

COMMENTARY

Volume VI

Number One

BEGINNINGS OF THE WCC

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The beginnings of the World Council of Churches date back to the years just prior to World War II. The motivation for such a Council was stimulated by a world-wide resurgence of non-Christian and anti-Christian forces. In Russia, the church was outlawed; in Germany, religious rights and liberties were restricted. Race pride and race antagonism were expressing themselves in constantly growing programs which spread persecution, terrorism and hate. The dogma that the State was the be-all and end-all of existence with authority over man's political, economic, social and religious life was gaining ground in all parts of the world. Even in countries where religion was still free, large segments of the society had departed beyond the influence of the Church and were building their lives on philosophies of humanism or pure materialism. Civilization was being undermined by a world-wide process of moral deterioration.

What was to be done about this moral deterioration? "A world process can only be dealt with effectively by a world force," was the conclusion of a representative committee of churchmen from every major division of the Christian Church except the Church of Rome. They perceived the world was "too strong for a divided Church," and proposed a World Council of Churches in the summer of 1937 to two Christian Councils, one on Life and Work meeting in Oxford, and the other on Faith and Order meeting in Edinburgh. These two conferences accepted the proposal and set up a committee of fourteen members, seven from each conference, to draft a constitution for a World Council of Churches. The primary responsibility of the proposed World Council would be to continue the work of the Faith and Order, and Life and Work Movements in one body.

It should be observed that in the objective for the formation of this World Council, the very principle underlying Christ's kingdom was denied. His kingdom was and is not of this world, but the Church leaders behind the WCC movements desired a "world force" to meet what they perceived as challenges to Christianity. In this they were imaging the concepts of the

Papal Church.

The leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church entered the picture from the very start. Upon learning of these proposed conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh, E. D. Dick, then Secretary of the General Conference addressed a letter to the Secretary of the Northern European Division recommending the representation on the part of the Division at these conferences. Contact was made and the Faith and Order Conference gave permission for the appointment of two delegates from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The roster of the Life and Work conference to be held at Oxford had already been finalized so that the Church could not be officially represented, but the leadership hoped that Elder H. W. Lowe could attend as an observer. (See Exhibit #1, p. 3) Thus the Seventh-day Adventist Church was on the ground floor from the very inception of the WCC, and by its own request, taking part in the deliberations which led to its formation.

Resulting from these contacts and authorizations, W. A. Visser 't Hooft, secretary of the provisional WCC, sent through the Northern

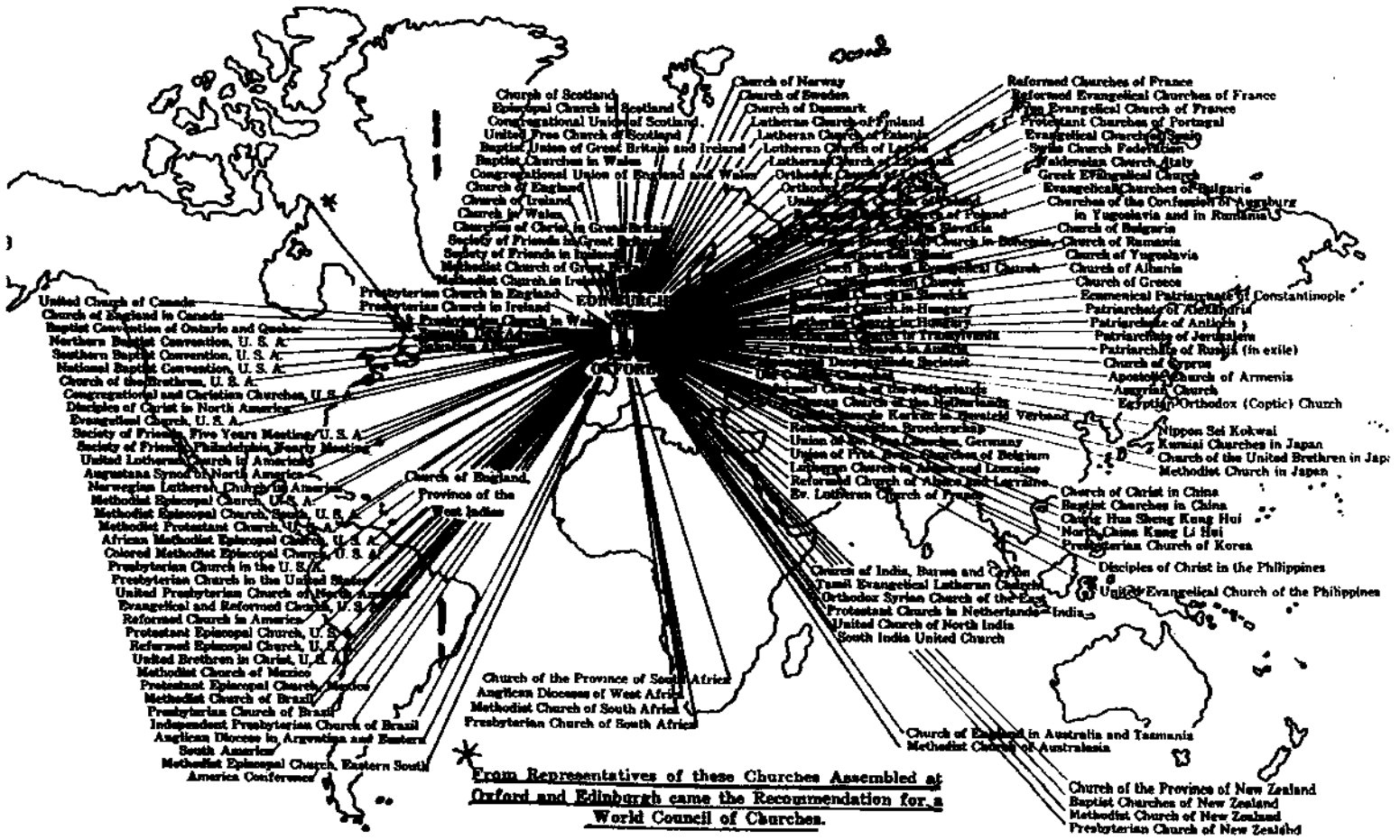
European Division an official invitation to join this "forming" World Council of Churches. (See Exhibit #2, p. 4) The General Conference Committee on March 30, 1939, with Elder J. L. McElhane in the chair, voted not to join. The minutes read as follows:

An inquiry was received from the Northern European Division with reference to our accepting an invitation to membership in a World Council of Churches that is in process of formation. It was

VOTED, To reply to this inquiry that, in harmony with our denominational position concerning such matters, we do not consider it advisable to accept membership in this organization. (See Exhibit #3, p. 4)

Because of World War II which began in 1939, the World Council of Churches did not become a reality until 1948. Then in 1950, the National Council of Churches was formed in America, and the Second Phase of Adventist ecumenical involvement began. The National Council developed "units" or "commissions" covering such diversified areas as overseas mission problems;

→ → →



From Representatives of these Churches Assembled at Oxford and Edinburgh came the Recommendation for a World Council of Churches.

continuing education for ministers in the field; radio and TV contacts; and Christian education at the local church level. By joining one of these units, a church became a "Cooperating Denomination" of the NCC. (See Exhibit #4, p. 4) In response to an inquiry in 1959, Raymond F. Cottrell, who was then Associate Editor of the Review wrote:

I understand that certain officers of the General Conference have been appointed to meet with various divisions of the National Council of Churches. (Letter dated, August 27, 1959)

To these various commissions, the Church has made contributions and holds voting membership in several of the units of the NCC. The available statistics are far from current. In 1960, a letter signed by the Assistant General Secretary, Donald F. Landwer, stated:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church does hold voting membership in several of our program units and in addition has non-voting or associate membership in other units. In 1959 the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church sent a total of \$6700 toward the support of these program units to which it has one relationship or the other. (January 29, 1960)

It can be reasonably assumed though the data is unavailable to this editor that the contributions to these various "units" of the NCC has increased and not decreased.

By 1965, a Third Phase of the Adventist ecumenical contacts had begun in a renewed relationship with the WCC. This has been described in detail in the book, So Much in Common. Since we covered much of the present relationship of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to the WCC in Commentary (V-2), we will only call attention to certain facts not covered in that issue. First, in 1970, W. R. Beach, then Secretary of the General Conference, wrote in a letter dated April 14, that Seventh-day Adventists "who go to the meetings of the World Council of Churches do so as observers, without delegate status of any kind, they have neither the right to speak or to vote." Keep in mind that this was in 1970. The evidence as documented in the previous Commentary clearly indicated that the Adventist "observer" (B. B. Beach) at the Seventh Assembly of the WCC in 1991 was there as a "delegated representative" with the right to speak in any plenary session. There can be no question but that the relationship between the SDA Church and the WCC has changed since 1970. It is much closer! But the laity of the Church have not been told what has transpired to bring about this changed relationship.

RESIDENT

SECRETARY

EDMUND, KENT, EDWARDS

Pastor E.D. Dick
Takoma Park
Washington, D.C.
U.S.A.

JIR-ff

E. R. COLSON, TREASURER

MEMORY: Great Britain, North Ireland, Irish Free State, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and Ministers in East and West Africa: Kenya Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Liberia Gold Coast, Nigeria, and French Cameroons

EXHIBIT #1

General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists
(NORTHERN EUROPEAN DIVISION)

18th June, 1937

11 Hazel Gardens, Edgware,
(London Area)
Middlesex, England



Dear Brother Dick:

On the 25th of April you wrote me suggesting that the Northern European Division appoint delegates to the World Conference on Faith and Order which is to be held in Edinburgh in August. I have taken up correspondence with the secretary of this conference in Britain, and we have been given permission to appoint two delegates, namely, W.K. Read and H.W. Lowe, who expect to be present.

There is another world conference to be held at Oxford this year on Church Community and State. We endeavoured also to get opportunity of appointing delegates to this conference but we were informed a few days ago that some 18 months ago all church organizations who were to be represented at this conference were notified and that they cannot now at this late date give us any delegation. It seems that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was not listed among the churches which were to be reappointed. Brother Lowe is hoping, however, to get an opportunity to attend as without doubt the relationship between church and state will be taken up quite fully.

With kind regards, I am,

Yours very sincerely,

World Council of Churches.

(IN PROCESS OF FORMATION)

PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE

(Constituted by the World Conference on Faith and Order and the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work)

Chairman of the Provisional Committee:
The Archbishop of York.

Chairman of the Administrative Committee:
M. le pasteur Marc Boegner.

General Secretary:
Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft.

GENEVA

41, Avenue de Champeil
Tel. 24.152

Cable Address:
"Othmann" Geneva.

EXHIBIT #2

Geneva, November 15, 1938

J. I. Robison, Esq.,
41, Hazel Gardens,
E D G W A R E.
Middlesex

Dear Sir,

I have been instructed to forward the enclosed official invitation which has been duly signed by the following members of the Committee of Fourteen:-

- Most Rev. William Temple, D.D., Archbishop of York, Chairman,
- Rev. William Adams Brown, D.D., Vice-Chairman,
- Rev. M. E. Aubrey,
- Dr. G. F. Barbour,
- Rt. Rev. George Bell, Bishop of Chichester,
- Rev. Dr. Marc Boegner,
- Rt. Rev. H. Fuglsang-Lamgaard, D.D., Bishop of Copenhagen,
- Most Rev. Erling Eiden, D.D., Archbishop of Upsala,
- Rev. Prof. G. Flcrowsky,
- Most Rev. Metropolitan Germanos, D.D., Archbishop of Thessalonica,
- Dr. John R. Lott,
- Rev. Prof. Dr. S. F. H. J. Berkelbach van der Sprenkel,
- Rev. J. Ross Stevenson, D.D.,
- Rt. Rev. Bishop G. Craig Stewart, D.D.

Yours sincerely,

W. A. Visser 't Hooft,
Secretary.

The following denominations or one or more of their boards or agencies, not members of the National Council of Churches, are either voting or non-voting associate members of one or more Council units or area committees:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Advent Christian Church | Friends, Kansas Yearly Meeting |
| American Lutheran Church | General Baptist |
| Anglican Church of Canada | Lutheran Brethren |
| Assemblies of God | Lutheran Church—
Missouri Synod |
| Associate Reformed
Presbyterian | Lutheran Free Church |
| Baptist Federation of Canada | Mennonite Church,
General Conference |
| Brothers in Christ | The Mennonite Church |
| The Brethren Church | National Primitive Baptist |
| Church of Christ (Holiness) | North American Baptist
General Conference |
| Church of God,
Anderson, Ind. | Presbyterian Church in Canada |
| Church of the Nazarene | Reformed Episcopal Church |
| Churches of God in
North America | Salvation Army |
| Cumberland Presbyterian | Schwankfelder |
| Evangelical Congregational | <u>Seventh Day Adventists</u> * |
| Evangelical Lutheran | Southern Baptist |
| Evangelical Mission Covenant | United Church of Canada |
| Finnish Evangelical Lutheran | Universals |
| Free Methodist | United Evangelical Lutheran |
| Friends, California Yearly
Meeting | Wesleyan Methodist |

EXHIBIT #4

MEMBERSHIP IN WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES: March 30, 1939, p. 110f

An inquiry was received from the Northern European Division with reference to our accepting an invitation to membership in a World Council of Churches that is in process of formation. It was

VOTED, To reply to this inquiry that, in harmony with our denominational position concerning such matters, we do not consider it advisable to accept membership in this organization.

EXHIBIT #3

J.L. McElhany, Chairman.
A.W. Cormack, Secretary.
E. Zeidler, Recording Secretary.

RALPH LARSON'S DISTORTIONS OF THE WRITINGS

Dr. D. Douglas Devnich, President of the Canadian Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has performed an honorable service in documenting Dr. Ralph Larson's distortion of the Writings of Ellen G. White. These distortions appeared in two articles of Our Firm Foundation, September and December, 1991. Dr. Devnich zeroed in on the September issue which discussed "The Tithe Problem." It is hard to believe that Larson would stoop to this level in seeking to underpin Spear's insatiable lust for money. To seek to prop up a man, who brags about the "deep pockets" he gets his hands into, with distortions of the Writings casts a shadow upon his other studies including the Incarnation. Has he done the same in those research studies? This would be tragic.

Dr. Devnich's documentation appeared in Canadian Adventist Messenger, December 1991. He wrote:

The Ralph Larson article centres on the idea that E. G. White would approve of individual church members not submitting the tithe of their income through the local church treasury and on through the Denomination. I will not develop on that question here. An insert on Tithe in last month's Messenger covers the subject adequately. [See WVN, XXV 3(92) for our analysis of the insert]

What I wish to point out is that Larson like the OFF [Our Firm Foundation] editor, Ron Spear, accuses the pastors and leaders of the Church with falsity and apostasy...

Now here is the tragedy. And, this is a sample of how deceptive OFF writings are quite regularly. Unless the readers of OFF are vigilant they will miss the dishonesty. [Amen!] I refer you to the following quotation in full as given in the Larson article:

God desires to bring men into direct relation with Himself. ... Every man has been a steward of sacred trusts; each is to discharge his trust according to the direction of the Giver; and by each an account of his stewardship must be rendered to God. ... We are responsible to invest this means ourselves. (Test., vol. 7, 176-177)

If you will actually go to volume 7 of the Testimonies to (sic) the Church, pages 176 and 177, you will find that Ellen G. White does not even use the word, "tithe" in the article entitled "The Author", pages 176-181. She addressed the issue of whether or not denominational publishing houses should pay royalties to authors of published books and articles. Her point is that authors should be allowed "to hold the stewardship of their own works."

Please note that Larson with the use of ellipses (...) pulls together sentences that are not connected in the original source. He makes it sound like Ellen White addresses the stewardship of tithe which "we are responsible to invest ourselves", when in fact she addresses investing the returns or profits of authorship. She says that it is the author's personal responsibility to decide how to manage their monies. Ellen White doesn't deal with the tithe question at all in that section of Volume Seven. (So much for "the straight testimony" of OFF writers.) (p. 3)

On page 6, we have reproduced the pages in Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 7, pp. 176-177 from which Larson quoted. The underscored sentences are the ones quoted. We will also include the section from the article in Our Firm Foundation which is in question.

But this is not all. In the December 1991 issue of OFF, Larson began a quotes from The Great Controversy, then modified the statement. He could not do otherwise because he had not followed the counsel given. This distortion is placed in a block by the editors of OFF indicating their full approval. (p. 29) We shall likewise place this distortion on page 6 with the full statement from The Great Controversy for your comparison.

The counsel is clear in the Writings that all doctrine" must find its "standard" in the Bible, and the Bible only. But this Larson did not do. In my reading of the articles in question, I could find very little, if any, use of the Bible. It is evident that Larson does not qualify to be a part of that "people" whom God will have "on the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrine, and the basis of all reforms." (GC, p. 595)

The Bible can be shown to support the individual choice as to where the tithe is to be placed. But it does not indicate that it should be used to support the distortion of Spiritual Gifts. May God have mercy on the "sheep."

THE AUTHOR.

God desires to bring men into direct relation with Himself. In all His dealings with human beings He recognizes the principle of personal responsibility. He seeks to encourage a sense of personal dependence, and to impress the need of personal guidance. His gifts are committed to men as individuals. Every man has been made a steward of sacred trusts; each is to discharge his trust according to the direction of the Giver; and by each an account of his stewardship must be rendered to God.

In all this, God is seeking to bring the human into association with the divine, that through this connection man may become transformed into the divine likeness. Then the principle of love and goodness will be a part of his nature. Satan, seeking to thwart this purpose, constantly works to encourage dependence upon man, to make men the slaves of men. When he thus succeeds in turning minds away from God, he insinuates his own principles of selfishness, hatred, and strife.

In all our dealing with one another, God desires us carefully to guard the principle of personal responsibility to and dependence upon Him. It is a principle that should be especially kept in view by our publishing houses in their dealing with authors.

It has been urged by some that authors have no right to hold the stewardship of their own works; that they should give their works over to the control of the publishing house or of the conference; and that, beyond the expense involved in the production of the manuscript, they should claim no share of the profit; that this should be left with the conference or the publish-

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ment such as we have now. Some will be influenced by Ellen White's statement:

→ "God desires to bring men into direct relation with Himself. . . . Every man has been made a steward of sacred trusts; each is to discharge his trust according to the direction of the Giver; and by each an account of his stewardship must be rendered to God. . . . We are responsible to invest this means ourselves." Testimonies, vol. 7, 176-177

THE SCRIPTURES A SAFEGUARD 595

sound doctrine . . . That time has fully come. The multitude . . . with the . . . THE GREAT CONTROVERSY . . . an suppl

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines, and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant

ing house, to be appropriated, as their judgment shall direct, to the various needs of the work. Thus the author's stewardship of his work would be wholly transferred from himself to others.

But not so does God regard the matter. The ability to write a book is, like every other talent, a gift from Him, for the improvement of which the possessor is accountable to God; and he is to invest the returns under His direction. Let it be borne in mind that it is not our own property which is entrusted to us for investment. If it were, we might claim discretionary power; we might shift our responsibility upon others, and leave our stewardship with them. But this cannot be, because the Lord has made us individually His stewards. We are responsible to invest this means ourselves. Our own hearts are to be sanctified; our hands are to have something to impart, as occasion demands, of the income that God entrusts to us.

It would be just as reasonable for the conference or the publishing house to assume control of the income which a brother receives from his houses or lands as to appropriate that which comes from the working of his brain.

Nor is there justice in the claim that, because a worker in the publishing house receives wages for his labor, his powers of body, mind, and soul belong wholly to the institution, and it has a right to all the productions of his pen. Outside the period of labor in the institution, the worker's time is under his own control, to use as he sees fit, so long as this use does not conflict with his duty to the institution. For that which he may produce in these hours, he is responsible to his own conscience and to God.

No greater dishonor can be shown to God than for one man to bring another man's talents under his abso-

They will be accompanied by many of

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"But God will have a people" who will cling to the truths of the Bible regardless of the opposition. See *The Great Controversy*, 595. They will stand through the last great conflict because they have fortified their minds with the truths of the Bible. See *ibid.*, 593. God will protect them from deception because they are purifying their souls through a belief in the truth. See Manuscript 122, 1905

as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority,—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support.

QUESTIONABLE DOCUMENTATION BY TREFZ

On November 30, 1991, I received a call from the West Coast inquiring about the validity of a statement appearing in Freedom's Ring, a publication of the the Biblical Studies Institute, edited by Robert Trefz. The allegation in question read that "the Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry document [was] signed by one hundred theologians, including a representative of the SDA church." (Vol. 2, #9, p. 7; emphasis his.) We were called because we had written about this Faith & Order Commission's document a few years back. The question concerned the signing of the document by Dr. Raoul Dederen, the Adventist presence on this commission.

The next day, I wrote to Dr. Dederen as follows:

Last evening, I received a call from the West Coast calling my attention to a paragraph in the October issue of Freedom's Ring (p. 7) which stated:

"The book [Unity of the Churches] is built on the Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry document, signed by one hundred theologians, including a representative of the SDA church."

The concern of the calling party was the stated fact that you "signed" the document. Now I have a copy of a letter which Dr. B. B. Beach wrote April 2, 1982, which states that you abstained from voting on the document, therefore, it is difficult for me to put these two concepts together. ...

In the interest of truth, and accurate statement, I believe it best to make direct contact with the primary source, and thus this letter to you.

In a few days, Dr. Dederen called and assured me that, in fact, he had **not** signed the BEM document. This information I transmitted to my questioner. But Trefz continued to write, and was even featured on a video as a part of The John Osborne Show. Another reader on the West Coast called me in disgust over the video. This resulted in another exchange of communication between Dr. Dederen and myself. A copy was sent to Trefz, but to this date, there has been no response. (See page 8)

What are the facts? First, what all has Trefz

written? Based on a Faith & Order Paper, #149, Trefz wrote in a very abbreviated manner:

186 Churches have responded to the most significant document yet produced by the World Council of Churches - the Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry document which calls for the unity of the churches in those areas.

Declares the Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry 1982-1990 Report on the Process and Responses: "Some communions have adopted one common response (Roman Catholic, Salvation Army and Seventh Day Adventists)..." (Vol. 2, #10, p. 3)

What was the SDA response according to Trefz? He continues to quote from the same Paper:

The joint response of Seventh Day Adventists terms BEM as "unquestioningly one of the World Council of Churches' most significant publications to date." (ibid)

All of this documentation which Trefz uses is from secondary and not primary sources in his church-bashing effort. In fact, the SDA "response" was not "joint" but unilateral. Why did Trefz not obtain a copy of the SDA response to the BEM document? They were available from the WCC for I have a copy before me as I write. And if he does have the document, why did he not quote directly from it? This casts a long shadow over all the "research" which he is doing.

The Adventist response in its introductory paragraph did state exactly as the Faith & Order Commission Paper #149 read, but after analyzing point by point the whole document, what conclusions were drawn?

On Baptism:

We find much in the FOC Statement on baptism with which we can agree. At the same time we are unable to be as accommodating as the framers of the statement would wish, since we find statements to be allowing of (to us) mutually exclusive positions and to be undefined at key points. (p. 7)

On Eucharist:

In the Faith and Order Statement the celebration of the eucharist is treated as the central act of the church's worship. Adventists concur with other Christians in seeing the celebration of the Lord's Supper as a sacred event in the church's life, but for Adventists the proclamations of the Word rather than the celebration of the eucharist is the center of the church's worship. (9)

On Ministry:

It may well be that the ministry statement's intent never was to canonize Orthodox or Catholic or Anglican theology and practice. Yet, as it stands, it is too Catholic in intent, too influenced by Orthodox,



"Watchman, what of the night?"

Wm. H. Grotheer, Editor

P.O. Box 69

February 5, 1992

Ozone, AR 72854



ANDREWS
UNIVERSITY

February 11, 1992

Dr. R. F. Dederen
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, MI 49104

Dear Dr. Dederen,

Please find enclosed a page from Freedom's Ring, latest issue in which the BEM issue again arises based on questions evidently arising from Trefz' October allegation about which I was called.

From the telephone conversation with you, I conveyed to my inquirer exactly what you told me. As you can see, there is a direct contradiction in regard to several points - abstentions, and the "list" which Gassmann faxed to Trefz. This needs to be clarified, and hopefully soon.

I look forward to your explanation. It is difficult for me to see how a "voice" or "hand" vote could be noted as "unanimous" except that a negative response was called for, and no hands were raised. It would seem to me that "abstentions" would also be called for or at least in order.

Thanking you in advance for this clarification and thanking you for the past response, I remain,

Respectfully yours,

Copy: Trefz

P. S. You will observe that Trefz states - closing paragraph - "Another source, the back cover of the BEM document itself, published by the WCC, declares that Adventists were a part of the unanimous decision." The fact is the back cover does not so state. It reads - "Over one hundred theologians met in Lima, Peru, in January 1982, and recommended unanimously to transmit this agreed statement - the Lima text - for the common study and official response of the churches." There is a difference between approving, in fact, and approving the recommendation for transmission for study by the individual churches. This inability on the part of Trefz to fine line his comments casts doubts in my mind about his ability to correctly analyze his other documents he alludes to and quotes from in his paper.

Pastor Wm. H. Grotheer, Editor
P.O. Box 69
Ozone, AR 72854

Dear Elder Grotheer:

Thank you for your brief letter of February 5 and for calling my attention to a page from a recent copy of Freedom's Ring, in which the BEM issue is brought up by Mr. Trefz.

The contradiction that Mr. Trefz underlines between Dr. Gassman's statement and mine should not be too difficult to address. The statement on the back cover of the BEM document, as published by the World Council of Churches, speaks indeed of a "unanimous decision." Anyone reading the text in its entirety will discover that what was unanimously recommended was "to transmit this agreed statement for the common study and official response of the churches." There is a clear difference between voting on the content of a text and voting on a decision to send it to the churches for their reactions.

I was glad to notice that you yourself noted this variance as indicated in the P.S. of your letter to me. I would also have to agree with you that this inability on the part of Mr. Trefz to be more specific in his comments casts doubts as to his ability to correctly analyze the other documents and statements he quotes in his paper.

Very cordially,

Raoul Dederen
Seminary Hall

RD:jh

Anglican and Roman Catholic members of the Faith and Order Commission. Its aim is probably to recover the convictions and life of the early undivided church, the church of the great ecumenical councils and the first centuries, as it developed from the New Testament church. We appreciate the attempt, but feel constrained to urge the authors of this statement to pursue their work of reconstruction farther back in Christian history; to compare and verify their statements with the biblical writings accepted as normative. (p. 19)

ABOUT THAT BEM DOCUMENT IN THE OCTOBER, '91 ISSUE

A telephone call to the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland, in which I spoke to the director of the Faith and Order Commission, Dr. Gunther Gasmann, reveals the following points:

1. The vote by the Faith and Order Commission in Lima, Peru, was unanimous.
2. There were no abstentions.
3. A voice or hand vote was used. There was no signing in the sense of writing with a pen.
4. Nobody has contested the fact that the vote was unanimous.
5. All members of Faith and Order serve in a personal capacity.
6. Dr. Gasmann faxed me the list of participants that unanimously approved the BEM document.
7. Dr. Raoul Dederen's name was on the list of those who unanimously approved the BEM document. He is the SDA that sits on Faith and Order.

Another source, the back cover of the BEM document itself, published by the WCC, declares that Adventists were a part of the unanimous decision.

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Freedom's Ring, January, 1993, Vol. 3, No. 1

You, the reader, can now conclude whether Trefz's use of secondary sources is to be adopted, or whether you wish to rely on primary documentation. You also have a basis upon which to judge all of Trefz's conclusions and documentations on other topics as well.

In the January 1992, issue of Freedom's Ring, Trefz placed a summary column "About that BEM Document in the October '91 issue." (p. 17; see Exhibit on this page) Going down this column, one would think that Trefz had a clear case for his assumption in the October 1991, issue. But note the last paragraph - and observe that it is not in quotes. Here is what the back cover of the BEM statement actually said and we quote word for word:

"Over one hundred theologians met in Lima, Peru, in January 1982, and recommended **unanimously to transmit** this agreed statement - the Lima text - for the common study and official response of the churches. They represented virtually all the major church traditions: Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, Methodist, United, Disciples, Baptist, Adventist and Pentecostal." (Emphasis mine)

The misuse of this statement serves to underscore whether the validity and conclusions of Trefz's research in other areas can be trusted without a thorough checking of the data presented. To be unable to differentiate between an unanimous vote for the Lima text, as he charges, and an "unanimous vote to transmit" as clearly stated raises some serious questions and doubts.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

This whole issue of Commentary points up some very serious flaws both within the regular SDA Church, and "independent ministries" on the periphery. It is evident that as far back as the 1930s the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was losing its prophetic vision. The book of Revelation clearly identifies the "dragon" and the powers through which it will operate in these last days: the beast, the false prophet, and the "image to the beast." Yet we requested to be represented through delegates to the meetings which formed the WCC! After

pulling back, we then went gung-ho for B. B. Beach's contacts with representatives of the WCC which led to the appointment by the Central Committee of the WCC of an Adventist to sit on the Faith and Order Commission in 1967. And this appointment had the full approval of the General Conference. This led ultimately to Dr. Dederen being in Lima, Peru, in 1982 when the BEM statement was adopted. In our judgment this was unfortunate, and cannot be justified if we still truly believe the book of Revelation. But neither can the falsification of the facts surrounding the adoption of the BEM document be justified for church-bashing purposes. On what basis can "Independent ministries" charge the leadership of the Church with dishonesty when they practice the same themselves, and this includes airing these false charges on The John Osborne Show.

The compounded tragedy as noted in this issue of Commentary is the prostitution of what had been the good name and scholarship of Dr. Ralph Larson to serve the ends of Ron Spear. Further, to distort the Writings in seeking to accomplish the objective is also unbelievable, except that it is documented. When will the concerned people of God wake up and see what travesties are being practiced on them?