

tenure in office Buganda's health services underwent tremendous improvement. He again ran for a parliamentary seat in the 1980 elections on the UPM ticket, but lost. A year after the National Resistance Movement launched its armed struggle, Kisekka's home and farm were attacked and razed by government troops. He himself narrowly escaped death before fleeing into exile. While there he joined the political wing of the movement. After the death of Professor Yusufu Lule, the movement's first chairman, Kisekka in January 1985 was appointed the external coordinator of the National Resistance Movement. . . .

Does the biblical teaching to turn the other cheek forbid wars of liberation? Prime Minister Kisekka does not think so, and he is right. Wars of liberation are an exercise of the right of self-defense, not revenge. Rulers who tyrannize subjects they are supposed to protect cease to be legitimate and thereby forfeit the allegiance of the subjects. In the democratic era the people are sovereign and have the right to change their governments even by force if force is the only means available. The imperatives of love legitimize the revolt against tyranny. As Kisekka told the missionary, it is well-nigh impossible to appreciate the ethical dilemma that faces victims of tyrannical regimes unless one has lived under them. Pastor Bekele Heye, president of the Eastern Africa Division, seems to agree. In the presence of this author he praised President Museveni for liberating Uganda and restoring to it peace and human rights. He told President Museveni that Adventists had all along been praying for him and for the success of his Movement. . . .

In spite of its "safe" apolitical stance the church found itself banned, its missionaries expelled from the country, its church buildings, schools, and clinics desecrated

or destroyed, and its members imprisoned or killed. When the guilty regimes were removed by force, Adventist Ugandans, along with the general population, sighed with relief. As this essay has argued, they cannot be faulted.

While it is understandable that the church would avoid exposing itself by publicly criticizing governmental authorities, the Adventist church, as the "light of the world," has a moral obligation to help shape the public ethic and to speak out against injustice and oppressive demonic systems. The Seventh-day Adventist church has a duty to remind rulers, as did the prophet Isaiah, to "Learn to do

good; seek justice; correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:17, RSV).

How should the Seventh-day Adventist church act prophetically? The church should cooperate with other responsible church groups on matters of grave public concern, such as peace, justice, and human rights. In unity there is strength. Additionally, the Adventist church should educate members of their duty as citizens to speak out on moral issues and shape public opinion. Otherwise the denomination will be dismissed as irrelevant. Dr. Kisekka is showing the Adventist church how members can act against injustice and right grievous wrongs.

Trumpet Blasts and Hosannas: A Once and Future Adventism



by Roy Branson

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My mother was a fifth-generation Adventist. She grew up

in the mission field and married a minister. She worked with him through World War II as he became president of the Middle East Union. She taught in the school he founded there—Middle East College. My father, at the age of 54, died of a massive heart attack. After Elder H. M. S. Richards' funeral sermon and the burial in the cemetery at Loma Linda, mother and I sat next to each other in the car taking us back to our home. We both knew that in a day or two I would leave to resume my studies at the seminary at Andrews. She finally broke the silence. "I wonder if we'll ever see him again." I was stunned. I talked about seeing Dad soon, about meeting him in the resurrection. She turned directly to her seminarian son and said very quietly, very slowly, "We never know for sure." A fifth-generation Adventist.

My mother was not wondering if Dad's sins had been forgiven, or hers, or mine. . . . My mother was not asking, "Has Dad been saved?"

but, "Where is God?" She was not worried about transgression of law; she was not asking me to provide her with a theory of the atonement. She was devastated by her loss, by loneliness, by death. She was anguished at the absence of God. And so are we—as individuals and as a church.

Many mistakenly think that the *Apocalypse*, so important for Adventist identity, merely points Christians to the future, to the second coming of Christ; that it is a detailed history of the future. Actually, the apocalyptic imagination spends more time drawing the heavenly realms—the sanctuary, the emerald throne, the risen and active Lord of thousands times thousands—into the Christian's present experience. . . .

The early Seventh-day Adventists were so steeped in the apocalyptic imagination that when the Millerite setting of times for the future return of Christ failed, they shifted the emphasis of apocalyptic to the present. In the image of the sanctuary they re-emphasized the present activity of God in the cosmos.

Sanctuary symbolism brought them assurance. God might not be immediately breaking in from the future, but he was active in the present. Where is God? He is in the heavenly sanctuary. John the Revelator's portrayal of divine activity and majesty in the heavenly realms provided sanctuary to the disappointed. The little flock could be warmed by glory. Their present had become a part of the most holy.

The experience of the disappointed was also rekindled by the radiance of Ellen White's experience. An absent God again came near through an Ellen returning, in their midst, from visits to the Holy City and its temple suffused with the "eternal weight of glory." "Our faces," she reported, "began to light up and shine with the glory of God

as Moses did when he came down from Mount Sinai." What the apostles were for the early church, Ellen White was for Adventists: a living sacrament, a visible means of experiencing God's invisible presence.

The absent God also came near in the Sabbath. We usually think of the Sabbath conferences simply as theological disputes, intellectual clarifications, casuistry of divine law. But the fundamental importance of the Sabbath was its experience of the divine. The Great Day of the Lord remained beyond, but in the Sabbath day one encountered the holy now. To cross its threshold was to enter God's dwelling place; to become contemporary with God himself—a sacrament in time. Where is God? He is in this moment. For the disappointed what had been a present devoid of divinity again glowed with God's

The church in our time is to embody the apocalyptic vision: a community whose disappointments are overwhelmed by its experience of the Divine. The Adventist Church is to be a visionary vanguard, revolutionaries of the imagination, propelled into action, shattering routines of oppression with the shock of the holy.

presence. . . .

The apocalyptic communities of the early Christian church and 19th-century America first felt despair at the absence of God, began to experience renewal through sacraments of his presence, then set about transforming their worlds. To be drawn into the apocalyptic experience is to be thrust from anguish to hope, from defeat to revolution. . . .

In the early 1890s Adventists were among the earliest to take on the challenge of transforming urban America. . . . Seventh-day Adventists, assured by sacraments of God's presence—the Sanctuary, the Spirit of Prophecy, and the Sabbath—set about embodying in their institutions their apocalyptic vision of an ideal society. . . .

Just as creation of the state of Israel became the Jewish answer to the absence of God at the Holocaust, the growth of the Adventist church became for some the persuasive answer to the Great Disappointment. . . . For some, the visible, organized Adventist church became the most potent of all sacraments—a visible means for experiencing God's invisible presence. . . .

Those Adventists not working for the denomination know that many people in their offices do not define themselves as sinners against God and yearn for forgiveness. . . . Offer them the promise of divine forgiveness and they will greet you with a friendly, indulgent smile. That's nice, but who needs it?

Of course many people—if not all—do ask religious questions. . . . Many people fear boredom and meaninglessness in their lives; almost all tremble at the prospect of death. At the moment of their annihilation, people dread the void. They do ask, "Where is God?"

Indeed, no matter how secular it may appear, our culture fears its annihilation. Confronted by nuclear

winter, by the ultimate holocaust, humanity is chilled by a cosmic loneliness, a consciousness of the absence of God.

It is precisely that dread of the void—of meaninglessness and annihilation—that is overwhelmed by the apocalyptic vision. A truly apocalyptic Adventism draws people into experiences of worship that are encounters with the holy. Our Sabbaths are sanctuaries reverberating with the *Apocalypse's* coda to 2,000 years of religious worship: trumpet blasts, voices like the sound of many waters, shouts of the archangel, choirs of harps, amens and hallelujahs from myriad hosts. Sabbath worship is a refraction of the divine radiance; the color, movement, and vitality of the *Apocalypse's* sanctuary, filled with golden candlesticks, billows of incense, pillars of

fire, thrones of precious stones. In the apocalyptic vision divine power reaches our place, our time.

In the sanctuary of the Sabbath experience the despairing not only sense that God exists, but that His presence encompasses the creation—not some distant event, but a continuing divine activity. Ordinary events erupt with meaning. All creation becomes attractive; all creatures reflect divine glory; all people become objects of wonder, of respect.

Contemporary Adventism should regard a rekindling of the apocalyptic vision as its special gift to contemporary culture. . . . It will set out to make the excitement and drama of apocalyptic an integral part of the experience of all Christians. . . .

Where is God? Many of us have

moments, like my mother, when we wonder why God is absent, when we despair, when we are lonely beyond speaking. We are modern persons. But somehow in our small, tight darkness, we have seen a great light. We have been warmed by Sabbath fellowship. We have glimpsed divinity in the passion of 19th-century spirituality and the cosmic imagery of the *Apocalypse*.

The Adventist church in our time is to embody the apocalyptic vision: a community whose disappointments are overwhelmed by its experience of the divine; a church empowered by God's presence. The Adventist church is to be a visionary vanguard, revolutionaries of the imagination, propelled into action, shattering the routines of oppression with the shock of the holy.



The White Family at Elmshaven, California, in 1913. Left to right: standing, Mabel White-Workman, Wilfred Workman, Henry White, Herbert White; seated: Does Robinson, Ella White-Robinson, Ellen G. White, May White, William White; on ground: Virgil Robinson, Mabel Robinson, Arthur White, Grace White. This picture appears in Arthur White's biography of Ellen White. Although Ella's necklace was originally airbrushed out, the Review and Herald has determined that in future editions the photo will be reprinted unretouched. Photo courtesy of the Art Library, Review and Herald Publishing Association. Vol. 20, No. 2 (December 1989).