

ADVENTIST BODIES

GENERAL STATEMENT

What is known as the "Advent movement" originated with William Miller, who was born at Pittsfield, Mass., February 15, 1782, and died in Low Hampton, N. Y., December 20, 1849. He bore a good reputation as a farmer and citizen, served as a captain in the War of 1812, and was a diligent student and a great reader, although he had only a common-school education. For some years he was an avowed deist, but, as he said, "found no spiritual rest" until, in 1816, he was converted and united with the Baptists. After his conversion, as objections to the authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures were pressed upon him in the same way that he had formerly pressed them upon others, he determined to devote himself to a careful study of the Bible, laying aside commentaries and using the marginal references and Cruden's Concordance as his only helps. As a result of this study he became satisfied that the Bible is its own interpreter, and that it is "a system of revealed truths, so clearly and simply given that the 'wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.'"

At that time very little was heard from pulpit or press respecting the second coming of Christ, the general impression being that it must be preceded by the conversion of the world and the millennium, a long period of universal holiness and peace. As Mr. Miller studied the prophetic portions of the Bible, he became convinced that the doctrine of the world's conversion was unscriptural; that not only the parable of the wheat and the tares, as explained by Christ in Matthew xiii, 24-30, 36-43, but many other passages, teach the coexistence of Christianity and anti-Christianity while the gospel age lasts. As the period of a thousand years, during which Satan is bound, mentioned in Revelation xx, and from which the conception of the millennium is derived, lies between the first resurrection (Rev. xx, 4-6), which he understood to include all of the redeemed, and that of "the rest of the dead" (Rev. xx, 5), his conclusion was that the coming of Christ in person, power, and glory must be premillennial. He believed that at this coming there would be a resurrection of all the dead in Christ, who, together with all the redeemed then alive, would be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air"; that the wicked would then be judged, and the present heavens and earth dissolved by fire, to be followed by their regeneration as the inheritance of the redeemed, involving the glorious, immortal, and personal reign of Christ and all His saints.

As to the time when the Advent might be expected, Mr. Miller's conclusion was as follows:

In examining the prophecies * * * I found that only four universal monarchies are predicted in the Bible to precede the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom; that three of those had passed away—Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Grecia—and that the fourth, Rome, had already passed into its last state. * * *. And finding all the signs of the times, and the present condition of the world, to compare harmoniously with the prophetic description of the last days, I was compelled to believe that the world had about reached the limits of the period allotted for its continuance.

Moreover, as a result of his study of prophetic chronology, he believed not only that the Advent was at hand, but that its date might be fixed with some definiteness. Taking the more or less generally accepted view that the "days" of prophecy symbolize years, he was led to the conclusion that the 2,360 days

referred to in Daniel viii, 13, 14, the beginning of which he dated from the commandment to restore Jerusalem, given in 457 B. C. (Daniel ix, 25), and the 1,335 days of the same prophet (xii, 12), which he took to constitute the latter part of the 2,300 days, would end coincidentally in or about the year 1843. The cleansing of the sanctuary, which was to take place at the close of the 2,300 days (Daniel viii, 14), he understood to mean the cleansing of the earth at the second coming of Christ, which, as a result of his computations, he confidently expected would occur some time between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844, the period corresponding to the Jewish year.

The public labors of Mr. Miller, according to the best evidence to be obtained, date from the autumn of 1831, when he accepted an invitation to go to Dresden, N. Y., to speak on the subject of the Lord's return. He gave several addresses, with the result that many persons were "hopefully converted." Other invitations quickly followed, and thus began a work which in a few years, though not without opposition, spread far and wide, ministers and members of various evangelical denominations uniting in the expectation of the speedy, personal, and premillennial coming of Christ. The first general gathering of those interested in this subject was held in Boston in October, 1840. The call for this gathering simply invited Christians of all denominations to come together to compare views and to confer as to the best means of promulgating this important truth. The Advent movement was further assisted by the appearance of a number of papers, such as the *Midnight Cry*, the *Signs of the Times*, and the *Trumpet of Alarm*, emphasizing these views.

As the time approached when the coming of Christ was expected there was widespread interest and elaborate preparation. When the period originally indicated by Mr. Miller had passed without bringing the event, there was much disappointment. Later, however, some of the Adventists put forth a theory fixing October 22, 1844, as the date of the Advent. Mr. Miller ultimately accepted this view, and announced that if this prediction too should fail, he would suffer twice as much disappointment as he had experienced before. The passing of this date also without the occurrence of the expected event was a source of great disappointment both to Mr. Miller and to his followers. He did not, however, to the end of his life, change his views with regard to the premillennial character of the Advent itself, or his belief that "the day of the Lord is near, even at the door," although he acknowledged his error in fixing the date.

In its beginning the Adventist movement was wholly within the existing churches and there was no attempt to establish a separate denomination. Mr. Miller himself during the greater part of his work was a Baptist licentiate. In June, 1843, however, the Maine Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church passed resolutions condemning the movement, and from that time considerable opposition was manifested. In some cases Adventists were forced to leave the churches of which they were members; in others they withdrew voluntarily, basing their action, in part, on the command to "come out of Babylon" (Rev. xviii, 4), including under the term "Babylon" not only the Roman Catholic Church, but the Protestant churches. Mr. Miller and other leaders earnestly deprecated this interpretation, yet it influenced some to leave the old communions.

The Adventists who, for either of the causes mentioned, withdrew from the existing churches generally formed organizations of their own, although in some places they omitted any formal organization, considering either that the time was too short or that organization was sinful. No definite move was made, however, toward the general organization of the adherents of the Adventist doctrines until 1845. In that year, according to an estimate made by Mr. Miller, there were Advent congregations in "nearly a thousand places, numbering * * * some fifty thousand believers." A conference was called at Albany, N. Y., in

April, 1845, for the purpose of defining their position, and was largely attended, Mr. Miller being present. A declaration of principles was adopted, embodying the views of Mr. Miller respecting the personal and premillennial character of the Second Advent of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the renewal of the earth as the abode of the redeemed, together with cognate points of doctrine, which have been summarized as follows:

1. The present heavens and earth are to be dissolved by fire, and new heavens and a new earth are to be created whose dominion is to be given to "the people of the saints of the Most High."

2. There are but two Advents of the Saviour, both of which are personal and visible. The first includes the period of His life from His birth to the Ascension; the second begins with His descent from Heaven at the sounding of the last trump.

3. The second coming is indicated to be near at hand, even at the doors; and this truth should be preached to saints that they may rejoice, knowing that their redemption draws nigh; and to sinners that they may be warned to flee from the wrath to come.

4. The condition of salvation is repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who have repentance and faith will live soberly and righteously and godly in this world, looking for the Lord's appearing.

5. There will be a resurrection of the bodies of all the dead, both of the just and the unjust. Those who are Christ's will be raised at His coming; the rest of the dead, not until a thousand years later.

6. The only millennium taught in the Word of God is the thousand years intervening between the first resurrection and that of the rest of the dead.

7. There is no difference under the gospel dispensation between Jew and Gentile, but God will render to every man according to his deeds. The only restoration of Israel is in the restoration of the saints to the regenerated earth.

8. There is no promise of this world's conversion. The children of the kingdom and of the wicked one will continue together until the end of the world.

9. Departed saints do not enter their inheritance at death, that inheritance being reserved in heaven ready to be revealed at the second coming, when they will be equal to the angels, being the children of God and of the resurrection; but in soul and spirit they enter the paradise of God, to await in rest and comfort the final blessedness of the everlasting kingdom.

The somewhat loosely organized body formed at the general conference of Adventists held at Albany, N. Y., in April, 1845, continued for a decade to include practically all the Adventists except those who held to the observance of the seventh, rather than the first, day of the week as the Sabbath. In 1855 the discussions, in which Jonathan Cummings had so prominent a part, resulted in the withdrawal of some members and the subsequent organization of the Advent Christian Church. The Adventists who continued their adherence to the original body were for the most part those who believed in the doctrine of the conscious state of the dead and the eternal suffering of the wicked, claiming on these points to be in accord with the personal views of Mr. Miller. They, however, felt the need of closer association, and in 1858 organized at Boston, Mass., the American Millennial Association, partly for the purpose of publishing material in support of their belief and partly as a basis of fellowship. Some years later the members of this society adopted the term "Evangelical Adventists" as a denominational name, with a view to distinguishing themselves from other bodies with which they differed on doctrinal points.

For some years the association published a periodical bearing at different periods the names, Signs of the Times, Advent Herald, Messiah's Herald, and Herald of the Coming One. It contributed to the support of the China Inland

Mission and of laborers and missions in other fields, but as the older members died many of the younger families joined other evangelical denominations, and the number of churches and members diminished rapidly. In 1906 they reported 18 organizations with 481 members, 16 church edifices, church property valued at \$27,050, 9 Sunday schools with 57 officers and teachers and 264 scholars, and 8 ministers. When the inquiries for the census of 1916 were made, it appeared that all the churches, except a few in Pennsylvania, had disbanded or discontinued all services, and from those in Pennsylvania no information could be obtained. The denomination as an ecclesiastical body has, therefore, been dropped from this report.

Discussions in regard to the nature of the Advent, and particularly in regard to the future life, resulted in the formation of other bodies independent in organization but agreeing in the belief that the Advent is to be personal and premillennial and is near at hand and in their recognition of the influence of Mr. Miller and those immediately associated with him.

The denominations grouped under the name Adventist in 1926, in 1916, and in 1906 are listed in the table below, with the principal statistics as reported for the three periods. Two bodies listed in 1906 are not included in the table for 1916. The omission of the Evangelical Adventists is explained above, and that of the Churches of God (Adventist), Unattached Congregations, is noted in the statement (see p. 33) of the Church of God (Adventist).

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR THE ADVENTIST BODIES, 1926, 1916, AND 1906

DENOMINATION AND CENSUS YEAR	Total number of churches	Number of mem- bers	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR		SUNDAY SCHOOLS	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Num- ber of schol- ars
1926								
Total for the group	2,576	146,177	1,819	\$11,069,449	2,336	\$7,610,863	1,759	102,779
Advent Christian Church.....	444	29,430	385	2,310,000	379	536,192	304	18,806
Seventh-day Adventist Denom- ination.....	1,981	110,998	1,363	8,477,999	1,849	6,998,988	1,383	81,067
Church of God, Adventist.....	58	1,686	12	25,850	39	13,887	23	685
Life and Advent Union.....	7	535	7	91,000	6	19,861	7	344
Churches of God in Christ Jesus.....	86	3,528	52	164,600	63	41,935	42	1,877
1916								
Total for the group	2,667	114,915	1,716	3,885,235	2,240	2,186,588	2,246	98,802
Advent Christian Church.....	534	30,597	417	1,188,070	423	274,446	379	21,007
Seventh-day Adventist Denom- ination.....	2,011	79,355	1,231	2,568,495	1,737	1,887,772	1,803	74,863
Church of God (Adventist).....	22	848	8	8,200	10	2,358	-----	-----
Life and Advent Union.....	13	658	8	41,600	11	8,996	9	439
Churches of God in Christ Jesus.....	87	3,457	52	78,870	59	13,016	55	2,493
1906								
Total for the group	2,537	92,735	1,471	2,425,209	-----	-----	2,078	69,110
Evangelical Adventists.....	18	481	15	27,050	-----	-----	9	264
Advent Christian Church.....	541	26,799	428	864,323	-----	-----	362	16,941
Seventh-day Adventist Denom- ination.....	1,884	62,211	981	1,454,087	-----	-----	1,656	50,225
Church of God (Adventist).....	10	354	3	4,000	-----	-----	9	326
Churches of God (Adventist), Unattached Congregations.....	10	257	2	2,300	-----	-----	5	200
Life and Advent Union.....	12	509	6	29,799	-----	-----	7	259
Churches of God in Christ Jesus.....	62	2,124	36	53,650	-----	-----	30	895

LIFE AND ADVENT UNION

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for the Life and Advent Union for the year 1926 is presented in Table 1, which shows also the distribution of these figures between urban and rural territory.

The membership of the Life and Advent Union comprises those persons who have been baptized, by immersion, and have subscribed to the articles of faith of the local churches.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: LIFE AND ADVENT UNION

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PER CENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations)	7	5	2		
Members	535	381	154	71.2	28.8
Average per church.....	76	76	77		
Membership by sex:					
Male.....	221	135	86	61.1	38.9
Female.....	314	246	68	78.3	21.7
Males per 100 females.....	70.4	54.9	(*)		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years.....	6	5	1		
13 years and over.....	529	376	153	71.1	28.9
Per cent under 13 years.....	1.1	1.3	0.6		
Church edifices:					
Number.....	7	5	2		
Value—Churches reporting.....	7	5	2		
Amount reported.....	\$91,000	\$80,000	\$11,000	87.9	12.1
Average per church.....	\$13,000	\$16,000	\$5,500		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	4	3	1		
Amount reported.....	\$10,500	\$10,100	\$400	96.2	3.8
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	3	2	1		
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting.....	6	5	1		
Amount reported.....	\$19,861	\$18,192	\$1,669	91.6	8.4
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$13,894	\$12,382	\$1,512	89.1	10.9
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$5,967	\$5,810	\$157	97.4	2.6
Average expenditure per church.....	\$3,310	\$3,638			
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting.....	7	5	2		
Officers and teachers.....	76	64	12		
Scholars.....	344	291	53	84.6	15.4

¹ Urban territory includes all cities and other incorporated places which had 2,500 inhabitants or more in 1920, the date of the last Federal census; rural territory comprises the remainder of the country.

² Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

³ Ratio not shown, the number of females being less than 100.

The data given for 1926 represent 7 active organizations of the Life and Advent Union, with 535 members. The classification of membership by sex and by age was reported by all of the 7 churches, including, however, only 3 which reported any members under 13 years of age. No parsonages were reported.

Comparative data, 1890-1926.—Table 2 presents, in convenient form for comparison, a summary of the available statistics of this denomination for the censuses of 1926, 1916, 1906, and 1890.

TABLE 2.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1890 TO 1926: LIFE AND ADVENT UNION

ITEM	1926	1916	1906	1890
Churches (local organizations)	7	13	12	28
Increase ¹ over preceding census:				
Number.....	-6	1	-16	
Per cent ²				
Members	535	658	509	1,018
Increase ¹ over preceding census:				
Number.....	-123	149	-509	
Per cent.....	-18.7	29.3	-50.0	
Average membership per church.....	76	51	42	36
Church edifices:				
Number.....	7	8	6	8
Value—Churches reporting.....	7	8	6	
Amount reported.....	\$91,000	\$41,600	\$29,799	\$16,790
Average per church.....	\$13,000	\$5,200	\$4,967	
Debt—Churches reporting.....	4	3	4	
Amount reported.....	\$10,500	\$12,250	\$10,300	
Expenditures during year:				
Churches reporting.....	6	11		
Amount reported.....	\$19,861	\$8,996		
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$13,894	\$7,529		
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$5,967	\$1,467		
Average expenditure per church.....	\$3,310	\$818		
Sunday schools:				
Churches reporting.....	7	9	7	
Officers and teachers.....	76	73	45	
Scholars.....	344	439	259	

¹ A minus sign (-) denotes decrease.

² Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

State tables.—Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present the statistics for the Life and Advent Union by States. Table 3 gives for each State the number and membership of the churches classified according to their location in urban or rural territory and the total membership classified by sex. Table 4 gives for selected States the number and membership of the churches for the three censuses from 1906 to 1926, together with the membership for 1926 classified as under 13 years of age and 13 years of age and over. Table 5 shows the value of church edifices and the debt on such property, for 1926 alone. Table 6 presents, for 1926, the church expenditures, showing separately the amounts expended for current expenses and improvements, and for benevolences, etc., and also gives the data for Sunday schools. Separate presentation in Tables 5 and 6 is limited to those States in which three or more churches reported the principal items shown (values or expenditures), in order to avoid disclosing the financial statistics of any individual church. The States omitted from these tables can be determined by referring to the complete list which appears in Table 3.

TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: LIFE AND ADVENT UNION

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX		
	Total	Ur- ban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Males per 100 females (¹)
United States.....	7	5	2	535	381	154	221	314	70.4
New England:									
Massachusetts.....	1		1	83		83	53	30	
Connecticut.....	3	3		231	231		91	140	65.0
Middle Atlantic:									
New York.....	1	1		85	85		29	56	
New Jersey.....	1		1	71		71	33	38	
South Atlantic:									
Virginia.....	1	1		65	65		15	50	

¹ Ratio not shown where number of females is less than 100.

TABLE 4.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, 1906 TO 1926, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926, BY STATES: LIFE AND ADVENT UNION

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches in either 1926, 1916, or 1906]

STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926		
	1926	1916	1906	1926	1916	1906	Un- der 13 years	13 years and over	Per cent under 13
United States.....	7	13	12	535	658	509	6	529	1.1
Maine.....		3	2		37	22			
Connecticut.....	3	3	4	231	155	128	1	230	0.4
Other States.....	4	7	6	304	466	359	5	299	1.6

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION ¹

DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

The doctrine that there will be no resurrection of the wicked was preached in 1848 by Mr. John T. Walsh, then an associate editor of the Bible Examiner, an Adventist periodical published in New York City. A considerable number of Adventists joined him and in 1863 the Life and Advent Union was organized in Wilbraham, Mass., and the Herald of Life was founded as the denominational organ, with George Storrs as its first editor. The number of churches has not been large, but a number of people hold the views of the Union who are not enrolled in its organized churches. Of these it is impossible to give any estimate.

DOCTRINE

In matters of doctrine they are in accord with the earlier Adventists except in regard to the resurrection and the millennium. They hold that the righteous dead only will be raised and that eternal life is bestowed solely at the second

¹ This statement, which is substantially the same as that published in Part II of the Report on Religious Bodies, 1916, has been revised by H. L. Babcock, editor of the Herald of Life, and approved by him in its present form.

**TABLE 5.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH DEBT, BY STATES, 1926:
LIFE AND ADVENT UNION**

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches reporting value of edifices]

STATE	Total number of churches	Number of church edifices	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		DEBT ON CHURCH EDIFICES	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount
United States.....	7	7	7	\$91,000	4	\$10,500
Connecticut.....	3	3	3	40,000	2	5,600
Other States.....	4	4	4	51,000	2	4,900

**TABLE 6.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926:
LIFE AND ADVENT UNION**

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches reporting expenditures]

STATE	Total number of churches	EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR				SUNDAY SCHOOLS		
		Churches reporting	Total amount	For current expenses and improvements	For benevolences, missions, etc.	Churches reporting	Officers and teachers	Scholars
United States.....	7	6	\$19,861	\$13,894	\$5,967	7	76	344
Connecticut.....	3	3	11,306	7,147	4,158	3	40	180
Other States.....	4	3	8,556	6,747	1,809	4	36	164

coming of Christ; that the millennium, the one thousand years of Revelation xx, had its fulfillment in the past and, instead of being a time of peace and happiness, was a period of religious persecution and suffering; that this earth, purified by fire and renewed in beauty, will be the eternal inheritance and dwelling place of God's people, in which the wicked dead will have no share at all, their sleep being eternal. They believe that omens of the near approach of Christ are to be discerned in the widespread weakening of faith in an inspired Bible, the general condition of unrest and perplexity among the nations and kindred developments along many lines.

ORGANIZATION

In polity the Life and Advent Union is distinctly congregational; associations are for fellowship and have no ecclesiastical authority. Ministers are ordained, either at their own request or on request of a church, and after proper examination by a committee appointed for the purpose.

WORK

The activities of the Life and Advent Union consist of maintaining mission work in China and aiding weak churches in this country. The headquarters of the China work are in Ho-Chow, Anhwei, which is under the care of four American missionaries, beside native pastors and teachers. The amount spent for mission work in 1926 was approximately \$6,000.

Three camp meetings are held annually—one in Maine, one in Connecticut (which is the principal one), and one in Virginia. The official publication of the denomination is the Herald of Life, issued weekly at New Haven, Conn. This paper has a circulation in nearly every State in the United States and in several foreign countries.