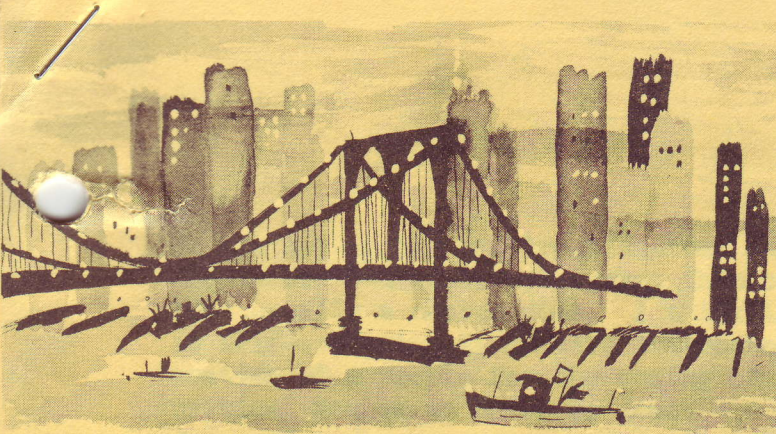


1976

"Watchman, what of the night?"

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12



A LETTER AND A REPLY

Since the first Thought Paper was published in January, 1968, we have endeavored to keep each issue as free as possible of "personalities". What we have written which involved individuals was not regarding their personal idiosyncrasies, but only those acts for which all of us in responsible positions must stand accountable. We have at no time written behind one's back, but said what had to be said plainly and openly in a way which we believe that Christ would have said it. We do not profess to have achieved this objective perfectly, but we have tried to keep this goal ever before us.

When accusations and innuendos continue to be made behind one's back so that honest people might be deceived, it becomes necessary to speak forth so that the facts may be known, and that those persons who want to know, can know and make intelligent decisions in regard to the matter. The copy of the letter below is one exhibit of such behind-one's-back activity, and our reply follows.

General Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists
6840 Eastern Ave. NW, Washington D. C.

February 26, 1976

Division Presidents
Division Ministerial Secretaries

Dear Fellow Leaders:

I understand that one who styles himself Elder W. H. Grotheer has been sending you some of his material from time to time. I happen to be on his mailing list, too.

I understand from one or two of you men that you have been under the impression that this man is a Seventh-day Adventist minister in good and regular standing. I feel that it is the best thing for me to tell you that he is not a Seventh-day Adventist church member. He used to be a worker. He has been disconnected from the church for several years on what grounds I do not know, but his subsequent activities lead me to believe that the brethren must have had good grounds for separating him from the organized work.

He has set up his own organization, and he has done it in such a way that he can ordain his own ministers, grant them credentials, and do all of the other things that usually a church does. I think that the kind of material that he sends out is self-evident. If he were interested in the unity of the church and the preparation of a people for the coming of the Lord, he would not write in the caustic, critical manner in which he does.

I wish that you would warn the folk in your division and if he is sending his material out your way, you will know what to do with it. What a wonderful thing it would be if some of the people with mimeographs would direct their efforts into a finished work instead of pulling down.

God bless you all.

Cordially yours,

(Signed)

Robert H. Pierson

OUR REPLY

July 12, 1976

Elder Robert H. Pierson, President
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Takoma Park, Washington D. C., 20012

Dear Elder Pierson;

Your letter dated February 26, 1976 which was sent to all Division Presidents and Division Ministerial Secretaries has come to my desk. It is sad that it came in a round about way, and that you did not manifest enough Christian courtesy to send me a carbon copy when you sent it to each of these men. Before publishing any issue that I might have with you directly, I have, as I am doing now, written to you prior to such publication. Further, what I have had to say in regard to your official actions in monthly thought papers, I have placed you on the regular mailing list so that you might know just what had been written and why it was written. I have documented the same so that it could be verified. This is not the case with your letter which contains gross misrepresentations.

In your letter you state "that the brethren must have had good grounds for separating him from the organized work." The facts are that I took a voluntary leave of absence from the organized work. In a statement dated November 29, 1966 on official stationary, Elder H. H. Schmidt, President of the Southern Union Conference stated: - "This is to establish the fact that Wm. H. Grotheer left the employ of Old Madison College and the Southern Union Conference strictly on his own, June 1, 1965. He was in good and regular standing as a denominational worker when he took this voluntary leave of absence." Not only has this statement been written, but my credentials were maintained until 1967 by the Southern Union Conference, when at the Session in that

year, they were allowed to "lapse". At no time have my credentials ever been taken from me, nor requested from me.

You also state in your letter that "he has set up his own organization, and he has done it in such away that he can ordain his own ministers, grant them credentials." No where in our charter granted by the State of Mississippi, which is a public document by the way, nor in our By-Laws have we been granted the authority to ordain men to the ministry, neither have we attempted to do so! Our charter reads that we support that which is in harmony with "the tenets upon which the Seventh-day Adventist church is based, viz: the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White." We do have power to grant credentials to "any minister ordained according to the rites of the Seventh-day Adventist church." This was written into the charter so that any minister who seeks to speak forth against the evils prevailing in the church, and who can no longer receive support from the church because he chooses to so speak, may still continue to exercise his rights legally as an ordained minister of the Gospel.

My brother, if you cannot write honestly concerning your fellow men whom you can see, how can you write truthfully about Jesus Christ and the Father whom you have not seen?

In your letter you state that you do not know "what grounds" were given to disfellowship me from the church several years back. Has one of your division presidents been so derelict in his responsibilities that he did not inform you of the committee he appointed to hear the case, and did he not give you a copy of the report issued by the committee? Let me refresh your memory by outlining for you the facts involved.

When the charter of the Adventists Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi was granted, action was forthcoming to remove me from the church roll on the grounds of insubordination as I was not recognizing properly constituted church authority. It was first attempted by board action alone, and then under pressure of the fact that such was not in keeping with the Church Manual, a business meeting was called for the purpose. At this business meeting, attended by the local conference president, action to disfellowship me was taken without me being able to speak in my own defense as is guaranteed in the Church Manual. Interestingly, also, is the fact that not another single board member of the Foundation at that time, and none since, have been called in question as to their membership. If I were in "sin" because I was a member of the board, then were not all members of the same board also in "sin"?

So I appealed the unScriptural and unconstitutional action taken. A committee of administrators, pastors, and laymen was set up, who came to Mississippi to hear the case. They issued a report entitled - "Grotheer Hearing Committee". Among the recommendations made was that the Foundation be dissolved and that "any assets of the Foundation be paid over to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and an accounting be given of prior receipts and expenditures." In 1972, I was totally unaware that you and other church leaders were playing in the legal "crap game" the world uses with the money the laity entrusted to you. (I use the term, "crap game" because that is how a Seventh-day Adventist layman in good and regular standing, and who is himself a stock broker, described the transactions of the stock market.) Now let me assure you that at no time has the Foundation had enough money to cover the paper and/or real losses sustained by your administration in the stock market. Further, at no time have we had enough money to invest in such a game, and even if we did, we would not play the stock market. We believe that the funds placed with the Foundation are a sacred trust to be used in harmony with the will of God for this time so that His

people might be warned of the apostasy in high places.

Now there are other aspects of this Committee report that you may not know. In a letter from one of the members of the committee after the hearing, I was told that if I met the conditions noted in the above paragraph, and others such as personally recognizing myself as no longer a minister of the Gospel, then I could be restored to church membership "on a basis different than would be in the case in most circumstances." This was explained verbally to me by the individual to mean that I would not need to be rebaptized, nor make a profession of faith. Now let the implications of this fact sink into your thinking. Further, I received a letter from still another member of the same hearing committee which stated - "On several occasions he [Elder L. L. Bock, the chairman] made it emphatically clear that whatever the problem was, it was certainly not in the area of theology."

Now let us do a little reasoning together. You know that I was once a minister in the organization - some twenty-five years holding regular credentials, the prime years of my life. From your viewpoint, I am now a lost sheep of the house of Israel. Have you as the first minister of the church as you style yourself, adopted a shepherd's role, and made any attempt to find the "lost sheep"? If I am in a lost condition, should you not seek to rescue me as you encourage your ministers to seek the lost in the world? Did not Christ die for me, as well as for them? Is my soul of no value to you? Or are you afraid if we sat down together, you could not defend the heresy and error you have placed your imprimatur upon?

Elder Pierson it is time that you come clean with truth, and not continue to hide behind assumed ignorance and misrepresentations in dealing with your fellowmen for whom Christ died as well as you.

May the Lord help you to be intellectually honest and forthright, and what I request for you of the Lord, I ask likewise for myself.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Wm. H. Grotheer

COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS

It is written - "We are to repeat the words of the pioneers in our work, who knew what it cost to search for the truth as for hidden treasure, and who labored to lay the foundation of our work. They moved forward step by step under the influence of the Spirit of God." (Counsels to Writers, p. 28) Note the list of the early pioneers who searched for truth as for hidden treasure: "My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, Elder Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of time in 1844, searched for truth as for hidden treasure." (Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, p. 56)

Now take special note:-

"In all the land saith the Lord; TWO PARTS therein shall be cut off, and die; but the THIRD PART shall be left therein. God says He will bring the THIRD PART through the fire, and refine them. They shall call upon Him, and He will hear them. He will say IT IS MY PEOPLE; and they shall say the LORD IS MY GOD." [sic. - see Zech. 13:8-9.]
First part, Sardis, the nominal church or Babylon. Second part, Laodicea, the nominal Adventist. Third part, Philadelphia, the only true church of God on earth, for they ask to be translated to the city of God. Rev. iii, 12; Heb. xii, 22-24. In the name of Jesus, I exhort you to flee from the Laodiceans, as from Sodom and Gomorrah. Their teachings are false and delusive; and lead to utter destruction. Death! Death! eternal DEATH!!! is on their track. Remember Lot's wife.

Joseph Bates

Fairhaven, Mass., Nov. 10, 1850.

(This is from the Review & Herald, November 1850, p. 8, published in Paris, Me.)

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Some have written regarding a question which was asked in the thought paper for May, 1974 (VII - 5). It read - "Could it be that the beast of Revelation 17 is the prophetic symbolism of the first beast of Revelation 13 in its 'healed' state?" This should have read - "Could it be that the woman riding the beast which comes from the 'bottomless pit' is the prophetic symbolism of how and in what combination the first beast of Revelation 13 will appear in its 'healed' state?" Babylon the great - the Harlot of Revelation 17 - is composed of three sectors (Rev. 16: 19) rather than just the Papacy as is represented by the first beast of Revelation 13. The beast of Revelation 17 is "the eighth, and is of the seven", not "seventh." This beast underlies all seven. See Testimonies to Ministers, p. 62 for the identification. Inasmuch as we are studying the book of Revelation in the Sabbath School, it should be noted that the lesson on this subject for the third quarter will give another interpretation to this prophetic symbolism. The lesson states: "From another vantage point this beast of chapter 17 is seen as the image to the beast in Revelation 13." (See Lesson 7, p. 56)

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FURTHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ZAIRE

"At the time of our little visit today I should like to tell you something about a rather unusual development in the Trans-Africa Division. That portion of Africa formerly known as the Congo is now the country of Zaire. Early in the year 1972 the General Conference officers received a letter from Elder M. L. Mills, president of the Trans-Africa Division, which gave information concerning recent developments in the Zaire Republic as it related to our denominational work. Apparently President Mobutu had become dissatisfied with the proliferation of religious sects in the country, and the government adopted a procedure to reduce the number drastically. The new law required that all religious groups be registered with the government with the exception of three; namely Roman Catholics, Kimbanguists (a purely Zaire oriented church) and the Church of Christ [CCZ]. The new law laid down certain regulations for any other church organization which might wish to function in the country. One of the requirements in connection with the application for recognition was a deposit of 100,000 Zaires (the unit of local currency) in a bank in the country of Zaire. This amount represents approximately six months of the Seventh-day Adventist church's operating budget in the entire country of Zaire. The General Conference officers advised the Trans-Africa Division to make the deposit, and in due course, recognition was given to the Seventh-day Adventist church in this country."

*From a letter dated, September 25, 1972, signed by J. C. Kozel,
Assistant Treasurer of the General Conference.*

This information raises some very important questions that are left unanswered in this letter, or in the Review and Herald article on the subject dated, October 19, 1972.

1. Was the deposit returnable? Under what conditions? Has the money been returned since new regulations of the government placed our church as a "community" in the united Protestant Church of Christ of Zaire (CCZ)?
2. Or was this deposit like a performance bond? If our "community" as one of the groups in CCZ refuse to take part in the organic union called for by the president of CCZ, will the deposit be forfeited?
3. Has the deposit been placed into the operating budget of CCZ, since we agreed to become a part of the united Protestant Church of Zaire (CCZ)?

Unless the questions concerning the events in Zaire are clearly answered and documented, one wonders if the price of a "sell-out" has risen somewhat in the past 1900 years from thirty pieces of silver to 100,000 Zaires!

See January, 1973 thought paper special entitled "A Cover-up?" for a review of the report from the Review & Herald as compared with a report in Christianity Today.