

Authors and Writings

Description



[Victor Houteff](#)

Victor Houteff

In 1929, a Seventh-Day Adventist Sabbath School teacher named [Victor Houteff](#) began to receive light concerning Isaiah 54-66. The message he received was primarily concerned with the sealing of the 144,000 and the purification of the church. This message was soon published in a book called *The Shepherd's Rod*. As further revelation continued to unfold, he also published a number of other writings and disseminated them throughout the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

Though Victor Houteff's message was rejected by the majority, it stands as a vitally important message, explaining the meaning of many Scriptural passages which had never before been understood. The message of the Shepherd's Rod can be summed up as a call for reformation, which is "a change of ideas and theories, habits and practices" (*Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 128 – Ellen White). It is an announcement of the investigative judgment upon the living and the subsequent establishment of the Davidic Kingdom. It is the message of the great and dreadful day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5), and as such, it is ever-unfolding in fresh manifestations of light as proclaimed through the messengers that followed after Victor Houteff.



Benjamin Roden

Benjamin Roden

After the death of Victor Houteff (Feb. 5, 1955), a man named Benjamin Roden was given a message of reproof and warning, first for the Davidian Seventh-day Adventists (those who accepted the message brought by Victor Houteff), and then for the Seventh-day Adventist church in general. His message declared that the time for the investigative judgment for the living to commence had come, according to Ezekiel's prophecy of the 430 years (Ezek. 4).

Both the Seventh-day Adventist church and the Davidian movement were in a time of crisis when Roden came to them with his message. The Davidian movement was in confusion, not knowing what would happen now that Victor Houteff had died. Florence Houteff (Victor's wife) had taken over the Davidian Association and soon started teaching that the church would be purified and the Davidic Kingdom established in 1959 (a prophecy which obviously did not come to pass). The Adventist Church was being questioned by some leading theologians from Evangelical Christianity who were trying to discern whether or not they should be considered a "cult." Both movements (DSDA and SDA) were undergoing radical changes and both were giving up some of their most foundational former teachings in order to meet their new circumstances. Though they did not know it, they were in need of a clear voice that would speak only the truth – they needed a revelation from God.

Ben Roden was moved upon to write letters to the leading men and women of the Davidian and Adventist movements containing a message of new light to give strength to the messages which had already been given. He proclaimed a clear and distinct message amidst the confusion of the day. He knew that message was not of his own authority, but of the authority of Christ. To indicate by whom the message came, he was instructed to sign his letters "The Branch" – which was at that time revealed as the new name of Christ (Rev. 3:12). In spite of the fact that Ellen White saw in vision that the 144,000 would receive the truth of Jesus' new name (*Early Writings*, p. 15) and that Victor Houteff had said that it is "THE BRANCH" who would bring about the long expected

revival and reformation ([*Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, No. 8*](#), p. 24), both the Davidians and the Adventists refused to heed the light and subsequently went off into greater sin.

Those who accepted the message of the Branch (who then became known as Branch Davidian Seventh-day Adventists) were privileged to hear a continual and fresh unfolding of truth as the Spirit revealed the meaning of the Scriptures to Ben Roden. New Scriptural duties with which they had not before been acquainted were brought to their attention; truths which had long been lost were now being restored. Among these truths was the great pillar doctrine that Christ did not come to do away with any portion of the law. Ben Roden was shown that, in addition to keeping the Sabbath, we are also supposed to keep all the other appointed times of the Sanctuary in harmony with the work of Christ in the Sanctuary above. Within this system, men were to be pointed to their Redeemer and thus have an opportunity to receive the righteousness of Christ.



Lois Roden

Lois Roden

As time went on, there became a need for a fresh message of truth to stir up the Branches (Branch Davidians). Although they professed to believe in Ben Roden's message, many unfortunately held it in their minds only as a theory. Private interpretation had become rampant and all were failing in that they had not allowed the truth to change them. In 1977, the Branch Davidians were met with a startling revelation which was given to, and proclaimed by, Lois Roden (Ben Roden's wife). They were told that they needed to be born again – born of the Spirit so that She may be to them as a Mother. They were shown that humanity, both men and women, were made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) and that it is by looking at the image of God in creation that we can see what the Godhead is really like (Rom. 1:20).

Ben Roden told all the Branches that they needed to investigate this message, and he soon proclaimed it alongside his wife, both working together as representatives of the male and female Persons in the Godhead. They taught this truth of the Heavenly Family together for about one

year until Ben Roden died on October 22, 1978. The message of the Branch-She taught that the Godhead is made up of distinct Beings and that the Holy Spirit is the Mother of Christ, just as God is His Father. This message came as a shock to the Branches, the Davidians, the Adventists, and also the world. Lois began proclaiming the message far and wide and soon gained recognition. She was given awards by certain Religious foundations for the publication of the *Shekinah* magazine, which dealt with both the Divine Feminine as well as the role of women in church and in society.

In 1983, a young man named Vernon Howell (later known as David Koresh), set fire to the administrative building at the Branch Davidian headquarters which contained all of their in-print literature as well as their publishing equipment. Howell then gathered a following and started a separate movement which did much to oppose Lois Roden and her work. Between the opposition of Howell and that of others (including her own son George), the work of the Branch was to a great degree hindered. In spite of all this, the Heavenly Family continued to reveal more and more light to Lois during the years of her ministry. In 1986, the last year of her life, the Divine Family granted yet another revelation to her concerning Themselves. What was shown was that, in addition to our Heavenly Father and Mother having a Son, They also had a Daughter. Though Christ was the only begotten Son (John 3:16), he was only the first-begotten Child (Heb. 1:6). It was shown that Wisdom was begotten before the foundation of the world and that She, along with Christ (The Word) was an agent in creating this world (Prov. 8; 3:19). She was revealed as the Bride of Christ, the choice one of Her that bare Her (Song of Solomon 6:9). Thus was revealed the full Family image. The message was given that we might behold the glory and love of our Heavenly Family and by thus beholding, become changed.



Douglas Mitchell

Douglas Mitchell

Among the Branch Davidians there was one man, Doug Mitchell, who, in spite of all the opposition to Lois Roden, was convinced that the message she bore was from Heaven and that he must do

all within his power to support her and the message she bore. Near the end of Lois' life, Doug was one of the few left who was supporting her work. When Lois died (Nov. 10, 1986), most of those who at one time supported the Branch message had been scattered by the confusion caused by George Roden (one of Ben and Lois' sons) and others. Things had gotten so bad that it did not seem like there was much hope for much good to come out of anything.

At this time, Doug was given a revelation of the vision of the dry bones which Ezekiel saw (Ezek. 37). These dead, dry bones cried out, "Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we are utterly cut off" (Ezek. 37:11). Yet, the prophecy showed that they would be resurrected after a series of events which brought about their reformation. Doug was shown that this prophecy symbolically depicts the Advent messages (including the Davidian and Branch messages) coming on the scene and being proclaimed to a people who are dead in trespasses and sins. This people is the whole house of Israel (Ezek. 37:11) and that therefore all who professed to be the people of God (whether Christian, Adventist, Davidian, or Branch Davidian) were in a spiritually dead condition.

In order to awaken people to their deplorable condition, our Heavenly Family revealed much practical light to Doug, including the truth of "The Lord's Supper." It was revealed to him that the Scriptural Lord's Supper had been supplanted by "the Mass," and that this had taken away from God's people the thing which was to keep fresh in their memories the sacrifice and intercession of Christ. Doug taught that the Lord's Supper is a real meal, not a mock meal or a ritual. He demonstrated that the Scriptures present the Lord's Supper as the daily meals of the followers of Christ, which are to be eaten during the third and ninth hours of the natural day, just as the priests of the earthly tabernacle service ate their meals at those same times. The Lord's Supper was seen to be practical in every particular. It was demystified and placed back into its right context; it had been taken from the table to the altar, and now it was time to take it back.

Doug's message came declaring the straight truth to a backslidden people. Through him were revealed such important truths as the dry bones, the Lord's supper, and even the Seven Thunders of Revelation 10. From 1986-1993, not many were interested in listening to Doug's message. The Branch Davidians had been scattered, George Roden and Vernon Howell had a shoot out, the results of which were George's incarceration and Vernon's illegal takeover of the Branch Davidian Headquarters – New Mt. Carmel Center.

The tragic events of 1993 at Mt. Carmel Center, Waco, Texas, are widely acknowledged as an unforgettable scene in the history of America. It is true that they are all that, but they are so much more. The events of the 1993 siege have been used as a weapon of warfare against the truth and against those who proclaim it. In addition to bearing the unpopular message of the Branch, Doug was also called to stand up for the truth as to who the Branch Davidians are, and who they are not. He was called to call sin by its right name, whether it be the sins of the media in forwarding the lie that David Koresh was the leader of the Branch Davidians, or whether it be the personal sins of the Branch Davidians themselves. Doug Mitchell bore a striking rebuke to a wicked world, and for that reason, he was despised, rejected, and ignored.



Trent Wilde

Trent Wilde

Though Doug's message was unheeded and ignored by most, it was not left to vanish in the dust. There were a few who had accepted Doug's message during the majority of his ministry, but in the last few years of his life, there formed a close-knit group who accepted his message and would end up carrying it on after his death (March 15, 2013). Among these was a young man named Trent Wilde, who would be the next called to bear the message of the Branch and who still bears it today. In contrast with the beginnings of each previous message, the message which Trent received was not met with opposition by those who believed the message of the previous messenger. Instead, they all saw eye to eye and some even bore testimony of revelations which had been given them concerning this Divine appointment. This marked change has been seen by the Branches as a fulfillment of prophecy (Isa. 52:8; Hos. 1:11; Zech. 3) indicating that we are on the brink of a new day.

This phase of the Branch message has been marked by many paradigm shifting truths such as the nature of Inspiration, the material nature of reality, the existence of wicked gods, the history and nature of Scripture (including lost Scripture), and the revelation of the Psalms as well as other prophecies. More than that though, this message has been marked by the restoration of the gospel as is revealed in Justification by Faith. The message declares that the resurrection of the dry bones has begun and that the kingdom has sprouted in the wilderness. Though this kingdom starts as the smallest of seeds, it will grow to be the greatest of trees (Matt. 13:31-32). Justification by Faith is seen to be more than a mere bookwork or a declaration that one is looked upon as righteous by God. It has been shown that if one has any amount of sin, he is a servant of sin, and is seen as such by the Family of Heaven. To be justified is to be made righteous, which is to be made free from sin – to manifest the life of Christ in all of one's works – whether in thought, word, or deed.

Those who hear this message are called into intimate friendship with Wisdom, who is to us as a

Sister (Prov. 7:4). She is the One who gives life (Prov. 3:18), which is the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 5:9-10). All are called into the school of Christ, to learn of Him and to live. To receive salvation is to accept the truth as the only reality and to let it stand uncontroverted in the mind, casting out errors, restoring reason and love. The message teaches its hearers to come to a knowledge of the truth by careful experimentation, not confusing feeling for faith. Empirical evidence is uplifted as the standard for testing claims. The truth is first and foremost in all things as it is only the truth which can set one free. The constant cry of the message is,

“Listen! Every one that thirsts, come to the waters; and those that have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for that which is not really bread? And why do you labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen to me carefully, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in fine food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, and your whole being shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” – Isaiah 55:1-3