

the church is not always as it appears to be.

It was at Soquel that I first saw a woman, Madelyn Haldeman, preach a sermon. One evening as she walked through the youth tent, tall, forceful, and feminine, I first dreamed of preaching my own sermon. At Soquel I also listened to the wit, intelligence, and integrity of H.M.S. Richards, Sr. Summer by summer he created an oasis in a desert of chaos. That he had withstood a lifetime of camp meetings, had made peace with the "boys at the G.C.," as he called them, that he never appeared without his Bible, assured me and my generation that the center would hold.

Many question the relevance of camp meeting. It is an administrative headache. It is expensive and anachronistic. There are problems with health departments and city officials. There are summer storms

which threaten tents. But camp meeting still stands.

That we ought not to return to camp meeting another year is often the theme of the Sabbath sermon. Speakers at camp meetings in 1964 repeatedly said that we were 120 years from the disappointment and that "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man." This same message was proclaimed at camp meetings in 1983. As surely as every Adventist camp meeting repeats these words, year after year we return again. I suspect that we go on this ritual errand into the wilderness because there, finally, our fury of Apocalyptic words is swallowed up in a sea of glass. Camp meeting is a promise of grace, an assurance that the covenant and community still hold fast, that in a sky churning with clouds the size of a man's hand, the rainbow still shines.

Radical Discipleship and the Renewal of Adventist Mission



by Charles Scriven
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Charles Scriven, now president of Columbia Union College, in this essay opened a drive, now joined by others, to convince Adventists that they are more heirs to the "radical reformation" of the Anabaptists, than to the "magisterial reformation" of Luther and Calvin. It is a part of his attempt to expand theological discussion

within Adventism beyond debates over theories of salvation to involvement in social reform.

Scriven is one of several theologians and ethicists who have, over the past 25 years, helped to put social ethical questions on the agenda of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (see profile of Desmond Ford). Scriven, who graduated from Walla Walla College, received a B.D. from the SDA Theological Seminary and a doctorate from the Graduate Theological Union. He has written, among other books, The Demons Have Had It (Southern Publ. Assn., 1976), and The Transformation of Culture (Herald Press, 1988). One of Spectrum's most prolific contributors, Scriven also served six years as associate and co-editor of the journal.

Historians have come to believe that both Methodism and Baptism belong to a distinctive type of Christianity, profoundly different not only from Roman Catholicism but also from the "magisterial state-church" religion of Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anglicanism. This is the "believers' church," or "sectarian," or "radical Protestant" type of Christianity. . . .

Anabaptism . . . is the founding movement among the many movements that make up the radical Protestant tradition. More than Lutheranism or Calvinism, it is the radical Protestant tradition that acquaints us with the Methodist and Baptist pioneers of the Adventist way. This radical Protestantism is what we should especially attend to as we try to faithfully fulfill the promise of the Reformation. . . .

Anabaptism helps . . . by setting before us a *distinctive and radical interpretation of devotion to Christ*. In this view, true devotion requires, first of all, discipleship. . . .

The memory of Anabaptism can give us the courage to strike a different emphasis from Luther, to stress the reality of new life in Christ as strongly as we affirm the truth of justification by faith. Until the scriptural witness to Christ persuades us to think otherwise, we may regard our church's emphasis on sanctification as a thing not to be ashamed of, but to vigorously uphold. . . .

In Anabaptism we find historical precedent for faithful lives serving as missionary witness. . . .

There are two ways in which we can make this sort of witness; both reflect the Anabaptist heritage and both are present, if not fully developed, in contemporary Adventism. Consider first non-violence. . . . Is the time not here for non-violence to become a central motif of Adventist identity? Are we faithful to our own past if we avoid the simple

question, Can disciples ever kill or prepare to kill? . . .

A second way to sharpen our witness is through the style of our lives together. True Christians live and even suffer for one another, the Anabaptists said; they build up a kind of family solidarity. . . .

In our relations as male and female, black and white, ordained and unordained, do we exhibit harmonious equality or do we erect dividing walls of hostility? . . .

Anabaptists believed that true Christian witness, true Christian evangelism, confronts not only individuals but also nations and

institutions. . . .

That is where a final element of Anabaptist heritage within radical Protestantism comes into play: the sense of coming apocalyptic transformation. We today are familiar with apocalyptic consciousness; it is central in Adventism as it was central in Adventism's Reformation predecessors. The coming apocalypse keeps us always mindful of divine judgment on the present age, and always hopeful that, by whatever miracle, a new heaven and a new earth will truly come and our witness will truly matter. . . .

Adventist Tithesaying—The Untold Story



by Brian E. Strayer
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Many Seventh-day Adventists think our 19th-century pio-

neers' giving habits probably outshone those of their 20th-century descendants. Hence, tithing—practiced by 86 percent of all Seventh-day Adventists today in some form—must indeed be one of the oldest financial traditions within our church. In truth, however, this method of systematic giving entered the pantheon of Adventist practices quite late in the 19th century. While most Adventists have been sacrificial givers, they have not always given systematically. . . .

Up to 1859 no regular giving plan emerged in Adventist circles. While many sabbatarian Adventists gave sacrificially, most members gave sporadically. The three angels' messages given to the Philadelphia church in prophecy could not be spread like the leaves of autumn using the Laodicean methods of 1850s Adventists. Somehow, a new financial program had to be shaped to fit the urgency of the message. . . .

The third giving plan—Systematic Benevolence—actually originated with a church committee at Battle Creek, and not with any one

individual. James White explained to *Review* readers in February 1859 that on the previous January 16, a group of men had met to consider what he called “a System of Benevolence” that would induce every member to give regularly to fully sustain the cause while relieving the few who had given beyond their means. J. N. Andrews, J. B. Frisbie, and James White joined forces to propagate the Battle Creek plan in the *Review*. . . .

It is well worth noting that whenever James White or others discussed the Systematic Benevolence plan, they usually emphasized its nonsacrificial nature. White saw the giving ratios as low enough so those in the poorest circumstances (except widows, the infirm, and the aged, he felt) could give, while those in better circumstances, he hoped, would give even more than the stipulated amounts. At no time did anyone in 1859 mention Malachi 3:8-10, nor did any *Review* writer stress the personal blessings of faithful giving. Writers placed primary emphasis on the needs of the cause. . . .

In practical terms, how did the faithful implement this plan? James White described the procedures in Battle Creek in 1861. Every Sunday the Systematic Benevolence treasurer visited each member's home, carrying his hand trunk and the Systematic Benevolence record book. “All expect him, and all get ready for him, and meet him with open hands and benevolent feelings.” A few hours' labor netted \$25. Yet “no one feels poorer but all feel happier after casting their small sums into the treasury.” To assist the treasurers and each member in keeping track of his weekly giving, the *Review* prepared ledgers with columns for dates, names, weekly giving amounts, and monthly totals.

One sample ledger, printed in the January 6, 1863, *Review* leads