



Adventist Heritage

Harry Anderson Script

By Richard Wright

Harry Anderson is considered to be one of the greatest illustrators of the 20th century. Joseph Harry Anderson was born on August 11, 1906 in Chicago, Illinois. Harry, along with his sister and two brothers, excelled in elementary and high school. While in high school, Harry worked as a stock boy in a stationery store. Before long, he was painting signs for the store.

Harry excelled in mathematics, and he enrolled in the University of Illinois in 1925 as a math major. During his sophomore year, he enrolled in an elective art class in still life painting. His art professor was so impressed with Harry's ability that he recommended that he pursue a career in art. So, in the fall of 1927, he enrolled in the Syracuse School of Art.

While at Syracuse, Harry Anderson spent a year studying the human anatomy. He considered this a valuable learning experience. He would later say, "*"It is really impossible to make a clothed figure look realistic without a knowledge of what the body is doing underneath. Not only will the clothes not hang properly, the gestures and posture are likely to be off balance."

After graduating with honors from Syracuse, Harry and his friend and fellow art graduate, Tom Lovell, moved to New York City and set-up a small studio in the Washington Square area. Harry got a night job at the Mirror Candy Company. During the day, he would paint and take samples of his work to various art agencies.

In 1932, Harry Anderson obtained his first professional assignment, when he painted an illustration for a short story in *Collier's* magazine. He was forever grateful to William Chessman, art director of *Collier's* for giving him his first break.

In 1934, the young artist returned to Chicago and got a job as an illustrator at the Stevens-Gross Art Agency -- the largest agency in the Midwest. His first major assignment came in 1937, when he produced a series of illustration for "Cream of Wheat." Soon, he was doing work for Ford, American Airlines, Ovaltine, Coca Cola, and Buster Brown Shoes.

While advertising paid good money, Harry Anderson preferred illustrating for magazines. By 1940, his work was in demand at *Collier's*, *Redbook*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *Cosmopolitan*.

In 1940, Harry married Ruth Huebel. They bought a house in the Chicago suburb of Highland Park. Before long, the couple had two sons and one daughter. It

looked as if Harry Anderson had now achieved the American dream and would spend the rest of his life working as a popular magazine illustrator.

Harry, in fact, became so busy during this time, that he decided to hire a handyman to help him with the upkeep of the house. The handyman was a Seventh-day Adventist, and he was soon witnessing to Mr. and Mrs. Anderson.

In 1944, both Harry and Ruth were baptized in the Adventist Church. Soon, their local pastor sent some samples of Harry's work to the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Terence Martin, the art director of the *Review*, was quite impressed. Both Martin and Anderson soon realized that they both wanted to see religious art move in a new direction.

These men wished to see Jesus portrayed in modern settings, so Terence commissioned Harry to paint such a picture. Harry produced what would become his most famous illustration, "What Happened to Your Hand?"

The first reaction of the older men at the *Review* was one of shock and revulsion. Some even thought it was blasphemous to depict Jesus in a modern-day setting. However, Terence Martin defended the painting and eventually persuaded the others to accept it. Eventually, of course, such illustrations would become widely accepted.

Harry Anderson would spend the remainder of his life producing religious illustrations. Much of his art would be produced for Adventist publications. In the process, he re-invented religious art. This incredible body of work would comprise half his total output.

In 1946, the Andersons moved to Washington, DC, to be closer to the Review and Herald Publishing Company. Harry made only a minimal wage working for the denomination, so he continued to produce illustrations for other magazines. In 1949, he produced a series of covers for *Women's Home Companion*. Each cover consisted of a brother and sister theme. Harry used his own son, Tim, as the model for the young boy.

By 1951, Harry Anderson wanted to move closer to New York, so that he could better interact with his fellow illustrators. He and his family settled in New England. Harry continued to produce art for both Adventist and non-Adventist publications throughout the 1950s and 60s.

It was also during the mid-1960s that Harry Anderson produced a series of paintings for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This culminated in his painting of a large mural for the Mormon pavilion at the 1964 New York World's Fair.

By the 1970s and 80s, photography had overtaken original artwork in most magazines. However, Harry again found work as an illustrator in the advertising world. He produced art for the Esso (now Exxon) and Humble Oil Companies, John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company, and Redbook. All this time, of course, he

was still producing illustrations for various publications in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Harry Anderson received several awards for his art. Among them were the Grumbacher Prize from the American Watercolor Society, the Clara Obrig Prize from the National Academy of Design, and numerous awards from the New York Art Directors' Club. In 1994, he was inducted into the Society of Illustrators' Hall of Fame.

By the 1990s, Harry Anderson was producing very little commercial art. However, he occupied his time by building model ships and painting for his own enjoyment. He was known as a quiet, unassuming man who never talked about his many honors and awards. He was also widely known for his abiding faith in God.

Harry Anderson died in 1996 at the age of 90. He was remembered as the last of the great illustrators from the Golden Age of magazine illustration. Of Mr. Anderson, the art professor and critic, Haddon Sundblom said, ******"The difference between Anderson and other artists is that Harry has knowledge."