

Introduction to a Discussion

By Roy Branson

The Seventh-day Adventist Church emerged out of a Great Disappointment. The Little Flock first “wept and wept until the day dawned.” Only afterward did its members regain hope and become the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A question that faces a twenty-first-century Adventism seeking renewal is whether vibrant, highly motivating hope can only come after great disappointment. Must crucifixion always precede resurrection? Does hope depend on prior despair? Can upwardly mobile children of upwardly mobile Adventist parents all over the world continue to be drawn to the Great Advent Hope?

The disappointed Millerites of mid-nineteenth-century America regained their hope—their “expectation of something desired,” as the Oxford English Dictionary defines hope—by first gaining a sense of being in the presence of God.

To a community shocked on October 22, 1844, by God’s absence, Ellen White’s visions reassured it of God’s presence. Her vivid reports of a sanctuary vibrating with the sounds of silver trumpets and harps of gold, a city of light, full of the weight of God’s glory, revived hope in the disappointed. The Little Flock’s hope also grew as its members experienced Sabbath worship; their hope soared as they felt their New England chapels suffused with the light and music of the heavenly sanctuary.

ADVENT

HOPE

Adventism’s
Apocalyptic Hope

Of the Time
that Is Not Yet

Death and
the Blessed Hope

*These articles are from presentations
made at the 2005 AAF Conference, in
Silver Spring, Maryland.*

