

# Peace Messenger

News, Connections & Commentary

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Adventist Peace Fellowship

June 15, 2007  
*Speaking the truth in love*

## In this issue...

**"Who Are Representing Christ?":** excerpts from article published by Ellen White (1827-1915), prophetic visionary and co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in the August 11, 1896 issue of the *Review and Herald*.

Ellen White addresses the social and moral crisis of 1890s America – an era of rapid industrialization, fueled to a large extent by a massive influx of immigrant labor.



Here are a few particulars\* to help give a sense of the historical setting of this article, and prompt reflection on its pertinence for today:

- In 1890, the top 1 percent of American families possessed over 25% of the wealth; the top 10% held 73% of the wealth.
- The financial panic of 1893 led to 16,000 bankruptcies and 500 bank failures.
- Unemployment rose to 20% of the workforce during the ensuing depression, and thousands of homeless tramped from city to city looking for work.
- At the same time, the wealthy flaunted their privilege with lavish parties. At one of these guests proudly proclaimed that they had spent over \$10,000 on their attire.
- While the poor shivered in overcrowded, poorly-heated tenements, the very rich built million-dollar summer resorts at Newport, Rhode Island, or grand mansions on New York's Fifth Avenue and Chicago's Gold Coast.

**Who Are Representing Christ?** by Mrs. E.G. White  
*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, August 11, 1896

We are living in times that try men's souls. Those in high positions of trust, whom we may call--as God called some in the days of Noah--mighty men, men of renown, know little of the causes that underlie the present state of society. Many do not care to know; others do not study from cause to effect. Those who hold the reins of government are not able to solve the problem of moral corruption, poverty, pauperism, and increasing crime of every type, manifest in all classes, from the highest to the lowest. Many are struggling vainly to place business operations on a more secure basis. The great extremes of wealth and want produce unnumbered evils.

In our large cities there exists an appalling condition of poverty. Multitudes are destitute of food, clothing, or shelter fit for a human being. In the same cities are men of wealth, who have more than heart could wish; who live luxuriously,

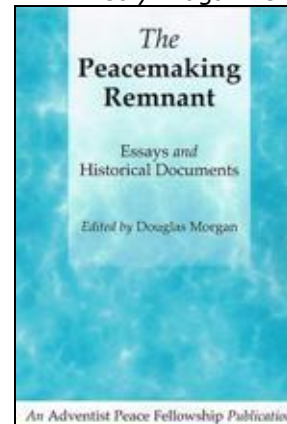
## Peace Messenger Recent Issues:

- \*Anti-torture Legislation (June 8)
- \*"Last Throes": The Second Anniversary (June 1)
- \*Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund (May 25)
- \*Doss Statue Unveiled (May 18)
- \*U.S. Military Aid Goes to Governments Using Child Soldiers (May 11)
- \*Third Option for Iraq (May 4)

## The Peacemaking Remnant

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## Historical Documents

1860s GC Resolution

Joseph Bates

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spending their money upon richly furnished houses and personal adornment; or worse, upon the gratification of the sensual appetites,--upon tobacco, liquors, and other things that destroy the power of the brain, unbalance the mind, and debase the soul. While they are thus selfishly indulging themselves, all heaven is looking down upon these unfaithful stewards. God and angels mark how the means given to men with which to honor the Creator by blessing the world, is turned to the gratification of self, to the dishonor of God, and the neglect of his heritage. [Amos 6:3-8 quoted]

Israel had transgressed the law, violated the Sabbath, and oppressed the poor, turning away the stranger from his right. They had given themselves to indulgence of appetite, to wine-drinking, and to similar things....

The prince of darkness has set in operation every device to ruin and destroy man. He has legions of evil workers uniting with him to obliterate the image of God in our youth. I ask those who are acquainted with truth, who know righteousness, What are you doing? Are you using your influence to bring into the ranks of the Lord's army all whom you can possibly reach? Have you yourself enlisted to fight the battles of the Lord? As Christians it is our work to represent Christ. We are to set an example that shall be in striking contrast to the practises of this evil age....

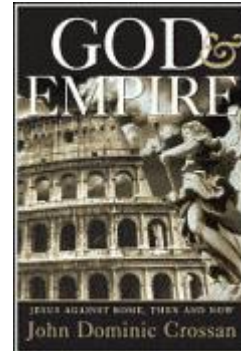
"He that oppressthe poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want." This breaks up worldly policy, and sets aside worldly maxims.... "Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate."...

While distrust and alienation are pervading all classes of society, Christ's disciples are to reveal the spirit that reigns in heaven. Because the world was ruined through sin, God gave his Son to draw men back to him. He "so loved the world, that he gave" all that heaven could give for the saving of the lost. In every soul who receives that love it will manifest itself in like manner. God so loved that he gave. If we love with his love, we, too, shall give all. We shall be co-workers with him whose mission it is to "preach the gospel to the poor; . . . to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." We shall do the work he has set before us,--"to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke; . . . to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house; when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh."

**Comment** Note: *The complete article is available in the online documents of the General Conference Archives*

\*information derived from the collegiate textbook *The American People*, by Gary Nash, Julie Roy Jeffrey and others, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Longman, 1998), 638, 677.

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**Editor:** Doug Morgan

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