

# Spectrum

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The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

## Surviving 1844

VOICES OUT OF THE SILENCE

1844 IN GREAT  
AMERICAN LITERATURE

"DAY-DAWN"—A DRAMATIZATION

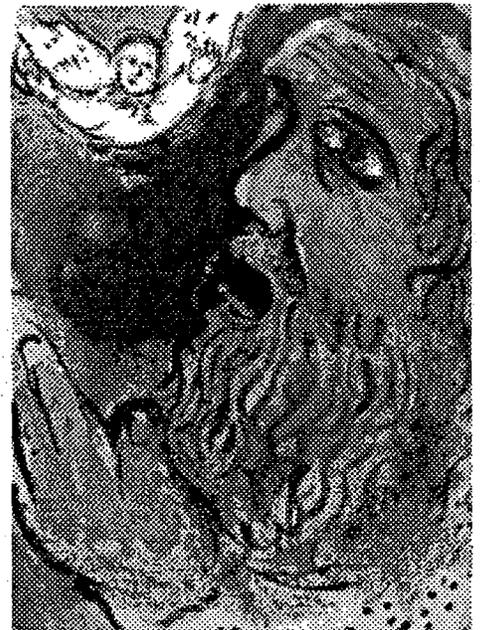
THE SANCTUARY—GOD  
IN OUR MIDST

SDA TRAGEDY, HEROISM  
IN RWANDA

ADVENTISTS ON  
NETWORK TELEVISION

CHANGING OF THE GUARD  
AT LOMA LINDA

October 1994  
Volume 24, Number 2



# Spectrum

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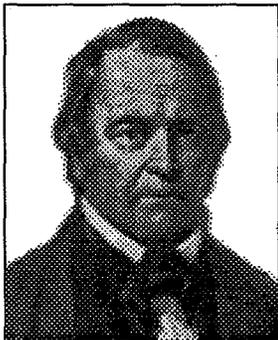
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# Surviving the Great Disappointment

The General Conference has just produced a professional, 100-minute color television documentary on William Miller. A plethora of books by Seventh-day Adventists on the Millerites has also appeared throughout 1994. In some Adventist congregations, October 22 has become a time to evoke the Great Disappointment in Scripture, preaching, and singing; the Disappointment is a part of their liturgical year. Now, *Spectrum* has devoted a special section to 1844.

But what does the Great Disappointment mean to Adventists? As we identify ourselves more and more closely with the Millerites, what is happening to Adventism? What is the significance of making the Disappointment not only a part of Adventist scholarship, but also increasingly embedded in its worship and spiritual experience?

One response is to resist the idea that 150 years of Adventism has been built on a mistake, and to turn the Disappointment from a negative into a valuable experience. Adventists were on a pilgrimage to find the truth. The Great Disappointment was a major setback, to be sure, but all in all a helpful learning experience. As George Knight says in the new documentary, after 1844 Seventh-day Adventists realized they should never again set dates for the Lord's return.

A second very important response is to embrace the Great Disappointment as a central, underdeveloped part of Adventist self-understanding. In this issue of *Spectrum*, Glen Greenwalt appreciates Jan Daffern's declaration that for Adventism "communities of disappointment are our communities"; that "we are the disappointed who are lonely and doubting, poor and jobless, divorced and widowed, young and vulnerable.

We are the disappointed, singing in a strange land" (in *Pilgrimage of Hope*, 1986). This understanding of Adventism makes embracing the victims of violence, and preventing future such victims, a fundamental mission of the church (See "Adventist Tragedy, Heroism in Rwanda," on p. 3).

Another approach that deserves attention, stresses that whatever their historical relationship, Seventh-day Adventists are, in important theological respects, *not* Millerites. Of course Millerites, defined by their expectation of the Second Coming, do have an identity with Adventists. But Millerites, defined by the Great Disappointment of October 22, are not Seventh-day Adventists. The Seventh-day Adventist community arose precisely by proposing an alternative to setting dates for the return of Christ, and by discovering other ways to experience the presence of God—The Sabbath, the visions of Ellen White, and to an extent not yet fully understood, according to Glen Greenwalt, the sanctuary (See "The Sanctuary—God in Our Midst," p. 42).

Perhaps if we are clear that the Seventh-day Adventist community is in crucial ways different from the Millerite community, we can avoid denegrating the experience of 1844 by transforming it into merely a learning experience; we can appreciate the pain and loneliness of the Great Disappointment as a genuine tragedy; and we can also better see the the Seventh-day Adventist Church as emerging, not just from a failed appearance of Christ, but from new ways of sensing God's presence in our midst.

—Roy Branson



# Adventist Tragedy, Heroism in Rwanda

Rwanda's genocide through the eyes of missionaries and the voices of the victims' relatives.

by *Sharise Esh*

**I**N THE KILLING FIELDS OF RWANDA, ADVENTISTS were involved in killing other Adventists. That is the darkest report coming out of Rwanda. Not only did Adventists participate in the killing of tribal enemies in their communities; Adventists were involved in the deaths of fellow Seventh-day Adventists. According to 1992 figures, one in every 33 Rwandans is an Adventist, one of the highest densities of Adventists in the world. If Adventists were killed as frequently as others, of the 300,000 Seventh-day Adventist Rwandese (1994 figures), more than 30,000 Adventists have already been killed.

J. J. Nortey, president of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division, which includes Rwanda, estimates that perhaps 10,000 Adventists died in the massacre. Nortey says he himself does not have evidence of Adventists killing Adventists.

The terrifying days of violence were set off by the assassination of the presidents of Burundi

and Rwanda on Wednesday, April 6, 1994. They were returning from a conference in Tanzania, where they had discussed ways to end the ethnic killings in their countries. A rocket fired from the ground shot down the plane in which they were traveling. Both men were Hutus presiding over countries composed of Hutu tribal majorities and Tutsi minorities.

At approximately 5 a.m., Thursday, April 7, Rwanda erupted in violence. The fighting, which started out to be political, soon turned tribal. The militia, comprised of the Hutu majority, began the slaughter. Armed with makeshift weapons, they rooted out Tutsis and Hutu moderates, and committed mass killings. From the April assassinations of the presidents to September 1994, the United Nations estimates that there have been one million people killed.

When the violence first erupted, Seventh-day Adventist missionaries were serving in universities, medical and dental clinics, relief agencies, and orphanages. As Per Houmann, an Adventist dentist, told the *New York Times*,

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what those missionaries saw and experienced “left a scar on our souls.” Here we bring you the story of six missionaries who experienced these events firsthand. Four were based in Kigali—three working at a dental clinic on one Adventist compound, a fourth working for ADRA at another compound. The fifth and sixth, whose stories we share first, worked on the faculty and staff of the Adventist University of Central Africa about 50 miles northwest of Kigali.

## Witnessing a Blood-Lust . . .

“I had caught something on the news late Wednesday night about the two presidents,” said Ron Booth, an Adventist missionary working at the Adventist University of Central Africa. His wife, Sanita, worked as a secretary in the university president’s office. “However, I didn’t hear the whole story until Nils Rechter, the business manager of the university, called the next morning to notify us that there would be no school that day.”

Instead of classes, students and workers spent the day listening to automatic weapons fire and watching smoke from burning huts as violence erupted in the streets outside their campus. The day was also spent inspecting and fueling vehicles in case they were needed on short notice. The students gathered for a special convocation where faculty explained the events and calmed their fears, and special housing was set up in the administration building for the Tutsis who were arriving on campus, seeking sanctuary from the fighting outside. Throughout the day, the campus was relatively quiet. Nonetheless, special security precautions were taken that evening. Americans and other expatriates took turns driving around the campus with a large spotlight.

It was about 8 o’clock the next morning, Thursday, April 8, when the violence hit home. Booth was headed to the home of a

friend when he heard shouting—followed by an exploding grenade. About 500 Hutus had broken down the doors of the administration building, and were dragging the Tutsi students and faculty outside, where some fleeing Tutsis had gathered. Booth watched the Hutus beat the Tutsis to death with sticks and clubs.

“I witnessed whole families participating in the killings,” said Booth. “There were mothers with babies strapped to their backs, alongside boys of 10 or 11, all participating in this blood-lust.” The killings continued until 12:20 p.m.—Booth remembers looking at his watch. When the fighting had eased, approximately 250 Tutsis lay dead in front of the administration building, with roughly 200 more dead outside the science building.

Booth remembers standing in the midst of the bodies, watching the Hutus that were milling about—still hitting some of the Tutsis who weren’t quite dead, trying to silence them. “It’s hard to watch children being killed,” said Booth. “I felt so helpless. [The Hutus] were still wanting to hurt people, they still had the lust for blood. We weren’t sure that they wouldn’t turn on us if we tried to interfere. The few people who did speak up were pushed aside or ignored.”

About 5 p.m., Ron and Sanita were at home when they noticed Hutus gathering outside their house. They were attracted there by a girl of about eight, intently looking in their windows, something that normally never happened. Afraid that opening the door would bring the violence inside, the Booths negotiated with the crowd through an open window. The crowd had a fairly detailed list of Tutsis they believed to be on the campus, and not having found all of them, were convinced that the Booths were harboring them in their home. After Booth arranged for a committee, including the original girl, to search the house, the Hutus, with the encouragement of some local authorities, finally moved on.

Except for the little girl. She continued to

stand on the back porch, peering in the windows. Because of the blood stains on her dress, and forlorn look on her face, the Booths assumed that she had lost her family in the slaughter. Actually she was still convinced the Booths were harboring Tutsis who needed to be killed.

Saturday returned to relative calmness, with those on campus preparing for the evacuation

they believed would come that day. Workers spent the day building trailers and putting sides on trucks so they could haul non-Rwandan students and missionaries across the border into Zaire.

Part of Booth's job was hosing blood out of truck beds that had been used to haul dead bodies away from the campus. The university's trucks had been lent to authorities, but now

## Adventist Violence: The Case of the Sefukus

Gerard Sefuku, a Rwandan, the son of an Adventist minister and member of the Tutsi tribe, is a graduate student in organizational management at Bethel College, Mishawaka, Indiana. He lost 32 members of his family in the Rwandan bloodletting.

Gerard has been studying in the United States for five years. This fall, he was looking forward to his father, Pastor Issacar Sefuku, beginning doctoral studies at Andrews University, very near to Gerard's college. But the day he was to receive his visa to the United States, Pastor Sefuku was killed.

The day after the plane crash in April that killed the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, Gerard called Rwanda and spoke with his family in Rwamagana. He was told that the genocide had already begun, and that the Sefuku family were going into hiding at a nearby Catholic church. Two of Gerard's brothers would stay by to care for the home and to communicate with other family members.

A few days later, the two brothers were also forced into hiding. After his last telephone conversation with his brothers, Gerard did not hear any news regarding his family for four weeks. Then a letter arrived from his sister. His father was dead, his mother was barely alive and in a hospital in critical condition. Wanting his mother to receive the best care possible, Gerard paid individuals in

Rwanda to take his mother to a hospital in Burundi. Gerard was able to speak with his family after they were in Burundi, and discovered the details of the massacre.

Four days after the plane crash, Gerard's father was severely beaten and then shot and killed in front of his family. His mother, Adele, and 14-year-old brother were also beaten, slashed with machetes, and left for dead. For three days Gerard's mother lay in the midst of the holocaust until she was found, barely alive, and taken to a hospital. Lying beside his mother, Gerard's younger brother had died of his wounds two days before.

Among the dead were members of not only Pastor Sefuku's family, but also his Adventist congregation. According to Gerard, thousands of people died inside and in the area around the Catholic Church.

As Gerard began to investigate the deaths of his family, he was shocked to discover that the individual who reported his father's whereabouts to the executioners was another Seventh-day Adventist minister—an individual whom he and his family knew well. Innocently, Gerard's brother had told this Adventist pastor in Kigali how happy he was that his father was still alive. The following day, two soldiers were dispatched from Kigali, specifically assigned to kill Pastor Sefuku.

Gerard keeps in almost daily contact with his mother, now in Burundi. Because she has been unable to secure a visa to the United States in Burundi, Gerard's mother will soon return to Rwanda to apply for the visa.

Throughout the summer, Gerard has been appealing to the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to help his mother. "The church owes my father for 40 years of service. The church can do nothing to help my father now, so why can't they help my mother?"

*T. Lynn Caldwell, who conducted the interview with Gerard Sefuku is an assistant professor of communication at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, and acting chair of the department. She graduated with an M.A. in communication from Western Michigan University at Kalamazoo.*

they would have to haul students and faculty out of the country to safety. The job was especially dangerous because that area of Rwanda has one of the highest incidences of AIDS in the world. Forty percent of Rwandans are HIV positive. Booth couldn't help but realize that the blood of the victims could cause further casualties.

Evacuees from the university were finally able to leave on Sunday, April 10. Students, missionaries, and expatriates crossed into Goma, where they spent three days with other missionaries. From there, some were taken to Nairobi, with others leaving through western Africa.

"While it was happening, I wondered about myself," recalls Booth. "I have been in several evacuations. However, I've never witnessed anything this bad. While it was going on, I had little emotion. With all the atrocities happening around us, it was like a switch we had to flip to get through it. What I do remember is the supportiveness and caring of the people we worked with, how hard everyone worked for each other."

## This Is My House . . .

For three years, since December 1990, Jerry Phillips (a pseudonym), who directed an SDA community project in northern Rwanda, has lived the war Americans have only recently heard about. However, it wasn't until four months after he moved to Kigali, to work as a dentist at an Adventist compound, that the fighting became real to the rest of the world.

"When the plane carrying the two presidents was shot down on April 6, all hell broke loose. We didn't know who was killing who. People from both tribes were being killed," said Phillips, recalling the first day of intense fighting. "From what we knew, it was the presidential guard that had taken power and was doing the killing. There was also a group called the Youth Group of the Extremist Hutu

Party. This was a group of civilians armed with machetes, sticks, clubs—basically whatever they could find. They knew the people in our area and where they lived. They would pick which ones they wanted to kill, and then go find them."

These groups were in search of Tutsis, or anyone opposing the president's party. If a person belonged to these groups, he or she was on the list to be killed. Later, the Adventist compound—hosting four missionary families and an unmarried young woman—found itself in the midst of the fighting, sandwiched between the government forces on one side, and the Rwanda Patriotic Front on the other.

Worried about the people outside the compound who were already being killed, Phillips took some American friends to check on some Adventist Rwandans down the street from the compound. While en route, Phillips and his companions witnessed a band of Rwandan men making their way down the road, going from house to house, killing and looting.

Assuming that no harm would come to foreigners, Phillips and his friends stood in the doorway of their Rwandan friends' home, claiming it to be their own. The band of men moved on to the next house. Luckily, the family who lived in the house next door had left the day before, leaving behind only one young boy. He was able to sneak out of the house and jump the fence to the house where Phillips and his friends stood guard. By the time the band of men left the house next door, it had been gutted—right down to the doorknobs.

When the young men had finished their job, one of the soldiers returned to the house where the foreigners still stood. "Aren't you scared?" the soldier asked in the native Kinyarwandan. Not wanting the soldier to realize how much of his language they understood, they replied in broken fragments, "We aren't scared because you are here to protect us." The soldier, angered by this, replied, "But you saw what we did! You don't

understand. I will make you scared!" With this declaration, he raised his gun till it was pointing at the group. Phillips reached into his pocket and pulled out some bills. "Here, this is for you," he said, holding it out to the drunken soldier. As the man pocketed the money, the group took off running for the compound, with shots ringing over their heads just as they entered.

## Shut Your Gate . . .

The director of the dental clinic in Kigali where Phillips worked was Per Houmann. When Houmann and his wife Alice stepped off the plane in August 1993, they could already tell that there was tension in Rwanda—armed soldiers lined the runway. The Houmanns had been warned of the growing tension, but realized the meaning of this more fully when a rash of incidents took place in February 1994. They were forced to temporarily close down their clinic, the only full-service dental clinic in the country.

"The tensions were bad enough even then that my Tutsi workers would have been killed if they attempted to come in to work," said Houmann. "We remained closed for a week. Things seemed to calm down after that, but the tensions were never resolved. About three weeks later, our gardener came in and told us to shut our gate, because there were people right down the street having their throats slashed. About three weeks after that, our Tutsi night watchman came in after being severely beaten by six people, and had to have his eye patched."

The intense fighting started before sunrise on April 7, the day after the assassinations. The Houmanns could hear tremendous explosions of gunfire about 150 yards from their home on the compound. "The militia would be fighting, and then there would be silence for awhile. But the silence worried us more

than the fighting, because we realized that during the silent times, they were going to the surrounding houses rooting out Tutsis, sympathizers, and moderates to kill them." It was during one of these times that the Houmanns heard their backyard neighbors being killed.

Employees—Adventist and otherwise—started coming to their compound, seeking protection. "There were workers and their families from both tribes. I couldn't understand how they were together, protecting each other. It was amazing to see them putting their lives on the line for each other." The Houmanns were putting themselves at risk as well, harboring workers in their home. "But," says Alice, "the militia were coming to our home just as much to rob us as to hurt our workers, so [our workers] protected us as well."

The Houmanns remember one worker who was a particular inspiration to them. Francois had come in to work the night before the fighting, but was unable to go back to his home. His strong Tutsi features would have gotten him killed in the fighting. "He was unable to return to his family, who he was sure were dead by now. Yet he never looked scared. Every night and every morning he would lead some of the others in singing hymns and reading the Bible. He was at such peace with God it was as if he had no fear. When we left the compound, all the other Tutsis were looking at us with sorrowful eyes, because they knew that they were going to die. Francois was the only one at peace. It reminded me of that text that says 'perfect love casts out fear.' That was Francois."

As the Houmanns left Kigali—four days after the violence began—with their children lying on the floor of the car, they felt for the first time that they were the focus of the hatred. "Going out of Kigali, we were shot at. At roadblocks we would see trucks of bodies being hauled out, as well as bodies lying in the road. At the last roadblock, there were about 400 or 500 men and boys with sticks, clubs,

and machetes. They had a vacant look in their eyes. It was as if they were possessed. They became more and more bold, asking for money and threatening to puncture our tires. This was the first time we really felt we were the focus of their anger.”

## I'm Needed Here . . .

Carl Wilkens, director of Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Rwanda, was the only American—and Adventist missionary—to stay in Kigali throughout the months of killing. During that time, only a very few expatriates of any nationality tried to remain in Rwanda's capital. Indeed, both the United States government and the world leadership of the Adventist Church ordered their personnel out of Rwanda. But Wilkens stayed. Now, both the United Nations and the U.S. State Department have recognized his unique bravery by awarding Wilkens written commendations for his continued humanitarian service during the most dangerous of conditions.

When the crisis broke out, Wilkens had a house full of relatives. Not only did he have to worry about his three children, ranging in ages from six to 10, and his wife, but also his parents, who were visiting Rwanda and working on an ADRA project in the area.

“At first, we thought it was similar to the crisis that occurred in February. We thought the city would be shut down for a few days and then business would resume as usual. But

by the third day, we could tell that something was different,” recalled Wilkens. The first sign of trouble came when an Adventist orphanage sent a message over the shortwave radio asking for assistance. The somewhat frantic message stated that the militia had already killed one worker in front of them, and they couldn't gauge what was happening in the other areas of the grounds where violence was breaking out.

“Shortly after this came the big push to evacuate the missionaries stationed there,” said Wilkens. “The telephones had gone out

after the first two days of fighting, but we still had radio contact with the American embassy, so it was our job to coordinate the evacuations with them.”

This was an especially tense time for Wilkens and his family, not only because of the fighting in the city, but also because Wilkens and his wife had already decided that if anything like this ever happened, he would stay behind while the rest of his family evacu-

ated. “We wondered if it was the right decision, but everything happened so fast, we only had one night to think about it. We decided that we would sleep on it that night and make the decision in the morning. That night, God gave us so much peace, we felt it had to be his will that I stay in the country.”

One reason Wilkens chose to stay behind was to help protect two of his houseworkers. They were at serious risk because of their strong Tutsi features. Wilkens' wife, children, and family evacuated to Kenya. Wilkens spent the next 88 nights sleeping in the hallway of

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*Wilkens chose to stay behind to help protect two of his houseworkers, and spent the next 88 nights sleeping in the hallway of his home. Their diet consisted of oatmeal, granola, rice, and beans—food they had stored away for just such an occasion. During the ordeal, Wilkens' weight dropped 20 pounds.*

his home. His house guests now included his two houseworkers, a church worker and his wife, and their relatives. Their diet consisted of oatmeal, granola, rice, and beans—food they had stored away for just such an occasion. During the ordeal, Wilkens' weight dropped 20 pounds.

For the first three or four weeks, Wilkens and his group remained completely housebound. The government had announced a curfew in the city, and no one could leave his or her home. "We spent those weeks in Bible study, reading, and prayer, not knowing what was about to come. I think God outlined that time for us to strengthen us," said Wilkens. "There were some long days, but I feel it was needed for us to prepare for the shelling, gunfire, and militia we would have to face when we were finally allowed to return to work around the city."

When Wilkens was finally able to leave the house, it was only in furtive spurts. "We would go out for a couple hours or so, and then have to stay inside for a couple of days. . . . We would have to rebuild our strength and work up the courage to go out again. But even on the days when we felt as if we accomplished nothing, God would show us something that we had done. It was often tempting not to go out at all. Some didn't, but it was hard for them as well. They had to sit and listen to the bombs all day and wonder if we would return. It was a hard time for everyone."

Wilkens said that "people questioned why I was staying, when there was nothing I could do. But God showed me that he could still use us to help people." Wilkens and his housemates spent their brief excursions out of the house working with groups of orphans in Kigali—about 750 in all—taking them food and fresh water. Since the ADRA vehicles and supplies had been stolen, Wilkens worked with his own car trying to transport the supplies, and finally with a large dump truck he borrowed from the U.N. It was better equipped to haul

the large containers of water. Food and dry milk were bought for the orphans from the thieves who had been looting.

A secondary responsibility during this time was to keep up communication between church workers and the union administration, working as a link between the groups inside Rwanda who couldn't contact one another, as well as getting messages to concerned parties outside Rwanda. During the entire time, Wilkens was in daily radio communication with his wife who stayed in Nairobi, Kenya, so she could be close to her husband. "That contact was so important," said Wilkens, "and to learn about the huge prayer network. There were literally thousands of people praying for my safety—people I hadn't seen in years, people I was sure had forgotten about me. It gave me a sense of courage."

## And God's Hand Led . . .

These prayers, and the reassurance they gave him, carried Wilkens through some very tense times. Wilkens remembers one day when a group of about 10 militia—neighbors of his—came to his home armed with machetes ready to kill the people in his house. "It was only an hour of negotiating and God's protection that saved the people in my home," said Wilkens. "We would go back and forth, arguing:

"You're my neighbors, you know me.'

"But our problem is not with you, it's with the Tutsis in your house.'

"Yes, but they're not part of the war.'"

With laconic understatement, Wilkens added, "The group finally left, and no one in the house was harmed."

Another day, Wilkens went with his group to take food and water to a group of about 250 orphans, as well as 60 women and children who were also seeking refuge at the orphanage. They had been harassed for four or five

days. Each day the militia took away one person to kill. The militia had warned the occupants that this would soon stop, and they would come to kill them all at once. By the time Wilkens arrived with his group, the militia had already surrounded the building.

When the group of militia saw the foreigner approach, carrying a radio, they hesitated. They obviously wanted to wait until Wilkens and his workers left. Wilkens took advantage of this time to call the Red Cross and the local authorities on the radio. It took about two hours, but finally the local authorities came and dispersed the crowd. Wilkens also secured a guarantee from the prime minister that the orphanage would be protected. About 10 days after Wilkens' arrival, the occupants of the orphanage were finally evacuated to a more secure area. During that time only one more person had been killed.

Wilkens continued his work for close to three months, until the new government was in place and the fighting in the city drew to a close. While many consider Wilkens a hero, he disagrees. "I'm no hero," he told his family. "I'm just thankful that I could find out just how precious the Lord can be."

When the fighting quieted down and the city became more stable, Wilkens turned his focus to his family. "The whole time I was there, my wife and I looked for indications that the immediate crisis was over and I could return to be with my family. This seemed to be it. My wife had been so selfless in allowing me to stay in the country. It was just as much work for her to see me stay as it was for me to stay. With the crisis almost over, I knew it was time to go be with my family."

## Questioning Oneself . . .

In the aftermath, Booth, a professor in the business department at the Adventist University of Central Africa, is left with questions.

"We weren't able to evacuate everyone. The Rwandans couldn't get out of the country, so they had to stay behind. There are still some killings going on. People who sympathize with the Tutsis are at risk. We worry for their safety. We ask ourselves if we should've stayed behind and helped more. These are hard questions to answer."

Equally hard to answer is what these missionaries will be returning to in Rwanda, which, according to Booth, many of the missionaries are eagerly waiting to do. There have been several conflicting reports as to the amount of damage and stolen items, and it will be interesting to learn the truth.

Until that time comes, Booth and his wife will be working on a temporary assignment in Abidjan, the capital of the Ivory Coast. "We're just working there until it will be possible to re-open the university. We're hoping it'll be about three months, but it's hard to tell."

## A Country Dark With Hatred . . .

"It's so hard to imagine the people in the country being able to recover from the hatred that has been passed down from generation to generation," reflects Alice Houmann. "There are neighbors and family members killing each other to save themselves. If your son married a Tutsi, then you were expected to kill the son and daughter-in-law both to keep from being considered a sympathizer. I remember hearing one story of a man living down near the orphanage. The militia had surrounded his house and were calling for his wife, a Tutsi, to be sent out to be killed. They said if he didn't comply, they would come in to kill the whole family. The man had to send his wife out. How do you recover from something like that?"

"And what's going on now, that's a whole

other tragedy that's happening," continues Houmann. "All the disease and starvation. This is a little country in the center of Africa that no one had even heard of before all this happened. And yet it has to touch your heart. It's so meaningless. There's basically two tribes, they have the same race, language, religion, and history. And yet they can't get along to the point where they would murder their neighbor or they have to run and hide because someone else is in charge. It all boils down to basic selfishness. It's so overwhelming."

"When you're in a situation like that, it suddenly becomes very hard to differentiate between your duties as an individual, a parent, wife, dentist, citizen, and missionary. You have a responsibility in each one of these areas. It's very hard to blend them all together into making the right decisions, and not just think in one mode. I understand now why not everyone took people into their homes. If you took one person in, you risked getting everyone else killed. Plus, you never knew if the person you were taking in from one tribe to protect wasn't doing harm to members of the other tribe in return. It's hard to know which role to play in a situation like that. And yet, it was very hard to get in our car and drive away."

The Houmanns have since learned that of the four families and three single men who stayed with them at the compound, one is confirmed dead, three are missing, and three are accounted for—two of them known to be still working for the church.

Alice and Per Houmann left in October for Malawi, where Per serves as director of dentistry. "If and when Rwanda opens back up, there's a possibility we will go back to Kigali in an attempt to restart the clinic there. It will take some thought."

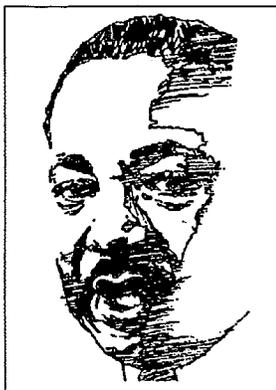
## Unfinished Business . . .

The Phillips family has already been assigned to return to work in Rwanda; they will be returning to uncertain circumstances. When they left Rwanda they had no electricity, no water, not even a home—everything they owned had been taken in the looting. Phillips will also be returning to a community where he knows both the people who were killed and the people who killed them. "From the extensive outreach nature of the community project where I worked for three years, I got to know the people in the community very well. I knew both groups. I had become very attached to the people there," he said.

Phillips, who was originally assigned to work as a dentist in Ethiopia, says, "I was very glad when my assignment was changed so I could return to Rwanda. If I were unable to return, I would feel that there was something unfinished in my mind. I'm not nervous. I want to return.

"The biggest need when we return will be helping the people who have been displaced," he continued. "I don't think I will be working in dentistry for quite a while. What the people need now is to re-establish the social structure. We need to collect the children and start orphanages. We need to feed the people and teach them how to provide food for themselves."

"I feel like this has given me an opportunity to put a correct value on my priorities. Everyone likes security. We could've easily moved on to dentistry in Ethiopia. But I've realized that human life is the most valuable thing. It was very hard to leave my friends. I felt like I had let them down. I want to be there for them when they need us. I want to rebuild the trust—to put 100 percent into the people."



# Why King Was Not an Adventist

Martin Luther King's becoming an Adventist "would have hampered his becoming one of our nation's greatest leaders."

by Roland J. Hill

**C**OULD MARTIN LUTHER KING HAVE BEEN both a civil-rights activist and a Seventh-day Adventist? No. Here is why.

The milieu of the black community, the black theology of the Baptist Church, and the liberal Protestantism of his seminary training all played a role in shaping this national leader. Of these three influences, black theology had the greatest impact on King's life. The very fibers of King's soul pulsed with the religion of his people. This is what King himself thought of his theological roots:

I am first and foremost a [black] minister. I love the church, and I feel that civil rights is a part of it. For me, at least, the basis of my struggle for integration—and I mean full integration of Negroes into every phase of American life—is something that began with a religious motivation . . . And I know that my religion has come to mean more to me

than ever before. I have come to believe more and more in a personal God—not a process, but a person, a creative power with infinite love who answers prayers.<sup>1</sup>

Notice that his religious experience began with a view of God. Not the God of the white man, whose God is mainly a God of the head and not the heart, whose God is colored by his privileged position, but the God of an oppressed people, who needed not only to know God but also to experience God. A God who could not only save their souls but also liberate their bodies from the shackles of white oppression. No black man (other than blacks rooted in the white religious experience) could escape this view of God.

## The Black View of God

**K**ing was greatly influenced by his black view of God as the God of liberation. It was not uncommon for blacks to speak of God as promising to deliver them as he did Israel

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from Egypt. James Harris in his book, *Pastoral Theology—A Black Perspective*, writes “black theology believes that liberation is the essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and any authentic Christian theology affirms that God is on the side of the oppressed.”<sup>2</sup> Even though black theology as we know it today is relatively new, most black churchmen and leaders agree that it does reflect the roots of black religious thought. James Cone believes King’s theology emerged from black faith.

King’s faith was derived primarily from his people’s suffering and struggling in a society where whites talked of freedom and justice, while blacks experienced slavery and segregation. A separate faith emerged among black Christians in the United States because they believed that the God of the Exodus, the prophets, and Jesus did not condone the mistreatment they received from whites. . . . It was a black faith that emphasized God’s will to make right what white people made wrong, so that the rule of love would be established among all races of people. This was the hope that encouraged black Christians to bear witness, through public protest, to God’s creation of human beings, just like white people, and not as slaves or as second-class citizens.<sup>3</sup>

This black view of God shaped Martin Luther King and the other black ministers’ views about civil and political action against injustice. Since God was on the side of the oppressed and they were on God’s side, they had no other choice. If they were to be on the side of God, they must protest against the oppressor. King’s theology was in sharp contrast to that of Seventh-day Adventism and the theology of any other predominantly white religious organization.

For the white Protestant American, God is indeed a transcendent, omnipotent God. During the civil-rights movement, whites magnified God’s transcendence at the expense of His immanence. It seemed that white people viewed God as concerned about human beings’ spiritual welfare, but could not see him as concerned about their everyday living. This

is clearly seen by the actions of many of the church’s pioneers. Many early Adventists, in response to their understanding of God, lifted prophetic voices against social ills like slavery and alcohol. Our theology hasn’t changed, but our practice has.

I can remember my own father, now a retired Adventist pastor, leading the first “sit-in” protests in Savannah, Georgia. His actions were in defiance of official communiques from the General Conference warning against involvement in the civil-rights movement. Despite the church’s official stand, many black preachers participated in the civil-rights movement, but seldom in a leadership role, for fear of reprisal from the leadership of the church. Their fears were not without basis, for Adventist history documents the treatment of men who sought to be leaders of social change in the black community. These men were banished from the church and left without any supporting organization. It appears that black theology forms a natural resistance to white theology and sets black preachers and leaders, of which Martin Luther King was a part, on a collision course with white Protestant Americans.

## The Blackness of the Black Church

The black church played perhaps the most crucial role in liberating Martin Luther King to be the leader of the civil-rights movement. Unlike the development of new white churches, the black church was not born out of some new theological proposition, but solely on sociological grounds. The black church was a clear response to white oppression. Gayraud S. Wilmore, reflecting on the roots of the black church, writes about the Free African Society—the forerunner of the African Methodist Church:

Wherever the Societies were organized, they began as a protest against white prejudice and neglect and with the objective of providing not only for religious needs, but for social service, mutual aid and solidarity among people of African descent.<sup>4</sup>

Because the black church is centered in protest, this has given rise to protest leaders. In fact, simply by leading black churches, preachers get programmed to protest. Any preacher in the black tradition is expected to be involved in social change. In black theology, the church and community are tied together in single garment of destiny. In fact, in a 1968 Gallup Poll, 75.6 percent of the black community expected the church to be involved in the civil-rights movement. It is no small wonder, then, that Martin Luther King surfaced as both a Baptist preacher and a civil-rights leader.

Black ecclesiology sets the preacher as the center of church life. He is the leader, the general, and in many situations, the ultimate authority among the people. He is the Moses come to liberate his people. W. E. B. Du Bois expresses the position of the black preacher in these terms: "The preacher is the most unique

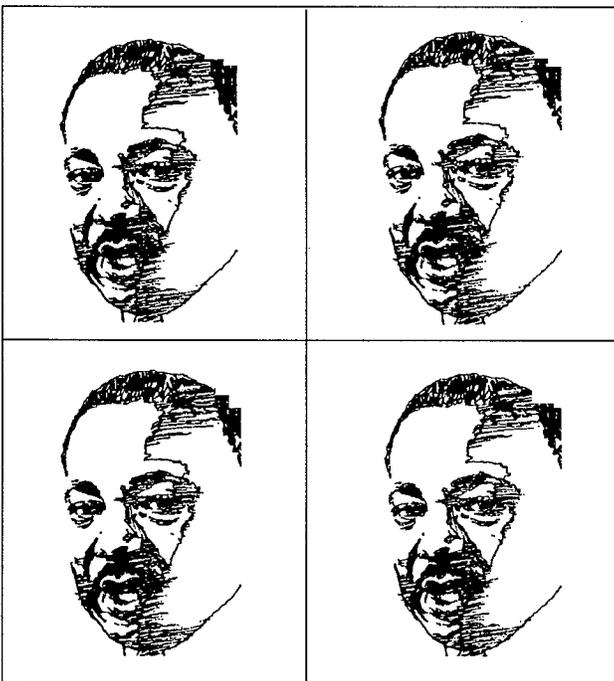
personality developed by the Negro on American soil. A leader, a politician, an orator, a boss, an intriguer, an idealist—all these he is, and ever too, the center of a group of men."<sup>5</sup> Peter J. Paris correctly states:

The experience of self-governance provided blacks with the opportunity to practice the basic rights of citizenship long before the basic rights became constitutionally guaranteed and politically enacted for them. Ironically, it became the destiny of the black preachers to emerge as the freest of all persons, black and white alike, because they embodied the condition of independence and freedom more than any other. In their pulpits they could condemn virtually any social evil in either the white or the black community without fearing the possibility of censorship.<sup>6</sup>

The black preacher of bygone days entered the ministry, built up a sizable church and personal following, and then combined parish work with political work. Even today, many black politicians are a senior or associate pastor of a church. In a 1965 Gallup survey, 88.3 percent of the blacks polled favored the involvement of the preacher in political matters. It was therefore easier for Martin Luther King than for a white preacher to become involved in the civil-rights movement.

Adventist views of the church place the movement ahead of the preacher. This view becomes detrimental to the production of great leaders. Adventist ecclesiology has no room for men who overshadow the organization. Martin Luther King towered over his local congregation, which he eventually gave up, and even over the organization he founded, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The black tradition gave its churches and its ministers almost full autonomy, something the Adventist Church could not afford to do.

In order to keep its centralized government, the Adventist denomination can never have any superstars. Leaders such as Martin Luther King must have their independence. Adventism as we know it today could not survive the



growth of ecclesiastical giants. A centralized government demands control. Clearly, Martin Luther King would have had a difficult, if not impossible, time working within the Adventist Church.

## The Mission of the Black Church

Unlike the Adventist Church, which sees its primary mission as preaching the third-angel's message to the world in preparation for the second coming of Christ, black missiology has more of a "this-world concern."

The mission of the black churches has always transcended their own constituency by aiming at the reform of the larger white society, that is, causing the latter to practice racial justice as an expression of genuine Christian understanding and devotion. Their mission, therefore, has had both internal and an external dimension in that they have sought religious, moral, and political reform in both the black and the white community, though not in the same respect.<sup>7</sup>

With a mission that has as one of its major concerns social justice, it would logically provide encouragement for preachers to become involved in social concerns. In fact, in the black community the church has always been the largest institution. It must take on a large social role if social change is to occur. This broad mission of the black church allowed King to preach in a sermon at Ebenezer, his father's church:

There's something wrong with any church that limits the gospel to talkin' about heaven over yonder. There is something wrong with any minister . . . who becomes so otherworldly in his orientation that he forgets about what is happening now. There is something wrong with any church that is [so] absorbed in the hereafter that it forgets the here. Here where men are trampled over by the iron feet of oppression. Here where thousands of God's children are caught in an airtight cage [of poverty]. Here where thousands of

men and women are depressed and in agony because of their earthly filth . . . , where the darkness of life surrounds so many of God's children. I say to you that religion must be concerned not merely about the streets flowing with milk and honey, but about the millions of God's children in Asia, Africa, and South America and in our nation who go to bed hungry at night. It will be concerned [not only] about a long white robe over yonder, but about [people] having some clothes down here. It will be concerned not merely about silver slippers in heaven, but about men and women having some shoes to wear on earth.<sup>8</sup>

The social conditions of black people foreordained that the mission of black churches would encompass the whole life of the black community. Indeed, concerns for the plight of black Americans brought the black church into existence.

Martin's missiology also took shape around Walter Rauschenbusch's social gospel. King studied the writings of Rauschenbusch and reflected his thinking in most of his writings. Rauschenbusch believed that personal existence is basically social, and that a relevant Christianity would "bring men under repentance for their collective sins" and would



proclaim a corresponding social salvation. He contended that the church should be at the forefront of social change through a program for more revolutionary social action. The social gospel movement was characterized by a sharp criticism of social injustices, especially economic injustices. A cursory reading of King's writing and his sermons, reveals strains of the social gospel woven throughout.

Of course, two major problems of the social gospel was its utopian elements and strained view of the nature of humanity.

## Black Views of Humanity and Salvation

King's understanding of salvation (soteriology) was also affected by the social gospel. To understand his soteriology, we must first investigate his view of humanity. King, like the liberal Protestants of his time, believed that humanity is basically good—that the reason humans do evil things is because of their lack of knowledge. This philosophy is seen in King's optimistic view of white preachers during the civil-rights movement. He believed that by educating them about the injustice done to black people in this country and



appealing to their goodwill, they would respond positively. A new age would begin.

Had King been an Adventist, his theology would have checked any overly optimistic view of human nature. He would have believed that human beings are basically evil—that social changes do not change the human heart. Adventism teaches the need to work for the betterment of society, but does not see social cures as the answer to the moral condition of humanity. Only a renewed heart can really change the human heart and thus society.

King's liberal anthropology and his black theology gave rise to a soteriology that tended to be "this worldly." In his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, King implied that the salvation of humanity will come from overturning oppressive systems. Little in his soteriology called for deliverance from sinful human nature.

## Black Eschatology

Martin Luther King's theology shaped his views on the end of time. King's ultimate goal was a new world order on the earth. Again, in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, we catch a glimpse of this eschatology.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed, . . . I have a dream that one day . . . sons of former slaves and sons of former slave owners will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, knowing that we will be free one day . . . This will be the day when all God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing."<sup>9</sup>

This optimistic view of the future was born out of an eschatology that saw God as ushering in a new age on this earth. Had King been an Adventist, his optimistic dream for America would have been shattered. Our eschatology proclaims "that when they shall say, Peace and

safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.”

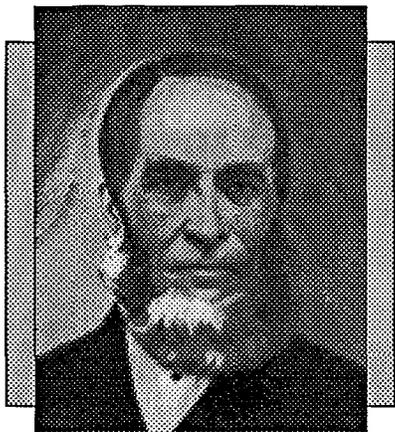
Investigating Martin Luther King's thought allows us to understand how he could become

the great leader of America's civil-rights movement. It also becomes clear that Adventist theology and practice would have hampered his becoming one of our nation's greatest leaders.

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Hiram Edson

# Voices Out of The Silence

Luther Boutelle and Hiram Edson remember October 22, 1844, and the days that followed.

The most poignant voices actually heard the silence; voices that listened for on-rushing divinity and heard only their own breath. Before chatting on about the meaning of 1844, they listened to the quiet—as we should; heard the muffled sounds of grief and loss, as we might well do.

Eventually, the disappointed found their voices. Two of them begin the special section on Surviving the Great Disappointment. The first, Luther Boutelle, later joined the Advent Christian movement, the larger denomination of former Millerites. The second, Hiram Edson, shared an idea—Christ beginning in 1844 a new ministry in the heavenly sanctuary—that helped sustain the smaller, more radical “little flock.” Almost 20 years later, Edson’s group became the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The following excerpts, with brief historical notes, appear in the appendix to *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century*. They are reprinted here by permission of the University of Tennessee Press. The volume is edited by Ronald L. Numbers, chair of the History of Medi-

cine Department at the University of Wisconsin, and the author of several books, including *Propheticess of Health: Ellen G. White and the Origins of Seventh-day Adventist Health Reform*, and *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism*; and by Jonathan

M. Butler, the author of *Softly and Tenderly: Heaven and Hell in American Revivalism, 1870-1920*, and several articles in *Spectrum*, including “The Historian as Heretic” (August 1993).

—The Editors

## “Unspeakably Sad . . . On the Wing Again”

*Luther Boutelle, a Millerite lecturer from Groton, Massachusetts, later became a leader of the Advent Christian Church, a denomination that emerged from the main body of ex-Millerites. The following account from his autobiography, Sketch of the Life and Religious Experience of Eld. Luther Boutelle (Boston: Advent Christian Publication Society, 1891), pp. 62-72, describes his activities and emotions in 1844.*

As we entered upon the year 1844, the interest, instead of decreasing, kept up; and during the summer the number of Camp-meetings, Grovemeetings and Conferences increased, and the work-

ers in the Lord’s vineyard had all that they could do.

In the early part of the summer our attention was directed to the fall as the time for the Lord to come, according to the types in the Old Testament, which began to be studied and preached. By July there was such a concentration of thought among the strong ones on time, that it was called “the midnight cry.” Thus a new impetus was created, and the work of holding meetings and preaching was increased. As we fell, one after another, into the current belief that the fall would witness the coming of our Lord, it became in faith a certainty—we believed it with our

whole souls. Thus the cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh!" was, by the "time argument," made to end in the fall of 1844, Jewish time, tenth day of the seventh month, supposed to be Oct. 20, 21, or 22. This brought us to a definite time, and in coming up to it, the works of Adventists demonstrated their faith and honesty, not to be questioned. As they moved on with the point of time before them, all grew more enthusiastic. Crops were left unharvested, their owners expecting never to want what they had raised. Men paid up their debts. Many sold their property to help others to pay their debts, who could not have done it themselves. Beef cattle were slaughtered and distributed among the poor. At no time since "the day of pentecost was fully come" had there been the like—a day when that pentecost was so completely duplicated as in 1844, when Adventism prevailed and reigned.

There was a great stir and talk, in many places, about putting the Millerites under guardianship. But this did not cause any to go back on their faith. They were firm and held fast, believing they should speak and act. Thus they were known by their fruits. There was some fanaticism, but the body of Adventists were sober, honest, a holy people, with strong faith and ready to meet their Lord—to see the King in his beauty. As the time to which all looked drew near, the Bible was studied even more, and a fuller consecration made. There was a harmony that made us a unit at this time, and the representatives of Adventism and the flock were all one.

## The Great Disappointment

The *Advent Herald*, the *Midnight Cry*, and other Advent papers, periodicals, pamphlets,

tracts, leaflets, voicing the coming glory, were scattered broadcast and everywhere, like autumn leaves in the forest. Every house was visited by them. They were angels of mercy sent in love for the salvation of men. Everything now began to converge to a point. October was the closing time of probation! the judgment and rewards! A mighty effort through the Spirit and the word preached was made to bring sinners to repentance, and to have the wandering return. All were awake to this great end—salvation. The tenth day of the seventh month drew nigh. With joy all the ready ones anticipated the day. Solemn, however, were the last gatherings. Those of a family who were ready to meet the Lord, expecting an eternal separation from those who were not ready. Husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters separated, and that forever! The leading preachers of Adventism had all endorsed the tenth day of the seventh month as the time when the Lord should be expected. On Oct. 6, Mr. Miller accepted the argument as true, and wrote an endorsement to it.

Geo. Storrs, Sept. 24, 1844, in the *Bible Examiner* said, "I take my pen with feelings such as I never had before. Beyond a doubt in my mind the tenth day of the seventh month will witness the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven."

The *Voice of Truth*, of Oct. 2, stated that Elders Marsh, Galusha, Peavy and others had endorsed it.

In closing the *Advent Herald* office on the 16th of October, an immense edition of that paper was issued for free distribution in all parts of the land. This was considered the last edition ever to be published.

We now give an extract from Bro. S. Bliss. He wrote, "The time immediately preceding the 22nd of October was one of great calmness

of mind and pleasurable expectation on the part of those who regarded the point of time with interest. There was a nearness of approach to God, and a sacredness of communion with him, to which those who experienced it will ever recur with pleasure. During the last ten days secular business was, for the most part, suspended, and those who looked for the advent gave themselves to the work of preparation for the event as they would for death, were they on a bed of sickness, expecting soon to close their eyes on earthly scenes forever."—*History of the Second Advent Message*.

These quotations harmonize with what I knew to be at the time. Such a concentration of thought, such a oneness of faith was never before witnessed; certainly not in modern times. All that did speak spoke the same things. Solemn, yet joyful. Jesus coming! we to meet him! Meetings everywhere were being held. Confessions made, wrongs righted; sinners inquiring what they should do to be saved. Those who were not with us were mightily effected [sic]. Some were exceedingly frightened with awful forebodings.

But the end of October passed, making unspeakably sad the faithful and longing ones; but causing the unbelieving and wicked to rejoice. All was still. No *Advent Herald*; no meetings as formerly. Everyone felt lonely, with hardly a desire to speak to anyone. Still in the cold world! No deliverance—the Lord not come! No words can express the feelings of disappointment of a true Adventist then. Those only who experienced it can enter into the subject as it was. It was a humiliating thing, and we all felt it alike. All were silent, save to inquire, "Where are we?" and "What next?" All were housed and searching their Bibles to learn what to do. In some few places they soon be-

gan to come together to watch for some development of light, relative to our disappointment.

Not quite content with being housed, after such stirring times, I went to Boston. Found the *Advent Herald* office closed, and all still. I next went to New Bedford. Found the brethren in a confused state. Had a few meetings; comforted those who came as best I could, telling them to hold fast, for I believed there would be a good come out of this matter. Returning from New Bedford to Boston, I found the office of our *Herald* open, and Bro. Bliss there. He said he had hardly been from his house since the time passed. He inquired if there were any meetings being held. I told him there was to be one in the city that evening and that in other places they were coming together to comfort one another. Some fanaticism was seen, but the many were sober watchers for their Lord.

I learned of a company that had

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*We came into the tarrying time. This helped us to bear our disappointment, and put our feet on solid land. Prophecy again rang in our ears, and we were now on the wing again, and the world found Millerism, which they buried, still alive.*

come together to stay until the Lord came. I felt like visiting them. Accordingly I took a carriage ride to the place. I found about seventy believers in a large house, living there and having meetings daily. They had put all their money in a milk-pan, and when they paid for anything they took the money from the pan. All was common stock. We held a meeting with them and advised them as best we could to keep the faith and separate, and see to their individual interests, and those of their families, which advice they kindly took, and very soon separated, going each to his or her calling.

After a time in looking over the way the Lord had led us, and bearing the reproach in consequence of our failure, we found there was to be a disappointment in the fulfillment of the parable. The words of Jesus were, "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." From the first of our experience as Adventists, we believed we were fulfilling the parable by going forth to meet the Lord in our faith and preaching of his coming, but we did not see that the Bridegroom—the Lord—would not come when we expected him. But it was not long after our disappointment before the light began to break in upon us, and we saw there was to be a waiting time, a midnight before the Lord would come. Turning to Rev., tenth chapter, we saw that after the "little book" was eaten, and sweet in the mouth, there was a bitterness to be experienced. Our disappointment was bitter, and it was by eating the word of God, or the little book. Since that time a new inspiration has been given us, and we have done even more than we did before our disappointment; for the little book was to "prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." Thus the word of God is fulfilled by us, and we can still repeat:

In eighteen hundred forty-four,  
We thought the curse would be  
no more.  
The things of earth we left behind,  
To meet the Saviour of mankind.  
With many we took the parting  
hand,  
Till meeting in a better land.  
The day passed by—no tongue  
can tell  
The gloom that on the faithful  
fell.  
That what it meant they hardly  
knew  
But to their Lord they quickly  
flew.  
They searched the Word, and  
not in vain,  
For comfort there they did obtain.  
They found "the bridge" they  
had passed o'er;  
Then they rejoiced and grieved  
no more.  
Their faith was firm in that blest  
Book,  
And still for Jesus they did look.

## Resuming the Work With Good Courage

And now a new era was begun. These divine utterances were heard with such distinctness that it was easy to believe them; and with a zeal equal to our former one, we took hold of the work now given us to do. We found that the truth was not to be all learned at once. Thus we came into the tarrying time. This helped us to bear our disappointment, and put our feet on solid land. Prophecy again rang in our ears, and we were now on the wing again, and the world found Millerism, which they buried, still alive. So while the Bridegroom tarried, meat in due season was to be given. With the assurance of light and divine help we quickened our pace in itinerating, and soon found the whole body

was breathing more freely. We as a people righted up, and the sound of rejoicing was heard. The scattered Advent body was gathered again, and commenced anew their work of love.

In Jan. 1845, the *Advent Herald* appeared again in the field, acknowledging our disappointment, but urging the necessity of keeping

the signs of the Lord's soon coming before the people. Thus encouraged, our meetings, Conferences and Campmeetings were resumed with the former interest, while the way opened wonderfully before us for missionary work, scattering the light of the gospel in all directions. We now had calls as many as we could attend to.

## “We Wept, and Wept, Till the Day Dawn”

*Hiram Edson, a Millerite farmer from Port Gibson, New York, after 1844 joined the small group of sabbatarians who formed the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The following recollection, from an undated manuscript fragment in the possession of the Heritage Room, Andrews University Library, begins with the evidence that convinced him of the truth of Millerism and ends in mid-sentence in a discussion of the seventh-day Sabbath.*

I began to muse on this wise; if all this is the fruit of the new doctrine, the evidence is clear that it is from heaven; for it is written, “by their fruits ye shall know them.” “A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit;” And thus this question was settled with me.

In this incident of my experience I also learned an additional lesson, namely, that God was ready and willing to hear and answer prayer for the sick, and to stretch forth his hand to heal and raise them up, and restore them to health. Since which time, I have shared in, and witnessed many incidents of like character.

The next morning the physician came to visit his patient, and to his great astonishment met him out of doors walking up and down the

lane, praising God with a loud voice. He gazed and listened with wonder and astonishment at the narration of what God had wrought. Pale, and trembling he returned home, relating what he had seen and heard, his residence being but a few doors from the church where the lectures were given.

When Monday evening came [both?] our [families?] went to the prayer meeting, appointed the night before at the close of the lectures. The meeting house, though large, was filled to overflowing as it had been during the lectures. It was judged best to have a short sermon and then a season for testimonies. The brother who had been healed, and myself, bore our testimonies: what God had wrought for us; which had its influence on the minds of the congregation. Before the close of the meeting, our preacher very hesitatingly gave a faint invitation, that, if there were any in the congregation who felt like seeking the Lord, and desired prayer for them, if they would make it manifest by rising on their feet we would engage in prayer for them; when some eighty at once arose, without being urged. And thus I saw literally fulfilled, what was presented before me the night before, when in prayer before the

manger. But the voice which said, “Go talk the truth to your neighbors, and fellow men,” and my promise to do so, was lost sight of, and did not come into mind.

I was endeavoring to walk carefully before the Lord. I did not want to loose [sic] the victory, the liberty, and freedom I had been sharing. But notwithstanding all my efforts darkness was stealing over me; the heavens became as brass, and I could find no answer from God—I knew not why, until I sought the Lord in persevering secret prayer, and, in earnest, to know what intervened and hid his face from me. At length while in prayer in the forest my mind was carried back to the voice which said, “Go talk the truth to your neighbors,” which I had promised to do, and that I could not share the light of his countenance, or freedom of his spirit, until I lifted that cross and discharged that duty. This seemed the heaviest cross which had ever been presented for me to lift. It seemed more than I could consent to do; but no relief came, till, at length, I consented to make the effort. And not until I reached the third family did much victory or freedom return to me, but here the cloud seemed to break, and old and young, the greyheaded and youth, were melted to tears; expressing their desire for saving grace. As I moved forward in this work day times; and attending the evening meetings; for they were protracted, until it was claimed that between three and four hundred professed conversion, the cross grew lighter, or, my strength increased in bearing it. There was one family I had passed several times without calling on them. The head of the family was dissipated, and I thought it would be but casting pearls before swine; so I passed them by.

After laboring as above, night and day, I became worn and felt I needed rest. I decided not to attend

meeting that evening, also, not to make any more calls but go directly home and obtain rest. On passing the above named house I was stopped in the road opposite the house, by some unseen power, and could not make progress. I know not what was the cause, and began to ponder whether it was duty to enter the house. While thus waiting a shadowy form in human shape stood before me, and led toward the house, at which I said, Can there be duty to call here? The form repeated the lead toward the house twice, or thrice, and I followed, gathering assuredly that the Lord's angel was accompanying me and leading me in the way I should go. I entered the house, was received kindly, had a free time talking and praying with them, learned that they were backsliders, and were desiring to return unto the Lord. The above revival and ingathering of souls, being the result and legitimate fruit of the above lectures, was additional evidence that this new doctrine was from heaven; for it is a good tree that brings forth good fruit. "A corrupt tree cannot

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*The day had then passed and our disappointment became a certainty. Our fondest hopes were blasted. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept, and wept, till the day dawn.*

bring forth good fruit."

During what is called the seventh month movement, in 1844, myself and several other Brn. were engaged in circulating publications on the coming of Christ, day times, and holding meetings at my own private house evenings. As we were about to commence our evening meeting on one occasion, a two horse waggon load of entire strangers came; and after preparing seats for them we commenced our meeting by singing, "Here o'er the earth as a stranger I roam, Here is no rest, is no rest." It was sung with the spirit and with the understanding, and the spirit which accompanied the singing gave to it a keen edge, and before the hymn was sung through, the entire company of strangers were so deeply convicted that rather than bear the reproach of being convicted, or converted at a Millerite meeting, they all started to leave the house. One man and his wife succeeded in getting out of doors; but the third one fell upon the threshold; the fourth, the fifth, and so on, till the most of the company were thus slain by the power of God. And such agonizing cries and pleading for mercy, is not often witnessed. Some thirteen, or more, were converted before the meeting closed. The man and his wife who left the house labored hard to persuade the rest of their company to leave at once for home; but not succeeding, and rather than remain through the meeting they went home on foot in a dark night, a distance of five, or six miles, carrying a child a year old. But this was not their heaviest burden. Their conviction was too deep to be easily shaken off; they were back again at the next evening meeting found pardon, and peace in believing. And, "so, mightily grew to word of God and prevailed."

Passing over other like manifestations of the power of God, we glance at our disappointment at the

tenth of the seventh month, 1844. Having the true cry, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, on the tenth day of the seventh month, and, having been early taught by modern orthodoxy that the coming of the Bridegroom to the marriage would be fulfilled in the personal second advent of Christ to this earth, (which was a mistaken idea) we confidently expected to see Jesus Christ and all the holy angels with him; and that his voice would call up Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the ancient worthies, and near and dear friends which had been torn from us by death, and that our trials and sufferings with our earthly pilgrimage would close, and we should be caught up to meet our coming Lord to be forever with him to inhabit the bright golden mansions in the golden home city, prepared for the redeemed. Our expectations were raised high, and thus we looked for our coming Lord until the clock tolled 12 at midnight. The day had then passed and our disappointment became a certainty. Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept, and wept, till the day dawn.

I mused in my own heart, saying, My advent experience has been the richest and brightest of all my christian experience. If this had proved a failure, what was the rest of my christian experience worth? Has the Bible proved a failure? Is there no God—no heaven—no golden home city—no paradise? Is all this but a cunningly devised fable? Is there no reality to our fondest hopes and expectation of these things? And thus we had something to grieve and weep over, if all our fond hopes were lost. And as I said, we wept till the day dawn.

A second glance over past expe-

rience, and the lessons learned, and how when brought into strait places where light and help was needed by seeking the Lord he had answered by a voice and other ways, I began to feel there might be light and help for us in our present distress. I said to some of my brethren, Let us go to the barn. We entered the granary, shut the doors about us and bowed before the Lord. We prayed earnestly; for we felt our necessity. We continued in earnest prayer until the witness of the Spirit was given that our prayer was accepted, and that light should be given, our disappointment be explained, and made clear and satisfactory. After breakfast I said to one of my brethren, "Let us go and see, and encourage some of our brn." We started, and while passing through a large field I was stopped about midway of the field. Heaven seemed open to my view, and I saw distinctly, and clearly, that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, that he for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary; and that he had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth. That he came to the marriage at that time; in other words, to the Ancient of days, to

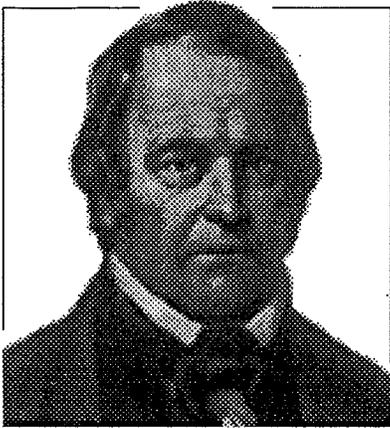
receive a kingdom, dominion, and glory; and we must wait for his return *from the wedding*; and my mind was directed to the tenth ch. of Rev. where I could see the vision had spoken and did not lie; the seventh angel had began [sic] to sound; we had eaten the littl [sic] book; it had been sweet in our mouth, and it had now become bitter in our belly, embittering our whole being. That we must prophesy again, etc., and that when the seventh angel began to sound, the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament, etc.

While I was thus standing in the midst of the field, my comrade passed on almost beyond speaking distance before missing me. He inquired, "Why I was stopping so long?" I replied, "The Lord was answering our morning prayer; by giving light with regard to our disappointment." I talked these things to my brethren.

In those days I was closely associated with O. R. L. Crosier; and Dr. F. B. Hahn, Crosier making his home with me a portion of the time. He examined the Bible on the subject of the sanctuary. F. B. Hahn and myself, was connected with Crosier in the publication of the paper called, "The Day-Dawn." Br. Hahn and myself, held a consultation with regard to the propriety of

sending out the light on the subject of the sanctuary. We decided it was just what the scattered remnant needed; for it would explain our disappointment, and set the brethren on the right track. We agreed to share the expense between us, and said to Crosier, "Write out the subject of the sanctuary. Get out another number of the Day Dawn, and we will try to meet the expense." He did so, and the Day Dawn was sent out bearing the light on the sanctuary subject. It fell into the hands of Elders James White, and Joseph Bates, who readily endorsed the view; and it was shown in vision to be light for the remnant. This number of the Day Dawn opened a communication between us and these Eastern brethren. We appointed a conference of the scattered brethren to be held at my house, and invited these our Eastern brethren to meet with us. Br. W. made the effort to come, but his way was hedged up. Father Bates came on. His light was the seventh-day Sabbath.

From my understanding of the opening of the tabernacle of the *testimony* in heaven, and the seeing of the ark of his testimony, and a few lines I had seen from the pen of T. M. Preble, I had been looking at the subject of the seventh-day Sabbath and talking it to my Brn. I had said to them, "If we abide by . . .



William Miller

# Day-Dawn

A New Hampshire couple is divided and drawn together by the Midnight Cry and Great Disappointment.

*(A tidy, unassuming house in a small town in New Hampshire. Cora, in her mid-20s, and Forrest, in his early 30s—a comfortably married couple—are talking)*

**Forrest:** Well, the great day has finally come, hasn't it?

**Cora:** *(Warning, almost playful. She is used to this sort of go around)* Now Forrest, don't start.

**Forrest:** Seems like any other day to me.

**Cora:** *(Triumphant)* Now that doesn't prove anything, and you

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*Betty Cooney, who has worked for 15 years in communications for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is a graduate of Atlantic Union College. Prior to working for the denomination, she was a freelance writer in New York City, writing not only for Adventist publications, but satirical pieces for a variety of media. The scene published here is adapted from her 1979 play, The Great Disappointment.*

know it. The Bible says he'll come like a thief in the night.

**Forrest:** Well, there you are. What sort of thief is going to come when there's a meeting room of saints waiting up for him?

**Cora:** *(Looking at him with a mixture of fondness and regret)* Do you know, sometimes I think you're hopeless.

**Forrest:** I'm a God-fearing man, Cora. I told you, if the Lord comes down for me, I will very willingly accompany him up again. I've got nothing against being a citizen of heaven.

**Cora:** *(Suddenly animated, fervent)* Then come with us, Forrest—come wait with us at the meeting! What could it hurt for you to come with us just this once?

**Forrest:** *(Shaking his head)* I suppose it wouldn't hurt, but what good would it do? That's what I want to know. If the Lord comes,

he comes, and he'll take us with him. If he doesn't, there's no point losing sleep at an all-night prayer meeting. I'll just have to go to work in the morning.

**Cora:** *(Earnestly)* But Forrest, you have to have *faith*. You have to believe he's coming, or you'll be left behind.

**Forrest:** *(Unmoved)* He made me, didn't he? Why wouldn't he take me home?

**Cora:** Because . . . *(almost afraid to say it)* because you might not be—*prepared*.

**Forrest:** Because I won't go to the meetings with you. *(It is not a question)*

**Cora:** Well . . .

**Forrest:** *(With slow-building anger)* That's it, isn't it? You think heaven will only have those built to sit and think for hours at a time. The rest of us restless ones who

can't sit more than a few minutes without cracking our knuckles, we'll just have to set up camp by the lake of fire.

**Cora:** (*Nervous*) Now Forrest, I didn't say . . .

**Forrest:** No, and you didn't have to. There's an awfully self-righteous tone to all those meetings, and don't think it doesn't show. Well, go ahead. Go with your people and get ready for your long journey. I'll stay here and do something *worldly*—maybe try to figure how to get us out of debt. If anyone asks where my wife is, I'll tell them she didn't really leave me—just took off for heaven.

**Cora:** (*With quiet dignity, but obviously hurt*) I'm sorry, Forrest.

**Forrest:** (*Not finished yet*) And maybe while you're there, you can point out to the Lord that, evil as your husband may be, he does have *one* virtue.

**Cora:** (*Still hurt, her mind elsewhere*) And what is that?

**Forrest:** (*Sarcastic*) Can't think of it, eh? Well, it's a good thing I brought it up or the Lord might have overlooked it, too. (*Loudly*) I'm against slavery, Cora, remember? That was one of your causes I was all *for*. I even hid some slaves in our big oven. I saved lives!

**Cora:** (*Quietly*) You've done many wonderful things, Forrest, and I'm sorry I made you angry. (*Forrest is quiet, almost abject, wondering if perhaps he has overreacted, but not yet ready to apologize. Cora continues, half to herself*) It's just that . . . that I so want for you to go with me. If I could only be sure that you were—*prepared*.

**Forrest:** (*He is immediately angry*)

*again, almost shouting*) Prepared! Prepared! I'll tell you what I'm not prepared for. I'm not *prepared* to give up on all my investments and sell everything just to pay off our debts. I'm not *prepared* to go off with you on this . . . this *goose-chase*—going off to wait for the end of the world, for . . . for the Lord to come down out of the sky like some magician's sideshow. I'm a grown man, Cora. Now leave me be.

**Cora:** (*She looks at him for a long moment, and begins to cry*) I'll never see you again, Forrest.

*(The suddenness of her statement catches him off guard, and he turns away from her, shaking his head)*

**Cora:** (*Crying harder*) I'll never see you. . . . I can't . . . I don't know if I can . . . (*Sobs choke her, and she covers her face*)

*(He comes to her hesitantly, and touches her arm. She puts her arms around him. They stand for a moment, then a knock sounds on the door)*

**Cora:** (*Pulling away from him, wiping her eyes.*) That's Josephine. I . . . I have to get my things. I have to go. (*She rushes around the room, snatching up clothing, as though trying to escape the pain of leaving. Another knock sounds, and finally there is nothing more for her to do. She stops and takes one last look at Forrest*) Good-by, Forrest.

**Forrest:** (*Quietly*) Good-by, Cora.

*(The door swings open and shut and she is gone.)*

*Time passes. We see Forrest pace the room in agitation, finally going to the pantry and rummaging for something. He returns with a bottle, and pours himself a drink.*

*Some time later, a neighbor stops by. His voice is indistinct, but we see him gesturing around the house. It becomes clear that he wants to buy it. The two men sit at the dining room table and draw up a contract. Forrest signs, and the neighbor leaves. Forrest raises his glass in a silent salute.*

*Much later. The sun has risen, and we see Cora returning slowly, stumblingly. Reaching the house, she finds the door locked and knocks. Forrest answers, obviously drunk*

**Forrest:** (*Loud, his voice slurred*) Who's there? Who's there? (*Bawling*) Answer!

**Cora:** It's your wife, dear; please open the door.

**Forrest:** (*Decided, shaking his head*) Not my wife. Can't be.

**Cora:** (*Urgent*) But it is, Forrest. It's me, Cora. Please let me in.

**Forrest:** Not my wife, no. My wife's a Millerite. She's gone up. (*He*)

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**Cora:** *It's your wife, dear; please open the door.*

**Forrest:** *Not my wife, no. My wife's a Millerite. She's gone up. Up, with all the other saints. Mostly men saints. They're going to have a time up there . . .*

*points heavenward, then loses his balance and sits down abruptly*) Up, with all the other saints. Mostly men saints. They're going to have a time up there, but nothing bad. Oh no, 'cause in heaven they don't marry or nothing. They just desert their lawful wedded husbands.

**Cora:** Forrest, please let me in. The neighbors will hear.

**Forrest:** Neighbors have all gone up, too. I, only I am left. I'm a sinner, Cora—a hopeless sinner. *(Long pause)* Cora?

**Cora:** Yes?

**Forrest:** Cora, I'm drunk.

**Cora:** *(Resigned)* I know, Forrest.

**Forrest:** A whole bottle, Cora, I drank a whole bottle of liquor, and smoked three cigars, and played cards all by myself, and—and . . .

**Cora:** *(Listlessly)* And what else, Forrest?

**Cora:** *I feel so—stopped. Like I've forgotten how to live. What do we do now, Forrest? What do I do?*

**Forrest:** *If you loved him enough to go to live with him forever, you ought to trust him just a little bit now.*

**Forrest:** *(Puzzled)* Nothing else. Haven't had time for anything else. *(She sighs)* Yet. But I will, don't worry. Tomorrow I'm going out and buy me a slave!

**Cora:** *(Horried)* Forrest!

**Forrest:** 's true, I am. And then I'm going to find me a woman, one who won't be leaving me, off to meetings and praying and going to heaven all the time. Cora, what do you think I am, dead? I need you. I need you. *(He opens the door)*

**Cora:** *(With despair, as the reality of situation begins to sink in)* I need you, too, Forrest. We need each other. *(She reaches out for him. Forrest sways and passes out, falling away from her, stretched out on the floor)* Forrest? Forrest! *(He begins to snore)*

*(Later. The lighting shifts, and the sun slanting through the windows suggests that it is mid-afternoon. Forrest is still lying on the floor. Cora is curled up on the couch, sleeping, her coat over her. Forrest wakes up slowly, stands up, staggers, clutches at his head. Finally he notices Cora on the couch)*

**Forrest:** *(Puzzled)* Cora? What's she doing in the parlor? *(Goes to the grandfather clock and looks at the time. Starts to remember)* Oh, God. Poor Cora! *(Remembering the morning)* What did I say to her? What did I do?

**Cora:** *(Waking up, blinking against the light)* Where . . . where am I? Forrest? *(He goes to her. She realizes where she is. Despondently)* Oh.

**Forrest:** He didn't come.

**Cora:** No.

**Forrest:** *(Teasing her just a bit,*

*trying to stir her up)* Well, there's always tomorrow.

**Cora:** *(Forlorn)* Yes, there's tomorrow.

**Forrest:** *(Gently, a little unsettled by her despondence)* You said Miller warned against being so sure.

**Cora:** I know, I know. But when you want something so *badly* . . . *(She slumps visibly)* I feel so—*stopped*. Like I've forgotten how to live. What do we do now, Forrest? What do I do?

**Forrest:** *(Carefully)* If you loved him enough to go to live with him forever, you ought to trust him just a little bit now. *(He glances at her sideways, trying to gauge her reaction. She nods. He continues)* You Adventists may just have to admit that maybe you haven't quite read the Almighty's full meaning on this, that's all. He knows everything, Cora—isn't that what you believe? How can one of us humans, or even a group together, know what's in his mind? He made us—it's not likely our brains are bigger than his.

**Cora:** *(Resigned)* You're right, of course.

**Forrest:** *(Long pause. Then, very cautiously, almost holding his breath)* There is one thing that might make you happy.

**Cora:** *(Not too optimistic)* What?

**Forrest:** Well, you know how you wanted me to sell the house and pay off all the creditors? *(Her eyes begin to widen and he rushes on)* Well, look here. *(He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a roll of bills)*

**Cora:** *(Gasps)* Forrest, no! You sold our house?

**Forrest:** (*Nervous, fidgeting*) Well, I didn't really figure the world would end, but I thought it might make you happy, anyway, and besides, we could pay off our debts and . . . er, well, get started again.

**Cora:** (*A bit dazed*) When do we have to move our things?

**Forrest:** (*Nervously*) Well . . . (*Panicky laugh*) that's another good thing about it. We won't have to move anything.

**Cora:** (*Still dazed*) You sold our furniture, too? (*He nods*) Well. (*Again*) Well. (*Starting to snap out of it*) But Forrest, where will we live?

**Forrest:** A . . . um, well, a boarding house, I thought. (*Plunging ahead*) Just listen, Cora, it's for the best. Think of it. There'll be no more creditors at the door, and in no time I'll start getting returns on my investments. We'll have our own house again, and better than this, before you know it.

**Cora:** (*Almost bitter*) I wish I could believe that. You're going to invest in that bathtub, aren't you? That

one no one will ever buy?

**Forrest:** (*Firmly*) Cora, if you lose faith in the Lord, I can stand it, but you've got to have some faith in me. Do you think it was easy for me to sell the house that we've both worked so hard for? But that *is* what you asked me to do. Now you've got to believe in me, just a little at least. I know I'm taking a chance, but I want to see what I can do, maybe as much as you wanted to go up to those pearly gates. I think the Lord understands that, Cora, and I wish you'd at least try.

**Cora:** (*Softening*) I believe in *you*, Forrest; it's those pedal showers and electrified bathtubs that worry me.

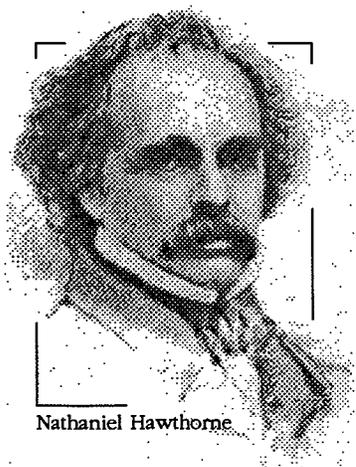
**Forrest:** (*Fervent*) That's because you're not an investor, like me. When I see a peddle shower, I don't see just one. I see hundreds of them, all with happy people inside, pedaling away. And I see them thanking me for bringing them such a wonderful invention. It may still sell. And this bathtub, it may go very well. They say they've had some dramatic successes in Europe. They've just got to tinker with it a little more.

**Cora:** (*Softly, resigning herself to the idea.*) We're going to be in that boarding house for a long time, aren't we? (*He shrugs and tries a hopeful smile*) Well, I guess I could take in a little work— (*Her optimism and energy are starting to take over, and she begins to gather herself against the years ahead*) I can teach fine stitching, or maybe even French—put that fancy education I got to use.

**Forrest:** (*Beginning to glow*) That's it, Cora. That's all I need. Things will be different now, I know it. Say—I'm starved. Let's go buy a dinner at the Endicott Hotel. We're debt free. We'll celebrate. (*He looks down at himself, sees his rumpled clothes*) You just wait while I change. I won't be a minute. (*He bounds up the stairs*)

(*The early winter sun is beginning to set, filling the room with a soft, orange light. Cora stands quietly, taking in the scene. Then she turns to the sofa and picks up her coat, preparing to go out*)

**Cora:** (*Softly, to herself*) Well, there's always tomorrow. (*Even more quietly*) Always tomorrow.



Nathaniel Hawthorne

# 1844 in Great American Literature

Millerites and apocalyptic expectation as a part of the canon of American culture.

by Gary Scharnborst

FOR OVER A CENTURY, THE MOST NOTORIOUS millennial movement in American history has inspired American authors to literary re-creations of the phenomenon. The adventist prophet William Miller, who predicted that the world would end through the literal return of Christ and the cataclysmic inauguration of His Kingdom in 1843 or 1844, and his followers, known simply as Millerites, could scarcely have imagined the fascination they would exercise for so long after the scheduled fulfillment of that prophecy. Rather than populating the Kingdom with risen saints as they had hoped, their lasting influence probably has been among those generations of writers who have reinvented the story to serve their own literary purposes. These allusions merit examination because the climate of ignorance about the American millennial tradition<sup>1</sup> has been congenial to the growth of

Miller legend<sup>2</sup> and, as John P. McWilliams has noted, a cultural historian can observe the gestation of popular myths only by returning to "the extant data of original disagreements."<sup>3</sup> Was Millerism, as it often has been portrayed, the unfortunate consequence of mental or doctrinal aberration? Was Miller a megalomaniac who commanded a woeful cult of misguided zealots? Were their eschatological expectations invariably derided or dismissed by responsible people? The more reliable answers to these questions may be found not in secondary texts such as Clara Sears' *Days of Delusion* (1924) or Alice Felt Tyler's *Freedom's Ferment* (1944), but in literary works considered as primary documents.

Moreover, the Millerite phenomenon historically has been a touchstone for reflection by American authors upon a variety of themes, some of them, like political reform, only tangentially related to apocalypse. With the nation in the 1840s in the throes of economic and political turmoil and with a national literature in the faint blushes of its "coming of

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age," Millerism provoked dissimilar responses from similarly esteemed writers. In the late nineteenth century, literary realists adopted Millerism as backdrop for historical fiction. More recently, with the threat of the End looming again, literary modernists who find catharsis in absurdity have discovered that the Millerites with their ludicrous doctrine were prophetic in an unsuspected way. By tracing the images of Millerism from contemporary sources, through the rise of realism, and into this century, the literary historian may examine the artistic or political temperament of such American authors as Hawthorne, Emerson, Whittier, Longfellow, Eggleston, and Coover.

A brief summary of salient facts about Millerism may serve as a frame for this survey.<sup>4</sup> A self-educated farmer and converted deist, William Miller began to lecture throughout rural New York in 1831 that, according to his calculations, Christ's Second Advent would occur sometime in late 1843 or early 1844. Miller employed five methods of calculating the date, each one equating symbolic days mentioned in biblical text with literal years, each one indicating that the End would occur during the 12 months preceding March 21, 1844, or the spring equinox that ended a year in the sacred Jewish calendar. He attracted no greater following than other revivalists of the "burnt-over district" until, in 1839, he recruited Joshua Himes, a Garrisonian abolitionist, to promote his crusade.

During the economic depression that gripped the nation in the wake of the Panic of 1837, Millerism prospered under Himes' direction.<sup>5</sup> Adventist papers entitled *The Midnight Cry* and *Signs of the Times* were published in major cities; the movement spread from its New England base north to Canada, south to Virginia, west to Missouri, and across the Atlantic to England;<sup>6</sup> and an estimated 120 Millerite tent-meetings were held during the warm months of 1842, 1843, and 1844 with estimated

attendance of a half-million. The appearance in March 1843 of the most brilliant comet of the century, was hailed by some Millerites as an omen from God, a Last Warning which corroborated their prophet's calculations. Although the *parousia* did not occur by March 1844 as expected, the movement continued to spread.

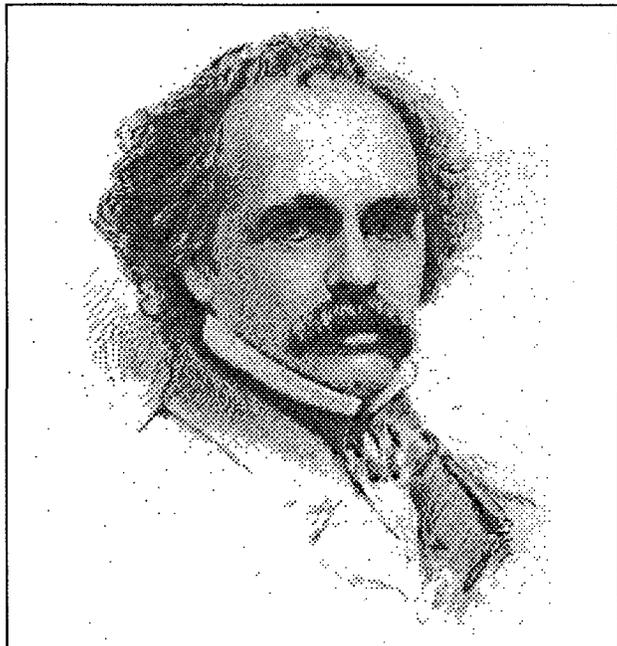
Miller eventually issued a revised prophecy, agreeing with some followers that the Day of Doom should occur the next "tenth day of the seventh month," or October 22, 1844 on the Roman calendar. As this day neared, lurid stories of mental collapses, murders, and suicides of hysterical Millerites, as well as rumors that some of them had sewn muslin ascension robes, were repeated from rival pulpits and in newspapers. Undoubtedly, many believers neglected business or farm, ignored debts, and otherwise allowed their worldly obligations to lapse in order to prepare for the imminent End. During the night of October 22, many of them remained at home or gathered in their usual meeting-places to pray, though one well-publicized band fled Philadelphia "as Lot did from Sodom" and awaited he Advent in tents until a fierce storm ended the vigil. After the Lord failed to materialize on this date, the movement lost most of its following, and its largest remnant eventually merged with another group to form the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Miller died five years after the Great Disappointment, and Himes lived in near-anonymity as an Episcopal priest in South Dakota until his death in 1895.

American authors who lived during the Millerite excitement played several variations on the theme in their literature, although four general types may be identified. First, Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne responded with apparent appreciation for the imaginative thrust of the movement and claimed romantic kinship with the prophet. Certainly, Poe was familiar with Miller's prophecy in March 1843, for he referred to it in print that

month.<sup>7</sup> However, as Daniel Hoffman notes, he probably was influenced by Miller's millennial expectations as early as 1839 when, in "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion," he described a fiery holocaust which consumes the earth.<sup>8</sup> From the realm of Aidenn, Eiros recalls that as the End grew near "Mankind grew paler" until "All human operations were suspended." Finally, there occurred "A combustion irresistible, all devouring, omniprevalent, immediate;—the entire fulfillment, in all their minute and terrible details, of the fiery and horror-inspiring denunciations of the prophecies of the Holy Book."<sup>9</sup>

Millerism seems to have sparked Poe's apocalyptic fantasies, and he profitably mined his vein in such later works as *Eureka* (1848) and "Mellonta Tauta" (1849). In *Eureka*, he discussed "the inevitable catastrophe" or "great End" which he prophesied "is at hand," and substantiated his metaphysical musings with astronomical evidence about a comet much as the Millerites in 1843 had regarded a comet as proof of the imminence of the End. Moreover, he described "one Miller or Mill" as the most clever logician of the nineteenth century, presumably alluding to William Miller as well

Nathaniel Hawthorne



as John Stuart Mill.<sup>10</sup> In "Mellonta Tauta," a phrase which Poe elsewhere translated as "These things are in the future,"<sup>11</sup> a pundit aboard a balloon in the year 2848—a literal millennium in the future—repeats the reference to "one Miller, or Mill." An ironic revelation in the form of a gossip letter, this tale ends as Pundita's balloon collapses and she descends, a comic Christ, into the sea.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, Hawthorne was fascinated by Miller's prophecies and recurrently referred to him in tales written at the height of the enthusiasm. Theorizing that a writer of romances should eschew verisimilitude "to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience" and aim instead to depict "the truth of the human heart," Hawthorne composed tales set in the neutral territory "where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet." In order to work modern materials into his fiction, he had to select what was neutral though not yet distanced by history. William Miller was typecast for Hawthorne's repertory of "phantasmagorical antics," most notably in "The Hall of Fantasy" (February 1843), because, as a visionary, he already moved in shadowy circles between fact and invention.<sup>13</sup> Hawthorne in this tale clearly did not treat Miller in a tone of amused condescension. Rather, the prophet's celebrated mystique and his skepticism about the efficacy of social reform entitled him to prominent station in the Hall.

Hawthorne contemplated the implications of Miller's prophecy in several romances written during ensuing months. In "The New Adam and Eve" (February 1843), he imagined "good Father Miller's interpretations of the prophecies to have proved true. The Day of Doom has burst upon the Globe, and swept away the whole race of men." Upon this frame, he constructed a jeremiad lamenting the vanities of civilization. The new Adam and Eve wander amid the ruins of the past and "pass unconscious judgment upon the works

and ways of the vanished race" (pp. 247, 262). In "The Christmas Banquet" (January 1844), published only weeks before the expiration of the year when, according to Miller's original calculations, the overripe earth was destined to be plucked from the heavens. Hawthorne seemed to sympathize with a disconsolate prophet whose expectations were liable to disappointment. In "Earth's Holocaust" (May 1844), written, according to F. O. Matthiessen, "when the activity of the Millerites had caused him to ponder how reforming zeal might bring to destruction all the age-old abuses and encumbrances of the world,"<sup>14</sup> Hawthorne envisioned a vain attempt by earth's inhabitants to destroy their "accumulation of worn-out trumpery . . . by a general bonfire" like the final conflagration (pp. 381, 403). Though he was not a Millerite apologist, in fine, Hawthorne like Poe was intrigued by the possibilities Millerite doctrine opened to the writer of romance.<sup>15</sup>

The Transcendentalists of the 1840s offered a second response to Millerism. Though opposed to forms of dogma, the Transcendentalists recognized their ancestry with the Millerites in the "come-outer" tradition. Both groups denounced the sensuality of the physical world of appearances and preached a mystical faith in the dawning of the millennium. Thus when Theodore Parker, Bronson Alcott, George Ripley, and Christopher Cranch visited a Millerite meeting in 1840, they "found themselves at least superficially in agreement" with them.<sup>16</sup> Whereas Millerites came out to await the literal thousand-year reign of Christ inaugurated through supernatural intercession, Transcendentalists hoped for a spiritual millennium progressively inaugurated through the symbolic agency of Nature.<sup>17</sup> Thus Parker once declared that October 22, 1844 was "too long to wait" for the millennium.<sup>18</sup>

Ralph Waldo Emerson adopted an even more sanguine attitude toward Millerism. An anecdote about his encounter with a Millerite

on the Last Day, though almost certainly apocryphal, illustrates his cheerful skepticism. When asked by a fanatic "Sir, do you not know that tonight the world is coming to an end?" Emerson reportedly replied, "I am glad of it; man will get along better without it."<sup>19</sup> Certainly, he expressed no strong hostility toward the movement in his several allusions to it. After reading an article in *Signs of the Times* early in 1843, for example, he recorded in his journal that he had learned "of an excellent Millerite who gives out that he expects the second advent of the Lord in 1843 but if there is any error in his computation,—he shall look for him until he comes."<sup>20</sup> A few months later, he opined that "New England cannot be painted without a portrait of Millerism with the new advent of hymns" and copied into his journal the lyrics of a popular Millerite anthem. On the same page, he listed Millerism as the first characteristic of "The Age."<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, Emerson may have alluded to the movement in several of his compositions published in *Essays: Second Series* (1844). For example, his reference in "The Poet" to popular religious imagery—"some stars, lilies, leopards, a crescent, a lion, an eagle, or other

Edgar Allan Poe



figure which came into credit God knows how, on an old rag of bunting, blowing in the wind" probably describes murals depicting the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the apocalyptic vision of John, which Millerite evangelists used to illustrate their sermons.<sup>22</sup> To be sure, in "Nominalist and Realist" Emerson regretted that a prophet with impunity may declare "I thought I was right, but I was not" and demand "the same immeasurable credulity" from his followers,<sup>23</sup> much as Miller had in March 1844. Still, despite misgivings, he appreciated Millerism as a come-outer enthusiasm akin to his own Transcendental faith.

The Quaker poet and abolitionist John Greenleaf Whittier shared a third contemporary perspective on Millerism with progressive reformers in the millennial or post-millennial tradition, including Adin Ballou, John Humphrey Noyes, and William Lloyd Garrison. Like the Transcendentalists, these reformers anticipated eventual amelioration of all earthly imperfections and a reign of saints in a this-worldly paradise. They also believed that the Second Advent was either a spiritual, ahistorical event or would occur only after the millennium. As Hawthorne recognized, they were liable to charge premillennialists like the Millerites, who believed the earth was doomed, with shirking responsibility to reform its institutions.

Garrison deplored the adverse effect of Millerism on the effort to abolish slavery, and his statements on the subject warrant review for the light they shed on Whittier's thought. In early 1843, shortly before the commencement of the millennial year, he published a two-part series in *The Liberator* in which he excoriated

the "Miller mania" and protested "the prolongation of a popular delusion [which] cannot fail to be attended with evil consequences."<sup>24</sup> Although he admitted that he had no personal acquaintance with Miller himself, he noted with regret that two of Miller's chief lieutenants, Himes and Charles Fitch, had defected from abolitionist ranks.<sup>25</sup> A few weeks later, another former abolitionist wrote *The Liberator* to defend his decision to resign from a temporary movement to enlist in Miller's eternal one, and his letter met with Garrison's curt reply: "Our friend B. speaks of two kingdoms of Christ—one of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, set up 1800 years ago, and another that

remains to be set up, at the end of the world! We do not think that any improvements can be made upon the first one."<sup>26</sup>

Like all progressive postmillennialists, Garrison scorned idle chiliastic speculation and pressed for constructive social reform. This was the attitude Whittier shared. Like

Garrison, he could express his abolitionist dream and postmillennial expectations, as in his poem "The New Year" (1839), as well as admonish the Millerites for the social quietism, as in "The World's End" (1844). In this essay, Whittier acknowledged that Millerism was not a doctrinal aberration, but that a similar prophecy had been uttered "in every age since the Christian era" began. Still, he confessed that he could not sympathize with his Millerite friends because "the effect of this belief in the speedy destruction of the world and the personal coming of the Messiah, acting upon a class of uncultivated, and in some cases, gross minds, is not always in keeping with the enlightened Christian's ideal of the better day." By promot-

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ing a narrow interpretation of Holy Writ, Millerism undermined efforts at social reformation.<sup>27</sup>

However reasonable this objection, these reformers were so ready to discredit the fanaticism that they often repeated sensational and unsubstantiated stories about its traumatic effects.<sup>28</sup> Whittier once urged his readers to execute their "simple and clearly defined duties of the present life" instead of prying "into the mysteries of the future" like one unidentified couple in Maine who had been "very unprofitably engaged in brooding over the mysteries of the Apocalypse, and in speculations upon the personal coming of Christ and temporal reign of the saints on earth." Obsessed by the prospect of earth's imminent dissolution, according to Whittier, the pitiful pair "came to an agreement that the husband should first kill his wife and their four children, and then put an end to his own existence. This was literally executed,—the miserable man striking off the heads of his wife and children with his axe, and then cutting his throat."<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, public opinion about the Millerites was colored by this kind of hearsay. Himes claimed in an open letter written after the Disappointment (printed in *The Liberator*) that "the reports so generally circulated by the 'press' and otherwise, as the 'fruits of Millerism'—of insanity, suicides, and the breaking up of families, with poverty, distress, &c. . . . are, most of them, unfounded; and those which have any semblance of truth are greatly distorted and exaggerated."<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, too, his protest was not often heeded, and these reports have usually been accepted at face value even by modern historians.

After condemning its alleged influence, Whittier did not allude to Millerism again until the enthusiasm had waned and slavery had been legally abolished. In about 1866, he confided to Annie Fields that he "had been deeply impressed lately" with Millerite doctrine,<sup>31</sup> and in two poems published that year

he treated adventism less polemically. In "Snow-Bound," he depicted "A not unfear'd, half-welcome guest" of his family that winter night during his boyhood whose "sweet voice had notes more high/And shrill, for social battle-cry." As he later explained, this woman, Harriet Livermore, eventually "embraced the doctrine of the Second Advent" and withdrew from the battle for social reform. Because she "felt it her duty to proclaim the Lord's speedy coming . . . she crossed the Atlantic and spent the greater part of a long life in traveling over Europe and Asia." His poetic tribute to her concludes:

And still, unrestful, bowed, and gray,  
She watches under Eastern skies,  
With hope each day renewed and fresh,  
The Lord's quick coming in the flesh,  
Whereof she dreams and prophesies!  
Where're her troubled path may be,  
The Lord's sweet pity with her go!<sup>32</sup>

Whittier also expressed without acrimony his postmillennial view of adventism in "Our Master." "We bring no ghastly holocaust," the poet averred, because Christ reveals Himself through those who continue His ministry of reconciliation on earth. Epidemics of religious enthusiasm like Millerism postponed rather than heralded the millennium.<sup>33</sup>

The movement provoked more derisive criticism from politically conservative writers, especially James Fenimore Cooper, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Unfortunately, within the past century their genteel disdain for the mass-maniacal clamor of Millerism, the fourth type of contemporary response, has been misrepresented as the attitude of most mid-nineteenth-century Americans. In retrospect, their complaints seem the most unkind cuts, for unlike Garrison and Whittier they had little motive to criticize and little exposure to the movement; consequently, their attacks consisted of little more than rumor and innuendo.

The patrician Cooper, embittered by the libel accorded him in the press for his opposition to the Anti-Renters of New York, regarded Millerism as further evidence of the rabid mob mentality threatening the republic. Though at least one group of itinerant Millerites held meetings in Cooperstown during the millennial year,<sup>34</sup> Cooper himself probably did not attend them, for in correspondence he disparaged the movement.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, he intruded into his novel *Wyandotté* (1843), set in pre-Revolutionary New York, a preachment upon the dangers of Millerism. He contrasted his genteel protagonist, who "saw and felt the consequences of education, habits, manners, opinions and sentiments," with "the ordinary demagogue, a wretch equally incapable of setting an example of any of the higher qualities in his own person or practice, an of appreciating it when exhibited by others." Lest his commentary be misunderstood, Cooper specified "Miller's interpretations of the prophecies" as one example of the demagoguery he feared.<sup>36</sup>

Although his own modest postmillennialism is evident in his utopian novel *The Crater* (1847), he expressed in a letter written soon after its publication the same bias against Millerism that he shared with other conservative contemporaries.<sup>37</sup>

With their assumption of Brahmin superiority, Longfellow and Holmes mocked Millerism as a virulent strain of mass lunacy. Though Longfellow's publisher advertised *Kavanagh* (1849) as "a beautiful picture of life in our own times,"<sup>38</sup> this story included a description of a Millerite camp-meeting that was neither beau-

tiful nor pictorially accurate, one obviously formed by rumor and prejudicial newspaper reports rather than personal observation. Indeed, the account of the evangelist's arrival in the New England village contains the earliest allusion in American literature to the gowns allegedly worn by Millerites on the Day of Doom. The infection carried by this evangelist quickly spreads through the village. One evening, as the fanatics sing one of their "awful and ludicrous" hymns to gloom and doom, an orphan, convinced by their theology of fear that she has been consigned to a sinner's hell and that she labors hopelessly beyond the pale of deliverance; drowns her-

self in a river—an incident Longfellow obviously could not have witnessed (p. 102). Holmes ridiculed Millerites in an early installment of *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table* (1857-1858), originally published in the organ of Brahmin culture, the *Atlantic Monthly*. Referring to the comet of 1843, the sardonic Autocrat admits he would have felt more nervous "if I had

thought the world was ripe. But it is very green yet, if I am not mistaken; and besides, there is a great deal of coal to use up, which I cannot bring myself to think was made for nothing. If certain things, which seem to me essential to a millennium, had come to pass, I should have been frightened." He then declaims a satiric poem, entitled "Latter-Day Warnings," detailing in eight quatrains those conditions he would consider harbingers of the End. Only "When legislators keep the law,/When banks dispense with bolts and locks," etc.—when all this transpires let "Miller's saints blow up the

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globe;/But when you see that blessed day,  
Then order your ascension robe."<sup>39</sup>

Significantly, antebellum authors who mentioned the ascension robes allegedly worn by Millerites usually viewed the movement with patrician condescension: suffered limited, if any, personal exposure to it; and referred to robes, which they considered symptoms of madness, in works composed years after the movement had lapsed into disarray. Most of the other contemporary figures surveyed here seemed sympathetic to the spirit of Millerism, though not its dogma, and Whittier even acknowledged its orthodoxy. The picture that emerges is from this literature suggests, as Whitney R. Cross has concluded on other bases, that the Millerites "cannot be dismissed . . . when the whole of American Protestantism came so very close to the same beliefs."<sup>40</sup>

Although the memoirs of Annie Fields<sup>41</sup> and the letters of Thomas Wentworth Higginson<sup>42</sup> indicate that a dispersed remnant of Millerites continued into the 1860s to expect Christ's imminent Second Advent, the generation of authors who matured during the Age of Realism regarded the enthusiasm exclusively as a historical event. Occasionally, as in John DeForest's *Witching Times* (1856) and *Irene the Missionary* (1879), these realists distilled details for their literature from recorded Millerite history.<sup>43</sup> Typically, however, literary realists treated Millerism as historical backdrop for local color stories.

This ostensibly objective view of the movement was adopted first by Edward Eggleston, who believed that the novelist shared the obligation of the historian to "set down things as he finds them"<sup>44</sup> and who thus designed his novel *The End of the World* (1872) as a history of Millerism in southern Indiana. Its melodramatic plot deserves little comment, for it hardly differs from myriad sentimental stories then popular: the love of Julia Anderson and August Wehle triumphs over the opposition of

Julia's shrewish mother, a misunderstanding and estrangement, and the evil machinations of a mustachioed villain. Yet, as William Randel observes, the novel "has value not because of its plot but because of the scenes and events that form the background of the plot. The climax of the love story coincides with the day which the Millerites had announced as the end of the world."<sup>45</sup>

Having adopted the method of a realistic novelist and social historian, Eggleston portrayed the Millerites as pious and sane citizens. Elder Hankins, the evangelist who propagates Miller's "new-fangled" faith in the community of Sugar Grove, converts many residents whose expectation of the End relieves "the fearful monotony of their lives" (p. 59).

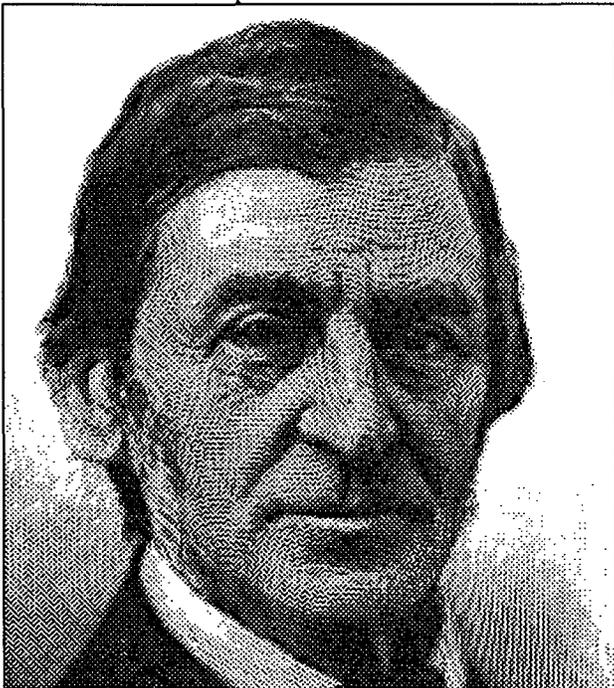
In all, rather than depicting the Millerites as a collection of crazies on the fanatical fringe of frontier society, Eggleston suggested that the movement enjoyed mass appeal. As he concluded in his own voice: "The assured belief of the believers had a great effect on others. . . . An eminent divine, at that time a pastor in Boston has told me that the leaven of Adventism permeated all religious bodies, and that he himself could not avoid the fearful sense of waiting for some catastrophe" (p. 251). This realistic appraisal of the movement earned the praise of W. D. Howells, who like Eggleston had been a young boy living in the Ohio River valley during the millennial year. Howells agreed in his review of the novel that during "the great Millerite excitement . . . vast numbers of good people throughout the country believed that the end of the world was at hand, and probably most men were touched with a vague fear that it *might* be so."<sup>46</sup>

In four climactic chapters, Eggleston chronicled the events of the Last Day and following morning. "Work was suspended everywhere" (p. 256), he reported, and popular terror seized upon crimson clouds and shooting stars as signs of the End. Retiring to "a large bald hill" to await their ascension,

these Millerites “wept and shouted with the excitement” (p. 257). Like the Philadelphia sect that suffered poor weather on the night they expected the End, they finally were dispersed by a torrential rainstorm. A lightning bolt “produced a startling effect upon the over-strained nerves of the crowd. . . . And then the hurricane struck them, and they half-ran and were half-carried down the rear slope of the hill” (pp. 275-276). Sobered by the dawn of another day, “Some declared that the world had ended and that this was the new earth,” while others “still waited for the end,” and still others reacted by embracing “the blindest atheism and boldest immorality” (p. 278). Purporting to record social history, Eggleston even attributed some of these details to other sources.

Yet how accurate is this picture of Millerism? Unfortunately, most of Eggleston’s evidence seems to have been hearsay. Despite errors of method and fact, however, the work merits modest praise for the realistic tone in which it attempted to treat a movement that had become the butt of ridicule. He exonerated the Millerite leaders for irresponsibility for

Ralph Waldo Emerson



the outburst of enthusiasm, explaining that “every religious delusion has grown from some fundamental error in the previous religious teaching of the people” (p. 58). He even praised the descendants of the Millerites, “the Adventists of to-day,” as “a very respectable denomination, a doing work which deserves more recognition, from others than it receives” (p. 57). However flawed the factual basis of his history, Eggleston at least adopted the conventions of historical investigation and disregarded the jaundiced view of Millerism then popular. If his account is not entirely accurate, neither is it deliberately malicious.

Mary E. Wilkins, a New England local colorist, also used Millerism as historical backdrop for her short story “A New England Prophet” (1894). Although she claimed that she had based her story upon an actual incident in her hometown of Randolph, Massachusetts,<sup>47</sup> Wilkins probably modeled it upon Eggleston’s novel. Like Elder Hankins, Wilkins’ prophet “expounded strange and subtle mathematical calculations and erratic interpretations of history as applied to revelation with a fervor which brought conviction to his audience.”<sup>48</sup> In both accounts, a prominent Millerite suffers the scoffing of a skeptical brother who saves him from ruin by assuming ownership of his farm before the scheduled Day of Doom and returning it after the day has passed. The climax of both stories, the marriage of a young Millerite woman and her unconverted lover, occurs while the band of believers await the End atop a hill. And Wilkins in her denouement described the “pallid shivering people” returning to their homes the next morning (p. 611) much as had Eggleston in his novel. Unfortunately, Wilkins also compounded Eggleston’s historical inaccuracies. Whereas Eggleston had alluded only once to ascension robes, for example, Wilkins recurrently mentioned them. Jane Marsh Parker, a writer

of popular didactic stories and the daughter of a Millerite evangelist, was so provoked by this distortion of the historical record that she publicly rebuked Wilkins for reinforcing "many erroneous impressions of a movement which, disastrous as it was, did much to clarify the theological atmosphere."<sup>49</sup>

Though Parker doubted the reliability of Wilkins' history, she certainly appreciated Millerism's potential as a subject for realistic fiction. Nearly a decade earlier, she had attempted to set straight the record of the movement in an historical novel entitled *The Midnight Cry* (1886).<sup>50</sup> Judged only on aesthetic grounds, it is a poor novel indeed, with stilted characters and a contrived plot; considered as a study of Millerism, however, it is remarkable, for it combines the virtues of eyewitness reporting with the advantages of historical retrospect, and although patently autobiographical, it is probably the most complete and reliable history of Millerism written before Francis Nichol's definitive apology *The Midnight Cry* (1944).

The value of Parker's novel as a historical source has been overlooked despite Parker's methodical refutation of popular misconceptions about the "memorable fanaticism."<sup>51</sup> In an early chapter, she constructed a factual frame for reminiscence by summarizing Millerite doctrine, history, and exegetical method. During the summer of 1844, she reported, about 50,000 Millerites fixed the day "when the Lord should literally descend from heaven." Though this spiritual quickening often was jeered, "Thousands who scoffed at the teachings of Father Miller in public, trembled in secret." Rather than apologizing for the delusion, Parker candidly admitted its errors, though she added that the Millerites, as biblical literalists, navigated the mainstream of fundamentalism, not a backwash of apostasy. Once establishing that 1843 Jewish time "did not end until 1844 Roman time" and that "Jewish authority was paramount in such matters,"

these literalists could calculate from biblical clues the exact time of Christ's return.

The seven times began with Babylon, 677 years before Christ, and these seven times were 2520 years, and then like any simple sum in subtraction was  $2520 - 677 = 1843$ . The getting of that 2520 years was easy enough: one had but to multiply seven (representing times) by 12 (representing months) and the product by 30 (representing days), and there it was.

Moreover, Parker attributed Millerism's popularity to its orthodox extremism, rather than, as had Eggleston and Wilkins, the titillation it offered bored and illiterate farmers (pp. 96-101). Though she colored these paragraphs with her personal recollections, she accurately delineated in them important theological and historical characteristics of the movement.

In the remainder of the novel, Parker fleshed out this skeletal outline by illustrating the orthodoxy of Millerism and the normality of Millerites. Although Parker admitted that the End might seem "scientifically unthinkable and theologically monstrous" to her modern readers, she assured them that forty years earlier sane Christians had not been so enlightened (p. 223). Though she acknowledged that adventism forestalled institutional reforms (pp. 53, 134, 210), she also documented the benevolent influence it exercised through individual regeneration (pp. 223-224).

As in the stories by Eggleston and Wilkins, the climax of Parker's novel occurs simultaneously with the climax of religious excitement, though her eyewitness report of the Last Day contains none of their lurid details. Parker had precluded suspense about the terror attending the End by paraphrasing in another early chapter a seminal exegetical work usually ignored by historians of the movement, Miller's "Dream of the Last Day." Like Michael Wigglesworth's "The Day of Doom" and Hal Lindsay's *The Late Great Planet Earth*, end-

points of a popular American tradition in which it may be placed, Miller's work described "a globe reeling to destruction, the stars hurled from the heavens, the children of men crying in vain unto the Judge, descending, attended by a retinue of angels and archangels" (p. 141). The eventual climax of the novel hardly compares with this vision. Rather than describing ecstatic flocks perched on hills awaiting the new dispensation, Parker set her climactic chapter in a private home where her adolescent heroine passes a feverish night (pp. 278-281). This incident and her repeated references to the disquieting effect of chiliastic doctrine on young minds (pp. 101, 157, 179, 188) suggest that, however sympathetically she sketched the Millerites, her novel cannot be construed as an unqualified apology for them. As one reviewer concluded she painted "a graphic picture of the extensive disorder caused" by Miller and his followers.<sup>52</sup>

Clearly Eggleston, Wilkins, and Parker were intrigued by Millerism as a subject for historical inquiry, and each limned the movement in a realistic fiction. Each attempted, unlike earlier authors, to explain its appeal. The most accurate depiction was rendered by Parker, the least celebrated writer, though errors in the stories by Eggleston and Wilkins may be attributed to the popular image of Millerism that they assimilated rather than to the personal biases or literary shortcomings. As self-styled historians, Eggleston and Wilkins repeated as fact the popular legend that the believers had donned robes for the ascension; thus their stories, though purporting to record

the local history of Millerism, illustrate the process by which the rumor embellished the gospel truth.

In the twentieth century, American authors have adopted a peculiarly modern attitude toward Millerism. Those in the realistic tradition, including critical realists, have slighted the anachronistic subject. Upton Sinclair referred only incidentally to it in his muckraking essay *The Profits of Religion* (1918),<sup>53</sup> and Sinclair Lewis in *Elmer Gantry* (1927) and Waldo Frank in *The Bridegroom Cometh* (1938)

ignored Miller though they censured modern adventists. On the other hand literary modernists, infatuated with the abstract ideas of time and the absurd, have celebrated Miller as a prophet of nonsense. Much as Poe and Hawthorne had been fascinated with Millerism a century earlier as a subject for romance, literary modernists have been enraptured with it as an incredible topic

*A survey of Millerism in American literature suggests that during the nineteenth century the enthusiasm was not dismissed merely as wholesale madness but was recognized by such authors as Hawthorne and Emerson as a subject for sensitive and serious contemplation.*

for ridiculous fictions. Subverting the traditional notion of a paradigmatic or time-ordered fiction that arranges concords between beginning, middle, and end,<sup>54</sup> these modernists manipulate time just as traditional writers manipulate character and setting in plots with linear continuity. For example, Djuna Barnes illustrated "spatial form" in her avant-garde, novel *Nightwood* (1936) with a vignette about a woman unrestrained by time, "the only woman of the last century who could go up a hill with the Seventh Day Adventists and confound the seventh day—with a muscle in her heart so passionate that she made the seventh day immediate."<sup>55</sup> Modifying the mi-

metic function of realistic fiction, moreover, these modernists invent absurd worlds-without-end which resemble no real world so much as that netherworld to which Miller and his followers had expected to be translated. For example, an ageless Millerite in William Gaddis' *The Recognitions* (1955) reads Miller's "Dream of the Last Day" with the dedicated fervor of a new convert.<sup>56</sup>

These chief features of literary modernism, the manipulation of time and the realization of the ludicrous, are combined in *The Origin of the Brunists* (1966), an exhaustive new-novel adaptation of Millerite history. In this novel, Robert Coover cracked the seventh vial as though it were a fortune cookie and invented a technologically modern world into which the Millerites, the obvious analogue to the macabre Brunists, have been transported. Giovanni Bruno, the miraculous sole survivor of a coal mine cave-in, suffers brain damage from carbon monoxide poisoning. A spiritualist, a holy roller widow, and an amateur numerologist independently discover some esoteric meaning in his mumblings and dumb gestures and elevate him to prophetic office. Slowly increasing their number, the group infers from Bruno's grunts that the End of the World will occur on April 19, the last day under the sign of Aries. They fashion white tunics for their ascension. The editor of the local newspaper, a protagonist playfully named Justin Miller, infiltrates the cult, publishes his own "midnight cry," a special pictorial exposé headlined BRUNISTS PROPHECY END OF WORLD!, and plans a Millennium's Eve TV documentary.

Meanwhile, the Brunists attract international attention. Miracles, suicides, and astrological verifications of the prophecy are reported around the world. On the Last Day, the robed Brunists lead a crowd of spectators and media crews to a slag hill, their bizarre Mount of Redemption. There they sing and pray while vendors hawk popcorn and soft drinks amid

carnival tents. Suddenly, a violent storm breaks and frenzied Brunists leap into "the air as though trying to fly," strip, and roll in the mud.<sup>57</sup> Random violence erupts in the confusion: a child is trampled, one woman dies in an epileptic fit, another suffers a miscarriage, an old man is crushed when the bingo tent collapses, and Miller is virtually crucified. Recovering from their Disappointment that Christ temporarily had postponed his appearance, the Brunists are institutionalized: their hymns climb the top 40 charts; their leaders write popular inspirational books; Sister Clara Collins, a time-warped Ellen White, becomes their "Evangelical Leader and Organizer"; and Giovanni Bruno, their crazy prophet, is sent to a mental hospital.

In light of some recondite parallels between the Millerites and the Brunists, it is apparent that Coover researched Millerite history for this novel. For example, both founders are poor poets before they become prophets, and both movements collaborate prophecy with multiple computations and astronomical evidence and prosper under the direction of subordinates. Nevertheless, Coover deliberately distorted the record by referring to ascension robes, hysterical suicides, and crazed behavior on the Mount of Redemption because, as he observed, "It is easier for me to express the ironies of our condition by the manipulation of Platonic forms than by imitation of the Aristotelian."<sup>58</sup> Instead of writing a historical novel or even a parody of a historical novel about Millerism, he assaulted the very notion of historical veracity. More simply, he voided the teleological bowels of history by creating a novel world in which "facts" are irrelevant, if not incredible. His selection of oft-distorted "facts" about Millerism as analogues to those irrelevant if not incredible "facts" recorded in his metahistory of Brunism is ironically propitious.

This survey of redactions of Millerism in

American literature suggests that during the nineteenth century the enthusiasm was not dismissed merely as wholesale madness but was recognized by such authors as Hawthorne and Emerson as a subject for sensitive and serious contemplation. Occasionally, it even was credited with reviving orthodox, though extreme, millennial expectations within American Protestantism. Although progressive reformers like Garrison and Whittier justifiably inveighed against the movement because it bid fair to deplete the ranks of the Party of the Future, the allegation that the Millerites prepared robes for their ascension seems to have been an idle rumor spread largely by their partisan and patrician critics until it obtained the force of truth. This study also silhouettes differences and similarities among the literary strategies of romance, realism, and modernism in the treatment of a single subject. Whereas

the writers of romance mingled fact and fantasy in their invention, the realists purported to record social history, which in each case climaxed with the scheduled fulfillment of prophecy on the Last Day. Like Poe in "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion," the modernists wrote about Millerism from a point of view transcending logical progression, as if a pointless apocalypse already had consumed the common-sense world and left an ironic one in its place. Indeed, the new dispensation expected by Miller corresponds to the *nouveau roman* just as the End of the World corresponds to the predicted Death of the Novel. This literature demonstrates that the specter of apocalyptic death haunts each generation, including our own. In apocalyptic times we all become characters dreading the conclusion of an insufferable drama. No other prophecy of our universal plight is quite so surefire.

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# The Sanctuary— God in Our Midst

God gave us a sanctuary so that he might dwell in our midst.  
The sanctuary opens a way between heaven and earth.

by *Glen Greenwalt*

I STILL VIVIDLY REMEMBER GOING TO CHURCH IN my freshman year of college and listening to a sermon in which a pastor, by adding the 120 years of Noah's preaching and the three and one-half years of Elijah's message to the year 1844, predicted that Jesus would return in 1968.<sup>1</sup> I was profoundly impressed by the preacher's sermon, as were many of my classmates. The sermon was consistent with everything I had ever heard in my Adventist instruction. The preacher's argument simply followed the wonderful logic of numbers and symbols that was indelibly imprinted upon my youthful mind.

Then, in my junior year in college, I took courses in Daniel, Revelation, and Biblical Eschatology where, for the first time, I caught a picture of how long God's people have been waiting for the fulfillment of their salvation. But I never really saw the suffering and

disappointed hopes of previous generations as being real. All of their stories were just so many examples written for our day. Time had always been short in my Adventist view. It began in 1844. Time really had lasted only a little more than a hundred years. I actually knew people who had listened to Ellen White and many of the other early pioneers preach. I knew, that is to say, people who spoke to people who lived at the beginning of time!

Today my generation is in its mid-forties and these sorts of arguments no longer work for us, let alone for our children. Last fall, in anticipation of this year's 150-year anniversary of 1844, I took a few informal surveys to see if this generation of Adventists shared the same vision as held by their grandparents' or even parents' generation. I discovered that 78 percent of a Sabbath school class comprised of mostly retirees, many of whom had been denominational employees, believed that the date of 1844 was extremely important or very important to their faith, but only 9 percent of a class of college sophomore voted likewise. Whereas 65 percent of the retirees' class

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believed that the church was spending about the right amount of time on time prophecies, or the church should spend even more time on these prophecies, 95 percent of their grandchildren marked on their survey the response that the church should “stop trying to prove time prophecies altogether and move on to bigger, more important issues.”

The question, of course, is Where do we go from here? How does a community direct its course when it has outlived its own best understandings of itself? As Adventists we never expected the world to last this long. One hundred fifty years of delay is not something to celebrate for Adventists who look for the soon return of Christ. By far, the most important question facing Adventists today is, How does a community plot a future course when it has journeyed beyond the borders of its own charts and maps?

Little imagination is required to see that, as a community, we who are Adventists are beginning to divide along the natural lines of a group of travelers who are no longer certain of their direction. Some of us are wanting to go back to landmarks and wait there for Jesus to return; but to follow that course is certainly to forsake the Adventist call to present truth. At the opposite end of the line are a growing number of Adventists, particularly the young, who insist that we need to push ahead in the spirit of the pioneers in our discovery of new truths and landmarks, even if that means giving up many of their doctrines. But certainly this is no better proposal for setting our course direction. People suffering from amnesia make poor travelers. To become forgetful of

one's past is to lose sight of the very reference points that give direction to a journey. In the middle are the vast majority of Adventists—laypersons, administrators, and academics alike—whose overriding concern is simply one of holding the fraying lines of the community together. Unfortunately, a directional compass set only on holding the community together is a compass that has no bearing. Not only is the middle road often the wrong road, but as any tour leader knows, a style of leadership based on “keeping the troops together” works only so long as everyone is heading in basically the same direction.

In my own answer to the question of Where do we go from here? I propose that we as Adventists must recover a more profound sense of our status as pilgrim people. To begin with, we need to recognize that we always begin a journey from where we now stand. Then, we need to realize that none of us is the source of our own beginnings. Everything is a preface, a middle, and an ending of something else. On the pilgrimage that is Adventism, landmarks should be recognized as changing points of reference, rather than established goals. We do not honor our tradition by simply trying to mimic the experience of our ancestors. To forsake the past or to idolize it is equally dangerous. To idolize the past is to give up the journey along the way. On the other hand, to forget one's starting point is to become hopelessly lost on the journey. We honor our tradition best, and are most secure in determining our future, when we engage all Adventists, even those long past, in a lively conversation regarding the challenges and

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*Adventists never expected the world to last this long. The most important question facing Adventists today is, How does a community plot a future course when it has journeyed beyond the borders of its own charts and maps?*

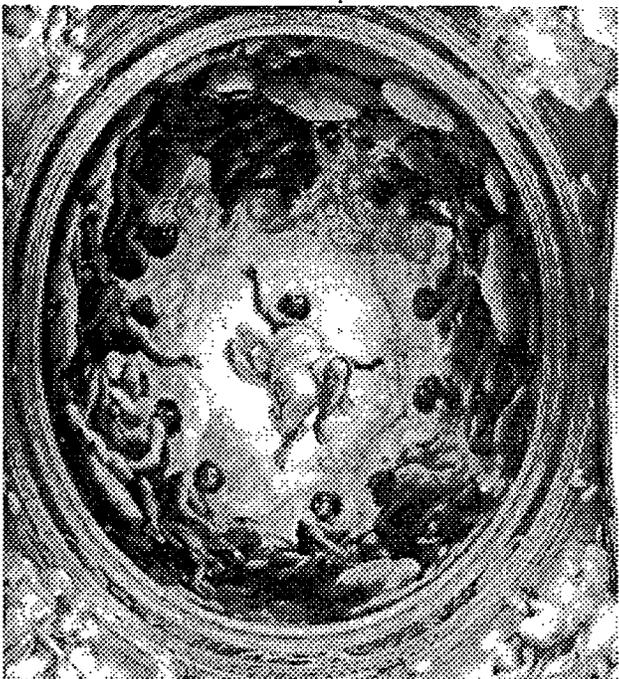
tasks that now stand in our path.

My own starting point for appreciating 1844 and the beginnings of Adventism, as well as envisioning the future journey of the church, is Mervyn Maxwell's high school textbook, *Moving Out! Breaking Through With God's Church*. Maxwell, by both the title of his book and his gift as a storyteller, reminds us of the power of our pioneers' stories and what they can still mean in our pilgrimage today.

## William Miller: A Personal, Historical Vision

Any story of 1844 must begin with William Miller and his prediction that Jesus would return to earth "about the year 1843." William Miller was not a trained biblical scholar, but he was by all accounts a remarkable man, possessing gifts of both intellectual rigor and great charisma. In 1814, William Miller became Captain William Miller when 47 fellow Yankees volunteered to join the battle against the British at Lake Champlain under his command. After the battle Miller boasted that the

Adapted from Corregio's cupola, "The Vision of St. John on Patmos of the Risen Christ and the other Apostles"



"rockets flew like hailstones," but that he had not flinched. "I am satisfied that I can fight. I know that I am no coward."<sup>2</sup>

After the war, Miller was a popular Fourth of July speaker. But the war had changed Miller in ways beyond making a captain out of a New England landowner. As happens with many who survive the horrors of war, Miller underwent a religious awakening in his life. I found in the Bible, Miller wrote later, "such a Savior as I needed."<sup>3</sup> While the church and the world remember Miller as a man obsessed with dates and time charts, Miller himself recognized his greatest discovery in life to be the discovery of a personal Savior alive in the world. "In Jesus," Miller wrote, "I found a friend."<sup>4</sup>

The importance of Miller's discovery is not fully appreciated without knowing that before the war Miller had been a Deist. Deists are often dismissed as near-atheists who view God as a master clock maker, a Being who made the world and then abandoned it to its own devices.

While the clock-maker metaphor illustrates the mechanical notion of the universe held by Deists, it fails to evoke the optimistic religious sentiment that the clock-maker illustration expresses. If the world is, in fact, the accomplishment of God's perfect, all-knowing will, then the world cannot really be different than it is, since divine foreknowledge accounts for all future events—even our prayers, which we were part of the world from the beginning!

As a consequence, this world, with whatever evil it contains, is in fact the best of all possible worlds, since it is the world God intended. While God does not determine human choices, God did give reality to the particular set of choices that now comprises human history. Of all the possible starting points God might have chosen in creating the world, he chose the beginning that led to this particular world.

My friend and colleague, John Brunt, has recently argued with great insight that Deism

never really left Miller's bones when he viewed the second coming of Christ.<sup>5</sup> For Miller, the spatial order of Deism was replaced by the temporal order of prophecy. The giant gears of prophetic inevitability had been set in motion, and they would move inextricably forward to the final countdown. That Miller never moved fully beyond Deism does not negate the importance for Adventists of Miller's discovery of the personal Savior he needed.

The idea of a personal God of history is central to Adventist thinking, although we have not always recognized the implications of our belief. A personal God is at the heart of Adventist Great Controversy theology. Love and grace limited the power and rights that belong properly to God, so that God, in creating the world, shared with it what was rightfully his own. This is a dumbfounding idea of immeasurable consequence. Only by withdrawing into the divine self, and thereby creating space and time for creatures, could God have created independent beings fashioned in the divine likeness. This means that the predictions of prophecy, like the history they predict, are open to change.

As Adventists, we have long taught that God's sacrifice on the cross was full and complete, but the work of saving human beings from their hurt and pain is not yet complete. This world is not yet totally under Christ's dominion. The salvation of the world is still in progress. The final outcome of our individual histories is not yet fully determined.

While the denominational leaders rightfully clarified in the 1960s the church's acceptance of the full and complete nature of Jesus' atoning work on the cross for our sins, Adventists should rightfully lead the way in reminding the world that the plan of salvation is not yet complete. The effects of sin are still all about us. Even on good days, children still die.

Now, to acknowledge this ongoing struggle means that God is not the clock-maker God.

It is to acknowledge that time does not move forward inextricably toward its final end, but that our choices are real and in some sense determinative even for God. Human actions make a difference in history. History, Miller reminds us, moves to the heartbeat of a Friend.

## Charles Fitch: A Dark, Nightly Vision

One of the individuals who joined Miller in declaring a soon-coming Savior to the world was Charles Fitch, a circuit-riding, Congregational pastor. Fitch stands out in the early Adventist story not for what he taught, but for what happened to him. In the summer of 1844, the Millerite movement was galvanized when Samuel Snow made his famous prediction that just as Jesus died on Passover as the lamb of sacrifice, so Jesus would return as the Lamb of Atonement on the Jewish Day of Atonement, which happened to fall on October 22—a date less than three months away. As a result of Snow's announcement, thousands of new converts poured into the Millerite movement. In many towns, saloons were closed. In others, church bells tolled every hour, calling sinners to repentance.

Not long before October 22, Fitch had three groups of people who came to him for baptism. The water was freezing cold up in New England, and riding home, Fitch took ill and died on October 14, just eight days before he expected Jesus to return. In Mervyn Maxwell's telling of the story, he imagines what it was like for the Fitch family during the wait. Since Charles had been a circuit-riding preacher, he was often away for more than eight days at a time. The wait would be hard, but in eight days this father and husband would be back in the arms of his family! Mrs. Fitch and the children could wait that long. Finally the day arrived, the day Dad was coming home.

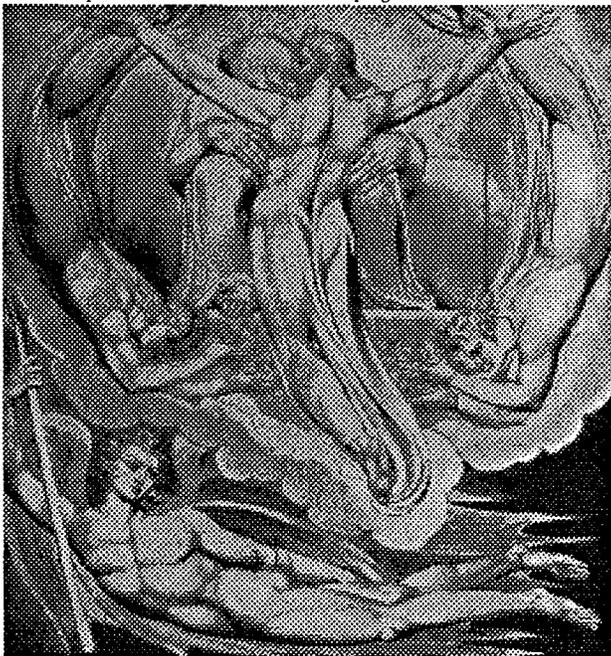
Some years ago Jan Daffern published what

I have long felt is one of the most insightful articles that has ever been written on the meaning of the 1844 experience.<sup>6</sup> In her article, Daffern suggested that perhaps we as Adventists, whose formative experience was shaped in the crucible of disappointment, are a people uniquely qualified to minister to hurting and disappointed people. This suggestion has profoundly affected my understanding of what it means to be an Adventist. As Adventists, our identity is often shaped by what we know, rather than by our hopes or faith.

From the story of Charles Fitch and his family's disappointment, I am reminded of my own great need and the need of the world around me for beacons of hope and courage that somehow yet shine, even when the lights of our answers have gone out. I am reminded that at some points in life, the only helpful friend is the one who doesn't try to explain pain, but who provides a hand and an arm to carry a friend beyond the severest reaches of pain.

In a suffering world, Adventist hospitals and churches, and most recently ADRA, have been beacons of such hope. I can't say how happy

Adapted from William Blake's "Christ Accepting the Office of Redeemer"



I was to be associated with the name of Adventists when I read in public news bulletins that Adventists were almost singlehandedly distributing care parcels in Sarajevo during last year's siege, because they were the only humanitarian group that was trusted by all sides in conflict to be fair. And again, in recent months, I have been proud to be an Adventist when I have read of the work ADRA is doing in Rwanda. As Adventists, caring for the dispossessed and the sorrowing is not a sideline. It is central to the mission of our story.

## Hiram Edson: A Prophetic, Heavenly Vision

After a night so dark it has forever been remembered as the night of the Great Disappointment, Hiram Edson was crossing a cornfield, returning home from the barn where he and others had spent the night in prayer. There, according to his own words, he "saw distinctly, and clearly, that instead of our High Priest *coming out* of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth . . . , that he for the first time *entered* on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary."

Adventists have long speculated not only over the nature of Edson's experience, but also over its theological importance. In the painting I remember from childhood, Edson is standing in the middle of a cornfield, looking into heaven, where he sees Jesus in his priestly robes entering the heavenly courts on our behalf. While I have no way of knowing what Edson actually saw on that day, I believe that Edson's experience was truly visionary. For Edson saw what many prophets have seen in their hour of darkest trial—namely, a vision that Jesus had not abandoned them, but was even then working on their behalf in the courts of heaven.

I will not take time to remind the reader of the history of the Adventist speculation re-

garding the meaning of Edson's vision. Significantly, early Advent believers themselves offered a number of explanations of what Edson saw. It was only some 13 years after the Great Disappointment that the view was established that Jesus had gone into the most holy place, there to begin a work of investigating the books to see who would be saved and who would be lost. Today this view, like other explanations before it, is losing its persuasive appeal. As time continues, the explanatory power of our interpretation wanes.

Nevertheless, while some are ready to reject the whole experience of Adventism as little more than a strategy to save face in light of our mistaken predictions, I personally am intrigued by Edson's early vision. It seems to me to lie not only at the heart of the Adventist faith, but also the faith of all Christians longing for Jesus' coming in an hour of great darkness.

What strikes me about Edson's vision is that it stands in continuity with the visions many of the biblical writers received in their hour of trial and disappointment. Edson's vision is almost identical, for example, with that of Daniel 7, where Daniel sees one like a Son of Man standing before the Most High. The verdict is clear. Judgment is given for the saints and against the beast. Likewise, Edson sees what Stephen saw in his last hour as he was about to be stoned—again a vision of one like the Son of Man standing before the throne of God (Acts 7). The list goes on. Paul recounts in the book of Ephesians seeing heaven open and the saints sitting with Jesus on heavenly thrones. The book of Hebrews testifies that the way into the heavenly sanctuary is made open for every saint. And in the grand vision of the Apocalypse of the Revelator, John in his banishment on the Isle of Patmos sees Jesus ministering for the saints in the heavenly sanctuary.

In each case we find a similar pattern. In a time of great distress, God opens heaven to remind his people that they are not aban-

doned, but that God, even in their hour of distress, is working on their behalf.

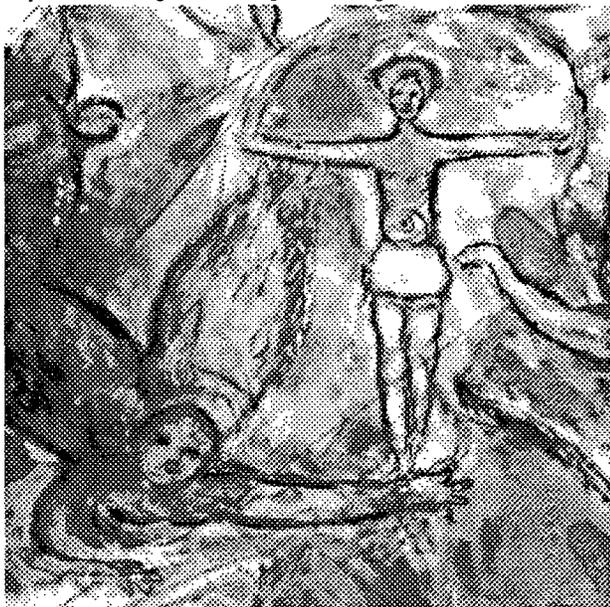
This is the central truth of the Christian faith. It is the central truth of Adventist faith. At times, we Adventists, like believers in every age, get so caught up in trifles that we overlook the truth staring us straight in the face. In our case we have gotten so caught up in our timetables and the pots and pans of the sanctuary that we have lost sight of the central truth: God gave us a sanctuary so that he might dwell in our midst. The sanctuary opens a way between heaven and earth. The sanctuary brings us to the very heart of God.

This is the story that still wins human beings over to the side of God. This is the story that Adventists have been called to give to the world.

### Ellen White: A Practical, Down-to-Earth Vision

Some may wonder why I identify Hiram Edson with the prophetic, heavenly vision, and Ellen White with the practical, down-to-earth vision. After all, Adventists recognize Ellen White, and not Hiram Edson, as the

Adapted from Marc Chagall's final drawing for the stained glass window, "The Good Samaritan"



prophetic messenger to the remnant church. What strikes me in reading *The Great Controversy* account of the Adventist experience of 1844 is that, while Ellen White recounts the theological explanations used by the early pioneers to explain 1844, her own emphasis lies elsewhere. For Ellen White, the primary evidence that God was in the Advent movement of the mid-1800s was located in the overwhelming spirit of Christian charity and virtue that surrounded the movement.

"The message, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!' was not so much a matter of argument," Ellen White writes, "though the Scripture proof was clear and conclusive." Rather, "There went with it an impelling power that moved the soul."<sup>7</sup> For Ellen White, the evidence that confirmed the movement was of God was the fact that "It bore the characteristics that mark the work of God in every age. . . ."<sup>8</sup> There was persevering prayer and unreserved consecration to God.

What is most striking about Ellen White's account of the 1844 experience is that she believed God was present in the experience of 1844, because God was doing in 1844 what he has been doing in every age, namely restoring people to himself. In contrast to the way I learned the story, in which my experience as an Adventist was detached from the experience of other believers by the fact of 1844, Ellen White places 1844 in the context of the whole history of Christianity. She emphasizes the validity of the Adventist experience, precisely because of its shared resemblance to God's work in every age! This is an idea we as Adventists have only

begun to explore.

I believe Ellen White takes us back to the original theology of the sanctuary that emerges from the book of Leviticus.

In Leviticus 26, three principles are established regarding the sanctuary. The first is that the sanctuary was to be built so that God could dwell in the midst of his people (verse 11). Israel's security and prosperity were dependent upon God's presence. The second principle was a warning: Not even God can dwell forever in a polluted environment. The sins of God's people, both religious and moral, would force God to abandon his sanctuary and leave

it desolate (verse 34). It was this principle in Leviticus that Daniel recalls in Daniel 9 when he confesses the sins of his people. Thirdly, in the end, God's warnings always end in promise. If Israel sins, and then repents of her sins, God will again dwell in the midst of his people and restore the fortunes of the sanctuary and the land (Leviticus 26:40ff).

1844, I believe, fulfills this paradigm. Adventism represents part of a great revival of God's spirit that awakened the church in the mid-19th century. The validity of the Adventist experience does not arise from the fact that he acted in an isolated manner in our church apart from what God was doing elsewhere in the world. The validity of Adventism comes from his ambassadors in restoring a right relationship between God and all people. It is because the work committed to Adventists is the same that has been committed to God's people from the beginning of time that I have confidence in the Adventist movement.

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*Edson's early vision seems to me to lie not only at the heart of the Adventist faith, but also the faith of all Christians longing for Jesus' coming in an hour of great darkness. Edson's vision stands in continuity with the visions many biblical writers received in their hour of trial and disappointment.*

Of course, the sanctuary is not yet completely restored. The covenant God first made to Israel will not be complete until God, really, truly, honestly dwells in the midst of his people. On that day all tears will be wiped

from all eyes, for John saw in that land no temple, because the Lord Almighty and the Lamb *are* its temple (Revelation 21:22).

This is the fullest Adventist vision—the vision that must not die.

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#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. I recently went out to a small church for a weekend seminar on 1844 where I discovered a new wrinkle to this argument. A very sincere brother of the church argued that if one added the 153 fish that the disciples caught in their nets and the three and one-half years of the Elijah message to 1844 one came up with the year 2000, when this brother predicted Jesus would come.

2. Quoted by Mervyn Maxwell in his book, *Moving Out: Breaking Through With God's Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1973), p. 4. The original is in the Adventural Collection of the library at Aurora College, Aurora, Ill.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 18. The original is found in William Miller,

*Apology and Defense* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1845), p. 24.

4. *Ibid.*

5. John Brunt, "The Disappointment and the Hope of the Advent Yet to Come," to be published later in a collection of articles remembering 1844.

6. Jan Daffern, "Singing in a Strange Land," Roy Branson, ed., *Pilgrimage of Hope* (Takoma Park, Md.: Association of Adventist Forums, 1986), pp. 89-97.

7. Maxwell, p. 23. The original is located in the Adventist Source Collection, Heritage Room, James White Library, Andrews University.

8. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1911), p. 402.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 400.



## General Conference Mounts Creative, Massive Responses To Rwanda

The General Conference responded both internally and externally to this year's crisis in Rwanda (see essay, p. 3). Internally, the Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries arranged for Adventist missionaries escaping from Rwanda to receive, for the first time, immediate professional support for post-traumatic stress. Externally, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) mounted one of the largest relief efforts for Rwanda of any non-governmental organization.

### Support for Post-Traumatic Stress

Missionaries escaping from Rwanda were driven from the airport (or within days of their arrival) to three days of debriefing, April 26-29, at Camp Blue Ridge, overlooking Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. After the three-day session, weekly conference calls among the returned missionaries and professional counselors continued for six weeks. In Gland, Switzerland, a smaller group of about a dozen European missionaries and African denominational leaders had a similar session with mental health professionals connected with the

Adventist hospital there. These debriefings with health professionals are expected to set a precedent for debriefings of Adventist personnel involved in future crises.

The debriefings in Virginia were led by Jeffrey Mitchell, a psychologist at the University of Maryland. His International Critical Incident Stress Foundation includes the United Nations among its clients.

During the first full day, 25 adults shared with one another and professional counselors their reactions to the most troubling scenes they had observed. An equal number of youngsters, ages 6 to 16, had their own simultaneous sessions. The second day, representatives of various General Conference departments were invited in for a couple of hours to answer questions about insurance, finances, and future career plans.

The last evening of the debriefing was a memorial service for those already dead or likely to be killed, whom the missionaries had left behind in Rwanda. On a table was a large, lighted "Christ candle." Those missionaries who wished to take another candle, lit it from the Christ candle, and mentioned a person they were remembering. One teenager, who had not felt able for two days to take part in the sharing, said he was lighting his candle for his closest friends—three

*Adventists in Rwanda, in health care, in the pages of Ministry magazine, and in network news.*

Tutsis he had left behind and whom he thought were now dead. While a recording of Rutter's choral *Requiem* played "Out of the depths I cry to Thee," (Psalm 103), all the candles were put out, except for the Christ candle. Then biblical passages on the resurrection were read by the missionaries, as they relit their candles from the Christ candle. The service ended with all lights coming on, and the playing of the "Hallelujah Chorus." The missionaries requested that the candles not be extinguished as they informally continued to share their experiences with one another.

The memorial service was planned by Dick Stenbakken, director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries. Formerly the National Service Office, the Chaplaincy Ministries is now a liaison office among Adventist chaplains in all areas; Stenbakken, and his associate, Marty Feldbush, are working on protocols for the Mission Institute at Andrews to use for pre-crisis training of outgoing missionaries.

## Relief for Refugees, Development for Rwanda

The President of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division, J. J. Nortey, reports that by the end of September ADRA had five teams responding to the Rwanda crisis. Two were providing medical services in refugee camps in Goma and Bukavu, Zaire. Two other medical teams operating near the former University of Eastern Africa, and in the southwestern part of Rwanda, where French forces had briefly established a protectorate. A fifth team was working on rehabilitation, beginning with trash collection, in Kigali, the capital.

ADRA reports that even before the mass exodus of Rwandans to

Goma, Zaire, a 30-person team headed by Barry Chapman, working with three other humanitarian agencies from mid-May to early June, pulled body parts and 1,000 corpses from Lake Victoria, and buried them along a six-mile stretch of beach assigned to them by the Ugandan government. The bodies had been dumped into the Kagera River in Rwanda and carried by the current into Lake Victoria. Together, ADRA and three other agencies recovered approximately 11,000 bodies in Uganda.

Zaire and Tanzania had shorelines similarly clogged with decomposing bodies. Early United Nations estimates project the num-

ber of bodies in Lake Victoria to have been 25,000-40,000.

As for its efforts in Goma, Zaire, the largest and most publicized refugee center, ADRA reports that in August its multinational medical team of more than 200 medical personnel were treating 1,500 patients daily. ADRA, responsible for the health needs of 400,000 people, operated at two sites: a field hospital, opened by August 1 and treating 1,200 people a day; and a clinic, about 20 miles away, treating 300-350 people too weak from disease to make it to the hospital. By August 12, ADRA had shipped 82 tons of materials from the U.S., Uganda, and Kenya.

## AHS/West, Loma Linda Create Second-Largest California System

Two Adventist health systems—Loma Linda University Medical Center and Adventist Health Systems/West have entered into a joint venture with three other non-Adventist systems to form California Health Network, perhaps the second-largest health-care system in California. As reported in California's major newspapers, the existing systems are not merging, but patients who belong to one of the four health-care groups are able to use medical facilities of the others.

California Health Network has a combined total of 1.2 million managed-care patients, 14,500 participating doctors, and \$4 billion in assets. It is competing for second place with three other health-care systems, including Catholic Health Care West. Kaiser Permanente remains by far the largest health-care provider in California, with well over 4 million patients.

The new network will negotiate contracts between insurance carriers and companies to provide

health-care, and will try to cut costs by standardizing billing and administrative procedures.

California Health Network includes Loma Linda University Medical Center and Adventist Health Systems/West (the two Adventist systems bring to the joint venture 3,609 beds, 4,409 medical staff, and \$1.6 billion in assets); California Healthcare System of San Francisco (2,580 beds, 3,600 medical staff, and \$932 million in assets); Sutter Health, based in Sacramento (2,559 beds, 3,000 physicians, and \$1 billion in assets); and Sharp Healthcare of San Diego (1,949 beds, 3,500 affiliated physicians, and \$630 million in assets).

This is by far the largest and closest affiliation of Adventist health systems with other health-care providers. Leaders of the Adventist systems involved emphasize that the arrangement is not a merger, but a joint venture, allowing Adventist hospitals to continue present distinctive policies.

## Ministry Issue Withdrawn From Circulation

The July 1994 issue of *Ministry* magazine, after being published, was withdrawn from circulation because of a single paragraph. The 55,000 copies withdrawn were more than three times the usual run, since the July *Ministry* was the special *Preach* issue distributed to non-Adventist ministers. At the time, the cost for reprinting the July issue with a different article was expected to be \$20,000, though the actual cost may prove to be less.

Numbers of the July issue had already been distributed through the General Conference headquarters, when James A. Cress, the head of the General Conference Ministerial Association that publishes *Ministry*, ordered the issue withdrawn. Cress's action was subsequently ratified by the Administrative Committee, comprised of the highest officers of the General Conference. To override the judgment of an editor and call back an issue of such a prominent Adventist journal as *Ministry* is a highly unusual, if not unprecedented action.

The article, "Make a Joyful Noise!" by Barry D. Oliver, a senior lecturer in ministry and mission at Avondale College in Australia, stresses the need for Adventists to attend to worship. Following is the paragraph that forced the reprinting of 55,000 copies of *Ministry*.

*Unfortunately, worshipers with such subjective orientation usually find difficulty expressing themselves freely in Adventist worship. Some have even found it necessary to leave the Seventh-day Adventist communion. Take, for example, David and LaVonne Neff. They grew up in Adventist homes, were Adventist Church members*

*and employees once, but now belong to the Episcopal Church. Why did they make the switch? Apparently they felt a need for a greater experience of the awe and majesty of God (a subjective experience), and this they were not getting in their Adventist Church. David Neff writes: "To my Adventist friends, the church was a community of people built around a common doctrinal commitment. The essence of being Adventist did not lie half so much in worshipping God on Saturday*

*morning as it did in believing that Saturday morning was the right time for worship. To my Episcopal friends, the church was a community built around a common worship commitment . . . Of course, my Adventist community believed that proper worship was important, and the folk at St. Paul's believed that orthodox doctrine was essential. But the mainspring of community identity was different" (David and LaVonne Neff, "Six Pilgrims Share Their Stories," in Robert E. Webber, *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail: Why Evangelicals Are Attracted to the Liturgical Church*, Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1985, p. 154. Italics supplied by Barry Oliver.)*

## Theological Community Mourns Heppenstall, Hasel

Edward  
Heppenstall

Edward Heppenstall, former chair of the department of theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, died at his home in Redlands, California, August 22, 1994. He was 93 years old.

Heppenstall introduced the meaning and significance of righteousness by faith to several generations of Adventist pastors and teachers, including the name most prominently identified, recently, with the teaching, Desmond Ford. Heppenstall also inspired more young people to become Adventist teachers of theology than perhaps any other teacher of his time. They included, among many others: Wilber Alexander, who later chaired the department of church and ministry at the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University; Tom Blincoe, who became a

dean of the seminary; Fritz Guy, who became associate dean of the seminary and a president of La Sierra University; and Beatrice Neall, a professor of theology at Union College.

At the memorial service for Heppenstall held August 27 at the Loma Linda University church, Fritz Guy, now a professor of theology at La Sierra University, retold Heppenstall's life story. Born in Yorkshire, England, Heppenstall completed a two-year program at Stanborough College, then his B.A. at Emmanuel Missionary College in Berrien Springs, Michigan, in 1933. A year later he earned an M.A. in history from the University of Michigan.

After several years of youth ministry, Heppenstall became pastor of the La Sierra College church in 1940 and joined the theology department. A year later he was chair. For 15 years Heppenstall taught at La Sierra, earning his doctorate along the way from the University

## Gerhard Hasel

of Southern California in 1951. In 1955 Heppenstall began his 10 years of influential teaching at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, where his ideas about the biblical covenants and the relation of law and gospel quickly stimulated study among students and criticism among church officials. In retirement in California, Heppenstall published four books in six years, all revolving around the saving work of Christ, including *Salvation Unlimited: Perspectives in Righteousness by Faith* (1974).

Guy, who was planning to major in science before encountering Heppenstall in college, attempted at his memorial service to describe his teacher's contribution to the life of Adventism. "Without much fanfare or any great crisis, Edward Heppenstall decisely and permanently transformed Adventist theological scholarship. Before him, Adventists studied and taught Bible doctrines. After him, and because of him, we studied and taught *theology*. We learned to look at Adventist belief as a whole and in depth, and we became aware of the theological world around us.

"Of course it is dangerous to think,' he said over and over in his classes, 'but it is more dangerous *not* to think.' . . . He was nevertheless willing to endure criticism from church officials who failed to see the evidence that was so clear to him. One of the minor ironies in the recent history of Adventist thought is the fact that many of those who claim to represent 'historic Adventism' are in fact reflecting the once-denounced but now-accepted views of Edward Heppenstall."

Guy ended his eulogy by saying that the best way to sum up Edward Heppenstall's ministry was to say that "he showed us what it means to love and serve God *with all our hearts and with all our minds.*"

Gerhard Franz Hasel died in an auto accident in Colorado on August 11, 1994, at the age of 59. Hasel was the the first John Nevins Andrews Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology and the director of the Ph.D and Th.D programs at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Earlier, for seven years (1981-1988), he served as dean of the seminary, where he had taught for 27 years.

At a several-hour memorial service at the Berrien Springs Village SDA church, August 17, Mervyn Maxwell, a former colleague on the seminary faculty, recounted that Hasel had been born in Vienna, Austria, into an Adventist minister's family. Throughout World War II, the father remained a non-combatant, and Gerhard, in defiance of the Nazi authorities, was kept out of school on Saturdays. Hasel received his B.A. from Atlantic Union College, his M.A. and B.D. from the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University and his Ph.D. in Biblical studies from Vanderbilt University. After pastoring for a year, he taught at Southern College for four years (1963-1967).

Hasel's son, Michael, a doctoral student in archeology at the University of Arizona, has compiled a list of 14 books and 319 articles and book reviews written by his father. Hasel's academic writings were noticed outside of the Adventist community. Warren Johns, of the Andrews University Library, has identified 39 reviews in scholarly journals of four of Hasel's books, perhaps the best known of which is *The Old Testament: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. Hasel wrote the article on the Sabbath for the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, was recently appointed associate editor of *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament*

*Theology*, and at the time of his death was working on two volumes, Amos and Hosea, for the *New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, being published by Eerdmans's Press.

Inside the Adventist community, Hasel was, as Maxwell said in his life sketch, "at times controversial," and known as "one who committed robust energies and impressive intellect to the quest for truth." Hasel was the most academically accomplished of those voices within Adventism focused on the dangerous inroads of the "historical-critical" analysis of the Bible. Even after his years as dean, when he installed a financing mechanism that increased enrollment, Hasel's chairmanship of the doctoral committee of the SDA Theological Seminary, and his development of scholarship funds for doctoral candidates, placed him in a key position to influence Adventist theological teaching worldwide.

Maxwell also referred to Hasel's crucial role in forming the Adventist Theological Society, committed to promoting "sound, conservative, biblical scholarship and interpretation." He served as its second president (1990-1992). The society's members are required to reaffirm each year their commitment to not only the 27 fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but other affirmations, including belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible.

At the memorial service, some of Hasel's former students publicly stressed his importance as a leader of the theological thinking within Adventism represented by the Adventist Theological Society, and served notice that his ministry within Adventism would not die, but live on in them. Hasel is survived by his wife, Hilde, and three children: Michael, Marlena, and Melissa, all married.

## Adventist Names in the News

The NBC television network in September named **Donna Willis** their medical correspondent, reporting primarily on the morning *Today* program. From May through September, Willis reported on the network eight times.

Willis attended Oakwood College for more than three years, then received her B.A. and in 1977, her M.D. from Loma Linda University. Harris took an internal medicine residency at the Mayo Clinic. While working at the Kettering Medical Center, she appeared regularly on a program it produced on a Dayton, Ohio, cable television station.

Willis moved to Baltimore as a reporter on medical news for WMAR, channel 2, and soon was invited to join the staff of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, a post she retains.

During a typical segment on the *Today* program at the end of September, Harris discussed with Katie Curic the subject of paramenopause. Among other points, Willis emphasized that the condition was worsened by smoking.

Each week, Willis also hosts "The Operation," on the cable Learning Channel, and remains active in a program she developed, "Heart, Body, and Spirit," which has brought together Hopkins and the General Conference in a health-education program carried out in black churches.

Events on August 22 and 23 established that Loma Linda University Medical Center and Loma Linda University School of Medicine will undergo a changing of the guard. Whatever innovations they bring, the backgrounds of the new leaders suggest that Loma Linda University will continue to compete for prominence in academic, high-technology medicine.

For 30 years, Adventist medical education has been shaped by the forceful vision and will of **David B. Hinshaw, Sr.**, certainly the most important figure in Adventist medicine since John Harvey Kellogg (see *Spectrum*, Vol. 22, No. 3). In the 1960s, Hinshaw presided over the moving of the denomination's medical school from Los Angeles to Loma Linda and the building of a medical center complex that originally housed more than 300 patients. Now, the various entities of the Loma Linda University Medical Center include more than 1,500 beds.

Hinshaw, as president of the Loma Linda University Medical Center (and of the virtually identical Adventist Health Systems/Loma Linda), was a major figure in the creation, in May, of California Health Network, a joint venture of the Medical Center, Adventist Health Systems/West, and three other systems, that may be the second largest system in California (see p. 51).

In August, the Medical Center board selected Hinshaw's successor. **J. David Morehead** will become president of the Loma Linda University Medical Center, beginning January 1, 1995. Morehead received his M.D. degree from Loma Linda University in 1973. Morehead, an associate professor in the section of urology (department of surgery) and in the department of pediatrics, has been senior vice president for children's services for the Medical Center since 1992.

Morehead led in the planning, organization, and implementation of the children's hospital, and completed the project several million dollars under budget.

Also in August, **Brian S. Bull** was elected dean of the school of medicine and vice-president of its clinical faculty. For 21 years, Bull has chaired the Department of Pa-

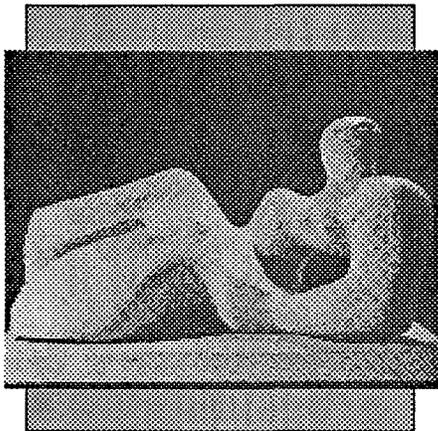
thology and Human Anatomy at the school of medicine.

After graduating from the Loma Linda University School of Medicine in 1961, Bull studied for seven years at Yale University School of Medicine, the National Institutes of Health, and the Royal Postgraduate Medical School in London, England. During these years and since, Bull devised new techniques and procedures now used internationally in the field of hematology. He has served on the editorial boards of several journals, and since 1985 has been the editor-in-chief of *Blood Cells*, the leading scholarly journal in his field.

June 28, the *Nightline* news program, on the ABC television network, focused on the subject of confidentiality within self-help programs. The program asked, Should prosecutors be able to bring into court confessions to criminal behavior made in Alcoholics Anonymous sessions? No, said **Adele Waller**, an attorney in a Chicago law firm specializing in health care, a graduate of Andrews University, and a lifelong Adventist.

Waller argued that the present law should be changed. Self-help groups should be afforded the same privilege of confidentiality that penitent-priest and physician-patient relationships now receive. After all, the ultimate goal is to prevent crime. Respecting the confidentiality of what is said in self-help sessions will make it more likely that individuals will attend self-help meetings and receive genuine help in getting off drugs and avoiding further criminal behaviour.

Waller also noted that people pay psychotherapists for drug therapy often based on an Alcoholics Anonymous model. The communications in "AA for pay" are protected. People who have no money go to AA and their communications are unprotected. Wealth and privilege go together.



## God Is *Like* a Woman, But God *Is* Our Father

I have been out of the Adventist academic loop for some time now and have just recently begun to read *Spectrum* again. Please permit me a diversion from my pastoral duties to offer a brief critique of Iris Yob's article on feminine language about God (*Spectrum*, Vol. 23, No. 3)—from the theological right.

Yob correctly notes that all human speech about God is analogical—or, as she says, metaphorical. We can only speak about something in terms of what we already know. This is a truism in philosophy and theology. But I cannot agree with her (modernist) assumption, implicit in her remarks, that all references to the divine in Scripture fall into that category. It fails to take into account the doctrine of revelation. The divine names in particular are not represented in Scripture as the products of man's groping toward God but rather as authoritative disclosures of the divine about itself—words *of* God *to* man.

The "Our Father" given by the Messiah to his disciples is perhaps the only instance of a divine name revealed in the New Testament. It is the equivalent of the revelation of the tetragrammaton (YHWH) to Moses at the burning bush. It is the revelation that Christ brings to those who believe in him. Hence, although there are numerous meta-

phors and (more often) similes about the divine in Scripture, "Our Father" is not one of them. The Messiah did not instruct his followers to address God thus so that they would compare God to their own fathers as they prayed. Rather, the name signifies the Messiah's own relation to God, which, according to the Gospel of St. John, the Messiah enjoyed even before he was born as a man. The orthodox doctrine of the Trinity asserts that the relation of the divine Father to the divine Son precedes and is independent of any human relations that might resemble it. By instructing his disciples in use of this divine name, Christ was announcing that they had become one with him and thus enjoyed the same relation to the Almighty—that of being his sons. The address of God as "Our Father" is a privileged one that a believer makes *in Christ*. It is not merely a term chosen from among a slew of metaphors that human beings have used to refer to the divine in the history of religion.

In stark contrast, any comparisons that the Bible makes between the ways of God and a feminine activity are strictly that—comparisons. In every translation I have encountered, they are always put in the form of a simile. Speaking for God, the prophet can say, "As one one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you" (Isaiah 66:13).

*Readers react to Yob on feminine images of God, Burnham on Adventism and AIDS in Africa, and Christenson on race.*

Or Moses will say of Israel, "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the LORD alone did lead him" (Deuteronomy 32:11-12). Both Isaiah and Moses drew attention to divine nurturance, but neither would have considered addressing God as "Mother" any more than he would have addressed him as "Eagle."

Thus, even though we mortals may feel ourselves quite justified in comparing a divine activity to either the ways of man or the ways of

woman (or, for that matter, to the ways of a bird), we must tread carefully when invoking the deity: the divine names are not human inventions; they are sacred revelations and should be treated as such. God is *like* a woman in much that he does—or, rather, she is like him, having been as much fashioned in the divine image as a man. But God *is* our Father. There is a difference.

The Reverend Jeffrey Smith  
All Saints Anglican Church  
Aiken, South Carolina

## Burnham's "AIDS Hits Africa" Earns Praise, Condemnation



I wish to applaud Gilbert Burnham for writing—and *Spectrum* for publishing—the article on the Seventh-day Adventist Church's response to the AIDS epidemic in Africa (*Spectrum*, Vol. 23, No. 4). He has clearly identified the problems: (1) the AIDS epidemic is devastating sub-Saharan Africa; (2) HIV is spread almost exclusively by heterosexual contact; (3) sexual practices—such as early onset of sexual activity, extensive premarital sexual intercourse, multiplicity of partners—result in high HIV infection rates; and (4) the response of the church in

caring for persons with AIDS or in education of its members has been limited.

The high ratio of Seventh-day Adventist members in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa virtually guarantees that many Adventists will be among those who contract AIDS. Our continued success in evangelism undoubtedly will result in many baptisms of HIV-infected individuals. Dr. Burnham correctly points out that "sexual practices among unmarried Adventist youth differ little from their non-Adventist and non-Christian peers." His observations are confirmed in a study recently completed by one of our doctoral students at Loma Linda University School of Public Health. This study, conducted in the East African Union, has been submitted for publication; therefore, I can only refer generally to its findings. Adventists did not differ from other Christians in their premarital and extramarital sexual behavior, but the rate was half that of traditional African believers. The number of

sexual partners was similar.

Traditions in African cultures do not automatically change with church membership, in spite of what we teach. In fact, customs such as the Levirate marriage still are followed in the Christian, including Adventist, community. The church, according to this recent study, was not viewed as a source of AIDS information. Dr. Burnham made some very concrete and useful suggestions regarding the potential of youth organizations, Adventist schools, and service organizations in educating Adventists and non-Adventists alike in Africa. His comments about teachers' reluctance to teach about sexuality and HIV/AIDS are equally applicable to Africa and schools in the United States. The North American Division Office of Education is currently publishing a series of elementary science-health textbooks that include sex education and HIV/AIDS education. Good textbooks, however, do not ensure that the subjects will be taught. Information alone is rarely enough to produce behavior change. Families must reinforce the teaching by role-modeling and discussing appropriate behaviors.

Abstinence until marriage, then faithfulness on the part of both partners, is the goal of sex education and HIV-prevention education. But studies done among Adventist young people, both in the U.S. and in Africa, indicate that approximately 20 percent of our youth do not follow that ideal. Which brings us to the "C" word: What do we teach about condoms? Dr. Burnham again correctly points out that while they do not offer absolute protection, they do reduce risks. Apparently the Adventist participants in our African study agreed, for they were among the highest users of condoms in the groups studied.

Seventh-day Adventists must

respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, not only for self-protection but in caring for others as Christ would care. Not only in Africa and the United States, but in every country this epidemic is sweeping. It is not the time to bury our heads in the

sand and pretend "it doesn't happen to good people."

Joyce W. Hopp, Dean  
School of Allied Health Professions  
Professor, School of Health  
Loma Linda University

## Are Adventist Beliefs Culturally Determined?

Thanks for Mr. Burnham's article on AIDS in Africa and the importance of a truly Christian response to this plague. It seems shocking that sexual practices among unmarried Seventh-day Adventist young people were about the same as those in the general population, Christian and non-Christian. One wonders about the U.S. Could this be true in our country as well? Have we been hiding our light under a bushel on this issue, or is it simply an unrealistic, culturally determined vestige of our roots in another age?

It was heartening to read Mr. Burnham's suggestion of "fall-back stances" on issues where cultural pressures are strong. This realism will make the job of evangelizing the

world much easier, both overseas and in this country. The rigidity of our health message has been a major disincentive to many otherwise committed people, who may even be turned off from Christianity by our stance. Another example is our emphasis on tithing in societies where materialism is as strong as it is in the Western world. And the absolutism with which we have presented the seventh commandment is simply unrealistic in modern America. Once we have articulated a reasonable and caring "fall-back stance" on each of our peculiar beliefs, the end will really come quickly.

Earl M. J. Aagard  
Angwin, California

## Burnham Should Apologize

I was surprised that a professor of Johns Hopkins would write an article such as the one that appeared in your journal. The article was "AIDS Hits Africa: Where Are SDAs?" by Dr. Gilbert Burnham. This requires an apology from him to the two Seventh-day Adventist church divisions in Africa and from your journal for publishing an article full of racial overtones, and shows a colonial mentality of "we know what is good for you."

For an African reader, it appears that Burnham does not intelligently understand "African culture." He

does show the typical mentality of the "missionary" who had problems fitting in today's Africa under indigenous leadership with the attitude of "I know best," which has been abundantly evidenced in his article.

"Traditional African" culture, for his information and the information of your readers, prohibits promiscuity; it is punishable by death. What Burnham does not know or fails to admit is that the Western culture, which was brought to Africa by him and others like him, brought the permissiveness and

"solutions" which are foreign to us.

The promotion of condoms, which he advocated when he was here and is still advocating, is not an "African traditional" way of dealing with such problems. He has imposed his views of African sexuality on the community he lived in and now he is trying to impose his views and approaches to solve the problems, neither of which are African.

I speak from experience. I was in a youth congress in Malawi that hundreds of young people attended when a skit on AIDS prevention was presented by a group from Malamulo, where Burnham was the medical director. The director of the AIDS skit worked directly under Burnham.

The presentation was culturally offensive and unacceptable to the attendees because it was devoid of the Christian principles of morality and was no different than the "party line" that would be given by any non-Christian organization. Condoms do have a place in some situations, but a limited role in AIDS prevention in Africa; but promoting the use of condoms is a diversion from the central issue of sexual behavior.

Promoting the use of condoms in Africa by donor countries and other groups may have some economic advantages to them, but it is of limited use because, apart from the moral issue, there are problems of acceptance, distribution, transport, availability, and, in many areas, cost. (Early in the condom distribution program, condoms were given free of charge and distributed in schools to children in the sixth and seventh grades. Now there is a charge for the condoms. While the charge may appear minimal for Burnham, it is significant when mounting a church-wide or nationwide effort.) These concerns are, of course, apart from the moral

and spiritual implications. Perhaps Burnham, who seems to have so much concern and has the answer to AIDS in Africa, should leave his ivory tower at Johns Hopkins and head up the AIDS prevention program in the World Health Organization. It is a shame that a man with such insights is buried at Johns

Hopkins!

Johns Hopkins and Gilbert Burnham should apologize for this article.

Baraka G. Muganda  
Youth Ministries Director  
Eastern Africa Division  
Zimbabwe, Africa

## Africa: We Know What to Do

My attention was drawn to the article "AIDS Hits Africa: Where Are SDAs?" by Dr. Gilbert Burnham. My interest in the article was thwarted by the prejudices with which the author, a Johns Hopkins University professor, discusses the issue of AIDS in Africa, which led me to wonder what his motives were. Having worked in Africa and also being a Seventh-day Adventist, I am sure he has not just discovered that AIDS hit Africa. As a concerned Adventist and the medical director of Malamulo Hospital in Malawi for more than a decade, who helped to build the physical plant, it would be interesting to find out whether he was able to reduce the spread of AIDS

around Malamulo as compared to other parts of Malawi. The citing of unpublished research leaves a lot to be desired.

The author shows little understanding of what Adventists are doing in our educational as well as health programs in Eastern Africa. Instead he portrays prejudices and generalizations. His citing of a statement that "many African societies do not proscribe sexual behavior before marriage" leaves a lot to be desired, especially as man in the "Western world" has termed measures against such behavior in Africa as being too harsh. Burnham's suggestions are elementary and a "rehash" of what he stands for—condoms—as the answer, with a

sprinkling of behavioral change.

While in Malawi, he promoted his program, including the promotion of condoms, at will. He, however, cited an unpublished study that concludes that there is little difference found between Adventist churchgoers and non-Adventist girls who do not attend church. How could one expect different results while advocating and promoting the same program as the general populace? Would this be the natural consequences of such a program?

For those of us who know what we should be doing in our Adventist schools and among our membership, we are confused by this kind of muddled thinking. This is exactly what he terms as "a bland interdenominational restatement" was emphasizing—traditional Christian morality, which we as a church see as the only answer to the problem of AIDS the world over.

What Burnham did while here in Africa, and other countries do as far as the AIDS problem is concerned, is a disservice to our efforts against AIDS. One would like to evaluate his accomplishments, outside of those alluded to above.

Some of the questions one would pose in relation to the AIDS problem in his country are:

- 1). What has the \$4 billion the U.S. government spent on promoting "safe sex" done to curb the disease in the U.S.?
- 2). Do Adventist schools have a lower incidence of HIV/AIDS than non-Adventist schools? If the answer is yes, is that due to condoms?
- 3). Why is homosexuality prevalent among Adventist schools in the U.S., and what does Dr. Burnham propose to do about that?

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Education Director  
Eastern Africa Division  
Zimbabwe, Africa

*Letters to the editor are always welcome, and will be considered for publication unless otherwise specified. Direct all correspondence to the editors, Spectrum, P.O. Box 5330, Takoma Park, Maryland 20913-5330 (U.S.A.). The editors reserve the right to condense letters prior to publication.*



## Burnham Speaks the Truth. Listen!

Dr. Gilbert Burnham, in his article "AIDS Hits Africa: Where are SDAs?" spoke from a deep love for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I know Dr. Burnham. When I visited his program at Malamulo Hospital, Malawi, in 1989, I saw what he had done and the vision he brought to the problem of AIDS in Africa.

Because of the vision and leadership of Dr. Burnham, Malamulo Hospital became the premier medical institution in Malawi. It was the center for quality medical care and the training program for medical assistants whose graduates had the highest qualifying scores in all of Malawi. Malamulo and its graduates provided more than 20 percent of the medical care for Malawi. (At that time, there was no medical school in Malawi, and medical assistant was the highest level of medical training available in the country.)

Malamulo Hospital, under Dr. Burnham's leadership, developed public health programs: (1) He humanized the care of Hansen's disease (leprosy) in Malawi. No longer were those afflicted with Hansen's disease isolated in leprosariums; he

developed a home-care program for the entire country. A few medical assistants rode bicycles from village to village providing medication, observing and supervising their care. This saved money, maintained patient dignity, and preserved family units. (2) He actively promoted reforestation—planting well over 1 million trees. (3) Under his direction, villagers dug and developed nearly 200 wells in surrounding villages.

During his tenure, he obtained grants from many agencies for buildings, curricula, and training facilities at Malamulo Hospital. In addition, he received multiple grants to study the effectiveness of treatment and prevention programs for "river blindness."

Dr. Gilbert Burnham made a tremendous contribution to Adventist medicine in tropical Africa. With wisdom he speaks the truth; in love he speaks the painful truth. Listen to him.

Harvey A. Elder, Professor  
Loma Linda University  
Chief, Infectious Diseases  
Jerry L. Pettis Memorial  
VA Medical Center

## Burnham Responds

Perhaps a quarter of Adventists live in sub-Saharan Africa. Few areas of the world can match the growth of the church here. More than 10 million persons with HIV, or about 75 percent of the world's infected population also live in the same region. How do these two phenomena interact? For *Spectrum* readers I set out to objectively consider demographic and cultural patterns contributing to infection, the potential impact of AIDS, the

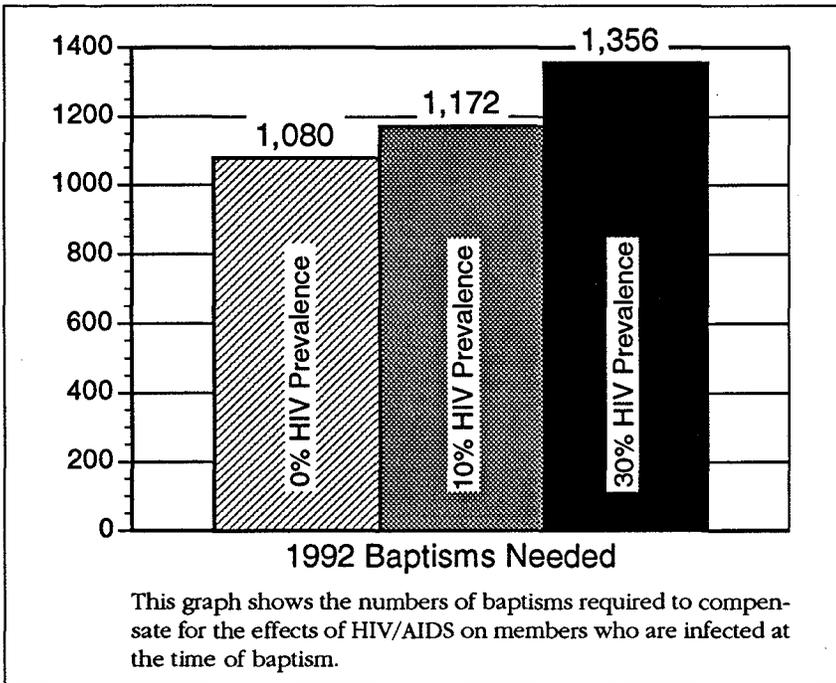
church's resources for fighting AIDS, and its response so far. The approaches I suggested which could be used for control, and labeled as "colonist" or "racist" by correspondents are, in fact, based on successful African approaches developed and implemented largely by Africans. One of the most comprehensive is SYFA (Safe-guarding Youth From AIDS), designed by an Ethiopian, Dr. Aklilu Lemma, for UNICEF.

In their letters, Pastors Muganda and Kibuuka very effectively illustrate the depth of defensiveness and denial which has made addressing HIV/AIDS difficult for Adventists and other Christians virtually everywhere. The first step in dealing with HIV/AIDS in the church is to get past the stage of denying the problem or blaming others. If a parallel can be drawn from national HIV/AIDS control programs, those countries that have confronted the crisis openly, such as Uganda, whose vice-president is a Seventh-day Adventist physician, seem from early data to be more effective in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS than countries that are still in denial.

Promiscuity has been a taboo in many if not most traditional societies. This and other traditional behavior patterns are now breaking down in Africa as they have elsewhere before. As societal values change, appeals to traditional standards no longer have the force they once did, requiring new approaches to promoting Christian moral values.

Drama, which Pastor Muganda refers to, is a traditional communication method popular in many African cultures. This is one of many approaches that Adventists can use to get across important HIV/AIDS messages. Adventist youth have used drama very effectively to promote Christian responses to the temptations, struggles, and perplexities youth experience in rapidly changing societies. Making these too "preachy" can blunt the drama's effectiveness in influencing decisions of youth for right moral values.

The letters of Pastors Magunda and Kibuuka also illustrate the difficulty in clear thinking about condoms common to many Christian groups. Finding it difficult to effectively combat promiscuity or rejection of moral values, it can be



easier to attack condoms as a proxy. Unfortunately, energy may be wasted in attacking condoms that could be used to address the risky behavior that increases the spread of HIV/AIDS. The promotion of condoms for irresponsible sexual behavior is not consistent with Christian values. At the other end of the scale, few would prohibit the use of condoms in a marriage where one spouse is infected and the other not. Many would also accept the use of condoms to protect one spouse where the other spouse is engaged in risky sexual behavior.

The difficult thinking begins when the focus shifts to the person who is engaged in risky behavior. Should persons likely to become infected with HIV/AIDS as a consequence of willing choices be offered protection? From a public-health standpoint the answer is clear. The health, economic, and social consequences of AIDS are so gigantic that any reasonably effective measure should be actively promoted. But, from a moral standpoint, would this be condoning irresponsible sexual behavior? If Christianity is about caring rather

than judging and fear-mongering, and if we believe that Christ can bring about long-term (and often delayed) behavior change, then perhaps we should be less strident over condoms.

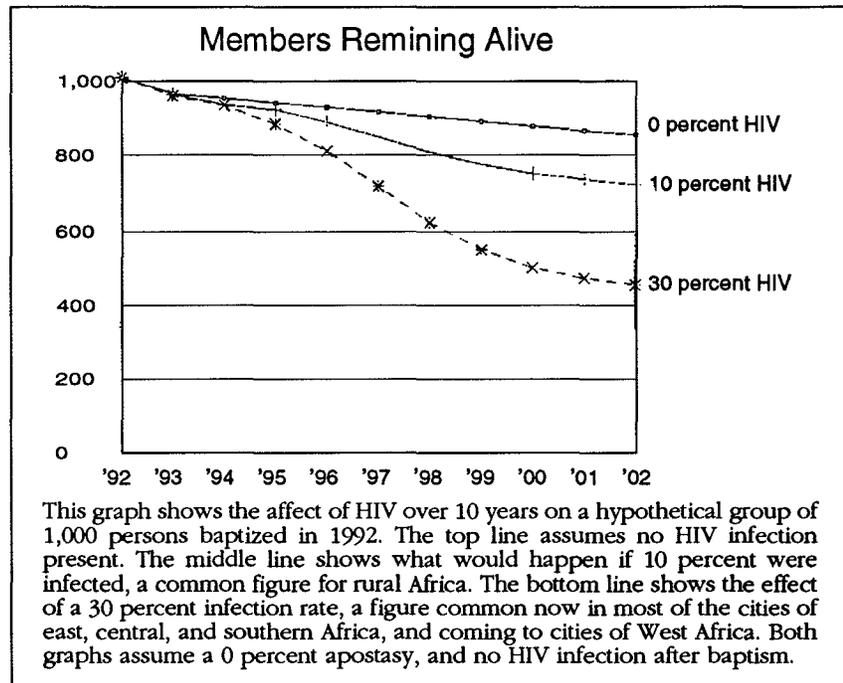
Joyce Hopp stresses the importance of not only developing an HIV/AIDS school curriculum but also effectively implementing it,

and following this up with support in the home. In any country, teachers can, unfortunately, also have negative influences, as illustrated by a recent article in a national Uganda newspaper under the headline "LIRA HEADMASTER SUSPENDED OVER ALLEGED AFFAIRS" (*The New Vision*, Kampala, Uganda [June 25, 1994], p. 4).

The Headmaster of the Amuca Seventh-day Adventist School, Lira, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, has been suspended indefinitely for allegedly having love affairs with his school girls. . . . \_\_\_\_\_ reportedly threatened to dismiss any girl who refused to have sex with him. . . . Several girls have allegedly given in to him because of fear that they would be suspended from school. . . .

Citing this recent example is not meant to indicate this problem is confined to Africa, for it can occur in North America as well as elsewhere, but it is to emphasize the potential of this behavior for HIV spread among adolescents in school.

An important impact of HIV/AIDS on the church in Africa, that

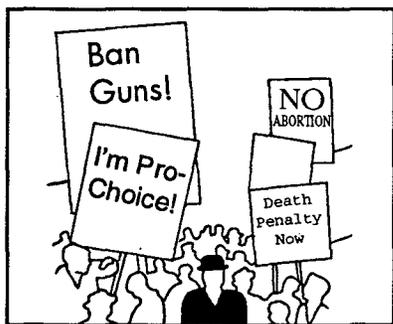


of membership loss, needs additional emphasis. If one considers the deaths of members who are already infected with HIV at the time of baptism, the impact is substantial, as illustrated by the two graphs. This continuing loss of members will greatly increase the marginal costs of each new baptism. In an era of sharply reduced

operating subsidies from the world church, under the title of "load-sharing" (read load-shedding), this can have serious consequences for the Adventist Church in Africa.

Gilbert Burnham, Assoc. Professor  
School of Medicine  
School of Public Health  
Johns Hopkins University

## Further Chastening of A White Liberal



I have just finished reading Reo Christenson's article entitled "The Chastening of a White Liberal" (*Spectrum*, Vol. 23, No. 5), and my emotions are thoroughly confused. I am simultaneously angry, humored, frustrated, disappointed, and saddened. I am angry that space within this journal should be provided for such pseudo-intellectualism. I am humored because the ignorance and blindness is so great that maybe, just maybe, the entire essay is a joke—albeit a cruel one. I am frustrated because once again we must read the words of a supposedly enlightened individual who is truly anything but. I am disappointed that the *Spectrum* editors weren't more critical of the piece and didn't demand more revisions before publication. And I am saddened because of the harm this piece will do by allowing all those people who feel similarly to Prof. Christenson to now call themselves liberals. I hope this es-

say does not represent mainstream liberalism. If it does, then I can no longer be a part of it.

I have so many questions about this article I am sorry that I can only touch on a few. It is, though, the sort of article one could literally pick apart sentence by sentence. My criticisms are directed at Prof. Christenson and do generally follow the order of the essay:

1. Throughout the entire essay you seem to limit yourself as to the color of poverty. After reading the essay the only conclusion to be made is that poverty is black and an urban phenomenon. Did you know that the latest census figures show that the poverty rate is higher in non-urban areas than urban areas? And we all know, don't we, that as for absolute numbers there are more poor whites than blacks? Poverty is neither a black nor an urban problem. It is very much *our* problem. If you had been more sensitive to the realities of poverty, this response letter could have been even more interesting. Because you have limited your criticisms to minorities, I will primarily limit my criticism as a means to counteract your complete dismissal of the experience of minority groups.

2. In the third paragraph I wonder just whose "common sense" you are talking about. To me it

sounds like that of a thoroughly white, middle-class, and contented centrist who became angry—and I mean really, really angry. But not, of course, from centuries of slavery, continuing discrimination, unemployment, disrespect for your language, police beatings, intense envy and extreme want, a lack of opportunities because your country would rather jail you than educate you, and the disrespect and apathy upon the part of your representatives. *Those* angry people Christenson tells to turn the other cheek, pray, and go sit in front of the television.

Prof. Christenson, have you ever said a bad word after accidentally mashing your thumb with a hammer? I think you need to re-evaluate your usage of that phrase, and maybe try to place yourself in another's shoes sometimes. It is possible to have "sympathy and understanding" for the rioters without condoning what they did. I don't condone what they did, but I have no problem saying that if my life experience was similar to that of some of the residents, I might have been down there myself that day.

3. I couldn't believe this: "the deepest roots of poverty . . . were fixed in *family* (italics my own) environments. . . ." I and many others would argue that what is really at bottom cannot be reduced to a simple generality like "family environment." Consider some alternative forces combating the progress of minorities: (a) An economy that is quickly metamorphosing from one based upon manufacturing to one based upon service—and changing quicker than we can react; (b) an industrial policy that encourages American corporations to lower their manufacturing costs by moving their operations offshore; (c) an economic policy that holds that unemploy-

ment can get too *low*. The ideal unemployment rate is about 5.5 percent. We are pretty close to that rate now (that is, the nationwide rate), but the unemployment rate among African Americans is twice that, and many times that for teens. The conclusion being, unemployment ye shall always have with you. It's called structural unemployment and we better get used to it. We have yet to figure out how we as a nation are going to psychologically and physically deal with the fact that there will always be tens of millions of individuals out of work.

(d) What about the educational disadvantage African-Americans suffer from due to centuries of slavery, discrimination, and lack of educational opportunities? We educated whites seem to think the desire for education is somehow a genetic urge. People, it is learned desire. The public school system is the best thing this country ever created. It provided an opportunity for all children to learn how critical education is. Education is not merely learning the three R's. Education is also learning how important education is. Why don't we let all kids learn that lesson?

(e) When it comes time to leave college and get a job, boy is it nice to be able to rely on the school alumni network, or maybe call upon Dad to help find you something; nothing like that old-boy network. With so few African-Americans in positions of power making hiring decisions, if you are an African-American looking for work in white corporate America, you better hope you have an outstanding résumé, or find a sympathetic and egalitarian employer. (Thirty-one percent of Americans hold negative attitudes towards blacks.) Professor Christenson, certainly this nation needs to re-evaluate its attitude toward family, but I think the plight of the poor deserves a more complex and nuanced consideration

than you have provided.

4. The ideology behind busing was exactly as Professor Christenson suggests: busing provided African-Americans an opportunity to become white via osmosis. By merely being near whites they could via osmosis embrace white values, attitudes, and behaviors. And, of course, what a money-saving idea busing turned out to be. We, the people, didn't have to sink any new money into educational facilities for black communities. The conclusion Christenson leads me to make about the failure of integration via busing is that segregation is preferable. The equation he sets up is as follows: integration, disciplinary problems, racial hostility, and white flight (as if racial hostility or disciplinary problems never existed prior to integration). Maybe Christenson did not mean to posit solely this equation, but from his brief discussion of busing, that is the only equation I found sensible.

5. I, along with many others, find it extremely suspicious that after centuries of de facto affirmative

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*We educated whites seem to think the desire for education is a genetic urge. People, it is learned desire. The public school system is the best thing this country ever created. It provided an opportunity for all children to learn how critical education is.*

action (and quotas—"white males only") for whites, it is only when minorities are given the benefit of affirmative action policies that we whites start complaining. I think maybe, just maybe, the smoke and mirrors of arguments against such policies are really covering up a desire to sustain the status quo.

I assume that since you believe "equal treatment without regard to gender or ethnicity" is the only means to creating opportunity, then you must be against granting special treatment to new mothers who decide to take an extended leave to be with a newborn by giving them back their jobs upon return?

6. I am interested in your characterization of middle-class values that you say Headstart tries to inculcate in its students. "It's the only way to expose these children to an educational environment similar to that of most middle-class families—one in which parents use proper English and pronunciation, patiently answer questions, read to children, give them educational games, and so on." Could you please supply me with the survey that presented these findings. I would be interested in reading it. I am especially anxious to read the author's definition of "proper English and pronunciation."

I assume from the paragraph that you would prefer non-native English speakers be disallowed from teaching at a Headstart school? Often times non-native speakers still speak with a bit of an accent long after they have moved here. Your racist policy will surely disappoint all those Spanish-speaking children here in southern California who will have fewer teachers who look similar to them to look up to because of your stringent English law.

7. I was totally stunned that you should ignore discussion of all the structural constraints over which minorities have little or no control and that impact their lives in such

a disproportionate manner (see number 3 above), but make way for this most inane criticism: the underclass need to buy "fewer soft drinks and junk foods" and eat more "cooked rather than packaged cereals [and] more vegetables and less meat." Unbelievable!

8. I really appreciate the paragraph on apprenticeships vs. job-training. The problem being, of course, you make it sound as if that is the only option that should be given to members of the underclass. Are you so pessimistic, Prof. Christenson, about the dreams, aspirations, and goals of both inner-city kids and good-hearted U.S. citizens that you have given up on the possibility of a college education being extended to all?

9. I am glad I read further into the essay because I found one thing we could agree upon. I commend you for warning about "the erosion of moral values" in this nation. The decline really bothers me, too. I am truly frightened about where this nation is headed. It really bothers me that: the respect citizens give to our Constitution has waned to the point that we refuse to protect the civil rights of gays and lesbians; our sensitivity as fellow human beings to individual desires, ambitions, and dreams has waned so much that this nation is having to weather a backlash that is struggling to return women back to the home ('where they belong'); government programs, PAC's, and not-for-profit groups are doing the charity work to aid the needy that we as individuals should be doing—what happened to our sense of service?

10. By the end of the essay I am still not sure what your response would be to such civil (if you will) disobedients as Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, and maybe even Jefferson, Madison, and Washington. Would your pre-revolution

advice to each of them be to "behave responsibly. . . and daily manifest the characteristics of hard work"? Disavow me, please, of my impression that you think civil-disobedience is not a middle-class value, but rather something radicals do, or African-Americans do, or gays do, or communists do, or anti-semitics do.

11. So we shall teach children that "sex outside of marriage is an evil just as great as theft and perjury and wanton violence"? Could you supply your estimate of the jail time adulterers should be sentenced to? If you are going to equate it with wanton violence then, what do you think, five to 10 with the possibility of parole after three?

12. One thing I was really disappointed you didn't cover was personal responsibility. Throughout the essay you criticized government programs for doing less than expected or planned. I was hoping that, at last, maybe, someone was going to make a call for personal and individual involvement in fighting social problems. It just seemed a logical move. I actually was waiting for it at the very end of the essay, but it never came.

What a disappointing essay this turned out to be. This essay could have been an opportunity for *Spectrum* to really engage readers on some truly basic ideas such as equality, racism, difference, and oppression. Instead, you have played right into the misconceptions that many decent people have without revealing the ignorance and interested assumptions that underlie those beliefs. In addition, *Spectrum* and Christenson have also sullied the good name of liberalism by claiming to speak from that position, yet all the while discounting the experiences of racial and ethnic, sexual, and economic minorities. Suffering as many minority social groups do from contemporary marginalization, powerlessness, violence, exploitation, and cultural imperialism, coupled with a legacy of discrimination that is much worse, I guess I would have hoped for a much more insightful social and cultural critique that might have gone a long way toward disabusing readers of some of the reasons they support and sustain the status quo.

Dean A. Harris

## Christenson Responds

While a fully adequate response would take up more space than I think *Spectrum* wants to print, here are a few counter-comments.

I concentrated on inner-city poverty because my article was written shortly after the Los Angeles riots, and those riots involved minorities, especially African-Americans (who, alas, often vandalized the shops of Koreans, another minority. That should be viewed with tolerance and understanding?).

Inner cities have indeed been depleted of manufacturing and other jobs but no one had come up

with a feasible solution for bringing those jobs back. Exhortations won't work, since entrepreneurs find the inner-city environment an unattractive location compared to green and spacious suburbs, with lower taxes, lower insurance rates, less crime and a more-reliable labor supply. Business men and women aren't in business for social uplift purposes.

Spend more money on predominantly black schools? A hundred studies have found almost no correlation between the amount of per pupil spending and educational achievement. And because of af-

fluent suburban school districts can spend as much as they wish on education, no practicable method exists for equalizing school spending even if that were more helpful than it is. On inner-city kids' negative attitudes toward education, I suggest the reader consult *Time* magazine, March 16, 1992. (A score of other writers have made the same point.)

If Mr. Harris wants to believe in affirmative action, he has a lot of company among people whose judgment I often respect. But in this area we'll just have to agree to disagree. Equal rights for all used to be considered a liberal stance; now it is often seen as reactionary. Call it what you will, I'm for it.

Am I opposed to special employee treatment for new mothers? Oh, come on, now.

Has Mr. Harris noted that it is blacks today who increasingly reject integration? Even where schools are numerically integrated, blacks tend to associate with one another and even ostracize blacks who associate with white students.

Yes, Headstart *should* teach good pronunciation and good grammar, because African-American children and others who obtain this asset clearly have an economic and social edge over those who don't. Why doom minority children to a lifelong handicap? Ideological blinders shouldn't obscure reality.

Low-income people often struggle with the grocery bill. The proposals I made were sensible ones—and ones that my wife and I practice. Saving \$25 to \$30 a week on grocery bills isn't peanuts, if your paycheck is slim. Especially if it improves your health. No apologies for making the point.

We should strive for a college education for all? Most institutions of higher learning bend over backward to attract black students and keep them on campus. But after 38 years of college teaching, I'm con-

vinced we send too many kids to college now. Almost 60 percent of American youth get *some* college training, and I doubt if more than 15 percent are capable of doing college work that is rigorous and demanding. Europeans agree. What we do need, for blacks and whites alike, are more good apprenticeship and vocational-training programs.

Among blacks who currently get a college degree, it's worth noting that black women earn more than comparable white women. In general, there is probably as much reverse discrimination where black college grads are concerned as there is negative discrimination. Many corporations are eager to demonstrate how non-racist they are. Some blacks know this and almost all whites are aware of it.

If Mr. Harris wants to champion special legislation to protect gays and lesbians, that is his privilege. I shall not join in, for reasons too lengthy to develop here.

**H**ow would I view courageous blacks who fought for equal rights in decades past? It's not an academic question; I strongly championed them when they were fighting the good fight. But they fought for equality, not affirmative action. As for civil disobedience being unseemly for middle-class people, during the Vietnam War I declined to pay a portion of my income tax as a protest against the war. The IRS seized the unpaid portion from my bank account, which it had a right to do.

Yes, fornication causes more suffering in America than theft and perjury and random violence combined. Fornication takes a terrible toll among African-Americans, especially, because they have such high rates of illegitimacy, single-parent families, school dropouts following pregnancies, subsequent entry onto welfare rolls plus their

children who get involved in crime, drugs, poor educational performance, and often lifelong poverty. Think of the parental distress all this brings, too. Add these up and the reader can see why I think fornication is an evil far greater than modern society likes to acknowledge. It is sad that even churches are unwilling to give this sin the attention it so richly deserves.

I didn't emphasize personal responsibility enough in meeting poverty problems? I plead guilty. That should have been stressed more.

In sum, it would have been ever so easy (and politically correct) to write a piece about the L.A. riots and inner-city distress by blaming it all on white racism. But despite its historical contribution to black troubles, white America cannot solve inner-city problems today. Especially the plight of the lower-class black family. Looking back will get us nowhere; what can be done today is our real concern and that was the thrust of my article.

As not a few African-American leaders recognize, the primary burden for dealing with these problems must fall on blacks themselves. White America can and should help (as I specifically pointed out in my article) but blacks must do most of the job. The "victim mentality" so prevalent in America today is not a prescription for progress. It's not what produced the growing black middle class which, happily, respects traditional American values and takes advantage of its opportunities.

I didn't pretend to write as a spokesman for liberals; I expressed the opinion one liberal arrived at after three decades of studying the subject of poverty. For those who still think I must have written a truly dreadful piece, I invite a re-reading of that piece. I'll take my chances on your verdict.

Reo M. Christenson  
West Carrollton, Ohio

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