Spectrum

The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

The Power of Apocalyptic

GROWING UP WITH THE BEASTS

THE APOCALYPSE OF JOHN

THE CITY IN MODERN APOCALYPTIC

SOCIAL REFORM AS SACRAMENT OF THE SECOND ADVENT

THE GULF WAR ON SDA CAMPUSES

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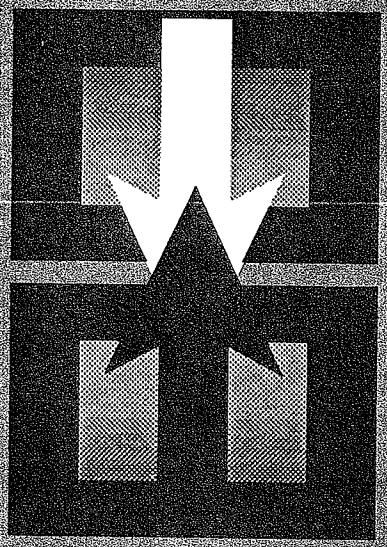

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Spectrum

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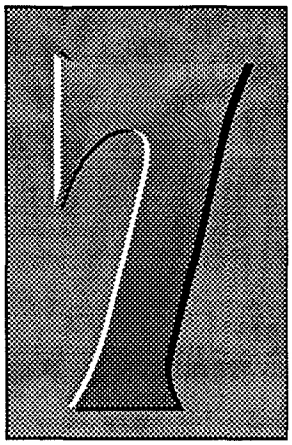

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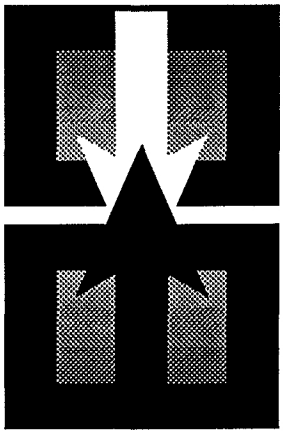

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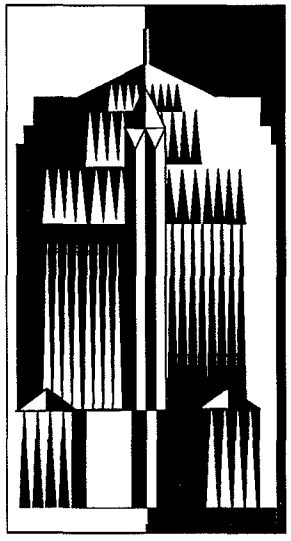

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The Power of Apocalyptic

THE GULF WAR CAN BE FOUND IN JOHN'S APOCALYPSE. That is what some Seventh-day Adventists believed early this year. According to the college newspapers we review in the opening article of this issue, some Adventists thought the Gulf War was the beginning of Armageddon, history's last battle.

It reminded me of my uncle Fordyce, the evangelist. During the height of the Cold War, he preached that his Bible referred to Russia. Adventist academics objected that one can't just go to Scripture and find whatever name has recently appeared in the news. The academics were right, and my uncle wrong. But my uncle was also right—and so were those Adventists who this year tried to make apocalyptic scripture relevant to their present lives.

Sure, the religion professor at Southern College and the pastor in Loma Linda, quoted in our first report, are accurate: You can't find references in Scripture to the Persian Gulf. But apocalyptic should also not be limited to foretelling the future; to predicting events in what the Adventist grandmother in our short story calls the Last Days.

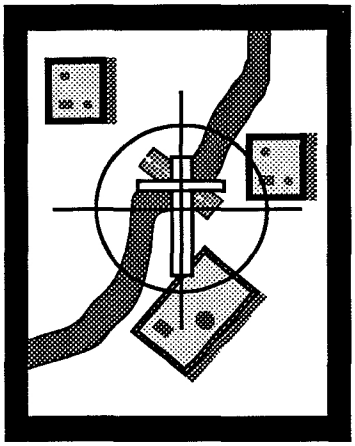
All the essays in the special section make the point that apocalyptic is relevant to the present. God is not waiting to act until the Last Day. He is present now. Everything we touch—the entire cosmos—is suffused with his presence. Everywhere we turn, God's radiance exposes the powers of darkness, threatens the tyranny of the oppressor.

The special section not only challenges equating apocalyptic solely with the future. Most people identify the word *apocalyptic* with crisis, cataclysm, disaster. But biblical apocalyptic is also hopeful, utopian, a vision of the ideal.

Many upwardly mobile, urban professionals in the Seventh-day Adventist Church no longer mark their calendars according to Daniel's timeline. They appreciate the Sabbath, but they are frankly embarrassed by those wild, apocalyptic books on which this church was founded. They find them well-nigh impossible to read.

This issue of *Spectrum* is an invitation to reenter the strange, fascinating world of John's Apocalypse, to become dazzled by its fierce beauty. But it attempts even more. This issue asks Adventists to believe once again that they can be heralds of the New Jerusalem; that they can emerge from an encounter with apocalyptic charged by the immediacy of God's glory, empowered to venture new embodiments of God's ideal.

Roy Branson



The Gulf War on SDA Campuses

Our generation has been accused of smugness, complacency, and indifference to anything not stamped "For Me." Campus newspapers show something different.

Compiled by Harvey Brenneise

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPERS OF THE NORTH American Adventist colleges and universities gave information and expressed a wide range of opinion about the recent Persian Gulf War. This included a substantial amount of material that was not supportive of the war effort. Because of the short length of the war, the quantity of war coverage by a particular paper largely corresponded with its publication frequency. The most extensive coverage was at Andrews University and Walla Walla College, which have weekly papers, and the least at Southwestern Adventist College, which has a monthly paper. There was little coverage of the Gulf crisis prior to the outbreak of war, and it took as much as three weeks after the beginning of hostilities for the first reports to appear in some papers. There has also been little postwar comment.

A number of common themes can be seen. Many students wished to express their opinion of the war. This is evident particularly in the editorial comment and letters to the weekly newspapers. Student opinion surveys were common. The only formal survey was conducted by the *Southern Accent,* in which 91 percent of Southern College students believed the allied forces would win. However, only 61 percent believed that U. S. forces belonged in the Middle East (45 percent of females, and 78 percent of males). Fifty-seven percent of the students did not think that the crisis marked the end of time.

The war in Bible prophecy was discussed at Loma Linda University and Southern College. Larry Christoffel at Loma Linda and Norman Gulley at Southern both disagreed with the views of some fundamentalists outside and inside the Adventist Church that the war would be Armageddon, although neither would deny that possibility. Religion Professor Gulley was responding to local media coverage of a Chattanooga Adventist church member who, in the Adventist tradition of finding eschatalogical significance in wars, stated that this war had

Harvey Brenneise is an associate professor of library science and the head reference librarian at Andrews University. His compilations of student writing from Adventist campuses appear in Spectrum *periodically.*

been predicted in the book of Daniel. Gulley dismissed this interpretation as speculative, and stated that Adventist hermeneutics of *sola scriptura* require that the Bible be its own interpreter. Given past Adventist eschatological speculations, it is unclear which position is more faithful to Adventist tradition. It is possible that the official church has learned from past failed prophetic interpretations, although it would be interesting to know what was said in Adventist pulpits and by Adventist evangelists during the latter part of January.

Individual students at Walla Walla and Pacific Union colleges attended local peace rallies, and Walla Walla students helped organize a rally. The photojournalism students at Southern reported a rally, but apparently did not otherwise participate. Lawrence Geraty, president of Atlantic Union College, stated that he would be supportive of student-organized programs such as teach-ins or rallies for or against the war, although demonstrators would not necessarily be immune from disciplinary action if they disrupted classes. The only actual demonstration was reported at Walla Walla, where pro- and anti-war demonstrators took up positions on opposite sides of College Avenue. While only a few students participated in demonstrations, the campus appeared to have plunged into more vigorous debate over the Gulf War than any other Adventist school.

Concern about the possibility of reinstitution of the draft was common. At Walla Walla there was a packed worship for a talk given by the local draft officer.

The papers reported a number of ways for students to become personally involved in expressing support for the troops. These included special blood drives at Southern College and Loma Linda, sending care packages (AUC) and letters (AU and LLU) to the troops, tying yellow ribbons (AU), and praying (AU, LLU, PUC, SC).

A growing acceptance by Adventists of members serving as active members or reservists in the professional military was apparent. The *Campus Chronicle* reported that 2,000 Adventists were serving in the Gulf, although no source for this information was given. The papers gave considerable attention to students, faculty, relatives, and friends in the military who were called up or who might be. For example, La Sierra reported three Marine reservists called up, and AUC reported a student who was called up to serve as a Religious Program Specialist (whose job is to protect chaplains, who are not allowed to bear arms). Columbia Union, Pacific Union, and Southern colleges all reported students in the military. Andrews University reported the only faculty member called up, Keith Mattingly, a religion teacher sent to the Gulf as a chaplain. Ronald Tull, brother of a Southern College student, was the only survivor of a light armored vehicle hit by "friendly fire" at Khafji, Saudi Arabia.

A growing acceptance by Adventists of members serving as active members or reservists in the professional military was apparent. . . . It was reported that 2,000 Adventists were serving in the Gulf.

A number of campuses reported canceled travel plans due to the threat of terrorism. Andrews canceled a tour of South Africa, and there was doubt about the summer archaeological dig in Jordan. Columbia Union College canceled a mission trip scheduled for spring vacation, and Southern called its student missionaries home from Israel. One of them reported that Palestinians in Israel opposed the

Iraqi invasion of Kuwait until the allies sent in troops and Saddam brought up the Palestinian problem. They changed their tune and "would say things like, 'Saddam is going to kick your butt.'"

Student-written poetry and artwork relating to the war was printed by papers at Andrews University and Columbia Union and Walla Walla colleges. The *Collegian* at Walla Walla included a peace poster as an insert. On the front it said, "Pray for Peace," on the back was "Live for Peace," and the middle was splotches of red and black, presumably portraying blood and oil.

Following is a brief synopsis of war coverage by school.

Andrews University: No "Quasi-Religion" in America?

Several non-American graduate students expressed surprise and consternation at the support American Adventists gave to the war effort. An American faculty member debated a German and a Ghanian.

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to letters by Frank Hasel and Harold Tucker in the Feb. 6 *Student Movement.*

If Hasel's home country is Germany, then he should know that twice in this century German Seventh-day Adventists enthusiastically supported war and even dictatorship to a degree never seen among American Adventists.

European division President Louis T. Conradi led a majority of German Adventists in praying for the Kaiser, bearing arms in his army in WWI, and even attending school and working on Sabbath to support the war.

During the 1930s, German Adventists warmly supported Adolf Hitler and his rearmament efforts leading to WWII, as their pamphlets and official church magazines show (see Jack Patt, "German Adventists Under Nazi Rule" and Erwin Sicher, "SDA Publications and the Nazi Temptation" in *Spectrum* 8, No. 3).

Hasel's closing words about Adventists' "quasi-religious devotion" to the state taking the place of "commitment to God and His Word" aptly describes what happened among Adventists twice in Germany, never in America! . . .

—Brian Strayer, Andrews University *Student Movement*, February 13, 1991, p. 5.

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to a letter by Prof. Brian E. Strayer (*Student Movement*, Feb. 13) which takes me to task for my earlier letter to the editor (*Student Movement*, Feb. 6) in which I attempted to explain why some American Adventists support this war and participate in military institutions.

Let me begin by saying that Prof. Strayer rightly assumes that I am German. But it appears as if for Prof. Strayer this fact alone puts into question what I tried to point out, namely that alongside their faith there exists among many—though by no means all!—American Adventists a quasi-religious devotion to the American state.

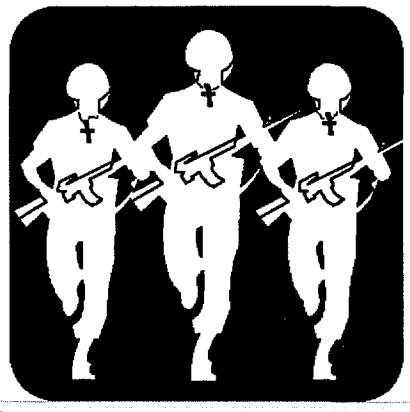
It is unfortunate that Prof. Strayer failed to see the point of the argument.

What I said remains true whether it is stated by a German, a British, a French, a Russian, a Swedish, an African or any other person.

May I also remind readers that it was the American scholar Martin E. Marty who made the initial observation in his book "Christian Church in the United States" (1987). What I did was simply to quote him and apply the issue to the present situation in the Adventist community.

Prof. Strayer will be interested to know that as a German citizen (although I don't consider this earthly country my real home), I am not unmindful of the history of Germany in the two world wars. My own parents and grandparents suffered under Nazi rule because of their religious convictions.

Yes, I am well aware of what happened and I am not proud of



that at all; as a matter of fact, I am deeply ashamed.

This sad knowledge, however, makes me even more sensitive to the whole issue of war and participation in military institutions!

I know that God holds me responsible for my conduct today and not for what someone else did half a century ago, long before I was born (cf. Ezekiel 18).

It is precisely because of my concern about the current attitude of some American Adventists on the war issue that I called attention to some dangers.

To detract from the present problem and our current responsibility by referring to an incident that happened several decades ago is to commit a fallacy of which David Hackett Fischer has ably warned in his book "Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought" (1970).

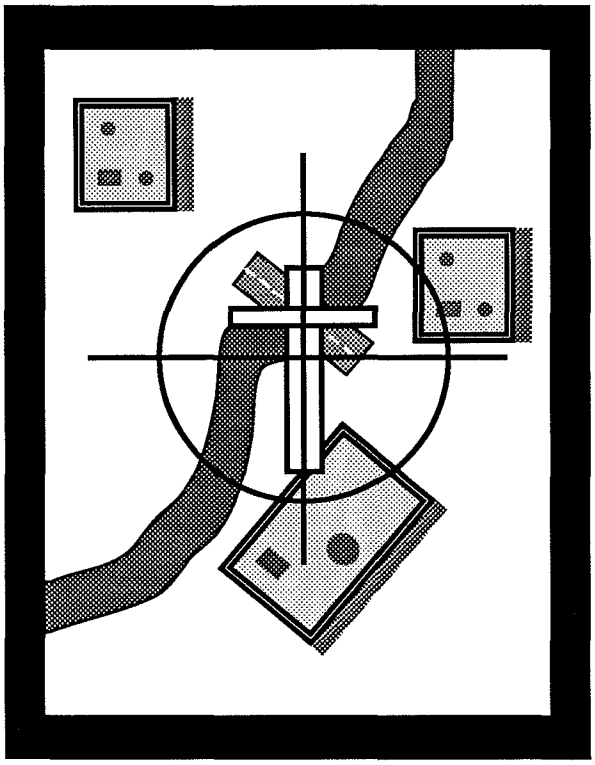
Prof. Strayer will also like to know that today the overwhelming majority of German Adventists do not support war in any form and for any reasons, and almost all Adventist youth in Germany decide to do social service rather than non-combatant service in the army.

In Prof. Strayer's letter he mentions Ludwig R. Conradi and his "support" of Kaiser Wilhelm in WWI.

I suppose that as a history professor, Strayer is well aware of the fact that not everything Conradi did and said was fully grounded on Biblical teaching. Conradi—his tremendous leadership qualities notwithstanding—made several theological and personal decisions which eventually led to his dissociation from the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I suppose that Prof. Strayer is also aware of the fact that the warm support of the war by some Adventists, under the leadership of Conradi, was one of the major reasons for the split in the Adventist church in Germany from which the so-called "Reform Movement" resulted.

I for my part have esteemed America highly for its religious freedom which is based on a strict separation between church and state.



Could it be that this "public religion" of the nation, as Benjamin Franklin has called it, blurs this important distinction between church and state, a distinction which in America has been a source of blessing in the past and which is essential for our precious religious freedom in the future?

—**Frank M. Hasel,** Andrews University

Student Movement, February 27, 1991, p. 7.

Dear Editor:

Some readers may disagree with the assertion by Professor Brian E. Strayer that "quasi-religious devotion to the state" describes only "what happened among Adventists in Germany, never in America" (*Student Movement*, Feb. 13).

My concern, however, is that the analogy he draws between the attitudes of German Adventists to World Wars I and II and the support of American Adventists in the Persian Gulf war, is on the one hand helpful and, yet, on the other hand misleading.

Dr. Strayer's letter is misleading because it leads readers to conclude erroneously that (i) German Adventists have no right to question the morality of any war since Adventists in that country "enthusiastically supported" WWI and II; (ii) since "a majority" of German Adventists followed their leadership in the war campaign, American Adventists may be justified by doing the same.

The reason why the above conclusions are objectionable is that it is based on a relativistic ethic which teaches that right and wrong are determined by each cultural matrix or by following the choice of the "majority." I hope that Dr. Strayer did not intend to give this kind of impression to his readers.

However, Dr. Strayer's analogy is helpful in that it exposes the dangers Christians face whenever they

adopt the "political religion" of their respective countries.

In the case of Germany, the war issue not only jeopardized the credibility of the church to the world, but also it resulted in a split within the Adventist church itself, according to the Biblical Research Institute's "The SDA Reform Movement," 1988, by Helmut H. Kramer.

Let us hope that in their attitudes to the present war campaign, SDA Christians will be humble and willing enough to learn from the past mistakes of others—even if it be the Adventists of Germany during WWI and II.

The wishy-washy position of some Christians is summarized by one Bible scholar who has correctly observed that as long as their country or tribe is at peace, Christians prefer and advocate peace. Strangely, however, when their country or tribe goes to war, they find ways to support the war, either as a so-called "necessary evil" or as a God-given crusade against other's evil.

Not willing to take the Bible seriously, such Christians neglect the teaching of the New Testament about peace, or treat it as an "impossible ideal in an imperfect world."

A similar position is held by some Adventists whose apathy on issues, such as the current one, is stronger than their conviction. Consequently, they are indifferent to challenges facing their church and how these challenges are resolved.

Considering issues of war and peace as matters for their nations and tribes to work out, Adventists in this group shirk their responsibility to "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good," (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Instead, they accept without question whatever their national, tribal or religious leaders say or do.

But there is another group of Adventists whose conviction is stronger than their apathy. While members in this group may vigorously differ on the specifics of their positions, they stand united in their acceptance of the Bible as the sole basis for resolving their opposing views. At the same time, they are gracious enough to express their disagreements in the true spirit of Christian respect.

As they wrestle with the difficult question, "Are Christians free to engage in their nation's or tribe's warfare?" they seek to be informed by scriptural teaching alone. I would hope that the *Student Movement* will facilitate and steer the debate on war to a Biblical focus.

Questions such as the following deserve answers: What light can the nature of the Old Testament wars throw on the current problem? What is the relationship of war to the commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Kill"? How does the teaching about peace by Jesus and the NT writers influence our position? How do we deal with tests (i.e. Romans 13; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:13) that discuss the Christian's responsibility to the state? How does this responsibility to the state relate to the claims of God and the statement of Jesus that "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight?" (John 18:36)?

If we fail to address this perplexing question, members of our worldwide church may find themselves adopting different national versions of "civil religion" in which unquestioned loyalty to God and His Word is replaced by a religious commitment to the state.

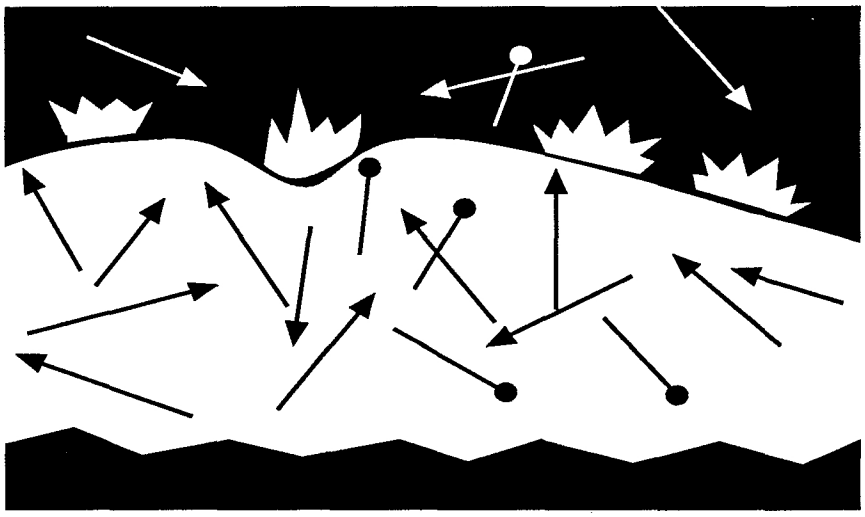
Dr. Strayer claims that this kind of pseudo-religion happened only in Germany but "never in America." Let us hope that the future generation of Adventists will not look back on events in our day and conclude sadly that it happened again in the Adventist world.

—**Samuel Koranteng-Pipim**, Andrews University *Student Movement*, February 27, 1991, p. 7.

Atlantic Union College: "I'm Not a Piece of Prime Meat"

In a column on December 5, David Stone, a senior English major, observed, "I don't like feeling like a piece of prime meat—Grade A, a fresh U.S. grown 21. I want to finish my senior thesis, own my own unenvironmental car, and dream of writing a book."

President Geraty stated that the college was not taking any official action in response to the war, but that students would be educated in



war-related activities such as medical training, should the need arise. Geraty also pledged financial relief to students who were called up. He stated that he had purposely kept a low personal profile because "I feel like I have an unpopular point of view in that I am not supportive of the war effort."

Biology Professor Gene Johnson, spokesman for the Adventist Environmental Institute at AUC, commented about the environmental damage in the Gulf area. He concluded that "our high standard of living is one reason there is a disaster there. People in developed countries have got to stop overusing their share of the world's resources."

Columbia Union College: Support Our Troops "to win this war"

The *Columbia Journal* reported (11/19) the story of a part-time CUC physics professor who had escaped from Kuwait just before the Iraqi invasion.

Peter Justesen seemed to reflect the feeling of several at CUC and other Adventist campuses when he wrote, "We need to support our troops in the Middle East, no matter if we think the policy is good or bad. The troops need our support to win this war."

La Sierra University: "There is no enemy"

The *Criterion* was the only Adventist college newspaper to print a letter President Bush sent to college students defending U.S. policies in the Gulf.

A writer for the paper visited several Iraqi students in the Southern California area, and reported their feelings of sadness, anger, and despair. He concluded, "I now realize there is no 'enemy.' The people of Iraq, like the people of any country, do not seek war. It's not 'us against them.' It's 'us WITH them', joining for a common universal wish—one of peace on earth."

Loma Linda University: "Come home safe"

Loma Linda Today and the *Courier* reported very little Gulf-related news. The counseling center was opened especially for sharing and support. Students expressed experiencing difficulty in studying in an environment of war crisis. Loma Linda also established a Desert Storm Prayer Center. A group of staff at the LLU Medical Center were pictured wearing special tee shirts with a U.S. flag, yellow ribbon, and the slogans, "Come Home Safe" and "Come Home Soon."

Pacific Union College: "We should be very grateful to Saudi Arabia"

The *Campus Chronicle* followed its usual magazine format, concentrating virtually all of its coverage to the January 24 issue. One writer protested the anti-war protestors, and another criticized the media for making money out of the latest crisis.

Some PUC students established a Persian Gulf Warline, a free war news updating service provided by Looking Up Youth Ministries.

A January editorial declared:

"I think one of the most ridiculous sayings by protestors is "No Blood for Oil." This is only a small part of why we are over in the Middle East. We could survive a Middle East monopoly by Hussein. If Hussein has never heard of competition he would learn about it. We can get oil from other locations. Our main interest in Iraq is to destroy those nuclear, chemical and biological plants that we deem as a threat to our society. We should be very grateful to Saudi Arabia for inviting us to protect them because this gave us an excuse to do what we have wanted to do for a long time."

In the same issue, Mike Wiggins wrote "On Protesting Protesters," which concluded:

"I think that everyone should be able to voice their opinion but these groups often don't have even a general idea of what the protest is about. There was even an advertisement in the *San Francisco Chronicle* for professional demonstrators.

"Protesters jump at every trendy thing to demonstrate and in the process shoot themselves in the foot. Next week they will have forgotten that our country is at war, if they even really realized it in the first place, and will be burning more cars for the cruelty with which heartless humans can kill spiders in cold blood."

—**Mike Wiggins**, Pacific Union College *Campus Chronicle*, January 24, 1991, p. 8.

Southern College: "Pits of hell" and Burning Bushes

The food service director at Southern blamed the crisis for contributing to increased food costs in the cafeteria.

In one of the more bizarre incidents reported by student newspapers, Southern's FM radio station, WSMC, received a call during an on-air call-in show which stated, "George and Barbara Bush are going to descend to the pits of hell in a robe of flames." WSMC turned this incident over to the FBI, which reported it to the Secret Service. Officials checked with Southern College's administration to see if there might be a Middle Eastern student whose voice matched that of the caller. WSMC also went to 24-hour coverage of the war, including broadcasting war news on Saturday.

Southwestern Adventist College: Fighting Without Even "Seeing the face of the enemy"

There was very little war coverage in the monthly *Southwesterner*, but an editorial in January stated:

"We also like to fight our wars from a safe distance. Fortunately technology has allowed us this luxury. Techno-War waged using smart missiles launched from hundreds of miles away or bombers flying thousands of feet up, allows us to attack and destroy without ever seeing the face of the victim.

"Although we have managed to keep war distant, and therefore clean, we still find ourselves somewhat ill at ease with the concept of organized killing. Each time it arises we find ourselves searching our collective consciousness.

"We should be thankful that we live in a nation where debate is still allowed. I pray that our country never enters a war without an emotional/intellectual/moral struggle.

"When the flag-draped coffins of American personnel start appearing on the nightly news, all of us will see for a moment the true price of our endeavor in the Gulf. Technology may allow us to keep things distant and sanitized, but it cannot save us from all of the consequences of war."

—Kevin Wells

Union College: Christians Simply Don't Fight

The *Clocktower* gave some coverage to the crisis leading up to the war. Several essays were critical of U.S. policy:

"From a Christian perspective, the only feasible position would be simply not to fight. From a military perspective, the U.S. would strike swiftly with its air power at the Iraqi leadership and hope that Saddam's forces turn tail. This may be practical. The Christian perspective may not sound practical. However, it is Christian."

—W. D. Fitts

Walla Walla College: Freedom Bought With Someone Else's Blood

By a considerable margin, the *Collegian* had the most extensive coverage of the war. It also had the largest number of antiwar opinion pieces and letters. Walla Walla students participated in a Persian Gulf debate held at Whitman College. It is evident that the student body was quite polarized about the war, with definite pro- and anti-war camps.

Dear Editor,

Dan Rather spoke in discerning terms. War is no longer anticipated: it is here, and a peaceful future of the free world had taken on a challenge. I wasn't always afraid of war. I used to wish I could have lived during World War II when patriotism was rampant, victory was in sight, and bold headlines ran across the papers daily. I figured if history was an amusement park, war would definitely be the roller coaster.

I was in clinical lab in the labor and delivery unit of Portland Adventist Medical Center when the onset of war was announced over the TV. My patient, a young Filipino woman, didn't know what to expect as she was heading into labor for her first child. I explained, "When the contraction is too painful, I want you to take a cleansing breath by breathing in through your nose and slowly exhaling out your mouth." I called her mamma, and her eyes came alive. Her husband came over to the bedside, and she told him he was going to be a papa. They had dated for four years and been married for three; it was time.

Grandpa used to take me to the Navy docks in San Diego when I was so young I had to reach up for his hand. Grandpa also took me to see the movie Top Gun. *I've watched*

that movie more times than I dare count, and I still feel like a hero just for being an American. I pictured boys sent off to war to return as men with a tough masculinity and heroism all of their own.

A dozen pink and red roses were delivered to mamma by a delivery boy. "I don't know who they're from. There's a card on the top there," the boy said. Papa stood there just holding the roses as the room of medical personnel and mamma leaned forward waiting for him to open the card. Then he grinned and said they were from him. I helped him disassemble the wrapping and placed the buds close enough for mamma to smell, but she turned away because a new contraction had started.

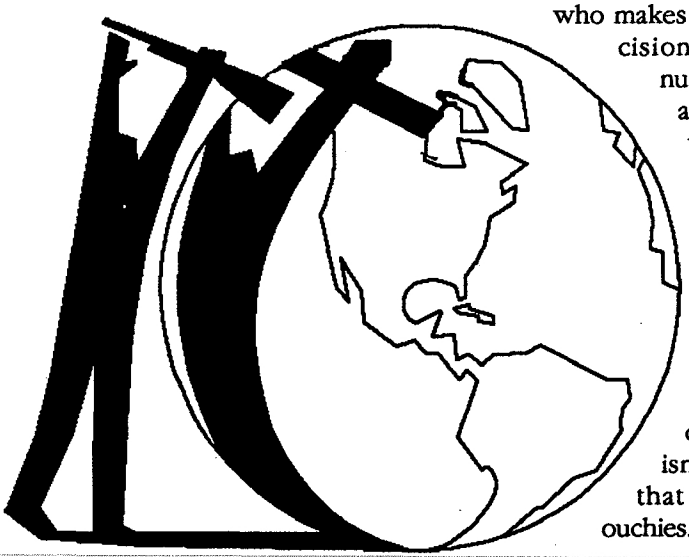
My brother will be eighteen in October; my cousin is twenty. I want to be selfish. I don't want to share my life with the war. On the other hand, Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia. What if yesterday's history had melted into today's? It's not easy to distinguish between a greedy man and an insane man, especially when it comes to politics.

Baby wasn't ready to face the world yet. Mamma had been in labor for almost a day, and we were anxious to speed up an apparently tardy Mother Nature. We started mamma on Pitocin, which increased the intensity of her contractions. Her wrinkled face signaled a new intense level of pain. A quiet and retiring woman was coming forth with aggressive pants, "he-he-he-he." Papa was holding her left hand; I was holding her right hand, and we were both squeezed.

I looked up at the TV to see Dan Rather still chatting with experts. They show the enemy on a map with little play ships and borders. I am remote from details and am more interested in the "end" than the "means." I want peace and freedom, but I don't want to see the "means" of war to be the big round eyes of children barely old enough to understand absolute evil or the gurgling blood of a freshly fallen enemy. If the opposite of love is apathy, then why doesn't everyone just ignore their enemies?

Mamma's body is shaking. Her face is sobbing, and I have to take control and force her to pant, "he-he-wo." "Just take this one contraction. You can do it. Come on, 'he-he-wo'." Oh, when is the doctor going to be here! She needs her epidural shot now; she can't handle the overexpansion of muscles and tendons anymore.

Casualties. They're given in numbers and not names. Everyone who makes important decisions wants low numbers of casualties. A soldier who returns home and struggles to find a job and a marriage that lasts, is he a casualty? A happy homecoming parade isn't a band-aid that cures all ouchies.



The doctor has come and gone, leaving a sleeping woman who is in labor.

A soldier becomes America's hero who takes less of himself to the grave—whether he makes it home for the parade or not. Freedom is a privilege that comes with a high price tag. A privilege bought with someone's blood, sweat, and tears. The sacrifices offered for America by its soldiers are not worth it for themselves. We, as free Americans, have the right to support or demonstrate against war. It is our veterans and those veterans yet to come who give us that right.

It's five o'clock at night. I'm tired because I've been here since six-thirty this morning. I don't have to stay in lab any longer. I have the freedom to go. I think I will because the worst of her pain is over. She may need moral support, but I have theory class to study for.

—Shirley Hervig, Walla Walla College *Collegian*, January 24, 1991, p. 11.

The paper included yet another chapter in the apparently never-ending campus debate about whether or not Walla Walla's engineering graduates should work for the defense industry.

Work for the Military?
YES

What? You're not still debating that, are you? This has been going on for years now! I understand that local theologians still make an annual pilgrimage to the engineering building to discuss Christians employed by military organizations. One once said (to the best of my memory) that whom one worked for and the type of work that they did was a matter of individual feelings, commitment, and Christian experience. Another, on the other hand, left little doubt about his views.

Working for the military was immoral and the school should not allow recruiters from military organizations to enter the campus. You could not work for the military if you were a Christian. Bad! He even said that you could not be a Christian and a policeman both! Wow, that stuff is kind of heavy. I always hoped that if I ever needed a policeman, that he or she would be a Christian! Well, I'm not saying that he was wrong, just that his viewpoints differ from mine.

This question of working for the military has been raging for so long now, and due to the diverse differences in backgrounds and viewpoints of us all, the answer is not very easy.

As for me, I work for that part of the military called the Navy. I am proud of it and I enjoy my work. Of course some of you will immediately say, "How could you! You must enjoy killing people." I am about as guilty of that as anyone working for Boeing, Ford, or General Motors. All are respected companies worthy of Christian employment, right? Well, Boeing has a military airplane division, Ford has their aerospace company, and General Motors owns Hughes Aircraft Company. All of which build "war machines."

I am not going to debate the morals of our country having a strong military defense. The fact is, we do have a military system, and our citizens, young and old, man and woman, Christian and non-Christian alike are serving in it. Unfortunately though, military bases, planes, and ships are very dangerous places to work. It comes with the territory. In one instance alone, a fire on an aircraft carrier resulted in 143 deaths. There was not an enemy in sight. The deaths resulted from our own weapons. It seems that when bombs and missiles are engulfed in a jet fuel fire, they have a habit of exploding. In a wartime situation, our pilots will be shot down by enemy missiles. These two realities of both peacetime and wartime are tragic.

At the Naval Weapons Center where I work there are about 3,000 scientists employed. Some of them are working to make our weapons more lethal, some are not. If you work for General Motors and don't want to design radars for F-15's, you can choose to spend your time designing seat belts for Chevettes. At the Naval Weapons Center, I do not personally choose to build more lethal weapons. I choose to spend my time in activities which will save the lives of our sailors. About half of my time is spent trying to make our weapons safer to handle. My efforts directly affect the safety of our bombs and missiles when subjected to fires, impacts by fragments and bullets from guns. The result of this work often is a weapon that is also less powerful when used as intended. Is that good or bad? The other half of my time is spent analyzing the weapons that would be used against our pilots in a wartime situation. By analyzing the hows, whens, and whys of a potential enemy's weapons, our pilots and aircraft designers can develop techniques and countermeasures to use to save that pilot's life in the event someone wants to shoot him down. I have the choice to work almost anyplace on the base. I choose to do what I do because I get a great amount of satisfaction knowing that my work directly saves lives. Whether we are at peace or at war, I am responsible for the increased safety of our troops.

Well, I am sure that not everyone who reads this will agree with me. I never said that I could justify my decision to work for the Navy to everyone, but if you pay taxes, then you are paying my wages. Is that not support? Other reasons I work there are I love the desert and I enjoy traveling. I get to travel all around this country (and occasionally beyond) and I get to drive big ships all over the ocean from time to time.

—Bob Van Stee, Walla Walla College *Collegian*, February 14, 1991, p. 6.

Work for the Military? NO

Would I accept employment to develop or produce military equipment? No, and I don't recommend it for others. But, the issue is complex. Let me begin by analyzing some of that complexity.

When I finished graduate school with a Ph.D. focused on control systems (the things that keep the space shuttle flying straight or make a new car engine run well), I had naively failed to think enough about potential employment. Funded by NASA, I had ridden the wave of enthusiasm over getting to the moon a little on the late side. It was 1972; NASA shriveled, Boeing shrank, and the instrument industry sank. So, I aimed for Bell Laboratories with its emphasis far away from military applications, and, six years later, was working on the most exciting project of my life. But, irony had struck—I was designing a new world-wide military communication system. What I would not have chosen to begin with became a source of excitement. I did not refuse the assignment because I rea-

soned that there was a difference between a general-purpose communication system and weapons. Many would challenge that view.

Why would anyone choose to work on military applications when there are so many other things to be done? For one thing, military projects often work with the most advanced technology. Someone says: "Let's push the frontiers. See what you can do and send me the bill later." Excitement and creativity often reach their peaks under such circumstances. (Corruption may also thrive, but that's another topic.) For me, a world-wide encrypted communication system was a true engineering challenge, and the people I worked with were the best I had ever encountered. I had one terrific year before Congress cut the funding.

For many, technology is exciting. Take the Patriot missile, for example. That's something I could have worked on. It's loaded with the best computer control, electronics, and radar yet conceived. What kid doesn't find a thrill in trying to knock down a stone with another stone? Missile technology simply adds intellectual challenge to an innate excitement of life.

Exhilaration and excitement are strange parts of our psyche. I remember my great glee over shooting English sparrows. Birds were thrilling targets because they were evasive. And, I thought, English sparrows were the most brat-like intruders, fully deserving of annihilation. Then, one day, my target burst into a puff of yellow and brown feathers. A sick feeling displaced my exhilaration; it must have been a female goldfinch, I concluded. English sparrows have been safer ever since; I no longer shoot anything.

How strange that a few yellow feathers had such a big effect. But, that is very human. We often recoil from the implications of what we do. Do you know why we have the Nobel prizes? After inventing dynamite, Alfred Nobel wanted to be sure that his profits from its sale would reward those who worked for the "good of humanity." He knew that dynamite didn't always produce enough good to offset its harm. Somehow, he was both exhilarated and chagrined by the explosions he made possible. More recently, the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb brought even greater thrills and despair to its teams.

What strange creatures we humans are: we shoot birds, but cry when the feathers are yellow; we unleash powers that we cannot control; we build bombs to ensure our safety. How long, Lord, how long?

Most days, I qualify as a pacifist; I've never fought with anyone and I hate to see others fighting. Surely no one needs better weapons. On other days, I think about Adolf Hitler and Saddam Hussein. Can we always avoid war? Is the Patriot missile a force for good or for evil? My mixed feelings are very frustrating.

Teaching is a great job for a pacifist; students are such gentle creatures. But what if my students graduate and want to work on the Patriot missile? What should I say? After all, we can't all be teachers.

To those of you who want to stay out of the military-industrial complex, I say: "Good choice. That's where I want to be. I think the most important things waiting to be done are non-military."

To those of you who believe that a strong military can prevent war or at least end it sooner, I say: "I respect your choice. Remember that Congress won't ask your opinion before declaring war, and others may sell your product to almost anyone. Our leaders and businessmen are not always noble."

Finally, the big question for everyone: What does it take to turn our energies toward finding the best for humanity? Can it be just as thrilling to save energy as to shoot a missile with a missile? When you go to work, remember that our grandchildren will live in the world that we leave to them. Let's see if we can leave it with fewer bombs and less pollution than we have today. Isn't our biggest challenge to explore the frontiers of peace and to reverse the present forces of environmental destruction?

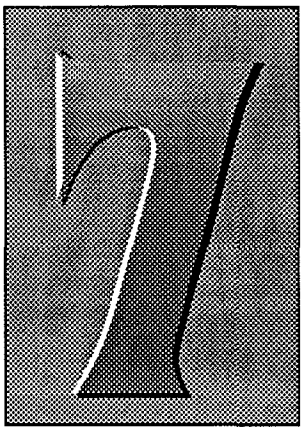
—**Carlton Cross,** Walla Walla College *Collegian,* February 14, 1991, p. 6.

The first-year president of the college, Nils-Erik Andreasen, congratulated the campus:

". . . College students ought to get involved with an issue as important as the war. It should be discussed vigorously from many perspectives—the perspectives of America and its allies, of the Iraqis and the Arab world, of oil and economics, of ethics and religious principles, of the future world order and eternity. . . .

". . . Because next time a war threatens, you may well be legislators, industrialists, teachers, pastors, counsellors, community leaders or decision makers on behalf of many other people. And we would like to think that such future leaders and decision makers, as you will surely be, have had a little practice in clear and sensitive thinking. . . .

"...I am particularly pleased that we have remembered these principles here, because in addition to being a college community, we are also a Christian community, which means that we bring certain values to the discussion. . . ."



The Seventh Day

The strange world of Adventism as seen through the eyes of a Methodist kid who's not sure whether her newly minted Adventist grandmother is crazy—or right after all.

by Beverly Coyle

Beverly Coyle's new novel, The Kneeling Bus, *recounts her childhood growing up in rural Florida during the 1950s as the daughter of a Methodist minister, "a liberal with advanced degrees." We here reprint one chapter.*
— The Editors

THAT SUMMER I TURNED TEN AND BOUGHT A parakeet at Alma Turner's pet store in town. Before she started up the final transaction Miss Alma insisted on showing me a photograph of her granddaughter, Faybia.

"She looks like me," Alma said, leaning on her elbows, studying the likeness, "but I believe there's worse things in life." She held out a bleary photograph of a grown woman who I saw instantly would one day be me if I wasn't careful. The granddaughter looked to be forty, but was wearing a child's necklace on a blackened chain. A small gold cross was stuck in the middle of her throat.

"She lives up north," Alma said, reaching insider her bosom for a handkerchief trimmed with crochet. It was Florida in August and all the women in Boynton Beach had hankies.

Alma Turner was the most forward-thinking woman in our town. When her TV set—a mahogany Philco—arrived from Miami, a photographer had rushed over to take a picture of Alma pointing a bony finger at the mysterious screen. I still had the clipping along with other special keepsakes—a lock of my own grandmother's hair and an abandoned collection of cigar rings from foreign countries.

Boynton Pets sold mostly tropical fish and kittens. Alma sold miniatures in the back as well—cups and saucers, teeny commodes, covered cake plates the size of acorns. Behind that was a set of rooms where she lived with a parrot she was willing to sell for fifty dollars. People thought she was kidding, but fifty dollars was a bargain, Alma said; she said folks

From the book *The Kneeling Bus* by Beverly Coyle, published by Ticknor & Fields, New York. Copyright © 1990 by Beverly Coyle. Reprinted by permission.

around here knew nothing because they never traveled. She had taught the parrot to advertise. "I'm a bargain," the bird said.

"All the parakeets in this cage are my males," Alma explained. We stood in front of the special cages she'd made from chicken wire; the mesh tops sagged over branches strung on clothesline. "If you want yours to be a talker, you have to be sure to pick a male. They get a dark spot over their beak. It's the mark of intelligence."

Weeks before, she'd pointed out an ugly chartreuse lump of a bird who'd been hatched in July. I'd been in and out all month to see if the place above his beak would grow dark enough to distinguish him. Suddenly, in a matter of days, the spot had deepened to an ashy smudge.

"Yep, Carrie, he's going to be a real good one," she said, pleased for me. "When you get him home you spend some time now taking him on and off his perch. The trick is to put your finger in like this and let him walk right onto it before you lift him out."

My parakeet looked sideways and suspicious when she offered him a step-up. But then, just as she'd known he would, he put a foot forward, my heart swelling at the thought of him doing that for me. I watched him swaying dangerously, trying to balance himself on his fragile chicken tongs. As Alma passed her hand in front of my face, he crouched as low as he could and hung on for the ride.

"How long will it take him to talk?"

"I don't make prophecies."

Alma deposited the bird inside the brand-new plastic cage that came free with the deal. As I carried him off, full of hope, she called out to me, "Just don't be asking for miracles."

The next day, a letter arrived from my grandmother. The envelope was so fat Grandma had used up a whole roll of tape to get the thing closed. I was in the mango grove behind our house, bent down over the cage, already coaxing my pet. "You silly bird, you silly Billy," I was saying over and over when Jeanie came out to break the news. "She's joined a Seventh-day Adventist church," Jeanie said. "Mom says they're more fundamentalist than anyone." My sister sighed wearily and knelt down beside me because she thought I wasn't listening, which was not the case. I felt sure something unusual was about to happen to our whole family this time, something I'd been waiting for.

Jeanie's voice went low. "They footwash," she said.

"They do not," I said.

"They do. They wash their feet right in the pews."

I closed my eyes and waited. "No they don't. You're making it up."

Jeanie shrugged her shoulders. "I'm telling you what's in the letter. Go read it for yourself. If you *can* read. Mom and Dad are having a fight. Mom is crying right this minute."

Billy fluttered inside his cage and hopped to the perch nearest Jeanie. His head feathers sat straight up with pleasure when Jeanie made a few *tuck-tuck* sounds with her tongue; when she whistled, the kindness made him quite mad. He began nodding from the top of his cage to his toes, turning round and round on his perch, saluting her first high then low until he almost fell on his face.

"Your bird is as dumb as you are," she observed.

But I saw the real truth immediately. Billy would go to anyone.

My mother sat at the kitchen table, the letter spread out before her. I couldn't make out her expression. Dad leaned against the drainboard and watched me hang the plastic cage

on a sturdy hook he'd put up in the corner.

"I certainly wouldn't have expected it," my mother was saying, expressing my thought almost at once. This thing had happened to her mother, but we all knew the dark weakness for fundamentalism came from Dad's side of the family.

The letter lay in two piles. Half of it was anchored with a saucer. Grandma had typed out every moment leading to her decision—the complicated details of her conversion. She'd used a two-toned ribbon so that words and whole sentences would stand out in red like the red words of Jesus in my Youth's New Testament.

I saw my mother thumb the pages and then give up.

"Do they wash their feet in church?" I asked.

She looked at me. "It's just a ceremony, sweetheart."

I imagined all their feet exposed and a pile of socks and shoes on the floor of some little brown church in the wood.

"What else do they do?" I said. (They would sing "Bringing in the Sheaves" for one thing.)

"Noel?" Mom said.

Dad took a pen from his shirt pocket and bided his time. He was a handsome man with a strong jaw who did nothing to set himself above his flock. Sundays and funerals, he stood naturally and gracefully as if he were standing on his own front porch. "It's their belief that we should worship on Saturday instead of Sunday," he said. "That's why they call themselves Seventh-day Adventists."

Mom stared at him as if she were having to take this in once more and just could not.

"But *Sunday* is the seventh day," I said, counting from my thumb, starting with Monday. I was a Monday's child.

Dad pointed to a calendar hanging by the phone. When I looked, all the Mondays in August had suddenly moved over. Four Sundays, at the head of each week and busy with penciled reminders, pushed everything down one. I saw, for the first time, that Saturday stood all by itself—extreme and final—as far away from us as it could get. Why had I never noticed this before?

Mom took my hand and turned away to look at Dad. "Mama's lonely. She's looking for a family with these people, don't you think? Noel?"

"Maybe you should invite her here."

Mom got up and put the letter in the sink. She hadn't intended this to be funny, but Dad gave a laugh, and it made my mother turn huffy.

"I have no idea what I should do," she said.

My grandmother wasn't lonely. None of us had ever seen her so pleased with herself. She said she'd talked to a lovely woman all the way down on the bus.

I saw, for the first time, that Saturday stood all by itself—extreme and final—as far away from us as it could get. Why had I never noticed this before?

She began right off the bat. "It's one of the Commandments, darlin'," she explained. This was the simplest explanation for what she'd done, she said. "The seventh day is the Lord thy God's," she sang, lifting a pale pink corset from her suitcase and placing it flat in the top drawer of my dresser. I'd be staying in Jeanie's room, and I'd lined the drawers in gift wrap for Grandma—ironed Christmas paper with green and silver bells. "The seventh day is the Lord thy God's," she said.

There was a radiance in her face in spite of her fleshy nose and her wisps of dry fine hair. Mom came into the room with ice water. "Here we are!" she breezed.

The tray was too small; the glasses clinked sonorously together. Grandma patted my mother's arm. "Sunday is *not* the Sabbath day." She spoke in a new kind of voice, low and masculine. "Sunday is the wild solar holiday of pagan times."

There were things on the stove and Mother excused herself.

"They let the pagans keep their sun gods so they would convert easier. Maypoles, nakedness, graven images." Grandma clutched a gigantic brassiere in her arms. "They made Sunday into a false Sabbath."

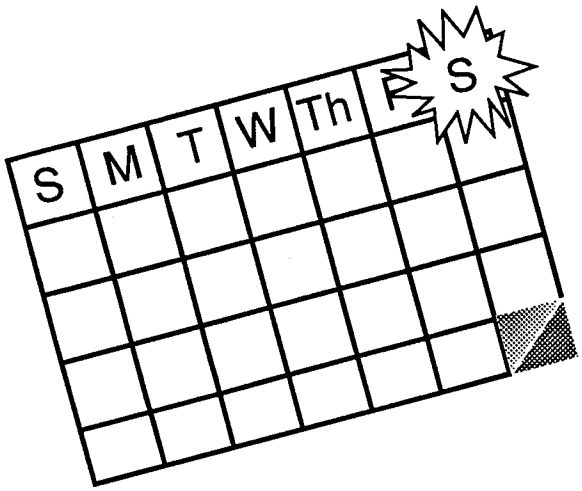
"*Who* did?" I asked

"They did it in order to fool the pagans," she said.

She sat on my bed and opened her notebook. She wrote the words "Sun God" and "Son of God" so I could see, she said, how the pagans might get confused and be accidentally converted. As she wrote, she moved her arm in a cool circular motion, her hand never touching the page. The fragrances of her were like all the summers of my life. I leaned against her powdered skin and studied the moles along her neck. Translucent, they hung by delicate threads.

"We must never be counted among their number," she said. "We must never be counted among those who changed the Law."

Downstairs Mother was getting the noon meal on. It wasn't like Grandma not to be down there helping—to be sitting instead with me in my blue-papered room. By now the casserole was on the table. Mom stood at the bottom of the stairs calling up to us. "Yoo-hoo!" she called. But Grandma seemed not to hear.



"We have proof they changed the Law," she continued, lowering her voice.

"Who *were* they?" I asked. "The pagans?"

"Oh, yoo-hoo!"

Grandma shifted to face me. This is why she'd come. She pressed my hand. ("Is anybody up there?") She whispered she had taken a long time figuring these things out. Hadn't it taken her all of her sixty-two years? She bent her big head to mine.

"Not the pagans, darlin'. It was the pope."

Mother walked around the table adjusting the forks. "Oh, there you are."

Grandma nodded at the birdcage in the corner. "What's his name, darlin'?" She was pleased for me.

"Billy." Jeanie moaned, as if there were no hope.

"Billy Billy?" Grandma called, and her voice had the familiar pitch and timbre he knew meant love. He acknowledged her with his practiced bows, the obsequious ups-and-downs of his long chest. When I opened the cage and let him step onto my finger, he flew straight to the top of her head, and she folded her arms slowly, pretending parakeets landed in her hair every day of the week.

"He has to go back to the pet store tomorrow to have his wings clipped," Mom explained, "now that he's used to us." She motioned that I should put Billy back in his cage, please. She looked at Dad. "Noel?"

We bowed our heads and Dad asked that the food be blessed to the nourishment of our bodies and us to His service. Grandma murmured an extra amen and we all relaxed.

The rest of the family sent their love. They were all fine—Carl, Grace, Aunt Dove, and Rita. But the freeze had done such dreadful damage. Carl and the boys were having to sell

the fruit for concentrate this year.

"It's a shame," Dad said.

"And they're all upset with me, of course," Grandma said, patting Mom's arm. "Your Aunt Dove says I've broken her heart." Grandma sighed. "She's hoping you'll talk me back to my senses."

My severe great-aunt Dove, with her deep-set waves of pearl-gray hair. I couldn't imagine anything that could upset her more.

"Well, we want to hear all about it," Mom said. She smiled at Dad, at Jeanie. At me. "Have some of the ham, Mother."

"Oh, no." She shook her head. "I don't eat pork, Caroline."

"Oh?" Mom said, staring at Dad for a moment. "I didn't realize."

"No pork and no coffee."

Later that afternoon, when she'd had her nap, I took her out to the mango grove. I'd pulled old wicker chairs out there by then. We sat down, and I got her to tell me what else the Seventh-day Adventists did. Well, they gave a tenth of all they earned; they refused liquor and stimulants. When she sat back, the late afternoon light cast leafy shadows on her face and arms. They never went to movies; they wore no jewelry; teenage girls didn't ever shave their legs.

Once in a while she leaned down to Billy's cage, repeating his name while he watched the brilliant, iridescent flies crawling in and out of his view. She told me how she feared the idea she might have died not knowing what she knew about the Sabbath. There would have been nothing worse than that.

"Do my parents know?"

"They don't know about the pope."

"Are you going to tell them?" I knew I wouldn't tell Mom if I were her.

Billy suddenly sang out something between a note and a word. Grandma took a stick and dug an old measuring spoon out of the sand. "It's my duty before I go."

When she said "go," I knew she meant her duty before she died. And yet I imagined it as a real journey, away from everything dear and familiar: the Methodist Church, her sister Dove, her children. Us.

For a moment I saw myself walking with Grandma along miles and miles of sandy road on a mission. Neither of us had a pocketbook.

The next morning, the wood shavings at Alma Turner's filled the air with a clean smell; her birdseed always made me think of spices from the Orient—caraway, cardamom, and anise.

And yet my grandmother didn't take to Miss Turner. When the two of us came into Boynton Pets, hauling Billy in his plastic cage, Alma asked a simple question Grandma refused to answer.

"Did you come on the train, Mrs. Jamieson?"

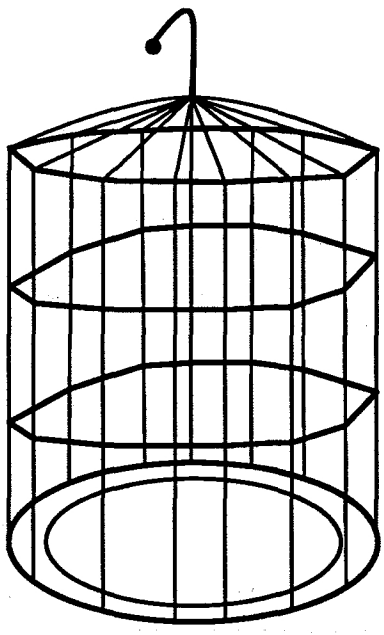
"No, I didn't," Grandma said, squaring off in front of the hamsters. And when it was clear she wasn't going to say how she came, Alma's hands fluttered to the back of her head to see if anything had come loose.

I blushed and had Billy walk onto my finger just the way she'd taught me. Alma smiled at my progress and let me know she was prepared to accept some people's ways. She was a business woman and had seen all kinds. We heard Grandma call out, "And what are *these?*"

"Why, those are True Gold guineas, Mrs. Jamieson."

"And you sell them to people?"

Alma gave me a sharp look. "Yes, ma'am," she answered, and, though she continued to stare at me, she removed a pair of scissors from under the cash register. She was an expert who,



in an instant, had my parakeet spread out in her palm like a hand of glossy playing cards—the sharp edges of his wing repeating over and over a simple pattern of color. Until now I'd never seen these intricate shades. Someone had hidden them there—this ribbed and rigid array of unnameable greens.

Billy looked quite content before the blades began to come together and my grandmother had rushed to us. "Oh, please. Please don't."

Alma met no one's eye when she put the scissors down on the counter and tapped her finger to make her point. If the Lord hadn't wanted us to have these birds as pets, she said, He wouldn't have given them the gift of human speech. She looked at me; wasn't she right?

"He hasn't said anything yet," I said.

And then Alma knew she'd been betrayed. She touched a spring somewhere that collapsed my parakeet to the size of an onion bulb. I saw his smooth ball head pop out from under a thumb. He gave us all an encouraging chirp, but Alma thrust him back in his cage and handed me the whole shebang. "You said you weren't asking for a miracle."

"I'm not," I said. The exotic smells had suddenly made me lightheaded. Grandma had already left the store.

"Well," Alma said, pointing the scissors at me, "maybe you just *better*."

I found Grandma not far off, sitting on a bench in front of the post office. She was fanning herself with a piece of newspaper and breathing hard. The day was too warm and we'd walked too far. She said she had to be still for a minute. We sat together, watching the slow cars in town. I remember the Florida towns in that time well, so sleepy and ringing with no sound at all. Men and women lingered like drugged bees in the intense sun. You could sit and wait for an unlikely breeze to start up, high and out of reach, in the tops of the royal palms.

"It's such a long journey and I'm worn out," she finally said. "I should never have let myself get fat. It was wicked of me."

"Oh, Grandma," I said. I looked down at her swollen black shoes and studied the tiny perforations over the toes. We were in the Last Days, she murmured; that was certain.

"What will happen to you?" I said.

"The Lord will come for me in the clouds of heaven."

"Oh, Grandma." I hadn't meant to sigh, but I couldn't help it. I knew now why she'd broken my aunt Dove's heart.

After dark, after the family had gone to bed, I lay on the rollaway they'd set up in Jeanie's room, unable to sleep, imagining her journey. Once in a while I could hear Billy, ruffling the paraphernalia in his cage downstairs. Once, he sounded as if he were flying up to the blue-papered room where Grandma's whistles and rattles of breath took off like spirits out the windows.

And in the middle of the night I woke up thrashing, and Jeanie sat right up. "You want me to get Mom?"

"No," I said. I went into the hall and crept downstairs. I took Billy's cage and slipped out the back door despite his objections. His feathers had slicked down at the inconvenience of being jostled in the middle of the hot night.

Even in the dark, he recognized the mango

Grandma and I had been reading Revelation for several days. There was nothing to match it in all of Methodism.

"I want you to write the mark of the beast down at the bottom of this page. Then I'll show you something interesting."

grove, and, once settled there, he took in the drama of the tropics. He shook himself out and sidled up to his tin mirror to practice what he knew while I sat back in one of the wicker chairs and tried to imagine myself—grown, gone, and seriously counted. I'd be wearing a jungle helmet at the time I let myself be hurled into some latter day when I'd be old enough for courage.

For Africa.

My parakeet chirped and talked on to himself in the mirror and ignored me.

Africa was my push from the swing and into the wild blue yonder of all whooping confusions—"Red and Yellow, Black and White" we sang in the song about the children of the world. The fire dancing and grassy legs and the lawful bones in their noses. I began to hum. "They are precious in His sight . . . They are precious in His sight."

The next morning I went downstairs and confronted them before she woke up.

Mom folded her hands in her lap and waited for Dad to say something.

"It's true that the day was changed, Caroline," Dad finally told Mom. "It was done in the third century."

"Well, I never heard that before and I think it's all very interesting," Mom said, "but what matters is that we worship every week. Mama knows we believe in a Sabbath as much as she does."

"Why did they have to go and change the day?" I said.

"Who?"

"The Catholics."

"Who?"

"The pope."

Mom looked at Dad. "Do you know what this is all about?"

"One of the popes, I don't know which one," Dad said, smiling. "It's in the recordings of Eusebius."

"That's right," I said. "He changed the Ten Commandments." I raised my voice. "We should be worshiping on Saturday."

"Maybe we should be," Dad said. He winked at me as if we were in cahoots.

"Well," Mom said, "maybe he thought it was better to pick a day to distinguish Christians from the Jewish people. Saturday is *their* Sabbath."

(We knew about Jews the way we knew about Sir Isaac Newton. They were discoverers. They had discovered that God was One, and *no* one would have figured it out for a long time if it hadn't been for them.)

"Well, I wouldn't mind worshiping on the same day as the Jews," I said.

"Well, of course, I wouldn't either, sweetheart. My point is, back then people felt differently. It's important to try to appreciate why they might have thought it was all right to have a different day."

"They were trying to trick the pagans," I said.

"What?" Mom said.

I had always suspected she was gormless.

"Well, I certainly don't believe that anybody was trying to trick anybody," she said, getting up to put the milk away. "If we all go around thinking everything is a trick, where would that leave us?"

None of us had expected Billy to take that moment to speak—to say "Silly Billy" in the clearest of human voices.

"Listen to that!" Mom said.

And he'd even spoken with all the self-deprecation I'd been counting on, though I was in no mood to be pleased. Everything *is* a trick, I thought.

Out in the grove several days later, Grandma showed me something she'd pasted

in her notebook. It was a color photograph of the pope, and I knew this was no good. If she was hoping to get them to listen, she would have to be more careful. She couldn't go showing a thing like that round the house—a color photograph of the pope clipped from *Life*.

"Now, then," she said, pulling her chair a little closer to mine. We were like girls doing homework, heads together, arms entwined. "I want you to look very closely at his crown. Tell me what you see."

On the pope's crown I could just make out the letters of VICARIVS.

"That means 'the substitute,'" Grandma said. Then she slowly turned over the picture to show me a Latin phrase she'd written in a white space on the back: VICARIVS FILII DEI. She pointed to each word and read, "'The Substitute for the Son of God.'"

Grandma and I had been reading Revelation for several days. There was nothing to match it in all of Methodism.

"I want you to write the mark of the Beast down at the bottom of this page. Then I'll show you something interesting that happens when we add up all the Roman numerals in the pope's title."

Right away I told her they would never add up to anything in the six hundreds!

"Maybe not," she murmured, "maybe not." But she began putting down letters anyway—just the I's and V's, etc.

V	5
I	1
C	100
I	1
V	5
I	1
L	50
I	1
I	1
D	500
I	1

"How did you get a *five* hundred?" I asked, startled.

"From the D, darlin'. From the D!"

My knowledge of Roman numerals did not extend to five hundred. I began to add the column expectantly, thinking how it was just like my teachers to leave me unequipped for anything serious. In a matter of minutes, when I began to bring down one perfect six, then a second, and, finally, a third, I gave myself over bodily to what had happened before my eyes. Three perfect sixes had shot up like cherries. I added the whole thing again to make absolutely sure.

Grandma tore the sheet from her notebook and gave it to me with a little flourish.

But by then I'd thrown myself against her, in love and astonishment.

Mother wept.

She hugged me against my will, saying she had to take back what she'd said the other day. This really *was* a trick, she said.

Somebody had really been trying to trick Grandma. She pushed the paper away and put her head in her hands, exasperated. "Sweetheart, we don't believe in things like this. These are numbers. This is a coincidence."

I pulled the paper toward us and added up the column again. Already I'd adopted the urgent pencil scrawl of an adult. "This number is in the Bible!" I said.

Dad covered his mouth and got up from the table.

"I don't see what's so funny, Noel."

"I'm sorry, honey. I was thinking of something else."

"I wish you'd tell us what."

"I was remembering a few of the fellas in seminary. The more conservative boys used to talk about the Beast. It was surprising—the ideas some of those boys came up with."

"Well, I think it would be helpful if you'd tell us about that right now."

Dad hesitated. "This was during the war. Some of the boys worked out the numbers to explain Hitler. They found out Hitler's mother was born on the sixth of June in 1860. If you wrote it out GI style, you got six, six, six, zero,

which was close enough for them."

Dad wrote down 6/6/60.

"I don't think that's very close," I said. "Besides, Hitler's dead."

"True."

"But that's not the point, is it, Noel?"

"No. It's not."

"Talk to her, Noel! Explain it to her."

"Okay, one edition of the *Communist Manifesto* had six hundred and sixty-six pages," Dad recalled. "That sort of thing."

I was getting mixed up. Mother had her head in her hands again, but now *she* was trying not to laugh.

"And don't tell us the Communists are dead," she said, letting go. "The Communists are everywhere."

I stared at her.

Dad pounded his fist. "That's right," he said, pointing his finger at my nose. "It may turn out to be the Communists. But before them it was probably the pope."

Mom sobered and lowered her voice. "Okay, enough," she said. "Let's not have anyone going around saying the pope is the Beast."

"The Whore of Babylon," my father whispered.

Outside the sun showed no mercy for the familiar objects simmering on our back stoop—Mom's frayed laundry basket, her dirty work shoes curling in the heat. I let the screen door slam shut on them. I'd made sure to let Mom and Dad see me take down Billy's cage and head off alone with him to the grove.

Mom rarely came out to the grove. Normally she stood at the edge peering in—oh, yoo-hoo. But in a few moments she had followed me and was entering from the far side, with her apron still on, her waist as narrow as a girl's. I began to squint at her—to squint at her slender feet sinking into the sand. I felt lean rancor come into my throat. By the time she reached me, I'd almost become, in the fifty yards from her kitchen to the trees, a Seventh-day Adventist.

"Dad didn't mean what he said about the pope," she said when she'd settled in one of the chairs. "You know that, don't you? He was joking."

Just the easy way she sat down had meaning for me now—the way she crossed her smooth, shaven legs at the ankle.

"We have respect for the Catholics," she said, "for all faiths."

"I don't," I said.

"Yes you do. Right now you're angry."

"I am *not*."

"Well then, I'm glad. Maybe we could talk about this." She unfolded the torn sheet from Grandma's notebook. For a moment Billy, uncertain of the bright paper, jumped around scolding the toys and little ornaments on the bottom of his cage. Mom waited until he was quiet again. "This *is* remarkable," she said, ironing out the paper slowly, then running a stub of pencil down the column of numbers. "But you know, Dad was just saying when he looked at this that the first word doesn't have two V's. The second V is really a U. Vicarius. It means vicar. Like the Episcopal ministers."

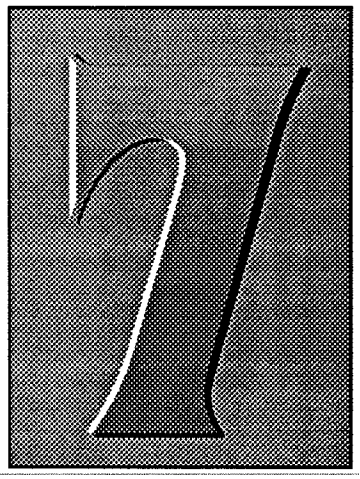
I watched dumbfounded as she gently crossed out the second V in the column.

"What are you doing?"

"There's no second V here, sweetheart. The Romans used to print their V's and U's exactly alike to make things easier when they engraved."

"Then why are you changing it?"

"I'm only trying to show you how some people can get numbers to work for them."



But everything was getting clearer and clearer. I was a witness to how someone like my own mother could take a pencil and change the Law.

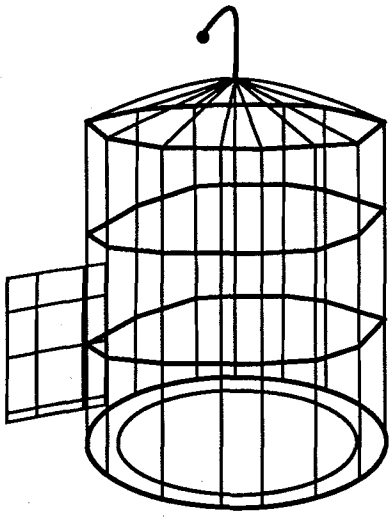
"Pretty boy," Billy said.

On her Sabbath, Grandma stayed more or less alone up in the blue-papered room. Downstairs, while Billy preened himself on her shoulder, my mother sipped her coffee and alluded to a larger view of things.

"She's an older woman now," Mom whispered. "You, you'll grow up and go off on your own. To college, Dad and I hope, where you'll learn a lot of new things you've never thought about before."

When she stood up to make her journey to the icebox, to put the milk back where she always put it—just to the side of the orange juice—all the college photographs of her appeared in my mind. In her first yearbook she'd started out as tiny as a postage stamp. And every twelve months after that they'd blown her up a bit bigger—to a calling-card size, to a shower invitation, to an extravagant full page of her own—my mother in a low-cut drape. An adjustment in the focusing had turned her into everybody's dream girl.

"I'm not going to college," I said. "I'm going to do something you'd never think of in a million years."



I would have given a good deal for the courage to walk to the icebox and pour the whole bottle of milk over my head.

"You can do whatever you want to do; that's my point," Mom said.

I spun around in the direction of Africa. I saw my dad standing on the other side of the screen door, squirting the family car with a hose. For a second I imagined he was trying to put out flames. "In a trillion years," I said, jerking around again and startling Billy into flight. He alighted on the screen door, then craned his head around to look forlornly back at me the very moment Dad bounded onto the stoop to tell us something, opening the door wide and flinging Billy's two or three ounces into the air.

"Whoa!" Dad shivered as if some invisible soul had passed right through him. Mom gave out a cry and Jeanie ran in from the living room, thinking someone had gotten burned on the stove. By the time Dad recovered, a little furious at his own part in the accident, he was accusing us all of carelessness and stupidity. His anger fell on Jeanie, who burst into tears, saying she didn't even know what he was talking about.

"Something made Billy fly to the screen, Noel," Mom explained. but she was as upset as he was. "It's no one's fault. He's never done that before."

Dad turned and ran into the yard. "Well, that's just great!" he shouted back at us. "And now he's gone."

I ran upstairs to my room, not expecting to find Grandma dozing, not hearing anything. Meanwhile under my feet things were already calming down to Dad's deep drone and Mom and Jeanie's quiet reconstruction of what had happened. For a moment, I stared out a window, blinded by the afterimage—Billy's green wings blackened in the sunlight. I thought I heard the delayed report of the snap he'd made, vanishing without me into the world.

I shook Grandma's arm. "Billy flew away," I said.

"Oh, dear," she said, sitting up and taking my hand. She had fallen asleep reading, still dressed in her thin nightgown because of the heat.

But she was listening to them below. "You should go back down there," she said. "They're upset."

I sat beside her on the bed. "No, they aren't."

"Yes, they are," she said. "I'll get dressed.

Go tell your mother everything's all right. She's all upset down there."

When I turned in the doorway, she was kneeling in her thin gown. She hid her big nose in her hands and let the tangled wisps of her head fall low. I didn't want to look at the enormous flesh on her upper arm as she knelt alone at the side of my bed. Her arms pressed oddly against her breasts; the bare bottoms of her feet appeared swollen and shapeless. I hurried away, embarrassed, and found Mom sitting by herself at the kitchen table.

"Carrie, we're so sorry," she said.

None of them had closed the screen door. It stood open as if they thought there was no point in closing it again. He'd so completely flown the coop.

"I'm going out to look for him," I said. "Grandma's praying."

"Oh, sweetheart," Mom said, the defeated sigh in her voice too familiar for me to bear.

I took down the cage above her head, lowering it slowly until she and the table slid to the other side of a deep divide that must always be there now. My life would start from the opposite edge, and as I left the house with Billy's cage I finally asked for a miracle.

Please let me find him, I said when I looked over my shoulder and saw Mom following me out the screen door in her black high heels. I took a good look at her standing there, slender and lovely in the yard, looking up at the window of the papered room. I heard myself offer up a silent deal, a real bargain: If He'd just let me find Billy, if He'd let me bring him back and put him down before her very eyes, I'd go and *do* something. I saw myself rattling along with an empty cage—rattling myself down the highway and right out of town and on my way—when what really happened was that I nearly stepped on that almost invisible chartreuse onion bulb, about five minutes later, out in the mango grove, which was as far as Billy or I managed to go.

I put out my finger and watched him climb up, one chicken foot and then the other. In all that time, he'd been poking around beneath the trees—that silly bird, that talker—scaring the brilliant flies.

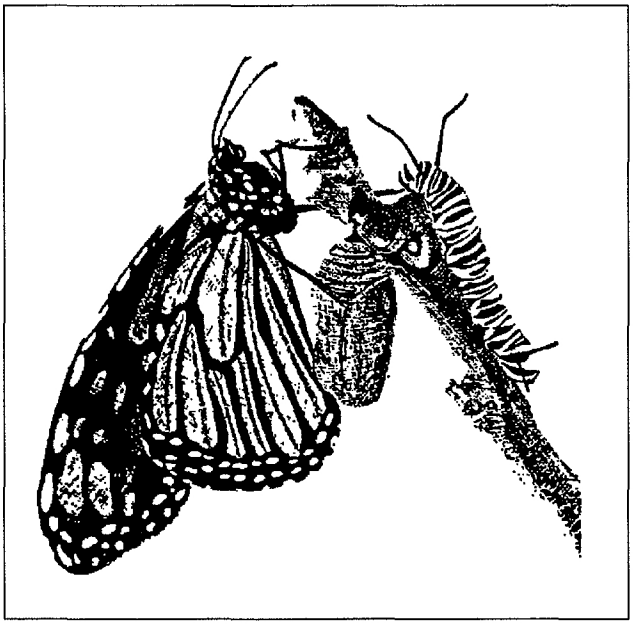
And I wondered, suddenly, what I would do without my wicker chairs, or the box of cigar rings and the trees and all of Boynton Beach. They hung like miniatures above the funnel that would suck them to the bottom of everything. If He'd just let me find him, I'd prayed, if He'd just let me bring him back and put him down before her very eyes, I'd go ahead and believe He was real and coming soon, out of the blue, to take me from her and break her heart.

Judas

You're the friend I've always longed for in
my senses
But emotion rises up and I am blind
And I flail against possession of your loving
And I long for freedom that I cannot find.

Every thought that I am thinking must be
censored
Every word I say is palmed and analyzed
Every dream I ever dreamed I look at
broken
In the ocean depths of your adoring eyes.

by Joy Cassano Coleman



Trivial Pursuits*

We turn
like dachshunds in our skin
And look behind us
Wondering
if where we've been
Means something
to us?
to Them?
If now—
If then—
We'll catch this rodent we pursue
This rat of time
That leads us blindly
on a merry chase.
This future—
This black hole we face
Could swallow us
Could terminate the Race!

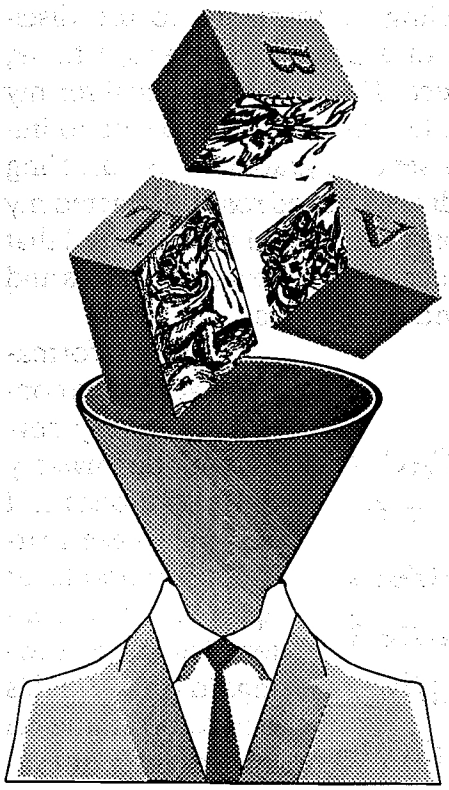
Yet

Softly in our minds we know
That trust is all there is to life
That trust must grow
And not stand hesitant
But go
to face the Unknown
Calm, serene—

We turn
like dachshunds in our skin
And look ahead
Remembering
Who
sent us in.

* This poem was published in *College People Magazine*, by Collegiate Publications; in *Many Voices, Many Lands*, by the Poetry Center; and in *Montage*, by Columbia Union College.

Joy Cassano Coleman, a graduate of Columbia Union College and a member of the Spectrum *Editorial Board, writes from the Eastern shore of Maryland. Her poetry has been published in several magazines and anthologies. Her drawing at left first appeared in* Montage.



Growing Up With John's Beasts: A Rite of Passage

What crazed menagerie is set loose upon the world? What rough beasts slouch toward Bethlehem? Charles W. Teel, Jr., on a lifetime with Revelation.

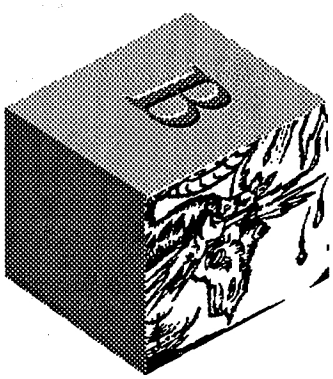
by Charles W. Teel, Jr.

NAMING THE BEASTS THAT PROWL THE PATMOS Zoo of St. John the Divine has been very much a part of my spiritual pilgrimage. And not surprisingly. It was so with my parents and with their parents before them. For we are part of that Adventist religious movement given birth amidst the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844, when William Miller and his band gathered on New England's bluffs to wait in hope for the end of this present age. Inspired by this confident hope and armed with an approach to biblical interpretation that biographers have characterized as "wooden literalism," the Millerites embraced a world view that was squarely based on the naming of apocalyptic beasts and portents.

When the end did not come, the Millerite movement foundered and fractured. Following the Great Disappointment, one brother from Maine reported more in earnestness than in humor that some of the remnant band continued on in hope, others had turned to strong drink, and still others had gone to California! As the son of a Nebraska farm boy *cum* Adventist pastor, it fell my lot one century later to continue on in hope, to eschew strong drink, and to follow my parents to a parish in California.

Charles W. Teel, Jr., professor of Christian ethics in the School of Religion, La Sierra University, Riverside, received an M.Th. from Harvard University and a Ph.D. from Boston University in social ethics.

Our three-week trek from Maryland to California was made just after mid-century in the family's 1952 Chevrolet sedan. Because the trip came in the middle of the school year, and I was missing classes, I religiously studied my seventh-grade Bible textbook *en route*. The learning objective of the unit under consideration was unlocking the secrets of the Apocalypse. As we journeyed across the Great Plains, I roped, tied, and branded the beasts of St. John. The mysteries of the 666 conundrum were resolved while we navigated the terrain that would later evoke John Denver's pop hit "Rocky Mountain High." The Arizona desert was the venue in which I memorized historical footnotes corresponding to the seven trumpets, the seven angels, the seven seals, and the seven plagues. Although the car radio played newscasts on the Joseph McCarthy congressional hearings as well as an occasional Pete Seeger song of social protest, it never occurred to me to identify either McCarthy or Seeger as participants in the great controversy depicted by St. John. For at my tender young age I knew that prophets resided in a sacred and slightly unreal past, and were preoccupied with a heavenly future rather than with the profane developments of a secular present.



The new kid from the Eastern seaboard who saluted Loma Linda Elementary School's seventh-grade teacher with the strange term "ma'am" did himself proud in the spring of 1952. He earned an A+ on the unit test covering the Book of Revelation. My teacher attributed this sterling performance to the disciplined home of a pastor. She was, I think, partially correct. Not inconsequential for my performance, however, was my desire to impress another seventh-grader whose dazzling smile, white dress, and red rose dominated my pubescent consciousness. I was inspired that spring to use acrostics to memorize beasts and times and dividing of times.

At my tender young age I knew that prophets resided in a sacred and slightly unreal past, and were preoccupied with a heavenly future rather than with the profane developments of a secular present.

Spiritual formation had indeed contributed to my seventh-grade mastery of John's beasts. I first met these marvelous mutants at age five when contemplating the drawings in Uriah Smith's ponderous tome on apocalyptic literature entitled *Daniel and the Revelation.* For hours on end I literally wondered after these beasts, with no detail of horns or wings or hooves escaping my attention. Of course I was too young to ascertain the meaning that the author attached to them. But I knew that my father, my mother, and our much-loved conference president—a church official and *ipso facto* one who personified all that was good and right and true and secure—knew exactly what these beasts stood for. And that was enough to make my world good and right and true and secure.

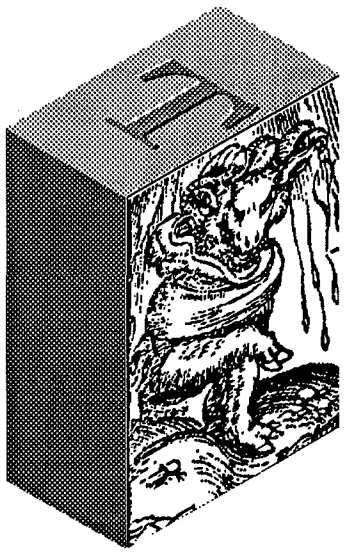
The universal significance of John's menagerie was heightened by evangelists who enlivened parish life in our Minnesota and Maryland congregations. Papier-mâché props, then plywood cutouts, then Ducane Projector transparencies, and then glow-in-the-dark "black light" visuals filled the stages of tents and

tabernacles and public halls. The beasts loomed larger than life, dwarfing the evangelists, and offered a tapestry of cosmic proportions within which all of humankind's questions of meaning found direct and specific answers. During these decades of vintage Adventist evangelism, I babysat a younger brother on wooden folding chairs and looked on with pride as my mother played the vibraharp and my father introduced such "world traveled" evangelists as Fordyce Detamore. Topics included "Will Germany [previously Turkey and later Russia] Rule the World?" "The Rise and Fall of Empires," "The Battle of Armageddon," and "God's One True Church."

By now I was old enough to follow a bit of the argumentation, to comprehend the methods of biblical interpretation, to link texts together, and to add numbers that totaled 666. And although I had no idea what the term *empirical* meant, I nodded vigorously when the evangelist asserted that he had demonstrated empirically that the Pope was the little horn, that the Catholic Church was Babylon, and that the Seventh-day Adventist Church, headquartered in Takoma Park, Maryland, constituted God's true remnant church that would "go through" to the end of time. I requested baptism. (Only later would I come to recognize the triumphalism and exclusivism communicated in a baptismal vow that required affirmation that "the Seventh-day Adventist Church *constitutes* God's remnant church. . . .")

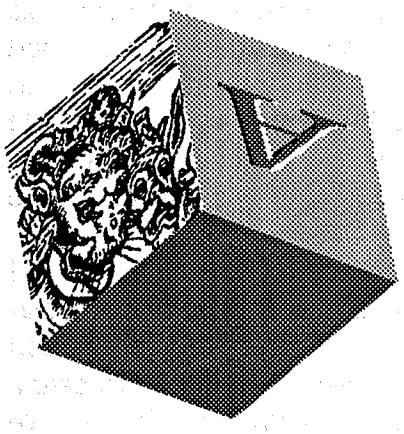
When the religion curriculum called for study of the beasts once again during my junior year at Loma Linda Academy (the cycle would once again repeat itself during my sophomore year of college), it became clear that the evangelists' teaching techniques, if not their interpretations, had served me well. I wrote yet another perfect examination. My classmates and I—who all looked alike and boasted neither foreign accents nor dark skin tones—bathed in the peace and prosperity and bland uniformity of the fabulous '50s. Chimes tolled from the tower of the Loma Linda Sanitarium and Hospital, wafting over scented orange groves and a contented community untroubled by freeways, outsiders, or beasts. Our advance knowledge of the sweep of human history tied up all loose ends. Our universe was secure: God was in his heaven, Dwight David Eisenhower was in the White House, Pat Boone and Doris Day were wholesome role models, the beasts were catalogued and in their rightful place, and all was well with the world.

Two developments threatened my peaceful existence: entrance into college and the National Guard-enforced high school integration in Little Rock, Arkansas. A crop of interesting and interested teachers with fresh Ph.D. diplomas in hand called a generation of college students to the excitement of pursuing the idea. A recently created general-studies curriculum posed question after question. What is the scientific method? What are the limits of the scientific method? What are my sources of authority? How do I know what I know? How do I know what is true? What is myth? Why do persons and societies need such grand and sweeping stories? How have poets and theologians and scientists and prophets and painters and architects and playwrights spoken to these issues? What constitutes salvation? How does mankind (that is the word which even interesting and interested persons used in those days) experience salvation? How is redemption mediated? What is involved in "finish-



ing the work"? And what does all this have to do with Little Rock? Then Montgomery. Then Selma. Then Birmingham.

New beasts began circling on the horizon of my cozy encampment, and that made me uncomfortable. I was now having questions about the religious community that had given me birth. William Miller was a part of my very being, yet his "wooden literalism" troubled me.



I was awed by Uriah Smith's detailed footnotes and exhaustive grasp of human history, yet his far-reaching grasp of divine history was beginning to appear too neat, too ordered, and too concrete. I cautiously and tentatively entertained the possibility that Uriah Smith's formulations could be less than final. Still, I balked at acting on the nudges that my college teachers were providing; their attempts to expand my universe and introduce me to the possibilities of identifying contemporary beasts.

If I were to allow Uriah Smith's copious classification of John's beasts to be in any way revised, wouldn't my universe fall apart? Hadn't my perfect scores on two examinations demonstrated that I had solved the riddle of human history? And wouldn't tampering with the locks that kept those beasts in cages open a Pandora's box? Would not these beasts multiply like proverbial rabbits?

Things were getting out of hand. I wanted to return to the certainty and security of the 1950s. (When confronted at this point in my spiritual journey with a multiple-choice test item on defining *myth*—[a] falsehood; [b] fairy tale; [c] cosmic story or integrated symbol system bringing meaning and motivation to human experience—I circled "c" as the the correct option. Yet even though my definition of myth had matured sufficiently to allow me to discount "a" and "b," I was not about to recast the symbols that gave shape to my belief system: if Uriah Smith's beasts could cover the existential nakedness of Adventist evangelists and believers whose lives spanned a full century, who was I to tamper with these portents?)

Indeed, several developments of my early college years exemplify my hesitation to seriously rethink the imaging of John's beasts. First: to offset the confusion created when one religion teacher's eschatological chart placed the close of probation just before the national Sunday law and another teacher argued for the opposite, I burrowed extensively into Uriah Smith's definition of the beasts and pored over numerous texts to ascertain "empirically" which teacher was correct.

Second, upon hearing that a black Adventist pastor from Mississippi had gone to jail rather than be turned back from the counter where he attempted to register to vote, my response was to question why he was "getting mixed up in political issues" rather than "finishing the work entrusted to God's remnant."

Third, a final, if less than successful, attempt to engineer a return to the womb of the 1950s came as I broke free from my apolitical tradition to vote for Richard Nixon and against the Catholic John F. Kennedy in the 1960 elections—even an apostate Protestant was to be preferred over an opponent who so clearly represented the forces of Babylon.

Then came study at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. I was nurtured by dedicated Adventist scholars who decades earlier had wrestled with William Miller's hermeneutics and who had been blessed but not limited by Uriah Smith's categories and classifications.

I was also intrigued by two reproductions on the wall of the seminary reading room that graphically depicted the belief system that held James White's universe together. They also demonstrated his ability to alter and

change even major symbols in that overarching cosmic story that is the Great Controversy. White's earlier graphic expressed a world view dominated by the law, whereas the later representation of his symbol system unambiguously placed the cross at the center of history.

If James White's cosmic story could be open to change and growth and development, perhaps I could step beyond the comfortable womb of my 1950s symbol system: Perhaps I could risk belief in a God who continued to work in history, rather than one whose activity in history had been frozen by Uriah Smith's interpretations of St. John's visions.

Once this liberating discovery had dawned, seminary professors could help me to see that certainty and security consist less in having a blueprint of history than knowing that God continues to be both above and within history; and that in God's great scheme of things we must always be open to manifold surprises.

I discovered that God asks not that we line up our historical footnotes like ducks in a row. Rather, God asks that in response to the saving act of Jesus Christ we ally with remnant communities in every age and stand against those Babylonian beasts that oppose what is true and just.

To affirm a belief in the God of history is, not least of all, to respond in history where God is acting—and to be open to the surprises that God has in store. Most liberating of all was the discovery that such a step did not require me to abandon my grounding in Miller and Smith. Indeed, in finding contemporary significance for John's beasts, I found myself standing on their shoulders.

I am much indebted to Adventist stalwarts such as Roland Loasby and F. E. J. Harder, to Methodist churchman Walter Muelder, to Mennonite Lawrence Burkholder, and to Baptist Harvey Cox (among numerous others), who helped me grapple with those eschatological and apocalyptic passages of Scripture that are key to Adventism's identity.

Harder's exegesis of Matthew 24 and 25 helped me understand that those who second-guess the God of history with their "eschatology/chronology" charts are explicitly cast as unfaithful believers, whereas those open to being surprised by the God of history and those serving "the least of these" are characterized as the ones who wait faithfully.

God asks that in response to the saving act of Jesus Christ we ally with remnant communities in every age and stand against those Babylonian beasts that oppose what is true and just.

Muelder led me to see that Moses' covenant and Jesus' kingdom demand that humankind's justice be modeled on Yahweh's righteousness: thus, to wait faithfully for God's kingdom is to work earnestly for that kingdom. Burkholder so capably described the church as a radical remnant, a community of witness and service that even with the institutionalism, patriarchalism, and preoccupation with status and power found in today's church, I can still utter (with Robert McAfee Brown) "two cheers for the church!" And it was Loasby's Greek exegesis of the Apocalypse and Cox's seminars on feasts, fools, religion, and secular cities that enabled St. John's symbols to come alive—not merely in the cloistered church—but also in the marketplace of the world.

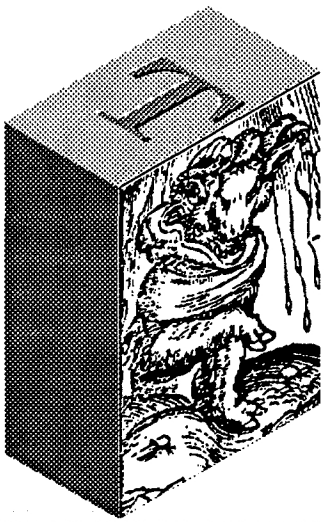
Septuagenarian Loasby revelled in "stirring

up your pure minds." Like other mentors, he showed me that prophets indeed spend far more energy "forth-telling" in the present tense than "foretelling" in the future tense. As he helped us exegete the Apocalypse, the Tree of Life, the Sea of Glass, Babylonian Beasts, and Faithful Remnants could loom from daily newsprint no less than from India paper with gilded edges.

By way of supporting his contention that the sacred and the secular—as well as the present and the future—were of one piece, Loasby never tired of quoting that Ellen White passage in which the boughs of the Tree of Life are said to hang over the walls of the New Jerusalem and to reach into our very real and present world. It was a liberating discovery to learn that the Tree of Life "whose leaves bring healing to the nations" may equally inspire our commitment to the peacekeeping endeavors of the United Nations as enkindle an eternal hope.

If the Tree of Life held implications for humankind's present as much as its future, ought not the same hold for Babylonian structures and remnant communities?

Discovery takes place in the ivory tower of academia as ideas are discussed. Discovery also takes place when theory takes hands and feet and tries to walk city streets. It was in pastoring a downtown Boston congregation that I grasped an expanded understanding of John's beasts. In ministering to their flocks, pastors routinely encounter the demons of alienation, separation, unfaithfulness, hopelessness, helplessness, and escapism. These evil powers are manifest in every congregation and every culture.



Pastoring in this urban setting enabled me to empathize with brothers and sisters who daily confronted beasts of racism, sexism, and tokenism; beasts of ethnocentrism, nationalism, and imperialism; beasts of consumerism, commercialism, and corporate greed; beasts that wield power in a manner that enables them to prowl, pounce, demean, and infect not only individual existence, but also institutional and corporate life.

A single illustration will suffice. At mid-century, the Boston Seventh-day Adventist Temple boasted a thriving 500-member congregation, a 12-grade school, a sprawling physical plant, and pastors whose preaching attire included striped trousers and morning coats. By 1970 the threescore souls who graced the Temple's pews mirrored the neighborhood's yeasty population mix as well as that of the low-income apartment building directly across the street: a clutch of octogenarian Anglos and a four-fifths migrant and immigrant majority comprised chiefly of graduate students, southern blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Caribbeans.

Students residing in the apartment complex (owned by a slumlord whose real-estate holdings included two-thirds of Boston's low-income housing) documented fire-code irregularities, and petitioned for inspections. After receiving no response from either the management or the city authorities they mounted an unsuccessful rent strike. When a fire broke out in the building some months later, gutting the upper floors and snuffing out the lives of eight residents, it came to light that the city official responsible for enforcing fire-code compliance was the slumlord's brother-in-law.

Under such conditions, how ought a prophetic congregation to respond: As a prayer circle? A soup kitchen? A first-aid station? A storage center? A community-organizing agency? An investigative reporting team? A civil-disobedience cadre chained together on a balcony of the charred fourth floor while

reading aloud from the book of Amos, Ellen White's *Welfare Ministry*, and those passages from the Apocalypse that rebuke Babylonian powers for trading in the "souls of men"? or all of the above?

Members of this urban congregation led me to recognize that numerous impersonal and institutional beasts require slaying. And if slaying such beasts is impossible, they must at least be named for what they are. They must be held up as the manipulating, corrupting, and corroding powers of Babylon. Over and against these Babylonian beasts stands the faithful remnant.

With the angels of Revelation 14, this faithful remnant announces the bad news of Babylon, proclaims the good news that Babylon is fallen, and asserts that the powerless, vulnerable, but faithful true will indeed triumph. The remnant can do this with assurance because the God of history has declared it so!

During the decade of the 1960s, characterized by the national social evils of racism and war, I found myself responding to Martin Luther King's earlier call to disobey unjust laws in an open and nonviolent manner. As a result of witnessing against the beast of institutional racism, I found myself in a Southern jail. As I was the youngest person in the jail cell, it fell my lot to bed down on the top of a three-tiered bunk, within inches of the ceiling. A previous occupant had inscribed a two-line poem on the uneven plaster: "Where there's dope, there's hope." Not to be outdone, I drew upon images of the Apocalypse as I penned an "Ode to Brother Augustus Newman." Newman was a beloved parishioner/elder/saint in our Boston congregation whose decades of service to the poor of Boston's inner city helped me see that not only beastly powers but remnant communities take many shapes and sizes.

Some years later I returned to Harvard's campus for a summer-long seminar sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Participants were encouraged to mine their own religious traditions for ways in which they both imbibed and resisted dominant culture.

Happily, I found sources showing how my religious forbears condemned slavery as a demonic and dragonic expression of that beast of the Apocalypse that had the horns of a lamb, yet spoke as a dragon.

I also learned that, as the century progressed, religious-liberty concerns evoked similar characterizations of national public policy. I further discovered that at the turn of the century an esteemed Adventist evangelist inveighed against U.S. colonialist undertakings in the Philippines and cited this action as one more example of John's two-horned beast raising its head.

Imagine my happy surprise just three summers ago upon discovering that socially conscious Catholic priests in the Peruvian highlands extolled pioneer Adventist missionaries Fernando and Ana Stahl as their "spiritual forbears" and "missioner mentors." This endorsement stemmed from the fact that the Stahls' interpretation of the gospel led them to confront the Babylonian beasts of ignorance and drugs and religious intolerance fostered by the "near feudal" social system existing in Peru's vast Lake Titicaca Basin at the turn of the century.

Underscoring the social and structural nature of the Stahl witness, one priest enthused: "The gospel which the Stahls proclaimed was enacted not only in chapels and clinics and schools but also in city halls, town law courts, and the national legislature." He concluded with a phrase that carries an even sharper punch in Spanish than in English: "In the truest sense the Stahls were missionaries, visionaries, and revolutionaries."

Why is Fernando Stahl memorialized by a statue in Peru—the only North American to be so honored? Precisely because he and Ana formed a remnant community that allied with other remnant communities. Precisely be-

cause this couple stood against Babylonian forces that permitted a 5 percent white and *mestizo* population to coerce and manipulate and fence out the 95 percent indigenous population. The first indigenous and first coeducational school system, which they founded, exhibited a remnant presence that helped force Babylonian structures to crumble.

So extensive were the changes wrought, that within a single generation the eldest son of one of the Stahls' first converts would be elected to represent the formerly fenced-out peoples of these highlands in Peru's national legislature (see "The Radical Roots of Peruvian Adventism," *Spectrum,* Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 5-18).

Such discoveries helped me see that the church I love includes a great cloud of witnesses who have came to terms with John's beasts. These rugged pioneers who peeled back layers of cultural practice and religious instruction in order to confront contemporary beasts and communicate the remnant message to distant peoples deserve to be remembered.

To that end, my classes on eschatological hope and apocalyptic portents now include "show and tell" components that demonstrate the manner in which Adventist missionary pioneers boldly went forth to found remnant communities and to confront Babylonian beasts. Students interview colleagues of these pioneers and record oral histories. Mission collections donated to our fledgling mission museum enliven the discussion. And field study (plus student missionary appointments and ADRA internships) enable students to walk in the footsteps of these "missionaries, visionaries, and revolutionaries."

Only as we tell the stories of these apocalyptic beasts in the present tense will contemporary Adventist young people consider appropriating Adventism's cosmic story as their story. For our sons and daughters who dream dreams and see visions, like the pioneers we hold up to them, are not content to fight the beasts of another time and place only—any more than John or Paul or Augustine or Peter Waldo or Martin Luther or William Miller or Uriah Smith were content to fight the beasts of another generation. In fact, some beasts fought by remnant communities of a previous generation may no longer be baring their fangs—or have the strength to even gum their opponents into submission. To be faithful to the remnant message is not merely to fight the beasts of those who have gone before, but to rename the beasts under the pressure of every new generation. (This contemporizing process should not be surprising to a people whose earliest periodicals boasted the titles *Present Truth, Signs of the Times,* and *These Times.*)

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A Catholic student in Haiti invited me to share my expanded definitions of beasts and remnants in a setting not exactly of my own choosing. I was teaching a graduate course that included pastors and health professionals, evenly divided between Adventists and Catholics.

With the Adventist union conference president sitting in on the last three days of the class, an articulate Catholic physician posed what was to be the final question: "I understand that Adventists draw on the images of the Apocalypse in naming Catholics as the false

Babylonian power and themselves as the true remnant. Would you care to comment on this?" I offered my response understanding slowly and deliberately:

• The Apocalypse, from which the images of Babylon and remnant are taken, clearly identifies these images with institutional and corporate entities. Sin and salvation thus find expression not only in individual hearts but also in the traditions and structures of church and society.

• Babylonian realities in the Apocalypse correspond to those institutions that give expression to the beastly, the manipulative, the coercive, and the corrosive dimensions of human behavior. Remnant realities are made up of the defenseless, the powerless, the vulnerable, the faithful, and the true. Forms of these expressions change, of course, but they manifest themselves in human history anew in every generation.

• The Catholic Church has indisputably engaged in more Babylonian activity than any other Christian body. For example, I have stood silently with my Spanish wife in Madrid's Plaza Mayor paying tribute to those who succumbed to the early fires of the Inquisition. Further, I have sat on a 100-pound sack of corn while riding in the back of a stake truck with a Colombian Adventist pastor in his 80s who still bore the lash marks of being tied to a tree and beaten by Catholic assailants merely because he professed Protestantism.

• Yet it must be noted that Catholicism has had some 12 centuries longer than any other Christian body to wreak havoc.

• God and St. John are both sold short when any single institution or community is classified as thoroughly remnant or exclusively Babylon. To equate Catholicism with Babylon overlooks too many Catholic clergy and lay people on three continents whom I have learned to love precisely because they act as a remnant.

To define Adventism as constituting God's remnant exhibits a triumphalism that cancels out the need for continued critical self-examination of where our religious community falls short of God's remnant ideal: our own preoccupation with power and our wrestlings with the beasts of parochialism, ethnocentrism, sexism, and institutionalism. We do not "constitute" God's remnant, yet we are indeed called to be a part of God's remnant, called to proclaim the message of John's angels, the liberating news that Babylon has fallen.

More recently, the good news that the defenseless remnant wins over the oppressive Babylon structures and institutions led me to create a celebrative worship liturgy. Art students sculpted candlesticks and brass players rehearsed Gabrielli. Grade schoolers were invited to draw pictures of St. John's beasts. These same children were asked to draw pictures of events noted in the world press illustrating Babylon and the remnant. Academy students clipped photos from news magazines past and present that depicted either oppressive Babylonian structures or empowering remnant communities. College students sifted through historical sources to document stories of contemporary beasts and remnants.

Later, as worship began, the candles of the seven churches were lit, stories were told, St. John's passages were read, drawings and photos were shared. A congregation was thus led to celebrate and experience the good news that the Baby wins over the beast; that psalms of praise drown out imperial edicts; that Rosa Parks can emerge victorious over a system of Jim Crow segregation laws; that truth conquers false-

hood; that the hope of Dietrich Bonhoeffer outlasts the terror wrought by his Nazi executioners; that the pregnant and vulnerable and defenseless woman of Revelation 12 triumphs over the dragon; that contemporary churchwomen will one day experience the equality of an inclusive gospel; that the woes accorded an unrighteous Babylon give way to the shouts of Alleluia uttered by the faithful remnant.

Following this liturgical celebration, members of the congregation remained to inspect sculptured candelabra, to view crayoned canvasses, and to share impressions of beasts recently named. I overheard a pastor sum up her experience of the morning: "Until today I missed the forest for the trees in the Book of Revelation. I had memorized names and dates and battles and kingdoms and beasts but had failed to see how sweeping and contemporary the good news of the Apocalypse really is."

The rite of passage continues. Alleluia and amen!

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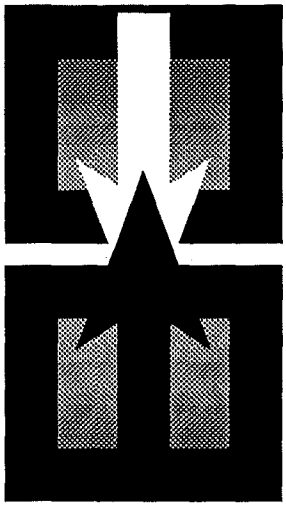

The Apocalypse of John: A Presence of Our Future

John's Apocalypse has inspired, mystified, and encouraged pilgrims with its visions of future events. But Beatrice S. Neall sees a present relevance for spirituality in the ancient book.

by Beatrice S. Neall

ADVENTISTS HAVE ALWAYS CHERISHED THE BOOK of Revelation for its pictures of heaven—the reward of the overcomer. Ellen White's early visions are saturated with the language of John's wonderful book. From childhood she lived in the glory of the "bright and holy land" with its robes and palms and crowns. It was those rays of glory that brightened the gloom of her difficult childhood.

Christians of all ages have naturally viewed the heavenly visions in terms of the future life with Jesus. And they have let the future irradiate the present. But there is an even stronger relationship between the heavenly visions and the earthly life of the believer. A careful reading of the Apocalypse shows that John intended his visions to portray the present life of the victorious Christian. In the midst of tribulation, assailed by the demonic hordes of the abyss, the believer even now stands with the great multitude before the throne, praising God for his great salvation. John, more than any other Gospel writer, caught the significance of Jesus' promise of eternal life now. His Apocalypse builds on his Gospel by painting picture after picture of what it means to experience eternal life now.

To describe this world view in which the future enters the present I prefer to use the term "inaugurated eschatology" rather than "realized eschatology," because John portrays a real consummation of world history. What is literal and real in the future enters the present as a spiritual experience. For example, the saints will reign forever and ever (22:5), but even in exile John shares the kingdom (1:9). The river flows through the holy city (22:1, 2), but the thirsty may drink of it now (v. 17; cf. 7:17). God will dwell with his people face to face (21:3; 22:4), but now Christ enters the

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door to dine with them (3:20). Christ is coming soon with his recompense (22:12), but he comes now to his church (2:5, 16, 25). The holy city will come down from heaven to the new earth (21:2), but it is coming down even now (3:12).

These vivid images create for the Christian picture after picture of the spiritual life with Jesus. While we talk about the means of grace —prayer and Bible study and witnessing— John describes priests in white robes worshiping before the throne, a bride in white linen, and an army of kings riding white horses to battle.

It is this imagery of inaugurated eschatology—heaven now in this life—that provides creative, dynamic, moving pictures of spirituality. In this article I have not begun to exhaust the meaning of each picture. Here is a rich field for study—to determine from the text and from personal experience what the Holy Spirit intended to convey by these images. As we review them one by one, I invite us all to ponder where we fit into each picture, and what impact this perspective could have on our lives.

It is this imagery of inaugurated eschatology—heaven now in this life—that provides creative, dynamic, moving pictures of spirituality. . . Here is a rich field for study. . .

The Vertical Axis of the Apocalypse

In his book, John pictures the righteous and the wicked as two opposing communities in a vertical relationship to each other. The wicked are consistently called "those who dwell on earth," while the righteous appear to be called "those who dwell in heaven." (The Greek verbs are even more picturesque—those who are *housed* on earth and those who *tent* in heaven.) The first half of the equation is consistent and clear, attested by numerous scholars—earth-dwellers are the enemies of God's people. Every reference to them is negative—they shed the blood of martyrs (6:10), they are targets of the trumpet woes (8:13), they rejoice at the death of the two witnesses (11:10), they worship the beast and marvel at it (13:8, 12; 17:8), they are deceived by the false prophet (13:14), and become drunk with the wine of the harlot (17:2). Paul Minear has the interesting view that the earth-dwellers are not ordinary sinners, but apostate Christians, and cites convincing evidence to support his point.[1]

Logic demands that if the dwellers on earth are wicked, the righteous must be somewhere else, maybe in heaven. There are, in fact, two texts that refer to the heaven-dwellers—they are the ones who rejoice when Satan is cast out of heaven (12:12) and those who are blasphemed by the beast (13:6). Are these saints or angels? The Greek—"those who tent (or tabernacle) in heaven"—sheds light on the subject. Tents in Scripture apply to human dwellings rather than angelic. The tabernacle was the place where God met with his people (Exodus 36:25). John (the only New Testament writer to use *tent* as a verb) gives it two meanings—God tenting in humanity (John 1:14; Revelation 21:2, 3), or humanity tenting in God (God "spreads" his tent over them [Revelation 7:15], Jesus himself being the new temple [John 2:19-22, Revelation 21:22]). It is clear from the Johannine writings that the verb "to tabernacle" has to do with God and his people

dwelling together. It seems best, then, to understand the expression "those who tent in heaven" as applying to the saints.

Other verses in Revelation show that John thinks of the saints as heaven-dwellers. The woman of Revelation 12:1 appears in heaven, though she is very much on earth fleeing to the wilderness from the dragon. Revelation 18:20 suggests that "heaven" is the same as the saints, apostles, and prophets. It seems, then, that John is consistent in dividing the world into two communities, earth-dwellers who oppose God, and heaven-dwellers who serve him.

What did John mean by this imagery? I see one possible implication—"those who are housed on earth" belong to the secular world. On the other hand, "those who tent (or tabernacle) in heaven" are priests (see Revelation 1:6; 5:10) since only priests enter the tabernacle. They belong to the sacred world.

The Horizontal Axis of the Apocalypse

There is also a horizontal axis of Revelation, for John visualizes two communities living side by side—one in the holy city and one outside. At times one invades the other. This is possible because the holy city comes down from God out of heaven (3:12), making it vulnerable to attack by the heathen. In chapter 11 John is told to measure the inner shrine of the temple and those who worship there, while the court and city are overrun by the heathen. (See Daniel 8:13, where the little horn tramples the sanctuary and saints.)

In Revelation 14, the heavenly community stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion (vv. 1-5) while the opposing forces are crushed in the winepress "outside the city" (v. 20, NIV). This implies that the saints with the Lamb are "inside the city." Chapter 20 develops this imagery by depicting the camp of the saints, the holy city, under attack by the hordes of Gog and Magog (v. 8). And again, in the epilogue of the book, John's concept of two communities dwelling side by side becomes clear: the white-robed saints enter the city while the fornicators and murderers are outside (22:14, 15).

John thus pictures two opposing communities—heaven-dwellers and earth-dwellers, insiders and outsiders. Here is the germ of his inaugurated eschatology—the saints in this life are already a part of the heavenly realm.

Routes to Heaven

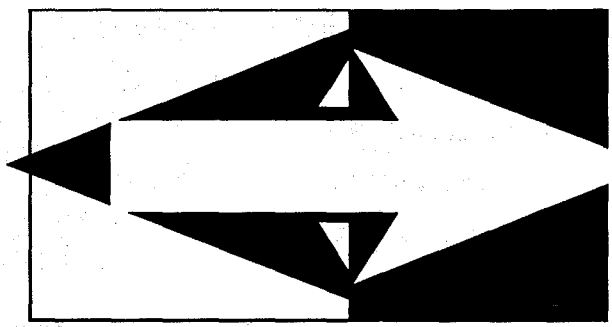
John repeatedly depicts vast assemblages of people who by some unexplained process were transported to heaven. How did they get there? I can think of five possibilities:

1. By translation without seeing death, as Enoch and Elijah.

2. By bodily assumption after death, as Moses, Christ, and the "blessed virgin."

3. By the ascent of the soul to heaven after the body dies. This is the basis for the widespread view that the saints in heaven are martyrs, even when John does not identify them as such.

4. By the second coming of Christ when the faithful dead are raised and the living translated to heaven. The presence of the righteous in heaven assumes that the coming of Christ has occurred or is being viewed proleptically. The problem here is that many of the visions in question do not mention the Second Coming; rather, the contexts indicate that the tribulation under Antichrist is still in progress.

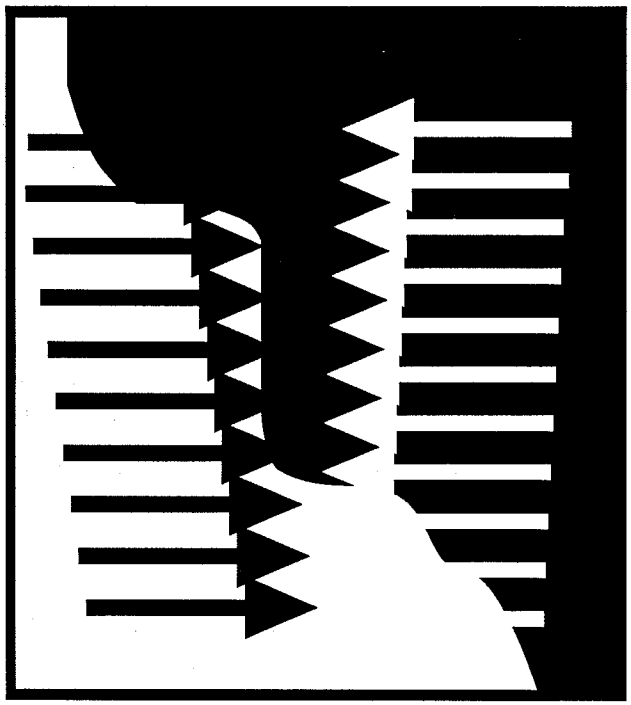


5. By a figurative experience with God. In this view the saints make a spiritual ascent to heaven while still engaged in the tribulations of earthly life. The idea that the saints reign spiritually with Christ during the tribulations of earth is suggested by the following lines of evidence:

a. The heaven-dweller and city-dweller motifs, already explained.

b. The contexts of the heavenly visions, which indicate that the struggle with Antichrist is still in progress and the second coming of Christ has not yet occurred.

c. A series of present participles that describe the saints as "those who *are coming* out of great tribulation" (not *have come*, 7:14), those who *"are worshiping in the temple"* during the 42 months of trampling by the heathen (11:1, 2); those who *"are following the Lamb"* while the rest of the world worships the beast (14:4, cf. 13:8); and those who "*are conquering*" the beast and its image (not *have conquered*) 15:2, 3. If the present participles are to be taken seriously, it appears that the saints are very much engaged in the conflicts of earth while they appear to be in heaven.



The Throne-Room Scenes

It is in the throne-room scenes that inaugurated eschatology appears most vividly. The initial view of the throne-room (chapters 4 and 5) introduces the *dramatis personae* of the heavenly court—God, the Lamb, elders, and angels. They appear to be celebrating the victory just won by the Lamb at the cross. In their hymns of praise the heavenly choirs mention a great multitude from all tribes and nations who have been ransomed by the Lamb's blood (5:9). It is this great multitude, also called the 144,000 ransomed ones (14:3), that appears repeatedly in the throne-room scenes and becomes the focus of this study.

Chapter 7 sets the stage for the drama. It is the eve of the great tribulation: the saints are being sealed and the tempest is about to rage. As soon as they are sealed and the four winds are released, John sees them in heaven crying out for salvation (vss. 9, 10). The elder informs John that these are the ones who are coming out of great tribulation (v. 14). They are not yet through with the troubles of this world, but spiritually they are before the throne of God receiving strength for the ordeal they are passing through.

Here I agree with a number of commentators (Beasley-Murray, Caird, Charles, Hoekema, Kiddle, Ladd, Lenski, Summers, Swete, and others) that the two companies of chapter 7, the 144,000 and the great multitude, are the same. There are many reasons to support this conclusion. John hears the saints described as 144,000 sealed from the 12 tribes of Israel (v. 4), but when he looks he sees that they are actually a vast multitude from all nations, which cannot be numbered (v. 9). By describing the saints in two ways, John is stating a theological paradox: God knows the number of his elect, and those who inherit the blessing of Abraham are as numberless as the stars. The fierce winds that threaten the 144,000 are another way of describing the

great tribulation from which the great multitude comes. The number *144,000* in its symmetry, vastness, and perfection is a symbol of the great multitude who cannot be numbered. Israel today means God's people of all nations, and the 12 tribes could represent the many tribes of earth. Being sealed is equivalent to being clothed in white robes. So 144,000 of the 12 tribes of Israel is thus a symbolic way of describing the great multitude from every tribe and tongue and nation.[2]

But the scholars who accept the identity of the two companies also see them in two stages—the church militant on earth and the church triumphant in heaven, with a time lapse between. The Greek, however, does not allow this. The great multitude are coming out of the great tribulation (v. 14). So, they cannot literally be in heaven—they must be there in spirit. Understood this way, the chapter takes on new poignancy. Their loud cry, "Salvation belongs to God!" (v. 10) is a plea for help. And God responds by spreading his tabernacle over them (v. 15). [This is why they are called "those who tent (or tabernacle) in heaven."] While under God's tabernacle they are protected from the fierce winds of verse 1 and from the scorching sun of the plagues of the tribulation (v. 16, cf. 16:8). While the earth-dwellers are enduring the tempest, the Lamb is leading his followers to springs of living water, and wiping the tears from their eyes (v. 17). For the heaven-dwellers, tribulation is robbed of its terrors. They stand "before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple" (RSV) (the Holy and Most Holy Places where only the priests may enter). The saints are indeed priests (1:6, 5:10), clothed in priestly white robes (7:13, 14). They "serve him" by their constant praise "day and night" during tribulation.

John again sees the saints during the 42 months when the holy city and the temple court are trampled by the heathen (11:1, 2, cf. Daniel 8:13). During this horrendous time they are shut in with God in the inner shrine of the temple.

As the conflict between good and evil intensifies, John introduces the opposing forces of the last great battle. On the seashore stands a dragon (12:17) while a beast scrambles up from the sea to join him (13:1, 2) These two allies have the whole world on their side—the vast company of earth-dwellers (vv. 3, 4 , and 8). Rising high above the seashore is Mount Zion (14:1), site of the holy city (v. 20) with its tabernacle-temple (13:6),[3] where the throne of God is located (14:3). Here is where the heaven-dwellers live; they are God's tabernacle since He dwells in them (13:6). For 42 months the beast has made war on them and conquered (v. 7). Now a third ally emerges from the earth to join forces with the dragon and the beast. He galvanized the earth-dwellers by performing miracles and branding them on the forehead and hand (v. 16). He attacks the heaven-dwellers by economic sanctions and a decree that they should be put to death (vv. 17, 15).

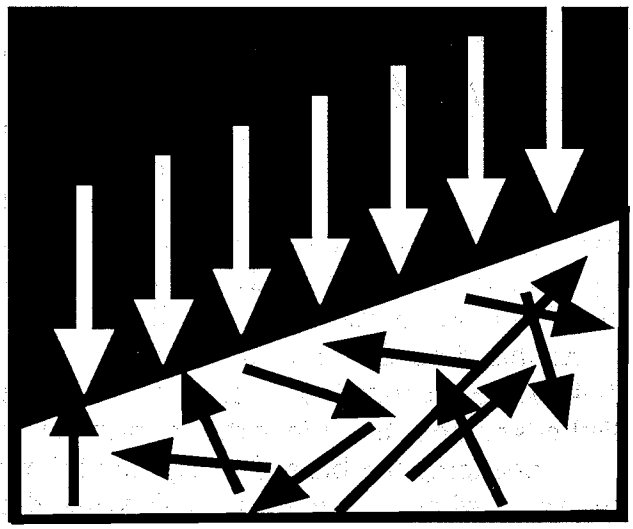
For the heaven-dwellers, tribulation is robbed of its terrors. They stand "before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple" (the Holy and Most Holy Places where only the priests may enter).

At this time the Lamb's forces appear—144,000 select individuals branded with the Father's name (14:1). While the earth-dwellers are worshiping the beast (v. 12), they follow the Lamb wherever he goes (14:4) While the

earth-dwellers are deceived by the lies of the false prophet (13:14), these have no lie in their mouths (14:5). Surrounded by enemy forces, under a death decree, they sing in thunderous tones a new song of praise and deliverance (vv. 2, 3).

Three angels then appear in the heavens and give the world a final warning. The Son of Man appears on a cloud to reap the earth. The evil forces outside the city are crushed like grapes, and blood flows to the horses' bridles (14:17-19). Here is the initial picture of the final conflict between earth-dwellers and heaven-dwellers.

Next the scene changes to the final outpouring of God's wrath in the seven last plagues. Again John looks for the people of God. He has seen them before the throne, in the temple, and on Mt. Zion. Now they stand on the sea of glass still singing their new song, the song of Moses and the Lamb (15:2, 3). John states that they "are conquering" the beast and its image—they have not yet reached heaven, but are still engaged in the conflicts of earth. (Their song praising God for his judgments [v. 4] would not be appropriate in the future age.) But even though they are in the heat of conflict, spiritually they are standing on the sea of glass, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb as Israel sang and rejoiced by the Red Sea when Pharaoh and his host were destroyed. To them, as to Israel of old, the plagues mean deliverance.



A glimpse of the heaven-dwellers occurs again in chapter 17 where John gives a brief summary of the final battle: The kings "'will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and *those with him are called and chosen and faithful*'" (v. 14, RSV). The heaven-dwellers have been "with him" through every stage of the conflict.

After the falling of the plagues, the whole kingdom of Satan, under the symbolism of "Babylon," collapses. Ironically, the world in its lament over Babylon calls upon the saints to rejoice:

> Rejoice over her, O heaven,
> O saints and apostles and prophets,
> for God has given judgment for you
> against her! (18:20).

Accepting the challenge, the great multitude of saints in heaven cries out in triumph: "'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just!'" (19:1, 2). This is the same "great multitude" who, at the beginning of the tribulation had cried out, "Salvation belongs to our God!" (7:10). They now add another stanza to their song—he has judged their oppressor, the harlot. As soon as the harlot is removed, the Bride appears clothed in bright linen, fine and pure. The Bride has no doubt made herself ready by separating from the harlot Babylon (18:4, NRSV). The exultant cry goes forth that the marriage of the Lamb has come (19:7).

But the wedding plans are interrupted by a battle scene. The Bridegroom becomes a warrior on a white horse and the Bride an army on white horses. The only vestige of the wedding imagery is the "fine linen, bright and pure" (v. 14, RSV) which the Bride is still wearing. The "armies of heaven" can be identified as saints (not angels) by the white linen that they wear (cf. v. 8). Also, there are only two armies in this battle—the armies of heaven under the King of

kings, and the armies of earth under the beast (v. 19). Here again is a view of the heaven-dwellers in opposition to the earth-dwellers. (As we have noted above, 17:14 has identified the same group as saints.) Of course they are present with Christ as "heaven-dwellers" only in a spiritual sense. In reality they are on earth awaiting deliverance from on high.

Because John has pictured the saints as being with Christ throughout every stage of the final conflict, he does not have a strong picture of the resurrection and translation of the saints at the Second Advent (compare with 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17). He mentions only that they came to life in the first resurrection and reigned with Christ for 1,000 years (20:4, 5). Then, as the first heaven and first earth pass away, all that was figurative becomes literal. The holy city descends from heaven in reality (21:2). God and his people, who have long dwelt together in spirit, now experience face-to-face communion (21:3).

What Does It All Mean?

The heaven-dwellers in John's Apocalypse are pictured as white-robed priests, a white-robed bride, and a white-robed army. In each of these capacities they overcome the world. The function of the army is to conquer. The saint conquer all of their foes, both internal (as listed in the messages to the seven churches) and external (describes in the battle scenes). The function of the Bride is to present herself in purity to her husband. But the priestly function is perhaps the most prominent theme.

Jesus revealed to the church of Philadelphia the secret of surviving the hour of trial coming on the world: "Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut"—the door to the throne room (3:10, 8; 4:1, 2, RSV).

Through every crisis, Christian priests may press through the court into the Most Holy Place (*naos*) to the very presence of God and the Lamb (7:9; 11:1, 2). Their priestly white robes washed in the blood of the Lamb entitle them to full acceptance with God (7:14). With prayer and praise they serve God day and night in his temple (v. 15). They overcome fear and despair through shouting God's praises (vv. 10-12). When parched with drought and broken by sorrow, the hand of God wipes away their tears (v. 17). When confronted with death, they sing in thunderous tones the song of Moses and the Lamb (14:2, 3; 15:3). They cherish faith and hope and courage no matter what horrors ascend from the abyss because God descends with greater power to defeat them. They transcend their troubles instead of being crushed by them because they view the overwhelming evils of earth from the perspective of the throne of the sovereignty of God.

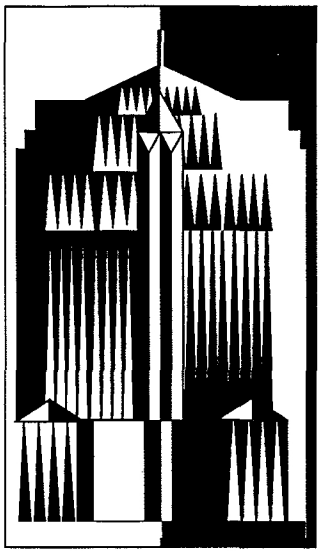
In this powerful imagery, John's Apocalypse depicts the meaning of spirituality.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Paul Minear, *I Saw a New Earth: An Introduction to the Visions of the Apocalypse* (Washington, D. C.: Corpus Books, 1968), pp. 218-221.

2. Another line of evidence strongly supports the identity of the two groups—John repeatedly describes them in the same way. Both groups follow the Lamb (7:17; 14:4); both attest that God's ways are true and just (15:3; 19:2); both have a voice "like the sound of many waters" and like thunder (14:2; 19:6, RSV). Both stand before the throne, the elders, and the four living creatures (7:9, 11; 14:1, 3). The promises to Philadelphia (3:12) are fulfilled to both groups—they never go out of the temple (the great multitude in 7:15), and they have the name of God written on their foreheads (the 144,000 in 14:1). The song of the elder (5:9) assumes their identity—the ransomed ones (144,000 of 14:3) are from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (the great multitude of 7:9).

3. This draws upon the imagery of Daniel 11:45—"Antichrist shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountains" (RSV).



The City in Modern Apocalyptic

The metaphor of the City, in Scripture and in literature, conjures up both evil and good images. Barry L. Casey muses on the City as Babylon and the City as the New Jerusalem.

by Barry L. Casey

CHRISTIANS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AMBIVALENT toward cities. We identify oppressive and arrogant behavior by institutions and states as Babylon. We also identify the City with what humanity, thrown out of the Garden, created in the Wilderness. We see the City as an act of defiance toward God: Cain, its founder, the first murderer and builder. Yet, when we read the Book of Revelation, particularly chapter 21, we find the eternal home of God's children positively symbolized by a City, the New Jerusalem.

The condemnation and suspicion of the cities is also ingrained in the American experience, stemming, in part, from the pioneer's love of the open and limitless horizons of the American frontier. In the 19th century, European, Catholic, and Jewish immigrants flooded into Northeastern cities. In the 20th century, Southern blacks migrated northward. Recoiling, the white, middle-class perceived as a threat the hordes of the Great Unwashed who packed the inner cities. The clash of languages, the bewildering mix of cultures and mores, ethnic and religious groups, made the cities strange and decadent to the circumspect and cautious mind of the WASP.

Adventism has shared Christian and American suspicions of the City. Many Adventists still regard cities only as strongholds of sin to be penetrated, injected with goodness, and then observed from a safe distance. The move of the General Conference headquarters from Washington, D.C. to the suburbs of Silver Spring, Maryland, is indicative of this attitude. Yet, according to a recent survey conducted by the Church Ministries Department of the North American Division,[1] fully 50 percent of North American Adventists are urban.

Thus, it might be helpful to reevaluate this remnant of our 19th-century rural heritage—the conviction that we are country people who make evangelistic forays into the city. The reality, for

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many of us at least, is that we are urban people who make recreational forays into the country.

It is even more critical that Adventists rediscover the city in the rich tradition of apocalyptic. Whether we realize it or not, Adventism's emphasis on apocalyptic and the books of Daniel and Revelation have uniquely equipped us to speak and act powerfully on behalf of the cities. Yet it is popular culture and literature that evokes haunting, searching images of the apocalyptic city. Something we have known but disregarded, others are now speaking to with eloquence and vigor.

If Adventist Christians are to be effective witnesses to God's grace and compassion, they must love the cities. To believe that all cities are demon-possessed, that all inhabitants of cities are sleepwalking through life, having given up their wills to some overpowering force for evil, is simply inimical to the power of grace and forgiveness central to the gospel.

To long for the New Jerusalem one must love the old Jerusalem, even if it murdered the prophets and killed the faithful, the Jerusalem that Ezekiel and the other prophets dared to call Babylon.

While the first Christians, especially Paul, moved easily within urban settings, they also understood the spiritual and political power structures that made the city an especially dangerous place for outsiders. There is little doubt that hearers of John's Apocalypse understood his references to Babylon as applying to the Rome of their time. It is equally the case that most converts of the early church were urban dwellers who had no intention of leaving their cities unless they were forcibly removed.

The power of apocalyptic, as seen in the Book of Revelation, was a message of encouragement and hope to continue in the good fight until the end. Far from looking for release by and by, the early Christians were committed to working within the cities, suffering persecution if need be, and rejoicing in the power of the Lamb of God to sustain them until the New Jerusalem supplanted present-day Babylon.

In that respect, the message of Revelation is just as relevant today as it was in the first century A.D. Do not faithful Christians around the world live in Babylon and long for the New Jerusalem? Are we not citizens of both cities—the first by necessity, and the second by choice? Isn't it true that to long for the New Jerusalem one must love the old Jerusalem, even if it murdered the prophets and killed the faithful, the Jerusalem that Ezekiel and the other prophets dared to call Babylon? And in order to love Babylon, that great city, we must look past the filth and degradation and cruelty, to the heart of the city—God's gift of the human spirit—and learn to love and cherish it. In the end, God will transform this marvelous, terrible, creative invention of humans into the enduring symbol of the divine-human encounter.

The City as Babylon

The first image, the City as Babylon, is well covered by Paul Theroux's *O-Zone*,[2] in which the privileged inhabitants (known as the Owners) of a Manhattan in the not-too-far-distant future, live in walled isolation from the poor (known as the Others), and in dread of the mutants they think live in the radioactive wasteland of the Midwest—the O-Zone. Once

outside the city they are helpless and afraid, completely at odds with the Wilderness. It is also a city beyond redemption, like its biblical counterpart, because its very structure is built on carefully sustained collective illusions of might and power.

Manhattanites are fascinated by the aliens and mutants they suspect live in the heartland of America—the O-Zone of Nebraska and Iowa. There seems to be an unconcious need to project all their fears about the breakdown of their enclosed society onto the sketchy reports and sightings they have received about the Zoners. The Owners are both frightened and fascinated by the Zoners' lives and affect what they imagine to be "the alien look," ragged clothes (very expensively styled, of course!), strange hairpieces, and painted faces.

There are also militant fringe-groups among the Owners who make a sport of hunting the poor and homeless outside the walls of Manhattan from helicopters. Blasting them with thunderous sound, they back them into alleys and corners like rats and shoot them from the air.

Those Owners who find themselves, through encounters with the Zoners, to be at odds with the illusions of their own culture, are no longer comfortable there and become outcasts themselves. They wander outside the city and there, in a movement familiar in American literature and culture, find a more authentic self in the countryside, among an alternate community.

The purity of the country contrasted with evil Babylon is also a common motif in American literature. The farmers are pitted against the merchants; the piety of rustics shows up the hypocrisy and unbelief of city dwellers; the innocence of the country is preferred to the duplicity and cynicism of city life.

These themes are central to Theroux's narrative of an epic journey from the O-Zone to New York City, in which a young Owner becomes first a hostage of the Zoners and then a full-fledged member. Through his struggles to overcome his prejudice and fear, we are led to compare the richness of the Zoners' lives with the shallowness of the Owners.

American advertising has capitalized with great success on this enduring vision of the bucolic life of the country. What could be more appealing to harried city dwellers than to believe that their favorite cereal was produced by rosy-cheeked maidens and hearty country boys? Nobody wants to think that the din and clash of assembly-line techniques was applied to their Post Toasties.

While there is little direct evidence in the Old Testament of a much later city-versus-country dichotomy, it is true that the fulminations of the prophets are primarily against the cities and against Jerusalem. Amos, the reluctant prophet/shepherd from Tekoa, condemns the wealthy and indolent women of Bashan for oppressing the poor and crushing the needy (Amos 4: 1). Isaiah pictures a sodden Jerusalem, drunk with the wrath of God against her (Isaiah 51), a city gorged on its own iniquity, reveling in the oppression of its own poor, whose priests lead the people into sin (Isaiah 3). But it is Ezekiel who lashes out most virulently, portraying Jerusalem as so wicked even the heathen nations are shocked (Ezekiel 5).

Yet, even though their denunciations of a Jerusalem as harlot are bitter, the prophets consistently ring a note of hope. Jerusalem will also become the ideal City, the Daughter of Zion, and the light to all the nations. The depth

of feeling revealed in the denunciations may indicate that the prophets were not simply passing along the message of Yahweh, but were personally reacting to the injustice and degradation they witnessed. Hell hath no fury like a prophet disregarded. Denunciation of heathen cities for flagrant violations of human rights is one thing—it is part of the prophet's job description—but to have to watch as God's beautiful child deliberately disobeys calls for tough measures.

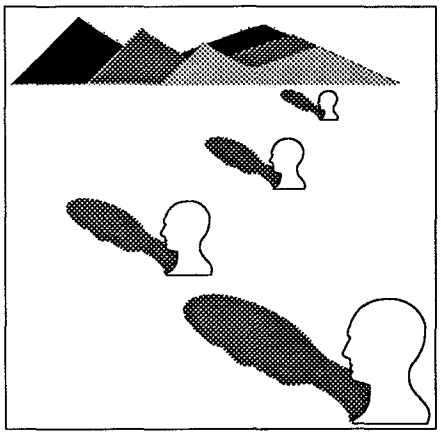
Throughout the prophetic writings we see an alternating pattern of denunciation of the City—Babylon or Jerusalem—as an unjust status quo and annunciation of Jerusalem as the transformed ideal.

The City as Wilderness

Another theme in contemporary literature is that of the City as Wilderness. Tom Wolfe's bestseller, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*,[3] portrays the rise and fall of Sherman McCoy, a junk bond trader who strays from the familiar streets of Manhattan into the Wilderness of the Bronx. McCoy, a smug but insecure "Master of the Universe," feels himself to be invincible until a hit-and-run accident precipitates his fall into awareness.

McCoy is a "once-born" person, to use Francis Newman's phrase; one of those people for whom the world is a beautiful and harmonious place. "Of human sin they know perhaps little in their own hearts and not very much in the world," says Newman.[4] McCoy's rude awakening to the suffering and tragedy in life is at once a psychic wound and a spiritual crisis.

Wolfe's New York *is* a psychic and spiritual Wilderness, with almost every character in the book either a self-made victim or a conniving manipulator. Here "Nature, red in tooth and claw," lives within the luxury apartments and the ruined tenements of the city. I suspect this is the experience of many middle-class professionals today. The exuberant agendas of the yuppies have come hard against the cruelty and bleakness of the City as Wilderness. The painful awareness that this *is* life and that it is not going to get better soon, if ever, can be both a terrible shock and a great healer.



Again, a gauzy image of the country provides a convenient fantasy for city people. Sherman McCoy, wallowing in self-doubt and bewilderment, ponders moving to a southern country town where he can fish in a creek, despite the fact he can barely manage to walk the dog two blocks without coming up short of breath and patience.

Isaiah describes the wasteland of Jerusalem, the vineyard that has been trampled because bloodshed has taken the place of justice (Isaiah 5:5-7). Jeremiah speaks of the terror that grips Jerusalem at the news their enemies are coming to wreak destruction (Jeremiah 6:24). Time and again, the prophets speak of the desolation of Jerusalem, likening it to a vineyard stripped and bare, or an orchard decimated (Jeremiah 8:13). The City as Wilderness is a place of psychological destruction as those who are brought low are crushed in spirit (Isaiah 29:4-9). The loneliness of those in a darkened city, under siege from God, is heard in Amos's haunting words:

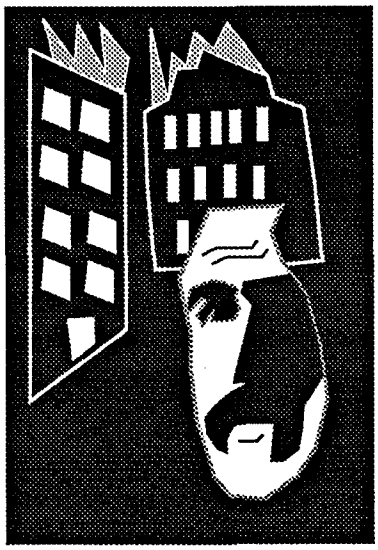
> Why do you long for the day of the Lord?
> That day will be darkness, not light.
> It will be as though a man fled from a lion
> only to meet a bear,
> as though he entered his house
> and rested his hand on the wall
> only to have a snake bite him.
> Will not the day of the Lord be darkness, not

light—
pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?
(Amos 5:18-20, NIV).

The City as Jerusalem

There is a third theme in contemporary literature—the City as Jerusalem. Not as common as the previous themes, the City as Jerusalem offers us a hope consonant with Christian faith. In Mark Helprin's haunting panegyric to New York City, *Winter's Tale,*[5] the city is the home of justice and the place of holy dreams—the only real place. Those who travel outside the city to the wilderness of 19th-century upstate New York enter into places which are literally not on the map. While life in the city is influenced by the fluidity of time past, future, and present, human purposes in the wilderness are completely subject to capricious elements. Time stands still in the rough places of the wilderness. In that dark and wintry landscape, those who pit themselves against the cold elements risk life and limb.

Helprin's characters are a full mix of good and evil, always grappling with their temptations and the call to purity and justice. There is Peter Lake, a kind of Moses/Messiah figure, a master mechanic who regards machines as holy. There is Pearly Soames, the enduring incarnation of evil, who commits heinous crimes in order to possess beautiful things. A man entranced by color, he is a sensualist without sensitivity or moral discrimination; an aesthete who raises enjoyment to the status of a religion of the senses. There is Hardesty Maratta, who wants to believe in miracles and is guided by the inscription on a silver platter given him by his wealthy industrialist father. Honesty, courage, sacrifice, patience—these are the virtues Hardesty's father commends to him, along with the inscription on the platter, which reads, "For what can be imagined more beautiful than the sight of a perfectly just city rejoicing in justice alone."[6]



Winter's Tale is an ambitious work, spanning a time period from the early 19th century to the dawn of the 21st millenium. It slips from fantasy to reality and back again, from the future to the past, until one realizes that Helprin is writing an epic for our time, of the promise and hope of a beautiful city. In the end, the grand experiment toward which the narrative has been ascending fails amidst the apocalyptic destruction of New York City on the eve of the year 2000. But the next morning, like irrepressible children, the people of the city are clearing away the rubble and preparing to rebuild.

Shining through Halprin's hope in the miraculous and unexpected is the New Jerusalem of John's Apocalypse:

> To enter a city intact it is necessary to pass through one of the new gates. They are far more difficult to find than their solid predecessors, for they are tests, mechanism, devices, and implementations of justice. There once was a map, now long gone, one of the ancient charts upon which colorful animals sleep or rage. Those who saw it said that in its illuminations were figures and symbols of the gates. The east gate was that of acceptance of responsibility, the south gate that of the desire to explore, the west gate that of devotion to beauty, and the north gate that of selfless love. But they were not believed. It was said that a city with entryways like these could not exist, because it would be too wonderful. Those who decide such things decided that whoever had seen the map had only imagined it, and the entire matter was forgotten, treated as if it were a dream, and ignored. This, of course, freed it to live forever.[7]

Helprin's imaginative vision comes close to a Christian attitude toward the City. "A great city," he says in the prologue

> is nothing more than a portrait of itself, and yet when all is said and done, its arsenals of scenes and images are part of a deeply moving plan. As a book in which to read this plan, New York is unsurpassed. For the whole world has poured its heart into the city by the Palisades, and made it far better than it ever had any right to be.[8]

Just as the Garden of Eden represents God's ordering of beauty out of the chaos and void of unformed matter, so the City is humanity's attempt to structure harmony out of chaos.

In the Bible, the City was always the recipient of God's wrath and tenderest love. Both Ezekiel and Isaiah condemn and idealize Jerusalem. Ezekiel prophesies the direst threats against the city possible: it will become an object lesson to the surrounding nations of what God can do to a people who rebel and flout his commands.

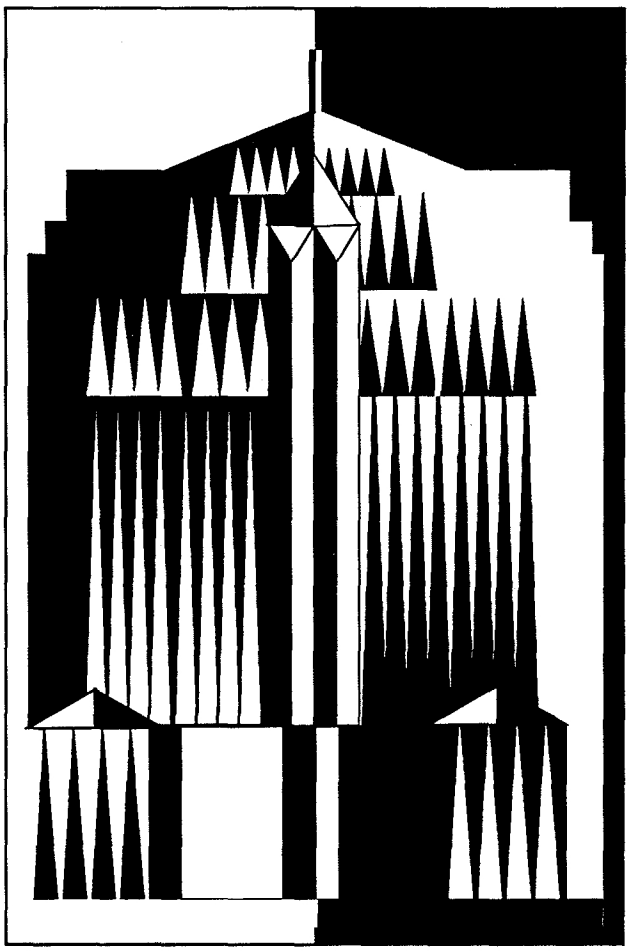
In later chapters Ezekiel lays out a vision of the New Jerusalem that becomes the perfect prototype for Revelation 21. Likewise, the Jerusalem of Isaiah 62 is the City restored, remade by God into a showcase of God's favor and a light to all the nations. Throughout the Scriptures these two views of Jerusalem function as both warning and promise.

In the end, in the Book of Revelation, Jerusalem and Babylon symbolize all that is beautiful and all that is wretched and cruel about cities. Babylon is the lens through which the nature of humans as idolaters can be scrutinized. Jerusalem is transformed from the prodigal, but much-loved child of God, to the jewel in the crown of the universe. God remakes the city, pouring into it all the order, grace, symmetry, and proportion necessary to make it nothing short of perfect. Jerusalem, the holy city of God, is the pinnacle of dreams and visions, the Garden of Eden transplanted to an urban setting of wonder, justice, and compassion.

Jacques Ellul, a French sociologist and evangelical Christian writer, says God uses the evil form of the city only because of his compassion for humanity.[9] We should not take advantage of God's forgiveness for building cities to claim that our actions were right. God, according to this perspective, is gamely trying to make the best of a bad situation.

But if the *form* of the city is inherently evil, why would God ever use it (since it apparently has the power to distort reality). If God could change the form of the city to something more benign, why bother using it in the first place? On the other hand, if the form of the city is not inherently evil, then God's New Jerusalem is the sanctifying of humanity's creative impulse. It is the stamp of approval on humanity's idea.

This is the wonderful thing about the New Jerusalem in Revelation. Among all the images available to portray the eternal home of humankind, God chose the City. Throughout the



prophetic writings, one has the sense that God's denunciations of the cities, Jerusalem especially, are those of a wounded parent rather than a merciless and exacting judge.

Nor do we find God condemning cities as such, insisting that holiness can only be found in the country. Rather, God graciously takes up the idea of the City, the creation of humankind after the Fall, and redeems it. The New Jerusalem of Revelation is the sanctified expression of that wayward city of Isaiah 62, Ezekiel 5, and other chapters, and the rest of the prophetic voices.

The City as the Temple of God

Cities are places of immense suffering and degradation. The City is Babylon on the Hudson, the cruel oppressor of the weak. The City is also a Wilderness, a place of chaos, the territory of demons. But the City is also Mother Teresa and the hundreds of anonymous people who work with crack babies, the illiterate, and the homeless.

The City is a place of beauty as extraordinary as the Tetons or as gentle as the Shenandoah Valley. The play of morning and afternoon light on the stone of the East Wing of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., is as entrancing as the sun sweeping over North Dome in Yosemite Park. The explosion of spring colors along the Mall—the heart of this urban capital—is as grand as the profligate riot of colors at California's Tuolumne Meadows. The City as Jerusalem is God's resounding Yes! to the best and most beautiful things in life, even when they are reflections of human creativity. The City as Jerusalem is the promise of a new thing, the City as holy space without darkness or fear; the City as the temple of God.

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Social Reform as Sacrament of the Second Advent

There is more to apocalyptic than fire and smoke. There's justice and hope and glory—and a vision of the good and beautiful.

by Roy Branson

OUR MISSIONARY FAMILY, JUST HOME ON FURlough from Egypt, was driving across the United States on Highway 66. We had reached one of the Midwestern states when a thunderstorm suddenly engulfed us. I was six years old. Except for my first few months I had lived all my life in the parched suburbs of Cairo. I was terrified as rain poured down, lightning split the sky, and thunder cracked directly overhead. I was frightened, not because I didn't know what was happening, but because I did: the Lord was returning. I began to wail.

I had already heard countless Adventist sermons. I knew how it all ended. First, a cloud the size of a man's hand; then lightning, thunder, and the resurrection of the dead; next, in front of the whole world, would come the separating of the wheat from the tares, the sheep from the goats. And I was a goat. I was naughty, wicked, disobedient, and going to be condemned before thousands and thousands of perfect, heavenly beings.

The storm was so intense that my dad had to pull over to the side of the road. I remember my mother trying to calm me by quoting the Psalms. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." The Lord loved me, she assured me. He wouldn't want anything terrible to happen to me. Without realizing it, my parents were face to face with their youngest child's "apocalyptic consciousness."

Thousands of Seventh-day Adventists have watched clouds the size of a man's hand to see if they grow into the cataclysm of the last day.

Roy Branson is the editor of Spectrum *and a senior research fellow at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University.* *An expanded version of this essay will appear as a chapter in a forthcoming book,* Righteous Remnant, *edited by Charles W. Teel, Jr., and published by Loma Linda University Press.*

Tom Dybdahl chronicles the experience of generations of Adventist youngsters who dream that they are in a large field before a raised platform on which a kingly judge, surrounded by dignitaries, calls the final roll. Those who are saved go to one side; those who are lost go to the other. But just before learning whether or not they're saved, they wake up.[1]

Extending the Time

Despite all this concern with the evaluation of our behavior in the final judgment, some people question whether the Second Advent has anything to do with morality. They wonder if the apocalyptic books and passages of the Bible—Daniel, the Apocalypse, Matthew 24 and 25, to name a few—are not inherently escapist. They question whether an apocalyptic consciousness is a moral consciousness.

Of course it is. And if the consciousness is truly apocalyptic, it is a social consciousness, concerned about the moral behavior of not just individuals but also institutions in society. The drama of the ages and the great controversy between Christ and Satan,[2] in which Adventist youngsters—and adults—place themselves, are cosmic morality plays: good versus evil, the oppressor versus the oppressed, the powerful versus the weak.

Consider what's going on in the minds of youngsters when storms and dreams fill them with awe, dread, and fear. On that Midwestern road I was convinced that every aspect of my life was under constant scrutiny. I dreaded an evaluation, an assessment of whether my motives and character were good and my actions right or wrong.

I thought a judgment had probably already been rendered on whether or not I would be saved. In moments, I would learn in front of all humans, angels, and unfallen beings what that verdict would be. I was not trembling before an avalanche or an earthquake, but before a judging will. I was not frightened of nature; I was terrified of God.

There are theological problems with this sort of apocalyptic consciousness. At the very least, it is incomplete. Adventists sometimes have a hard time worrying about more than their individual destiny. But whatever its faults, such a consciousness makes some assumptions crucial to any attempt to begin the moral enterprise. Such a consciousness assumes that our destinies are not predetermined; they depend on the actions of free wills.

Some people question whether the Second Advent has anything to do with morality. . . . They question whether an apocalyptic consciousness is a moral consciousness. Of course it is.

Not only actions but the persons performing them can be morally evaluated. There will be a day when we as individuals, with our distinctive, unique bodies, will be judged. And to believe that I, as an individual, am being judged by God before the entire universe is certainly to believe that my actions are important.

On that road in the Midwest I thought it mattered a great deal what I did and what sort of a person I ought to be. Such a consciousness forms individuals who are highly motivated—an entire universe is waiting for them to act. People who live in the shadow of God's great, final act of the great controversy between good and evil are a people anxious to respond with their own dramatic actions on behalf of goodness and against evil.

Some have said that, while an apocalyptic consciousness may be concerned with personal morality, it robs Christians of the sense that they can do much of anything to affect the world and history. God is so powerful, so active, so immediate for people steeped in the visions of Daniel and Revelation, of the end of the world and the Second Advent, say these critics, that Adventists understandably don't want to take the time to become involved in complex moral decisions about how they ought to live with others in a highly urban, technological society. According to these critics, a vivid apocalyptic consciousness ignores social reform, a concern to change the moral behavior of institutions.

To be fair, that has happened. If the Lord is returning momentarily, there is scarcely time to worry about shaping or reforming social institutions. Many Millerites in the days before October 22, 1844, stopped worrying about some of their long-standing obligations. As early as the spring of 1844, farmers in northern New England left their crops in their fields. In New York City, "Brother Abraham Riker, a well-known shoe dealer in Division Street, who was for many years a class leader in the Methodist Episcopal Church, closed his store and spent considerable time distributing papers, attending meetings, and warning others."[3] If one believes the Second Advent of the Lord is to happen momentarily, if it is a part of the present (not the future), then it doesn't make sense to establish an Adventist ethics center—or, for that matter, of course, to establish an Adventist college, hospital, food factory, or church bureaucracy.

For a while, even after the Great Disappointment, some Adventists continued to believe that the Lord would return within days. A year later, in October of 1845, James White, in the pages of *The Day-Star*, condemned an Adventist couple who had announced wedding plans. They had "denied their faith in being published for marriage, and we all look upon this as a wile of the Devil. The firm brethren in Maine who are waiting for Christ to come have no fellowship with such a move."[4]

Of course, a year later, James and Ellen Harmon themselves got married and began confronting all the questions of right and wrong surrounding the family, that fundamental human institution prolonging the existence of life in this world.

By 1859 (15 years after the Great Disappointment), Ellen White made it clear that in her mind the Second Advent was not a present reality, but a future event. "I saw that this message would not accomplish its work in a few short months." Invoking the second epistle of Peter, she underscored her point: "I saw that God would prove his people. Patiently Jesus bears with them and does not spew them out of his mouth in a moment." With the Second Advent clearly in the future, Ellen insisted that Adventists must become involved in organizing institutions. "God is well pleased with the efforts of his people in trying to move with system and order in his work."[5]

Within a year, James and Ellen White had convinced an often reluctant group of Adventists to create a publishing association and adopt the name "Seventh-day Adventist." Ellen wanted them to go further and create a denominational structure. "Unless the churches are so organized that they can carry out and enforce order, they have nothing to hope for in the future."[6]

Ellen White was no longer a Millerite; for the Millerites had had no future, only a present. With Ellen restoring the future, a denomination could come into existence—and in 1863, 19 years after the Great Disappointment, it did.

Avoiding Temptations

Ever since Seventh-day Adventists, under the leadership of Ellen and James White, finally stopped being Millerites and became convinced that there was a period between the

present moment and the Second Advent during which they needed to act in a morally responsible way, they have struggled to know how to relate the Second Advent to moral action. Several temptations have plagued Adventist theology and history. Interestingly, these are not temptations to be passive and inactive. They are the temptations of activists.

One temptation has been to fill the void of Christ's nonappearance with our own presence. The invisibility of divinity in 1844 is answered by the visibility of the Adventist Church. For many Adventists, the answer to the Great Disappointment is the Great Achievement: creating a worldwide Seventh-day Adventist denomination. The anxiety caused by the delay of Christ's Second Advent in time is answered by the assurance of a tangible Seventh-day Adventist Church in space.

In response to a universal event that has not yet happened, Adventists create a ubiquitous church with institutions that are reassuringly concrete and tangible. Both defenders of the status quo and critics of church structure sometimes become more consumed with expanding or improving the church than with anticipating the Second Advent. In the lives of many Adventists—not just denominational employees—the doctrine of the church has actually superseded the doctrine of the Second Advent.

Another temptation has been to expand the strong commitment of Adventists to sanctification of individual Christians to encompass the sanctification of all history. Some of the 19th-century Methodist forebears and contemporaries of Adventism proclaimed the moral responsibility of believers to reach perfection. Building on this foundation, some Adventists have called, in effect, for their church to perfect history. It is the responsibility of Adventists, they say, to act in such a morally praiseworthy way that the Second Advent can take place. Practically speaking, on this view, the perfection of Adventists causes the Second Advent. Such a commitment to the doctrine of sanctification determines for some the relationship between the Second Advent and morality.[7]

A third temptation has been to allow our commitment to God's created order and laws to overwhelm our apocalyptic sense of the ongoing struggle between good and evil. Some Adventists are so conscious that God is Creator and Sustainer of the world that they forget the divine judgment of rebellious powers.

Some Adventists have called, in effect, for their church to perfect history. It is the responsibility of Adventists, they say, to act in such a morally praiseworthy way that the Second Advent can take place.

Some Adventists seem to read Romans 13 and its admonition to be subject to "the higher powers" to the exclusion of Revelation 13 and its condemnation of the beast to whom "power was given over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations," that "makes wars with the saints." They ignore that in Revelation 13 this political power is warned that "he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword" (KJV). Some Adventists have expanded their concern to observe God's laws and created order in their own living habits—temperance, diet, abstention from tobacco and alcohol, exercise—to include a commitment and respect for all human institutions. Just as Adventists—indeed all people—should energetically align themselves with God's natural order, they believe Adventists should not just conform to, but

actively support the established political and social order.[8]

At perhaps the nadir of Adventist social responsibility, German Adventist leaders from 1933 through the end of the war, in official church publications, fulsomely supported Hitler and his policies, including international aggression, anti-Semitism, and sterilization of the mentally weak, schizophrenics, epileptics, crippled alcoholics, drug addicts; even the blind, the deaf, and the chronically ill. Why? Because, as the president of the East German Conference wrote in the German equivalent of the *Adventist Review* after Hitler's ascendancy in 1933, the Christian welcomes Hitler, a "nondrinker, nonsmoker, and vegetarian," for his defense of "morality and order, incorruptibility and justice in the government." Long after Hitler had invaded Austria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, the Morning Watch Calendar for April 20, 1940, celebrated Hitler's 51st birthday with a long encomium to the Fuhrer as a moral exemplar:

> The unshakable faith of Adolf Hitler allowed him to do great deeds. . . . In Christian humility, at important times when he could celebrate with his people, he gave God in Heaven honor and recognized his dependence upon God's blessings. This humility has made him great, and this greatness was the source of blessing, from which he always gave for his people.[9]

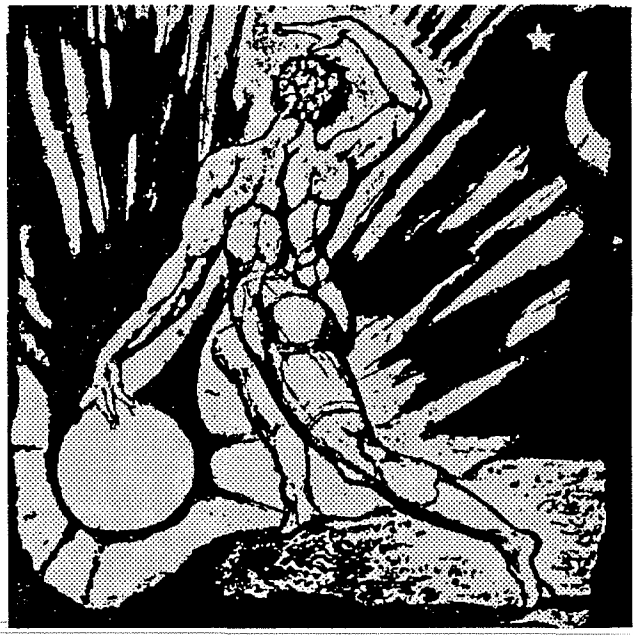
How might the Second Advent more appropriately be related to moral action? This question has recently become more acute as Adventists, somewhat to their surprise, have become more prominent and powerful. When Loma Linda University performed unprecedented heart transplants, the world media asked Loma Linda physicians and ethicists, "What is the relationship between these operations and your religion—the fact that you are Adventists?"

As Adventists assume more political power in developing countries, the public wonders if Adventists have a social ethic. "Does your view of the Second Advent affect how you think institutions in society, including government, ought to relate to one another?" is a relevant question asked of the Adventist who became prime minister of Uganda, the Adventists who entered the ruling cabinets of Barbados and Jamaica, the Adventists elected members of parliaments in various independent countries of the South Pacific, and the Adventists who organized the opposition New People's Party in the country of Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides).[10]

Can an apocalyptic consciousness possibly be relevant to upwardly mobile Seventh-day Adventists—in both the United States and the third world—who are gaining influence and power? These Adventists, after all, are clearly not Millerites. The Second Advent is, for them, decidedly not in the present, but in the future. These Adventists are not oppressed. Every day they see the providence of God pouring out blessings on their work and lives. What does Patmos have to do with Loma Linda; or Kingston, Jamaica; or Papua New Guinea?

The fact is that many scholars now believe that the congregations to whom the Apocalypse of John was first directed were not enduring physical persecution, but experiencing relative deprivation.

Members were not always able to join Jew-



ish synagogue communities or Roman social and commercial guilds. Early Christians may have felt themselves marginal, but few were actually enduring pain.

Some scholars go further and believe that the Apocalypse was written to arouse wealthy congregations, such as Laodicea, who may have been too ready to accommodate to their immediate social and political environment. Far from inviting his readers into a moral quietism, John saved his most severe scorn for the moral torpor of social-climbers, ready to prostitute themselves with corrupt groups rather than challenge institutional evil.

John, then, wanted not simply to comfort the fragile, but to confront the upwardly mobile, to expand the moral perceptions of the Christians of Asia Minor, to take Christians preoccupied with exclusions from guilds and thrust them into a universal controversy between good and evil.[11]

An Adventist social ethic can draw on the theological resources available to all Christians. But what would happen if we did not subordinate the importance of the Second Advent to other Christian affirmations, such as the doctrines of the church, sanctification, or Creation? What are the implications of constructing an ethic from the perspective of the Second Advent, specifically a Second Advent experienced within an apocalyptic consciousness?

Judging Institutions

First, it is not an ethic simply for individuals. It is also an ethic concerned about the behavior of institutions—a social ethic. It is true that the picture of last-day events in the apocalyptic portions of Scripture includes a resurrection of persons with their bodies, emphasizing their individuality, as well as the relevance of their actions now, as individuals, to their ultimate destiny. But John's reference to Babylon and the kings who are judged at the last day suggests that, in the apocalyptic consciousness, corporate powers are held morally responsible for their present actions.

Adela Yarbro Collins is certain that the symbols of the Apocalypse play distinctly moral roles. "Any reader in the Mediterranean world in John's time, when reading the words, 'and authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it' . . . would think of Rome."[12]

The founders of the Seventh-day Adventist movement also believed that the symbols of Revelation referred to oppressive corporate powers, both private and public. Ellen White makes the case for the abolitionist attack on slavery in apocalyptic terms:

> God will restrain his anger but a little longer. His anger burns against this nation, and especially against the religious bodies who have sanctioned, and have themselves engaged in this terrible merchandise.
>
> God's anger will not cease until he has caused the land of light to drink the dregs of the cup of his fury, and until he has rewarded unto Babylon double. . . . All the sins of the slave will be visited upon the master.[13]

While Ellen White identified a slave-owning United States with Babylon, James White condemned pre-emancipation America as having the heart and voice of the dragon of Revelation. The nation's

> outward appearance and profession is the most pure, peaceful, and harmless, possible. It professes to guarantee to every man liberty and the pursuit of happiness in temporal things, and freedom in matters of religion; yet about four millions of human beings are held by the Southern States of this nation in the most abject and cruel bondage and servitude, and the theological bodies of the land have adopted a creed-power, which is as inexorable and tyrannical as is possible to bring to bear upon the consciences of men. Verily with all its lamblike appearance and profession, it has the heart and voice of a dragon; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.[14]

Uriah Smith, James White's successor as editor of the *Review*, kept up the condemnation of corporate powers in apocalyptic terms, pointing to "the pulpits supporting slavery" as "the white-washed villainy of many of the pulpits of our land" as evidence that "the dragonic spirit of this nation has of late years developed itself in accordance with the prophecy" of Revelation 13.[15]

Adventist professionals and office-holders today should realize that they are not only responsible for their actions as individuals. If they are faithful to the apocalyptic consciousness of Scripture and their Seventh-day Adventist forebears, they will regard the actions of the institutions of which they are a part as having great moral import.

It is not just a question of whether individuals stop smoking—and thereby stop harming those around them. It is also a question of confronting powerful multinational corporations and friendly governments (such as the United States), institutions working together trying to increase worldwide smoking among women and children, and soaring death rates—10 million a year by 2020. It is important that a person avoid conflicts of interest in managing medical centers in Adventist Health Systems/U.S.; but it is also important that the system itself act responsibly in society to provide health care—a responsibility that includes working to make sure that those who have the least resources can somehow obtain a decent minimum level of care.

Transforming Society

Second, any ethic from the perspective of an apocalyptic consciousness is comfortable with change, radical change, in the institutions of society, including government. The Great Day of the Lord will overturn society. An ethic in anticipation of that event would not be surprised to see institutions transformed. From the standpoint of an apocalyptic consciousness, the creation is in turmoil and God must act dramatically to overturn oppressing, wicked powers disrupting his reign of justice and goodness.

Throughout the history of Christianity, apocalyptic groups have been in the forefront of change. During the Middle Ages, in what is now the Netherlands and Belgium, millenarian visionaries led mass movements for change in society. During the English civil war, apocalyptic sects, such as the Fifth Monarchy Men, made the most radical proposals for transforming politics.

In 19th-century America, those who set out to overthrow slavery, intemperance, and prostitution were often those who lived in expectation of the Second Advent. According to Ernest Sandeen,

> when the millenarian argued that the perfect society of the millennium would be created only by the cataclysmic return of Christ, he was suggesting different means, not different ends.[16]

Many of the early Seventh-day Adventist leaders had been part of the religiously motivated social reform movements to which Sandeen refers. During the time they were establishing the new denomination, they remained impatient with the slowness of change in the 19th-century American political system, particularly its reluctance to officially outlaw slavery. After Abraham Lincoln declared, in his first inaugural speech, "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists," Uriah Smith, as editor of the *Review*, seemed to threaten the sitting president with death if he did not immediately change the American legal order regarding slavery.

> He has to stand up against the "enthusiasm for freedom" which reigns in nearly twenty millions of hearts in the free North, and against the prayers of four millions of oppressed and suffering slaves. If he continues to resist all these, in refusing to take those steps which a sound policy, the principles of humanity, and the salvation of the country, demand, it must be from an infatuation

akin to that which of old brought Pharaoh to an untimely end.[17]

As Seventh-day Adventists spread around the world, they, like other Protestant missionary groups, deliberately set out to transform not only religious ritual, but also social practice. For better or worse, Adventists, through their schools, hospitals, and dietary programs, were even more ambitious and successful than other denominations in revolutionizing every aspect of their converts' culture. And for Adventists, the more sweeping and rapid the changes, the better.

If Adventists were to take seriously a social ethic drawn from the apocalyptic consciousness seen in Scripture and in their own heritage, they would have a hard time simply supporting the status quo in their societies. In totalitarian societies of either the left or the right, they would work, however possible, for fundamental transformation.

That is what the True and Free Adventists (Sabbathkeepers unrecognized by the government), did in the Soviet Union. During the regimes of Stalin, Krushchev, and Brezhnev, they were repeatedly imprisoned by Soviet authorities for not bearing arms, for refusing to work or attend school on Saturdays, and for insisting on speaking out in defense of human rights. State power, True and Free Adventists said, should not dictate faith and religion. When state power establishes either a state religion or state atheism, it has become the beast of Revelation.

These Sabbathkeeping Adventists persistently demanded that the Soviets at least live up to their own constitutional provisions protecting some religious liberty. Their underground printing presses published materials for Alexander Solzhenitsyn, as well as publishing their own ringing defenses of such well-known human-rights activists as Alexander Ginzburg, Yuri Orlov, and Anatoly Sharansky. They assisted these activists in establishing the initial Helsinki Watch human-rights committee.[18]

In relatively more open countries, Adventists with a social ethic based on an apocalyptic consciousness work for reform, as did the early Adventists in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand.[19] In no country can Adventists give their ultimate loyalty to any institution.

Confronting the Oppressor

Third, a social ethic drawing on apocalyptic would decide what changes to pursue in society on the basis of what policies served justice and freedom from oppression. Throughout the Apocalypse we read condemnations of unjust and oppressive political, commercial, and military powers. In chapters 13, 17, and 18, not only will the beast/Rome be punished, the whore/Babylon/Rome will be burned and her flesh eaten as punishment for her present, physical oppression. The "kings of the earth" who have been seduced by her power are doomed. So also are "the merchants of the earth"; those "great men of the earth" who have "waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies,"[20] and the ship owners, who "were made rich . . . by reason of her costliness."[21] These doomed merchants and ship owners are so perverse that they weep because "no one buys their cargo any more," including "slaves, that is, human souls."[22]

It is no wonder that a recent book by Allan Boesak, who has headed the colored Reform Church in South Africa and the United Democratic Front, is a commentary on the Apocalypse, entitled *Comfort and Protest.* It is no wonder that in it Boesak describes John the Revelator as "this banned pastor of the church," and characterizes the Apocalypse as "protest literature," filled with "explicit political criticism."[23] Boesak sees the New Jerusalem as a city

where our children shall live to bear children and not die untimely, where we shall build homes

> and live in them without fear of being driven out by war or influx control or the Group Areas Act, where there shall be peace so that no one will "hurt or destroy."[24]

When one reads chapter after chapter filled with condemnations of injustice and oppression, one is not surprised to read in Gustavo Guttierez' landmark *Theology of Liberation* that "eschatology is not just one more element of Christianity, but the very key to understanding the Christian faith."[25]

Far from providing an escape from moral engagement, John's Apocalypse is a call to arms; not to physical warfare, but to a fundamental revolt, nevertheless. Those immersed in the Apocalypse are drawn into a condemnation of the evil empire, its oppression, its ostentatious wealth, its blasphemous pretension to ultimate authority. The taunts and threats of the Apocalypse carry out surprise attacks, execute frontal assault. Its metaphors strip Rome of its glamor, attraction, and legitimacy, enlisting the reader in a revolution of the imagination against the oppressor.

Some contemporary Adventists, like Dr. Samson Kisekka, the leading Adventist layman who kept the Adventist Church alive in Uganda during the time of Idi Amin, have even understood their religious and moral commitments to demand that they participate in political revolts against oppression. At a time when innocents were being slaughtered, Dr. Kisekka helped lead the successful revolution that put the present government in power. After the revolt, he became Uganda's prime minister.[26]

Far from providing an escape from moral engagement, John's Apocalypse is a call to arms. . . [to] a fundamental revolt. . . . Those immersed in the Apocalypse are drawn into a condemnation of the evil empire.

Adventists in positions of power, acting according to an apocalyptically formed social ethic, would not work to support the economically and politically powerful, but the economically and politically deprived. Sometimes the powerful are executives in multinational corporations, sometimes colonels in the army, sometimes party members in one-party states. Specific policies will vary according to time and place. But whether in East or West, whether in the first- and second-world countries of the North, or third- and fourth-world countries of the South, Adventists faithful to the apocalyptic consciousness will exercise a preference for the weak, the vulnerable, and the destitute.

Entering the City of God

Finally, a social ethic from the perspective of the Second Advent is an ethic of expanding vision and imagination. It is a vision that begins with an ending; not an ending like some black hole of history—after the Second Coming, nothing at all.

The Second Advent inaugurates a time beyond the end. The Second Advent is not an ending like the dropping of the stage curtain; it is like the climax of the play, a commencement, a passage from one era to the next. Just as the special, final day of the week, the Sabbath, is an ending that does not destroy the week that follows, so the Second Advent is the culmination of history, not its annihilation.

Scripture portrays the risen Christ himself, following the Resurrection, maintaining his human identity in heaven. With the Second

Advent there is not only crisis but continuity.

Adventist views of the body and health have always assumed that there will be some concrete continuity between this time and that which follows the Second Advent. In their earliest days, Adventists abstained from tea, coffee, and especially tobacco, because they expected to step directly from this world into heaven. They could not conceive of polluting bodies on the verge of translation. Today, Adventist young people are taught that they must treat their bodies as the temples of God, and their talents as divine gifts, partly because they must be ready to enter, after the Second Advent, directly into heaven.

Consequently, a social ethic fueled by an apocalyptic consciousness will not simply work to end oppression and injustice. A social ethic expanded by the apocalyptic vision will not just rupture society—condemning injustice and fighting to throw off the shackles of oppression. The most powerful word of the apocalyptic is not denunciation, but annunciation.[27] Even more than proclaiming the end of evil, apocalyptic evokes the good. The Apocalypse of John does not simply cast evil into the bottomless pit, into the lake of fire. Its dazzling color and music of goodness allure us, alienating our affections from horrifying images of evil. Apocalyptic not only expands moral perceptions, it ignites the passions. We do not merely identify and evaluate; we love goodness and hate evil.[28]

The social ethic emerging from an apocalyptic consciousness glimpses a time beyond the end. Apocalyptic fulfills what Walter Brueggemann calls the "ministry of imagination," whose vocation is "to keep on conjuring and proposing alternative futures."[29] Here we find the ultimate mission of the remnant.

The work of the remnant is not to be the cause, and the Second Advent obediently to be the effect. The relation of the remnant to the Second Advent is part to whole, microcosm to macrocosm. The remnant is not to bring about the Second Advent, it is to envision it in both words and deeds. The remnant is to embody in present moments of protest and joy the Great Day of the Lord.

When we oppose tyranny, we point to that final liberation. When we act on behalf of the weak and the destitute, we signal the coming of that new, just society. When we create communities of freedom and fellowship, we invite others to experience that City whose coming wipes away all tears. Social reform does not coerce the arrival of the City of God. Moments of social reform are enactments of that future, ideal civilization. They make the invisible visible. Social reform is a sacrament of the Second Advent.

Apocalyptic evokes a vision of a social ideal—a holy city filled with gold and precious jewels, a society of justice and harmony, where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."[30] With an apocalyptic consciousness, we step from the prosaic order of tyranny into surprising, liberating poetry. We enter the City of God.

Notes and References

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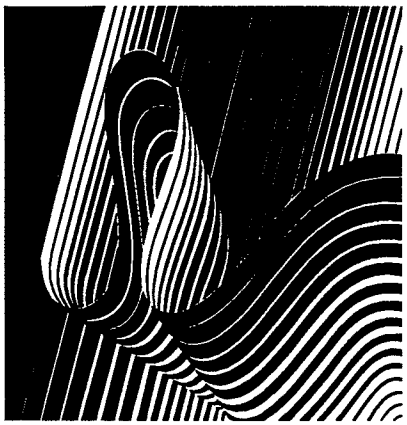

Joyce Cary's Creative Imagination
Living Real: Imagination for Life

Reviewed by Robert P. Dunn

Joyce Cary's Creative Imagination. Edwin Earnest Christian. American University Studies. Series IV: English Language and Literature, Vol. 68. Peter Lang: New York, 1988.

Christian's book on Joyce Cary gives evidence of the surprising maturity of recent literary criticism by Seventh-day Adventists. Thirty years ago Adventist literature teachers tended to stick to the business of teaching. Such scholarly activity as they practiced was mainly employed to deflect the attacks of Ellen White supporters who proclaimed the danger of the imagination to moral and spiritual stability. The difficulty in the fundamentalist attitude was that it gave insufficient attention to the importance of the imagination in ordinary life, and students not infrequently thought that the church frowned on creativity altogether.

Although the author was trained in Adventist schools, his agenda does not include reflection on the development of Adventist attitudes toward literature—and indeed he does not have much to say about literary theory at all. Instead, the book focuses on the importance of creative imagination for the 20th-century Anglo-Irish writer Joyce Cary. Yet Adventists who read the volume can see, through Cary's characters and Professor Christian's explanations, how practical and vital the imagination really is. Indeed, the approach need not be limited to Cary; it can be generalized to any author who respects the independence of his or her characters.

The research that culminated in this volume began in a master's seminar Professor Christian took under Dr. Ottilie Stafford at Loma Linda University Riverside. He testifies to her influence in his Acknowledgements when he says that she was "the best teacher I ever had." Would that every student who read literature in Adventist classrooms were able to translate that experience so meaningfully to the challenges of living as Christian has done. The book is not only the best defense that can be presented against Ellen White fundamentalists, it is also the best response that can be made to those secular critics whose insights do not wear well outside the library or the study.

Professor Christian says that for Joyce Cary, creative imagination is "'the fundamental human faculty by which man shapes and changes his world'" (p. 1). Although he does not mention it, his approach—and Cary's—seems compatible with recent ideological criticism, which holds that a work of art is not simply

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an artifact to be admired, but a power that actively seeks to change the world. His purpose is to show how Cary's characters live well (and sometimes ill) through the use or misuse of this faculty. This criticism is exciting. It not only makes one wish to read the author recommended, but also to see how any novel or poem can help you live better.

For example, Gulley Jimson in *The Horse's Mouth*, Cary's most popular work, attempts to be a serious artist in a society that does not recognize his talent. How should such a person deal with critics or with those who ignore his work? Christian writes:

> Jimson understands why his art is not appreciated. He sees the creative nature of life and enjoys it, knowing that fighting it is impossible. "Whole point is, no justice possible because of freedom," Cary writes. "But life is a gift" (MS. Cary 81/fol. 61). Gully Jimson sees that he must create his own destiny (p. 168).

How Jimson creates that destiny is what the novel is all about, and Christian does a fine job explaining the process. Many good Adventist students inclined to art, music, or literature would do well to read such a novel and reflect on how they can best nurture their own talents in a philistine society.

Cary does not deal with artists and obviously creative types. Many of the most interesting characters are the blacks and missionaries in the African novels. Too often, educated people fail to notice the creative abilities and needs of those apparently less educated. A prospective missionary would do well to read one of these.

Throughout the Cary corpus, a range of characters deal with life in unusual ways. There is Rose Venn, in *The Moonlight*, whose creative energies are spent trying "'to make order in the world, to make her sisters live what seemed to her good, dignified, worthy, happy lives'" (p. 108). There is Nina Nimmo-Latter, of the second trilogy, whose "special artistry is seen in her ability to adapt to misfortune. She does not like to act, she does not want to force herself on the world, but if change comes she accepts it and survives" (pp. 199, 200). In other words, Cary shows how all kinds of people use creative imagination to create lives for themselves.

I must confess that before reading Professor Christian's work, I had not known much about Joyce Cary. His writing induced me to take Cary more seriously, and his criticism has informed my own attempt to mark out the value of the imagination—artistic and otherwise—in a church that too often seems not to value it.

The only criticism I would make is that there are a number of annoying misspellings. Yet this is a minor complaint; the book is well worth your time.

Poverty and Wealth in James
James: An Epistle for the Poor

Reviewed by Gosnell Yorke

Poverty and Wealth in James. Pedrito Maynard-Reid. 136 pp. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987. $8.95 (paper).

Is the Book of James an epistle of straw, as Martin Luther called it? Hardly. Is it a legalistic disfigurement of Paul's beautiful theology of justification by faith in Jesus Christ? Not in the least. For far too long (in Protestant circles, at least), the Epistle of James has been relegated to the periphery of New Testament theology and ethics. Martin Luther has had no small part in this. His rather individualistic approach to the doctrine of righteousness by faith, which he considered central to New Testament theology in general and Pauline theology in particular, led him to write off James as nothing but an epistle of straw. After all, does not James make outlandish (and seemingly heretical) claims such as faith without works is dead (2:17)? And that one is justified not by faith alone but by works as well (2:24)?

A book like *Poverty and Wealth* comes as a welcome corrective to Luther's view, although that was not the author's primary objective or even his stated purpose. Based on a doctoral dissertation submitted in the early 1980s to the Theological Seminary at Andrews University, Maynard-Reid's book illustrates very well what happens when James is allowed to speak on its own terms. By situating the Epistle within the much larger context of the socio-historical and geo-political world of its time (mainly Syro-Palestine), Maynard-Reid shares with us a perspective on James that is refreshing, revealing, and perhaps, for some, even revolutionary.

For Maynard-Reid, the larger context of James is the Old Testament and Intertestamental literature, first-century Jewish life, and the New Testament as a whole. Under the rubric of Old Testament literature, he includes the premonarchial and monarchial periods, the wisdom literature, and the Psalms; under that of Intertestamental literature, he discusses briefly and mainly the books of I Enoch and Sirach; and under that of first-century Jewish life, he surveys the Palestinian, diasporan, and sectarian situation. In the New Testament, he draws our attention to

Matthew, Luke's two-volume work (the Gospel and Acts), and the Pauline corpus (in fact, the Corinthian correspondence).

This commendable attempt to situate James within a broad context is both the major strength and one of the minor weaknesses of the work. It is a major strength in that it gives us a glimpse of the much larger picture. But, I am afraid, it is only a glimpse. In a work of this length (only 131 pages with notes and excluding the one index), Maynard-Reid can give us only a relatively superficial exposure to the relevant literature. With regard to the Hellenistic tradition, for example, Book 8 of *The Republic* would have been a valuable source—one in which Plato not only describes and decries democracy as a degenerate form of aristocracy, but also one in which he disparages the poor and adulates the rich.

In terms of the socio-economic conditions of Palestine during the first three centuries A.D. (or C. E.), Gildas Hamel's more recent work can now be consulted with much profit as well. (See *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine, First Three Centuries CE.* [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989]).

Instead of pitting James against Paul (as is the habit of some scholars), Maynard-Reid uses a more contemporary socio-historical approach to the text. In particular, he draws our attention to James' apparent preoccupation with the same issue of poverty and plenty within the community he addresses; and the ecclesiological and ethical implications that follow and flow from it.

In four tightly reasoned chapters, the author takes us through the economics of the Epistle by focusing on 1:9-11; 2:1-13; 4:13-17; and 5:1-6. And in each case, he shows us that James exhibits a preferential option for the poor. Reference is made, for example, to "the author's [James'] sensitivity to the trials of the poor and his censoriousness of the rich" (p. 48). For James, the rich include the well-dressed and the well-fed, such as landed proprietors, itinerant merchants, and profit-loving agriculturalists—those for whom the many exploited tenant farmers in Palestine used to till and dig "to fill *one* 'single belly'" (p. 86).

Throughout the work, Maynard-Reid rightly urges us to resist the temptation to spiritualize and/or privatize away notions of rich and poor as they appear in the four passages under study. For him, the rich in James do not constitute those who are rich in faith or anything of the sort. Rather, they point to the avaricious and the arrogant—those who know how to exploit and oppress others for economic advantage.

Similarly, the poor refer not to those who are merely or mainly poor in spirit as Matthew, for example, would have it (See Matthew 5:3-5). In short, the rich in James point to the rich; and the poor, to the poor. Further, the rich are admonished to keep their theology and ethics, belief and behavior, faith and works together. By insisting that faith without works is dead (2:17), James, the half-brother of Jesus, is saying no more than that the *faith* that works is the faith that *works*—and for the benefit of the indigent believer.

After carefully analyzing chapter 5:1-6, this is essentially how Maynard-Reid ends the sixth and final chapter of his book. The book just stops, and the reader feels somewhat let down.

Personally, I would have loved to see a concluding chapter, with some provocative comments on how an epistle like James can be made relevant to our own time; one in which the "Third World" (more correctly, the Two-Thirds World) is kept in a state of economic dependency *vis-à-vis* the "First World."

Maynard-Reid, from the "Third World" himself (Jamaica), could have ventured to tell us what James would have said about our contemporary situation. According to the liberation theologians of Latin America, a mere handful of nations (and Christians) are filthy rich because of the fact that the vast majority of others are dirt poor.

Overall, Maynard-Reid's book is definitely worth having. Thank goodness, one doesn't have to be rich to purchase it.

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We Have Tomorrow
A History of Black Adventist Americans

Reviewed by Susan M. F. Willoughby

We Have Tomorrow—The Story of American Seventh-day Adventists With an African Heritage, Louis B. Reynolds. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1984. 383 pages (edited by Raymond H. Woolsey).

During its April 7-9, 1969, meeting, a Regional Advisory Committee in Miami, Florida, recommended "that the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) give study to the establishment of a grant for the development and publication of a book dealing with the history of the work among the Negro minority" (p. 367). The committee further recommended that L. B. Reynolds, associate secretary in the Ministerial Department of the General Conference, be asked to research and write such a book. *We Have Tomorrow—The Story of American Seventh-day Adventists With an African Heritage* was the product.

In this age when "diversity" is the buzz word in the denomination, it is timely that this book, which has been off the press for a while, be reviewed.

Reynolds gathers under special topics his extensive review of selected segments of important achievements or contributions of blacks, for example: "Infants in the Spring"; "Shadow and Substance"; "The Right Arm." He documents black involvement in the "work" from 1863 to 1983. Within themes, Reynolds gives a chronological account. However, there are several noncontextual emphases that will be included in this review.

This book makes reference and gives credit to persons other than those of African heritage who sacrificed in the carrying of the third angel's message and "the principles of Christian education to the people of the South." Reynolds notes that, in 1863, the 5,000 Adventist members were for the most part poor, and their limited holdings seemed scarcely equal to the great things they set out to do. But leaders (all white) did not use this as an excuse to refrain from working for blacks, most of whom were ex-slaves in the South.

In a statement entitled "Slavery and the War," published in 1863, Ellen White declared that "God Himself was bringing judgment against America for the high crime of slavery." As Reynolds highlights, the tragic Civil War, which facilitated the freeing of the slaves, could be called the catalyst for the beginnings of the black Advent work. It was God's method of preparing the way for the gospel of salvation to be heralded throughout the South.

Reynolds emphasizes the point that President Lincoln's signing of the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, effective January 1863, does not mean that freedom for blacks was a given. He aptly compares the emancipation of the slaves to the freedom of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt.

Jennie B. Allison embraced the opportunities created by that emancipation. As far as can be ascertained, she was the first black woman to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is fascinating to learn that she graduated from high school at age 77. She was 95 years old when she died in 1953 (p. 101).

The South has been looked upon as the cradle of the gospel work among blacks. Churches, church schools—both elementary and secondary schools—seem to have begun there, eventually reaching toward the North. The only Adventist black college is also located in the South.

For Adventists, the close of the Civil War provided a clear signal to begin evangelism among the black population of the United States, most of whom were ex-slaves and lived in the South. Heretofore,

> "Plantation owners had held unchallenged power over Negro field hands and could deny them conversations with anyone whose motives might be suspect. This rendered a gospel mission to the captive laborers almost impossible" (p. 142).

Freedom, however, was not an unmixed blessing. The "angry scar" had not yet healed, and Reynolds' work asks if it is still "itching" among God's people. For example, Reynolds mentions that, in the 1970s, only five black ministers were assigned to non-black churches either as pastors or assistant pastors.

The basic message that Reynolds conveys is how crucial it is to create environments for the expression of freedom and maximum attainment. He has developed this message through several themes that will undoubtedly be discussed for a long time.

Church Growth. Two of Reynolds' mini-case studies include feats of soul-winning. He tells of E. E. Cleveland's leading "more than nine thousand persons to Christ in thirty-six years of ministry" (p. 262). He also cites the case of Frederick S. Keitts, who, in 1923, held a six-week tent meeting in New Orleans. When the meetings were over, he baptized more than 100 converts. "Fifty years later all could be accounted for—either they were still in the church or had died in the faith" (p. 242).

Heritage of Dedication. Reynolds cites the fact that the grandfa-

ther and father of the recently retired president of the North American Division of the General Conference, Charles E. Bradford, were also ordained Adventist ministers (p. 257). Reynolds also calls attention to 1902 when many well-qualified black medical and educational personnel became ambassadors to the world.

Organization. Reynolds recognizes the importance of checks and balances by referring to Ellen White's concern that Sabbath school offerings collected in 1896 for the Southern work were appropriated for other denominational work. "The whole incident made clear the urgent need for church reorganization" (p. 87). This reorganization took place in 1901, when all interests were drawn together into the General Conference and its departments.

> It seems that before reorganization of the work of the General Conference in 1901, the International Sabbath School Association . . . directed the Sabbath Schools (p. 86).

Another type of reorganization occurred in 1944—reorganization into separate conferences, resulting in phenomenal growth and development for the black work.

Hope. Reynolds highlights blacks who were first: first physician, first missionary, first Ph.D., et cetera. He shows that black Adventists were not isolated. He cites a black Adventist leader greeting the President of the United States, and recounts how a judge (because of his firsthand experience with Adventists' use of hydrotherapy and of vegetarian meals) assisted Oakwood College's admission to the United Negro College Fund (p. 149).

Incidentally, in highlighting Oakwood College, Reynolds discusses few black graduates of other Adventist colleges. Reynolds is also biased in his treatment of black Adventist leaders. For example, one leader's contribution is extolled for a page, while another leader's equivalent contribution is summarized in a sentence or two.

This book may be a milestone, but, as Dr. Reynolds himself once admitted, it is not the full story of black Adventism in North America. For instance, much needs to be written about the growth of the black work in Canada, and inner-city work all over the United States. Also, although this book describes some contributions of Americans of West Indian descent, no history exists that relates the development of Adventism in the Caribbean.

This book effectively brings to light many of the contributions of blacks. It is a very readable work, and may well be used as a springboard for discussion in human relations committees in Adventist colleges and other institutions. It will appeal to a variety of readers—to young people who need to learn, or older people who need to be reminded, of the contributions of black Adventists.

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