



PREPARING TO STAND

Number, 3 — March 2008

“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3-21-05

The Adventist Identity Crisis

by Jim Buller

As Adventists, we believe we are living in the time just before the second coming of Jesus. Ever since the Millerite movement, for over a hundred and sixty years now, we have been saying, “Jesus is coming soon” —but, guess Who hasn’t shown up yet. Let’s be honest. When faced by this fact, many of us are embarrassed and don’t really know what to say. Our grandparents told us about how they thought Jesus would come while they were still teenagers. But now, after having lived full lives, they are dead and gone. Some of them even told us about people who were old, when *they* were young, that thought the same thing. And so, many of us conclude that Jesus probably won’t be coming back for quite a while yet —at least not in *our* lifetime.

In his address to the North American Division teacher’s convention in Nashville, in the summer of 2006, George Knight spoke of how we are in danger of losing our “apocalyptic vision.” Unfortunately, I think I would have to go even farther, and say that many of us have already lost the vision of the second coming happening in the near future. As a people, it seems we have slipped into “maintenance mode.” Instead of planning to go to heaven soon, we plan to be here on earth for quite a while yet —so we may as well prosper and enjoy life while we’re here. Thus, our thinking is absorbed with worldly things. Some of us don’t even talk about the end-time prophecies anymore. Why should we? —if we aren’t going to have to deal with these events in our lifetime anyway. Besides, the end-times are too scary to even think about!

Like the unfaithful servant in Matthew 24:48, we think, “my Lord delays His coming,” and off we go to party in the world. We overlook the fact that this very delay has been prophesied! Remember the parable of the Ten Virgins in Matt 25:1-13? The bridegroom *delays* his coming —and this delay is a key part of the parable! *Without* the delay, there would not have been a noticeable difference between the wise and the foolish virgins. In fact, it was the delay *that separated* the wise from the foolish.

The “oil,” in this parable, symbolizes the Holy Spirit. (See Zech 4:1-6.) So, the “extra oil” must represent an “extra” portion of the Holy Spirit —which reminds us of Elisha’s request. (See 2 Kings 2:9.) Both in the parable and in our time, the delay happens to make it obvious who, like Elisha, really wants more of God in their lives, and who, like the Laodiceans, think they have enough. (See Rev 3:14-22.)

This is especially interesting, because one of the things that came out of “Operation Global Rain,” (in the summer of 2007), was that people are afraid to get excited spiritually because they might be disappointed. Elisha didn’t just want more of the Holy Spirit so he could be a part of some excitement, or because he was afraid he might miss out on something. He wanted the extra portion of the Holy Spirit to be part of his life, a part of who he *was*. So, the question begs to be asked. Do we really want more of what God has for us? Or are we just concerned about losing time that we could have spent doing something else?

This reminds me of something we all did when we were children. Our parents would leave for the evening, and give us a job to do before they got back. But like the children we were, we would think, “Oh, we’ve got *lots* of time,” and off we went to play. But then, suddenly we’d look up at the clock, and realize that it was *already past* the time they should have returned! Did we think, “Oh, they haven’t come back as soon as we thought they would, so obviously they must not be coming back for a long time yet?” No! We *panicked*! And we frantically tried to finish our job before they *did* show up! No wonder Jesus said, “the children of this world are wiser than the children of light.” Luke 16:8. Even naughty children are wiser than God’s people! Don’t misunderstand me, I’m *not* saying we should panic. But we *do* need to re-evaluate our thinking.

Let’s go a little deeper into this issue. Why, did we panic and frantically go to work? Wasn’t it because we *believed* our parents *really were* coming back? —and we knew what would happen when they got home! Therefore, when we think, “Jesus isn’t coming for quite a while yet,” doesn’t it show that we must really *not believe* anymore? No wonder we have lost our apocalyptic vision. No wonder Jesus asks, “when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:8.

Before His death, Jesus plainly told His disciples about His betrayal, arrest and crucifixion, and told them to “watch and pray.” (See Matt 20:18-19, 26:2, 21, 41.) But in the garden of Gethsemane, like the ten virgins in the parable, they fell asleep. If they had really believed what Jesus told them, would they have gone to sleep? No! But because of their disbelief, and their own preconceived ideas, they ignored both the prophecies and what Jesus had told them to do to prepare. And like the ten virgins, the crisis hour found them asleep.

My brothers and sisters, wake up! We don’t have enough of the oil of the Holy Spirit for what is ahead! Don’t be content with a shallow Laodicean spirituality. Study and believe what Jesus has told us in the prophecies. Recognize that the “delay” in His coming and the church “falling asleep” have all been foretold —and therefore are all a part of God’s plan. Which side of the separation caused by the “delay” will you be on? Remember, it is our own disbelief and preconceived ideas that cause failure and disappointment. Determine that when Jesus comes, He will at least find faith in *you*. “And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.” “For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” Romans 13:11-12, Habakkuk 2:3. Now, before it is too late to go back and get more “oil,” be filled with the Holy Spirit. (See Eph 5:18.) Surrender to Him daily, and allow Him to work in you, so that you may be prepared to stand in the day of God.

Early Writings, page 58

Some are looking too far off for the coming of the Lord. Time has continued a few years longer than they expected; therefore they think it may continue a few years more, and in this way their minds are being led from present truth, out after the world. In these things I saw great danger; for if the mind is filled with other things, present truth is shut out, and there is no place in our foreheads for the seal of the living God.

Christ's Object Lessons, page 411

The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. Its influence is not abiding. The Spirit works upon man's heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature; but the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form. "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as My people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." Eze. 33:31. The apostle Paul points out that this will be the special characteristic of those who live just before Christ's second coming. He says, "In the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves; . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

Patriarchs and Prophets, page 657

Every Failure on the part of the children of God is due to their lack of faith.

Early Writings, page 58

Live and act wholly in reference to the coming of the Son of man.

The Desire of Ages, page 32

But like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay.

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Seminars: Some have asked about the possibility of doing end-time prophecy and/or wilderness survival seminars. Although I have done these in the past, I have had to turn down recent requests due to my schedule as a full-time teacher. This summer though, could be an option. If you are interested in a seminar in your area, contact me — probably the best way is by email.

Mailing List: Emailing also seems to be the most efficient way to send out "Preparing to Stand." Please email me if you would like to be on the mailing list, (or be taken off).

Some Thoughts on Group Shelters for Wilderness Survival

There are many types of shelters that can be built in the wilderness. However, in a survival situation, a shelter needs to go up quickly, usually in a couple hours or less. It also needs to be basic enough that it can be built from whatever materials are available. And, since we usually go on outings with other people, the shelter needs to adequately “house” everyone in the group. Let me begin with some stories.

Several years ago we led an overnight survival class trip. Upon reaching the camp area, the students all scattered into the surrounding woods and built debris huts —one person, low, triangular shaped shelters, “ribbed” with sticks and covered with debris. Each student chose his or her own little spot, which would be his or her home for the next couple nights. A central fire was made for cooking, which also served as a group meeting area.



debris hut

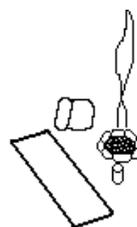
After supper and the evening gathering was over, the students went back to their own debris huts for the night. But the woods were now dark, and the spots that in the light of day looked like a cozy place to make a “home,” didn’t seem so friendly any more. Thus, as the night wore on many of the students, one by one, came back, built up the fire, and curled up on the ground next to it for the rest of the night.

On another overnight survival class trip, the students made “open-faced wicki-ups.” These are built similar to debris huts only larger, for about three to five people, with an open end that faces a fire. The plan was to build them around a central fire. However, as frequently happens, the students made their shelters too large, so they all didn’t fit around the fire. They also took too long, and it grew dark before they finished. Thus, most of them had not gathered additional debris for bedding to insulate them from the cold ground. So, as the night grew colder, many of these students also curled up, sat, or stood as close as they could get to the fire for the rest of the night.

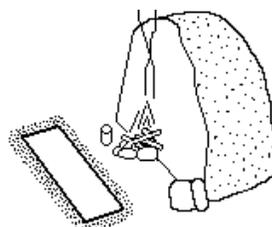
Recently I watched a survival video. The two men in it built a small, rectangular, roofed shelter of logs. They planned to warm it by bringing in rocks heated by the fire. But, part way through the night, the rocks needed to be re-heated. At which point, one of them simply curled up on the ground next to the fire for the rest of the night.

There is a better way to spend the night in a survival camp than curled up on the cold ground next to a fire. Years ago I learned some things that can probably best be described by these drawings.

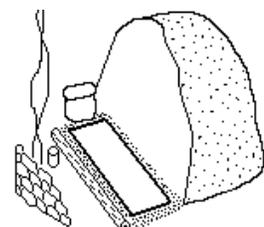
They are all about keeping the heat of the fire in the sleeping area, and using a “debris bed” for insulation from the cold ground.



**inexperienced
northwoodsman**



**somewhat experienced
northwoodsman**



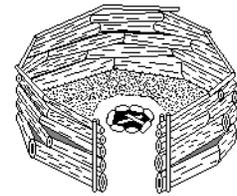
**experienced
northwoodsman**

Now, many of us go into the wilderness in groups. Therefore, we need shelter

options that work for groups. One-person debris huts *are* excellent shelters, especially if it is not advisable to make a fire —and they *can* be built next to each other for company. So learn how to build a good debris hut. However, most places I’ve been to simply do not have enough materials for everyone to make his or her own debris hut.

So, since people are naturally drawn to fire, especially when the night is dark and cold, it makes sense to build a shelter for the group based on the principles of the “experienced northwoodsman’s” camp. To be effective, the group survival shelter needs to: ① be easy to build in a couple hours *or less*, ② have enough space for the group, and ③ have a fire inside. From my experience, there are three types of shelters that meet these requirements. All three have been called “wicki-ups.”

For the sake of clarity, we will call the first type a “brush ring.” This is simply a circular, more efficient, group version, of the “experienced northwoodsman’s” camp. A brush-ring can be built by a group more quickly, using less materials, than it would take for everyone to make his or her own debris hut. Plus, everyone gets to spend the night in the reflected heat of the fire. To build one, make a wall of rocks, logs, brush, or whatever else is available, about 8 to 12 feet in diameter, and 4 to 5 feet high. With a small fire in the center, less than 8 feet across will be too cramped, while a diameter larger than 12 feet becomes harder to heat. These sizes will fit from about three to eight people. For larger groups, build more than one shelter, possibly with common walls. Face the door away from the wind, or simply toward the East. Be sure to place a good layer of debris around the inside of the wall for bedding and insulation from the cold ground. Since brush rings do not have a roof, they are mostly for good weather —though there are ways to roof them over.



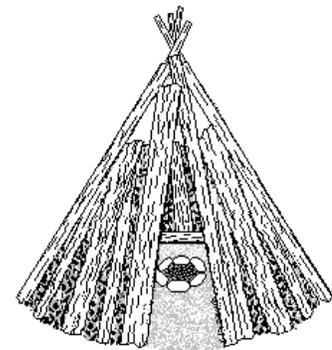
“brush ring”

For something more weather-proof, an “open-faced wicki-up” can be built. This is a triangular, semi-conical, or semi-dome shaped shelter, big enough for one to four, (or possibly more) people. Build them just big enough for everyone to have a place to sleep, as vacant space in the shelter means less warmth. This wicki-up is based on a tripod frame, “ribbed” with sticks, and then covered with debris —like the debris hut. Lay sticks or bark against the outside of the shelter to keep the wind from blowing the debris away, and put a thick layer of debris inside for bedding. Build this wicki-up with its back toward the wind, and a reflector fire in front of the open side. Depending on their size, two to four, open-faced wicki-ups can be built around a single central fire.



“open-faced wicki-up”

Though it takes more time and materials to build, the most efficient shelter of the three is a “closed” wicki-up. It is a cone shaped shelter, about 10 to 16 feet diameter, for about four to ten people. It is similarly built on a tripod based frame with poles and debris. With a small fire in the center, debris bedding around the inside wall, and some type of door, “closed” wicki-ups can be very cozy and weather-proof. Be sure to leave a “smoke-hole.”

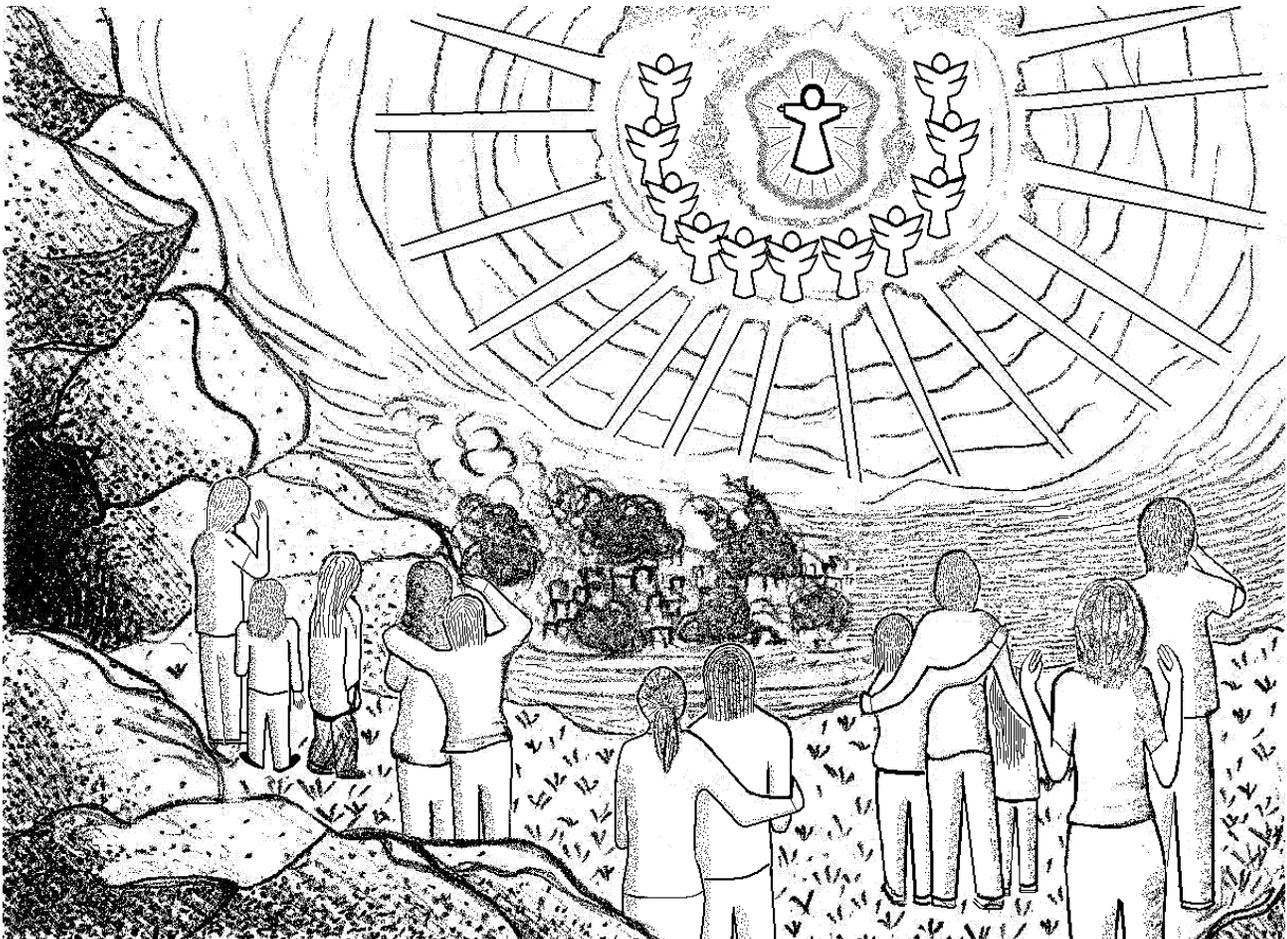


“closed wicki-up”

Remember with all of these shelters, to be sure to keep the fire relatively small, and closely watched. They are all essentially huge tinder-bundles, and you won’t want a stray spark to send your shelter up in flames in the middle of the night! Be sure to keep a clean space between the fire and the debris bedding. You can also divide the night up into “fire watches,” taking turns keeping the fire going, and watching it.

To:

From:



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