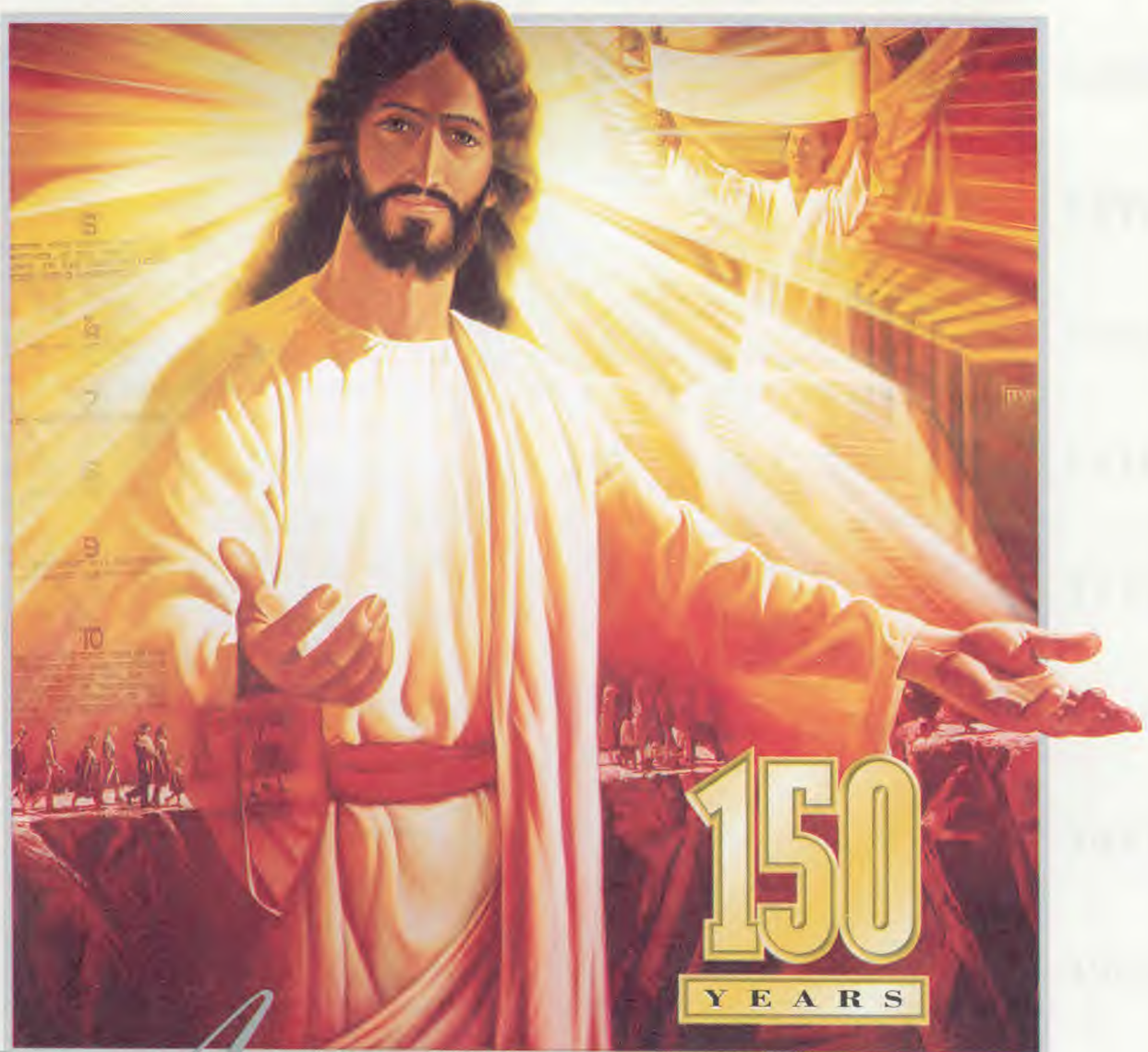


1844

SPECIAL EDITION

ADVENTIST REVIEW

WEEKLY NEWS AND INSPIRATION FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS 150-YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



A

People of Hope

1994

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The impossible

BY WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

How do you capture 150 years of miracles in 64 pages? How do you distill the spirit of a people drawn from every race under God's sun, from palaces and the hovels of ricksha pullers, from among the world's finest musicians and surgeons and also from illiterate peasants? How do you catch the dynamic of a movement of expectation and disappointment, of courage and heartache, of rugged individuals and blood and sweat and tears?

How do you tell the story of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in this year, a century and a half since 1844?

You cannot, but you can make a beginning. So let us go back to the beginning, or almost the beginning.

The year is 1848, and a small group of Adventists, a tiny remnant left from 1844 but the kernel of a new movement, are gathered in Dorchester, Massachusetts. A young woman is there, only 20 years old—Ellen Harmon White. During the course of the meeting she is taken off in vision and regains consciousness with a startling message: James White, her husband, is to start a paper. It will be small at first, but, says Ellen, it will grow and expand under the Lord's blessing until it stretches around the world like streams of light.

The group is stunned, James especially. He has no money, no home, no financial backers. Still, he believes the divine word. He labors with his hands,

gathering a few funds. He writes—every word—for a little paper: his “library” consists of a pocket Bible, *Cruden's Condensed Concordance*, and an abridged dictionary with one of its covers off.

By the summer of 1849 he has the copy ready. He seeks for a printer who will take the job on speculation—no pay until the paper goes out and readers respond with contributions. And James finds such a printer, a man not an Adventist brother but one prepared to take a chance on the earnest young preacher.

At last the paper is ready, 1,000 copies of *The Present Truth*. The little band kneels around the tracts, with supplication and tears entreating the Lord to guide each one to a receptive heart. Then James puts the papers in a carpetbag and carries them eight miles to the nearest post office.

That was our first major endeavor as Seventh-day Adventists. We didn't yet have our name—that would come 11 years later, in 1860—but James and Ellen and Joseph Bates and the others of that small group were already Sabbathkeeping Adventists.

Analyze that early endeavor, and you will see that it contains the germ of a movement. That venture, seemingly so rash, has been repeated again and again, transforming the small band into a vigorous and growing church of some 8 million members in nearly 200 countries. We are people of a dream, the impossible dream.

The elements are there—in that faith venture and ever since. In order of importance they are the Dreamer, the dream, and the dreamers.

The Dreamer

Back of all, before all, in all, and for all stands the Dreamer, Jesus Christ. He is the center of the Seventh-day Adventist movement—He alone. To Him alone belong all praise and honor, all glory and thanksgiving.

“There is no one like you, O Lord, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears,” sang King David. “And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth whose God went out to redeem a people for himself, and to make a name for yourself, and to perform great and awesome wonders . . . ?” (1 Chron. 17:20, 21, NIV).

And we sing with David as we exult at the Lord's wonders in our day. There is no God like our God, the one who came down from His throne to walk among us—Jesus, who suffered and bled and died in our place, who rose again, who as our great high priest welcomes us into the heavenly temple and who is coming back to earth. And who is like this people on whom You have lavished such kindness—not because we deserve it, but because of Your love; and for whom You have done such great things—not because of our efforts, but rather in spite of our efforts?

I call Jesus the Dreamer because that is what He was and is. He dreamed of a people saved from off this planet in rebellion,



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Dream

and left heaven to make it happen. He dreamed of a last-day message going to “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,” telling the good news about God and His offer of eternal life (Rev. 14:6-12). He dreamed of a work for Ellen and James, and Joseph Bates. And He dreams of a place on this earth for you and me, and a place in heaven at His side.

In this anniversary year some people have wondered if there’s anything to be glad about. “Why are we celebrating a disappointment?” they ask. “This ought to be a year of sorrowing that we are still here after such a long time.”

They miss the point. We’re not celebrating a disappointment, and certainly not the achievements of this worldwide movement. We celebrate the wonder and majesty of God, of Jesus our Saviour, Lord, and head of the church.

“We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history,” wrote Ellen White (*Life Sketches*, p. 196). We don’t want to forget! We want to rehearse His deeds! We want to shout for joy in worship of the One who loves the word “impossible.” When God has done such great things for us, we would be the worst of ingrates to keep silent.

The Dream

The Dreamer puts impossible dreams into the minds of men and women. He always has—throughout the Bible, from Abram leaving Ur of the Chaldees to the young man Saul struck blind on the road to Damascus so that the Lord might open his eyes to a new mission.

He put a dream into the heart of James and Ellen and the others as they knelt by those little papers. He put a dream into the heart of J. N. Loughborough, who began to preach the Advent message at age 20; and into Uriah Smith’s heart, who joined the *Review* at 21; and into Stephen Haskell’s heart, who preached his first sermon on the Second Advent at 19; and into the hearts of other young people who formed the nucleus of the new movement.

Some think of Adventists as children of disappointment, but they were not, and we are not. They were rather children of hope—a hope refined and deepened by the dashed expectations of October 22, but a hope that refused to waver or turn back, a hope built on the promise of Jesus Himself.

That hope gave birth to a dream, as the Dreamer, the object of their love and desires, gradually opened the world before their view. A dream of the everlasting gospel going to the complete

North American continent. A dream of it going beyond, to earth’s remotest bounds. A dream of a medical work to make people whole. Of education after God’s design. Of the message flying via print, radio, television, satellite, cybernetics.

Dreams, dreams, dreams. Impossible. The impossible dream.

The Dreamers

They were dreamers all, those people led of God who shaped and struggled, and built the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

And thank God, He still has dreamers! You’ll read about them in this special issue. As you read you will notice that, while the articles in a general sense move from 1844 to 1994 and beyond, the past, present, and future constantly intersect and interact. We praise God for the past and we build upon the past, but He calls us to think big, to dream His dreams today.

For we know how it will all end. We know what the ultimate dream is: “I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one ‘like a son of man’ with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand” (Rev. 14:14, NIV).

That’s why we’re a people of hope.

1844-1994

A PEOPLE OF HOPE

The Impossible Dream

October 22, 1844

A People of Prophecy

From So Small a Dream

Ellen White, Gift to the Church

Small Organization, Big Impact

Confessions of a Bible Teacher

God’s Rainbow Family

Why Are We Still Here?

The Land That Remains

How Then Should We Live?

The Future Shape of the Church

Possibilities Unlimited

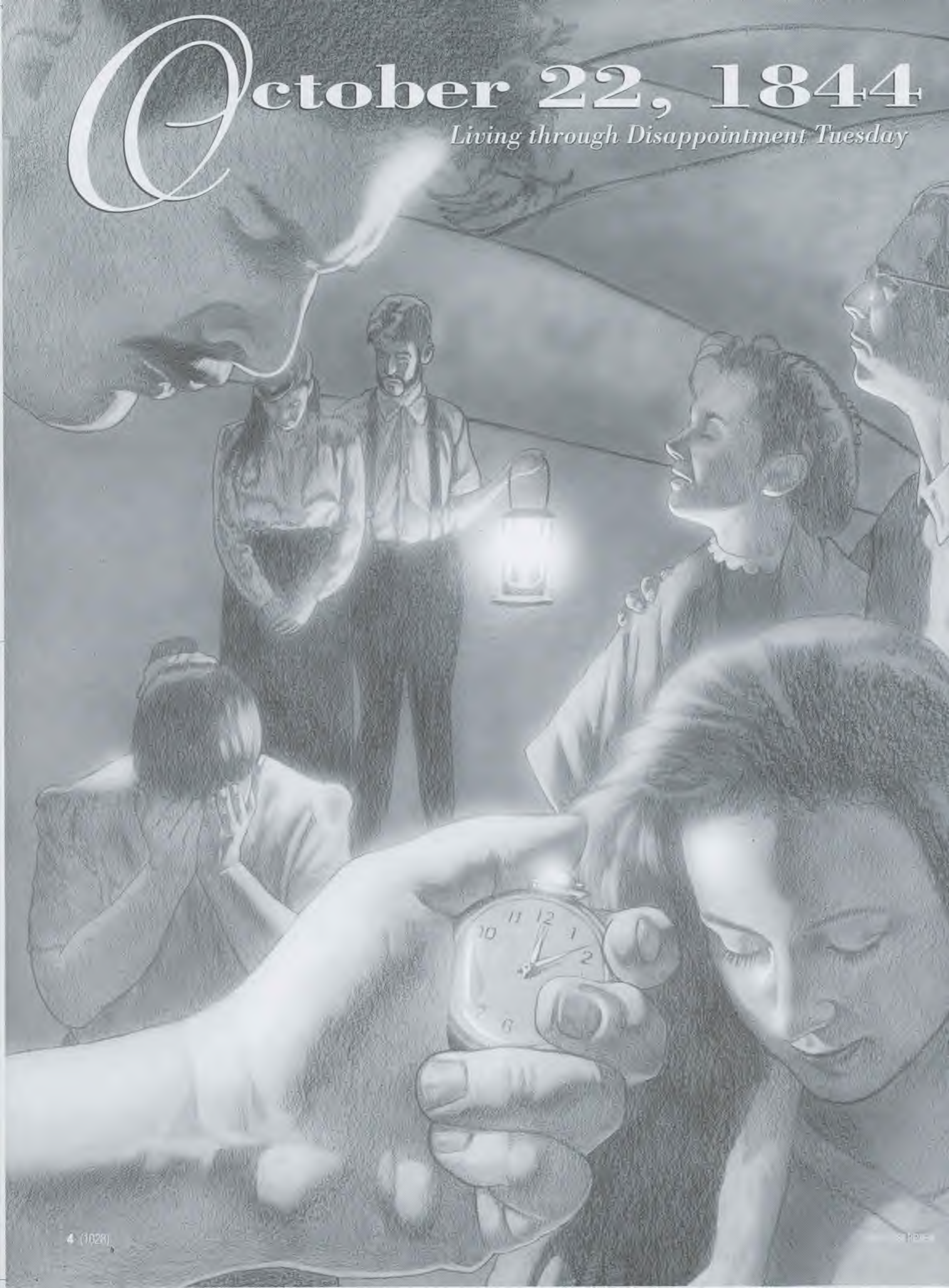
The Power of Hope

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October 22, 1844

Living through Disappointment Tuesday



Tuesday morning dawned exactly as thousands of other Tuesdays had begun before it. Yet this day—October 22, 1844—was *supposed* to be like no other Tuesday in history.

For 50,000 to 150,000 hopeful Millerites,¹ this was the anxiously awaited day when Christ would return. And by at least one estimate, another million or more of their skeptical fellow citizens² also kept an eye on the heavens that day as they wondered to themselves, *Might the Millerites be right after all?*

Although we have several eyewitness accounts recording the events leading up to October 22, curiously the Millerites appeared too busy watching and waiting to record exactly what they did that fateful Tuesday. Or might it be that by day's end their disappointment had become so painful that they just blanked out the experience from their memories?³

One youthful participant later remarked, "I remember that last day, but not as vividly as I should think I would."⁴

What we do know for sure is that Tuesday, October 22, 1844, was a typical New England autumn day. The temperature at sunrise in Concord, New Hampshire, was 42°F, though by 2:00 it stood at 58°F.⁵

Interestingly, the person who recorded this meteorological data did not record the wind and cloud conditions on October 22—it was the only day that month such information was overlooked. Possibly this individual was watching for a different cloud than those normally recorded.

The Singers Are Silent

If some Millerites were normally late risers, doubtless none of them slept in that morning! Eagerly everyone awaited the first glimpse of their returning Lord; nobody wanted to be found sleeping when Jesus returned.

In several places the Millerites stayed up all Monday night.⁶ Elsewhere, services had been held all day Monday. If ever people felt a need to worship and pray, it was then.

Describing the meeting held in Low Hampton, New York, on October 21, William Miller wrote, "The ninth day [of the seventh Jewish month] was very remarkable. We held a meeting all day and our place of worship was crowded to overflowing with anxious souls."⁷

"The last evening being the one before the great 'going out' of the Millerites, there was some anxiety in the public mind as to what and how they were preparing for this," reported a New York City newspaper. "It was generally expected that something more than ordinary display would be made at the different places of worship. The attendance thereat was pretty great."⁸

While the public may have hoped for something eccentric to occur at the Millerite meetings, rarely was such the case. In fact, very few examples of fanaticism were reported in the newspapers. Had anything unusual been going on, the generally hostile press would have certainly reported it. The newspapers were always quick to pick up any rumor about the Millerites—no matter how far-fetched.⁹

Ten days earlier William Miller had written: "There is no great expression of joy; that is, as it were, suppressed for a future occasion, when all heaven and earth will rejoice together with joy unspeakable and full of glory. There is no shouting; that, too,

is reserved for the shout from heaven. The singers are silent. They are waiting to join the angelic hosts, the choir from heaven. . . . Our meetings are all occupied with prayer, and exhortation to love and obedience."¹⁰

Very few accounts of Millerite meetings held on October 22 exist. Many years afterward, Uriah Smith recalled the meeting he and his family attended the night before: "The next day was October 22, 1844, the famous 'tenth day of the seventh month,' on which we were expecting the Lord to appear. The mob [that had lowered the tent on them the night before] left us to ourselves. Quite a number went forward in baptism."¹¹

The only contemporary eyewitness account appeared in the Cincinnati *Chronicle*. This reporter attended a meeting held Tuesday night, October 22.

"As the consummation of all terrestrial things was expected to have taken place last evening, and being desirous of seeing the effect of such belief upon its votaries at their last earthly meeting, I took the liberty . . . of being present. The assemblage, indoors and out, probably numbered 1,500 persons. If rightly informed about the capacity of the house, about 1,200 were inside. . . . There was less excitement than I expected, and a great deal more cheerfulness manifested in the countenances of the believers than could have been supposed at the hour of so great a crisis. . . ."¹²

And so the faithful gathered that memorable day, some in churches or meeting halls, while others—where such gatherings had been banned for fear of the mobs—met in private homes or orchards and

*"Is all this
but a cunningly
devised fable?"*

—Hiram Edson

BY JAMES R. NIX

groves. Each in his or her own way awaited the coming of the Lord, who would take them home to glory.

According to tradition, the Millerites living near William Miller met that day on the large outcropping of limestone, now known as Ascension Rock, situated on his farm.

Who Will Be First?

What a day that must have been! As the farmers did their chores that morning, doubtless they said to themselves, *I will never have to do this again.*

As young people brought in firewood or drew water from the well, they too thought, *How wonderful—in heaven there will be no wood to chop or water to haul.*

Mothers, cooking over hot woodstoves, thought, *Never another meal to fix! Our next one will be from the tree of life.*

Almost everything they did that day prompted the same thought: *This is the last time I will ever do this.*

All day long those expectant Adventists watched the eastern sky for the first glimpse of their returning Lord. From the very first rays of the early-morning sun, they began to watch. Higher and higher in the sky the sun rose. Still they watched. Nobody knew when during the day Christ would return. So hour after hour they watched . . . and prayed . . . and waited.

What did they talk about? Did they sing? How did they keep their children occupied all day long? Doubtless more than one mother pointed to the sky and said to her excited little ones, "Which of you will be the first to see Jesus?"

Think of the questions the children must have asked their parents and grandparents that day. "What will the cloud look

like?" "How will we know which one Jesus is in?" "When the trumpet sounds, will everyone be able to hear it?" "Will we really fly through the air?" The list of questions that were asked over and over that day could go on and on.

And they prayed. One story recounts that each time the group of hopeful Millerites knelt to pray, the thought went through their minds, *I wonder if Jesus will come before we have finished praying.*¹³ Each time, *I wonder . . .*

From early in the morning on through that seemingly endless day they watched and waited. Lower and lower the sun slipped in the western sky. Surely Jesus would come. They were absolutely positive He would not . . . could not . . . let them down. In fact, according to William Miller, "even wicked scoffers stood mute that day."¹⁴

Finally the sun went down over the horizon. By this time, nearly every child must have asked, "When is Jesus going to come? Will it be much longer?" Doubtless they were comforted with the reassurance that in the parable of the 10 virgins the bridegroom comes at midnight. Surely "Jesus will come by midnight" was repeated over and over.

But in some minds haunting questions began to gnaw away: "Could we be mistaken?" "No! No! Did He not promise over and over that He wouldn't return until midnight?" Probably many a sleepy child dozed off to dream about the bright aerial display that would awaken them shortly.

The Clock Tells the Truth

Hiram Edson recalled, "We looked for our coming Lord until the clock tolled 12 at midnight. The day had then passed and our disappointment became a certainty."¹⁵

Joseph Bates wrote, "The effect of this disappointment can be realized only by those who experienced it."¹⁶

Although Adventists today expect Jesus to return soon, never have we gone through the crushing disappointment of not having Him do so on a specific day. The promise of that morning had started out as the brightest of their whole life; the darkness of their disappointment that night now seemed about to crush them.

Hiram Edson expressed it well when he wrote, "Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept, and wept, till the day dawn.

"I mused in my own heart, saying, my Advent experience has been the richest and brightest of all my Christian experience. If this had proved a failure, what was the rest of my Christian experience worth? Has the Bible proved a failure? Is there no God—no heaven—no golden city—no Paradise? Is all this but a cunningly devised fable?"¹⁷

Besides dealing with their own grief and uncertainty, those disappointed Adventists once more had to put up with the scoffers. Describing October 23, William Miller wrote, "It seemed as though all the demons from the bottomless pit were let loose upon us. The same ones and many more who were crying for mercy two days before were now mixed with the rabble, and mocking, scoffing, and threatening in a most blasphemous manner."¹⁸

Far and wide, disappointed Millerites had taunts hurled at them similar to those shouted at Joseph Bates by boys who fol-

lowed him down the street. "I thought you were going up yesterday," they mockingly yelled.

"You can have no idea of the feeling that seized me," Bates recalled. "I had been a respected citizen, and had with much confidence exhorted the people to be ready for the expected change. With these taunts thrown at me, if the earth could have opened and swallowed me up, it would have been sweetness compared to the distress I felt."¹⁰

Twenty-three-year-old James White succinctly summed up his reaction: "When Elder [J. V.] Himes visited Portland, Maine, a few days after the passing of the time, and stated that the brethren should prepare for another cold winter, my feelings were almost uncontrollable. I left the place of meeting and wept like a child."²⁰

Still Standing

Although many of the disappointed Millerites gave up their belief in the Advent, not all did. Among those who did not was William Miller. On November 10 in a letter to Joshua V. Himes, Miller wrote, "Although I have been twice disappointed, I am not yet cast down or discouraged. . . . My mind is perfectly calm, and my hope in the coming of Christ is as strong as ever. . . . I have fixed my mind on another time, and here I mean to stand until God gives me more light, and that is, *today, today, and today*, until He comes."²¹

Others who did not give up their faith in the second coming of Christ eventually founded the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Now, 150 years after October 22, 1844, that glorious hope of the soon return of the Lord still burns brightly in the hearts of millions of spiritual descendants of those faithful pioneers.

Today, during this special anniversary year, we still pray with the apostle John, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."²²

¹ For a discussion of the number of Millerites, see George Knight, *Millennial Fever* (1993), p. 213.

² *Ibid.* The U.S. population in 1844 is estimated to have been 20 million.

³ I have spoken with two followers of Margaret W. Rowen, who predicted the world's end on February 6, 1925. Neither of the followers could recall the events of that day. According to a daughter of Rowen's, the disappointment had been so painful that her mother had never talked about it. In fact, she said her mother had completely blocked everything connected with that day from her memory.

⁴ Jane Marsh Parker, "The Little Millerite," *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, December 1886, p. 316.

⁵ *The Farmer's Monthly Visitor* (Concord, N.H.), Nov. 30, 1844, p. 174.

⁶ F. D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (1944), p. 244.

⁷ William Miller to Dr. I. O. Orr, of Toronto, Canada, Dec. 13, 1844, p. 1. The original letter is housed in the Jenks Memorial Collection of Adventual Materials at Aurora University Library, Aurora, Illinois.

⁸ *Herald* (New York), Oct. 23, 1844, quoted in Nichol, p. 243.

⁹ See Nichol, pp. 253-258, 321-348.

¹⁰ William Miller letter dated October 11, 1844, quoted in Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller* (1853), pp. 270, 271.

¹¹ Uriah Smith, "Former Things," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Jan. 13, 1903, p. 4.

¹² *Cincinnati Chronicle*, quoted in *United States Saturday Post*, Nov. 9, 1844, as quoted in Nichol, p. 245.

¹³ William Miller to Dr. I. O. Orr, Dec. 13, 1844.

¹⁴ Nichol, p. 250.

¹⁵ Hiram Edson, undated autobiographical manuscript fragment (Andrews University), p. 8a.

¹⁶ Joseph Bates, *The Autobiography of Elder Joseph Bates* (1868), p. 300.

¹⁷ Edson, pp. 8a, 9, quoted in Nichol, pp. 247, 248.

¹⁸ Miller, quoted in Nichol, p. 250.

¹⁹ Joseph Bates, as told in J. O. Corliss, "Joseph Bates as I Knew Him," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Aug. 16, 1923, p. 7.

²⁰ James White, *Life Incidents in Connection With the Great Advent Movement* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the SDA Pub. Assn., 1868), p. 182.

²¹ William Miller to Joshua V. Himes, Nov. 10, 1844, quoted in Bliss, pp. 277, 278.

²² Rev. 22:20.

The Dream Continues . . .

From the beginning Adventists have been visionaries—looking for better ways to communicate Bible truths and minister to our churches, communities, and the world. Throughout this issue you can read some of the dreams your fellow Adventists are dreaming. Compare them with your own, and let's work together to make them happen.—Editors.

My Dream . . .



I dream of a church that lives and breathes Jesus' philosophy of love; a church in which men and women feel equally valued, respected, and supported.

I dream of a church that realizes it won't have all the answers until Jesus returns, so it allows people to express different opinions safely.

I dream of a church that is open to change and growth; a church able to see the beauty and worthiness of both innovation and tradition.

I dream of a perfect church. Not just perfect for my needs, but perfect for the needs of all its members. And only God can establish such a community.

Until then, I dream of a church that dedicates itself to God completely; a church that acknowledges its faults and shortcomings, but focuses on Jesus' example in all things.

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A People of

Almost 2,500 years ago the Lord called a remnant out of Babylon. “And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them” (Jer. 23:3). Though these people didn’t live up to their calling, they were still His remnant, a people of prophecy.

About 150 years ago the Lord again called out a remnant, this time out of spiritual Babylon, a people who would “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12). Though these people have not lived up to their calling either, they are His remnant, a people of prophecy as well. We believe that this modern remnant is the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Of course, “they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (Rom. 9:6). As Ellen White warned, “I saw that the remnant were not prepared for what is coming upon the earth. Stupidity, like lethargy, seemed to hang upon the minds of most of those who profess to believe that we are having the last message” (*Early Writings*, p. 119). And of course, not every Seventh-day Adventist will be saved.

Our Claim to the Remnant

Nevertheless, Scripture points to an end-time people with certain characteristics. What are those characteristics, and why do we claim that we fit them?

First, according to Revelation, this people would arise after the 1260-year period of persecution (see Rev. 12:6, 14, 17). By comparing Revelation 12 with Daniel 7, we know that this persecuting period began about the sixth century A.D. and so must end around the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, which thus is the time when God’s remnant must arise.

Second, the remnant is identified as keeping “the commandments of God” (Rev. 12:17). Whatever construction one might want to put on the phrase, it must surely mean at least the Ten Commandments. And at their heart, is the fourth, the command to keep the seventh day, not the first, as the Sabbath.

Third, this group manifests within it “the testimony of Jesus” (verse 17), which is “the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10). This we call the prophetic gift.

The first identification mark automatically eliminates, in any *corporate* sense (and I stress corporate), all those church bodies that arose prior to the end of the 1260-year period. Thus, none of the major Reformation churches, for example, can corporately be the one depicted in the prophecy.

Next, though many other churches arose after the 1260-year period, their disregard for the fourth commandment, as it reads in Scripture, automatically eliminates them.

And finally, of the few church bodies remaining, just one has the prophetic gift manifested within it in such a powerful and remarkable manner.

No wonder we Seventh-day Adventists believe that we are a people of prophecy. What other church arose after the 1260-year period, teaches obedience to all the commandments, and manifests within it the “spirit of prophecy,” so unmistakably revealed in the ministry of Ellen G. White? None, which is why we claim the title for ourselves.

Thus, we Seventh-day Adventists should realize that we are not just another church, another denomination. We are a prophetic movement specifically called out by God to do a unique work. This calling must not make us proud, arrogant, or exclusive. On the contrary, the reality of what we have been called to do and what we have done should bring us all to our knees, pleading with God to have mercy upon His Laodicean people.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Millerite revival, which called people out of many denominations into the Advent movement. We are commemorating not only the Millerites, but the powerful message of present truth that God gave to the small band who, refusing to abandon the Advent hope, eventually formed the core of what was to become the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the remnant church of Bible prophecy.

That the nascent Seventh-day Adventist Church came out of

BY ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG

Prophecy

other churches should remind us that we share many doctrines with other Protestants, such as the divinity of Christ, the virgin birth, the primacy of Scripture, salvation by faith alone, and the literal, physical second coming of Jesus. Yet because our founders started a new movement, we must always remember that we are, and always should be, distinct not only in what we believe, but in how we live, because what we believe should affect how we live. Our church alone fits those distinguishing marks of the remnant as depicted in Revelation.

This reality should kindle a fire in our souls at the majesty and grace of God, who has called us into this unique movement with a mission and message to prepare the world for the glorious consummation of every true believer's hope since Adam—the second coming of Jesus.

A Dime a Dozen

I have been saddened by those among us who downplay our unique calling and mission, who tend to view our church as just one of many. Perhaps this attitude has arisen from fear of falling into the trap of the scribes and the Pharisees in Christ's time, whose exclusivism and spiritual pride were abominations to the Lord. Though that danger exists, it should not be used to downgrade or nullify our calling.

Claiming that we have a specific present-truth message, of course, is certainly not the same as claiming that we alone are saved, that we alone are God's people, that we alone are holy. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has never made that claim, and I hope it never will. We have always acknowledged that the Lord has many faithful followers in other denominations besides our own. "Other sheep I have," said Jesus, "which are not of this fold" (John 10:16).

Whatever theological differences we might have with members of other faiths, we should never denigrate or judge their religious experience. There are many who, for whatever reasons, might not understand the Bible truth about the state of the dead, the Sabbath, or the sanctuary, yet have a deeper, richer, and more faithful walk with Jesus than many who have the privilege of knowing these truths.

Ellen White herself, though unequivocal about our church's status as the remnant, expressed the essence of what our sentiment should be: "And in what religious bodies are the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various churches professing the Protestant faith" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 383). No doubt there are many followers of Christ in the Roman Catholic Church as well.

Indeed, many of these other Christians live up to the light that they enjoy much more faithfully than we do. Yes, the sins

among us are real. Many—looking at the faults, the problems, the evil that exists among us—have been tempted to doubt our remnant status or special calling. But they are making a mistake that may last for eternity. Inspiration tells us that God will "carry the noble ship which bears the people of God safely into port," and that to "enter into any new organization . . . would mean apostasy" (*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 390).

Present truth exists whether we as a people are sanctified or not. Christ's death on the cross is the foundation of salvation whether or not all Seventh-day Adventists have died to self with Him. Christ is still our high priest in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary whether or not all Adventists believe that truth or live as if they do. The Sabbath is still the Sabbath whether or not we as a people keep it as we should. The Pharisees' perversion of the Sabbath in Christ's time didn't negate its truth any more than any modern perversion negates it now.

All of us, especially those who have been in the church and awaiting the Second Advent all our lives, long for the coming of Jesus. As a child I thought Christ would come long before I graduated from academy. Certainly, I thought, He would be back before I finished college. There was no way I'd ever be old enough to marry and have

God will have a remnant that doesn't merely profess to "keep the commandments of God," but that really does keep them.

children. Of course, Jesus would be back before I had to worry about raising my children through their teenage years. And now I am a grandfather!

However, Christ hasn't yet returned, and how easy it is to fall into the trap that Peter warned about: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of

his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (2 Peter 3:3, 4). Yet if our eyes are open, we should easily see that all things aren't continuing as they were from the beginning. Signs all around the world should wake us up to the times that we are living in. Never in my life have I seen world events not only so portend the second coming of Christ but vindicate as well our unique Seventh-day Adventist understanding of last-day events.

Not Professing—Practicing

One of those signs is that God will have a people who proclaim the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, a remnant that doesn't merely profess to "keep the commandments of God," but that really does *keep* them. Having our names on the remnant church books isn't good enough. We need to recommit ourselves personally to sacrifice our time, our talents, our energy, our money, our everything to make the task assigned to the remnant—the spreading of the three angels' messages to the world—a reality.

Isaiah wrote: "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in" (Isa. 58:12).

John the Baptist, in his attempt to prepare a people for Christ's first coming by preaching a "present truth" message, was, in many ways, preaching old truths that had been lost or perverted. In the same way, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as we attempt to prepare the world for the second coming of Jesus, is truly God's "repairer of the breach."

Scripture is clear: God has established a remnant church for these last days. Corporately, no other church body fits the description but ours. We alone have been given His present truth message. We won't be saved, however, division by division, union by union, conference by conference, congregation by congregation, or even family by family. We'll be saved only as individuals. Whether we ultimately are saved is an individual choice, as it has been for God's "people of prophecy" in every age. May God help us!

My Dream . . .



As a child I used to dream about a church with many more children, longer Sabbath schools, and shorter sermons.

As a teenager I dreamed of a church with more music, less rules, and more grown-ups who didn't care so much about the rules.

Then, for a while, I stopped dreaming about the church and had what I felt were more important dreams.

But now I have dreams again. I dream of a church that's not too different from the one I have. We have lots of kids, lots of music, and the sermons no longer seem so long. Even the grown-ups are pretty reasonable people (I suppose because I'm a grown-up too).

But in my dream we are all asking Jesus to help us accept each other as we are. Teaching by friendship a little more and preaching a little less.

I dream of a church in which you don't have to check out for a break between childhood and adulthood. In which you can feel welcome even when you are a somewhat normal and imperfect "in-betweeners." (Teenager may be a bit too restrictive a term for the in-betweeners age group.)

And I'm dreaming in a hurry, because I don't have much time to implement my dream. My oldest child is 7 years old.

And while I'm dreaming, I might as well make Sabbath school start at 10:00 a.m.

Gerardo Rodriguez is a pediatric neurologist. Born in Costa Rica, he was raised in Venezuela and took his medical training at Montemorelos University in Mexico. He and his wife and three children live in Sparks, Nevada.



Robert S. Folkenberg is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

From So Small a Dream

An Adventist time capsule

When Joseph Bates called the tiny Sabbathkeeping band of ex-Millerites “a scattered, torn, and peeled people,” he never dreamed that 150 years later, 8 million Seventh-day Adventists in approximately 200 countries would blanket the globe with chapels, schools, hospitals, and publishing houses. In 1844 these “Shut Door Seventh Day Sabbath and Annihilationists” (as people called them) seemed doomed to extinction like other Millerite groups. Why didn’t factionalism destroy them? What explains the phenomenal growth of Sabbathkeeping Adventism?

Five key factors have strengthened the Sabbathkeeping band throughout its formative years (1844-1888), reorganization period (1888-1945), and global innovation era (1945-1994). The church has organized effectively, continually developed its doctrines, emphasized mission outreach, built a combined health and medical work, and successfully overcome obstacles. Here is a closer look at these factors.

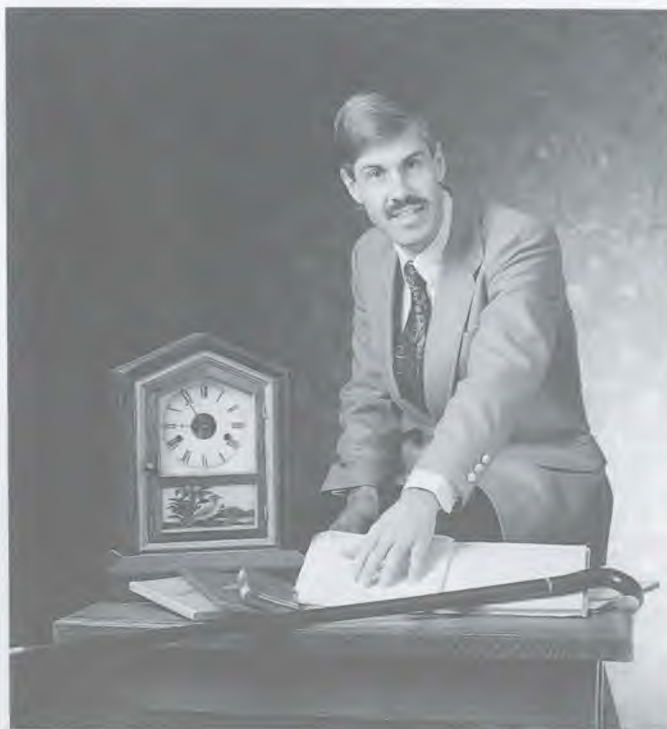
Formative Era, 1844-1888

During the 1840s and 1850s Bates, the Whites, and others struggled to unify a scattered band in “gospel order.” A peripatetic press spread new doctrines in the *Present Truth* (1849) and the *Advent Review* (1850). Soon the “scattered flock” began building meetinghouses for worship.

To support traveling preachers, believers in 1859 gave money to the Systematic Benevolence treasurer each Sunday when she came collecting for “Sister Betsy.” Having chosen a name in 1860, Seventh-day Adventists organized quickly: the Review and Herald press legally incorporated in 1861, state conferences formed in 1861, and the General Conference was established at Battle Creek in 1863. By 1882 a denomination of 30,000 members had colleges in Battle Creek, Michigan; South Lancaster, Massachusetts; and Healdsburg, California, with busy presses in Oakland, California, and Basel, Switzerland.

Doctrinal development. As organization developed, so did awareness of new truth. Our Millerite legacy included premillennialism, conditional immortality, and the first and second angels’ messages. But at the Sabbath Conferences (1848-1850), prayer, study, and all-night discussion added the Sabbath, Spirit of Prophecy, and the third angel’s message to this edifice of truth.

Accepting Ellen White’s Laodicean reproofs in 1856, Adventists realized their need of a Saviour’s atonement both at the



DAVE SHERWIN

cross and in the sanctuary.

Yet some “loving legalists” continued the debate over the two-horned beasts of Revelation 13, the Trinity, Armageddon, and the king of the north in the 1860s and 1870s. They refused to accept the gospel in Galatians and the righteousness by faith message of A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner at Minneapolis in 1888.

Mission outreach. Hampered by legalism and misunderstanding the “shut door,” early Adventists saw no need to proselytize. If Christ had

If Christ had "shut
the door" on
October 22, 1844,
all who rejected the
first two angels'
messages could not
receive the third.

"shut the door" on October 22, 1844, all who rejected the first two angels' messages could not receive the third.

But by the 1850s *Review* articles explained that while the door to the holy place was closed, the door to the Most Holy Place remained open as Jesus pleaded His atoning blood for sinners. Bates found David Hewitt in Battle Creek eager to accept the third angel's message and the Sabbath in 1852, although he had not been a Millerite.

With a message of hope to share, Adventists began "moving out" to the Midwest in the fifties, to California in 1868, to continental Europe in 1874, and to England, Australia, Egypt, and Hong Kong in the eighties.

They developed new witnessing methods. Maria Huntley pioneered the Tract and Missionary Society. George King trained colporteurs. Stephen Haskell started a ship ministry. Husband/wife tent evangelism teams drew larger crowds than local circuses.

Health and medical work. Although bombarded by information on temperance, diet, dress, and health reform, early Adventists did not see the *spiritual* importance of improving their lifestyle. Many had quit using liquor, tobacco, tea, and coffee by the 1850s, but Jesus was coming too soon to get sidetracked on diet and bathing!

After Ellen White's 1863 vision showed healthful living as part of the third angel's message, however, believers gradually accepted it collectively. Progressive revelation led them to give up pork and to recommend giving up all meats, to use water internally and externally rather than drugs, to adopt the reform dress, and to use salt, sugar, eggs, and butter in moderation.

At the Western Health Reform Institute (1866) in Battle Creek, the Rural Health Retreat in St. Helena (1878), and through the pages of Kellogg's *Good Health* magazine, Adventists spread the message of healthful living.

Overcoming obstacles and opposition. Had Sabbathkeeping Adventism been solely a human movement, it could not have survived the obstacles thrown against it from its inception. The great disappointment of October 22, 1844, destroyed most Millerites' zeal. Poverty, disease, and immorality discouraged many; fanaticism and factionalism doomed other groups.

In the 1840s, Enoch Jacob's "spiritual wifery" and George Storrs' "organization is Babylon" sidetracked many. In the 1850s, the Messenger Party in Michigan and the "age to come" offshoot in Wisconsin distracted others. During the Civil War, Iowa dissidents formed the Marion Party, which criticized James and Ellen White, while ex-evangelist Moses Hull defended spiritualism as biblical. Dudley Canright's acerbic *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced* (1889) stunned the youthful church. But with faith in God and a "blessed hope" rooted in Christ, it endured.

Reorganization Era, 1888-1945

The band of 3,500 Sabbatarian Adventists in the 1860s numbered 78,000 by 1901 and 576,000 in 1945, with colleges, hospitals, and presses on every continent.

Clearly, the maturing church had outgrown its original administrative carapace. With seven quasi-independent organizations in Battle Creek operating outside General Conference supervision, the time had come for greater decentralization and representation.

To reduce the "kingly power" of small boards, the General Conference Committee grew from 7 in 1887 to 25 in 1901. To provide better communication between the world headquarters and local conferences and missions, union conferences were formed in Australia (1894), South Africa (1897), the United States (1901), and other fields. From 1901 to 1918, nine quasi-independent organizations became new General Conference departments, while six new divisions directed by vice presidents fostered representation and efficiency in spreading gospel truth.

Doctrinal development. After some former legalists discovered "the truth as it is in Jesus" at Minneapolis, their preaching focused less on the law and more on the cross. Rejecting theological debates, preachers followed A. T. Jones, E. J. Waggoner, and A. G. Daniells in affirming the divinity of Christ, emphasizing righteousness by faith, and focusing on living the victorious life in Jesus.

Ellen White's *Steps to Christ*, *Desire of Ages*, and *Christ's Object Lessons* drew believers to the divine/human Christ. Camp meeting revivals, ministerial institutes, and devotional books like Meade MacGuire's *Life of Victory* helped them see "the matchless charms of Christ."

A new Home Missionary Department (1922) prepared members to share these truths with Bible study guides, filmstrips, and Ingathering magazines.

Mission outreach. But many wanted to go beyond their neighborhoods with Christ's love. Young Edson White took the gospel to Blacks in the Deep South of the United States in the 1890s. Blind Austin Wilson edited the *Christian Record* in braille after 1900. Aging Stephen Haskell's ethnic ministry in

New York City reached Jews and immigrants after 1910.

Zealous for foreign missions, General Conference presidents Arthur Daniells (1901-1922) and William Spicer (1922-1930) broke the Adventist mold of working for White Anglo-Saxon Protestant groups by sending missionaries among Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and others. Anna Knight in India, Harry Miller in China, Mimi Scharffenberg in Korea, the Stahls in Bolivia, and the Halliwells in Brazil breached geographic, cultural, and national boundaries to heal the sick, train the young, and preach Christ.

Members back home in America and Europe eagerly gave a week's salary every year in support of these missionary heroes.

Health and medical work. Since the 1860s Ellen White and John Harvey Kellogg had shaped the Adventist health message. The doctor confessed that he kept Battle Creek Sanitarium five years ahead of other medical centers by comparing new scientific findings with her writings and adopting the findings when the two agreed. Tragically, Kellogg's pantheism, criticism of church leaders and Ellen White, expansionist ambitions, and lax tithing and church attendance caused his expulsion in 1907. Many wondered if the church could support a medical program without the doctor.

But a series of financial miracles enabled the church to purchase sanitariums at National City (Paradise Valley), Glendale, and Loma Linda, California, as well as at Hinsdale, Illinois. And just as Kellogg's American Medical Missionary College expired in 1910, the College of Medical Evangelists opened in Loma Linda to train physicians and dentists for mission service.

Evangelists began incorporating health education classes in their meetings. In 1934 Everett Dick, at Union College, started what became the Medical Cadet Corps, preparing youth for non-combatant war service as medics and nurses. Adventists had decided that evangelism and medical work *must* go together.

Overcoming obstacles and opposition. Church growth came despite some of the most incredible difficulties the maturing church has ever faced. Workers faced Ku Klux Klan violence in the South. One hundred Adventists were jailed or worked on chain gangs for laboring on Sunday. German and French children paid fines or were failed for not attending school on Sabbath.

During the depression of 1893, church workers took 25 percent pay cuts: the General Conference treasury held only \$61.20!

During both world wars, governments nationalized Adventist hospitals, closed schools, and took over presses. Isolation, poverty, persecution, and death nearly destroyed the church in Germany, Italy, and Russia—but it endured.

Since troubles from without failed to crush the church, Satan stirred up dissidence within. False prophets like Anna Garmire, Anna Phillips, and Margaret Rowen sought to replace Ellen White. Some members pushed faith healing, competitive sports, lawsuits, or esoteric theology.

Critics attacked church leaders and doctrines. In the 1890s Ballenger denied the sanctuary significance of 1844; Stanton called the church "Babylon"; Kellogg promoted pantheism. After 1900 the perfectionistic holy flesh movement gripped the Indiana Conference, the World War I German Reform movement divided Adventists there, and the Shepherd's Rod in America set new dates for Christ's coming.

Apostasies among top leaders like Conradi, Jones, Waggoner, Canright, and Kellogg stunned Adventist members. But by moving its college from Battle Creek to Berrien Springs, its medical school to Loma Linda, and its General Conference headquarters and press to Takoma Park after 1901, the scarred but growing church made a fresh start.

Global Innovation Era, 1945-1994

In the postwar era of hostility to Western culture, the church's seminaries and colleges have trained national workers for leadership positions. Soon membership tripled from 650,000 (1945) to 2 million (1970)—then quadrupled to 8 million this year.

With increasing sensitivity for minorities, Adventist leaders voted for regional conferences in North America in 1945. Black membership shot from 18,000 in 1945 to 60,000 by 1966. After 1976 one out of five North American Division members was an African-American.

Congregations began ordaining women as local elders and associates in pastoral care, and teens became junior deacons and elders in the seventies.

As global financial pressures mounted, the General Conference responded with new debt retirement funding, investment committees, and reserve fund plans.

Doctrinal development. Meanwhile, a new Lay Activities Department, formed in 1966, sought to involve every member in active witnessing. Outreach opportunities multiplied: Voice of Youth crusades, cooking schools, Dial-a-Prayer messages, Bible camps, Revelation seminars, and numerous

My Dream . . .



I dream of a day when our first priority will be to introduce people to Jesus *before* we introduce them to our 27 fundamental beliefs.

I dream of a day when congregations will appoint leaders based on spiritual maturity, and not skin color, gender, financial standing, or educational level.

I dream of a day when our churches are known for the warmth, love, and acceptance experienced by everyone who walks through the doors. I want people to feel that they've come home, no matter their clothes, their hairstyle, their makeup, or if they're wearing jewelry.

Jesus doesn't require us to have it all together before we come to Him. He bids us to come just as we are. I dream of a day when we display this kind of empathy toward those who are struggling with alcohol, drugs, AIDS, divorce, etc.

Do I dream impossibilities? Our God is God of the impossible. When we rely on Him, all things are possible.

Steve Trapero, a displaced southern Californian, is the designer for the Adventist Review. He and his wife, Aikyoung, live in Burtonsville, Maryland.

One hundred
Adventists were
jailed or worked on
chain gangs for
laboring on Sunday.

"bands" (prayer, prison, nursing home, canvassing, etc.).

In response to religious liberty threats, the church published *Liberty* as a watchdog on Sunday laws, school prayer, and other First Amendment concerns. In the search for truth, it established the Biblical Research Committee (1952), invited theological discussions at Bible conferences (1952, 1974), and sponsored archaeological digs in Palestine. To clarify Adventist teachings for the public, it published *Questions on Doctrine* (1957) and held longer (12-week) evangelistic crusades.

In 1980 the church in General Conference session voted 27 fundamental beliefs, and in 1988 the General Conference Ministerial Association published *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, elaborating on these doctrinal foundations.

Mission outreach. In the postwar era Adventists discovered creative ways to spread the "blessed hope" of Christ's soon return. Fordyce Detamore and H.M.S. Richards of the *Voice of Prophecy* began radio Bible correspondence courses in the forties, while William Fagal of *Faith for Today* and George Vandeman of *It Is Written* preached Christ on TV in the fifties. Lay evangelism in the Philippines, Korea, and Mexico converted thousands in single crusades.

In the sixties Gottfried Oosterwal at Andrews University started Mission Institutes to train foreign missionaries. More than 1,200 youth had volunteered as student missionaries to 83 countries by 1975, while scores of English language school teachers witnessed through their enthusiasm and love in Korea and Japan.

Adult professionals also

yearned for service abroad. They went as "flying doctors" (dentists, oculists, surgeons) with Liga International, as builders of churches and schools with Maranatha Volunteers International, and as pioneers among new people groups with Adventist Frontier Missions. God's blessing has made the One Thousand Days of Reaping (1983-1985), Harvest 90 (1985-1990), and Global Mission (1990-1995) outreach thrusts tremendously successful.

Health and medical work. A rapidly growing church became a more health-conscious movement, innovating several programs to improve the quality of life. Wayne McFarland and Elman Folkenberg's Five-Day Plan (Breathe Free) helped smokers quit the habit. L. A. Senseman and E.H.J. Steed's Four Dimensional Key plan assisted alcoholics. Cooking schools taught low-fat, sugarless, vegetarian cuisine.

In the seventies *Westbrook Hospital*, Faith for Today's TV series, taught healthful living in a Christian drama setting. In the eighties and nineties, talk show host Dan Matthews has interviewed medical and health personnel on *Lifestyle Magazine*.

Even traditional evangelism focused on healthful living. Local churches sponsored health fairs or antidrug displays at county fairs using Smoking Sam (or Sally) and cancer-laden lungs in a jar. Vacation Bible Schools taught children good health tips along with crafts, songs, and Bible games. Community Services centers held cooking schools in addition to distributing food and clothing during disasters. Colleges innovated wellness programs to keep faculty fit and reduce medical costs. Teens read *Listen*, signed the teetotal pledge, joined aerobics groups, and supported Adventist Youth for Better Living (AYBL) programs.

Adventists have come a long way from the pork-eating, pipe-smoking days of the 1850s!

Overcoming obstacles and opposition. Such progress came in spite of obstacles, many severe. Postwar inflation and economic stagnation in some areas; bloody coups and political revolutions in others; tribal, civil, and international wars—all left their mark on the global church.

Adventists faced challenges from the secular realm: labor union controls, calendar reform, evolution, accreditation demands, and apartheid.

Within, several contentious incidents stimulated lasting positive change. Brinsmead's and Ford's attacks on traditional sanctuary truth caused the church to rethink its most unique doctrine.

Merikay Silver sued Pacific Press over equal pay for women, which eventually raised wages for the majority of denominational employees—women.

Lucy Byard's death after she was denied treatment at Washington Sanitarium and Hospital for being Black stirred the church to take action against racial discrimination.

The more things change . . .

Like the small group of Sabbathkeeping ex-Millerites in the 1840s, Adventists of the 1990s are even more "scattered," but as a burgeoning global movement. They are still "torn and peeled" by the winds of war, political strife, economic hardship, and occasional apostasy. Yet God has blessed this people of the "blessed hope" with progressive revelations on organization, doctrine, mission, and healthful living. In Christ their future appears bright.



Brian E. Strayer is a professor of history at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

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- Island Tour
- Scuba Diving

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- Aore Boat Trip
- Champagne Bay Bus Trip
- Scuba Diving - President Coolidge

Afternoon Options

- 3.30pm - Cultural Dancers
- 5.30pm - Opening Sabbath
- 7.00pm - Depart

Sunday/Monday - SOLOMON ISLANDS

Sunday Morning Options

- Betikama Tour
- Scuba Diving

Sunday Afternoon Options

- Cultural Village Concert - includes panpipers
- Scuba Diving
- 5.30pm - Tea on Lawson Tama Oval/Concert

Monday Morning Options

- Bus Trip to Villages
- Scuba Diving

Monday Afternoon Options

- Free Time

5.00pm - Finale Farewell

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Ellen White, Gift to the Church



Her prophetic gift only becomes more timely with age.

When Ellen Harmon turned 17 in November 1844, she was timid, sick, and troubled. No one could have imagined that someone in such fragile health would live to be 87, cofound the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and travel the world by horse and buggy, train and ship.

No one would have predicted that during the next 70 years she would write 26 books and 4,600 articles containing spiritual counsel, commentary on the Bible, and guidance on how to live a healthy, happy Christian life. No one imagined she might become a special messenger for God.

A childhood accident at age 9 virtually ended Ellen's school days. In 1843 she and her family were disfellowshipped by their church in Portland, Maine, for their strong belief in Jesus' imminent return, which they expected on October 22, 1844.

When these hopes were dashed, she and thousands of other disappointed Christians across North America were plunged into despair.

On a December morning a few weeks later, Ellen and a few of her teenage girlfriends in Portland, Maine, gathered in a prayer band. She later testified that God's power came over her as she had never experienced it before. She felt she was "wrapped in a vision of God's glory."¹

Though reluctant to speak of it publicly, she later shared her

story. Nearby Advent believers accepted it as light from God.

Ellen Harmon felt that the insights gained in this visionary experience gave Adventists reason to hope again. While they had been thrown into chaos by disappointment, she felt assured that God was with them. If they stayed on the path and clung to their faith, she predicted, they would break out of darkness into light.

Testing the Gift

Many Millerites who did not abandon their faith altogether in 1844 were cautious about "new light." The fact that Ellen was female and just a teenager did not inspire their confidence.

Her marriage in 1846 to James White, a young ordained minister, brought needed personal stability and credibility. In the years ahead James's leadership and administrative abilities would help sustain Ellen and make her work more effective.

But throughout her life both believers and unbelievers tested her. Those who accepted her claim of God's special leading did so for a variety of reasons.

Some felt awe at the physical phenomena they observed when she had visions in public settings—the lack of breath in her body and graceful gestures that were so powerful that strong men could not alter them.

Others felt that only God could have inspired her to write

BY KIT WATTS

them letters testifying to changes needed in their personal lives—issues they had never told anyone about.

Church leaders who struggled with prophetic and doctrinal interpretations took heart when she said God had led them. Or they kept on studying when she said God had more for them to learn.

At times leaders resisted her counsel to establish a school or hospital in a location that seemed totally unsuitable, but changed their minds when her predictions came true and her counsel proved correct.²

Many who read her books and articles felt her commentary on Scripture breathed life into their devotional experience and renewed their faith in Jesus.

Though never elected to a church office, Ellen White often participated in major decisions—whether to build a medical school, launch a gospel mission among former slaves, or to establish publishing houses around the world.

Hers was a key voice in vigorous debates, including the discussion of righteousness by faith that boiled over during the 1888 General Conference session in Minneapolis.

The impact of this ongoing ministry led Seventh-day Adventists to affirm Ellen White as one sent by God with “the spirit of prophecy.” She has long been accepted as an inspired messenger, one called to energize the church in a mission of warning and Christian service at the end of time.

Facing Important Issues

However, it must be recognized that not all Seventh-day Adventists view Ellen White in the same way. Although nearly 80 years have passed since her death in 1915, we are still learning about her.

Some learning occurs when detractors raise questions and more specific answers are dug out. And some learning occurs when we carefully evaluate our own presuppositions about the nature of inspiration.

For example, do human understanding and human language limit God’s ability to communicate divine truth to us? Or does God so completely overshadow a human instrument that truth is perfectly revealed?

Such questions were discussed frankly just four years after her death by church leaders and Bible and history teachers who met at a 1919 Bible conference in Takoma Park, Maryland. Unfortunately, the views held by those who knew Ellen White personally were lost to the church until 1974, when F. Donald Yost discovered transcripts of the meeting in the General Conference archives.

Several issues discussed in 1919 deserve our continued study today. For example:

❑ What are the strongest evidences of Ellen White’s special calling as a messenger of God?

❑ What is the nature of inspiration? What authority does it carry? If Ellen White is inspired of God, is she canonical—that is, are her counsels and writing equal to that of biblical prophets?

❑ Do Seventh-day Adventists look first to Ellen White, or is the Bible the source of faith and practice?

❑ Was Ellen White influenced by her times? Did she borrow or reshape ideas and words from contemporary historians, reformers, and Christian thinkers? Were her ideas original?

❑ What role did her husband and her literary assistants play in helping her prepare material for publication?

❑ Did Ellen White make errors? Did she ever change positions on theological issues? Do her writings show growth over time in her personal understanding? Is she infallible?

❑ Did she practice what she preached about lifestyle issues?

Recent Responses

During the past 25 years much new research has been done. Some of this picks up where the 1919 Bible conference left off. For example, church president A. G. Daniells argued that the physical phenomena that accompanied Ellen White’s public visions were “not the best kind of evidence” to prove divine inspiration.³

Or as Roger Coon, recently retired associate secretary of the White Estate, puts it: “Taken alone, physical phenomena are evidence of something *supernatural*, but they don’t prove whether it’s of the devil or of the Holy Spirit.”

In 1980 Neal C. Wilson, president of the General Conference, wrote a major article entitled “This I Believe About Ellen G. White.” He made five observations about the work of a prophet.⁴

1. “Originality is not a test of inspiration.”

2. “God inspires people, not words.”

3. “The Holy Spirit helps the messenger to select his material carefully.”

4. “The prophet’s use of existing materials does not necessarily mean that the prophet is dependent upon these sources.”

5. “Whenever we recognize similarities we must also see the dissimilarities.”

Is Ellen White canonical? “No,” says Roger Coon. “She’s like some individuals mentioned in Scripture whom we call ‘literary prophets.’ They were used by God, but their writings are not in the Bible. Mrs. White characterized herself as a ‘lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light,’ the Bible.”

From the earliest days of her ministry, White put the Bible first: “I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice.”⁵

Coon adds, “It’s clear that she was not verbally inspired. God inspired her thoughts, but she found it a challenge to express them. She sought editorial help from James and from literary assistants. She also revised her writings for different purposes.”

Regarding her lifestyle, Paul Gordon, secretary of the White Estate, notes that Ellen White did not come by health reform “naturally.” When her family faced serious health problems, she tried many things. Over time a series of visions on health reform provided what Gordon calls a “gospel sieve,” that is, guiding principles that helped her avoid extremes being advocated in her day and focus on practices that truly promoted health.

As for infallibility, Ellen White herself states: “In regard to infallibility, I never claimed it; God alone is infallible.”⁶ She was not prevented from making errors on historical details.

Gordon believes that “her contribution was not to retell history more accurately than anyone else, but to reveal *new dimensions* of history.” This is best illustrated by her view that earth’s history is the scene of a war, or great controversy, between good and evil.

Who Is the Real Ellen White?

Like our church's pioneers, Adventists continue to search for present truth, or answers that fit issues arising today.

These range from understanding the nature of Christ and the Bible admonition to "Be ye therefore perfect," to attitudes and policies about racism, appropriate worship styles, and the equality of women with men. Because of *hermeneutics*, or different approaches to interpretation, Adventists in good standing sometimes arrive at opposite conclusions after reading Scripture and Ellen White.

More issues wait in the wings. How will Adventists respond to the environmental movement, family violence, and the need to make Ellen White's message clear to people who no longer use Victorian English and who expect inclusive language?

According to Brian Strayer, professor of history at Andrews University, one of the major challenges today is to discover Ellen White the *person*. Some have elevated her prophetic role to the point that her humanity is forgotten.

Roger Coon admits that Ellen White has been particularly misrepresented to young people. "They think of her as a little old lady with button-up shoes, sitting on a tall stool, wagging a bony finger at them and saying, 'If you're having fun, stop it right now.'"

When he teaches denominational history, Strayer tells students about Ellen White, the young wife and suffering mother who buried two sons and came close to losing a third in a near-drowning.

"She was both a penny-pincher and a generous person," he adds. "And while some think she was weaned on a dill pickle, she loved children, enjoyed picnics, and liked to camp out in the mountains with James and the boys."

Strayer says Ellen and James were devoted to each other but also had some rocky times in their marriage, particularly after James's strokes. Ellen also had best friends, like Lucinda Hall, with whom she corresponded in great detail, and Marian Davis, a literary assistant for 25 years.

Plans by the White Estate to release a CD-ROM by 1999 that contains all of her unpublished work, including her diaries, will help us become better acquainted with Ellen White the person.

And what did she say about herself? She admitted her humanity and her need for a Saviour.

In a conversation with a young woman who had come to be her housekeeper, Mrs. White said, "You may see some things in me that you do not approve of. You may see things in my son Willie you do not approve of. I may make mistakes, and my son Willie may make mistakes. I may be lost at last, and my son Willie may be lost. But the dear Lord has a remnant people that will be saved and go through to the kingdom, and it remains with each of us as individuals whether or not we will be one of that number."⁸

She did not call herself a prophet. Writing in 1906, she said, "I have had no claims to make, *only that I am instructed that I am the Lord's messenger; that He called me in my youth to be His messenger, to receive His word, and to give a clear and decided message in the name of the Lord Jesus.*"⁹

Like a Parent

Ellen G. White helped sustain an infant church and nurture it into a worldwide movement. I like the imagery that Helen

Pearson uses when she characterizes her as "the woman who mothered the church."¹⁰

A parent lives with two concerns—meeting the children's needs and teaching them important principles. Sometimes both can be satisfied. Sometimes the two are in conflict. And no parent makes perfect choices.

I believe the record shows that Ellen White did an amazing job. She encouraged and led the church in accepting a prophetic mission. Words she wrote 80, 100, or 150 years ago still have the vitality to challenge and correct us. Most of all, these words continue to inspire us to live up to our high calling in Christ Jesus.

¹ *Early Writings*, p. 13.

² The establishment of Avondale College in Australia and Paradise Valley Sanitarium in California are two examples.

³ Transcripts of the 1919 Bible conference for July 30.

⁴ *Adventist Review*, Mar. 20, 1980.

⁵ Ellen G. White, in *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Jan. 20, 1903, p. 15 (reprinted in *Colporteur Ministry*, p. 125).

⁶ *Early Writings*, p. 78.

⁷ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 37.

⁸ A. L. White, *Ellen G. White: Messenger to the Remnant* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1969), p. 127.

⁹ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 32 (from a letter to Dr. Paulson, June 14, 1906).

¹⁰ *Adventist Review*, Apr. 2, 1992, pp. 18, 19.



Kit Watts is an assistant editor of the *Adventist Review*.

My Dream . . .



One day there will be no divisions in the church. Grudges will be undone. Misunderstandings will be understood. Broken relationships will be reconstructed. Board meetings will no longer be war zones. Cliques will be unheard-of.

Members will love and accept brothers and sisters in need. They will smile more and judge less. Guests will feel so welcome that they won't feel like visitors. Old and young will respect each other. Members will learn how to compromise rather than fight.

I have a dream that our church will be unified. And there will be peace.

Margie Mallari, 19, is a freshman at Pacific Union College in Angwin, California. Her home is in Stockton, California.

Small Organization,

In his book *The Keys of This Blood*, Catholic writer Malachi Martin lists Seventh-day Adventists along with several other small organizations that he says wield an influence totally disproportionate to their size.

Martin is correct. In a number of areas Adventists have made an impact that far exceeds our numerical strength. Not that we've always been the only ones to take up a cause, or even the first to do so. But our commitment, persistence, and organization have effected change in society.

Because of space limitations, I'll limit my discussion to two prominent concerns within Adventism: religious liberty and health/temperance. However, there are numerous other areas that I could address in which the church has in varying degrees affected society.

Religious Liberty

Adventism's end-time theology centers on the belief that freedom of conscience will be

greatly threatened before the coming of Jesus. Add that our day of worship differs from the bulk of society, and it's easy to see why religious liberty is a concern for us. And it has been since our denomination's inception.

During the latter part and the aftermath of the Civil War in the United States, militant Protestants began demanding that the government help the erosion of religious values within society. To many, the Civil War and the social upheaval that followed were divine retribution for society's failure to live according to God's laws.

Militant Protestants formed the National Reform Association in 1864 to encourage the government to enforce the "general principles" of Christianity. As a result of the association's lobbying and the general tenor of the times, Sunday laws were soon proposed in many states and were passed in several.

Five Adventists were arrested for Sunday labor in Arkansas in 1885, and arrests soon followed in Tennessee. In both cases the state high courts upheld the conviction. Adventists clearly needed a stronger lobby to avoid further conflict.

In January 1886 the *American Sentinel*, the church's first religious liberty publication, appeared. It was later called the *Sentinel of Christian Liberty*, and today is known simply as *Liberty*.

In July 1889 the Adventist Church founded the National Religious Liberty Association—and in one year began arguing in the nation's capital against proposed legislation that boded ill for freedom of conscience. Since the 1880s the church has enjoyed considerable success as it has continued to argue for separation of church and state within the United States.

Outside the United States the Adventist Church has had varying degrees of success in promoting and preserving freedom of conscience. Adventists in Australia, though relatively new arrivals, were influential in the debate over content in the fledgling nation's constitution. And Canadian Adventists have been active in religious liberty lobbying. However, in many



Sarepta M. I. Henry (1839-1900) could not keep silent. After her son was enticed to enter a saloon in 1874, she soon became a nationwide evangelist against alcohol with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (the same lobbying group that later grabbed headlines through the hatchet-wielding Carrie Nation).

Enfeebled in the Battle Creek Sanitarium in 1896, she accepted the Advent message and began corresponding with Ellen White, who was in Australia at the time. Henry miraculously recovered to campaign for several more years against alcohol.

Big Impact

countries where Adventists work, U.S. standards of religious liberty and separation of church and state simply don't exist.

Liberty and the Military

Military participation has consistently raised religious liberty issues. Here Adventists have played a significant role in making it possible for inductees into the military to participate in manners that follow their religious convictions. But it hasn't been an easy achievement. And the church hasn't always been as effective outside the United States as in it.

From its beginning the Adventist Church has opposed taking life in war. When during the early part of the Civil War it was possible to buy an exemption from military participation, Adventists usually chose this option. When in 1863 the government passed a law that included noncombatant provisions, the church immediately filed official statements with various government entities to affirm its noncombatant teachings.

However, during World War I the noncombatancy issue was complicated further by the desire of Adventist inductees to observe the Sabbath.

Neither the church nor the government was prepared. During the war 162 SDAs in the U.S. military were court-martialed. Before the war ended, 35 of these men were serving terms of five to 25 years at hard labor. Thanks to the efforts of church leaders, all had been granted pardons by Armistice Day. But the need for better legislation and better preparation of Adventist young men became apparent.

Largely because of Adventist lobbying, Congress wrote into the draft laws that noncombatant conscientious objectors should be assigned to medical duty. To assist, the church in 1934 established its Medical Cadet Corps, designed to give young men training in basic medical and military procedures. Thus, when they were drafted, they would be well versed in what was expected of them.

As a result of the church's consistent efforts, personnel in the

United States have enjoyed relative freedom to follow the dictates of conscience. And the church's work has benefited other faiths as well.

Labor Unions and Liberty

As the Adventist Church was consolidating during the latter part of the nineteenth century, a new social force was emerging—labor unions. Although the church acknowledged many of the inequities highlighted by the unions, the church also noted the determination of the unions to force employees to join them, whatever the cost. Granted the church's end-time theology—in which freedom of conscience would give way to coercion, according to Revelation 13—labor unions were seen as something to be avoided.

As the unions became more powerful and more workplaces became "closed shops," Adventists again saw the need to lobby so that members—and others with similar convictions—could yet honor their consciences.

Today, resulting in great

BY JAMES COFFIN

*The church's
track record
in church-state issues
prompts friend and foe
to take it seriously.*

John Harvey Kellogg (1852-1943) actually invented cornflakes. Never interested in becoming an entrepreneur, he passed the idea on to his brother Will to develop. John also invented peanut butter, Protose, and various hospital and exercise equipment.

But the Battle Creek Sanitarium received most of Kellogg's energy. His skills in medicine and public relations gave it an international reputation. Former president William Howard Taft registered as its 100,000th patient.





Because of **Ana C. Stahl** (1870-1968) the Indians around Lake Titicaca were taught in their own language for the first time. Despite complaints from the Spanish-speaking government schools, Ana trained Indian teachers, who then taught in the native language. These teachers started more than 200 mission schools.

She also helped her husband, **Ferdinand**, establish several medical clinics throughout the area. And she helped many Indians quit chewing coca leaves—the base for cocaine—by substituting flaxseed tea and quinine.

measure from the Adventist Church's ongoing efforts, employees with conscientious convictions are usually exempted from labor unions in the United States. Outside the U.S. the situation varies.

Certainly the Adventist Church hasn't been the only force in church-state issues. But it has been a sustained and consistent voice. Its track record prompts friend and foe to take it seriously.

Adventists and Temperance

Frequently when people are asked what they know about Seventh-day Adventists, they reply that we don't smoke or drink alcohol. Perhaps more people know about Adventism through the church's health/temperance work than any of its other outreaches.

In June 1863 Ellen White had a comprehensive vision about the importance of healthful living. Today that concern for health manifests itself tangibly in an impressive chain of Adventist hospitals and dispensaries spread around the world.

But the church's impact has been equally present in less tangible ways. For example, though Adventists today aren't prime movers in the increasingly restrictive smoking legislation in the United States, for decades Adventists battled almost singlehandedly.

In those days there was lit-

tle likelihood of passing the legislation that today is receiving overwhelming support. Rather, the emphasis was on establishing the truth about the injurious effects of tobacco.

During the fifties, sixties, and seventies, Adventists produced such films as *One in 20,000*, *Cancer by the Carton*, *Time Pulls the Trigger*, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, and *I'm Sorry, Baby*. The church's Temperance Department put forth unflagging efforts to unmask tobacco before the public as the killer it really is.

By the middle seventies, for example, the film *One in 20,000* had been seen by an estimated 75 million people and had been produced in 14 languages. In at least three countries—England, Denmark, and the former U.S.S.R.—the film was a major reason nationwide educational programs against smoking were started.

At a time when the scientific community itself was divided concerning the effects of tobacco, the Adventist Church was unequivocal. What Ellen White had seen in vision, the church said to the world: "Tobacco kills!"

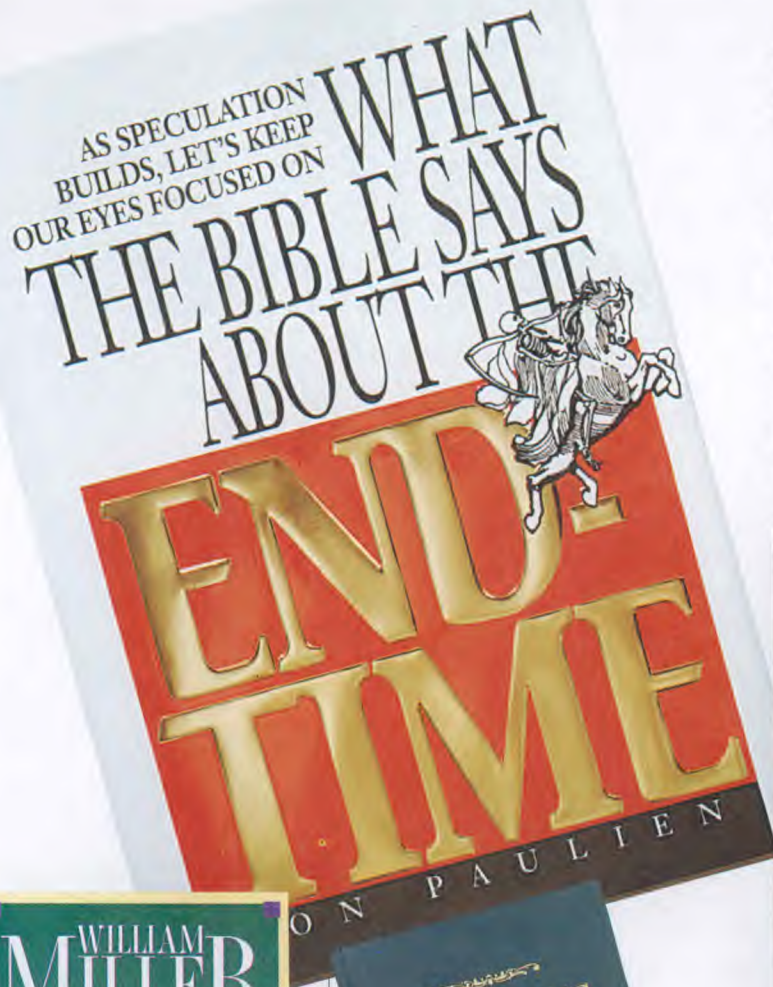
But the church didn't just preach platitudes and condemn people who were slaves to bad habits. It rolled up its sleeves and went to work. The Five-Day Plan, developed in 1959 by E. J. Folkenberg and J. Wayne McFarland, helped millions of smokers to kick the habit. Many went on to adjust their entire lifestyle as a result of what they learned.

Alcohol, too, the church has always called dangerous. From the 1880s through the repeal of Prohibition the Adventist Church was active in proclaiming alcohol's evils. C. S. Longacre, active in both religious liberty and temperance, served three times as the chair of national conventions for the Anti-Saloon League. Through his temperance activities he became personal friends with William Jennings Bryan and other well-known politicians. As a result of his high-level contacts, Longacre lobbied effectively for both temperance and religious liberty.

In society at large a period of relative silence about alcohol followed the repeal of Prohibition. But Adventists continued their efforts against it. By taking the stand of total abstinence, the church set itself apart from the practice of the majority of Christians.

Three films produced in the early 1960s—*From 5 to 7:30*, *Verdict at 1:32*, and *Becky*—convincingly showed that alcohol is not the attractive social elixir advertisers depict it to be. Rather,

Continued on page 26

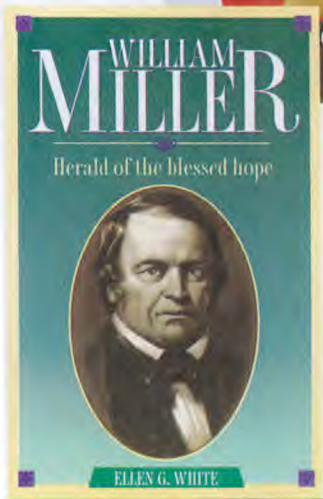


What the Bible Says About the End-Time

During Adventist history there have been many attempts to set a date for the Second Coming. What does Scripture say about the end? Dr. Jon Paulien traces the development of end-time thinking through Scripture, sharpening our view of last-day events and focusing on Jesus, who alone adds meaning to the end of time. Hardcover, 160 pages.

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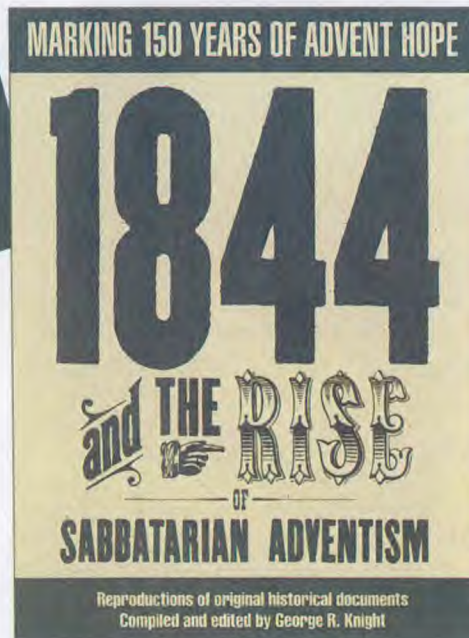
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This collection of comforting promises for these special times of need was drawn from more than 40 different Ellen White sources. Compiled by J. R. and Phyllis Bailey. Hardcover, 160 pages.



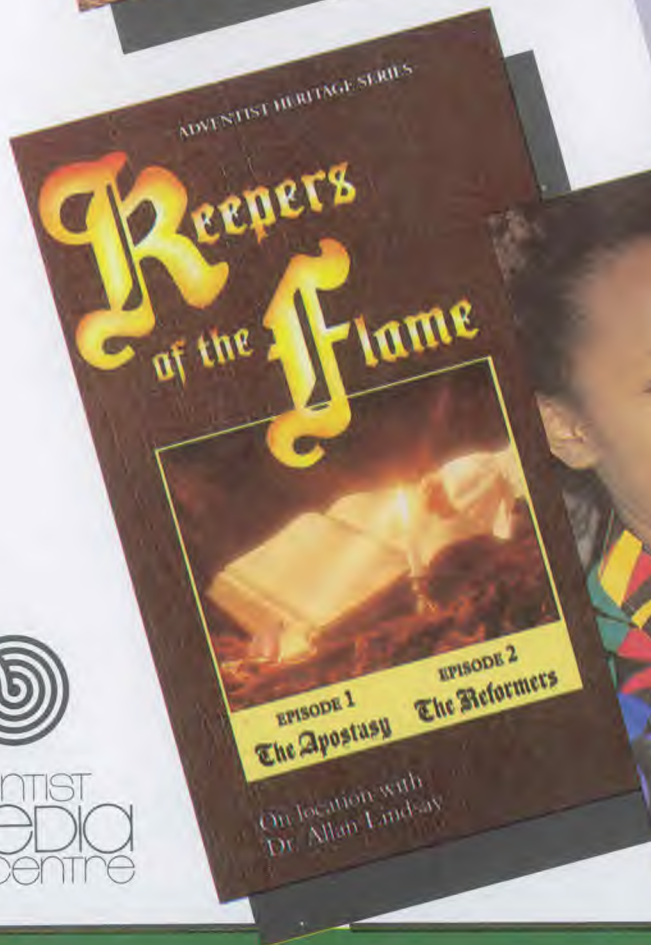
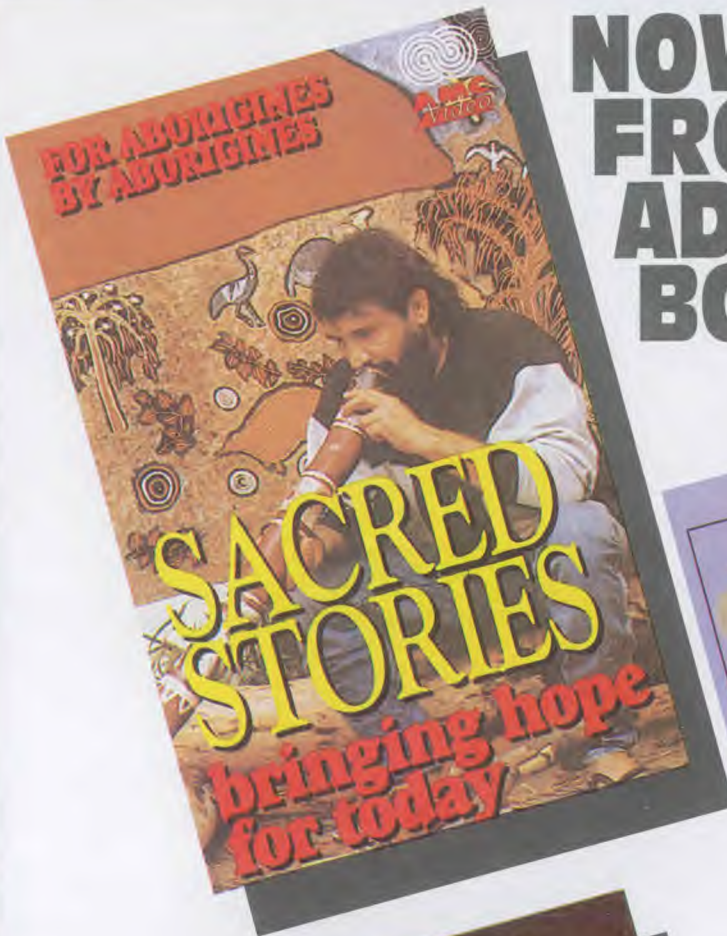
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My Dream . . .



My dream for our church is not that it be perfect, but that it be accepting.

I dream of a church that can accept others, no matter how dirty or poor, no matter how famous or rich. We could welcome them all and show them what God is really like—together.

I dream of a church that can accept itself. A church that can work out its faults—together.

I dream of a church that can accept Christ and the Bible. A church that can do what Jesus wants it to do and change, if necessary—together.

Laine Cronk, 12, lives in Reno, Nevada, with her father, mother, sister, and two dogs. She likes reading and writing, music, funny skits, and camping. She would like to be a schoolteacher when she gets a little older.



John Henry Weidner (1912-1994) caused the Nazi Gestapo much heartache during World War II. His Dutch-Paris Underground never had one refugee captured of the more than 1,000 they guided to Switzerland and Spain. Most were Jews, and about 200 were Allied airmen.

Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the new Israeli government, and several other nations showered him with medals after the war.

it's a sinister threat to individuals and society. The 1963 film *Becky* was endorsed by the Safety Council of the United States and shown by television stations across the nation.

Adventists forged the trail, demonstrating that alcohol need not be a part of social life, and today society in general perceives nondrinking as an acceptable, rational alternative. Nonalcoholic beverages are available at most social occasions. Not long ago alcoholic beverages would have been the only option.

The church's willingness to voice its concern about the ills caused by alcohol—at a time when theirs was an unpopular

course—has strongly influenced today's hard-line legislation concerning alcohol and driving.

In the health/temperance area as in religious liberty, effective publications have helped bring success. Since 1948 *Listen* magazine has provided quality, youth-targeted material urging a life free from alcohol, tobacco, and drugs.

Adventist Health Outreach

Three years after Ellen White's 1863 vision on health, the church launched a publication called the *Health Reformer*. That same year the Western Health Reform Institute opened in Battle Creek, Michigan—the forerunner of the more famous Battle Creek Sanitarium. By the turn of the century the sanitarium could boast 700 beds and a staff of nearly 1,000. Its director, John Harvey Kellogg, achieved worldwide renown as a physician, surgeon, and writer.

While the church has advocated the practice of orthodox medicine from its Battle Creek beginning, it has always emphasized a healthy lifestyle—the means to remove the causes of ill health in addition to addressing the symptoms. This too has finally been recognized by the medical field at large.

A major factor in the church's health outreach has been Loma Linda University in Loma Linda, California. Besides training medical professionals, many of whom are employed by the church's extensive health-care chain, the university has engaged in a variety of research projects that have demonstrated the validity of the lifestyle practices first taught by Ellen White.

The Advent of Breakfast Cereal

One of the by-products of the Adventist interest in health, yet the one thing that directly affects the general public daily, is the emergence of breakfast cereals.

While director of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, John Harvey Kellogg sought ways to make cereal grains more attractive to his patients. The result is the cereal flakes that today are on millions of tables at breakfasttime.

While the breakfast food industry in the United States didn't long remain within the

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Too Little Too Late

BY JAMES COFFIN

Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church has impacted society disproportionately to our size, I believe that in recent years we've failed in key areas to make the impact we could have made. It's beneficial to look not only at our successes but also at our missed opportunities.

For starters, we have not been a force in the environmental movement. The "Adventist" in our name points us toward the future. But the "Seventh-day" suggests we also seek a balanced, Creator-conscious life here and now.

Our wholistic approach to life and our belief that the Sabbath is a memorial of Creation should make us environmentalists. But unfortunately we have too often been indifferent: "Everything will be destroyed soon anyway. Why worry?"

Instead of leading the field and promoting the Bible's balance between commitment to the present and hope for the future, we've focused primarily on the future and left the environmental agenda to others. Now that we've finally

become involved, the movement has already drifted in directions that make us uncomfortable.

Second, we haven't been vocal in the gender-equity debate. Even if our church ultimately decides that for theological reasons ordination should forever be withheld from women, we can't justify our failure to speak out and set an example on women's concerns in other spheres.

How often we've acknowledged the right of women to receive equal pay for equal work *only* when the courts have forced us to. It's sad that we didn't take more initiative to ensure equal access and equal treatment for women in education, employment, and other situations.

Had Christians—particularly Adventists—acted as catalysts for change, radical feminism would have gained little, if any, influence.

Third, as a church we hid far too long from the abortion debate. We're still too silent.

Our church's recently articulated position in 1992 has much to commend. We're pro-life, yet we recog-

nize that because we live in a world of sin, ideal options aren't always available. We concede that abortion is occasionally the best of bad alternatives.

Realizing that such decisions are heart-wrenching, we prefer to let those most affected ultimately decide. However, we urge a family's community of faith to add input that lovingly responds to the predicament.

Had the North American church consolidated its thinking on abortion sooner and had we been more vocal in sharing our convictions—which are eminently reasonable—the extreme polarization of today's debate might not exist.

Church growth has made us more concerned with our public image. When David Koreshes pop up, they indirectly affect 8 million people.

However, trying to be a pleasant, respectable church is lessening our ability to decide quickly, act decisively, and speak loudly enough on issues to influence society.

As our numbers grow, we mustn't let our influence shrivel.

Adventist Church, it's an outgrowth of the church's concern about health. Today the Adventist Church in Australia and New Zealand benefits financially from its Sanitarium Health Food Company, an Australian Fortune 500 cereal producer.

Lessons to Be Learned

Health and religious liberty are but two developments by which the church has notably influenced society. In each case success has come because the church has addressed the problem early, taken positions that at the time weren't popular, and persisted even when success seemed unlikely.

As we look at the challenges of today we must not forget those characteristics that have made us successful in the challenges of the past.



James Coffin is senior pastor of the Markham Woods church in Orlando, Florida.

Through his van ministry, **Earl W. Moore** (1925-) provided the only organized health care for the Poor People's March on Washington, D.C., in 1968 after Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination. Throughout the six-week civil-rights encampment more than 30 Howard University doctors gave their time for Moore's Mobile Medical Unit.

He also provided care at the 1967 riots in Detroit and for more than 300 injured during the Memphis riots surrounding King's death.



Confessions of

Can we still believe the sanctuary doctrine

BY BEATRICE NEALL

Can Adventists still believe in the sanctuary doctrine after a century and a half? Has a judgment really been going on in the heavenly sanctuary all this time?

During the past 15 years, winds of controversy have swirled around this subject, and I as a Bible teacher have felt their force. At the 1980 Glacier View Conference I trembled as I saw the church's scholars and administrators publicly grapple with the issue of whether to

clusion was reached, I feared a deep split in the church.

Before the conference I prayed and studied as papers supporting and questioning the doctrine came in the mail. Desmond Ford's 1,000-page document arrived, followed by refutations from William Shea, who, judging from the type, was pounding relentlessly by day and night on whatever typewriter he could find to get the materials out to us. At times I felt like the carpet-bagger judge trying his first case. After hearing the accuser present his side, he slammed his fist on the table and shouted, "He's got it!" But after listening to the other side, he said, "Ain't that strange? Now *he's* got it!"

Grappling With the Issue

On which side of the controversy would I stand?

Ever since college days when I led a section of sopranos in John Hamilton's choir to shout "Be not afraid!" one measure too soon, I have been afraid of being publicly wrong! Would I be among the progressives who are bold to discard the old and advance to new understandings, or would I be among the stalwarts who maintain the truth when others discard it? In negative terms, would I be an apostate or an old fossil?

At Glacier View the small study group to which I was assigned prayed earnestly before considering each aspect of the doctrine. As all the groups met together to report on their conclusions, I saw a miracle of consensus take place. Not all of the proof texts used by the pioneers were supported. But the large group affirmed the basic pillars of the sanctuary doctrine.

Still, there were numerous questions to be studied. The book of Daniel, not unsealed until the time of the end, is profound. It still contains mysteries. It is not surprising that there is controversy over various interpretations. Fortunately while I was teaching Daniel and Revelation each year at Union College, I was privileged to belong to the Daniel and Revelation Committee that researched the many aspects of the doctrine and published seven volumes on Daniel, Revelation, Leviticus, and Hebrews.¹ I was greatly enriched by the interchange of ideas.

As I studied I recalled Edward Heppenstall's assertion: "Truth bears investigation." It can stand the closest scrutiny. To my joy, I discovered that the following pillars of our prophetic heritage stand firm.

1. The historicist system of interpretation.

This is the idea that the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation present a sweep of history extending from the time of the

affirm or discard it. Had the time come to abandon an archaic doctrine? If we did abandon it, would we be repudiating our origin as a people of prophecy? Whatever con-



a Bible Teacher

after a century and a half?

prophet until the end-time. Antichrist is the papacy, which ruled for 1,260 years and will be revived in the end-time. Today Adventists are almost alone in holding to this perspective.

Most Bible scholars are preterists, believing that Daniel and John were writing about crises in their own time.² In their system, Daniel's "antichrist" is the evil king Antiochus Epiphanes, while John's antichrist is Caesar. Then what about the climax of the prophecies, which was to be the setting up of God's kingdom? Preterists say it was a false hope.

Futurism, another system of interpretation, holds that the prophecies focus mainly on the end-time, a period of seven years when antichrist will reign and persecute God's people during the last three and a half years.

Why do I still hold to historicism? Because Daniel 2 does indeed present a sweep of history, extending through the ages from Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the divided kingdom to the end. Daniel 7 builds on the same structure, with added emphasis on Rome, a beast with a little horn that has power over the saints for 1,260 days. Chapters 8, 9, and 11 also build into this structure. John's prophecies begin with Rome and follow the Daniel sequence with more detail. If one accepts the Scriptures as inspired, then it is not difficult to see that they do indeed purport to extend from the time of the prophets to the time of the end.

2. The year/day principle.

This principle, vital to historicism, has been challenged by the concept that Christ's kingdom was meant to be set up at His first coming, making the time periods short (three and one half literal years of persecution). Because of human failure, time continued for nearly 2,000 years, giving rise to the need to stretch out the time periods by the invention of the year/day principle. Is this view correct, or is the year/day principle inherent in the prophecies themselves?

To me, the evidence is irrefutable that the year/day principle was built right into the prophecies. The time periods are all expressed in code language, not in normal speech as would be used for literal time. "Until evening morning two thousand and three hundred" is not normal speech in Hebrew or English. The number should come first. "Evening morning" is a strange way to express time, as is "a time, two times, and half a time." Not only that, but 2300 is an unwieldy number (as if I were to say I weighed 1,760 ounces). Literal time would be called "six and a third years."

The peculiar use of numbers shows that the time was intended to be symbolic. Furthermore, the time periods, if taken literally, are very short: three and a half years of rule by the little horn

(Dan. 7:25), six and a third years until the sanctuary is cleansed (Dan. 8:14), and 10 days of persecution (Rev. 2:10)—no big deal!

Normally Bible prophecies cover many years: 400 years of Egyptian oppression (Gen. 15:13), 40 years of wilderness wandering (Num. 14:34), 70 years of captivity in Babylon (Jer. 25:11). The shortness of the times in Daniel and Revelation is a clue that they stand for much longer time. But how does one decipher the code? Ezekiel, a contemporary of Daniel, gives the clue—a day counts as a year (Eze. 4:6).

Daniel himself gives a wonderful example of the year/day principle in chapter 9: "Weeks seventy are cut off for your people" (verse 24). All scholars agree that this means 490 calendar years rather than a year and four months of literal time. The irregularities that scholars have noted in the expression "seventy weeks"³ show that the language is in code.

To me, the evidence is clear that the year/day principle is built into the prophecies themselves.

3. The connection between Daniel 8 and 9.

Adventists are unique in saying that the 70 weeks are cut off from the 2300 evenings and mornings. Are they right, especially since the two chapters are separated by a lapse of 12 years?

*I trembled as I saw
the church's scholars
and administrators
publicly grapple with
the issue.*



There is a logical connection between the two chapters. The reason Daniel was praying 12 years after the vision of Daniel 8 was that the time had come for God's people to go back to their own land. Already a new government had arisen—the 70 years of captivity were almost up. But Daniel feared that the vision of the 2300 evenings and mornings indicated a long delay in the restoration of the sanctuary.

Accordingly, his plea in chapter 9 was that God would stick to His promise that the captivity would be for only 70 years (Jer. 29:10; Dan. 9:2, 19). Daniel's concern was about the time and also about the fate of his people, the city, the sanctuary, and the mysterious "Prince of the host."

Gabriel came to answer these concerns. First, he addressed the question of time. He said, "Understand the *mar'eh*," a special word for "vision" (Dan. 9:23). The common word for vision in chapter 8 is *chazon*, referring to the beasts and horns (verses 1-3ff.). But in chapter 8 he had spoken about "the *mar'eh*" of the evenings and mornings! So in Daniel 9:23 when Gabriel said "Understand

the *mar'eh*," he was specifically focusing on the 2300 evenings and mornings!

Then Gabriel zeroed in on Daniel's other concerns. Daniel had been thinking of the 70 years of captivity; Gabriel now told him of another 70—70 weeks out of the 2300 evenings and mornings that were especially cut off for his people (Dan. 9:24). Daniel was concerned about the immediate future of his people (verses 18, 19), fearing the depredations of the evil little horn (Dan. 8:23-27). Gabriel had previously tried to explain that these events would occur in the distant future (verses 17, 19, 26).

Now, in compliance with Daniel's request, he explained the more immediate future of his people: the city and Temple would be rebuilt with great difficulty, Messiah the Prince would come and be killed to make atonement for sins (including the sins that Daniel had agonized about in his prayer), and then the city and Temple would again be destroyed. Gabriel links these actions with the little horn power he had told about in chapter 8. "The prince who is to come," who "destroys the city and sanctuary" (Dan. 9:26), is undoubtedly the little horn who affronts the Prince of the host and takes away his sanctuary (Dan. 8:11). Gabriel does not tell more about the desolating little horn of Daniel 8, except to say that the decreed punishment would finally be meted out on it (cf. Dan. 9:27 with Dan. 8:25).

It thus becomes clear that the 70 weeks overlap the beginning of the 2300 days, from the time of Jerusalem's restoration under Persia to its destruction under Rome.

4. Cleansing the sanctuary.

What is meant by "then the sanctuary shall be cleansed," in Daniel 8:14? Is it legitimate to jump from there to Leviticus 16 (the Day of Atonement chapter) to say that cleansing the sanctuary means a work of investigative judgment? Critics point out that the word for "cleansed" is not even the same word in both places. In Leviticus 16 it is *taher* and refers to the removal of the sins of Israel from the camp. In Daniel 8:14 it is *nisdaq* and means restoring the sanctuary after the attacks of the little horn, as described in verses 11, 12.

There are excellent reasons to believe that cleansing the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 means judgment apart from Leviticus 16.



An investigative judgment is clearly depicted in Daniel 7:9, 10. And Daniel 8 is an elaboration of Daniel 7! The sequence is the same: Medo-Persia, Greece, a little horn power (Rome) that lifts itself up and persecutes the saints. Then comes judgment in Daniel 7, with the parallel cleansing or making right the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14. Both chapters go on to conclude that the enemy power is destroyed (Dan. 7:26; 8:25).

But is it legitimate to connect Leviticus 16 to Daniel 8:14? I believe it is. In both the focus is upon the sanctuary. In both the sanctuary has been

defiled by the transgression of the professed people of God (the little horn power in Daniel is an apostate Christian power). In both the sanctuary is made right by a process of judgment—of lifting the blame for sin from God, His sanctuary, and His saints, and putting it upon the head of Satan (the scapegoat in Lev. 16:21) and Satan's cohort (the beast in Daniel 7:11). In both judgment is the last event followed by the setting up of the kingdom of God. In Leviticus the Day of Atonement celebration is followed by the Feast of Tabernacles, representing the final homecoming into God's kingdom. In Daniel the judgment is followed by the saints inheriting the kingdom (Dan. 7:27).

However, Leviticus and Daniel describe judgment from different perspectives. Leviticus pictures Israel at peace in its own sovereign state. God is judging His people, both faithful and unfaithful (Lev. 23:28, 29). Daniel views judgment from a later perspective: God's people are no longer sovereign, but are under enemy domination. God judges the enemy power, thus distinguishing between those who are faithful to Him and those who follow a counterfeit system. His true saints, vindicated by the investigative judgment, are "found written in the book" (Dan. 12:1). Both Leviticus and Daniel describe a work of judgment from the sanctuary to deal with sin.

On Solid Ground

Some Adventists are disturbed that no other Christian scholars interpret Daniel 8 and 9 the way we do. Can a doctrine be true if no other Christians have discovered it?

Yes, it can. Of this I'm absolutely convinced. We've not been following cunningly devised fables. We stand on solid ground.

The Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, published from 1982 to 1993 by the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference and edited mainly by Frank B. Holbrook, is available through any Adventist Book Center.

Liberal scholars believe Daniel actually lived in the second century B.C., in the time of the persecuting Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes, and that he was only pretending to write from the sixth century. The rise of Persia and Greece, which seemed to be prophecy, would then have been actual history when Daniel wrote. For evidence that Daniel was written in the sixth century, see Gerhard Hasel, "Establishing a Date for the Book of Daniel," DARCOM Series II, pp. 84-144.

The noun for "weeks" is in an irregular gender. For a detailed discussion, see Volume I of the DARCOM series, chapters 3 and 4.

My Dream . . .



In 1957 I started life as a soy milk baby. In a distant relative's home I have listened to the accounts of the health message vision. I've attended Adventist schools from nearly start to finish. I've been baptized and camp meetingized, and read *Proph-
etess of Health*. I watched as an old friend was incinerated

at Waco. The tears of pain and joy mingle.

Now I have a dream that the church will be a place in which our only hero is Jesus Christ, and that all others—pastors, pioneers, and parishioners—are simply fellow travelers, not necessarily role models.

I hope that the "truth" becomes just that—the truth. And that the search for truth is a search for a greater understanding of an omnipotent God. The search will be more important than guarding the past understanding of truth. I hope that doing the "right" thing becomes less important than understanding *why* things are right.

I dream that the church will be a place in which members can be the people they really are. A place they can bring their "Gentile" friends for nourishment and not only for conversion.

I hope for an acceptance of scholars, visionaries, scientists, and yes, even apparel choices. I wish for the willingness to question the accepted givens, for a desire to learn the reasons and meanings of passed-down visions that many in my generation can no longer see.

Cindy Rae Hile Gulka is a dental hygienist who lives with her husband in Reno, Nevada.



Recently retired, Dr. Beatrice Neall was a professor of theology at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.



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God's Rainbow

BY G. RALPH THOMPSON

Seventh-day Adventists today number more than 8 million from almost every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. We are a true United Nations, a family drawn from more than 200 countries. What the United Nations has been unable to do politically, God has done in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Out of many peoples He has made one body.

tional church. We are God's rainbow family of the last days.

Although the world headquarters is located in North America, 89 percent of our membership resides outside the United States. In recognition of this fact, the major councils of the church—the General Conference session and the Annual Council—periodically convene outside North America.

The United States still has the largest number of Seventh-day Adventists, followed by Brazil and the Philippines. But most Adventists now live in Mexico and the Caribbean area, followed by South America and the two divisions that occupy most of the African continent—Eastern Africa and the Africa-Indian Ocean Division. All of these divisions now have more than 1 million members each.

The growth of a world church, however, brings specific challenges:

■ **The youth factor.** In many of the fast-growing areas in the developing world, the majority of our church members are under 30 years of age. What a vast army of youthful enthusiasm! But these young people want to be involved not only in the outreach of evangelism and soul winning but in administration and decision-making.

So we may have to adjust the way we do things. Not our fundamental doctrines, but our methods and plans. Older adults will have to be tolerant and understanding of younger members. Their music and worship may seem somewhat different, but *different* doesn't necessarily mean *wrong*. At the same time, young people will have to respect the preferences and tastes of the older members of the church family.

■ **The diversity factor.** The church today has more non-Caucasian Adventists than members of European

descent. The majority of our church members come from growing, developing countries of the world, which reflects tremendous success in our world evangelism and outreach.

■ **The leadership factor.** With the fall of colonialism after



PHOTO: U.S. CHRISTIAN CENTER

A General Conference session highlights our diversity. We are a multiracial, multiethnic, multilingual, and multina-

Family

*The Adventist Church today
is amazingly diverse.*

World War II, national leadership in government became the norm. Soon these changes began to affect the church also. Today in every country we see strong national leadership on the local level, unions, and the divisions.

The role of missionaries from the developed nations has also radically changed—from supervisor to partner and participant. With governing boards and committees reconstructed, and missionary and national working together as equals, the change was wrenching and radical. But the church weathered the storm and has done very well as a whole. Today a new breed of missionary goes out, not to supervise, but to work with nationals of the country to which he or she is going. Nationals, on the other hand, have learned to respect and appreciate these fellow workers who come to serve, not to rule.

■ **The economic factor.** About 2,000 new members join the church every day, but this growth also brings financial stress. Our new brothers and sisters do not necessarily come from the rich, highly educated, well-placed families of society. So the church today faces economic challenges resulting from the extraordinary growth of the church among peoples who live in weaker economic surroundings versus the slower growth of those who live in the more developed, sophisticated, and economically blessed nations of the earth.

Here, then, is the tension: money versus members. How shall we ensure adequate representation for all, including those whose financial ability helps to underwrite the major financial challenges of the church, but who are smaller in numbers because of slower growth? Where shall we draw the line between people, leadership, and money? “He who pays the piper calls the tune”—Is this to be the deciding factor in the governance of the church on the local church level, the conference, the union, the division, or the General Conference?

Shall we split off and form our own little groups of national churches divided by race, culture, color, national origin, and wealth? Or shall we remain a world body recognizing that we are not the Seventh-day Adventist Church *of* Africa, *of* North America, *of* South America, *of* the islands of the sea, but the Seventh-day Adventist Church *in* all those countries?

■ **The theological factor.** How diverse we are! Adventists come from the uneducated, meagerly educated, and highly educated; and from the rich theological backgrounds of higher education as well as the simple acceptance of a “thus saith the Lord.” But despite the great differences of our backgrounds and approaches, we all hold to the fundamental doctrines that make us a distinctive people, because our beliefs are based on the Word of God.

What holds this incredibly diverse and complex church together? In my judgment, three things: our 27 fundamental beliefs, the Sabbath school lessons, and our world policy and polity. All our administrators and committees adhere to the same *Working Policy*, while our *Church Manual* procedures, which can be changed only at a General Conference session, affect the

way we govern the church. These three factors help keep us together despite our cultural differences.

Of course, there will always be room for differences of opinion among us. Our diversity, even though it lends to complexity, ought not frustrate us. We each will have to learn to understand people from different backgrounds and cultures. Everything cannot always be seen in black and white. While we all must hold the same fundamental truths, I believe in plurality of approaches, and diversity of gifts and methods in the work of God.

Beyond all these issues, the greatest challenge we face is spiritual. Only the Holy Spirit can bring unity in diversity. Each group of us in this great multinational family must earnestly seek the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to help us in our daily living and in our witnessing for Jesus Christ. As we face the future, let us stand as a united body in Christ, remembering that it is “not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit,” says the Lord (Zech. 4:6).

The bottom-line question is Can common belief in the truths of Adventism override the national, cultural, linguistic, and racial differences that separate peoples? When tribalism, ethnicity, and cultural differences clash with Christianity, can the gospel win out?

Many thought leaders tell us that Christianity always loses this battle. As we face the twenty-first century, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has the opportunity to prove them wrong.

G. Ralph Thompson is secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Why Are We Still Here?

The question that haunts the church

Why are we still here? The question consumes the vast majority of Adventists as we face the 150th anniversary of the 1844 expectation. How do you answer it? How would you finish the sentence “We are still here because . . .”?

It would be enlightening, indeed, if it were possible to tap into the responses of all 8 million Adventists around the world—enlightening and instructive. Because I suspect that many of the divisive theological issues facing our church today derive directly or indirectly from the way we relate to that question. Our response—though often subliminal—determines whether we are happy, attractive, hopeful Christians or dissatisfied, critical, and morose. Whether we are daily anchoring ourselves ever more deeply in Christ or struggling to showcase our own victory.

Facing the Question

In a narrow sense (that is to say, in the Adventist context), the question is a reasonable one, raised against the background of statements by Ellen G. White as early as the mid-nineteenth century advocating the imminence of the Advent.¹ Acknowledging in 1849, for example, that “time has continued a few years longer than [we] expected,” she neverthe-

less issued this sobering warning: “I saw that the time for Jesus to be in the most holy place was nearly finished and that time can last but a very little longer.”²

“Time is almost finished,” she wrote the following year, and new converts coming into the church “will have to learn in a few months” what had taken her and other oldtimers years to master.³ In 1856 she “was shown” that some in a group assembled for a conference in Battle Creek “will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus.”⁴

If such statements—and there are others in this vein⁵—are to be taken at face value, the delay (from the human standpoint, at least) is not simply apparent, but real. Something happened. Something went wrong. If we can put our finger on it, then we will have found at least a partial answer to the main question before us.

Her Own Position

As we might expect, the passage of time made it inevitable that Ellen G. White herself should confront the issue of a delay in the fulfillment of her own expectations and predictions. How did she respond?

In one place she wrote as follows:

“If all who had labored unitedly in the work of 1844 had received the third angel’s message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work would have been completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people.”⁶

Can anyone have any doubt as to what that statement gives as the fundamental reason why God waits? Clearly, *it is the unfulfillment of the gospel commission*. God does not want “anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9, NIV).

Ellen White’s statements in explanation of the delay almost invariably contained two elements: (1) a perishing world unwarned, and (2) a lethargic remnant failing in its mission.

Around 1862, for example, she referred to a satanic “death stupor” resting on God’s people while “all heaven is astir” over the proclamation of the final warning.⁷ In 1883 she pointed to the “unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife” among the believers as responsible for their long sojourn in this world.⁸ “Unbelief,” she said in 1893, rests upon the church “like the pall of death,” preventing it from “imparting the light to those who know not the precious truth.”⁹ While “multitudes” perish, she wrote around the turn of the century, “few of the professed fol-



lowers of Christ are burdened for these souls.”¹⁰

“Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy,” she wrote in 1900, “Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the City of God.”¹¹

Her emphasis was the same in 1909, six years before her death: “If every watchman on the walls of Zion had given the trumpet a certain sound, the world might ere this have heard the message of warning. But the work is years behind.”¹²

On the basis of this philosophy she could say, in reference to 2 Peter 3:12, that “by giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord’s return.”¹³

No Linkage

I do not find in Ellen G. White’s own account any attempt to link the delay to the idea of a perfect, sinless remnant. That linkage simply is not there. Her references to the spiritual state of God’s people have the same tone as those to the world in general. God does not want His professed people to be lost any more than He wants the world to go down to ruin.

This comes through clearly in the following statement, written in 1868: “The long night of gloom is trying; but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God’s unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason for so long delay.”¹⁴

As every Adventist knows, she holds up before us the highest spiritual and moral standards. “Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children,” she said. “Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached.”¹⁵ But she *does not* advocate that the time of the Advent is somehow delayed by our failure to reach a prescribed standard of righteousness. She is very clear: the coming of the Lord “will not

tarry past the time that the message is borne to all nations, tongues, and peoples.”¹⁶ That’s her fundamental focus.

The “Character of Christ” Statement

A key statement that factors in Adventist discussions of this kind is the following: “Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.”¹⁷

But the statement does not appear in isolation. It comes with much context around it—a careful study of which will show that while it obviously has an inward-looking dimension, its fundamental focus is outward.

“The character of Christ” here is equivalent to “the spirit of unselfish love and labor for others,” a concept that appears in a parallel thought across the page and in the same context.¹⁸

Ellen White’s burden throughout the chapter in question was that of incarnational ministry. Unselfish ministry. *Ministry patterned after that of Jesus*. Read the chapter for yourself and see if this is not so.

When we speak like this, some think we’re watering down the “straight testimony,” that we’re making light of the kind of deep spiritual preparation necessary to meet the Lord. But that is to misunderstand the awesome power of the kind of ministry envisioned, and the strength of spiritual commitment and surrender from which it flows. Hear it again in the words of Ellen G. White: “If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one. But . . . we carry around with us a bundle of self. . . . It is our privilege to lay this burden at the feet of Christ and in its place take the *character and similitude* of Christ.”¹⁹

My Dream . . .



My dream for the church is to see every congregation a vibrant congregation.

Small groups in my church are working to accomplish the three essentials of a local church's ministry to its community: nurturing members, reclaiming missing members, and reaching out to those around them.

My dream is that small groups in every church will continue to develop and spread the Holy Spirit's influence throughout the church, the nation, and the world.

Benjamin F. Bandy II, 52, is married and has three grown children. He is an internal auditor for the Inspector General's Office, United States Department of Defense. He attends the Emmanuel Adventist Church in Brinklow, Maryland.

The emphasis in the judgment will be on this kind of ministry. The whole world will be divided into just two groups. Those whom the King commends will have demonstrated in their lives the practical outworking of the character (or spirit) of Christ. Says the King to them: "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me" (Matt. 25:35, 36).

This is the kind of ministry that will commend the gospel to rich and poor, and speed its message across racial, cultural, and national barriers. The complete opposite of navel gazing, it will arrest the attention of a cynical generation. That's what Mrs. White is talking about in her "character of Christ" statement.²⁰

From Another Perspective

But let's return to the basic question as to why we're still here. We have conceded that in the narrow sense it is a reasonable and valid query. But is it so in the wider context?

This opens up the issue as one that confronts the whole Christian church and not just Seventh-day Adventists. For clearly the New Testament writers spoke about the Advent with an urgency equal to that of Mrs. White. If anything, they were, in a manner of speaking, further from the mark than she—for they wrote earlier.

But whether in the case of Paul, or Peter, or Ellen White, the emphasis on the nearness of the Advent was always given for a practical purpose, for the sake of the way we live and witness in the world—never for the sake of time as such.

When it came to the raw question of time, Paul sought to keep in check the overly enthusiastic, some of whom had even claimed that the coming had already occurred. "That day will not come," Paul said, "until . . . the man of lawlessness is revealed" (2 Thess. 2:3, NIV). And Ellen G. White sought to calm things a bit when she observed that "the Lord intimates a delay before the morning finally dawns."²¹

So while the question as to why we're still here is a reasonable one in view of our history, it will weigh us down—spiritually and emotionally—if we do not at some point break free of that history and see the crass presumptuousness of it. This is what Jesus tried to get across to His disciples when on the eve of the Ascension He told them plainly: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority" (Acts 1:6, 7, NIV).

It's not really your business, Jesus was gently saying to them. And there is a sense in which the same is true for us.²²

As Seventh-day Adventists we need to recapture the concept of the sovereignty of God. We need ever to keep in mind that from God's standpoint there is really no delay, and we shouldn't get uptight about it. "Like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay." In heaven's council, said Ellen White, speaking about the First Advent, "the hour for the coming of Christ had been determined. When the great clock of time pointed to that hour, Jesus was born in Bethlehem."²³

And thus it will be with the Second Advent. "The apparent tarrying is not so in reality, for at the appointed time our Lord will come."²⁴

So why are we still here? Ultimately, only God knows. *And only God needs to know!*

²⁰ By its very nature, this topic will call for heavy use of the Ellen White writings.

²¹ *Early Writings*, p. 58.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²³ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 131, 132.

²⁴ For a convenient summary and assessment of similar statements, see Ralph Neall, *How Long, O Lord?* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1988), pp. 47-50.

²⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 116.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 260, 261.

²⁷ *Evangelism*, p. 696.

²⁸ *Christian Service*, p. 37.

²⁹ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 303.

³⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 450.

³¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 29.

³² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 633.

³³ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 194; cf. *Evangelism*, p. 694.

³⁴ *Messages to Young People*, p. 40.

³⁵ *Evangelism*, p. 697.

³⁶ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 189, 190. (Italics supplied.)

³⁹ For a detailed study on the statement, see Roy Adams, "What Did She Mean?" *Adventist Review*, Sept. 3, 1992, p. 4.

⁴⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 192.

⁴¹ I was delighted to see this emphasis in Arnold Wallenkamp's new book *The Apparent Delay* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1994), pp. 49-54.

⁴² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 32.

⁴³ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 270.



Roy Adams is an associate editor of the *Adventist Review*.

A Gift of Love

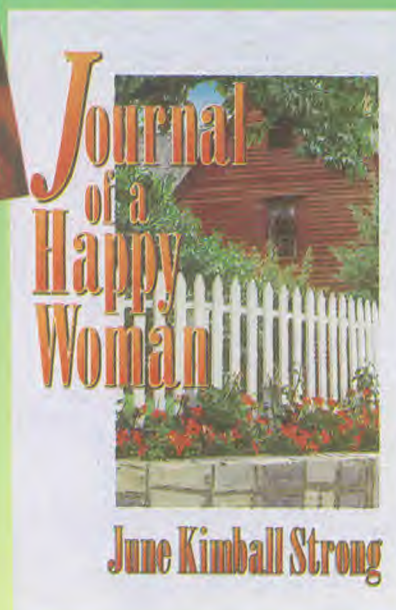
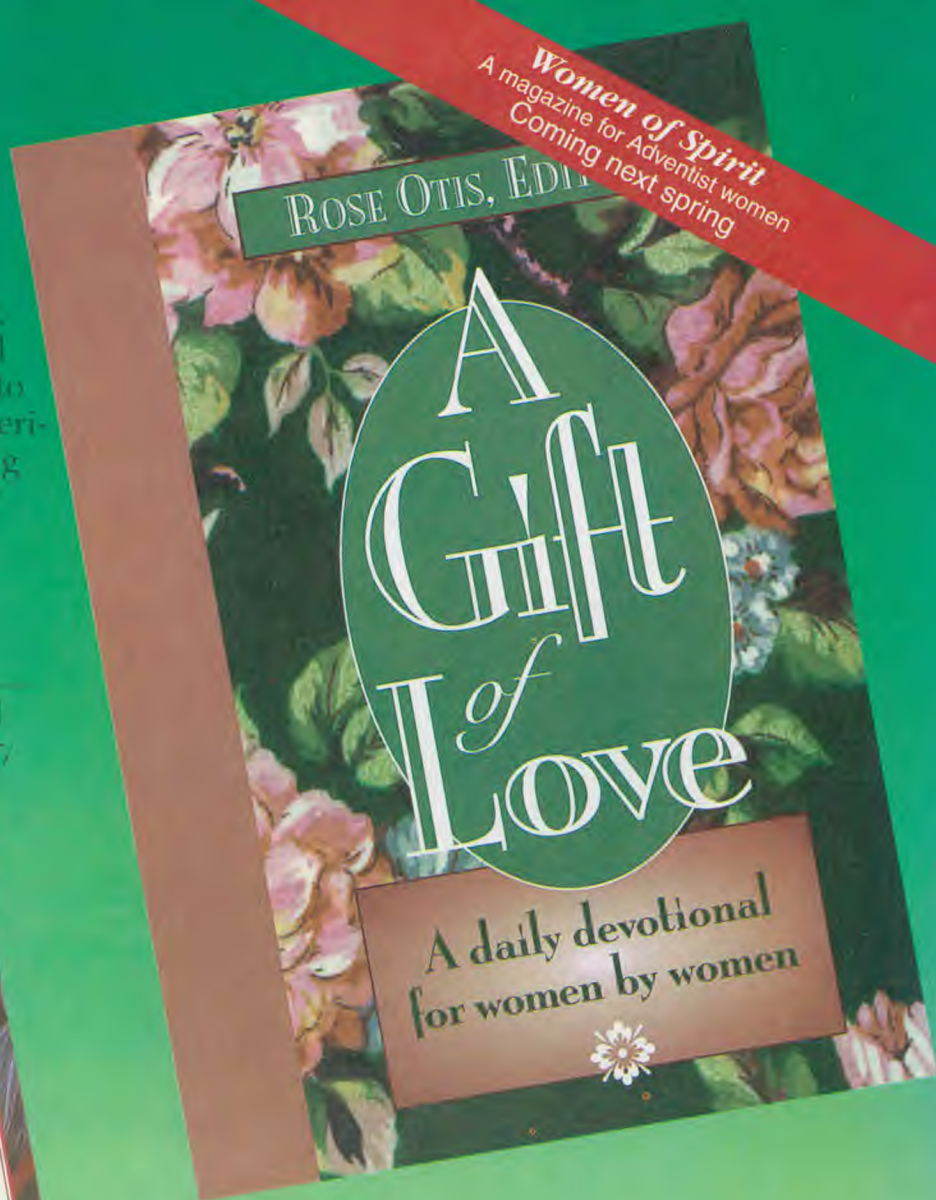
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The Land That

The first 150 years of Adventist mission is amazing. We have grown from a small band of reformers to the most widespread Protestant body in the world. Now is an appropriate time to look back and thank God for what He has done, ask where we presently stand, and—most crucially—question what God is calling us to do as we enter the twenty-first century.



REVIEW AND HERALD

Joshua told Israel that “all the land of the nations that remain” had been allotted for their inheritance. God would fulfill His promise and give it to them. We have not been commissioned to take literal land, but to call the world’s peoples to belief in Jesus and His second coming. What is the “land that remains” for us, and how would God lead us to possess it?

I want to examine our progress in five different areas—number of members, countries entered, mission strategy, mission sending agencies, and doctrinal influences. In view of this progress, I will suggest the directions we must move in as we take the “land that remains.”

Progress in Members

At the beginning of 1994 Adventist world mem-



MYRON WIDMER

bership was approximately 8 million in a world population of slightly more than 5.6 billion.² At least two interpretations can be made of these figures and how we are doing in relationship to world evangelization.

The pessimist who reads *numerically* says we are falling further and further behind. The number of people in the world is increasing more each year than the number we are winning in our evangelism.

The optimist reads *proportions* and *rates*. In 1950 there was one SDA for about every 3,300 people in the world. In 1975 the figure was one per 1,480, while in 1994 it is one per 700. As you can see, the figures have improved markedly.

The world population annual growth rate is a little more than 1.7 percent, while the current Adventist annual growth rate worldwide is about 6.2 percent. If that same rate continues, we will double in membership in nearly 12 years. That growth rate is fractionally higher than the rate for all evangelical Christians, but below the more than 9 percent growth rate of Pentecostals.

Other considerations aside, we can hardly be called a fringe sect when Adventists are the largest Protestant group in Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, French Guiana, Guam, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Peru, the Philippines, and Venezuela.

Progress in Countries Entered

When the first *SDA Yearbook* came out in 1883, it listed 32 denominational entities. Only five were outside of the U.S., and all of these were in Europe. By 1914 the yearbook listed 108 countries in which the church carried on evangelistic work, and by 1946 the number had reached 226.

Early Adventists took the words of Matthew 24:14 seriously. The end of the world and the second coming of Jesus were closely tied to the spread of the message to the whole world. Reaching all the countries of the world was important.

Counting countries was helpful in earlier times, but today does not generally give a clear picture of Adventist missionary progress and the needs of the world. Although the geopolitical makeup of



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REVIEW AND HERALD

Remains



Conquering spiritual Canaan

BY JON L. DYBDAHL

the world and the total count of countries has changed, it still is instructive that the number of countries in which the SDA Church exists in 1994, according to the *SDA Yearbook*, is actually fewer (204) than the number given in the yearbook for 1946 (226).

Between 1976 and 1994 the number of countries entered grew from 193 to 204, while the number of countries in existence increased from 221 to 233. To address the problem of ever-changing definable countries and to get a more focused picture of our task, the church is defining the world in a new way.



REVIEW AND HERALD

Progress in Mission Strategy

In the earliest days the church felt that it need not work outside of North America because representatives of the whole world had come to America.³ The whole world could be reached in the United States. Besides, for a church of a few thousand members, reaching the North American continent was a big enough task.

As time passed, our vision grew. In 1874 the church sent its first official missionary, J. N. Andrews, to Switzerland. In those early days of

Adventist cross-cultural mission outside the U.S., strategy concentrated on reaching large world areas that were already Christian.⁴

As the church grew and spread, this emphasis on continents or large areas gradually developed into an emphasis on countries.

In 1986 Neal Wilson, then president of the General Conference, sought and received permission to develop a global mission strategy. One result was the publication of the *Global Mission Datebook* in 1991.

This book presents a new strategy. It lists, by world division, population segments of 1 million people, giving data on each. The result is a listing of 5,234 world population segments of 1 million, with data on the church's presence or lack thereof in each. Before 1990, 2,946 of those segments had been entered, leaving 2,288 without an Adventist presence. These population segments are specially targeted for mission. Periodic updates showing progress are sent to the appropriate church leaders.

Some students of mission have been suggesting that alongside the emphasis on popu-

lation segments of 1 million, a new definition of target should be added. That target is *people groups*—identifiable ethnic, linguistic, or social groups. This approach recognizes that one country may have numerous ethnic groups and that an ethnic group may live in several different countries.

This emphasis on people groups better fits the “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” of Revelation 14:6. While figures vary, one major Protestant mission organization lists 11,000 people groups in the world who have not heard the Christian message.

The new emphasis on 1 million population segments and people groups gives a much clearer target and a more finely tuned strategy to mission work. Clearly seeing our task helps us see the needs and respond. We can rejoice that this step is being made.

Progress in Mission Sending Agencies

In the earliest days of Adventist mission, many people did mission work without organizational support. They had a burden to share our message in new areas, and they did. But soon most Adventist missionaries were sent directly by the church organization. Certainly this was the case by the early 1900s and remained the situation for years.

When I was sent to Thailand in 1968, I knew of no other way to go but with a General Conference Secretariat call. That situation is rapidly changing in North America and likely will soon change in other areas of the world as well.

When the Institute of World Mission planned our first young adult mission conference at Andrews in 1991, all Adventist organizations that sent missionaries were invited. We wanted them to recruit conference attendees for mission service. We knew of a few “sending organizations,” but the more we looked, the more we found. By the time the conference took place we had a list of about 30 different Adventist groups that help people serve as missionaries. We were so impressed that we put out a resource booklet listing information on these various entities.⁵

Three types of organizations exist. First are denominationally financed entities. Many of these groups—such as ADRA, International Teachers’ Service, and English language schools—operate somewhat indepen-



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dently of each other, with little contact except to have all missionary names approved by committee action.

Second, there are denominationally sponsored organizations. An example of this type is the New York Van Ministries.

Third are the supporting ministries. Although financially independent, many of these groups cooperate fully with the church.

If mission to the unreached is their main goal, they are usually truly supportive; those whose chief concern is theological reform are often difficult. *Theological* groups are not the same as *mission* groups.

Two well-known independent mission entities are Maranatha Volunteers International, which sponsors short-term mission trips that are usually building projects, and Adventist Frontier Missions, whose aim is to send missionaries to unreached people groups.

Rather than seeing this proliferation of mission groups as a threat, we should see them as evidence of life. Any church that has people committed enough to support new mission endeavors should count itself blessed.

Three other developments are closely connected.

First, not only are new mission agencies being born, but new ways of sending as well. While the numbers of long-term missionaries have decreased, short-termers have increased tremendously. Many people have taken a mission trip to Latin America or the former Soviet Union, or have served a year as a volunteer. Such growth in special project missions, student missionaries, and volunteers is to be welcomed, but we still need longer-term missionaries as the backbone of our efforts.

Another development is the beginning of a tentmaker mission program. Tentmakers are like Paul—employed and receiving their money from outside the church, but using free time and other resources in the cause of mission. Such workers can often enter areas regular missionaries are forbidden to go.

Last but not least, many places that recently were only receiving missionaries are now becoming missionary senders. We should pray that others will follow the vision of the 1,000 missionary movement, recently begun in the Far Eastern Division, which sends Asian missionaries to unreached parts of Asia.

Progress in Doctrine

Seventh-day Adventists did not start as a denominational organization. In fact, we hesitated to organize, as we didn't want to become like other denominations, which had mistreated us for our Adventist beliefs. We started as a loose organization tied together by our conviction about basic doctrine. Our main focus had to do with Bible doctrines, not administration. To share Adventist convictions was to be an Adventist.

A very challenging phenomenon is taking place in our world. More and more Christians are coming to have basic beliefs similar to ours, but most do not consider themselves Seventh-day

Adventists. How do we view people who share some of our convictions but not our denominational affiliation? Is our mission accomplished when people believe like we do, or only when they formally join our denomination?

The doctrine that has probably spread the furthest is the most basic of all Adventist beliefs—the literal, imminent second coming of Jesus. While the majority of Christians at the time of William Miller believed the Second Coming would take place after 1,000 years of peace, most evangelicals now believe in an imminent, premillennial return of Christ.

Some details differ, but many of these people could be called “Adventist” on this basic point. In essence, much of Christendom has come over to our side.

Something similar, although to a lesser degree, has happened in two other areas—spiritual gifts and the state of people in death.

In the early days of the movement our teaching on the prophetic gift of Ellen White was called the “continuity of spiritual gifts.” We believed that the gifts of the Holy Spirit promised to the church continued to the present day. Most other Christians believed they ceased in the apostolic age.

Under the impact of the charismatic movement, a sizable minority—if not a majority—of Christians now believe in the continuity of spiritual gifts. We may not agree with all that the charismatic movement stands for, but *we* were charismatic in basic theology before they were.

Many Christians, especially the more theologically informed, have also come to believe like Adventists about the condition of humans in death. There is wide acknowledgement of the Greek origin of the belief in the natural immortality of the soul and that the Bible emphasizes the resurrection.

Also interesting is that more and more Sunday churches in America are starting Saturday services. This includes an evangelical church with one of the largest weekend attendances in the country. While this is mainly a matter of convenience, it does indicate that many Christians are less convicted of Sunday sacredness and more open to worship on other days of the week.

Although it is hard to quote statistics on this issue, several major Adventist belief convictions have or are in the process of winning on the doctrinal battlefield. How do we rate and evaluate our success? Is this part of our mission?

How Much Land to Conquer?

In the light of all this, what are the directions we should take? What should we be doing now as we move into mission for the twenty-first century? Here are some suggestions:

■ *Evaluate* local and regional areas as to Adventist presence, rate of growth, proportion of members to population, and general health of mission. While overall the church growth rate is good, some areas are stagnant and need special help. Good stewardship demands we look carefully at how we are doing.

■ *Accept and act* on the strategy of Global Mission to reach people groups and 1 million population segments. We must educate peo-





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ple and then inspire them to act with renewed vigor to reach the 40 percent of the world that can be reached for Christ only by cross-cultural missionaries. Unreached groups and cities need special attention.

■ *Welcome and integrate* new mission organizations and methodologies so the vigor of special initiative can be combined with coordinated strategy and training. We must be open to honest people with a mission, yet encourage cooperation wherever possible.

■ *Adapt* administrative, financial, and procedural structures to facilitate the new mission strategies and realities. New situations and challenges demand new policies and ways of doing things. May God give us the grace to truly be a mission-driven organization.

■ *Involve* the whole church in mission. We must find ways for young and old to be enthusiastically involved in mission. Missionary receiving areas must begin to view themselves as missionary sending churches, or the task can never be completed. Those who cannot go must learn to pray and give.

■ *Search* for meaningful answers to the theological and ethical issues raised in connection with our mission. Some of these key issues are:

How do the desperate physical needs of the world that demand relief and development relate to evangelism? As ADRA grows worldwide and we face a crisis like AIDS, how should we as Adventists use our resources and view our mission?

We initially built our theology to define ourselves in a Christian world. How do we explain ourselves meaningfully in an increasingly secular Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu world?

Are we trying to win people to our convictions or to our organization, or both? How do we relate to those who believe like us but are not affiliated with us?



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■ *Fasten* the church's mission on prayer and spiritual commitment. All the money and strategy in the world cannot replace the power of prayer, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.

Mission must be founded on a spiritual basis. In particular, we must facilitate a widespread movement of prayer for mission.

On the Brink

The church stands where Joshua stood. We are on the brink of the heavenly Canaan, but some parts of God's territory need to be claimed for Him. Some land remains. Will we move on?

We must not wallow in pessimism and defeatism at the magnitude of the task. The Lord of the universe is the Lord of mission, and *He* will make good on His promises.

On the other hand, we must avoid a shallow triumphalism. The devil and his powers of evil are still loose and active. Much hard spiritual and mission work remains. This challenge demands our best and is our top priority.

In the end, by *God's* power, all the land that remains can be won for the kingdom.

¹ Joshua 23:4, NIV.

² *SDA Yearbook*, 1994.

³ Gottfried Oosterwal, *Mission Possible*, pp. 24, 25.

⁴ The *SDA Yearbook* for 1994 states that the first non-Christian country was entered in 1894—20 years after the first missionary.

⁵ For a copy of this booklet, write to the Institute of World Mission, Sutherland House, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan 39104; or call 616-471-2522. Enclose \$1 for postage and handling.



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REVIEW AND HERALD



ADRA



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Jon L. Dybdahl is director of the Institute of World Mission at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

How Then Should We Live?

Living in the midst of this secular age of strained and broken relationships, drifting morals, rampant self-indulgence, and individualism, and knowing that Christ is winding up this world's affairs soon, we might ask, How then should we live?

The disciples knew how—they dropped everything and followed Jesus, some even to martyrdom.

The early Christians knew how—in the midst of harassment and persecution, they willingly shared their earthly goods with fellow Christians and gathered daily to pray, sing, and read the Scriptures, all to strengthen their newfound faith in Jesus.

And Adventist pioneers knew how to live—they dedicated their lives and possessions to proclaim the most wonderful news, that Jesus was coming back *soon!*

But do *we*? Do we know how to live, knowing that Christ's coming seems right at the door and that millions, rather, billions, of persons are perishing for lack of hearing the everlasting gospel?

The apostle Peter raises the same concern: "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire!" (2 Peter 3:11, 12, RSV).

Indeed, what sort of persons ought we to be today? Today, 150 years since our church pioneers thought Christ's coming was imminent, even within hours. Today, knowing our movement's prophetic beginning, our distinct God-given commission, and knowing without a doubt that Jesus will give eternal life to all those who love and accept Him.

How then should *we* live?

First, we must daily renew our relationship with Jesus. Adventist Christians must begin where all Christians begin—at the cross, the heartbeat of Christianity. There we find Jesus—our sinless, crucified, risen Saviour and heavenly high priest, who is the core, the hope, of our lives! Nothing else really matters. Nothing else holds such eternal significance. Nothing else gives such meaning to our lives than knowing that Jesus gave up all heaven and died on the cross for us and now mediates His grace to us from heaven.

At the center of our faith is Jesus. Not doctrines. Not rules. Not policies. Not works.

Just Jesus.

And that's enough!

He's our friend, redeemer, Lord, intercessor, and coming king.

Each day we must peer into the mirror of His beauty. When we do, we cannot help seeing our sinfulness in all its wretchedness. We are constrained to acknowledge Him as our Saviour. Then we

must fall before Him with repentant hearts and welcome the Spirit-generated craving for Him to take control of our lives. To guide us. To transform us. To make us completely new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17).

Our first work, then, must be to fall *daily* before God—acknowledging His lordship and committing our lives to Him. Next comes time with His Word, His practical guidebook for living happy, healthy, holy lives—through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Second, we must recognize our privileges. After renewing our relationship with Christ, He offers to us one of the greatest privileges ever known to humankind—becoming ambassadors and ministers for Him. His spokespersons. His nurturers. He entrusts to us the most precious gift and responsibility ever told—the fantastic message of eternal salvation by faith in Christ (verses 18-21).

No longer are we mere humans consigned to a meaningless existence on earth. Now we're somebody! Ambassadors of God's heavenly kingdom! Ministers to God's people! And we have a purpose—to tell everyone about Jesus, His atoning sacrifice, His second coming, and His free gift of eternal life, offered to anyone who will accept His saving grace.

What a life! What a mission! Becoming an ambassador and a minister impacts everything we are and do—our thinking, our lifestyle, our relationships, our worship,

We must begin at the cross, the heartbeat of Christianity.

BY MYRON WIDMER

and our use of resources.

Admittedly, it is sometimes a struggle to keep our mission front and center. The fast pace of life constantly seeks to control our agenda, to divert our attention and energies away from our heavenly calling.

But God gives us strength when we ask. All of heaven's resources are at our disposal, just for our asking.

And so, with our relationship with God refreshed, our calling as ambassadors and ministers reaffirmed, we can now put our lives, our mission, and everything that clamors for our attention into proper perspective.

Third, we must strengthen our family relationships. Our work as ambassadors and gospel ministers must begin at home and be lived at home. We can be Christian fakes in public, but not at home. Many have said it well: "If we work to win the whole world for Christ but have ignored our families in the process, we have missed the most important part."

Our families must come first. Whether a spouse or children or parents or extended families, our family members must be the first recipients of our love and soul-winning efforts. We must talk openly of Jesus and how much He means to us. We must find creative ways of passing on our faith to our loved ones—particularly our young people.

In addition, we must stand solidly in defense of the institution of marriage—both in our commitment to the sanctity of the husband-wife relationship and to the creation of homes where Christ is present. We must work hard to make our family units into nurturing havens—havens where we can create strong families in the midst of societies now reaping the ill benefits of:

❑ Undisciplined parents who put earning money and enjoying personal leisure ahead of their children's needs.

❑ Children saddled with incredible cares or running wild without loving constraint.

❑ Confused homes where lines of authority are blurred.

❑ Homes in turmoil because of stressed or broken marriages.

❑ Parents who abdicate their God-given responsibilities and expect the government or the church to fulfill their role in teaching their children spirituality, values, and good work habits.

I believe God is asking us to put our families first in our ministry for Him. Strong Christians will make strong families, and strong families will make strong Christians. More than the fear of being held accountable to God for our children and families, what would it be like to spend eternity without them?

Fourth, we must build up our relationships with others. The gospel is best accepted by being shared from person to person, so we must commit ourselves to building relationships with others—be they our neighbors, fellow church members, coworkers, or business acquaintances.

Impersonal approaches just don't do it. They may awaken an interest, but the gospel needs the human touch.

Our desire to live godly lives should include the commitment to awakening and refreshing another's spiritual life. And in the process, our own will flourish and be strengthened.

Fifth, we must commit our resources to God. Words without actions will prove we're just a lot of hot air. Do we say we'll commit ourselves to God, but refuse to give our resources? We can fool ourselves, our neighbors, or even our families, but not God. He sees right through us.

And the way we spend our resources—our time, energies, mind, influence, money—is a good indicator of what we have committed ourselves to. When we spend more time watching TV or going to sporting events than working in some way as ambassadors and ministers for God's kingdom, we're saying a lot about our priorities.

Everything seems to be clamoring for our attention these days—work, family, friends, and even our church. Each one could occupy our entire time, energies, and money and still not be satisfied.

But we must remember our Christian priorities and consider the word "balance." No one is asking us to spend all day praying or giving Bible studies or helping the poor. Not even God. But if we believe that Jesus Christ can make a positive difference in someone's life now and for eternity, then we must make sure that we prioritize the demands placed upon our resources and ensure that we are not neglecting our distinct calling in these last days.

How then should we live?

With our eyes on Jesus—who alone gives meaning to our lives and empowers us by His Spirit to become His sons and daughters, ambassadors and ministers.



Myron Widmer is an associate editor of the Adventist Review, a husband, and father of three children.

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The Future Shape



of the Church

God is changing His church.

BY WALTER DOUGLAS

Many concerned Adventists are asking, “What, in practical terms, will the church of the future be like?” These sincere leaders and laity in our worldwide Adventist community are not trying to escape the pressing theological and ecclesiastical questions about the mission and nature of our church. Their questions and concerns arise out of their high expectation for the church’s witness in an increasingly secular and self-sufficient environment.

We must resist the inclination to hold on to old patterns of thinking and acting, and move creatively and boldly into the future. We cannot remain as we are. We have never done so, and we never will. Time and history are changing us. God Himself, I believe, is and will continue to change His church, despite our dry periods of faith, our fear of the future, and our fear of change.

We can say hello to the future with confidence and assurance as we remind ourselves that the church’s future is in God’s hands. He *will always* do what is best for us. We who are His agents can either decide to change and thus participate in shaping the church of the future, or else the church will take shape without our insight and goodwill.

Success Fails

To begin, I believe that the church must be more consciously shaped by its theological understanding of itself than by models drawn from corporate America. This theological self-understanding is fundamental to any vision of the church.

The church’s perception of itself will determine its understanding of its nature and function in the world. We must be clear about our mission. Our present image of ourselves is one of success. We are doing well in so many ways. But we need to remind ourselves that there is usually a price, indeed at times a very high price, to pay for success.

If the church is instead shaped by its theology, it will move into the future without falling victim to its own success. The church is called to and judged by its faithfulness—faithfulness not only to doctrine but to the gospel and its commission.

Nowhere in the Bible is success a criterion for determining how well the church is doing. When judging its progress in the world, the church of the future will have to become preoccupied with faithfulness, not success.

I know this will be difficult if not impossible to accomplish, because success is the theme of all that we do. We choose careers with which we are skillful. We grow closer to and then marry someone because our relationship keeps improving. And then we choose

a prospering school for our children so they can repeat this search for success.

I am not against success, but the future church will let God define success, while it focuses on faithfulness.

Start Learning Your Greek

As we envision the church that is coming to be, let us learn to think big, wide, and far in terms of time and space. Adventist theology, in shaping the church of the future, will have to strain its neck to see beyond the horizons of our traditional structures, beyond the success of corporate models, beyond the comforts of our ready-made methodologies of theologizing.

In order for such a sweeping shift in perspective, we *all* must begin thinking and participating like the theologians. Our entire church needs to become a seminary. Adventist theology will then be an engaging and practical enterprise as it rubs shoulders with human beings whose condition, outlook, concerns, and worldviews are not only those with which the church is familiar.

Many Adventists may not see this as safe, but theologically it is right on. After all, theologically, we know that the future of the church is not solely up to us. It is God’s church.

Such a theology will inevitably influence new forms of ministry and will open the church to the aims and purposes of God for both the church *and* the world.

God’s Ugly World

The church of the future will not be living in just another age of change. It will be living in a world it hasn’t faced in nearly two millennia. Because of human self-sufficiency, religious pluralism, and an incredibly shrinking technoplanet, the future Adventist Church will be a light in an age that will see the end of Christian world dominance.

This calls for a new understanding of what it means for the church to be in the world, but not of the world. The church that is coming to be cannot isolate or insulate itself from the suffering, the tension, and the conflicts in the world. It must open its eyes to both the ugliness and the beauty, and affirm that this is our Father’s world despite the presence of evil.

Theology must ultimately *share* and not simply *observe* the meaning of God and His interaction with the world. Christ’s incarnation is the classical example of the church’s role and function in the world. Copying His model is how we become effective salt, yeast, and light. If the church of the future cannot do this in a much more practical and compelling fashion, then it will run short of

My Dream . . .



I dream of a church that is alive—not just existing!

In Joel 2:28 God promised an outpouring of the Spirit that will be demonstrated by young and old, sons and daughters. We must have an environment conducive to the young "dreaming dreams."

I see every member supporting Adventist education as a means of accomplishing this goal. And every school and church committed to communicating the gospel.

Patricia Halberg Phillips is assistant to the president for college relations at Pacific Union College, Angwin, California. She and her husband have three sons. She has been an elementary school teacher and youth Sabbath school leader.

My Dream . . .



My dream for the church begins with myself. When I can habitually meditate on divine things, when God's will becomes mine, His requirements the delight of my life; when my intellect, heart, and conscience accept every ray of light that shines from God's throne, then the dream has started to become a reality.

I dream about women, men, teenagers, and children in every church who are overflowing with power from the Holy Spirit.

I dream of a day that our presidents, our theologians, our educators, writers, ministers, and pastors become one in spirit, one in doctrine, one in demonstrating their priority to spread the gospel news to every living person.

Myrtle Hicks is a retired nurse who lives in Fallon, Nevada. She has a grown daughter. She enjoys gardening, working with the local Dorcas Society, and "thinking young."

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Why Have Structure?

Our church is in a period of transition. Old structures and patterns of thinking are giving way to new forms of life and thought. Still, there is need for more change.

In the near future, the church will have to radically realign its structures to deal more effectively with its new realities of growth, size, economic resources—or lack of them—and cultural diversity. Plus, it must adjust to the religious pluralism and shifting political ideologies in an increasingly shrinking world.

We will have to constantly judge what structures must be removed and what new forms must be developed. This will not be easy. Some will resist. Others will be reluctant to move into the future along with the times. But one thing is certain: We cannot remain the same.

One reason for our reluctance and resistance is that some of us see change more as a crisis than an opportunity. Others have so identified structure with policy and the official hierarchy of the church that change is often viewed as unfaithfulness.

But structure exists only to serve theology and facilitate mission. All structure must be judged by this searching question: Does it contribute to mission; does it reflect the theological self-understanding of the church?

We Need Uncertainty

In other words, the question that the church of the future must answer is whether the present definition of the church as an organizational structure is really getting to its essential nature. Perhaps a more theological/missiological definition demands a model that embraces diversity and change.

This leads me to suggest a new and creative image for the church's structure. I see the church of the future functioning more like an organism than an organizational machine. The church will be more open to change and more responsive to its environment, without compromising its essential faithfulness to the proclamation of the Gospel.

Today far too many view the church's structures as machines. Machines are predictable, performing particular functions in response to specific instructions. As long as the machine is in good shape, it will perform its functions repeatedly in precisely the same manner no matter who issues the instructions. An identical machine may be procured with the same predictability.

Organisms are quite different from machines. To influence an organism, you must look into its personality and take account of its circumstances. You accept that the results of your intervention—no matter how carefully premeditated—are going to have a measure of uncertainty, and you must be prepared to reassess, revise, and try again.

We follow the mechanistic approach too often in today's structures. No matter how desirable the objectives, church leaders must never try to implement policies and create structures that will frustrate the wishes of a part of the members. Good church structures and policies stimulate members to produce and contribute to the growth and development of the church.

The organism paradigm for shaping the church of the future will better accommodate the reality of church expansion. For instance, by

2010 there probably will be more than 10 million Seventh-day Adventists in Africa alone. Within our lifetime, the axis of Adventism will flip radically from Washington, D.C., Berrien Springs, Loma Linda, and Sydney to São Paulo, Nairobi, Lusaka, Manila, and Kingston.

This will have far-reaching implications on the future shape of the church. Indeed, it *will be* the state of the future church. It will particularly impact the leadership of the Adventist community. No longer can it be assumed that the leadership will be White, male North Americans.

You've Been Promoted

In this new church, it will become more and more obvious that only three levels of administration are practically needed—the General Conference, the division, and the local conference. More responsibilities will be cared for by the local conference, and more and more decisions for mission and evangelism will be made by the local congregation. I predict a surge of interest in lay leadership and lay theology such as we have never known.

The General Conference president will function more as a spiritual leader and an interpreter of the mood and direction of the church—not as a CEO of a multinational corporation. He will be expected to have a growing grasp of the relationship between the church, the gospel, and the world.

Self-reliance will be the language and method for the church. Each division is immensely diverse in language, ethnicities, culture, customs, political ideologies, forms of government, and economic stability. Self-reliance will be the only effective way of dealing with these challenges. No longer will the church of the north be able to provide the majority of resources for programs and projects in the church of the south.

This reality will inevitably impact the way the church conducts its business. General church councils will have to devote more time to defining or redefining the spiritual nature of the church. They will discuss how the church's theology and mission will respond to present realities and future prospects, but not necessarily its pocketbook.

Thus, the world church will not need to meet so often to design, revise, and change policies and structures for the global church. Fall and spring councils may disappear. Besides, the technology of information delivery and processing has already swiftly removed many of our disadvantages of distance and size.

Of course, the leadership of the church will have to learn to cope with and utilize the challenges and benefits of the communication revolution. Indeed, such challenges and benefits may seem to threaten our self-confidence and reliance on traditional approaches for conducting the church's business. But rather than leading the church to despair, it should drive us to develop the talents that God has so bountifully bestowed upon us.

Lusaka Teaches Berrien Springs

One challenge that technology can't fix for the church of the future is that of being a community. We need to develop within the church a new and more realistic sense of community. The sense that we are one worldwide church will have to be taken with greater seriousness and reflected in our behavior. The north and the south will have to treat each other in ways that could be very strenuous and painful, but that will be absolutely vital.

My Dream . . .



I was 30 when I saw my grandmother for the last time. Small and frail from chemotherapy, she knew why our family had gathered at her California home.

One day she said she wanted to talk to me alone. I thought my spiritually starved grandmother was about to take a last shot at pointing me in the right direction. In fact, she

was, but not the way I expected.

Facing death, she turned everything upside down, cut away my moorings, and set me out to sea on a journey for spiritual balance that continues to this day.

Almost a lifelong Adventist, my grandmother was a musician and schoolteacher. She understood the value of rules and the many good purposes they serve. She and my grandfather always guarded the edges of the Sabbath. She often bought secondhand clothing so she would have more money to send to the mission field. A good steward, she was prepared to give an account for every dollar, every hour entrusted to her. Yet something was missing.

"I spent my whole life doing what I thought God expected me to do," she said. "But no one ever told me God cared whether I was happy. All I had permission to do was work. And that's about all I did. If I could look back on some times of enjoying life without fear or guilt . . ."

"Life is short, Geri Ann. And it's over before you know it. Find the things that make you happy and do them. You won't be sorry when you're old."

I don't think my grandmother regretted the major decisions she made. Perhaps she just needed to know she had value for who she was, and not only for what she had to give.

Like most third-generation Adventists, much of my understanding of the church came through early family experiences. Having seen the one person who for me most fervently embodied church values confess that following all those rules did not make her content has forced me to reassess what the church means to me.

The church of my childhood demanded unquestioning obedience. But the last thing my grandmother told me was a message of grace. In pain and sickness she concluded that the most important thing about God is love. Maybe that should be the *first* thing the church talks about.

Geri Ann Fuller is an account executive for a printing firm in Rockville, Maryland. She also teaches writing and English classes at Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland.

The church outside of North America, Europe, and Australia will expect Adventists in these places to better theologize with them. They will say, "You are our brothers and sisters whose ancestors evangelized our ancestors, but now we ask you to develop a sense of partnership and accept us as equals. We have studied in your institutions, we have theologized with you, and we have learned from you all that we know about church leadership and administration. Now we are asking you to learn from us all that we know about dealing with church growth and about meeting the challenges of poverty, cultural diversity, and different political ideologies. In short, we are asking you to theologize with us about our concerns."

This advance undoubtedly will encourage and strengthen the sense of community and unity, without which the church of the future will be vulnerable to dissidence.

As the church of the south becomes more and more self-reliant, the sense of community will become more and more crucial. If Adventist Christians in North America, Australia, and Europe don't dialogue the church of the south on its challenges, opportunity could change to a crisis. The call is to *share* the meaning of God in Christ, not just *observe* it.

Doctrinal beliefs and practices hold this church together as a community, not structures and policies. Despite cultural preferences and contextual appropriateness, the essential theology of the church will remain the same everywhere.

The Future Shaper

Conventional wisdom says the church is confronted by a world in which science and technology will shape its future. That's because they already are doing so. As a church we are barely conscious and often uncertain of the issues and challenges that will confront us as we prepare to move creatively into the future. But it is my settled conviction that the future shape of the church is most dependent on the Holy Spirit—just as it was in 1844 through people like Hiram Edson and Ellen White.

If we cannot believe that the Holy Spirit is and will be at work in the church, judging its actions and service, rejecting the old forms it wants to keep, causing new forms to emerge where the old dies; if we cannot believe the church will remain faithful to its mission and its message, then we cannot trust our dreams and visions as we try to shape the church of the future.

We have to accept in the most profound and fundamental sense that the future of the church is not up to us. As long as we lack the insight and humility to recognize this, we will not get very far. If we continue to behave as if the church's future depends on brainpower and economic resources, or on our hard work and global strategies, we will not get anywhere.

God brought this church into being. It is His body. Yet we are all invited to participate in its work in the world. God has an eternal purpose in creating the church. Ultimately that purpose will be fulfilled.



Walter Douglas is chair of the Church History Department at the Theological Seminary at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Possibilities Unlimited

The church in the next millennium

BY DICK DUERKSEN

My favorite professor used to say, “There’s no such thing as a problem or difficulty for a Christian, just *opportunities* for God to show His power.”

Right now the life of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is packed with challenges. In fact, we are living with so many tumultuous problems that we are often tempted to abandon this opportunity model and just wallow in our problems.

The list from North America could be frightening:

■ Money for traditional church needs decreasing. (Per capita tithing is dropping as our members increase.)

■ Cultural diversity increasing. (We’re not always sure we want “them” worshipping or playing or studying with us.)

■ Interest in SDA doctrines decreasing. (Many of the young feel these old doctrines are irrelevant.)

■ Church climate not always encouraging fellowship. (Many, of all ages, find only criticism and aloofness in our churches.)

■ Standards slipping. (“They” don’t look or behave like Adventists.)

■ Traditional Adventists calling for reform. (Some believe the old ways are the only good ways.)

■ Cultural Adventism increasing. (“They’re” Adventist only because their parents were Adventist and because they grew up in an Adventist community.)

■ Employment opportunities within the church decreased. (We all used to work for the church; now we work for Microsoft or McDonald’s.)

■ The remnant looking Laodicean. (Even the “good” people behave pretty “bad.”)

■ Institutional reorganization demanded. (More money is desired at the local congregation level.)

■ Worship—boring and irrelevant. (Too often true.)

And there are more. Opportunities all!

Cash Flow Currents

Recently I received a letter from a General Conference administrator who was praising God for sending so much money to the special projects of Global Mission. Then in a companion paragraph he urged me to encourage members to be more faithful in giving tithing and Sabbath school mission offerings.

I read the letter and chuckled at the problem he unconsciously described. He wanted everything to continue as it had been, everyone unquestioningly giving tithing, paying the church budget, and adding offerings for missions. Yet he also wanted everyone to give more money to the special projects.

It doesn’t work that way. Traditional fund-raising must give way to new approaches for funding the church and its mission. This is truly an “opportunity for God to show His power.”

Yes, we’ll continue to pay tithing as the new millennium arrives, but much more of it will stay with the congregation, and there will be an entirely new menu of approaches for funding local churches and other Adventist activities. ADRA, Global Mission, and your alma mater will be joined in your mailbox and on your telephone by dozens of other projects, organizations, and ideas. Everyone will be after your shrinking dollars.

Many Adventists will use this problem as an opportunity to reorganize their financial priorities according to the leading of God. Each paycheck will bring a family council on where the money is to go to advance the family’s spiritual mission. Families will likely put tithing at the top of their list, prioritize local congregation issues second, and then give, as the Spirit leads, to the most convincing of the other appeals.

The result will be a great reduction in funds available for administrators and institutions, and a great increase in funds for projects seen as effective and life-changing.

Soup or Salad?

Diversity is possibly a greater challenge than money. We are having a hard time deciding whether the Adventist Church is going to become a cultural salad or a well-boiled cultural soup. We’re not sure if we want to live on earth as *one*, or if we’d rather operate as a loose group of diverse cultures until the first Sabbath on the sea of glass.

Since each culture tends to see itself as just a bit better than any other, the idea of *truly* becoming one is almost anathema to each group. It often seems that we’d rather be a salad, served in about 12 unique bowls. Maybe even on 12 separate tables!

But this is an incredible opportunity for God to use Seventh-day Adventists as a worldwide demonstration of the oneness that can come from being loved by Him. As the next millennium arrives we will see key Adventist leaders stand tall and lead us



into an entirely new world of spiritual and cultural unity. Although many will follow the lead, others will continue to place priority on the values of culture and tribe.

The Truth Isn't Enough

The doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will continue to be biblical and true, relevant and meaningful. But we will need to learn how to first present them as relevant and meaningful rather than biblical and true. Information age people seldom ask, "Is it true?" Instead they wonder, "Is it relevant?" and "What will this do for me?"

The opportunity here is for us to demonstrate the relevance of each doctrine in practical and life-touching ways. We must find and develop the value handles for everything from the Sabbath to health to the Second Coming and beyond. Those handles have always been there, but we must discuss and explain them with much greater clarity than we have in the past.

Reforestation

To many Adventists, churches are unfriendly places. Just inside the perfunctory line of greeters lies a desert of criticism, pride, silence, and emptiness. What an incredible opportunity for the healing power of God! True conversion could transform this desert into a rain forest of God's love.

I'm not sure we'll become the Caring Church. The Laodicean message does not describe a church known for its other-centered spirit of fellowship. Yet the very nature of the term *remnant* requires that each follower of Christ be friendly, caring, and vulnerable in helping lift others out of Satan's selfishness.

The dawn of the next millennium will have many more congregations displaying the virtues of the remnant rather than the errors of Laodicea. In some communities our neighbors will actually describe us as "the friendly church that is here to help."

Standard Decisions

The Adventists of 2020 will not look or behave like the Adventists of 1920. Although they will stand out from the world as peculiarly Christlike, they will not dress or behave in ways that make them stand out as "odd."

The standards of dress, vegetarianism, music, Sabbath observance, and much more will become areas of individual decision rather than assumed corporate policy. We will accept that God requires *uniformity of commitment*, not *uniformity of response*. Different people from different cultures will live the Christian life in varied ways. The American Christian life of 1920 is not always the only or best response.

All of this opens a wonderful opportunity for us to teach members to respond in a reasoned biblical manner, rather than just doing what they would like to do. Our growing church will emphasize making wise, Christlike decisions rather than prescribing what the decisions should be.

Back to Whose Basics?

It is healthy to have prophetic voices constantly calling the church back to the basics—as long as those are God's basics and not our own interpretation of what we think God would like us to emphasize today.

It is easy to select one specific time in the history of our church and stridently proclaim this as *traditional Adventism*. It is much more difficult to prayerfully analyze God's leading throughout our history and then call us to continued growth as followers of the God who is head over heels in love with us.

Yes, true prophets point out sin. But much more, they point to the Messiah. Even more, they challenge us to new and better ways of living as Christians so that His attractiveness is obvious to even the most secular of our friends.

Cultural Adventism

Sometimes I wonder if we are raising people to live in Adventist communities, or if we are raising people to live for God as energized Adventists. Too many of my friends can easily say, "Yes, I'll always be an Adventist, but I sure don't believe all that stuff anymore."

They were raised as Adventists, so they are most comfortable in an Adventist environment. They met their best friends in an academy. Their first degree was from an Adventist college. Even most of their recreation companions are Adventists. They're comfortable as Adventists. But the doctrines and standards and worship are no longer relevant or meaningful for them.

Maybe cultural Adventism is just another definition for Laodicea. Both describe people who are blind to their situation and are really quite comfortable in it.

I believe the church will accept this opportunity and declare war on Laodicea. Our greatest weapons will be the passionate patience of Christ and the good news of His salvation.

The issue in each battle will be whether allowing Christ to take over is worth the trouble, whether the presence of Christ makes any real difference in life. We'll discover that the best time for battle is when friends are being crushed under trials, troubles, sickness, death, bankruptcy, bad grades, and the zillion other boulders Satan forces down upon us. The gold, eyesalve, and new clothes of Christ take on a miraculous new appeal when comfort is gone.

Our task is to be there, ready to be Christ for our friends.

The Church Goes to Work

In the 1950s more than 80 percent of Adventist college graduates were employed by the church. That number is now less than 20 percent, and the entire culture of Adventism has changed.

We no longer gather at the "san" for Friday evening vespers. We no longer work, play, live, and raise children together. Often we see one another only on Sabbath mornings and once a year at camp meeting. Church has become an appendage rather than the heart of life. If the trend continues, many of us won't even bother to come to the worship services anymore.

This truth provides an awesome opportunity for us to design new ways of meeting, fellowshiping, serving, and growing together. Possibilities include more home churches, more small groups targeted for people with similar needs, a new community service focus, a reemphasis on whole-life stewardship, numerous one-day camp meetings, and dozens of other activities that build community and purpose into the life of a church family.

This opportunity is packed with blessings, especially as we help members discover how to serve and survive in a world filled with people who believe and live very differently from

themselves. The old ways kept us isolated. The new way opens myriads of opportunities for us to be salty and bright in the world.

"Isolation from the world is not only a direct violation of God's will, it is dangerous for our spiritual welfare. . . . When we isolate ourselves from the sinful world, we are actually succumbing to the selfish, self-preserving ways of the world. By hiding, we become self-absorbed and empty, the opposite of what God wants for us. He has called His children to let His light shine through them into the darkest places of sin."¹

Sinners in the Remnant

It's true! and OK! The remnant church is the best place on earth for sinners. They'll be safe here. Safe in an environment where we all know we're sinners hopelessly in love with Jesus. Safe where we pick one another up, hold one another up, and then lift one another up into the fullness of God's forgiveness. Safe to grow into God's likeness. The Laodicean remnant must become this "place of personal pickup."

I am so glad that God doesn't give us His saving grace and then walk away saying, "OK. You're on your own. Have a great life!" Instead He stays right beside us and walks us through the trauma of repentance, confession, forgiveness, and the exhilaration of sanctification. We hear and feel His presence in the voices and touches of our friends.

Reengineering Church

The local congregation must become the central focus and driving force of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the coming millennium. Today we have a com-

*Are we raising
people to live in
Adventist
communities, or
as energized
Christians?*

plex organizational structure that often serves institutions and multinational organizations better than it serves congregations. Another wonderful opportunity for God to use His power and show us a better way to deliver His gospel in 2000 and beyond!

I've seen many projections of the church's structure in 2020, most of which have been drawn by people who have agendas of their own. Personally, I have no idea what new organizational design to propose. But I do have three guiding suggestions for the reengineering committees:

- Everything we do must lift up Jesus.
- All levels of organization must operate with the understanding that they exist only to serve members, not institutions.
- Every ruble, dollar, pound, and dinar should be budgeted and spent as if it had been given as part of the widow's last two mites.

Waking Up Worship

"The prevailing monotony of the religious round of service in our churches needs to be disturbed. The leaven of activity needs to be introduced, that our church members may work along new lines, and devise new methods. The Holy Spirit's power will move upon hearts when this dead, lifeless monotony is broken up, and many will begin to work in earnest who never before thought of being anything but idle spectators."²

Some like it formal, with lots of Bach. Some like it free, with hands in the air.

Some prefer pews. Others prefer couches or futons, or logs in the woods. Some must have stained glass. Others prefer banners or just beige paint. But most assume worship is something being done for them. Not true! Worship is a gift we bring to God. Its purpose is to focus us on His greatness rather than on ourselves or our needs.

The result of worship will be healing and power for transformed lives. It will bring us into closer relationships with Jesus and other worshipers, and then challenge us to purposeful service in the world.

Many Adventists find nothing like this in their churches—any Sabbath. What an opportunity for growth!

Activist Adventists

One other area gives me hope as I look beyond 1994. The early Seventh-day Adventist Church was in the center of most significant social issues. The evil of slavery, the use of alcohol and tobacco, the importance of cleanliness and health, the training of quality physicians, and the need for hospitals. All had Adventist voices speaking eloquently and following through with actions.

Unfortunately, that's not quite true anymore. There are few Adventist voices speaking out on abortion, spousal abuse, personal rights, religious liberty, health issues, or even vegetarianism. Too often we've sent in our dollars and then hoped ADRA would speak for us.

I believe the next generation of Adventists will change this. We have an army of members who are ready to be mobilized to meet the needs of our world head-on.

That mobilization will include national and local talent banks where every member can sign up to use his or her gifts in ser-

vice. Hundreds of volunteers will counsel unwed mothers in adoption clinics, and hundreds more will fly to disasters to counsel, heal, feed, and love. Adventists will use the hours of Sabbath to care for homeless, hurting, and hopeless people around the world.

Whenever the needs of individuals are being violated or abused, the church and its members will be on the front line. This selfless service will bring a new vitality to every aspect of church!

Ellen White said it well: "All who would bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ must first fall into the ground and die. The life must be cast into the furrow of the world's need. . . . To give is to live. The life that will be preserved is the life that is freely given in service to God and man."³

Christ is coming soon, and I hope to be in heaven before the year 2000. But if He allows me to turn over the calendar page, it's fine with me.

I'll be in my mid-50s that year and immersed in the most exciting church life God can design. A life that puts Jesus first, others second, and myself right in the middle where life happens. I plan to be living as His ambassador, telling His story for Him, allowing Him to make His appeal through me, a Seventh-day Adventist.

And my church? It will still be packed with Laodiceans. But God will also be there. Urging His gold, eyesalve, and salvation upon each of us. And celebrating as His remnant grows.



Dick Duerksen is vice president of Creative Ministries, and Communication Department director, for the Columbia Union Conference.

¹ William Carr Peel, *Living in the Lion's Den* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994).

² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 204.

³ ———, *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 86, 87.



The Power of Hope

Have you ever noticed how hope drives you to do strange things?

In the hope of reaching the summit, climbers risk limb—and life. In the hope of claiming a gold medal, some of the world's most disciplined young spend a lifetime on the balance beam. In the hope of discovering a miracle, cure researchers invest a decade peering into a microscope or stirring strange potions.

Hope is a powerful force. Hope is a motivating energy. Hope is a life-challenging attitude. Hope is one of the nonoptional components of end-time living. "We are saved by hope," the Bible says (Rom. 8:24, KJV).*

The apostle Paul used an illustration from the sports world (see 1 Cor. 9:24-27). May I also?

It is the bottom of the ninth inning, with two out and the home team behind 6 to 2. Expectant-fans-turned-bored-spectators begin to head for the exits. Even the umpire yawns. The pitcher walks a batter, but no one seems to care. The next batter hits a little blooper over second base, and now there are runners on first and second. A wild pitch advances them; a hit batter fills the bases. Hope begins to rekindle. Departing patrons pause in the aisles.

The count goes to two strikes on the batter, and the inevitable seems near. But a new mood has somehow energized the players. Adrenaline flows. They begin to talk it up from the dugout. Maybe. Just maybe. The miraculous begins to seem possible. The unexpected seems within reach. We call it hope!

A high inside pitch, and the batter connects. Excitement runs through the stands like a tidal wave. The fans head back to their seats as the ball clears the right field fence. It's a grand slam home run! Tie score. Hope. It's energizing, electrifying.

There is a powerful tendency for an organization in its 150th year to fall into the slump of those long middle innings. Early-season optimism turns tentative, then fades to doubt. It appears the other team may win after all. Spectators lose interest. Bad team. Bad leadership. Boo.

But the team that wins is the team that doesn't lose hope. The team that believes in the coach. The team whose members support one another, and give their all.

From its inception the Advent movement has negotiated extraordinary obstacles. That should not surprise us. The devil doesn't like this church, this ragged band of rescued rebels raised up at a key time in heaven's timetable and commissioned with the happy responsibility of telling the truth about God. We

are in his way. We complicate his strategy. It should give us courage that he is serious about attacking and distracting us.

Like the little boy who said his favorite song was "This world is not my hope, I'm just a-passin' through," we look ahead with a hope that eagerly anticipates. We put the "hope of salvation as a helmet" (1 Thess. 5:8). Remember Paul's "faith, hope and love" in 1 Corinthians 13? Hope is one of the great earmarks of being Christian.

Some time ago workers on an auto assembly line in Detroit, Michigan, told about their lives. The study showed that those who had something to look forward to at the end of the day were less tired and did better work than those who didn't. Bruce Larson asked the staff of the Meninger Foundation what was the single most important factor in the treatment of the emotionally disturbed. Their consensus: hope. When a patient turns a corner and begins to hope, that is the beginning of healing.

"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul" (Heb. 6:19). Hope anchors us to eternity.

"Since we have such a hope, we are very bold" (2 Cor. 3:12). Hope generates a sense of security and boldness.

Paul speaks of "endurance

ALFRED C. MCCLURE

My Dream . . .



My dream is that the Adventist Church will be known as the "Loving Church."

Webster defines *love* as "unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another."

It won't be easy to be a loving church. We must *individually* cultivate love in our own lives. Each and every member must *individually*

work to build relationships with Jesus Christ and others by diligent, Spirit-filled study of God's Word.

Ellen White tells us: "The secret of unity is found in the equality of believers in Christ. *The reason for all division, discord, and difference is found in separation from Christ.* Christ is the center to which all should be attracted; for the nearer we approach the Center, the closer we shall come together in feeling, in sympathy, in love, growing into the character and image of Jesus" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 259; italics supplied).

I dream of people studying the Scriptures daily and persistently, asking the Holy Spirit to help us apply God's precepts to our lives. Then we will be loving, Christlike people.

Glenda Hjar, 45, is a native of Denver, Colorado. Glenda, her husband, and two children enjoy such outdoor sports as cycling, camping, and skiing. She works as a paralegal for a Denver law firm.

GOOD NEWS FOR TROUBLED TIMES

BY JOHN C. BRUNT

Designed for Adventists to share with their non-Adventist friends, relatives and neighbours, *Good News for Troubled Times* offers an easy, comfortable approach to understanding basic SDA beliefs and how they relate to the gospel and practical, everyday living. Readers will learn about God's plan for humanity and discover how it can bring them great happiness now and eternal life later.

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inspired by hope" (1 Thess. 1:3). Hope gives us a spiritual tenacity.

But what happens to those who lose hope?

Criticism. Those whose hope grows dim often develop a critical spirit. "Maybe we have been deceived. Maybe God has withdrawn from us. Maybe the pioneers believed an illusion."

But hope restored changes attitudes. "Yes, it's been longer than we thought. But I trust God and the wisdom of His timetable." "Yes, we have disappointed God—and ourselves—by our compromise. But He has invited us to repent of our sins, and we have done that—and we do that." "Yes, we do need to constantly reexplore our roots. And I have learned that the more carefully I investigate the biblical moorings of this movement, the more firmly I discover them to be anchored to the Rock."

Affirmation helps melt away a critical spirit.

No vision. The vision of a completed task, a goal achieved, is fed by hope. Confidence in the achievability of the dream keeps hope alive. Even in the bitter days. Even in detours. Even when people—and leaders—let us down and changes leave us wondering. The unshakable confidence that God will see His people through to the end gives us reason to hope. And strong hope keeps the vision alive.

Laodicea. You cannot discourage those who are poised on the verge of realizing their dream. Only if we lose hope, only if the dream seems ethereal and uncertain, only if we lose our sense of need and our personal journey with the Guide—only then do we lose focus and fall asleep. If hope

is alive and well, we are compelled by an urgency, no matter how long the delay.

What Kind of Hoper Are You?

You are lost in a blizzard. No one knows where you are. The snowfall is beginning to slow. Maybe if you stamp out a message in the snow, someone will spot you from the air. It's not likely; it's a long shot, but it's your only chance. This is the kind of hope that is born out of desperation.

"Are you going to get out of debt this year?" "Well, I hope so . . ." Some lack of assurance here. Depends on circumstances. It's a dream, and a desirable one, but not very likely. This is the hope that is dependent on whether the most recent news is good or bad.

The third kind of hoper says, "The outcome of this journey is never in doubt. I'd stake my life on it. Even when the way gets long and trials make life seem grim, I take courage from the assurance that there is a better day coming." In Scripture, hope is the conviction that something good is going to happen and that God will see to it.

Hope contains the element of eagerness. Hope clings to the promises of God and draws not only assurance but excitement. As we walk in God's story we are excited about the future because we are "looking for that blessed hope, . . . the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13, KJV).

On the 150th birthday of this unique movement, I want to invite you to take inventory of your supply of hope. If it is strong, praise God for that. I hope you are sharing it regularly with others. If hope has grown dim for you, I invite

The day He didn't come

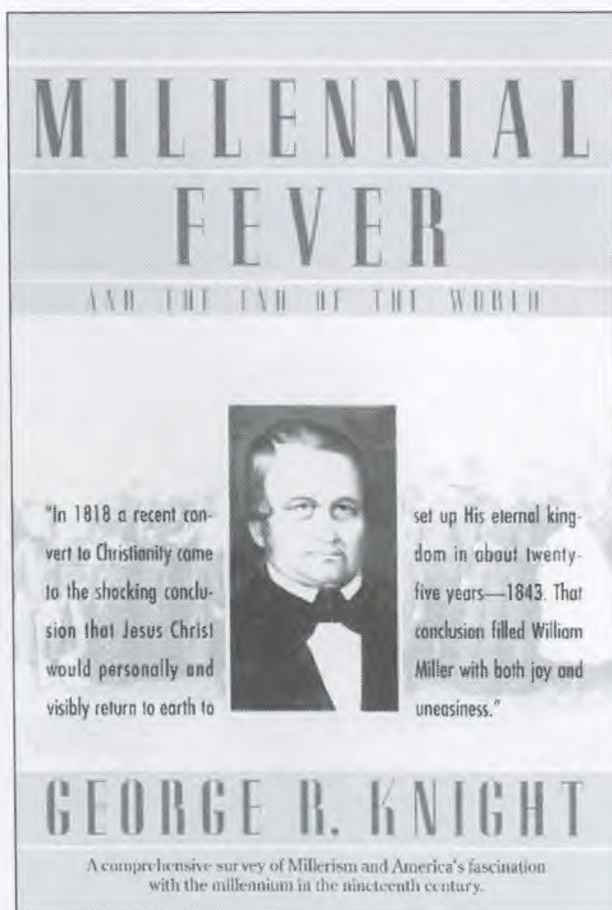
Millennial

Fever

by George Knight

October 23, 1844. One day after the faithful were to have gone home to heaven with Jesus. But Jesus didn't come, and the advent believers felt chained to the earth, reeling in shock and grief.

It is now fifteen decades after the great disappointment, and Jesus still hasn't come. Ever-deepening disillusionment and skepticism crowd the minds of many. But somewhere between white-hot millennial fever and hope grown stone cold is the patience of the second-advent saints. This book shows how to find it.



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My Dream . . .



I sometimes wish I could go back to the Adventist Church of my childhood.

The church of my childhood was a simple church. We worshiped together, worked together, played together; I felt sorry for people who didn't belong to the church.

But what a difference 30 years makes!

The church no longer seems simple. As an adult I see that churches very rarely do anything "together" anymore. It seems a virtual impossibility to please every taste and preference when it comes to church life. The fact that there is as much unity in the church as there is is a miracle in itself.

But perhaps today's diversity isn't bad.

Rather than whining about the way the church is now—as opposed to the way it used to be—we should celebrate the diversity that exists in the church.

It may be one of God's greatest gifts to the Adventist Church to realize that the church is not made up primarily of

White, North American, middle-class, nuclear family units (dad, mom, son, and daughter). Because we are so diverse—ethnically, economically, socially, yes, even theologically—we can have more impact on our world than our pioneers even remotely imagined.

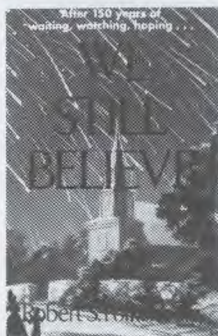
The one thing we do have in common—and the thing we should never doubt or disparage—is our allegiance and loyalty to the one true God, in whom alone is all truth. As long as we understand that we all have unique talents to add to God's kingdom, we shouldn't be distressed if we don't always march in lockstep toward the kingdom. We're all valued here, because we're all part of the process of getting from here to the kingdom.

So rather than simply "occupying" till Jesus comes, I see a dynamic church that continues to study, probe, explore, experience, and live God's truth.

What better way to wait for the coming we all hope will be soon?

Stephen Chavez is an assistant editor of the Adventist Review. He, his wife, and their two children left their home in Reno, Nevada, to be missionaries to Maryland.

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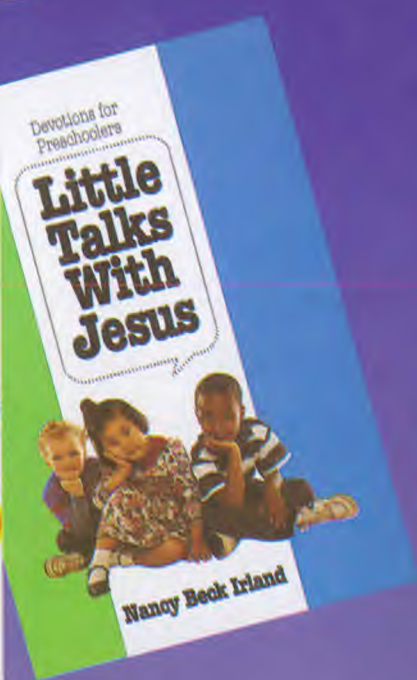
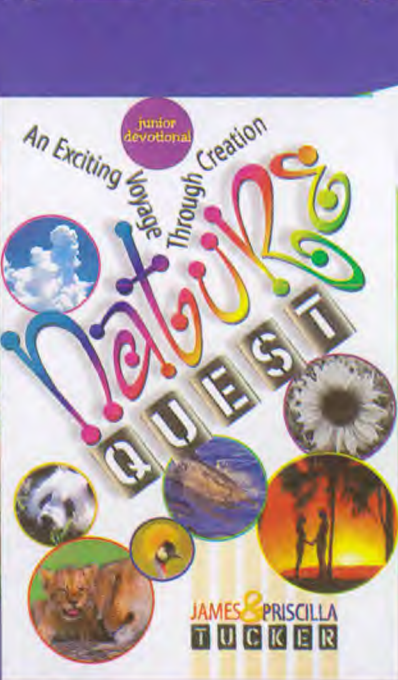
"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37, KJV). What a hope!

* Unless otherwise noted, Bible texts in this article are from the New International Version.



Alfred C. McClure is president of the North American Division.

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