the footnotes in the letters and manuscripts section and the

biographical sketches. While this may have precedent in volumes of similar types, the transition from exact footnotes linked to specific words and phrases to a general list of sources for the sketch loosed from the place of their contribution to the sketch manuscript may increase the efforts of those working to retrace the process. Third, while the placement of the “Chronological Index of Ellen G. White Letters, Manuscripts, and Publications” at the beginning of the primary documents makes good sense for the reader (111-122), the placement of the “List of Illustrations and Maps” (108-109) functions more like a special table of contents for the book with a significant portion of the items referenced occurring prior to this list in the volume. This can in effect mean that the reader must jump around to several different lists to try and locate items. It may have worked better to place this list immediately after the primary “Table of Contents” at the beginning of the volume so that the reader could take advantage of it at the outset of exploring the book’s contents.

Despite these interpretive challenges, these represent minor critiques of a work that provides crucial context for the study of Ellen White's previously unpublished letters and manuscripts. This resource offers indispensable tools for both scholars and new readers seeking deeper engagement with White's early and lesser-known writings. The meticulous efforts to unpack the contextual framework surrounding each document illuminate not only White's theological understandings but also the historical milieu that shaped her thought. This contribution to Adventist scholarship will undoubtedly stimulate fresh interpretations and research directions for both established scholars and newcomers to her extensive literary corpus.

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Strayer, Brian E. *Hiram Edson: The Man and the Myth*. Westlake Village, CA: Oak and Acorn Publishing, 2023. 242 pp.

Brian Strayer, emeritus professor of History and Political Science at Andrews University, has made contributions to the historiography of Seventh-day Adventism through his biographical studies of key figures within the movement. Over the course of his academic career, Strayer has cultivated a compelling and accessible narrative style, bringing to light the lives of the sometimes lesser-known pioneers in Adventist circles such as *J. N. Loughborough: The Last of the Adventist Pioneers* (2014) and *John Byington: First General Conference President, Circuit-riding Preacher, and Radical Reformer* (2018). His most recent biographical study focuses on Hiram Edson (1806–1882), a pivotal yet understudied figure in early Adventist history. This work is especially significant given the limited availability of primary sources and the general lack of scholarly attention Edson has received. Despite these limitations, Strayer succeeds in reconstructing Edson’s life, offering a compelling account that both addresses and redresses Edson’s marginalization in Adventist historical narratives.

While Hiram Edson is often referred to within Adventist tradition for his perceived role in articulating the sanctuary doctrine following the Millerite Disappointment of 1844, essential historical and theological questions remain. What were Edson’s precise contributions to the development of the sanctuary doctrine? To what extent did he comprehend its theological implications? And what, exactly, was the nature of the revelation he reportedly received? Strayer addresses these questions by situating Edson within his historical and religious milieu and by offering a closer examination of his personal life, thereby enriching our understanding of both the man and his theological legacy.

Central to Strayer's analysis is the religious context of the Second Great Awakening in North America, which he identifies as formative for Edson's spiritual and social worldview. He argues that the revivalist ethos—marked by emotional religiosity and openness to extraordinary religious experiences—provides an essential framework for interpreting Edson's visionary claims and the reactions they provoked among his contemporaries. From the outset, Strayer suggests that while Edson's so-called cornfield vision can be better understood when viewed against the backdrop of a region steeped in revivalist fervor and open to extraordinary religious phenomena (13), it also helps to understand Edson's other sociopolitical commitments, including his abolitionist views.

A good portion of the biography (35–96) is devoted to analyzing the events of the morning of October 23, 1844, and their impact on the development of Sabbatarian Adventism. His analysis offers a nuanced interpretation that not only deepens the existing historical understanding but also invites further reflection on the significance of such formative moments in Adventist history. He explores overlooked details and alternative perspectives, and in doing so, Strayer broadens the discourse surrounding this pivotal episode, underscoring its continued relevance for contemporary Adventist identity and historiography.

One particularly noteworthy insight is Strayer's point that Edson never claimed to have experienced a vision or prophetic dream; instead, he referred to his experience as a series of "presentments" he experienced (38)—a distinction that bears important implications for understanding early Adventist spirituality, especially when contrasted with the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White, a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Another significant historiographical contribution emerges in Strayer's effort to clarify longstanding confusion surrounding Edson's cornfield experience. He traces the origins of this confusion to interpretive layers added decades later, particularly in the 1920s, through the writings of Adventist historian Arthur W. Spalding and the recollections of Edson's daughter, Viah Cross (59). By disentangling these later additions from the original historical context, Strayer advances a more accurate and carefully documented understanding of the event, thereby strengthening the foundations for future scholarly engagement with this seminal episode.

Strayer challenges prevailing assumptions by portraying Edson not as a doctrinal architect but rather as a speculative biblical thinker whose theological insights often leaned toward speculation (149, 150). While Edson certainly played a formative role in prompting early reflection on the sanctuary theme, it was O. R. L. Crosier who initially articulated the doctrine in a coherent and structured manner that later pioneers would adopt. Despite later distancing himself from some of his own theological positions, Crosier's series of articles—particularly "The Law of Moses," published in the *Day-Star*—laid the foundational framework upon which Sabbatarian Adventists would later build and refine their understanding of the sanctuary doctrine (154).

Throughout the biography, Strayer presents Edson as a complex figure: not only a man of spiritual conviction and theological interest but also a committed participant in the life and mission of the early Adventist movement. For Strayer, Edson emerges as a generous and engaged leader who contributed his time, resources, and ideas to a cause that was still in its formative stages. Yet, it is noteworthy that this volume has not been included among the fourteen titles of the *Adventist Pioneer Series* published to date. Strayer also presents some debatable interpretations, such as his assertion that "nearly all Sabbatarian Adventists were Republicans" (18), which appears to be based on a tenuous interpretation of historical evidence. His claim seems to rely primarily on a passage from *History of Ontario County*, which states, "Having been founded as the organ of the Free Soil wing of the old Whig party, the [*Ontario County*] *Times* was an active participant in the events that led to the formation of the Republican party" (251). This source, however, does not adequately support such a sweeping conclusion about the political affiliations of early Sabbatarian Adventists and may represent an interpretive overreach.

Nevertheless, Strayer's work represents a valuable contribution to Adventist historiography. By foregrounding Edson's life and legacy, the biography opens new avenues for scholarly inquiry and underscores the importance of continued, rigorous engagement with the lives of early Adventist figures. It is evident that Strayer invested considerable time in reconstructing Edson's biography, often drawing upon rare or difficult-to-access materials. His research, including extensive use of resources housed at the Center for Adventist Research at Andrews

University, highlights the importance of archival scholarship and exemplifies the dedication required to illuminate the lives of those who helped shape a movement with global reach today.

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