Spectrum

The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Ranch Apocalypse

GOD, GUNS, AND ROCK 'N' ROLL

THE BRITISH CONNECTION

FROM HARVARD LAW TO WACO

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
SEVEN RESPONSES

DAY AT THE L.A.
COURTHOUSE

JOB'S PASSION FOR
GOD'S PRESENCE

THE GREAT BILLBOARD
CONTROVERSY

May 1993
Volume 23, Number 1

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Spectrum

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We Didn't Start the Fire But the Tinder Was Ours

Until their February shootout with law-enforcement officers, I had never heard of the Branch Davidians. Shepherd's Rods were familiar enough, but who were these people?

Despite the easy familiarity with which denominational spokespersons on network television referred to the church's long-standing problems with "Vernon," the world media has carefully disassociated the Branch Davidian Seventh-day Adventists from Seventh-day Adventists. That is still a relief. We *are* different. Seventh-day Adventists don't condone stockpiling weapons, drinking in the local bars, or carrying on polygamous marriages.

But then we began to learn more about the people who died at Ranch Apocalypse: sisters in their 20s from an Adventist family in California; a former student at Andrews University; young adults from Australia; several former ministerial students from Newbold College and their lifelong Adventist relatives; a younger brother of an active layman in Sligo church. These were not third-generation children of the Shepherd's Rods. Most estimates now say that 90 percent of those who died at Waco came directly from Seventh-day Adventist churches. This issue explores the extent to which they were us. Koresh set the flame, but we provided many of the materials.

The special section in this issue grapples with questions that will haunt Adventism for some time: How did Adventism contribute to this kind of tragedy, and what do we learn from the experience? Some Seventh-day Adventists no doubt blame immersion in the rock-and-roll culture, while others point to fundamentalist distortion of apocalyptic literature. Both are right.

What should give the greatest pause are the similarities between Koresh and Adventists—what both Koresh and Adventists feel in their bones: salvation arrives quickly, not slowly; God works most clearly in moments of crisis; the remnant's actions are the hinge of history; the majority of society will always remain hostile to the truth; loyalty to God may demand the ultimate sacrifice. Waco was the shadow side of this worldview. Other religious communities have their own darker side. Ours should not frighten us into rejecting everything we shared with Koresh. But it is our responsibility to learn also how not just our weaknesses but our strengths can be powerfully distorted. In this issue some have begun that task.

It will not be easy. During a recent visit to Battle Creek, I listened to a father talk of his son, a successful computer specialist, an active member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church until he joined Koresh in Waco, and a victim of the April 19 inferno. "If that is what religion does," the Adventist father told me, "I'm not sure I want to continue having any part of it."

Some Adventist congregations have already held memorial services; hopefully others will soon do so. *Spectrum* is not a congregation, but we dedicate this issue to all the families who lost relatives or friends in Waco, and to those whom they continue to remember with deep, unquenchable love.

Roy Branson

Although *Adventist Today* has no institutional, financial, or editorial relationship with *Spectrum* or the Association of Adventist Forums, we note with interest the arrival of this bi-monthly periodical of news and opinion. Its first issue is also devoted to Waco. Readers who wish to learn more about *Adventist Today* may look at the advertisement on the mailing wrap.

Letter From L.A.—A Day at the Court

An Adventist meets urban America at the trial of the four police officers charged with violating Rodney King's civil rights.

by Doug Marlow

As I approach the Edward R. Roybal Federal Building, our new federal court house at 255 East Temple, I am greeted by four silver men, 20 to 25 feet high and two inches thin, confronting each other at right angles, the sun starkly reflecting off their polished bodies filled with three- to four-inch holes. Their arms are reaching to each other's throats, and their mouths open in silent screams.

California Highway Patrol officers outside and U.S. marshals inside continually walk around monitoring everyone's activities. It is 5:30 Friday morning, April 9. The California Highway Patrol officers and U.S. marshals who constantly monitor activities in and outside the courthouse haven't arrived yet, but spectators have. I am already number 32 in line. According to an informal system worked out among the "regulars" viewing the trial, as each person arrives he or she receives a number. Through the day, a federal marshal calls out these numbers, and the people rotate through the courtroom. This being one of the final days of the trial, between 75 and 100 people have shown up. Those in front of and behind me include a free-lance film editor, a boy of 12, a professor of law, transients, a doctoral student in psychology, and an elderly woman in a lawn chair who needs assistance to walk.

At 7:00 a.m., the building opens. I, like the others in line, pass through the first of two metal detectors. Everyone heads for the cafeteria and coffee until 8:15 a.m. The first question on everyone's mind is whether there will be rioting. "I don't believe there will be any unrest whatsoever," says a man who calls himself Heavy D. Others say that they expect limited unrest depending on the verdict. Many others expect the unrest will come when the youths accused of beating Reginald Denny go to trial.

The press comes in for a lot of criticism. Joyce, a vivacious woman visiting the trial for the past five weeks, tells me, "I don't feel that the articles I have read have reflected any kind of reality I experienced in the courtroom. Not much of what I thought was significant was reported, although I didn't read many of the articles that have come out each day."

I walk up to an African-American male in his mid-30s, with a grey goatee and dreadlocks. I learn that his name is Mark, and that he's come down here to record history. When asked what it has been like for him these past few weeks, he replies, "Inside it is very educational, you know. The media gives you bits and pieces of what they want you to know." An elderly gentleman says, "I don't know why they think informing is the objective. TV is in the enter-

Doug Marlow, a graduate of Pacific Union College, is completing an M.A. in theology and a Ph.D. in clinical psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.

tainment business." A free-lance film editor delivers an authoritative, firsthand opinion: "The media is going to hell in a handbasket."

Hostility is also directed at the police. The most dramatic attack comes from a man who says that he rode with the Los Angeles Police Department three weeks before the riots last year. They were joking about how the X on the Malcolm X hats worn by young blacks makes a great target. A few feel the police have reason to be mad. This time they will be primary targets.

The news media seems to have a very different mood about this whole trial process than the few transients, senior citizens, and other observers. I am surprised at how uninvolved—even jovial—the media and technicians seem to be. There are the usual "Good mornings" as they wave their doughnuts at each other. Most of them express relief that this is almost over. When asked what it is like to be covering the trial, a CNN video operator says, "This is pretty boring stuff." While talking with reporter Greg LaMotte of CNN, we come upon his producer, who is irate because someone from headquarters is calling for a rewrite of the script and some overdubs. "This happens all the time," the technical woman standing by assures me.

At 8:15 a.m., one of the federal marshals calls out names and numbers for seating within the courtroom. There are no second chances. If the marshal calls a number and the person is not here, the person won't get into the courtroom. Finally, at 10:00 a.m., number 32 is called. Accompanied by a federal marshal, I attempt to pass through yet another metal detector into the courtroom. This one is so sensitive I have to remove the change from my pockets and take off my belt.

The experience inside the courtroom is strikingly different from the disorganized community outside. There is not a lot of emotion or feeling expressed by jurors, defendants, or anyone else in the courtroom. Twelve jurors and three alternates sit in a double row along the left wall. At the far end of the room the judge sits behind a bench. Five rows of benches for defendants, family, press, and observers are immediately inside the door, at the rear of the courtroom. The defendants sit in the front row of seats, dressed in suits and ties, listening intently to the monologue.

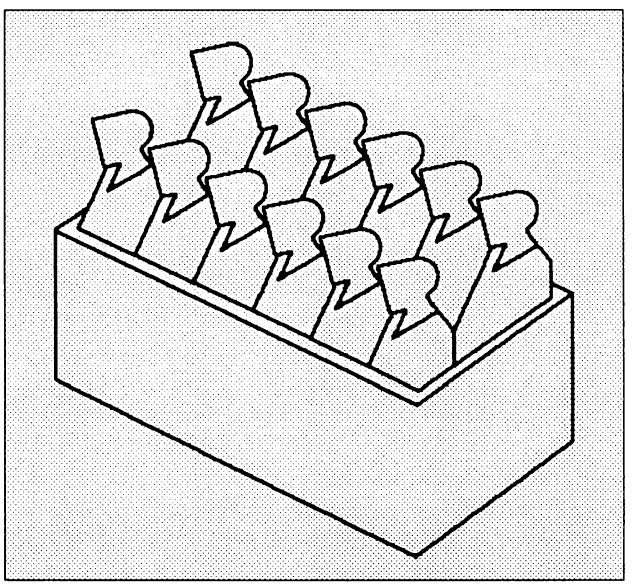
Michael Stone, Lawrence Powell's attorney, is already into the flow of his argument. He summarizes the medical testimony of the expert witnesses and tries to refute the testimony of others, especially that of Melanie Singer, another police officer. A replica of a human skull sits on the defense table, and Mr. Stone uses a police baton to show that, according to his position, there were no direct head blows. If there had been, more damage would have shown up. He states that the video did not show any head blows, but glancing blows to the arm and shoulder. Mr. Stone uses a high-tech computer simulation that shows a man of Mr. King's weight falling to the ground. Attorney Stone says the abrasions and gravel removed from Rodney King's face showed that the lacerations were from Mr. King hitting the ground and not from the baton blows.

Singer's testimony, according to Stone, is inherently unbelievable. Everyone sees things that never happened, but "all the fears of Melanie Singer will not turn fantasy into reality."

The jury's hardest and biggest duty, Stone says, is "to understand the perception of the officers." He even refers to the famous video, stating that since it was taken from across the street, it did not show the special relationships of the participants to the beating. He also makes a case against the eyewitness, saying, "It [the video] influences and discounts many of [them]."

Stone claims that there would have been no beating had it not been for Rodney King and his running from the law. He says Mr. King lied on the stand and had much to gain financially from not telling the truth. Mr. King had been drunk and had a motive for running away. His attempted escape had provoked the attack.

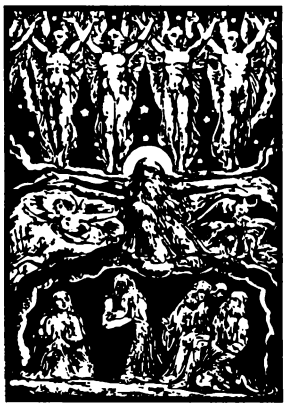
During the brief break in Stone's argument, a Hispanic youth sitting behind me says in a stage whisper, "The cops are gangsters; they're just bangin' for the government." Cynthia, a law professor sitting



beside me, questions Stone's entire line of defense, saying that it might serve to remind the jury of the injury done to Rodney King and to highlight his plight.

As he nears his closing, Stone states that the police officers' job was to bring Rodney King into custody. If King had been allowed to get up, even on his knees, he would have presented a threat to the officers. They needed to use more force to keep him down. If they did not do it, then they would not have solved the police problem—how to bring him in. The officers needed to decide which level of force would bring about their desired goals. "The force used," said Stone, "was ineffective. It was not powerful enough, because it did not bring him down fast enough."

On the way home from that long day of closing arguments, I puzzle over what had happened. I was still a long way from becoming part of the agony in the American experience that had produced the Rodney King beating. But perhaps today had been a beginning, the start of a pilgrimage toward involvement.



Job's Passion For God's Presence

Struggling with the mystery of innocent suffering: the subject of the spring 1993 Sabbath school lessons.

by Jerry Gladson

Epochs of faith, are epochs of fruitfulness; but epochs of unbelief, however glittering are barren of all permanent good.

—Goethe

The book of Job bewilders the reader. Its massive form, intricate literary patterns, and annoying repetition turn many away. But beneath its forbidding exterior an intense struggle with life's most perplexing questions goes on.

Job deals with how human suffering is understood in human experience and in the context of God's justice. How should one respond when disaster strikes? How should those around the sufferer react? What is God's role, if any, in human suffering? In what conceivable way can such pain serve the moral purpose of God? If there is a divine order, is not such uncalled-for suffering blatantly immoral?

None of these questions, including the larger issue of theodicy that lies behind them, receives a complete answer. Instead, Job experiences a vision of God—not unlike the prophets—that satisfies him by transcending his painful queries. It places the awful problem of suffering in the vivid light of the divine mystery and human limitation, along with an assurance of God's presence. But how does the divine vision respond to the dilemma of human suffering?

Let's try to clarify by reviewing briefly the major attempts to provide an adequate theodicy—all responses to a dilemma that runs something like this: If God is all-powerful, he is *able* to eradicate evil; and if God is perfectly loving, he will *want* to abolish it. Yet evil still exists. God is therefore either not all-powerful or not perfectly loving. Still worse, he could be both impotent and malicious!

Jerry Gladson, who received his B.A. from Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists and his Ph.D. in Old Testament from Vanderbilt University, wrote Who Said Life Is Fair? *(Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1985) from which this essay is taken. Gladson is vice president of the Association of Adventist Forums. The illustrations for this piece come from the series entitled* Illustrations of the Book of Job, *by William Blake.*

Inadequacies of Modern Theodicies

To explain evil as a fantasy, as some Eastern faiths do, not only sounds like a gigantic "cop out," but it in no way prepares one for the harsh realities dished out by life. If so significant a portion of human experience is illusion, how do we know that all of life, even the good moments, is not unreal?

The Augustinian freewill theodicies manage to trace evil eventually to the free moral choice of the creature and its attendant results, but they fail to tell us why God had to include evil in the range of choices in the first place. Could not the dichotomy have been between good and lesser good, rather than good and evil? Knowing the awful trail of woe that would inevitably follow from humankind's choice of evil, why did a wise and benevolent Creator put evil in the necessarily limited range of choice?

On the other hand, to assert with Irenaeus and his modern followers that our suffering and that of all creatures in the world is called for as a means to an end, namely, the creation of a better world beyond this one, leads us to question whether so much suffering is really required. Was it actually essential that six to 12 million Jews and other disfranchised peoples perish to further the eventual aims of this new world? Would not a far fewer have been sufficient? Remember Ivan's searching question to his brother Alyosha in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*?

> "If you knew that, in order to attain this [building human destiny], you would have to torture just one single creature, let's say the little girl who beat her chest so desperately in the outhouse, and that on her unavenged tears you could build that edifice, would you agree to do it?"[1]

Alyosha's answer—"No"—must be ours as well. The idea of climbing over the broken, mangled bodies of our fellow human beings to achieve a "better" world, even an eternal one, too deeply offends our sense of justice.

Nor does process theodicy help matters much more. It envisions God locked in a titanic struggle with chaos and evil against which his only weapon is divine persuasion. Our suffering is but a bit of residual cosmic chaos still embedded in reality. While process thought well accounts for the world of struggle and defeat, risk and victory, chaos and order, that takes place around us, the price it exacts—we are to surrender the omnipotence, or sovereign power of God—seems too high. Its God appears far removed from the one who upholds "the universe by his word of power" (Hebrews 1:3, RSV),[2] with whom "'all things are possible'" (Matthew 19:26). In process theodicy we trade the problem of theodicy for the problem of God.

A fifth approach, which is not so much a theodicy as a disposition, or attitude toward it. The tragic view pessimistically finds in the entire human phenomenon a tragedy: We are all fatally flawed, disposed by the very nature of things to suffer, often irrationally and cruelly. We are impotent. Our only response is to find some meaning in that which lies nearest at hand. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do with your might; for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

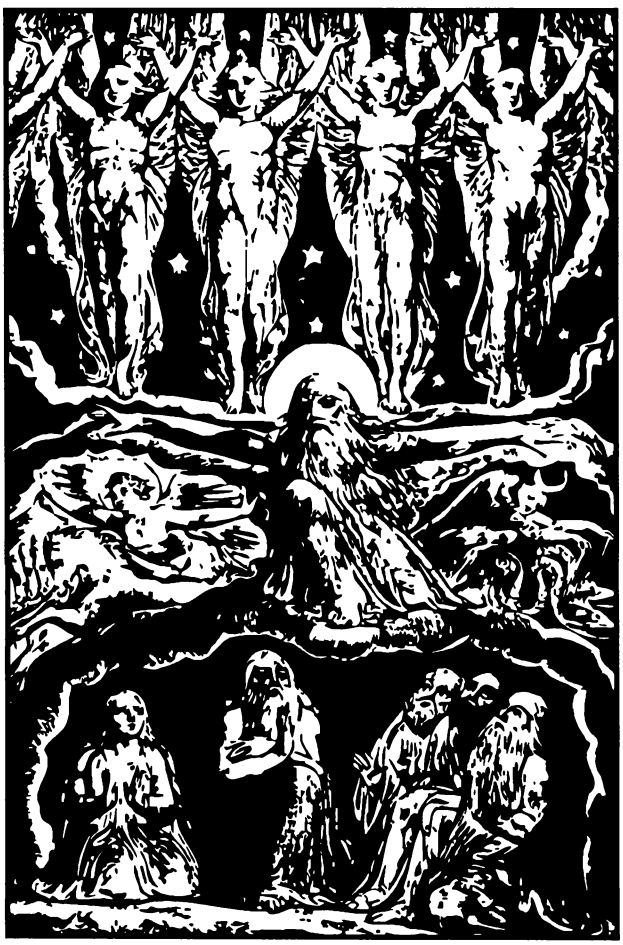
But isn't the "great controversy" approach often advocated by Seventh-day Adventists on the strength of Ellen White's account of the origin of evil, more decisive than all these other theodicies?

The great-controversy theme belongs to the freewill family of theodicies. It traces evil to the willful, rebellious choice of Satan in heaven. This defiance of God, and hence of the good, soon spread to other angels, and eventually to humankind. Because of his incredible power—far exceeding humanity's—Satan has even altered nature, releasing some of its devastat-

ing forces, such as storms and earthquakes.

Definitely improving the general freewill approach, it not only accounts for the problems occurring because of fateful human and superhuman choice, but also hints at some fascinating insights into natural evil. However, like other theodicies, it contains a difficulty that prevents final resolution. How does one account for the origin of evil? To locate the problem in the fall of a superhuman creature rather than a human one only transfers the issue from a human level to a heavenly plane, removing the possibility of solution even further from us. How did this perfect, wholly good, superhuman being come to choose that which his very nature intrinsically denied?

"Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given," concludes Ellen White.



When the morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy.

"It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it, is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin."[3]

We are left still with mystery.

The major theodicies thus ultimately fail. Job, by all accounts the most profound exploration of the question ever written, contains no final answer. Where does this leave us?

Modern Theodicies and the Book of Job

To conclude that major theodicies "fail" does not mean that they do not have any value. In fact, each of them embodies insights that shed light on the problem of evil. The tragic view, for example, reminds us of an inexplicable element of tragedy in the human condition. Process theodicy suggests that the proper understanding of theodicy may lie in a more precise clarification of what it means to declare God "all-powerful." Irenaean soul-making theodicy points to the necessity of a future dimension that will resolve matters tangled at present, while freewill theodicies properly stress the crucial role of human choice in unleashing the forces of evil upon the world. Each theory casts light, but none illumines the whole. When all is said and done, the problem of theodicy intractably remains.

The Bible as a whole also avoids a definitive response. It suggests a number of solutions: divine discipline in the form of suffering (Proverbs 3:11, 12); retribution upon human sin (Proverbs 21:7); vicarious suffering, which in some way benefits others (Isaiah 53:4-6); a resolution in the next life (2 Corinthians 4:17); the effects of supernatural evil ravaging the world (Mark 1:23-26; Ephesians 6:12, 13); and the divine presence in suffering (Job). While all these, like the major theodicies above, contain insights that apply to specific cases of suffering, the sacred writers put forth none of

them as the ultimate answer to theodicy.

The genius of Job is that it does not deny the value of responsible inquiry into the dilemma of suffering. In fact, the book allows various explanations to arise in the course of the tormented struggle that finally expends itself at the divine revelation. In most cases, these approaches are cast aside, not because they are false, but because they offer at best only partial explanations, inapplicable to Job's particular situation. Modern theories really accomplish little more. They too are incomplete, relevant to some situations but not to all.

In addition to a whole series of theodicies, then, the book of Job offers a divine appearance and bids us put our trust in God in the midst of inexplicable pain. Such a response, however, contains three important elements—the mystery of God, of human limit, and of divine Presence—which help us see the connection between trust in God and our suffering.

Mystery of God

The book of Job pre-empts a solution to the enigma of suffering by locating it in the mystery of God. To claim that suffering belongs to cosmic mystery would on first glance seem to give little comfort to someone wracked with the pain of multiple sclerosis or progeria. How, then, does the category "mystery" offer hope?

Normally we think of mystery as something hidden or secret, something left unexplained. Mystery teases, lures us on to discover its explanation. The word entered our language from the Greek, where it referred to the secret religious ceremonies of the mystery religions. The Bible, however, applied it to the secret counsel or purpose of a king, or by extension, God. The New Testament then transformed this concept by setting forth mystery as a divine secret long unknown but now revealed in Christ.

> Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings is made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith (Romans 16:25, 26).

In one sense, then, the biblical notion of mystery involves the strategic unfolding of God's plan for the world. As such it will always—at least in this life—remain partially hidden as well as partially revealed. Only at the end, looking back, will we be able to ascertain how God has worked in our behalf, how dark chapters of our lives have fitted into the grand design. The Christ-event has special significance in the mystery, not because it unveils all of God's plans, but because it discloses in a new way his essential character and intent. God stands displayed as the incarnate one, the fellow sufferer who joins humankind in its dilemma, whose sufferings redeem a fallen world in a way that could never have been true before. Christ's death and resurrection sets humanity right with God (Romans 4:23-25; 5:19) and momentarily exposes the core of divine mystery in a dazzling fashion, permanently etching it in the human consciousness.

Although God has in Christ revealed himself in a new way, still he remains shrouded in mystery. Even Paul, who wrote so beautifully of the divine mystery, finally exclaims, "How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (Romans 11:33). Divine mystery is bound up with the very being of God, placing him beyond human understanding. Therefore, in this world, "every act of unveiling must at the same time be an act of veiling; not until the final day of revelation will there be an unveiling in which there will be no veiling at all. Revelation in this age is always the disclosure of the *hidden* God."[4] This paradox, which belongs to the very essence of

God, means we shall understand some things, others we will not. But, by faith, those we do understand illumine those we do not.

Job, of course, lies before the Christ-event of the New Testament, but the essential character of the divine mystery it proclaims forms the necessary background to it. Revelation throughout Scripture means God discloses himself and his plan only by veiling his true glory at the same time. Luther, in fact, once spoke of the language of Scripture as the "swaddling clothes" in which Christ is laid.

Mystery lies at the heart of true religion. But its paradoxical character cuts like a two-edged

A Literary Outline of the Book of Job

More than most books, it is important to grasp the literary arrangement of Job. This may be a new thought to those who generally quote Scripture with little regard for literary context. Because random citation may support fundamentally incorrect ideas, one cannot afford the luxury of removing Jobian texts from their setting. Nor can we appeal to the exaggerated rhetoric of the characters in Job for doctrinal authority. The friends, to take but one of several examples, hold a rigid philosophy of suffering out of harmony with the general tenor of Scripture.

The literary framework consists of two prose narratives, the first of which sets forth the origin of Job's plight (chapter 1, 2), while the second and concluding one explains the character of his restoration (chapter 42:7-17).

Sandwiched between the prologue and epilogue comes the poetic dialogue (chapters 3-42:6). This poem looks at the whole matter from a human perspective: Why do the righteous suffer? What does one do when the order of life breaks up? Job the "patient" turns into Job the "impatient." Commencing on a cynical note (chapter 3), he moves from despair to desperation to a direct challenge of God himself (chapter 31:35). Job's friends, whose speeches alternate with his and conclude with Elihu's massive harangue (chapters 32-37), offer little consolation in their insistence that piety and prosperity belong together. Only in the majestic speeches of God (chapters 38-41) are matters brought to a climax. This divine revelation swallows up Job's anguish (chapter 42:1-6) and prepares the reader for the epilogue.

The prose epilogue (chapter 42:7-17) finds Job's fortunes graciously restored in spite of his own ambivalence and calmly brings the piece to an end.

So skillfully is the book constructed that throughout it the reader uncannily senses the cosmic and existential questions, and discerns—far more than the characters—that the only solution to Job's dilemma is found somehow in God.

A brief outline of the contents will help the reader to visualize the major elements of Job:

I. Prologue: The testing of Job (chapters 1, 2).
II. Dialogue between Job and his friends (chapters 3-31).
  A. Job's lament (chapter 3)
  B. First cycle of speeches
    1. Eliphaz and Job's response (chapters 4-7)
    2. Bildad and Job's response (chapters 8-10)
    3. Zophar and Job's response (chapters 11-14)
  C. Second cycle of speeches (chapters 15-21)
    1. Eliphaz and Job's response (chapters 15-17)
    2. Bildad and Job's response (chapters 18, 19).
    3. Zophar and Job's response (chapters 20, 21)
  D. Third cycle of speeches (chapters 22-28)
    1. Eliphaz and Job's response (chapters 22-24)
    2. Bildad and Job's response (chapters 25-28).
  E. Job's final defense (chapters 29-31)
III. The speeches of Elihu (chapters 32-37).
IV The divine speeches (chapters 38-42:6).
V Epilogue: The restoration of Job (chapters 42:7-17).

sword. In the book of Job, where we can discern several approaches to the divine mystery, the suffering Job fears the awful mystery of God (chapters 23:15; 31:23), while the friends neatly categorize it and enlist it on their side (chapter 5:9-16).

When we overemphasize the radical distance between God and humankind, it breeds skepticism, as we see in Ecclesiastes where divine providence appears to the author so deeply buried in secrecy that one cannot find it (cf. chapter 6:10-12). All of us know what it is like when others important to us do not explain their actions or give any clue as to what they plan to do next. We become suspicious, distrustful, even skeptical, of their intentions. Because God and his ways are hidden from normal observation, it is all too easy to conclude he is "distant," as in deism, or that he is nonexistent, as in atheism.

A few years ago the ABC television network presented a docudrama entitled *SOS Titanic*. The film told the story of the tragic sinking of the ocean liner *Titanic* in 1912. In the closing scene aboard the *Carpathia*, the British vessel that picked up the survivors from the icy grip of the north Atlantic, a woman sympathetically offered a tray of coffee and sandwiches to a bereaved cluster of widowed women with their children. Unresponsive, they preferred to gaze at the trackless ocean where tiny white icebergs dotted the cruel dark-blue water. The woman with the sandwiches broke the tense silence: "You must not lose faith in the Almighty. It was God's will—in his infinite love and mercy—that the ship go down." She was trying to be helpful.

The survivors ignored her. Finally, a nameless woman slowly looked back from the sea. "No coffee. No God either! God went down with the *Titanic*!"

But Job shows us divine mystery need not take us this far. Rightly understood, it leads to a deepened faith.

Mystery exists all around us—the mystery of life, genetics, language, human personality, and so on. Without it, life would quickly become boring, for the challenge would have disappeared. People attend schools, colleges, and universities because they want to push back the mystery of a certain field of knowledge. We cannot live without mystery. It will always be there.

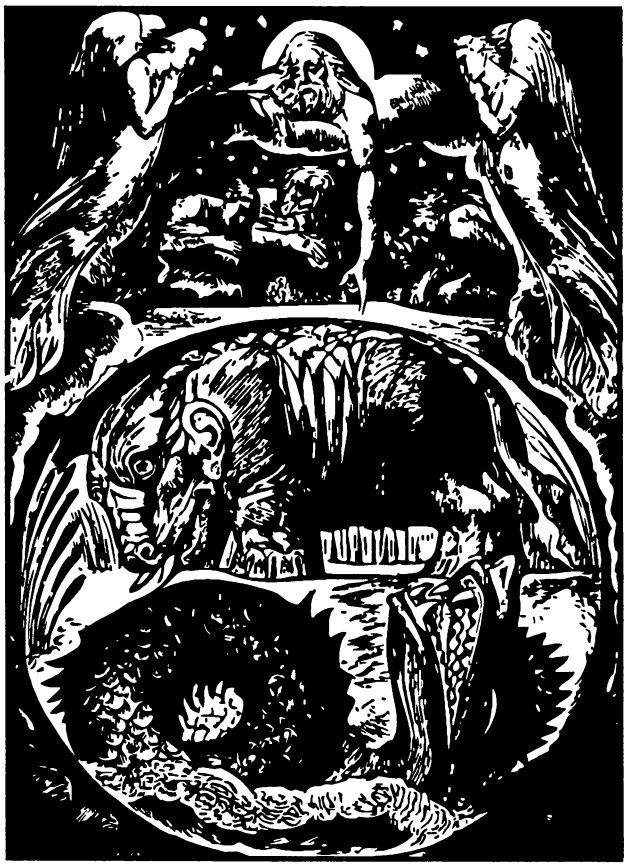
God, however, is the central mystery. He is the mystery that ends all others. If we find the world mysterious, is it any wonder we find ultimate reality even more so? "In the case of God," Gordon Kaufman reminds us, "we are not just speaking of a limit of experience; we are speaking of the *absolute limit*, the limit of all limits."[5] Because our understanding and dispositions are limited, God remains distanced from us. His distance, however, is not one of space or time, hence our scientific observation will never overcome it. Rather, as John Hick suggests, it is "epistemic." He means that God does not impose himself upon us without our desire for him to do so, without "an uncompelled response of faith."[6] A very ancient psalm, when referring to the exodus from Egypt, concurs: "Thy way was through the sea, thy path through the great waters; yet thy footprints were unseen" (Psalm 77:19).

Faith, in other words, "unveils" the mystery

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind.

in a way that completely escapes unfaith. "'He is not far from each one of us,'" faith affirms (Acts 17:27). Faith can make such an assertion because it finds in mystery the stuff of awe and wonder, not ignorance. The more we know about an individual, the more mysterious he or she becomes. In a good marriage, couples find out how mysterious they really are to each other as, paradoxically, their knowledge about each other increases. "The revelation of God overwhelms us with wonder because we sense his hiddenness and mystery," observes Wayne Oates. "This mystery is not ignorance but the feeling of the tether of our minds." Oates goes on to note that the sense of mystery increases in knowing because "the object of wonder ceases to be just an object and becomes a reality that has reached out, *presented* itself, and we are grasped by it. The It ceases to be an It and becomes a Thou."[7]

God personally comes to one who opens



Behold now Behemoth which I made with thee.

up in faith to him, renewing his spirit and assuaging his despondency. But it is a personal encounter, not a set of abstract reasons. It does not necessarily answer questions. Instead they are transcended in the silencing wonder and awe. God comes to Job personally. While the friends can speak only *about* God, Job speaks *to* him, and he to Job. In that divine moment the suffering victim finds rest.

When God speaks to Job, he ties the creation closely to himself. He proclaims the unity of all things under his sovereignty. This unity "cuts off every tragic outlook upon life, every tragic way of thought, at the root."[8] God is not a despotic, capricious ruler, but one deeply sympathetic with humanity (Psalm 8:1-5). What we see of him in what he has revealed, especially in his Son, only reinforces the conviction that behind the larger mystery lies the same throbbing compassion: God is for us.

I am speaking here of a faith that both accepts and surrenders to the mystery of God. Faith is not an emotion. It is not the rational conclusion of an argument. Nor is it the will to believe against all odds, a leap in the dark. Rather, faith combines emotion, rationality, and choice in a unity, just as the human personality is itself a unity. Therefore it has elements of emotion, will, and rationality. Because it anchors itself securely within the evidence, it has a rational side. And because it goes beyond the evidence, it preserves its character as faith.

The devil, Screwtape, in C. S. Lewis's classic tale, cautions Wormwood against the "dangers" of such trust. "Our cause [the work of evil] is never more in danger," he says alarmingly, "than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's [God's] will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys."[9]

Human Limits

The counterpart of this awesome divine mystery is clearly a willingness on our part to acknowledge our proper place in the divine economy. In simple language, human limit means we plainly admit the mystery of God and stop chafing because we don't know certain things about it. But such a bald statement too easily leads to cynicism. If God is going to be so arbitrary, it is better to resist him! Blaise Pascal once declared that humanity tends toward a wrong judgment of matters because of its denial of what religion must teach us—that our predicament is absolutely incurable outside of God's grace. He may be close to the truth. Our human pride does not wish to admit its limitations. So when the choice lies between skepticism and pride or faith and humility, we choose some variety of skepticism.

As we pause to consider, however, the real limits of our knowledge and understanding, we gasp in amazement. Although he wrote three hundred years ago, Pascal was certainly correct when he described the most brilliant human being as possessing a "learned ignorance." When one can't even keep up with a single field of knowledge, the sum total of humankind's rapidly accumulating wisdom is simply staggering. In my own field—Old Testament studies—to read all the articles and books published in a single year would probably take nearly 20 or 30 years. Those of us in academia sometimes get the feeling we are sinking in a quagmire of "learned ignorance"! But what about the infinity that we do not know?

What about our understanding of God, the central reality? Zophar, you will recall, reminds Job that he could not penetrate the "'deep things of God'" or "'find out the limit of the Almighty'" (chapter 11:7). Admitting our limit, such as Job eventually had to do (chapter 42:3), shatters our all-too-insistent grasp on what we have done as a recommendation before God. It means that not only do we have no moral purchase, but no intellectual or spiritual either. Before God we are helpless and dependent. Our vision extends only so far—beyond it stretches the boundlessness of God. Even our ideas of God are not exempt from inquiry. C. S. Lewis once mused, "My idea of God is not a divine idea. It has to be shattered time after time. He shatters it Himself. He is the great iconoclast. Could we not almost say that this shattering is one of the marks of His presence?"[10]

When Job therefore accepts the mystery of God and relinquishes his claim to understand, he at last finds peace. Faith ventures beyond reason and confronts God directly. It goes beyond reason, but really lies in continuity with it. We find true faith and power only by embracing reality. "Faith is not belief in spite of evidence; it is personal commitment regardless of consequences."[11]

Divine Presence

Above all else, suffering causes alienation. It isolates us from friends, family, our normal way of living, and from God. In her influential study of death, psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross devotes an entire chapter to the isolation produced in both victim and relations when death is imminent. In fact, among the five stages of grief, she includes denial and isolation as the initial one.[12]

Not surprisingly, Job experiences such isolation. His friends come to comfort, but soon leap to defend God, and the suffering man receives theology and doctrine instead of sympathy. One senses an increasing alienation between him and the friends as the poem progresses. Torn by his pain, he agonizes through conflicting emotions, fearing the hiddenness of God, yet desiring him. Finally, with only jackals and ostriches as his

companions (chapter 30:29), he turns—alone—to face the whirlwind of God.

The answer to isolation—alienation—is presence. The presence of someone who cares deeply.

So God comes to Job, breaking his isolation. Significantly, it does not happen after Job acknowledges the divine mystery or admits his own shortsightedness, but *before.* An act of grace, it leads to Job's surrender: "'Now my eye sees thee'" (chapter 42:5).

The author does not give us the precise details of how God approached. From the brief wording (chapters 38:1; 40:6), we gather it must have been similar to the way he came to the prophets (cf. Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1; Ezekiel 1)—by direct vision, in other words. Of course, he may manifest himself in any number of ways. For example, Scripture refers to his addressing humanity by a set of circumstances that time finally reveals as a link in his purposes (Genesis 45:4-7), through a fellow human being (Acts 9:17), through Scripture (chapter 17:11), by the influence of accumulated wisdom (Proverbs 1:20-2:6), and, surprisingly, even through one's enemy (2 Chronicles 35:20-22; cf. 2 Kings 23:29, 30)!

When God comes to Job, Job accepts him. Like Paul, Job proclaims the good news, only he does so negatively. The book indicates that even the perfect man has no claim on God because of his good works. Only as Job relinquishes his demand can he come to experience the real fullness of the grace of God. Outside of a relationship of grace—that is, of love—even the perfect man has no automatic title to real life. Only as loved by another is a person truly alive. Job comes through a severe crisis, and the revelation of God at first overwhelms him, but the Lord draws near and sides with him. The epilogue of the book tries to tell us that God's grace has now been profusely extended. The Lord "restored . . . gave . . . blessed," it says (chapter 42:10-12), all Hebraic expressions of divine presence.

I have heard thee with the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee.

But what role does suffering play?

We have seen earlier that without the link between suffering and guilt, suffering, insofar as it concerns God's role, becomes inexplicable, even scandalous in our minds. Now, the whole matter gets turned on its head: Job, the innocent, becomes Job the sufferer. Innocence—not guilt—comes into strange association with suffering.

Centuries after Job, innocence would once again dramatically step within the sphere of suffering. In Jesus, the innocent, suffering acquires radical meaning, resulting in an astonishing exchange: "Christ was innocent of sin, and yet for our sake God made him one with the sinfulness of men, so that in him we might be made one with the goodness of God himself" (2 Corinthians 5:21, NEB). The incarnation integrates suffering, innocence, and divine presence into a whole. In Christ the disruption of sin and suffering provides the precise means by which sin, and eventually suffering, is healed. "Being killed (as man) by death," Augustine put it, "he [God, in his humanity] killed death."[13] Jesus relieves and repairs the disruption. And in him the power of sin, suffering innocence, and the presence of Almighty God emerge. This was "to show his justice," Paul triumphantly exclaims (Romans 3:25, lit. trans.). Although it does not

explain suffering, it once and for all divests it of its moral implications and renders it the instrument of redemption. God himself becomes a partner with humanity in suffering, and lifts human tragedy into the perspective of salvation. If humans are condemned to a tragic fate, God joins them in drinking the hemlock.

In Jesus, God does not just approach humanity, but takes its place, to suffer himself. The incarnation is the answer to theodicy because it demonstrates God's willingness at the deepest possible level to assume the blame for a creation gone awry and to redeem it by the very instrumentality of its alienation.

Job, of course, cannot see how the providence of God can take up his affliction and transform it into redemption. However, his sufferings do become the means by which through a tortured experience he rises to a new awareness of God. We can often see it in our own lives—the illness that brought a family closer together, the death that led someone back to God. The soul-making theodicy capitalizes on this function of suffering, but while we cannot claim that every act of suffering has a redemptive purpose, we can say that the way we look at suffering can. We can relate to it in such a way that it becomes for us a strengthening experience.

How do we really know God is with us in suffering? How do we know he really cares? Perhaps he exists only in imagination, a wish-fulfillment to ease the pain?

Some find it easier to believe that no God exists than to believe he sustains the world in its present condition. A student of mine, troubled by all this, expressed his thoughts in a poem:

> If God's in the SS man,
> In the force of the powder
> In the mass of the bullets,
> In the clear cool air through which it flies
> hot and fast and straight,
> In the praying Hasid,
> In the gore spewing behind,
> In the grass it lands on,
> In the ashes of a scroll,
> In jeers, "It never happened!"
> In tears of those who wonder . . .
> WHY?[14]

It is not easy to answer such a question. But we can make a few observations.

Remember Job's search for God (chapter 23:3, 8, 9)? He knew the experience of those who find it difficult to believe. In fact, the apparent absence of God from the world deeply troubles modern human beings. When you stop to realize it almost 2,000 years have passed, if we accept the scriptural record, since any dramatic act of divine redemption has taken place. It gives one cause to wonder. Theologians now speak wistfully of the "absence," the "hiddenness," the "eclipse" of God, and have a hard time explaining it.

We have no absolute guarantees that God is present. But no guarantees does not mean no good reasons. While certain things count against his existence, such as theodicy, a cumulative body of evidence makes it entirely reasonable to affirm his reality. Clark Pinnock, for instance, speaks of God as a "reasonable probability" and notes that we cannot manage any more than this whatever our view of the world. He cites five categories of evidence: the practical value of the Christian faith; the authenticity of religious experience; the mystery of the universe; the historical events claimed by Judaism and Christianity; and the power of the Christian gospel can be checked out in the ordinary ways we verify the things we know.[15] Although we cannot conclusively demonstrate the existence of God himself in this way, still evidences of his reality are all around.

Religious faith begins an experience—it does not come to birth in philosophical analysis. But that doesn't mean religious faith disregards rationality. Rather, it has already found its

Object before the reflection on the nature of the experience takes place. Convinced of God's reality, the believer consequently knows that a solution to the problem of evil exists somewhere, even though he or she cannot find it. Given the ways of God known by experience, believers remain convinced of the ultimate resolution of the chaos of life. "For we have to do here with a mysterious and transcendent Reality which we cannot wholly understand. The ways of God are not our ways, and how His purposes come to fruition we cannot always know."[16] Like Job, they realize that the meaning they seek actually does exist, but that they will never be able in this world to obtain it.

This, I believe, represents the book of Job's contribution to the dilemma of theodicy. Although it does not logically explain suffering, nor does it forbid our attempts to understand, it goes beyond them by uniting a personal experience of God with humble, trusting faith. In other words, Job comes to trust God in spite of his pain.

The grandeur of his final experience, however, seems very remote from where most of us stand. It is a powerful vision, but difficult to live. When pain comes to us, we more often than not resemble the Job of the dialogue than the one after the divine speeches. In my own life I find it difficult to get from the former to the latter. Too often I react angrily at the apparently senseless suffering I see around me, becoming frustrated at the mangled lives and furious that I can do nothing about it. But because the Bible contains a book like Job, I know God can take my situation—anger and all—and transform it, just as he did Job's.

Often we feel we must satisfactorily answer life's perplexing questions in order to verify our faith. In that respect we are no different from Job's friends. To the contrary, the book of Job eliminates misguided attempts to figure out the causal relationship between God and his world. God will not be placed under restriction. He must remain free "to root justice where He pleases."[17] Old answers will not always work in new situations. Indeed, the power of new, untried experiences often contradict them. An understanding of God and his ways impels us on to ever greater risks and new dimensions of discovery. "God and heaven alone are infallible," Ellen White candidly points out. "Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed."[18] We must let God be God.

Caught up in a labyrinth of pain, we struggle to make some sense of it all. We feel raped by the cruel tragedy of life. We do learn from Job that suffering is no reflection on our morality. That is good news. Nor should we think of pain as evidence of the loss of God. Rather, it may be a token—strange and inexplicable—that he is with us, on our side, approving of us. The very hiddenness of God, in other words, may only mask his lingering presence.

Just as the Creator did not desert Job when life tumbled in, so we also are objects of his compassion. In moments of despair we are called to faith. The book of Job makes one thing clear: We can no longer assuage our suffering and that of others by the use of pat answers. Instead, we are to identify with pain, concede its tangled complexity, and rest in a humble faith mature enough to coexist with enormous dilemmas.

We do not get a fully rational explanation of evil from the book of Job, or from anywhere else for that matter. Like the fact of sin, suffering is ultimately mysterious. We can expect resolution of the enigma of human suffering in the context of God's justice to appeal to religious people, those for whom the reality of God is the starting point. Although left unexplained, suffering remains a summons to action.

We live by hope, a hope grounded in the

cross of the Innocent Sufferer. The cross compels us to listen to suffering as an abiding question, one piercing straight to the heart of God. Like Job, we find our solution not in rational categories, but in the vivid presence of God—God the sufferer, the overcomer. We are convinced that beyond suffering and death lies resurrection and life in the appearance of Christ "to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (Hebrews 9:28).

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The Making of David Koresh

Two *Washington Post* staff writers report on the kind of Adventist culture from which David Koresh came.

by William Claiborne and Jim McGee

IN THE BEGINNING, THE MEMBERS OF THE Seventh-day Adventist congregation in Tyler, Texas were intrigued by the handsome young man who returned to the faith after years of straying wildly from its strict moral code.

His name was Vernon Howell, and when he first arrived in 1979, he seemed genuinely hungry for spiritual guidance. But soon he proved resentful of the church's authority. Demanding of attention, he used the Bible to justify his sexual appetite and he had a worrisome ability to hold the church members' children in thrall.

When Howell was 20, he tried to use the Bible to justify a romantic relationship with the 15-year-old daughter of a prominent church member. After Howell insisted that God had given him the girl, church deacon Hardy Tapp said he confronted him about the situation. "His response to me was that she was already his wife in a Biblical sense. I said you can call it anything you want, but what you are doing is wrong. . . ."

The church grew increasingly wary of Howell, whose intensity was as unsettling as his hold over the young. He confronted church leaders again and again, arguing over everything from whether the church should buy a new organ to how Scripture should be interpreted.

One Sabbath, Howell forced a showdown, striding to the pulpit and launching a longwinded Scriptural harangue. When it happened again on the very next Sabbath, the deacons confronted Howell and told him, "We would like for you to leave, and if you're not willing to leave on your own, if we have to carry you out, we will," Tapp said.

Howell was formally "disfellowshiped" from the Tyler congregation in April 1983, a formal rejection by the church. The split would lead him eventually to a much larger destiny, in a compound just outside Waco that he called Ranch Apocalypse.

William Claiborne and Jim McGee are Washington Post *staff writers. Excerpts of their May 9, 1993, article "The Transformation of the Waco 'Messiah'," are reprinted by permission of the* Washington Post. Washington Post *staff researcher Barbara J. Saffir contributed to the report.*

There, under his new name of David Koresh—an amalgamation of the names of two Biblical kings—he found a role that fed his seemingly bottomless hunger to hold center stage and his lust for a rich and varied sex life. It was there, inside a ramshackle collection of wooden buildings over which his rule was supreme, that Vernon Howell—an abused child, itinerant carpenter, would-be rock star and self-styled prophet—would come to think of himself as Jesus Christ. And it was there, in an apparently self-set conflagration on April 19, that he would die, along with 71 of his followers.

A Disruptive Early Home Life

Vernon Wayne Howell was born in Houston on August 17, 1959, to Bonnie Clark, a 14-year-old, unmarried high-school dropout. His father, Bobby Wayne Howell, soon married another woman.

Shortly after Vernon's birth, Bonnie married a man who had just been released from prison, according to family members who remember him as an abusive man who beat both his wife and her infant son. Bonnie managed for nearly 18 months, then asked her mother, Erline Clark, for help.

Erline took her grandson, then quickly had two more children of her own—a daughter, Sharon, then a son, Kenneth. With Vernon—technically their nephew—they became a noisy trio in the Clark home, almost siblings.

According to the Clarks, Vernon was a bright and precocious child who grew up calling his maternal grandmother "Momma." Once, trying to help out at the age of 4, he put a garden hose in the gas tank of the family car and filled it with water.

Her husband was never affectionate with Vernon, Erline Clark said in an interview, nor was he expected to be. He was a hard-drinking "macho man . . . country-type Texan," she said, of a generation that did not encourage men to show emotion toward children unless it was time for discipline.

When Vernon was 5, Bonnie, who had divorced her first husband, married Roy Haldeman, and they took her son back to live with them in Dallas. Haldeman, David Koresh later claimed, administered physical discipline. "When I used to act up? When I had a bad report card? Can you imagine? We got our tails whomped," Koresh told an Australian television crew last year.

In a recent interview, Haldeman denied that Vernon grew up in an abusive household. "We had our normal problems . . . We got along okay," Haldeman said.

Sharon, his mother's young sister, said there were many happy visits with the Haldemans, but they usually ended very sadly, with Vernon begging to come home with "Momma." Sharon said her most enduring memory of this time was looking out the car window as they drove away and seeing Vernon on his bicycle, peddling furiously after the Clarks, tears streaming down his face.

During his early years in Dallas, Vernon attended public school, but was plagued by what family sources said the school told them was a learning disability. He was held back to complete first grade twice, and in the third and fourth grades was put in a special class for learning disabled children.

When Vernon was 14, it was decided he would go back to live with his grandparents. By then the Clarks had moved to a one-story brick house on Ardmore Avenue, a lovely tree-lined street in Tyler.

There was a place for Vernon to sleep in Kenneth's room, but he was fascinated with a small shed in the backyard. It was a mess when he first arrived, but Vernon was handy with tools. He cleaned and hammered and transformed it into his own private place. "It wasn't for lack of a bedroom in the house," Sharon said. "He just liked the idea of fixing it

up."

The backyard shed was a typical teenager's room, she said. He fashioned a bed, ran an extension chord for a black light, covered the walls with posters of 1970s rock star Ted Nugent and fluorescent designs. "It was like a clubhouse," said Kenneth, now 30. Vernon taught himself to play the guitar.

And always, Sharon said, there were girls. They came from around the neighborhood, ostensibly to visit her, she said, but really to meet this dreamy new guy with wavy blond hair who had his own place in the back and played rock-and-roll. "I don't think he really had to chase the girls," Sharon said. "Everybody that met Vernon liked him."

Sharon and the others remember this as a happy, stable time in Vernon's life. It ended, Erline Clark said, when her husband objected to Vernon's continued presence and he was sent back to his mother and Haldeman in Dallas.

Both his mother and grandmother were practicing Seventh-day Adventists, and Howell's early life was steeped in Bible study and governed by strict moral codes that applied the Ten Commandments literally and banned smoking, drinking, and fornication. But he had problems with formal instruction.

When he was 16, Vernon left public school and went to the church-run Dallas Junior Academy. He dropped out in the 10th grade. One family member said he became fascinated with the Bible during this period but had always listened to preachers on the radio.

The family is reluctant to discuss what happened at the school, but Erline Clark said she was told that Vernon got into a dispute with a teacher and was feuding with his parents. Sharon recalled that "he was having a lot of trouble at home with Bonnie and Roy," and "Bonnie had to take him out of school there." Back he came to the Clarks, who by now had moved to the picturesque rural town of Chandler.

Throughout the years of shuttling back and forth between his mother and his grandparents, Vernon was left to find his own way into manhood. "There was never a very really good male role model for him—someone who really took an interest in him and genuinely wanted to spend time with him and teach him something," Sharon said.

His sexual education began early, an example set by his mother and Sharon, his surrogate little sister, who married a soldier at 14. Years later, Vernon told women the story of an older girl who attempted to have sex with him when he was 6, and of the time when a group of older boys tried to rape him in a barn.

Erline Clark suggested that Howell's later sexual involvement with the young girls at the Waco compound whom he called "wives" ought to be viewed in the context of the prevailing sexual mores of rural East Texas. "The youngest girl that had a baby [at the Branch Davidian compound] was 14 years old," she said. "He never raped anybody in his life. . . . They grow up faster."

In interviews, his relatives frequently returned to the rejection they said he encountered from older males and father figures, including his natural father, grandfather and

stepfathers, to men who refused to let him marry their daughters. "Vernon seemed to be always wanting to be accepted and loved by the men in his life and it never seemed like he got what he was looking for," said one relative.

Rock-and-Roll Becomes 'Main Thing'

By 1978, Vernon was 18 and facing an uncertain future.

"In his younger years, he had a hard time," Kenneth said. "He was always looking for something. He had his rock-and-roll; he had his women. But it was never enough."

Howell did make enough money in construction to afford the down payment on a new Silverado pickup truck. It was black, with red velour interior, and he kept it full of rock tapes—Van Halen, Aerosmith, Eric Clapton and, of course, his idol—Nugent, a Detroit-based rock star whose videos featured violent hunting scenes. He was seriously into body-building that year, pumping up his biceps to the point where they almost looked too big on his lean frame.

Debbie Owens, then 16 and working as a waitress at an all-you-can-eat catfish restaurant, counted herself lucky to be dating Vernon. "He was a typical teenager," she said in an interview, a "rocker" who carried his guitar wherever he went

When Owens was not working, she hung out at a community pool in a mobile home subdivision. There was an open-air pavilion next to the pool with a roof and an electrical outlet and, during the summer, Vernon made it his own. He set up his amplifier, Owens said, and practiced for hours, usually drawing a crowd with hot riffs copied from Nugent and Clapton.

He would "zone out," Owens said. "It was like nothing else existed when he played, unless he messed up," and then he was super critical of himself, a real perfectionist about chord changes. "That was the main thing in his world. I was second. Music came first," she said.

Owens said the most striking thing about Vernon was the effect he had on younger boys, such as Kenneth, then in his early teens, and others who, she said, "idolized him." Guitarist Grant Cook, who sometimes practiced with Howell and later became a professional musician, said the same: Vernon always was hanging out with much younger boys.

"He really pumped them up, played with their self-esteem and they thought it was so neat that here this older guy would take the time to talk to these 14- to 16-year-olds," Owens said.

"It was real important to him that they thought highly of him, respected his music, his brain, his values," she said.

His younger uncle, Kenneth, said Vernon taught him to drive and counseled him on facing up to older bullies at his school. "I learned to stand up for myself," Kenneth said. "He taught me that."

Never, Owens said, not once in the seven months they dated, did she ever hear Vernon talk about the Bible or religion. What she did discover was that he was seeing another girl in Dallas, a girl whose family members said eventually became pregnant. Owens said they planned to have a meeting to talk things out, but Vernon never showed up.

In the months that followed, Howell headed into what family members and friends described as a pivotal emotional crisis. He had taught himself to be a capable carpenter, but held no steady job. He formed a band, but no one can remember a single paying gig. He was well read in the Bible, but apparently lacked a high school degree. And he still had no permanent residence, sometimes living in Dallas, sometimes in Chandler.

Although the date is unclear, this also was the period when he chose to confront one of the mysteries of his youth, the disappearance of his natural father, Bobby Wayne Howell. Vernon began a search that ultimately took him to the Houston living room of his paternal grandmother, Jean Holub, who said she arranged a meeting between father and son.

"When his dad pulled up," she said in an interview, "they grabbed each other and they hugged each other. And that was a wonderful thing." Vernon was delighted to find out that his father was both a carpenter and a skilled mechanic. "He started telling his dad . . . 'I know how to do carpenter work. It was just natural. And I am a mechanic, and that came natural. Now I know that I got it from you.'"

Whatever happiness Vernon found in this reunion, he was devastated by the breakup of his love affair in Dallas. When the girl's father refused to allow him to marry his pregnant lover, Howell returned to live in Chandler and, with Sharon [his younger aunt], began going to the Tyler Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"He was going through a chastising," Sharon said, seeking atonement for the guilt he felt over his sexual appetite. He told her, "'I am having a hard time keeping these thoughts out of my head,'" she said. "He prayed a lot and he lost a lot of weight."

A Return to the Adventist Church

From the first day he walked into a midweek prayer meeting, said Bob Bockmann, now an elder in the Tyler church, Howell commanded attention. If his discussions of Scripture were sometimes obscure, it was still nice to have a young man who was serious about the Bible.

The Tyler congregation was delighted to have a young, apparently fallen-away member return to the faith. When members learned that Howell was out of work, Harriet Phelps, an elderly woman whose sons were grown, offered him a room in exchange for work around her farm.

Bockmann and his wife, Maggie, befriended Howell, and Bockmann said the young man seemed to be burning with guilt over his past sex life and resentment that he had not been permitted to marry his ex-girlfriend.

"The girl he was with in the Dallas area was about to have his baby," Bockmann said. "It was just killing him, because her parents didn't want him around anymore. He really missed the girl and felt terribly rejected that he wasn't able to be with her."

Bockmann said Howell also professed to have intense feelings of guilt over his lifelong devotion to playing rock-and-roll. "He would not even touch a guitar," Bockmann said. "They [the rock songs] implied very strongly to him that he was under a satanic influence, so he had washed all that away."

At first, Bockmann said, Howell seemed receptive to the church's teachings. "He said, 'I am just a newborn baby.' Here was a point where he was asking to be led, asking to be counseled. Sad to say, it was very shortlived."

In a church with strict moral values, the reformed Howell suddenly became everyone's judge, especially when it came to the conduct of women. He told at least one father that his daughter was "wearing what he thought was immodest dress," Bockmann said. "He became very strait-laced."

Adding to the tension was the fact that Howell seemed able to command the rapt attention of younger members. He would stand in a corner and "all-encompass them," said deacon Hardy Tapp's wife, Annette, "and just totally take over the conversation."

And whatever his feelings of sexual guilt, he used the church to develop relationships

with women, both platonic and sexual. "He alluded that he was attracted to me," recalls Bockmann's wife, Maggie, who was much older than Vernon.

She said he would speak to her for hours about his childhood, often tearfully recounting physical abuse. Once, she said, he showed her a pattern of burn scars on one leg he said were caused when he was forced to kneel on a heat register.

His younger aunt, Sharon, said she believes that this period was the last, best chance for anyone to have interrupted Vernon Howell's transformation into David Koresh. His life might have turned out differently, she said, had Howell not been captivated by a powerful series of revival meetings sponsored by the church.

His life might have turned out differently, says Sharon, Howell's younger aunt, had Howell not been captivated by a powerful series of revival meetings sponsored by the church. They were called Revelation Seminars.

They were called Revelation Seminars and were conducted by evangelist Jim Gilley of Arlington, Tex. They featured dramatic, even frightening, images in a multimedia portrayal of Armageddon. Gilley, who still presents his "Prophesy Panorama" in the United States and abroad, is a rousing speaker and his video representations of the Apocalypse as foretold in the Book of Revelation—featuring earthquakes, pestilence and religious persecutions—was combined with a video of current events that seemed to point toward the imminent millennium.

"We went every night of the week," Sharon said. He couldn't stop talking about the details, which seemed to bring all his years of Bible study into focus. He felt he could expand on Gilley's teachings. Gilley said in an interview that Howell approached him one night and offered to reorganize the show and change its message. Gilley said he rejected the offer.

"That's when it took off," Sharon said. "That's when he really became serious.

"Vernon said that even Mr. Gilley had a piece of the puzzle missing," she said. The missing piece, Howell told her in earnest, was the Seventh Seal, something that could be opened only by a new prophet. The Seven Seals, as described in the Book of Revelation, bind a scroll held in God's right hand that prophesies the calamities that precede the Apocalypse.

Sharon said Vernon was convinced that it was time "to have a new prophet and a new light" in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and that he was quite possibly that person.

Vernon tried hard to bring his message to the Tyler congregation, but by that point, they had had their fill of him. Following his formal rejection from the church, he took a high-speed turn into the insular world of the Branch Davidians, a group formed 60 years ago by a man named Victor Houteff, another disaffected Seventh-day Adventist who quit the church after becoming convinced that he was a prophet. Since then, the Branch Davidians always had had a prophet living in their midst, someone who could convey the "message."

The Waco section of the Branch Davidians was headed by Lois Roden, who assumed the role of chief prophet after the death of her husband, Ben. But she was in her sixties and everyone understood she would soon have a successor. Here Vernon found his niche, in an isolated and insular group that was willing,

perhaps even anxious, to accept his claim of divine inspiration.

Howell recruited his uncle, Kenneth, to the sect. The two rented an apartment, working construction to pay expenses and spending their off hours recruiting on an Adventist campus or going door-to-door in the neighborhoods.

During this period, Howell developed a close relationship with Perry Jones, who ultimately gave Howell permission to marry his 14-year-old daughter, Rachel, Howell's first and only legal wife. A lifelong member of the Branch Davidians, Jones was convinced that the federal government posed an oppressive danger to devout Christians.

"He was real involved with our rights, freedom of religion, the right to bear arms," Kenneth said of Jones, who died from wounds inflicted in the Feb. 28 shootout with federal agents at the Waco compound.

The three took long trips to revival meetings, carrying along Davidian tracts filled with elaborate diagrams of the faith. As they drove, the car was filled with talk of "God, government and religion," Kenneth said.

At the camp meetings, Howell's natural gift for empathy and public speaking served him well. "He would have a lot of people surrounding him," Kenneth said, so much so that the revival organizers sometimes had police ask him to leave.

His old friends back in Tyler and Chandler heard that Howell, now in his mid-twenties, had transformed from a rock-and-roll libertine into a sanctimonious, Bible-quoting martinet.

After not talking to Debbie Owens for many months, Vernon suddenly showed up and wanted to talk to her about Scripture. He had lost the Silverado pickup, she said, and was driving a beat-up Chevy Nova filled with religious tracts.

He told her he had really changed and wanted to lead her to a better life. "I told him, 'You are the last SOB to take me to God,'" Owens said.

Gaining Leadership of the Cult

According to a number of former disciples, the gun battle at the Branch Davidian compound on Nov. 3, 1987—and the trial that followed—was the catalyst that rallied Howell's followers around the aspiring, 28-year-old evangelist and—perhaps more importantly—demonstrated to him the extent to which he could control them.

The dispute began when Lois Roden, who died in 1986, skipped over her son, George, and anointed Howell to be the Waco cult's new prophet.

To settle the dispute, George Roden had disinterred the corpse of a long-deceased cult member named Anna Hughes, who died at the age of 85. Whoever could bring Anna Hughes back to life would be revealed as the Branch Davidians' true prophet, he said.

Shortly before dawn on that November day, Howell and seven of his supporters, dressed in camouflage fatigues and carrying assault rifles and a camera, slipped into Mount Carmel, as the compound was officially known, to take a photograph of the corpse.

Howell later claimed he was seeking photographic evidence of the disinterment to support a criminal charge against Roden.

They were met in the yard by Roden, armed with a submachine gun. In a brief shootout, Roden was slightly injured. Howell and his self-styled "commando" squad were brought to trial on charges of attempted murder. Roden, now 55, is in a Texas mental hospital, where he was committed after killing a man in Odessa, Tex., in 1989.

Waco lawyers who were present at Howell's trial still recall the moment when he displayed his control over his followers.

As the Branch Davidians crowded into the

spectators' gallery at the start of the trial, McLennan County Judge Herman Fitts declared that anyone in the courtroom who needed to be sworn as a witness should stand and identify themselves. When there was no response, Howell's lawyer, Gary Coker, turned to the Branch Davidians present and urged—also with no success—that the defense witnesses rise.

Then, in a moment of high drama, Howell stood, smiling benevolently. Raising a hand, he declared: "It's all right. You've done nothing wrong. Stand." At this command, the witnesses stood.

After the jury acquitted Howell's lieutenants and deadlocked on the charge against him, resulting in dismissal, he was given another moment with which to savor his growing power. The Branch Davidians backed a truck up to the county sheriff's department and watched with satisfaction as deputies loaded it with dozens of weapons they had seized at Mount Carmel after the shootout.

"You don't have to stretch your imagination too far to appreciate how his followers must have interpreted that. He had won the verdict, the weapons and the compound. In his mind, and in those of his people, he must have felt that he was guided by the hand of God," former cult member Mark Bunds said.

A Name Change and 'New Light' Edict

During the five years of his leadership, Howell transformed the cluster of dilapidated bungalows at Mount Carmel into a fortress-like compound, greatly expanded its weapons arsenal and began training his followers in military tactics.

He also legally changed his name to David Koresh and declared himself a "sinful" incarnation of Jesus Christ. He issued his "New Light" declaration, proclaiming that, while his male followers would eventually find their perfect mates in heaven, their earthly wives and daughters were reserved exclusively for his sexual gratification and procreation.

"Only the Lamb is to be given the job to raise up the seed of the House of David, isn't he?" Howell asked rhetorically in a tape-recorded message he sent to Australia in 1989.

God, Guns, and Rock 'n' Roll

David Koresh, as seen from the church pews and bar stools of downtown Waco.

by Brian Harper

I FIRST SAW DAVID KORESH—THEN VERNON Howell—in 1987, when I was an undergraduate at Southwestern Adventist College in Keene, Texas, a little more than an hour's drive from Waco. One morning during a Sabbath school class, I noticed a man sitting by a window near the back of the classroom. He and his friends were handsome and dressed as if they had stepped out of the pages of *Gentlemen's Quarterly* magazine. At first, Koresh and his friends were quiet, but soon they were trying to dominate the class discussions.

Later, Koresh and his men met with about 50 Southwestern Adventist College students, lecturing them for some time. Finally, several religion majors questioned their methods of interpreting the Bible (particularly prophetic passages), and challenged their use of Ellen G. White. The thing that turned most of the students off to the visitors was their unwillingness to confess Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ. Although Koresh and his cohort were never rude or violent, they were uncomfortable and defensive when the college students challenged them.

Friends of mine who had extended conversations with them told me that the visitors were Branch Davidians, and that they had non-Christian views on sexuality and salvation. In fact, the Branch Davidians thought the good-looking, long-haired fellow I had seen in the back of the classroom was God's "new" messiah. Little did I know that four years later, when I was completing a Ph.D. in theological ethics at Baylor University in Waco, the "new" messiah would be living about 15 miles down the road.

Davidians (originally Shepherd's Rods), have been a part of the Waco scene since the 1930s. Victor Houteff, the founder, had been disfellowshiped by a Seventh-day Adventist congregation in Los Angeles when he proclaimed that the Adventist Church was apostate. Houteff felt his group was the true "remnant," and that his mission was to call fallen Adventists into his church.

Brian W. Harper, a graduate of Southern College, is completing his Ph.D. in theological ethics at Baylor University.

Houteff attended the Waco Adventist church, dominated Sabbath school discussions, shouted at church deacons, and disrupted worship services. The thing that angered the church the most was Houteff's tactic of doing the opposite of whatever the Waco congregation did. Houteff would sing when the preacher preached, and preach while the congregation sang. The congregation finally asked Houteff and his followers not to come to church. The congregation hired off-duty police officers to check membership IDs to make sure Houteff's followers and their weapons were kept out.

Fifty years later, Koresh was disfellowshiped from the Tyler, Texas Seventh-day Adventist church. He eventually joined the compound outside Waco. Following a shoot-out with one of Houteff's successors, Koresh became head of the Branch Davidians and perpetuated Houteff's interpretation of Ezekiel 9. Koresh, like Houteff, felt that God had appointed the Branch Davidians as the "executioners of the city."

It was not just his amassing of weapons that distinguished Koresh from Adventists, and even other Davidian leaders. His love for the music scene appeared to have nothing to do with biblical prophecy. Koresh could often be found in downtown Waco listening to local rock bands while guzzling a beer—or two.

> Then he cried in my ears with a loud voice, saying, "Draw near, you executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand." And lo, six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, every man with his weapon for slaughter in his hand, and with them was *a man clothed in linen, with a writing case at his side.* And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar. Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherubim on which it rested to the threshold of the house; and he called to *the man clothed in linen, who had the writing cases at his side.* And the Lord said to him, "Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it." And to the others he said in my hearing, "Pass through the city after him, and smite; your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity; slay old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, but touch no one upon whom is the mark. And *begin in my sanctuary.*" So they began with the elders who were before the house. Then he said to them, "Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain. Go forth." So they went forth, and smote in the city. And while they were smiting, and I was left alone, I fell on my face, and cried, "Ah Lord God! wilt thou destroy all that remains of Israel in the outpouring of thy wrath upon Jerusalem?" Then he said to me, "The guilt of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great; the land is full of blood, and the city full of injustice; for they say, "The Lord has forsaken the land and the Lord does not see." As for me, my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity, but I will requite their deeds upon their heads." And lo, *the man clothed in linen, with the writing case at his side,* brought back word saying, "I have done as thou didst command me" (Ezekiel 9:1-11, RSV, italics supplied).

Of course, Koresh was the "man clothed in linen" with "a writing case at his side," who was to put a mark on the foreheads of those men saddened by social injustice. His followers were to kill those people who did not receive the mark.

The interesting aspect of this interpretation for Adventists is the fact that the killing was to cleanse God's "sanctuary," which the Davidians have taught was the Adventist Church. After the Adventist Church was cleansed, then the

executioners could exercise the same judgment on the world.

Members in the Waco Seventh-day Adventist congregation became very nervous at reports that Koresh had stockpiled large amounts of weapons. They were convinced Koresh planned to use those weapons to cleanse the Adventist Church, killing those who did not have the "mark." In fact, in the fall of 1992, members in the Waco Adventist church heard rumors that the Branch Davidians were planning to start the cleansing of the sanctuary on October 22, 1992. Fortunately, it turned out that the Davidians were only celebrating a religious festival.

It was not just his amassing of weapons that distinguished Koresh from Adventists, and even other Davidian leaders. His love for the music scene appeared to have nothing to do with biblical prophecy. Koresh had a passion for rock 'n' roll music. He could often be found in downtown Waco listening to local rock bands while guzzling a beer—or two. Koresh looked for potential recruits from among those in the nightlife scene. Those who frequented the same taverns as Koresh say that he was a charming guy with a sense of humor. After getting acquainted, Koresh would invite members of rock bands out to the Mt. Carmel music studio for jam sessions. Apparently he had an elaborate sound system, quality instruments, and recording equipment. Local rock bands had discovered a cheap way to record their music.

Shannon Bright, a Waco drummer who plays with the band Blind Wolfe, spent time at the compound until two months before the shoot-out with members of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. Bright first met Koresh and some of his friends at a local bar in October 1992. They invited Bright out to the recording studio at the compound. Bright said that Koresh was an "excellent" guitarist and a very nice person.

Soon after his introduction to the compound, Bright began to hear about the religious beliefs that dominated the lives of the Branch Davidians. Bright found that Koresh could answer from the Bible every question he had about life. "Anything you wanted to ask Dave you could, even why the leaves fall off the trees," Bright said.[1] "What Dave showed me made more sense than anything that anyone has ever shown me in my life. . . . I can't prove he's not who he says he is, and I can't find anyone else who can, either."[2] Bright disagrees with those who say Koresh manipulated people with the Bible, making them unable to think for themselves.

> It's not like that. Dave [Koresh] has a knowledge of the Bible where he makes all the keys of the Bible harmonize together. It's kinda neat. Passage in and out of Mt. Carmel was free. They didn't have someone that stood at the gate and checked everyone who walked in. It wasn't like that. Anyone could walk in peacefully and walk right back out if they wanted to.[3]

Bright also commented on why Koresh had to keep weapons.

> Everything was coming down. Dave was telling people who he was, and he said the majority of people at first would be against him. They would come and try to take him. And if he just let them

take him, he wouldn't get a chance to present his message. He had to stand his ground.[4]

Bright left the compound after Koresh claimed Bright's girlfriend for himself.

Although that was too much for Bright, he still holds Koresh's teaching close to heart. "I don't think God will condemn me for something I can't prove either way," he said. "When the time is right for the truth to be known about who Dave is, everyone will know."[5]

Even for Adventists with their fascination with apocalypticism, Branch Davidians had weird religious ideas, practiced a bizarre lifestyle, and were feared as a physical threat. Nevertheless, members of the local Adventist church and many in the community knew the Davidians. It was no accident that the first memorial services in the country for the Davidian dead were held in Waco.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Bright's story about his experience with David Koresh and the Branch Davidians comes from an interview conducted by staff writers for the local Waco paper. The story was written by Mark England, "Still Having Doubts: Drummer Who Hung Around the Cult Continues to Wonder if Howell Isn't Christ," *Waco Tribune-Herald*, (April 17, 1993), 1A and 4A.
2. Ibid., 1A.
3. Ibid., 4A.
4. Ibid., 4A.
5. Ibid., 4A.

Apocalypse at Diamond Head

Pastor Charles Liu remembers 14 members leaving his Diamond Head Seventh-day Adventist church in Hawaii.

by Joel Sandefur and Charles Liu

Probably more members left the Diamond Head church in 1986 and 1987 to join Koresh in Waco than left from any Seventh-day Adventist congregation. Joel Sandefur, a theology major at La Sierra University, interviewed the pastor serving at that time.

In 1986, Vernon Howell, now better known as David Koresh, went to Hawaii to preach his personal brand of apocalypticism and recruit new members to his Branch Davidian sect. The Diamond Head Seventh-day Adventist church in Honolulu bore the brunt of his attentions. A member of that church invited Koresh to the islands to talk about some visions he had been having. Over the course of one year, Koresh managed to pick up 14 new members from the Diamond Head congregation and a few others from another church in Honolulu. In 1987, after his followers were disfellowshiped from the Adventist Church, Koresh left Hawaii, taking his new converts with him back to Waco, Texas.

Charles Liu, now an associate at the Campus Hill church in Loma Linda, was pastor at Diamond Head at the time. No one could have known or predicted in 1987 what would occur just six years later at the Branch Davidian compound outside of Waco in 1993. Liu had quite a bit of contact with Koresh during his year in Hawaii. The man who is now described as Koresh's "first lieutenant," Steven Schneider, was a deacon and a Sabbath school leader at Diamond Head, as well as a graduate student at the University of Hawaii. Liu talks quite candidly and reflectively about his experiences first trying to understand and then combat Koresh and his community.

The following interview took place on April 8, 1992, 11 days before the final inferno at the Waco compound.

Sandefur: Are any of the people from the Diamond Head Seventh-day Adventist church still down in the compound? Have any of them been released?

Liu: We know one person who was released. We know of one person in the compound and of two people who left before this all started. The remainder we are assuming are still there. We actually heard on the TV the voices of at least a couple of them. I think a radio station called up and got hold of one of them. Then the guy they call his chief lieutenant, Steven Schneider, was also a member at Diamond Head church. . . . he was one of our deacons and one of the Sabbath school leaders at the church—quite

an involved, educated young man.

Sandefur: What was David Koresh like? You had some contact with him.

Liu: Some of the things they've shown on TV are about what he was like. He was kind of schizophrenic in some ways; at times he could be very soft-spoken and quite pleasant and coherent. At other times he appeared to have a bug in his bonnet. He would start railing on some topic or another. I think he tended to put people off by his appearance with his long hair and this very intense [way of] staring you in the eye. He wavered between one personality and the other. I personally believe he really does believe in what he says. He is not manipulative as much as just deluded.

Sandefur: So you think it was a cult of personality that drew people to him?

Liu: Yes, there's no doubt about it. Some of the members who went with him really were, I considered, fairly balanced people. It seemed they were just overwhelmed by his personality. They almost couldn't help themselves.

Sandefur: Would you characterize what these people underwent as brainwashing?

Liu: Definitely. There was sleep deprivation. There were odd diets that I think got people's metabolisms out of balance.

Sandefur: So it was a classic cult indoctrination modus operandi?

Liu: Yes. I went to a couple of their meetings because our members were being drawn into it. Some of the techniques of communication he would use were to talk steadily for hours at a time and it would be without any opportunity for any kind of dialogue or questioning, all one way, and very intense.

Sandefur: What were those meetings like?

Liu: He [Koresh] had a really interesting technique. He would make personal claims for himself, first of all as a messenger or the Lamb. There were a number of terms he used for himself. He would say this is what's going to happen, this is how it's going to be, then stop and he'd ask a question, usually a rhetorical question: "Are you going to believe this? Can you be left out?" It was all building commitments, but in a very manipulative sort of way. Or he'd ask a question like: "Do you want to burn with the rest of Babylon?" The kind of questions that you can only answer one way. He also had a technique of promising people what they needed. "If you come to me I'll make your decisions for you. You don't have to worry about burning out; we'll take care of everything for you."

Sandefur: To what degree was what he was saying Adventist? To what extent did it resemble traditional Adventist doctrine? Or was it so far out in left field that you couldn't even recognize it as having Adventist roots?

Liu: That's probably a little touchy for the Adventist Church. I believe there is a connection. There is a reason that it is an offshoot of Adventism and not of Methodism or Presbyterianism. We do have a real interest in the Apocalypse, eschatology; end times are very much a part of our teachings. I think some of our evangelistic approaches have tended to focus on the fears of people—hurry up and get ready. So I think there is that connection. However, his conclusions are way, way beyond anything that . . . a rational human being, let alone a Seventh-day Adventist Christian, would embrace. We have to make that distinction.

Sandefur: What kind of people were drawn to Koresh? Was there anything that all the people from your church who followed him held in common?

Liu: Most of them were younger—not only in terms of age, but in terms of how long they had been Adventists. But that wasn't exclusive. There were two or three older people who followed him. But from Diamond Head, it was by and large young adults, twentysomethings. They tended to be newer in the church and I think very idealistic saying, "Here's someone who's really acting out their beliefs, not just playing church. . . . They're really serious about their religion." I think people like that seem to be drawn.

Sandefur: What did you do to combat Koresh and what was going on in your church?

Liu: There was a sense in which I felt a bit helpless because it was like fighting against motherhood and apple pie. . . . Their standard line to us every week would be: "Why are you making us close our Bibles?" Because we would say that the stuff you are bringing out of your Bibles is not appropriate, you cannot teach it from the pulpit, you cannot have Sabbath school classes, you can't talk about this stuff anywhere in the church. Their reply to us always would be—egged on by David Koresh—"This is repression. Why are you making us close our Bibles in the SDA church on Sab-

Those drawn to Koresh tended to be newer in the church and I think very idealistic, saying "Here's someone who's really acting out their beliefs, not just playing church. . . . They're really serious about their religion."

bath morning?" And all they wanted to do was speak in public. So finally we began to take this censure discipline action. We discovered when we did that, they didn't like it. They wanted to argue. They wanted the opportunity to debate in a public setting. And when we said we're not going to talk about it anymore, you can accuse us of whatever, but we're going to take disciplinary action . . . that really did disturb them. They preferred to argue.

Sandefur: So you tried at first to argue theologically with them?

Liu: We were talking out of two different worldviews, really. We were communicating in different languages as far as I was concerned.

I asked him point blank in the parking lot. . . . His wife—his original wife, Rachel, was there and he had her come over and stand by me and he said: "You're asking me if I'd cheat on this woman? I'd never embarrass her." Their little child was there with them. "I'd never embarrass my child." Shortly after that, apparently, he started doing the very things that he said he wouldn't.

Sandefur: Do you think something like this could happen again? Could another David Koresh type spring out of Adventism in the next 10 years, or do you think we've learned a lesson?

Liu: No. History tells us we go through these cycles. . . . The Shepherd's Rod movement alone has gone through six or seven evolutions that I've been able to trace . . . and I did a fairly intensive study about that because I knew they were coming from that orientation. The truth is that this may have had ties to Adventism, but really sprang more out of the Davidian offshoot of the SDA Church. It's like a third or a fourth evolution of that, which in itself was an evolution of something else that originally started with Adventism. So it just seems to me that we go through these cycles. There are always enough people within any given group who are looking for or needing something that makes them susceptible to cultic behavior.

Sandefur: Do you think we are dealing with a parallel world? We have the Adventist Church going along here and the Branch Davidians and the Shepherd's Rod kind of trailing along, skimming off members.

Liu: That has been happening since the 1930s or 1940s, I guess . . . so yes, in a sense. To say it is a parallel universe or something may be giving it too much credence. . . . We are talking about a very small group of people.

Sandefur: You have been quoted heavily, and you've had lots of people knocking on your door, calling you up, especially a couple of weeks ago. How was the media coverage? Was it fair? Biased?

Liu: I really feel like it was quite fair. I'm thankful for the media in this thing. A couple of years ago one of the members of the Diamond Head church contacted me and said: "I'm getting some really strong indications that there is some really bizarre behavior starting to go on with some of our former members who went with Vernon Howell. . . . That includes polygamy, child-abuse, underage sex . . ." He said: "We've got to do something. What can we do?" So he started trying to rouse some interest through legal means, trying to get somebody to check on it . . . and just seemed to not get anywhere because it was private things going on on private property and no real evidence. . . . It was hard to document anything. He was really desperate; there were other people who were really desperate. One of the former cult members, Mark Breault . . . came out and began to push it and say, "I've seen it. I have evidence . . ."

Then the legal authorities began to get involved. But still a lot of people were saying, "Hey, they just have their own religion. Maybe it's different, but they're in their own place and they're practicing it so why get involved?"

But when the media started pushing it, I think the truth came to light. So I really am kind of thankful for the media, that they pushed it, investigated it. . . . This report from an Australian media group that came over and may have precipitated this and the Waco paper that published articles probably did everyone a favor by bringing this to light.

Sandefur: Did Koresh have these Messianic characteristics that he has taken on now when he was in Hawaii?

Liu: Yes, his favorite term then was *Messenger.* He also talked once or twice about being the Lamb, which has certain connotations. At the time he was the Messenger, the Seventh Angel, he could unlock the seven seals of Revelation 14 as he interpreted them. He felt that he was a special person, that he had special messages. Apparently that evolved later on into this idea of being a messiah, being Jesus Christ, being

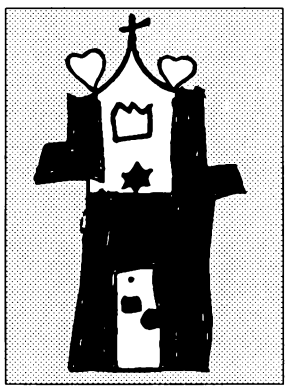
the only person who should be married or have sex with women of his community—all of these sorts of things. It was curious, I asked him one time at church . . . he used to come to church and sit there—we told him he couldn't speak there. Afterwards in the parking lot he would do his little recruiting thing. One time, after I'd heard some rumors that there was polygamy being talked about . . . I asked him point blank in the parking lot. . . . His wife—his original wife, Rachel, was there and he had her come over and stand by me and he said: "You're asking me if I'd cheat on this women? I'd never embarrass her." Their little child was there with them. "I'd never embarrass my child." Shortly after that, apparently, he started doing the very things that he said he wouldn't. I don't trust the guy when he makes promises or says things because I've heard him with my own ears tell a lie.

Sandefur: Did he ever threaten you?

Liu: Only indirectly by referring to Ezekiel 9 and the slaughter by the Temple. . . . He would quote that often and his followers would quote that often . . . even that they would help. . . . That it would begin with the shepherds. I can draw some conclusions from that. It bothered me a bit, but nobody called me up in the middle of the night saying they were coming to get me.

Sandefur: Do you think there is anything the church could do if it wanted to have a policy about things like this? Is there anything it can really do to combat the David Koreshs of the world? Or is it something we're doomed to always have with us?

Liu: I personally feel that we are doomed to have some of these things with us. It just seems that they inevitably come up. . . . It's just part of life, I'm afraid. I think what the Adventist Church can do is to be sure and . . . teach clearly what we understand the gospel to be so that the majority of the members don't get sidetracked by . . . wondering what's going on.



The Kingdom of Heaven

The British Connection

Why were one-third of the people in the Waco seige from England, and how did they get there?

by Albert A. C. Waite and Laura Osei

ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF DAVID KORESH'S CONverts from around the world came from Britain. Why? The majority of those recruited from Britain were educated black Adventists or former Adventists with Afro-Caribbean roots. Why?

Damian Thompson, religious affairs correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* (April 21, 1993), provided an historical and demographic explanation: "During the years of this century, Seventh-day Adventists made great strides in the West Indies and as a result have a large West Indian following in this country. Given that Koresh recruited specifically from Seventh-day Adventists, it was inevitable that a large proportion of his British followers would be from the Afro-Caribbean community."

We will probably never know for sure why people joined David Koresh's cult, but this essay tries to collect what information we do have about the converts from Britain. If one generalization is possible about them, it is that they had enduring relational problems, particularly conflicts within their families, sometimes having endured the trauma of a divided or divorced home. One married woman confided to a friend before she left Britain for Waco, "David Koresh provides the excuse I need to leave my husband and Britain." She never returned.

Koresh's inroads into Britain began in 1988 with Steven Emil Schneider, later his chief lieutenant in Waco. Born on October 16, 1949, Schneider did not do well as a student at Wisconsin Academy. After graduating in the early 1970s, Schneider applied to attend Newbold College. One of his references, the vice principal of Wisconsin Academy, praised his outgoing nature and leadership quality. Another reference, a pastor, said, "Schneider will do well in working to draw other young people to the Lord."

Schneider identified himself as a German-American with French connections. He was determined to come to Newbold, and offered to cut his long hair if that would help the

Albert A. C. Waite is a professor in the natural sciences at Newbold College. Laura Osei is a writer in London. Children released from the Waco compound drew the illustrations—their impressions of life in Ranch Apocalypse.

admissions committee to make up their minds. He wanted, he said, to be an evangelist.

During the first semester at Newbold, Schneider studied Choir, Matter and Energy, Fine Art, Life and Teachings of Christ, General English and Private Instruction in Singing. It is understood that his overall grades were very poor.

At Newbold, Schneider was heavily influenced by another American who was expelled for frequenting too many social gatherings in the community. A farewell party was held in the community, to which Schneider was invited. Late that night, a drunken Steve Schneider was picked up by a taxi driver and taken to the police station. He was charged and eventually fined for disorderly behavior. Newbold College asked him to withdraw. He did, on February 27, 1973.

Two weeks before the fire, Livingstone left the compound and was placed in custody. But the family and friends he left behind inside the compound died in the inferno: his wife, his mother, his cousin, and her friend. Altogether, five people from Nottingham died at Waco.

Fifteen years later, Schneider returned to Newbold College as Koresh's "John the Baptist." He made friends easily on the open, relaxed campus. Soon he was talking at gatherings in a bungalow on college property occupied by kitchen staff. He constantly invited students to "come and see."

Some students began displaying drooping eyes after attending long, nightly meetings. The buzz among the students mixed with uneasiness among the faculty. Those who attended began to suspect the authority of the church and misuse Ellen White's work. Those expressing concern about Schneider were told, "you cannot condemn or speak against something you have not heard or examined for yourself."

Finally, one of the authors of this report, Albert Waite, a member of the faculty, went to one of the meetings. After two hours, I recognized the psychological ploy being used. The speaker agreed with certain fundamental teachings of the church, suggested apparently reasoned answers for certain controversial questions, and quietly introduced new concepts without explanation. All this was done in a low-key monotone that was both disarming and knowledgeable.

In 1988, Schneider persuaded three theology graduates from Newbold College to become recruiters: Livingstone Fagan, John McBean, and Cliff Sellors. Fagan, who was employed as a ministerial intern, soon lost his job. That allowed him to recruit openly, particularly in Nottingham. John McBean targeted Manchester. In London, recruiting targeted a group of newly baptized Greek Cypriots who had just begun attending meetings sponsored by *Our Firm Foundation.* In turn, the Greek Cypriots influenced Teresa Norbrega, Leslie Lewis, and Bernadette Monbelly, all of whom are believed to have died at Waco. None of the Greek Cypriots suffered such a fate.

The authors of this article knew the three recruiters Schneider convinced to represent Koresh in Britain. Livingstone and McBean began enlisting and recruiting Britons from the north of England for the Branch Davidian commune in Waco.

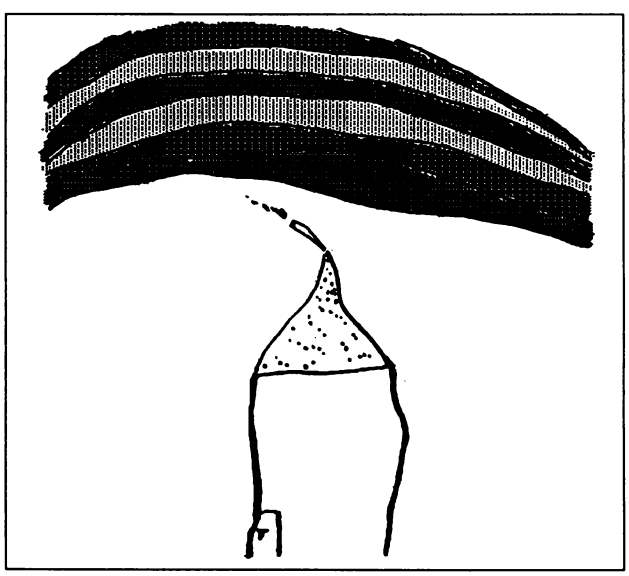
Nottingham

Livingstone Fagan, aged 33, and his attractive wife, Evette, age 32, were typical black British Adventists. They had two children, Renee and Neharah. Soon after joining the Adventist church in Nottingham, Livingstone—a short, small-framed man—zealously pursued ministerial training at Newbold College.

Keen and intense, with an avid interest in controversial issues, Livingstone had a love for power. Formerly a social worker, he gave the impression that he "knew it all" about sociological topics. Although his family was originally from Jamaica, West Indies, he had holidayed in America, and spoke with a loud, American accent.

His wife, Evette, had a zest for life and was a proud mother. She was a bubbly, friendly individual to those she knew. However, in public, she was private and standoffish. She had been introduced to Adventism by Livingstone. Shortly after, they both entered Newbold.

Finding herself working as an office clerk, Evette desired to improve her educational skills and to qualify as a nurse or teacher. Impressed by her husband's knowledge and rhetorical skill, she felt increasingly inferior to him.



A girl drew her home's dotted roof. "Bullets," she said.

Livingstone questioned and challenged his fellow students and lecturers on a variety of doctrinal topics. In 1988, Livingstone attended some of Schneider's discussions on biblical prophecy. Livingstone continued to attend these meetings. He was attracted to the Branch Davidian message, and thus found the channel for propagating his discontent with the church.

The following year, 1989, Livingstone graduated from Newbold and was placed as an intern in the Leicester church in the north of England. Livingstone also soon began proselytizing for Koresh. Once the North England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists received news of his actions, his license was revoked. Eventually he was disfellowshiped. Nevertheless, he continued to recruit members for the Davidians from his home community of Nottingham.

Livingstone's power and influence over the members of his family is particularly striking. His wife, Evette, followed him to Waco as did his mother, Adina Fagan, aged 61.

Livingstone also convinced his first cousin, Beverley Elliott, aged 28, to travel to Waco. Talented and musical, she loved singing and playing the guitar and piano, but she had recently suffered a broken relationship and was desperately seeking redirection for her life. Beverley struck up a friendship with Winston Blake, aged 28, and invited him to join her in moving from Nottingham to Waco. There Winston became one of six special disciples of the "Lamb of God," as Koresh called himself. Winston is thought to have died in the shootout when U.S. government agents first moved in to clear the cult's fortified compound.

From Waco, Beverley wrote to her ex-boyfriend, suggesting she was unhappy with her life. She described the lack of basic toiletries, and asked him to send deoderants, soaps, and a baggy T-shirt. She stressed that the sender's name and address be omitted from

the back of the parcel as "people over here are very nosy." Sadly, her mother died while Beverley was at the commune. Her family was distraught at her non-appearance at the funeral. She had had a very close relationship with her mother. Suzie Benta, aged 30, was Beverley Elliott's best friend. She flew out to Waco on the pretext of going on a two-week holiday. Her friends and family were baffled when she wrote from Waco stating her desire to stay there for some time. Once the siege began, they heard nothing more from her.

Two weeks before the fire, Livingstone left the compound and was placed in custody. He is still preaching homilies from prison. But the family and friends he left behind inside the compound died in the inferno: his wife, Evette; his mother, Adina; his cousin, Beverley Elliott, and her friend Suzie Benta. Altogether, five people from Nottingham died at Waco.

Manchester

John McBean was a resolute, determined, and energetic person. He had clear ideas of right and wrong—no grey areas. He fervently believed in Ellen White's writings, but did not appear to be fanatical. He cared about people and mixed easily with them. He graduated from Newbold with a B.A. in theology. Immediately after receiving his degree, he began recruiting for Koresh in Manchester.

John drew into the cult his Adventist girlfriend, Diana Henry, aged 28, a psychology student. She then recruited her family: Pauline, 24; Vanessa, 19; Stephen, 26; Philip, 22; and her mother Zilla, 55, a nurse originally from Trinidad. The father, Samuel, alone remained in the Manchester Seventh-day Adventist church the family attended. He attempted to win back his family by visiting Waco. Instead, he received the wrath of Koresh's tongue. His entire family of six died in Waco.

One of the six Henrys at Waco, Stephen, had a girlfriend in Manchester, Sandra Hardial, aged 27. She quit her council job in Manchester last year and joined Stephen in the commune. Her cousin, rock star Denise Johnson, flew from London to help her captive cousin. Her family says she seemed fine over the telephone, but after the gun battle they heard nothing from her. She is presumed dead.

Richard Bennett, aged 26, was a building supervisor with Manchester City Council. Easy-going, he left his girlfriend and three children for Waco. Ten days before the siege began, he rang his mother and said, "Mum, I am coming home soon." All together, 10 individuals from Manchester, including Bennett, died at Waco.

Rosemary Morrison, aged 29, and her six-year-old daughter, Melissa, also left Manchester for Waco. Melissa was the youngest Briton to die. During the siege, Melissa begged to be allowed to leave. Koresh had agreed, but at the last moment changed his mind. Rosemary, her mother, had left England to start a "new life" with the Koresh cult.

South England

At a weekend seminar in Derby, I saw a most interesting backdrop for the lectures. It was the work of artist Cliff Sellors, a recent convert to Adventism. I talked with this white, unassuming Englishman about his painting. His only objective was "to work for the Lord." At the time Cliff mentioned something about going to Newbold. My mind did not focus on the idea. He did not look the ministerial type.

On registration day in September of 1985, I looked up from the table along the line of first-year theology students who were waiting to see me. I was astonished to see Cliff Sellors. This time he looked neater, although not as well groomed as his peers in line. I dropped my pen on the table, walked over to Cliff and said, "I need you." I had forgotten his name.

He looked puzzled, smiled wider, and said, "Who, me?" pointing to himself. I replied, "Yes, you." That was the beginning of a close three-year relationship with Cliff at Newbold College.

About two years prior to our Newbold meeting, I had conceived the idea of a painting to combine the Creation account of Genesis with science and aspects of Ellen White's work. Since I cannot paint, the idea would never become a painting unless I could find an artist. Cliff and I carefully studied the Creation account in Genesis. Together we planned and designed the Creation painting project. He listened intensely, often with few comments. He would put his whole self in anything he decided to do. The painting took three years to complete. The finishing touches were done only seconds before he left for Waco, Texas. The local press acclaimed the work to be a Creation masterpiece (it measures 17 feet x 5 feet).

Cliff loved nature. He always carried a pocket book in his back pocket to sketch scenes from nature or to place an unusual blade of grass or flower between the pages. He once caught an adder on the back step of the bungalow where Koresh held his meetings. Cliff put the adder in a box and, while the others wanted to kill it, he saved its life by releasing it in the woods.

Cliff also had high personal morals. He was more interested in showing a young lady the beauty of nature than in holding her hand. He read Ellen White excessively. He also taped many chapters from her work, which he listened to while painting.

Clifford Sellors had an all-or-nothing personality. Soon after conversion to Adventism he burned most of his artwork and diplomas. He said God was not pleased with his work. Before he went to Waco, he gave away many of his books and tapes. For him, Koresh was Jesus. Yet, I was not surprised that Cliff at one stage had left the cult, if, as rumored, immorality was part of its practices. But why did this humble, honest, 33-year-old artistic genius go back to Waco?

Cliff befriended Livingston Malcolm, aged 26, a high-strung young man who was often tense and could be militant. Livingston sought knowledge but was not prepared to receive it from established bodies. He drifted from Adventism to Shepherd's Rod, to Rastafarianism, and finally to David Koresh. Actually, only the common bond of Koresh kept Cliff and Livingston together. Twin brother Solomon spoke to Livingston frequently, but each time the conversation was finished by Schneider.

Teresa Norbrega, aged 48, left London with her daughter, Natalie, aged 11 years. She did not inform her husband, Vincent, as to her whereabouts, leaving the country while he was away on holiday. He visited Waco and managed to bring Natalie out on the seventh day of the siege, but failed to convince his estranged wife to leave.

Diane Martin had strong, clear ideas. She strictly adhered to Ellen White's writings. She was a denominational employee, working as a secretary to a conference president and a union church ministries director.

Bernadette Monbelly, aged 31, was the girlfriend of Renos Avraam, one of the survivors of the Waco disaster.

About three of the individuals from England whom recruiters managed to convince to go to Waco we can find no information: Leslie Lewis, Anita Richards, and Doris Vaega.

All together, 24 Britons died in the inferno at Waco, Texas.

One of David's Mighty Men

Norman Martin, M.D., talks about his brother, Wayne—a Harvard-educated lawyer and one of Koresh's top lieutenants.

by Kendra Haloviak

ON APRIL 19, 1993, AS FIRE AND SMOKE engulfed Ranch Apocalypse, Colonel Norman Martin, a career military physician and a member of the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist church, sat at his desk. He is Commander of the Andrew Rader Clinic at Fort Myer, Arlington, Virginia. A nurse rushed in. Norman's aunt was on the phone and it sounded urgent. Norman knew. Four of his nine relatives inside the Davidian compound had walked out several weeks earlier. Now, the five others were probably dead.

For members at Sligo church in Takoma Park, Maryland, news reports from Waco, Texas, have taken on an added dimension because Norman and his wife Joyce are members of our congregation. Norman sings in the church choir and sits on several church committees. Joyce is appreciated by parents in our congregation for her gifts as a physical education teacher at Sligo Adventist School. Norman and Joyce have two sons, Kyle, 12, and Neal, 10.

When he got the news about Waco, Norman knew that the body bags coming out of Ranch Apocalypse would include his brother Wayne Martin, a Harvard-educated lawyer reported to be one of Koresh's principal assistants, and four of Martin's children. Wayne Joseph, 19, was a bright high school graduate; Anita, 18, took much responsibility in the nurturing of her younger siblings; Sheila, named after her mother, was an independent 15 year old; and Lisa, who was 13.

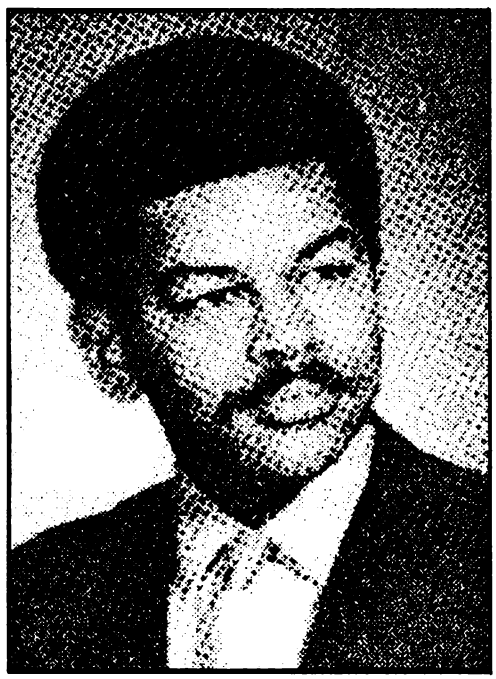
The grandson of an Adventist pastor, Wayne was the best-educated person in the Davidian compound. While he, his wife, and seven children lived with the Davidians, Wayne carried on a successful law practice in Waco—until, of course, the bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms stormed the Branch Davidian compound, and the government began its siege. Wayne then became one of the few people Koresh designated to talk with the FBI.

Just three days after the fiery end of Ranch Apocalypse, an amazingly composed Norman

Kendra Haloviak, a teacher in the religion department of her alma mater, Columbia Union College, received her M.A. in religion from Andrews University.

sat in his living room and talked quietly about his brother, Wayne. Norman tried to remember if his brother's childhood had pointed in any way to the horror of Waco. It certainly didn't seem to.

Norman, two years Wayne's senior, grew up with his brother in a close-knit, middle-class black family living in Queens, New York. One set of grandparents, an uncle, aunts, and cousins lived within walking distance of their home. All the Martins actively participated in their local congregation, the Lindon Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist church, where Wayne was the pianist for the Gospel Choir. Their paternal grandfather was an Adventist pastor, and at one point in his life, Wayne considered entering the ministry. Wayne loyally attended programs and projects sponsored by his local church. Norman remembers trying to get Wayne to venture out and visit friends who attended other Adventist congregations. Wayne refused, preferring not to miss anything at Linden Boulevard.



Wayne Martin

Norman's best memories with his brother center around the summers they spent together at their Grandmother Martin's (her grandson's namesake) home on the New Jersey shore of the Atlantic Ocean. The cousins played on the beach, shared camp stories into the night and listened to baseball games on the radio. Norman particularly remembers his brother and the cousins rooting against the Yankees the summer Roger Maris hit 62 home runs to edge Mickey Mantle for the single-season home-run record.

Norman does remember that Wayne was a little more quiet and soft-spoken than others in the family. At summer camps, Wayne was very courteous and stayed close to kids from his own neighborhood. Norman would have to introduce him to campers from different parts of New York. On breezy summer evenings on the New Jersey shore, Wayne loved his grandma's tapioca pudding and Postum (with extra sugar), indulgences that left Wayne always beginning the fall school term overweight. He didn't appreciate being teased about it.

In high school, a very bright, sensitive Wayne looked out for the outsider, the underdog. He began challenging materialism and typical middle-class values. At first, Wayne followed in his brother's academic footsteps. Norman had always wanted to be a physician, so Wayne passed a special entrance test to attend a high school specializing in science courses. But differences in their personalities soon led them in different directions. While Norman pragmatically asked, "What's due next week?" Wayne pondered, "Why am I here?" While Norman pursued medicine, Wayne became fascinated with history and took his B.A. in legal library science at Columbia University. He found real pleasure in the library sciences.

Later, Wayne was accepted by Harvard's Business School to pursue an M.B.A., and was accepted in its school of law. After receiving his law degree, Wayne was interviewed by several law firms. Wayne chose campus life over corporate practice. Norman recalls: "Wayne just didn't have the corporate-killer attitude." He accepted a position at North

Carolina Central University (a traditional black college) to teach and to be director of the legal library.

In New York, Wayne met and married Sheila Wheaton. They soon started a family. Shortly after the birth of their fifth child, James, Wayne and his wife, Sheila, watched as meningitis left their baby severely disabled. It was then that Wayne finally gave in to his wife's pleadings to meet Vernon Howell. They met in North Carolina. Shortly afterward, Wayne and his family moved from their home in North Carolina to Palestine, Texas (the group later secured property in Waco), where Wayne took Howell's side in the turf debate at Mt. Carmel. During and since that time, Wayne provided Howell with legal advice.

Reflecting on his brother's decision of almost a decade ago to join the Branch Davidians, Norman sees three factors influencing Wayne: (1) Sheila's pleadings; (2) meeting the convincing Vernon Howell; and (3) another opportunity to go out of his way to help an underdog. After all, the Branch Davidians and their leader weren't taken seriously by the majority of society.

During the past 10 years, friends and family who remember summer evenings together on the New Jersey shore, had tried to maintain communication with Wayne, his wife, and their children. Letters and gifts were sent regularly. Grandma Martin hid money in boxes of homemade cookies, so that her grandchildren could buy themselves something special on their next trip to town. Telephone conversations were eagerly anticipated on Thanksgiving and Christmas. Several times relatives visited with Wayne and his family, but Wayne usually arranged for these visits to take place away from the compound.

In 1983, Norman and his family made a professional move to El Paso, on the western edge of Texas. The two brothers met several times when Wayne drove west from Waco through El Paso to Los Angeles, in order to win converts to Vernon Howell. Norman remembers that conversations with Wayne usually focused on "Vernon." Often Wayne tried to convince his relatives of Bible prophecies that were to be literally fulfilled in the near future. At one time, Wayne believed that a prophecy in Ezekiel called for all families to move to Israel by 1987 for the return of Christ.

In 1991, Wayne's and Norman's parents, Joseph and Helen Martin, visited the compound to see their seven grandchildren (two more children were born after the family moved to Texas). Joseph and Helen's visit was very unpleasant. Howell maintained a constant presence. Howell scoffed at the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and at the Martins for their continued ties with Adventism. Joseph and Helen sensed that their presence caused an irritation and nervousness among Branch Davidian members. They vowed never to go back.

In March 1992, Norman (who has lived in Maryland since 1988), attended professional meetings in San Antonio, two hours south of Waco. He called his brother to set up a time to spend with his family. Wayne would not allow Norman onto the compound. Agitated, Norman asked his brother: "Why, do I pose a threat to the conditions of the children? Is there an armed person at the gate? Will Vernon Howell become violent?" Wayne never answered.

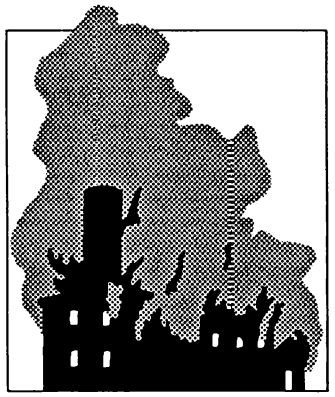
Norman remembers meeting Wayne at the Pancake House in Waco. Wayne showed his brother his law office and they enjoyed time with the children in a city park. At one point in the afternoon, some of Wayne's older children rode in their uncle's car. Norman recalls having "the urge to just keep driving . . . in order to save the children from life on a compound without the freedoms other American kids enjoy. . . . Now I wish I had kept

driving." At the time of this writing, two of the bodies dug from the remains of Ranch Apocalypse have been identified as Sheila and Lisa Martin, the children in Norman's car that spring afternoon. It is when Norman thinks of the children that he feels anger and bitterness over the Waco tragedy. "Healthy children should not be forced into bizarre life-styles just because their parents accept strange teachings from a madman."

According to Norman, the part of the news reports that most baffles him, is the arsenal of weapons amassed and used by the Branch Davidians. As they grew up together, neither Norman nor Wayne would ever touch a gun. Even toy guns were forbidden in the Martin home. The Wayne that Norman knew ". . . would have immediately packed up his family's belongings and left the minute he saw even one gun." A stranger to his own brother, Wayne, according to some newspaper reports, was one of David Koresh's royal guard, 20 "warriors" trained to use weapons and to train other compound members in their use. Federal agents reported seeing Wayne wearing a necklace of hand grenades when the shoot-out began.

During the ensuing standoff, Sheila and her three youngest children, James, 10, Daniel, 6, and Kimberly, 4, left the compound. The children are now in the custody of their grandparents, while their mother stays at a halfway house. During supervised visits between Sheila and her children, Daniel and Kimberly, who have been mostly raised by their older siblings, seem distant from their mother. From what Norman has been able to learn, the four older children were supposed to leave later; they never did.

Norman now struggles with mourning the death of a brother he has missed for almost 10 years. Norman experiences a mixture of loss, anger, and a strange relief at the deaths of his bright and gifted nephew and nieces—teenagers who no longer face the emotional abuse of Koresh's brainwashing. In our interview three days after the conflagration, I asked him, "How do you want your children to remember their uncle Wayne?" Norman answered, "That's a tough one . . . that's going to be a tough job." He added, "Every bad thought has turned into reality. All their (the Branch Davidians') prophecies have been fulfilled."



How Should SDAs Respond?

What do we do with Revelation after it has been so badly abused by someone like David Koresh?

Futuristic Highs at Mt. Carmel

by William H. Shea

We all know quite well what has happened to the Branch Davidian cult. The TV tape of the killings and the conflagration have run as often as the Rodney King beating tape. The media has made us well aware of these political events. But there was a theology back of those immediate political events. Ultimately, that theology stems from a particular view of prophecy. Its roots come from the SDA Church of 1929, but branches have spread so far that the Adventist roots of Branch Davidian interpretations of prophecy are hardly recognizable any longer. How did this happen and how did these views develop?

While Vernon Howell, a.k.a. David Koresh (that is, David Cyrus), has put his own Messianic and psychiatric twist on those lines of prophecy, he still stands in line with the founder of the Shepherd's Rod movement or Davidians, Victor Houteff. Houteff cast the die for Davidian interpretation of prophecy. It makes an interesting bit of psychohistory to see how this developed. A convenient place to begin is November 1930. That was when Victor Houteff was disfellowshiped from a Seventh-day Adventist church in Southern California. What was his prophetic response to that disfellowshiping? He developed what I would call "rejection theology." Having been removed from the church by the church, he turned his prophetic guns against it.

How did he do this? With a vision on January 1, 1931. In this vision, a number of biblical elements like the parable of the wheat and the tares, the harvest of the world in Revelation 14, and other topics, were turned against the Adventist Church. Previous interpreters of these biblical passages had seen them in terms of the whole world, good and evil. Houteff now saw them in terms of his followers versus those in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He had been rejected by the Adventist denomination, and now the Lord, working on his behalf, would reject them. This was made all the more explicit by the use of Ezekiel 9. This prophecy, which was fulfilled in 586 B.C., was now turned against the Adventist Church. The angel with the inkhorn was going to mark and distinguish his followers from the Seventh-day Adventists at large, who were to be destroyed. This was his first blunder of interpretation—to turn already fulfilled prophecy for use in his own personal feud with the Adventist Church.

Houteff's next step into the wonderland of personal prophecy was to adopt a theological Zionism. This was not Zion or Zionism for the Jews, but for Houteff's followers. He had come to this egocentric conclusion sometime between 1934 and 1939. Before the coming of Christ, God was going to re-establish a Davidic kingdom in Palestine, as it was then called. The leader of that theocracy was to be the new David, Houteff himself. God would miraculously and destructively clear out both Arabs and Jews from the Holy Land so his followers could possess the land.

David Koresh only embellished this idea by taking the name of Cyrus. David was to accomplish

with his followers what Cyrus did with the Jews—send them back to the promised land.

The contrast with Seventh-day Adventist theology here is stark. Only reluctantly have Adventist evangelists even admitted that Israel might come to exist. We still do not see that nation occupying a theologically significant role as an elect nation of God. Nor do we see any migration there of any other group to take over the land. For Adventists, there is no such intermediate step along the way to the second coming of Christ. That becomes the mere politics of this world. Not so for Houteff, or Ben Roden his successor, or David Koresh, the successor of Roden. The soon-to-be-established new Israel would be their kingdom, and they believed they would rule over it until the full coming of Christ. Then it would be transformed.

This is much closer to dispensational theology than to anything in Seventh-day Adventist prophetic interpretation. Adventists say that the restoration promises or prophecies of the Old Testament were conditional. They were not fulfilled, and they will not be fulfilled.

The third step in the drift into futurism was taken upon the death of Victor Houteff, in February 1955. In November, Mrs. Houteff said that she had received a prophetic vision that instructed her to apply the 1260 days of Revelation 11 in a literal way from the time of her vision until the coming of Christ.

This led to the establishment of the date of April 22, 1959, as the date for the Second Advent. Of course it did not happen, and this failure led to a splintering of the Shepherd's Rod movement.

But what is important here is to note that in terms of prophecy, the Houteffs had now rejected a standard principle of interpretation among Adventists. In apocalyptic literature, such of David and Revelation, prophetic times are symbolic, and should be interpreted according to the rule of a day for a historical year. Adventists have interpreted the 1260-day prophecy as fulfilled in past history, through the Middle Ages, leading up to the terminal date of 1798. Shepherd's Rods now applied them as literal and future. The prophetic Rubicon had been crossed.

We now come to David Koresh who, in his own psychotic way, grafted on this his futuristic strain of prophetic interpretation. He simply carried the method to a more illogical conclusion. In his long and rambling radio address, after the initial raid on his compound, Koresh proclaimed himself the Lamb of God found in the book of Revelation.

On what basis could he make such a claim? He said that he and he alone knew what the seven seals mean. Since that secret is the property of the Lamb to whom the scroll with the seals was given in Revelation, he would be the Lamb.

Well, what do the seals mean? They lie in the immediate future and are of catastrophic magnitude for the inhabitants of the earth. Beyond that, Koresh played his seals very close to his vest.

Seventh-day Adventists have also said that they know what the seals represent, but they have put them back in past history. The white horse and its rider of the first seal was the going forth of the gospel at the beginning of the Christian age. Historically, by the time we come to the fifth seal, with its martyred souls under the altar, we have come to the persecutions of the Dark Ages. The sixth seal takes us through the 18th and 19th centuries with the great earthquake, the Dark Day, and the Falling of the Stars. All of this was fulfilled by or before 1833 or 1844. Only the seventh seal lies in the future. Only it is connected, in one way or another, with the Second Coming.

The contrast between these two views is direct and uncompromising. The Adventist view has seen prophecy fulfilled before the coming of Christ. The Davidian view, on the other hand, has gone more and more futuristic in its interpretation, and has brought with it all of the excesses of that school of thought.

In truth, the prophetic views of

the Branch Davidians at the Mt. Carmel compound were closer to those of Hal Lindsay than they were to the Seventh-day Adventists. That was precisely the reason why they branched off—they no longer agreed with the historicist views of the parent body. They were not sensational enough, they were not exciting enough, they did not provide that instant relevance that produces an eschatological high. They have also demonstrated how far one can go in this type of interpretation. It should be a warning to the church, since we have other futuristic interpreters and groups circulating on the periphery of Adventism.

A word should be said in conclusion about the 144,000. The Branch Davidians claim that they and those who will join them were to make up that group. The half dozen groups that split off from them in 1962, after the predicted coming of Christ failed to occur, also claimed that they and they alone are, or will make up, the 144,000.

Since the turn of the century, Seventh-day Adventists have not interpreted this number literally. They see a symbolic number with its components of 12,000 each as not made up of literal tribes of Israel, but spiritual tribes before the throne of God. The first part of Revelation, chapter 7, gives the symbolic number; the second part tells us that when this symbol is finally fulfilled, literally, around the throne of God, it will be a great multitude which no one can number. The Adventist view of the 144,000 makes it as inclusive as possible; the Davidian view makes it as exclusive as possible.

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Fundamentalism Is a Disease, A Demonic Perversion

by Charles Scriven

On Sunday, April 25, 1993, the same day *The Washington Post* ran two essays chastising government law enforcement for its tragic assault in Waco, Andy Rooney of *Sixty Minutes* said he was sick and tired of slurs like these. Nobody's to blame, Rooney hissed, except those "religious nuts."

I'm with the *Post*: the government was impatient, klutzy—and culpable. Still, except for the children, Rooney's description fits. The Branch Davidians were religious and they were nuts—not just weird but weird to the point of lunacy.

And they were fed by fundamentalism.

All who are cousins to these crazies—and we Adventists are—should wake up to this fact. Perhaps we're not close cousins. I personally had never heard of the Branch Davidians until the media, gorging on the initial shootout, began to belch out the story. And what did I then hear? I heard about a man who had Revelation solved. I heard about a man who thought everyone was wrong but him. I heard about a man who knew all of the answers and none of the questions.

The man, and most of his followers, had once belonged to Adventist churches. Many in these churches thought—think!—that *we* have Revelation solved. Many think everyone is wrong but us. Many have all of the answers and none of the questions.

Our best theologians, including Ellen White, know we see through a glass darkly. They know that God, and God alone, is infallible. But it isn't often that our church's leaders, even its thought leaders, have either the spunk or the insight to say once and for all: fundamentalism is a dread disease, a demonic perversion, a groundwork for madness.

Not long ago—but before David Koresh—I gave a talk on "The Adventure of Truth" to some highly educated, second- and third-generation Adventists. Invoking the Abraham story, I said that when you truly love God you leave off arrogance of mind as well as heart. As Abraham set out, "not knowing where he was going" (Hebrews 11:8, NRSV), you walk a path of bravery and risk, all along acknowledging the imperfection of your knowledge and even of your prophecy (1 Corinthians 13:12). I also said that the contrary frame of mind was fundamentalism, a conceit that murders curiosity and leads thereby either to listlessness or to destructive passion.

The idea of truth as adventure appealed to this particular group—I was preaching to the choir. But in the conversation it came out that nearly everyone thought it was a *rhetorical* mistake to hammer away at fundamentalism. They thought that most Adventists would be suspicious of me, and reject my deeper point, if I came across unfriendly to fundamentalism, and that if I gave this talk elsewhere, or wrote it down for publication, I should avoid an explicit reproach.

Horsefeathers!

I was a fairly patient listener then. Now, after the madness and the fatal fire, and the knowledge that so many of the dead were schooled in Adventism, I'm impa-

tient. The church's leaders, including its privileged thought leaders, must acknowledge the violence of fundamentalism. Now, more than ever, we must confess that closed and cocky minds are an abomination to the Lord. God wants us always to remain open to change and renewal (Isaiah 48:6).

If I am a fundamentalist I take my convictions to be non-negotiable. I reject challenges to my belief before I have considered them. I deny my fallibility and my need to grow.

In other words, I reject God; I worship an idol.

The wild, ominous energy of David Koresh exposed the violence of fundamentalism. But it won't do to say No to this lunatic. We must say No to the frame of mind that fed the lunacy.

Charles Scriven, who received his Ph.D. in theological ethics from the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, is president of Columbia Union College.

Apocalyptic—Who Needs It?

by Beatrice Neall

How seriously should Adventists take apocalyptic books like Daniel, Revelation, and *The Great Controversy*? Apocalyptists, after all, are embarrassing to have around. David Koresh tried to precipitate Armageddon by his confrontation with the U.S. Government. David Mould mounts a billboard campaign against the pope, charging the Vatican with trying to change the U.S. Constitution. John Osborne chastises official Adventism for its ecumenical stance toward other Christians. Date-setters become increasingly active as the year 2000 approaches. Survivalists buy homes in the wilderness for the time of trouble.

These developments embarrass the main-line church. We may even wish to revise our apocalyptic stance. Aren't we triumphalistic in seeing ourselves as the one true church? Hasn't the Sabbath/Sunday issue, so relevant when *The Great Controversy* was written, become obsolete in today's secular society? Haven't Adventists erred in focusing on the pope while neglecting to take a stand against oppressive dictators of the 20th century? Shouldn't we concentrate on the modern "beasts" of ethnic hatred, oppression of minorities, and abuse of the eco-system? Perhaps apocalyptic, with its sensationalism, represents an immature stage of Christianity. Perhaps we should replace it with the gospel of love, acceptance, and forgiveness.

I suggest that we look to Jesus for enlightenment on these issues. He is central not only to the gospel, but also to the apocalyptic. As an apocalyptic figure, he ushered in the end time by setting up his kingdom. He stood under a death decree and felt the persecuting wrath of a "union of church and state." In Gethsemane, he endured the time of trouble, and on the cross, he drew to himself the plagues of scorching sun, darkness, and earthquake. He experienced death, resurrection, and translation. He stands in the tension between the gospel and apocalyptic. What might Jesus say to enthusiasts?

Should we precipitate the final crisis? Jesus tried to win his enemies by love. He did not precipitate the crisis—it was forced on him. Jesus would have told David Koresh to lay down his sword.

Should we fraternize or confront? Should Adventists fraternize with Christians of other faiths? Or should we denounce them as Babylon? Jesus feasted and fraternized with Pharisees such as Simon and Nicodemus. He was frank, but spoke the truth in love. Ecumenism is not a sin if the truth is not compromised. Jesus did not denounce the religious leaders of his day before his arrest. Bashing the pope at the present time is premature. The pope is not currently trying to change the U.S. Constitution. The encyclical to which David Mould refers merely asserts the right of workers to observe their day of rest. (Adventists fought for the same right.) The document has nothing to do with enforcing Sunday-worship upon non-believers.

Should we set dates? For 2,000 years, every date set for the end of the world has failed. Apocalyptists have supplied hundreds of rationales for the Lord to come by a certain date (the end of a millennium, the 120 years of Noah, a generation from the Falling of the Stars or the establishment of Israel), but God has ignored them all. "History overwhelms apocalyptic"—time keeps marching on in spite of efforts to stop it. Jesus not only refused to supply a date, but forbade others to do so (Matthew 24:36; Acts 1:6, 7).

Should we flee to the mountains? (An Adventist paper advertised, "three-bedroom ranch, excellent for the time of trouble; all modern conveniences." But is a home that receives mail, telephone, and other services hidden?) Now is not the time to be isolated from the world, but to penetrate the world with the gospel. Now is the time of Global Mission (Matthew 24:14).

But apocalyptic should not be rejected because enthusiasts have abused it. Abuse does not cancel use. And detractors can distort as well.

Aren't we naive to see ourselves in prophecy? Sects often see themselves as the fulcrum of history—the stone that strikes the image, the 144,000 on Mount Zion. Are Adventists naive to see themselves as "the remnant," the one true church? Though we are a small subdivision on the Christian landscape, we do have the remnant message and proclaim the last warning to the world—the three angels' messages.

Shouldn't our concept of "antichrist" be relativized? Though history has seen many oppressors, the sequence of powers listed in Daniel 7 still holds. Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin are gone; communism is crumbling; but the Papacy still grows in power.

Isn't Sabbath/Sunday an antiquated issue? Whether one agrees with *The Great Controversy* scenario or not, the biblical picture of the final conflict has to do with worshiping God or an anti-God power (Revelation 14:6-12). Also, in a violent world, the pressure for a religious solution is increasing. The Religious Right is eager to legislate such a solution. Furthermore, the three angels' messages are exceedingly relevant to a world that has forgotten its Creator.

Isn't the gospel enough? Some theologians would like to center all theology on the cross. But Christian theology must have two foci—both the first and second advents of Christ. If we have only the cross, we are of all people the most miserable (1 Corinthians 15:17-19). God gave apocalyptic to dramatize the struggle between good and evil, to arouse the world to its danger, and to inspire the hope of ultimate victory. In his apocalyptic discourse, Jesus told the signs of his coming—signs that in every age have produced a sense of urgency to prepare for his coming.

How then shall we live? The purpose of apocalyptic, as with all scripture, is to inspire a life oriented toward Christ and his coming (Matthew 24:42). At the end of his apocalyptic discourse (Matthew 25) Jesus spelled out just what this life is like. Surprisingly, it is not something heroic. It consists of being filled with the oil of the Spirit, developing one's talents in service to God, and caring for the needy and oppressed. Apocalyptic demands nothing more—nothing less.

Beatrice Neall, a professor of religion at Union College, holds a doctorate from the Andrews University school of graduate studies.

Did David Die for Our Sins?

by Douglas Cooper

The public relations department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has done back flips in an attempt to distance itself from former member David Koresh. They certainly have a right and even a duty to do so. After all, he was disfellowshiped from the church in 1981 and much of his radical theology is of his own making.

However, I suggest that all of us who are or were Adventists recognize the fact that a piece of us is inside that Waco compound. We have all been part of a religious family that has its dysfunctional side, and our black-sheep brother David is acting out the role of scapegoat very effectively for us. With our religious addiction and bent toward our own kind of more dignified cultism, with the emphasis we have placed on apocalyptic—Day of Armageddon—theology, with its persecutorial paranoid overtones, we have inadvertently fed the dark side of the wounded and vulnerable souls like David Koresh.

As an illegitimate child with learning difficulties, his early life could not have been easy. Dropping out of school in the ninth grade certainly did not enhance his already low self-esteem. When he did join the Adventist church in Tyler, Texas at the age of 18, his grandmother reports he was treated with disdain because of his long hair, style of dress, and musical tastes. Instead of being accepted for who he was (as AA accepts any alcoholic), and unconditionally loved in the church, he was apparently judged and criticized. As a result, he moved on to join the Branch Davidians in Waco. We Adventists will never know just how much that failure to love and support a lonely and insecure young man may have contributed to the present tragedy.

But wait a minute, it is not just us Adventists who are setting up people for elitism, religious addiction, and cultism. Equally culpable are the members of any religious organization who put their religion ahead of their spirituality. Anyone who considers himself morally superior because of his religious belief. Anyone who sits in judgment on the personal choices of another human being whether those choices are sexual, religious, or political. Anyone who says his way is the only way to God. Anyone who would try to set himself up as the only source of religious truth or as conscience for another person or who would attempt to dictate what someone else should believe. Anyone who holds a dysfunctional theology like the old manipulative, fear-inducing Baptist doctrine of a God who condemns people who don't measure up into a burning pit of fire and brimstone for all eter-

nity, a doctrine that has probably done more harm and kept more people away from real spirituality than any other teaching ever devised by the mind of humanity.

When religion is fear, guilt, and shame based, it becomes religiosity or religious addiction. This sets vulnerable people up to move into extreme positions like cultism.

Is David Koresh the Messiah? No. Did he die for our sins? Quite possibly.

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Kissing Cousins or Kindred Spirits?

by Charles Teel

Seventh-day Adventist image makers rushed to assemble press kits, complete with family-tree genealogies that identified the occupants of Ranch Apocalypse as mere kissing cousins. A tree trunk labeled Christian was hastily drawn boasting a Protestant arm, a millennial movement branch, and relatively young adventist shoots that include the Seventh-day Adventists. Fully two forks down from this Seventh-day Adventist shoot are the Branch Davidians. Reformed twice. Second or third cousins at best. Shirttail relatives only. And by marriage. Perhaps.

Seventh-day Adventists join with those of all faiths—and those of no proclaimed faith—who are profoundly repelled by the fundamentalist ingredients that fueled the fire of Ranch Apocalypse. Such ingredients include a literalist approach to Scripture, the assumption of unquestioned authority on the part of congregants, the exclusive withdrawal from ongoing history, the substitution of eschatological fantasy for present reality, and the enforcement of rigid behavioral proscriptions—with the community's leadership allegedly not being bound by key proscribed behavioral norms.

Are we appalled by these traits because they are so foreign to our lived experience—aberrations characteristic of no one in our circle closer than kissing cousins? Or are we appalled because David Koresh's reading of the Apocalypse, charting of eschatological events, listing of behavioral demands, and assumption of authoritive rule elicit strong identification buried deep within our collective soul?

Koresh's broadcast appeal referred to apocalyptic symbols and presuppositions embraced by traditional Seventh-day Adventism. His call to unlock the Apocalypse,to break the seven seals, and to anticipate the battle of Armageddon mirrors calls made by evangelists who attracted our grandparents, our parents, ourselves. (We remember such calls because these fantastic portents were illustrated by vivid visual representations: the first cloth hanging charts were followed by papier-mâché props, plywood cutouts, Ducane Projector transparencies, glow-in-the-dark black-light visuals, and—most recently—state-of-the-art multimedia productions.)

The transcript of a 1987 Southern California presentation by Vernon Howell (a.k.a. David Koresh), affirms numerous symbols that stand as traditional Seventh-day Adventist pillars. He declares his membership in the Seventh-day Adventist community of faith (". . . we, as Seventh-day Adventists, have our foundation in the sixth seal, don't we?"), aligns himself with Adventist evangelization approaches ("That's what we teach people in the Revelation Seminars, right?"), and affirms familiar signs of the end (the seven seals, the seven angels, the seven trumpets, the Dark Day, the falling of the heavenly bodies, the book of Daniel, the 1260- and 2300-day prophecies, and the antitypical Day of Atonement). Ellen White's *Early Writings, Word to the Little Flock, The Great Controversy, Prophets and Kings, Selected Messages,* and the *Testimonies* are used not only for their biblical understandings, but also for their behavioral proscriptions ("Now I'm not a scholar in Sister White's *Testimonies*, but I will say this much: I will say that not one of you is living up to the light in the *Testimonies*—not one in this room.")

Koresh, as with William Miller and a great cloud of Adventist witnesses, engages in a biblical interpretation that observers past and present characterize as "wooden literalism." Comparing scripture line upon line and precept upon precept with less than a clear regard for historical context and using a (non) method that "lets the Bible serve as its own interpreter" leads inevitably to alarming consequences. Koresh becomes, in effect, the keeper of the text. Keepers of the text who employ this woodenly literal hermeneutic begin "helping" the Bible interpret itself—unfettered by accountability to established norms of responsible reading. Quickly, leaders find themselves and their communities explicitly identified in the text.

The adage that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" is particularly instructive when applied to biblical interpre-

tation. Those interpreters who call others to embrace this fundamentalist grid—be they fundamentalist Catholics, Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, Branch Davidians, Jonestown recruits, followers of Khomeini, or members of the Charles Manson family—achieve power and authority by promulgating a law of literalism. Everything, even the most obscure formulae, symbols, and numbers, must be unlocked. Such definition leads inevitably to absolute authority of the interpreters and the demand for absolute obedience by the flock. Biblical authority corrupts and absolute authority corrupts absolutely.

In apocalyptic literature, prophecy goes into overdrive and symbolic language abounds in cosmic proportions. Readers and hearers of apocalyptic are hurled through time and space as they journey into the heavenly and earthly and subterranean spheres while piecing together fragments of humankind's shared story. Divine and demonic symbols of the great controversy between light and darkness flash larger than life on the screen of universal history. Beasts rampage and nations give obeisance. Harlots seduce and populations succumb. Winds blow and the earth shakes. Bowls are poured out and history screams. Woes are flung against space and the universe is hushed. In such a context, literalists, absolutists, and would-be demagogues have a field day.

Fundamentalist biblical interpreters have found everything in apocalyptic literature. Twin-tailed P-38 airplanes, the fall of the Turkish Empire, and the qualified assertion that the European Common Market will never become a reality. (Indeed, so committed to a particular interpretation were our Seventh-day Adventist forbears of the 1940s that a variant interpretation on the King of the North once evoked a fist fight between two Seventh-day Adventist divines—both seasoned and ordained clergymen—in Room 200 of Irwin Hall at Pacific Union College.)

Give or take a symbol or two, such games are harmless enough. Bruised limbs and egos can heal. But when apocalyptic interpreters presume to label entire religious faiths as Babylon, while at the same time identifying their own community as constituting God's True Remnant, the ground is laid for the sins of triumphalism, exclusivism, and pride. The abuse of authority blooms to full flower. Stir in a paranoid mindset that comes to anticipate—indeed invite—persecution at the hands of those branded as Babylonian whores and fornicating daughters of whores, and a self-fulfilling prophecy of destruction is set in motion.

Make no mistake: when Seventh-day Adventists heard Koresh's impassioned and detailed interpretations of the Apocalypse, we heard our shared history. Many of us were frightened by what we heard.

The fundamentalist law of literalism, abuse of authority, exclusive triumphalism, sensationalist eschatology, paranoid suspicions of persecution, and sectarian withdrawl from history need not carry the day when dealing with the apocalyptic. We have another option. The Apocalypse is not merely a puzzle to be pieced together or a chronology to be calculated, not a mathematical formula or historical secret, but a liberating discovery. Revelation is a magnificent hymn of praise to be celebrated.

The Apocalypse is not merely a puzzle to be pieced together or a chronology to be calculated, not a mathematical formula or historical secret, but a liberating discovery, a magnificent hymn of praise to be celebrated.

The Apocalypse affirms the good news that the Kingdom will triumph! The baby wins over the beast. The woman with child wins over the harlot. Faithful remnants endure as unrighteous Babylons crumble. Shouts of Alleluia! replace woes that have been poured out upon abusive systems. The lamb emerges as Lord of history.

Whether the occupants at Ranch Apocalypse were indeed kissing cousins cannot be answered once and for all. What can be affirmed is that the cosmic family tree pictured in the final chapters of the Apocalypse shades a great and diverse multitude, and that leaves from its many branches are a balm for the healing of the nations. Ellen White describes the boughs of this tree hanging over the walls of the heavenly city, encompassing the present order. No wooden literalism in this symbolic interpretation. No substitution of present reality for otherworldly escapism. Rather, individuals motivated by this image of the family tree are called to become engaged in their world as agents of healing, justice, and reconciliation.

Let us—who have ears to hear—listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

Charles Teel, a professor of Christian ethics in the Loma Linda University School of Religion, received an M.Th. from Harvard University and a Ph.D. from Boston University in social ethics.

Our Brothers and Our Sisters...

by Ron Warren

I have been a Seventh-day Adventist for less than four years. I love the church and am thankful for the difference it has made in my life. Because of my love for the church, the tragic events in Waco, Texas, and the church's response have raised painful questions for me.

In the conversations around Sligo church, my spiritual home, I have sensed a fatalism and resignation, as well as a desire for distance from the entire situation. I find it quite disturbing. More than once I have heard the comment, "It's hard to see how it could've ended another way." I realize my response is quite different. Why wasn't the Seventh-day Adventist Church searching for another way? Most of the people who perished in the compound were former Adventists. Steven Schneider, who was described as David Koresh's top lieutenant, attended Andrews University for several years. Wayne Martin, one of Koresh's most trusted advisors, came from a kind and loving Adventist family and, as a respected lawyer with a degree from Harvard, could only be described as one of our best and brightest. Most of the 24 Britons believed lost were raised as Adventists. A number of them attended Newbold College.

The Adventist Church may have been in a unique position to understand the torn psychology of some of the cult members. Where was the church in the negotiations? Could we not have found the courage to say, "Some of these are ours. What can we do to help?" Instead, the church seems to have sought the safety of a public-relations campaign in the media and in local churches in an effort to have people believe that this situation had nothing to do with Adventism. Of course this is not true. This is an Adventist tragedy.

Another disturbing comment that I have heard can be paraphrased, "If only those people had read the Bible correctly and understood *the truth*, they would never have fallen in with a cult." Unfortunately, as well-intended as it is, this kind of allegiance to a received *truth* is exactly the appeal David Koresh used with such deadly effectiveness. If some of our people are being conditioned to simply follow *the truth* of Adventism without being given tools for searching out their own truth, is it really surprising that they would simply follow the *truth* presented by a very charismatic personality?

It is time that we, as a church, prayerfully consider what there may be in our teachings and our teaching methods that would allow some of us—including those who have attended some of our finest institutions—to be so tragically misled by the ravings of a madman. It is certainly time, in their time of need, that we stopped distancing ourselves from our brothers and sisters who survived the Waco experience.

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In a Wild Moment, I Imagine...

by Ernest Bursey

This year the April Fool's issue of our student newspaper, the *Collegian*, included a half-page ad announcing an upcoming Revelation Seminar. The main feature of the event—David Koresh, of course, "who comes to us from beautiful Waco, Texas, where he has been playing guitar, getting married, and stockpiling arms as he prepares for the end of the world." The words aren't funny now. We were told in the media to expect a long siege so the children left inside the compound could be spared. But it's over now and they're dead.

I teach a course on the book of Revelation. I'd like to go on teaching Revelation as if nothing had happened. Wouldn't it be nice if I could just say that Mr. Koresh profoundly misunderstood Revelation, and let it go at that? But the *Collegian* ad suggests otherwise. The grapevine whispers that a half-dozen groups with Adventist connections will converge in Colorado to protest the pope during his visit in August. And this time it won't be so easy for me and other Adventists to distance ourselves from the interpretations of Revelation placarded before the world.

What can we salvage from Waco? The answers reveal yet another standoff—this time within Adventism—a standoff between those who see current events confirming Adventist interpretation of Revelation and those who see events like the Waco holocaust as confirming suspicion over the whole apocalyptic enterprise that has defined Adventism. In simple terms, we're in the midst of a standoff between those who attend

Revelation Seminars and those who boycott them.

Were the followers of Koresh, faithful to death, precursors of a blind humanity soon to embrace the antichrist described in Revelation 13? Or were David Koresh and his flock an embodiment of the excesses of their Adventist heritage, too long grazing on the visions of Revelation? I hear both answers even among my students. Whether the Waco episode will promote much real dialogue among Adventists in general remains to be seen.

Most of my students come from a conservative Adventist perspective. Most of them consider Koresh one more sign of the end. Others, a minority to be sure, come to the course carrying questions about the way Adventists have been reading Revelation. Christians—both Protestant and Catholic, Muslims, and even Communists from China—attend our college and take my class on Revelation. Perhaps it is a matter of personality, but I do not consider my first responsibility in teaching this course to deconstruct my students' beliefs about the mark of the beast and the Catholic Church as much as to help them sort out what is spiritually and ethically virile from what they have acquired. I judge my first task to search for the common ground. Where is it? Has Waco widened or narrowed it?

I caught myself speaking in class about "Wack-o, Texas." As a self-evident truth we "know" ourselves to be different from the Waco enclave. "How could they be so gullible?" We wonder about the personality flaw that would allow David Koresh to mesmerize otherwise intelligent people. It's more than an Adventist defense mechanism. Christians have long distanced themselves from the Jews calling for Jesus' crucifixion. We have distanced ourselves from the Nazi guards and executioners in the camps of the Holocaust, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of the supporting cast for the executioners were bona fide members of the Christian church. As an Adventist and a Christian, I shall try even harder to raise matters of moral courage and the responsibility to question authority systems, including my own.

In tomorrow morning's Revelation class we'll be discussing the seven seals without the benefit of Koresh's unfinished manuscript. Ought not the book of Revelation be indicted for inflaming a conscientious and unstable reader to imagine himself to be the Messiah filled with the wrath of the Lamb, who leads the powerful of the world to plead for rocks to cover them under the sixth seal?

Revelation does speak the language of violence. But only a skewed reading of Revelation would lead to the arming of the Davidian compound. The eye of the reader, prepared for the battle of Armageddon in chapter 16, is deflected at last from its execution, and must be content with a call of God to the birds of carrion in chapter 19 to consume the already slain carcasses.

I wonder, do Roy Branson and Roland Hegstad, two Adventist editors who both take Revelation seriously but read it differently, ever talk about the book of Revelation and Adventist prophetic interpretation? I'd love to read it in the Adventist Review.

Even more disappointing, the readers of Revelation are excluded from any wielding of the sword. God and the Lamb slay the wicked. All the others who take to the field in battle are excluded from the Holy City. Even the Holy City under siege is delivered by an act of God, not by any efforts by the besieged on their own behalf. Consistent with the rest of the New Testament, the readers are commanded to leave the matters of revenge and retributive justice in the hands of God and the Lamb. In spite of the vivid language against Babylon and the Beast, the book has no place for sanctified slayers or the stockpiling of weapons.

Koresh armed himself with guns and the Word. The government agencies responsible for protecting the rest of us matched his weapons of destruction. But in a wild moment of my own I imagine someone walking into the compound, armed only with the Word. The visitor expresses yet again the teachings of Jesus that forbade any follower of Jesus from taking up the sword to inflict the judgments of God. Surely one of us Adventists, steeped in the language of apocalyptic, could have tried. How do you reason with a madman writing himself into ancient texts? Weapons and a siege didn't work. Why not with prayer and the Word?

Were we Adventists so anxious to save our reputation from the embarrassment of Koresh that we missed an opportunity to save the lives of the children incinerated in the tragedy of Waco? We'll never know because we didn't try but left it up to Caesar's troops.

That standoff is over, but we could still work on resolving another one. This is an exciting time to be a religion teacher in an Adventist school. I find the range and vigor of views on Revelation expressed in Adventist periodicals refreshing. My student colleagues in this course on Revelation sit down with Mervyn Maxwell and Charles Teel. I invite them to listen to Roland Hegstad and Roy Branson, Dwight Nelson and Ottilie Stafford, Jonathan Butler and Roger Coon, just to mention a few voices within Adventism that have gone public on how Revelation ought to be read. That's because a college classroom is a place dedicated to a respectful and critical listening to different voices and to searching for the common ground.

What appears up to now to be lacking in this rich and diverse offering is evidence of dialogue. The present collection of views on Waco in this issue of *Spectrum* point in the right direction. I could wish for more. I wonder, do Roy Branson and Roland Hegstad, two Adventist editors who both take Revelation seriously but read it differently, ever talk about the book of Revelation and Adventist prophetic interpretation? I think it would make good copy. I'd love to read it in the *Adventist Review.*

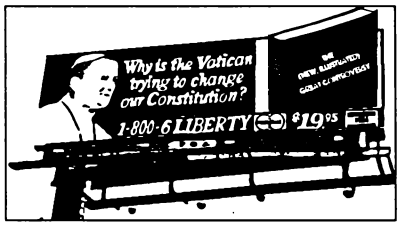
Where in print can we find a single book intended to provide a representative expression of the diversity of interpretation within Adventism? The recent volumes published by the Biblical Research Institute on the book of Revelation offer the best collective case for a traditional Adventist interpretation of Revelation. Some of the articles are creative. But there's precious little space given to differing points of view. That apparently was not the purpose of the series. Thoughtful members with questions are tempted to dismiss these volumes out of hand.

On the other hand, a widely circulated letter from a contributor to the Biblical Research Institute's volumes excoriated Charles Teel's article on Revelation published in *Spectrum*—an article I invited my students to read along with the Biblical Research Institute's offerings. I'd like to see effort expended to find common ground. Others would prefer debate—I'd even settle for that. Why not a review of the Biblical Research Institute's volumes on Revelation in *Spectrum*? Years ago the now defunct Southern Publishing Association published a volume on perfection, with contributions by Edward Heppenstall, Herbert Douglass, and others. What Adventist publishing house would be willing to follow suit on the interpretation of Revelation?

This is not only an exciting time, but also a dangerous time to be teaching a course on Revelation in an Adventist college. On several North American Adventist campuses, biblical scholars studiously avoid teaching a course on Revelation. If more of the teaching of Revelation and Adventist apocalyptic interpretation is to be done by those with relevant academic training—and I, for one, believe that is a worthwhile objective—those of us who are called upon to do the teaching need help. What college students and other thoughtful young Adventists need are models of public discourse, where the views of others in the church different from our own are treated with respect and are taken seriously.

How we have dealt with our differences over Revelation is symptomatic of the difficulties we Adventists are having dealing with our differences over a wider front. I hope it's not too late for listening to points of view that seem incongruous or antiquated. Perhaps the barriers to understanding and trust are insurmountable. The standoff between those who attend Revelation Seminars and those who boycott them may be unbridgeable. But the Word promises that "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb . . . The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together. . . . They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain" (Isaiah 11:6-9, RSV). In a wild moment, I imagine. . . .

Ernest J. Bursey, associate professor of biblical studies in the School of Theology at Walla Walla College, regularly teaches a course on the book of Revelation. He received his Ph.D. in New Testament from Yale University.



The Great Billboard Controversy

by Frank A. Knittel

Giant billboards attacking the Vatican and advertising The Great Controversy *are going up in Orlando, Portland, Denver, and Loma Linda.*

On Friday, November 20th, 42 billboards began to appear across Orlando, Florida, in the most visually desirable locations. With imposing letters, 21 of the signs demanded, "When Church & State Unite, What Do You Lose?" The other 21 asked, "Just How Secure Is Our Constitution?"

Within the week all 42 billboards were up, and discussion about their mysterious origin was already hitting Orlando talk shows. On Monday, November 30, a new wave of 12 billboards was unveiled—14 feet by 48 feet, the largest in the industry. This second battery of super billboards featured a face photograph of the pope with the question, "Why Is the Vatican Trying to Change Our Constitution?"

About a third of these superboards—still up in Orlando—are devoted to an invitation to buy *The Great Controversy* for $19.95, Visa and MasterCard welcome. Together with this is an 800 number for the book ordering.

David Mould, leader of Laymen for Religious Liberty, announced to the world in late 1992, that his group was responsible for the initiation of what may become the most controversial "evangelistic" endeavor related to the Seventh-day Adventist Church yet unveiled in North America. "For clarity and presence this board simply can't be beaten," said Mould. "This was our armor-piercing bomb, calculated to tear consumer inertia to pieces."

In addition to the Orlando campaign, Mould's billboards have appeared in Portland, Oregon, and in Lodi, California. Funds are currently being gathered by those who declare that they will soon have 50 of the superboards in place in the Loma Linda area. Mould has also announced that later this year, when the pope visits Colorado, Laymen for Religious Liberty will put on a massive protest demonstration, that will hopefully draw international attention.

Predictably, when the billboards went up in Orlando, they became the talk of town. The telemarketing company in New York taking the

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book orders reported that in the first week of billboard advertising sales of *The Great Controversy* were in "the thousands." The marketing company also revealed to Orlando callers the local telephone number of Laymen for Religious Liberty. A member of the group reported that within a few hours after the number was made public they received "several hundred" calls. Orlando talk shows devoted major airtime to discussion of the matter, and area newspapers devoted news coverage and editorial comments to the topic. Many of the callers were not amused. Neither were most Orlando Adventists.

Florida Adventist Hospital, the world's largest Seventh-day Adventist medical facility, was deluged with calls, mainly from people who simply could not put the advertising together with the impeccable reputation of the church-owned hospital. One switchboard operator reported that immediately after the first billboards were erected she had the busiest days of her memory.

Hospital personnel, stunned by the billboards and the resultant publicity, were hard-pressed to respond properly. Unlike at Waco, there was no General Conference team on hand serving as trouble-shooters. A hospital spokesman has stated that most Adventist physicians and nurses were embarrassed and in many cases enraged, and the non-Adventist staff members were variously amazed, perplexed, and angered. In some instances, when members of this second group discovered that *The Great Controversy* is one of the leading books of Adventists, their reaction became downright hostile. Adventist staff physicians and residency students reported that for at least two weeks they constantly fielded questions about their beliefs. Comments and questions still persist.

Understandably, the officers of the Florida Conference were put in a most awkward position. They did not like the tone of the billboards, yet they could not denounce them in terms of the message, for doing so would take a position relative to Ellen White that would induce tremendously negative fallout from many devout Adventists. Yet these church leaders felt some kind of response was both expected and mandatory.

A special issue of the conference newsletter, *Florida Focus*, attempted to put the matter into some kind of perspective. President Obed Graham commented, "I fear that many of our people have gotten the idea that this is the battle that God has called upon us to fight and if we don't take this hard-line attacking approach, then we must not be willing to take a stand in support of our faith."

Officers of the Florida Conference were in a most awkward position. They did not like the tone of the billboards, but could not denounce them in terms of their message, for doing so would take a position relative to Ellen White that would bring tremendously negative responses from many Adventists.

He did emphatically support *The Great Controversy*, declaring, ". . . the book entitled *The Great Controversy* is being distributed by the thousands, and we praise God for that. The Adventist Book Center carries many different editions for this purpose."

The remainder of the *Focus* was a compilation of statements from Ellen White's writings cautioning church members not to present Adventist beliefs in denunciatory and injudicious manners. Finally, *Focus* was accompanied by a letter to Mould from Paull Dixon, pastor at Portland, Maine, who entitled his letter, "BILLBOARDS ABOUT VATICAN 'RAPE' A CITY." In his letter Dixon asserts, "You have taken a right that is personal, beautiful and meaningful, the discovery of truth, and made it disgusting, even repulsive."

Mould's response to the special edition of *Focus* was a publication containing a compilation of passages from Ellen White declaring that we must boldly preach the "truth." Typical of his selections is the one from *The Great Controversy*, p. 566:

> "Men are closing their eyes to the real character of Romanism, and the dangers to be apprehended from her supremacy. The people need to be aroused to *resist* [italics, sic] the advances of this most dangerous foe to civil and religious liberty."

And, of course, the statements on the billboards do come directly from *The Great Controversy*.

Mould went on to claim that, "While the Florida Conference religious liberty leader was clearly less than enthusiastic, within days his counterpart at the Southeastern Conference [the Florida conference for black members] had not only

favorably mentioned our campaign in his Wednesday night study of *The Great Controversy*, but had also agreed to have Laymen for Religious Liberty host the religious liberty program at his church, the Mt. Sinai SDA Church, on January 23rd."

Who is David Mould, and who are the Laymen for Religious Liberty? Mould originally came from one of the Caribbean islands, and a few years ago developed a prison ministry under the title of "Jesus Behind Bars." For a time, he received moral and financial support from the General Conference, but according to General Conference sources, the relationship soured, and corporate church funds to support Mould's prison program are no longer provided. Mould also founded the Laymen for Religious Liberty organization. It has no generic connection with or financial support from the corporate church.

Mould has recently been joined by Webster Barnaby, also from a Caribbean island, and a former member of The Church of the God of Prophecy. Barnaby was drawn to Mould through the Orlando billboard campaign and according to Mould "kept his first Sabbath on January 2nd." The two, working together as leaders of Laymen for Religious Liberty, are regular members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and very firmly support its beliefs.

The activities of Laymen for Religious Liberty have driven the church into a most awkward position at a most crucial crossroad, coming as it does on the heels of Waco. Because of what has been written by Ellen White, Adventists have been conditioned to believe that the Sabbath is the first and foremost truth of the Scriptures because it will be the last great test before the end of the present world. Moreover, that test will be precipitated by actions of the combined powers of apostate Protestantism, spiritualism, and the Papacy. Obviously, then, if that is the truth, we must not hesitate to preach it. We must not hide our beliefs under a bushel basket. Consequently, our public evangelism crusades have been traditionally built around the beasts in Daniel and Revelation, as have our popular Revelation Seminars. The full-page newspaper spreads that Mould sponsors in Orlando, together with his public promise of future activity, is certainly a way to come out from under the bushel.

The Laymen for Religious Liberty assert that we cannot denounce what they are doing while at the same time supporting our belief in what has been traditionally declared a pivotal teaching of our church. And if that belief is truly to be preached throughout the world, we cannot condemn the startling events in Florida. We cannot distance ourselves from something we emphatically declare is a vital truth for the last days. Nor can we water down a crucial message in order to save embarrassment.

Our central message for these last days need not be defamation of or propagation against the Papacy, any more than it should be a message to Protestant non-Adventists that their churches have apostatized and therefore are hell-bent. Clearly, the billboard issue must be addressed—and quickly.

What Are the Church's Options?

First, we could give Laymen for Religious Liberty massive financial support so that it can blanket North America with Orlando-type superboards. Such a move, we could say, would do much to hasten the coming of the Lord.

The General Conference is in a difficult position to criticize taking such an option. The church world headquarters is energetically promoting a volume every bit as reactionary as Mould's billboards: Clifford Goldstein's recent book, *Day of the Dragon.* It has been glowingly advertised as a critical message for our times by the Adventist Book Centers, and is a hot item in its current camp meeting sales. Our church leaders are hardly in a position to denounce Mould while promoting his modern "loud cry" from our own press. In fact, at this juncture, we are tacitly saying what Mould says, but apparently hoping it will not draw attention from the world about us.

A second option is to do nothing to discourage Laymen for Religious Liberty—but to provide them no material means to assist their cause. The Laymen for Religious Liberty thus will continue as an entity independent of corporate church structure or control, but one at least tacitly approved by the church. Without the church's fi-

nancial support, the wish goes, at least the billboard project will fail.

A third option is to take a serious look at the entire issue of Ellen White's inspiration. As a church we have never yet formed a definitive position relative to revelation found in her writings as differentiated from her devotional messages. This third option, of course, would require massive re-education of church leadership, church ministry, and laity.

A first step in following this third option would be to admit openly that nowhere in *The Great Controversy* does the author ever declare that all in that book is revelational. A second step would have to be open admission that except for the Sabbath issues, most of the ideas in the book represent attitudes commonly held by Protestant churches of the 19th century. Even that oft-quoted passage on page 588—that in the time of the end apostate Protestantism would grasp the hand of spiritualism and the two of them would reach across the abyss and join with the Papacy in the persecution of God's people—was first penned by someone else.

The third step—and the most problematic—would be to openly acknowledge that the Scriptures—*not* the writings of Ellen White—are the source of doctrine for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A critical mass of Adventists—including ministers and other church leaders—agree that Ellen White is fallible, but there has been a reluctance to express this conviction openly.

This third option would force us to say that *The Great Controversy,* including specific teaching relative to last-day events, represents the conviction of its author, who might have written otherwise today. Such a position would seriously trouble those who have been conditioned to believe that while Ellen White's writings may be a lesser light than the Bible, they are *all* still sacred in a revelational way.

While many rank-and-file Adventists would be troubled by the suggestion to downplay *The Great Controversy* in evangelism, it is the most honest approach we can take. By doing so, we can honestly refute the Orlando billboard proclamations and declare faithfully that our message to the world is based upon the Bible and Bible only, that its thesis is Jesus Christ and him crucified. Our central message for these last days need not be defamation of or propagation against the Papacy, any more than it should be a message to Protestant non-Adventists that their churches have apostatized and therefore are hell-bent.

Clearly, the billboard issue must be addressed—and quickly. It must be recognized that Mould has followers and supporters to sponsor his lavish advertising. He claims that if his plans for the future materialize, he has assurance of even greater continuing support. The officers of our corporate church must come to terms with the problem of dealing with an in-church group which proposes no "new light," but wants to preach the old light more energetically than is deemed productive. If his plans for the future are at all realistic, polarization within North American Adventism is inevitable.

But surely collective reasoning within our church can avert chaos at a time when Americans are already wondering, in the wake of the Waco disaster, about the spiritual integrity of Seventh-day Adventists.

Responses to the Loma Linda issue are followed by a letter in defense of colporteurs.

LLU Debate Continued by A Principal in the Dispute

The August 1992 issue of *Spectrum* on Loma Linda was of great interest to me. Of particular interest was the section entitled "Documenting a Dispute." The dispute over academic due process is important to the vitality of Loma Linda University (LLU) and has important implications for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, since the General Conference is centrally involved in the Board of Trustees and its style of management.

Although there is a serious dispute at Loma Linda over academic due process, it is a procedural issue and simply obscures the real underlying dispute. *What lies beneath is a dispute over administrative misconduct that includes: abuse of power, intimidation of faculty, retaliation, exploitation, and infringement of patent rights.*

Your style of journalism is peculiar in as much as you are "Documenting a Dispute" without any investigation! You have not interviewed the individuals who are central to the dispute. If *Spectrum* is interested in "Documenting a Dispute," it will require investigative journalism.

You chose to publish President Behrens' letter to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) originally dated June 3, 1992, in response to the AAUP article in the May-June issue of *Academe.* Her letter is extremely misleading, and I trust that you will publish the following response:

President Behrens begins by stating that "you would not be surprised that the incongruity between the stated mission of LLU and the reported performance is easily explained by the fact that there is 'another side of the story.' I am sure you would agree that the merits of these cases cannot be discussed outside of appropriate institutional forums for due process or other appropriate legal forums."

This statement bears comment because the terminated faculty members never had the opportunity to hear or refute the "other side of the story" since it was presented to the Executive Committee of Loma Linda Faculty Medical Group, Inc., (LLFMGI) and subsequently, to Loma Linda Board of Trustees in the *absence of the accused!* Further, due process has nothing to do with "the story," but rather with the appropriate method of protecting the rights and reputation of the "accused." President Behrens proceeded in her letter "to speak to some issues which cause me grave concern at this time."

Behrens: "Formal predismissal meetings occurred in each case during which administration provided to a faculty committee, the reasons and the documentation for the dismissal of each faculty member. Further, the vote by the faculty members of that committee to support the recommendation of termination was conducted by secret ballot and was unanimous."

Response: This *faculty committee* she refers to consists of chairmen of clinical departments who do not challenge administration. Academic due process requires a predismissal hearing before an *elected faculty body*. President Behrens' strained attempt to equate her predismissal *meeting* with an appropriate predismissal *hearing* is quite transparent.

Behrens: "The grievance component of the faculty academic due process could have been initiated prior to the effective date of the termination of the faculty appointment. Specifically, this could have occurred in the intervening 30 days from notice of this intended action and its taking effect which was a provision expressly designed for this purpose. In actuality, the formal predismissal meetings, the 30 day notice, the lengthy opportunity for grievance after the 30 day period, and provision for arbitration clearly provided due process in these three dismissals."

You chose to publish President Behrens' letter to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), originally dated June 3, 1992. Her letter is extremely misleading, and I trust that you will publish the following response.

Response: The expression *"this intended action"* implies that the terminations were not completed prior to the offer of grievance. Quoting from President Behrens' letter of July 19, 1991 "... *the Board of Trustees of Loma Linda University has voted to terminate your faculty appointment as Professor of Medicine . . . effective August 12, 1991* . . . you have available to you the grievance procedures . . ." As stated by President Behrens "this provision was specifically designed for this purpose," that is, to offer the grievance *after* the termination. There is no doubt that it was "specifically designed" to offer the grievance after the termination has been voted on by every appropriate administrative body and the Board of Trustees.

The facts are these: On July 16, 1991, without any prior warning or counseling, I was handed a letter dated July 16, 1991, recommending termination of my faculty appointment and informing me of the meeting of the executive committee of LLFMGI on the next day.

On July 17, I wrote a letter requesting copies of the documents and papers that supposedly supported the allegations against me and I requested a few days to formulate a response. Later the same day, I hand delivered the letter to Drs. David B. Hinshaw and Douglas Will. I did not receive a reply, and the committee met as scheduled.

On the following day, (July 18, 1991), the Board of Trustees voted to terminate my faculty appointment without a hearing. The entire process was completed within 48 hours!

President Behrens also refers to the "arbitration" as part of the due process. Please note that the faculty handbook states that the arbitrator shall not have the authority to render an award "*which has the effect of altering, amending, ignoring, adding to or subtracting from existing University policies and practices.*" Incredibly, despite these facts, President Behrens claims that these provisions "clearly provided due process in these three dismissals."

Behrens: "Suspension of their faculty activities did not jeopardize their access to any faculty due process."

Response: The AAUP report did not claim that suspension jeopardized access to due process. Rather, AAUP's position was that suspension was unjustified because there was *"no threat of immediate harm."*

Behrens: "Each faculty member's opportunity to grieve continued beyond the time of the discontinuation of their faculty appointment."

Behrens: "Faculty appointment and employment for clinical faculty at LLU are with separate 501(c)(3) corporations. This relationship is well publicized and clearly defined and has existed since 1978."

Behrens: "For each of the three dismissed faculty, policies relating to the terms of their employment and termination were enumerated in their employment contract."

Response: These three statements of fact are irrelevant to the issue of due process.

Behrens: "Termination of the faculty appointments did *not* terminate the individuals' salaries which continued beyond the entire time available to them to initiate a grievance. It should be further noted that, at the subsequent time when their employment was discontinued, there was additional payment to these individuals as per their employment contract."

Response: A letter from Roy Jutzy (Medicine Department chairman) dated September 17, 1991, reads as follows: "This is to inform you that the LLUPMGI Operations Committee has made a preliminary decision to terminate your employment and your employment agreement . . . The relevant factors include the following: *Due to the termination of your faculty appointment,* you can no longer teach or perform services at facilities leased from LLFMGI . . ."

Undisputedly, we lost our salaried positions with even greater clarity: "*14. Termination.* This agreement and Employee's employment shall be terminated by the board or its designate upon the happening of any of the following events: (d) *Employee's loss of faculty appointment in the Loma Linda University School of Medicine. . . .*" Is there any doubt concerning the intent of the administration in this regard?

Behrens: "The policies on academic freedom were not breached in determining the cause for termination for any of the cases mentioned. More specifically, none of the faculty that were dismissed for cause were terminated for reasons that involved academic freedom."

Behrens: "LLU most particularly believes that academic freedom is the right of every member of our academic community, whether the individual is an instructor, a nontenured, or a tenured professor."

Response: President Behrens is apparently referring to Loma Linda University policies on academic freedom, rather than those established by the academic community. Academic freedom includes freedom to criticize which, as stated in the AAUP report, is a "crucial component of academic freedom and of the institution's ultimate vitality." Nevertheless, LLU policies on academic freedom, prior to policy revisions in 1991, read as follows: "*Academic freedom allows a faculty member to question institutional plans, objectives, or policies . . . without fear of administrative reprisal.*"

This phrase does not appear in the 1991 faculty handbook, which, ironically, was approved by the Board of Trustees on July 18, 1991, the same day that it voted to terminate our faculty appointments. Therefore, the revised policies of 1991 could not have been applicable to us. President Behrens' statement that "none of the faculty that were dismissed for cause were terminated for reasons that involved academic freedom" is simply not true, and the "cause" has never been publicly stated.

Behrens: "Why did AAUP staff refuse to urge the grievants to use the policy available to them that would have provided for proper adjudication as noted previously?"

Response: Such a request was made by President Behrens to Jordan Kurland in a letter to the AAUP dated October 28, 1991. His response dated November 5, 1991, was as follows: "We would have done so at the outset, were we able to agree with you that 'appropriate' procedures are available. As reiterated in my October 3 letter, however, we view the existing procedures as *"severely deficient when measured against generally accepted procedural standards governing dismissal from a faculty position; key deficiencies include implementation of a dismissal prior to a hearing on adequacy of cause and placement of the burden on the professor to prove that the administration and board violated institutional policies in effecting the dismissal. If you will reinstate the professors to their positions pending the outcome of the proceedings, and if you will assume the burden in the proceedings of demonstrating adequate cause for action against the professors, we shall be pleased to consider recommending their participation in the process."*

Behrens: Brown and Bessman incorrectly state that "The selection of the Loma Linda University grievance panel, in contrast, is largely controlled by the president . . ." This statement is poorly informed and reflects ignorance of the policy. The president has very little control over the grievance panel. For each open seat on the grievance panel, Clinical Science Faculty Advisory Council (CSFAC) provides the president with two nominees. "The president, in collaboration with the vice president for medical affairs and the dean of the School of Medicine, will appoint the faculty grievance panel from these nominees. . . . Thus CSFAC largely controls membership of the grievance panel, and the panel serves as an independent standing committee. Brown and Bessman appear to have missed this important fact."

Response: Who controls CSFAC? Approximately half of CSFAC are administrative faculty who are appointed chairmen of departments and are in lock step with the administration. The remaining members are either appointed by the department chairmen, or elected

This administration has acted in a most unchristian fashion and it is difficult to find any truth in these statements except for the reference to Christian philosophy being the foundation of our institution and our church.

by their respective departments. Moreover, *President Behrens is known to have simply removed certain names from the list of departmental nominees to CSFAC!* Further, the one individual in CSFAC who voted against the administration on May 14, 1991, was subsequently given the ultimatum: *either support the administration or seek other employment!* There is no question that President Behrens and her administration, in large part, control the selection of the Loma Linda University grievance panel. *Brown and Bessman did not miss this important fact!*

Behrens: "In our opinion, your Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure has failed to demonstrate careful scholarship, moderation, fairness and thorough analysis in its report . . . This has led to the publication of an inaccurate and biased report."

Response: An incredible statement from President Behrens who failed to investigate issues of vital importance to LLU, terminated faculty without due process, manipulated the electoral process, and refused to testify in the investigative hearings of the AAUP.

President Behrens' closing remarks are difficult to accept at face value. "The faculty and administration will implement all policies and procedures with *fairness and justice* . . ." The administration will continue to "*respect, value, nurture, and protect all the members of* our campus community not only in the fullest sense of the academic community, but also according to the Christian philosophy which is foundational to our institution and our church."

In light of the well-documented performance of the administration, these words are empty because this administration provides no "fairness and justice" for dissenting faculty. Further, this administration has acted in a most unchristian fashion and it is difficult to find any truth in these statements except for the reference to Christian philosophy being the foundation of our institution and our church.

George M. Grames
Redlands, California

"Crown Jewel" or "Historical Adventist Institution"?

I found your recent *Spectrum* issue on Loma Linda very interesting. There were references to the "controversy" in several articles without actually stating what the controversy was all about. The WASC and AAUP reports dealt with whether or not the *procedures* for disciplining the faculty and hearing grievances were appropriate, but nowhere were the *issues* that prompted the "controversy" discussed.

Stated in its simplest form, I believe the "controversy" centers around the following issues:

1. Who determines what the actual goals are for the university?
2. Who monitors the ethical behavior of administration in achieving these goals? (Does being a "religious institution" exempt it from standards of behavior required of "secular institutions"?)
3. How does one disagree, or even discuss these issues when all the publications and organizations of "faculty representation" are controlled by the administration?

It seems to me, both from observation and reading your editorial introduction, that the real, unstated, primary goal of Dr. Hinshaw and his younger associates is for Loma Linda to become and remain famous. Being famous is not altogether bad. However, being an example to students and patients of how Christian service is to be delivered should be the primary goal.

The basic reason that Stewart Shankel was fired was that he kept investigating instances where he felt that the LLU administration was mistreating its faculty and staff. The inability of administration to explain its behavior and its persistent suppression of any efforts for an independent investigation is sapping the vitality of the institution.

An even more fundamental issue is that of control and power. In that regard, Loma Linda University is but a microcosm of denominational structure. The efforts of the Pacific Union and North American Division presidents to control the Southeastern California constituency meeting in the fall of 1992 are conspicuous recent examples.

In this "Father Knows Best" environment, participatory management is an oxymoron. Board members are advised against talking to faculty lest they appear unsupportive of administration. Administration is eager to tell all who will listen how happy the faculty are, but have consistently suppressed and refused to discuss evidence to the contrary. Examples of this include the 1990 Abrahmson report, the October 1991 Department of Internal Medicine poll and the Interfaculty Advisory Council (IFAC) poll of May 1992.

At the October 1992 meeting of IFAC, the Faculty of Religion brought the following request* for the Board of Trustees to establish a "blue ribbon commission" to investigate the problems at the university. Administration spoke long and

hard against the proposal and the meeting was adjourned without any action being taken. Subsequently, a university vice president wrote a letter to the framers of the request. The letter could be considered an act of intimidation against the faculty of religion for having suggested that administration had acted inappropriately.

One of the outcomes of this faculty dissatisfaction is that many more SDA faculty are leaving the medical school than can be recruited. The vacancies, when filled, are frequently filled by non-Adventist physicians. In the latest issue of Loma Linda University School of Medicine's alumni journal, a university vice president shared with the readership, in the "Letters to the Editor" section, unarguable statistics on the truthfulness of this concern. If you disregard the good performance of the Department of Internal Medicine in retaining SDA faculty, one can see how severe the problem is for the rest of the School of Medicine.

This inconspicuous but very significant change in background and attitudes of the clinicians who are the role models for the students and house staff will have a profound effect on the LLU graduates and the future of the university.

Loma Linda may very well have been the crown jewel of an Adventist educational system, but it is rapidly becoming a "historical Adventist" university. When this rapidly changing faculty is eventually given a voice, it may well decide that denominational affiliation no longer advances its goal to be famous.

Finally, there is the story of the pilot who announced to his passengers that they were flying higher and faster than ever before, but unfortunately, he didn't know where they were—and didn't care to discuss it.

Richard L. Sheldon
Redlands, California

* REQUEST FROM THE FACULTY OF RELIGION TO I.F.A.C.

We the Faculty of Religion are deeply concerned about the erosion of the credibility of Loma Linda University, both locally and world wide because of the pain on our campus the last couple of years. We ask that I.F.A.C., through the Faculty Forum, request of the Loma Linda Board of Trustees the establishment of a Blue Ribbon Commission to address these issues and work towards healing.

Kudos to *Spectrum*'s Coverage

Kudos to the Editor-in-Chief, and to the writers of each of the pieces in *Spectrum*'s August 1992 issue on Loma Linda University/Medical Center. The task of capturing the history, the essence, and the promise of an institution so complex and so intertwined with the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is formidable indeed.

I have taught at Loma Linda as a faculty member for the past 27 years—a period that overlaps much of the history presented by Bonnie Dwyer. I found her piece "Pursuing That Vision Thing" balanced, informative, and virtually error-free. There is, I believe, one minor historical error. In discussing the proton accelerator project, she indicates that the idea arose out of discussions in the department of radiology, discussions that were supported by Hinshaw as "cutting edge" activities.

There is no doubt that the discussion arose out of radiology, and that Hinshaw deserves the lion's share of the credit for bringing the proton accelerator project to fruition—there is, after all, the matter of $20 million that he played a crucial role in securing from Congress. The Medical Center Board had, however, discussed the project on more than one occasion and had already given the go-ahead directive before Hinshaw became Vice President for Medical Affairs in 1986. These events all occurred during the closing months of Dr. Harrison Evans' tenure as vice president. I remember well the arguments advanced by a faculty committee that reviewed the initial proposal from Dr. James Slater in radiology, collected data on the two other machines operating in the U.S. (Berkeley and Harvard), and eventually recommended to the board of the university that the project was feasible and deserved support.

The "Who Pays the Bills?" piece by Kent Seltman is a remarkable gallop through a half-billion dollar general ledger. To give it some perspective, this figure is almost three times larger than the annual General Conference budget. This fact no doubt accounts for the attention that Loma Linda has received and continues to receive from the GC. Attention, perhaps, but a surprisingly small (relatively speaking) amount of money. Seltman's highlighting of the major share of the medical school budget borne by the clinical faculty is timely and probably not well understood by many outside of the Loma Linda city limits.

The varied and extensive Loma Linda research enterprise is nicely delineated by Clark Davis in "Research at the Cutting Edge." Clark's interest in research at Loma Linda is partly that of of a journalist, partly personal. He was operated upon

by Dr. Len Bailey (newly appointed as chair of surgery) some years ago.

There is always the question as to how much of an article should be devoted to the journalist's personal assessment and how much to background material. In "Documenting a Dispute" the editors have eliminated personal assessment entirely and have provided for the readers of *Spectrum* a balanced selection of original documents in chronological sequence. Given the contentious nature of this long-running controversy, this is a stroke of genius. It allows the reader to form his or her own conclusions and ensures that the source documents will be readily available for those who will again write about this unique institution. I am an editor myself. I am certain that this issue of *Spectrum* will become the definitive work on Loma Linda for the three decades—60s, 70s, and 80s. You have provided an invaluable resource for future historians of Adventism's institutions and have every right to be proud of your accomplishments.

Brian Bull
Chair, Pathology
Loma Linda School of Medicine

Spectrum's Picture Pretty Good; More Needed on Norman Woods

We have had many ups and downs at LLU over the past seven or eight years. The August 1992 issue of *Spectrum* gave the overall picture pretty well. Of course I would make some changes. The one that I want to point out is a discrepancy between two versions of the events surrounding President Norman Woods' resignation and the trustees' decision to divorce Loma Linda from La Sierra. Al Karlow's account is closer to the way I remember that famous day and year.

I would also have given more emphasis to Dr. Woods' role. He faithfully carried out the instruction of the trustees and carried out an even-handed study of consolidating LLU at Loma Linda. He corrected the money deficit at Loma Linda. He forced the trustees to face the fact that the two-campus two-provost structure did not work. During that time, he was the target for a great deal of heat—much of it ill-tempered and some of it vicious. His demeanor gave me a lesson in what it means to be a Christian gentleman.

Bruce Wilcox
Loma Linda, California

In Defense of Marlowe Schaffner

When the article "Pursuing That Vision Thing" in the August 1992 *Spectrum* came to my attention recently, it opened a hurting memory mixed with a flare-up of smothered indignation.

As one who has known Marlowe Schaffner well for more than 50 years—from the time he was a college freshman until the present—I can say that I have been impressed by his great integrity and by his unswerving, sacrificial devotion to his God, his principles, his church, his friends, and his co-workers—undimmed, I may say, by his experience at Loma Linda University Medical School. I feel the urge, therefore, to speak out.

First, one could question the carefulness of research that designated him as "the new dean," when that was not his title or role; that he succeeded Dr. Hinshaw when actually he succeeded Dr. Harrison Evans; that he was dismissed when actually he resigned. And there is the pejorative implication that he was merely an impractical dreamer in his effort to serve Loma Linda University—an insinuation that ignores both his planning and funding, for instance, the present basic sciences building and his less visible contributions.

Further, there is an unbalanced comparison, or assessment, which reports that Dr. Hinshaw's dreams came true in the face of malfeasance of a subordinate, but fails to mention that Dr. Schaffner also suffered such malfeasance.

Also, much of Dr. Schaffner's prior or subsequent contributions were not offered in a balanced referendum. No mention is made of the prominent assignments offered by the General Conference and even later by the university; of his election as president of the Medical Alumni Association; of his ongoing chairmanship of the Alumni Fund Council in which he coordinated the raising to date of $7 million for his alma mater.

Finally, to have the word *scandal* used in any way regarding Marlowe Schaffner is almost unbearable for one who has known him through his college days (from a faculty viewpoint as I did), through medical school, through his military experience, through his prompt willingness to leave an excellent and growing medical practice to go to Africa, where levels of responsibility rose until he was medical officer for the division, and through his 11-year presidency at the Kettering Medical Center.

I have known a few unembittered men who have seen their life work taken from them. Marlow Schaffner is one of them. His sacrificial life pattern has never wavered as he has responded to calls that might tend to redirect his life, even when years later his abilities were impugned, or, as one high official has said, "unduly maligned."

Dorothy Foreman Beltz
Loma Linda, California

BONNIE DWYER RESPONDS:

In covering 30 years of Loma Linda University history, Dr. Schaffner's brief tenure as vice president for medical affairs (less than two years), unfortunately did not warrant a full discussion of his entire career. You are correct in saying that his title was vice president, not dean, which unaccountably replaced the proper title in the editing process. Thank you for providing a broader perspective on his contributions.

Questions About Loma Linda's Bottom Line

As one of the "lay minds" interested in learning "WHO PAYS THE BILLS?" at Loma Linda, I was appropriately impressed with the detailed facts and figures presented by Dr. Seltman. When I attempted to tie the figures from his analysis to the table provided (page 20, not page 26 as referenced) I failed miserably.

I do not see how "the medical center has doubled its total operating revenue since 1986" ($204 million to $306 million). I also fail to see how "net income in 1991 totaled $306 million" ($5.2 million). It seems to me that Dr. Hinshaw and associates would be pleased to have Dr. Seltman's growth rate in their total operating revenue, and I am certain they would it worth his while to show them more about the $306 million in 1991 net income.

This article is on target because we "lay minds" want to know, but not badly enough to do our own research. So, rather than worry over the veracity of the other facts and figures in the article, I'm writing my confusion off to the uncollectible thoughts account.

John R. Hughes
Placerville, California

Keep the Colporteurs, Says Greater New York Conference

The best response to the question asked by your title, "How Much Longer for the Colporteur?" [October 1992], is "As long as probation continues, there will be opportunity for the canvasser to work."[1]

As a conference publishing director, I especially appreciated reading this and one other article on literature ministry in the October issue. I believe *Spectrum* readers may be interested to learn of an alternative to the new, tri-union publishing program that has been proving fruitful.

One of the three unions in the combined program, the Atlantic Union Conference, has one conference (Greater New York) that decided not to join FER (Family Enrichment Resources).[2] Our decision was based on the belief that a locally based, hands-on program would best serve the needs of the ethnically diverse metropolitan New York area. This local conference program has been operating for a full year, so some analysis is now possible as to whether the decision was correct.

From the start, Greater New York's new publishing program has operated on the following basis:

1. Efforts should be made to involve members of every Greater New York Conference church in literature ministry.
2. To work on a cash-only (C.O.D.) basis.
3. To work in cooperation with church pastors and administrators.
4. The conference continues its established pattern of supporting the program with a maximum of 2.5 percent of gross tithe income, out of which the Home Health Education Service (HHES) pays the salaries and benefits to the director, publishing assistants, and office staff, and benefits (medical, educational, car insurance, etc.) and incentives to the publishing assistants and L.E.'s.
5. The program follows Spirit of Prophecy guidelines on finance, recruiting, training, and methods of canvassing.
6. Book prices have been lowered by 25 percent.

We have been thankful to see the following results: From February 1992 to December 1992, Greater New York Conference literature evangelists delivered $543,000 worth of books. More than 50 persons were baptized as a result of this ministry, representing an increase of 44 percent over the previous year.

The success of this program occurred despite a very reduced

office staff consisting of the publishing director, a part-time secretary, 2 full-time assistants, 1 HHES manager and 1 part-time assistant. The reduced staff, however, means overhead is very low, freeing more money for advertising; sales promotions such as quarterly "Big Months," when the colporteurs receive special financial help for their expenses; and monthly Sunday training seminars.

If you wish to make a comparison with the rest of the Atlantic Union (conferences that joined FER), you will find that Greater New York's book-delivery totals for 1992 were double those of the combined FER conferences in the Atlantic Union during that period. In addition, we have seen steadily increasing numbers of applicants—both men and women—who wish to serve as colporteurs, many as a result of other L.E.'s, pastors, etc. (The total number of full and part-time L.E.'s in our conference rose from 40 to 63 in the past 12 months.)

The sales for the past two years show a continued pattern of increase, except for 1991 (the transitional period during the reorganization of the publishing ministry in our union):

1989 - $316,093.16
1990 - $412,523.30
1991 - $377,756.36
1992 - $543,000.00

In my estimation, the secret of such a positive record in publishing is due to several factors:

- Steady, systematic recruiting.
- Faithful, thorough help of consecrated publishing assistants in training, motivating, and working with L.E.'s.
- Training seminars on an ongoing basis.
- Involvement with church members and pastors. (A recent survey of pastors' attitudes toward publishing ministry in the Greater New York Conference is available on request.)
- Involvement of only local members in publishing ministry, rather than bringing colporteurs from other countries or states.
- The C.O.D. method allows literature evangelists more frequent opportunities for contact with customers, which has resulted in more sales, Bible studies, and baptisms.

In light of all the above, we can say with confidence that while probation lasts, the publishing ministry will endure. Our daily prayer is that the Lord will continue to put his hands on this ministry and make it prosperous for him.

Nahor Muchlutti
Publishing Director
Greater New York Conference

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1. E. G. White, *Colporteur Ministry* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1953), p. 11.

2. Northeastern Conference is another non-FER conference in our union. However, their publishing ministry has been in conjunction with that of other regional conferences (FHHES) since its inception. Northeastern Conference also continues, therefore, independent of FER.

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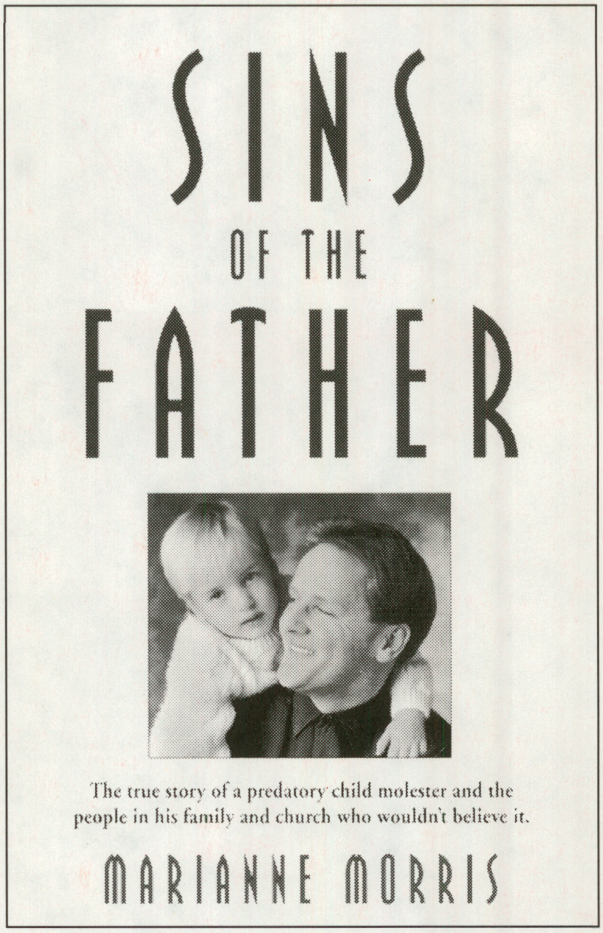

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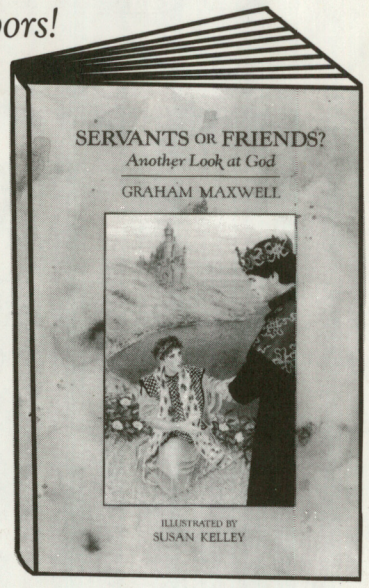

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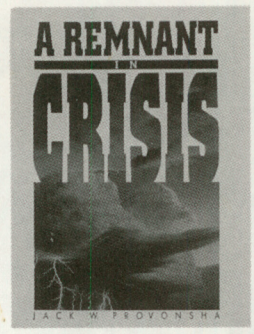

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