



*"Watchman,  
what of the night?"*

*"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,  
the hour and the end!"*  
Eze. 7:6 (Moffau)

XXVI

1(93)

# THE LINES ARE BEING DRAWN

## LET'S TALK IT OVER

Just after completing the lead article, we received the book, Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries. It contains 467 pages including facsimile reproduced documentation. The very nature of its contents warrants careful study before commenting. Sitting as it were for the moment above the fray, and knowing the hypocrisy practiced by the leaders of the Private Ministries named, one's sympathy comes down on the side of the Church's hierarchy even with its hierarchal manner of governance and apostasy. The problem in this whole confrontation is the backdrop given to this action by the Editor of the Adventist Review in his article, "Acts 15 Time Again." He believes the creation of these ministries was unnecessary because "the Adventist tent is large, encompassing a variety of ministers and emphases." (p. 8) From his experience, it is very true. One wonders after reading some of the theology as expressed in his doctoral dissertation why the tent flap dropped to include him in and Desmond Ford out; the line between them can hardly be discerned.

The use of the "tent" symbolism, or "umbrella" metaphor has overtones of ecumenism, and for that matter Roman Catholicism. The various orders (ministries) of the Roman Church with their differing theologies have one thing in common, their allegiance to the papacy. The Adventist concept was well expressed by a past president of the Arkansas-Louisiana conference to one of the Literature Evangelists in his field who wanted to discuss some of the Church's new theology with him. The appointment was quickly concluded with - "We have an open-ended

To page 6, col. 1

An insert in the Adventist Review (Nov 5, 1992) contained "an abbreviated and adapted version of a new book, Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries." This book is the result of a commissioned study authorized by the officers and Union Presidents of the North American Division of the Church. An article in the same issue of the Review by its editor noted this study as "Acts 15 Time Again," stating - "You will find something unusual in the insert and the book - mention by name of several private organizations that are causing church leaders serious concern." (p. 8) And name them it does, comparing them to the Shepherd's Rod, Robert Brinsmead, and Desmond Ford. However, this insert and Issues, according to the editor comes "as an appeal rather than a declaration of war." (p. 9) Time alone will tell which it really is, an appeal or warfare. We shall reserve final judgment until we can read and analyze the book itself.

A little thought reveals that the greater portion of Jesus' earthly ministry was that of an "independent minister" heading an "independent ministry." He did not intend it to be that way. He first tried to clean-up the headquarters organization, and overturn the corruption that existed there. John tells us that one of His first acts after launching His ministry was to drive the dealers in oxen, sheep, and doves from the temple precincts, and overthrow the tables of the money changers. (2:13-15) Interestingly, the dove market where the poor would buy their offerings was controlled by the high priest, Annas. Now apart from the profits derived from the exchange of money and the sale of sacrificially acceptable animals, this activity could be presented as a service to the people who had to travel many miles to attend, and who could not drive, or carry their sacrifices such distances.

Jesus did not divorce Himself from the temple.

nor its services. He said in doing what He did, This is **my** church, this is **my** temple, "make not **my** Father's house an house of merchandise." (2:16) Further, in one of the outlying conferences of the Jewish Church, Jesus preached for a short period of time to the local congregations as they met in their synagogues. (Matt. 4:23) Finally, He was expelled, and any who would confess His ministry was to be excommunicated from his local congregation. (John 9:22)

He ordained a ministry with a mission. The text reads - "And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach." (Mark 3:14) A terse comment on this action states - "The first step was now taken in the organization of the Church that after Christ's departure was to be His representative on earth." (DA, p. 291) Herein is revealed the hypocrisy of the ordination which has been recently performed by one of the "independent ministries" in the community of Adventism. The claim is put forth that these men were only being ordained for a "mission." So were the Twelve! But the ordination by these "independents" was not to establish a new church, so they said; they were still wanting to be "loyal" to the mother church. But what did that act mean - "the first step" in the organization of a new church "was now taken."

Jesus even commissioned 70 other evangelists, and sent them forth "before His face into every city and place, whither Himself would come." (Luke 10:1) What a stir this must have made among the local congregations of the Jewish Church! Not only that, funds flowed into His ministry. Women with sums of money at their disposal "ministered to Him of their substance." (Luke 8:1-3) The funds were of a sufficient amount that it was necessary for the Twelve to have a "treasurer." The reaction of the hierarchy was not long delayed. How many studies were commissioned by the hierarchy we are not told, but they invaded "home church" meetings to latch on any words which Jesus might utter which could be used against Him. (Luke 5:18-21)

Jesus made one final attempt to cleanse the Temple. It was the beginning of the Last Week. The text reads:

And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. (Luke 19:45-46)

The setting of this act dare not be overlooked. Jesus had just wept over the city declaring -

If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! but now they are hidden from thine eyes. ... Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. (Luke 19:42-44)

The beginning of the end for the Jewish Church/Nation as a favored nation under God, and the city of Jerusalem as the Holy City of God had begun. Even yet, Jesus chose a text in cleansing the temple precincts that echoed His hopes - He still called it, "My house." But a few days later, when He left the temple for the last time, He declared - "Behold, **your** house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. 23:38) It ceased to be His temple, His church; it was left desolate.

On Thursday night of the Last Week, Jesus gathered together in an upper room the ministry of His church, and gave to them the symbols of their oneness. After the terrifying and shaking experiences which followed, the disciples kept returning to this "upper room." (Acts 1:13) [While the KJV reads, "an upper room," the Greek text has the definite article, "the" - to huperōon] Here a new era begins - momentous things were about to transpire.

#### FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY

In the upper room, the followers of Christ studied diligently for ten days the Old Testament Scriptures. They conducted a business meeting with Peter in the chair. Then came the Day of Pentecost. Would they observe it? To do so, they would have to appear in the Temple for worship. (Ex. 34:23) But this temple had been declared desolate by Jesus. And if any had gone, they would have missed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Here is a lesson for us. We need to know where to be when God's Spirit is poured out in the Latter Rain!

The book of Acts is a "last day" book for God's people **now**. It sets forth the issues clearly and plainly which the torn and bleeding Adventist community needs. It is indeed a "now time" book.<sup>1</sup>

In the book of Acts, the disciples of Christ were first called "Christians" at Antioch. (Acts 11:26) This was a Greek term based on Christos, the Greek translation of the Jewish word for Messiah. (John 1:41) It is used only one other time in

Acts by Agrippa. (26:28) On the other hand, the Jewish hierarchy referred to them as the "sect of the Nazarenes." (24:5) However, another term is used consistently throughout the book of Acts to designate the disciples of Jesus - followers of The Way:

Acts 9:2 - "of this way" Margin, Gr., "of the way."

Acts 19:9 - "of that way." Gr., "the way."

19:23 - "about that way" - Gr., "the way."

Acts 22:4 - "this way" - Gr. literally - "this the way" because of rules of grammar.

Acts 24:14 - "the way which they (Jewish hierarchy) call heresy." The Greek word translated, "heresy" is translated, "sect" in verse 5.

Why followers of the Way? Jesus is the Way, the truth and the life. (John 14:6) Further, He opened "a new and living way," becoming "an high priest over the house of God." (Heb. 10:20-21) In the sanctuary truth revealed both in type and in antitype is to be found the way of and to God. (Ps. 77:13) This way of truth was intended by Christ to be the pillar and foundation of His church. The whole issue of the great controversy is over truth. The devil abode not in the truth. And the Jewish Church leadership accepted him as their father, and in so doing, brought the Temple of God to the point where Jesus declared it desolate.

History has a way of repeating itself. God raised up a people, and gave to them the sanctuary truth, a truth so unique that even the evangelicals knew it to be "a doctrine never known in theological history until the second half of the nineteenth century." And when the focus of the Church to whom it was committed became centered on emphases which left its preaching as dry as the hills of Gilboa, God sent "a most precious message" of Christ and His righteousness. This is declared to be "pure, unadulterated truth." (TM, p. 65) The Jewish Church had truth, but it was adulterated. The question is simply, how adulterated can truth become before those professing it, and the place of their worship is left desolate?

The book of Acts presents another picture. When Paul returned to Jerusalem from his third missionary tour, he reported to the leadership of the Christian Church "the things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry." (Acts 21:19) He could not state that "many thousands" had been converted. He could not tell of large edifices being erected in which to worship. He

had left the Followers of the Way in "home" churches. (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2)

In Corinth, when the members of the Jewish synagogue "blasphemed," Paul took the company of believers and began worshiping in the house of a God-fearer, Justus, whose home "joined hard to the synagogue." In due time the first elder of the Jewish Church cast his lot with the Corinthian believers. (Acts 18:6-8)

In Ephesus, after pleading with the Jewish congregation in their synagogue for three months, because of their disbelief and hardness of heart, Paul found it necessary to find a class room in the school of Tyrannus in which the Followers of The Way could study and worship. Separation inevitably followed the rejection of the truth as it is in Jesus.

However, the leadership of the Christian Church at Jerusalem could point to the "many thousands of Jews...which believe;" and they were "all zealous of the law." They were still following the statutes and ordinances of the Mosaic code. They were involved with the rites and purification of the Temple ritual. (Acts 21:23-26) Yet this temple, Jesus had declared desolate some thirty years before. The prophecy of Jesus that this temple would be destroyed had made little impression upon them, even though they were standing within the shadow of its fulfillment. They were staying with the Church.

It was Paul who was hated by the Jewish hierarchy because he called for separation from that which was desolate. But here he faced a separated group - the sect of the Nazarenes headed by James - and they had been given reports of his teachings which caused big question marks in the minds of the Jewish Christians. (21:21) Furthermore, they were seeking to hold a firm relationship with the Temple and its rituals, while having a separate meeting place of their own. (21:18)

How much different is today's situation in the Adventist Community? There is the main body, and scattered around are the various "sects" of Adventism - The Hartland Sect; the Hope International Sect, the Rolling Hills Sect, and the Steps to Life Sect. All of these are named in the study commissioned by the North American Division leadership. Does the message of the book of Acts have no meaning? Is the example and teaching of Paul as found in the New Testament without significance? Can we not know

# THE LAST INVITATION

In Matthew 22:1-14, Jesus gave a parable about a marriage. Those bidden, who would not come (Vs 3), were again called to attend a dinner (Noon meal, Vs 4). "But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." (Vs 5-7). There can be no doubt that this parable speaks of the invitation of God to the Jewish nation. Ultimately in AD 70, the murderers were destroyed and their city, Jerusalem, burned.

The parable continues with the instruction: "Go ye therefore into the highways.." In other words, go out of the city, or the then recognized Church. Paul was called to be the Apostle to the Gentiles. Concerned for the salvation of his people, he made every effort to take the gospel to the Jews first. Time after time and place after place the organized church fought against the preaching of the gospel to the people. Paul and Barnabas, in Antioch, finally told the Jews, "but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46b). Jerusalem, the city and center of Jewish worship, was destroyed in AD 70. The final rejection of the invitation by the church leaders came with the crucifixion of Christ; the three and one-half years from the death of Christ to the stoning of Stephen represents the last invitation to the Jewish church. Likewise the 36 years from the close of probation for the corporate church to the destruction of the city in AD 70, represents the time for the individual Jew to choose between the corporate church, lead by corrupt Jewish leaders or the church Christ started when he ordained the apostles.

Luke also records an invitation to a

meal. (Lk 14:16-24) At first glance this parable appears to be parallel to that in Matthew. However, closer examination reveals this parable to be rather an extension of the one in Matthew. See the comparison below:

<u>Matthew 22</u>	<u>Luke 14</u>
1. Dinner or noon meal	1. Supper or evening meal <sup>1</sup>
2. Go out of the city	2. Go first <u>in</u> the city, then outside the city
3. Servants slain	3. No servants slain
4. City destroyed	4. No city destroyed
5. Wedding furnished with guests, then an inspection	5. No definite conclusion, except those bidden who refused the invitation, shall not taste the supper

"And [he] sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, come, for all things are now ready." Being at supper time, this is the last invitation of the day. Eighteen hundred years after the invitation to the Jews, God raised up another people to give the last warning message to a dying world. This people were brought together by the preaching of William Miller in 1831-1844. These Adventists split into various groups according to the beliefs they held. The group embracing the Sabbath as part of the sanctuary message organized in 1863, into what is called today, the Seventh-day Adventist Church. By the late 1800s, messages from Ellen White warned of the near return of Christ. A national Sunday law was imminent. However, the Seventh-day Adventist church rejected this opportunity to fulfill her mission. Later, Ellen White, in a letter to P. T. Magan in 1901, lamented the fact: "We may have to remain in this world many more years because of insubordination."

History shows the slide of the SDA church into apostasy. In 1931, for instance, the church published changes to the 1889-1914 statements of belief. The beliefs were compromised by removing any reference to the Papacy as the man of sin and deleting reference to the importance of Bible prophecy in the study of God's Word. (See

Comparison of Statements of Belief,  
Available from ALF)

In 1950, two missionaries from Africa, came to the General Conference with a call for the Church to repent. Looking back from 1992 and understanding Jesus' prophecy in Luke 21:24b, it can be seen that this was to be the last invitation to the corporate SDA Church. The final rejection of this call was made by the SDA leadership in 1967. (A Warning and Its Reception, p. 8, buff section) Thirteen years later, the Church in General Conference Session in Dallas, Texas, voted the current 27 Statements of Belief. This compromise of truth consummates the final rejection by the corporate Church of the last invitation.

Note again in Luke 14:18-20, those that were bidden to the supper made various excuses for not accepting the invitation. They were too busy with the cares of every day living. Their thoughts and priorities concerned the things of this world. Revelation 3:17 pictures this group as saying, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." Could the parable in Luke be illustrating the experience of the SDA church in the last days?

What about individuals--what is to happen after 1980? "The true people of God, who have the spirit of the work of the Lord and the salvation of souls at heart, will ever view sin in its real, sinful character. They will always be on the side of faithful and plain dealing with sins which easily beset the people of God. Especially in the closing work for the Church, in the sealing time of the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are to stand without fault before the throne of God, will they feel most deeply the wrongs of God's professed people. This is forcibly set forth by the prophet's illustration of the last work under the figure of the men each having a slaughter weapon in his hand." (3T, p. 266, emphasis added)

After those bidden refused to come in (Lk 14:21), the servant is instructed

to go into the city, go to the church "and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind". Bring in those perhaps mistreated by the Church, those limping along spiritually who need help and those blind to the betrayal of the sacred trust by the SDA Church. But, bring them in where? Bring them into the faith of Jesus, and the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth. (1 Tim 3:15) How do we know we are living in the time of this parable, the last work for the Church or the last invitation? Only by the fulfillment of that prophecy of Jesus in Luke 21:24b.

Then the servant declares "it is done...and yet there is room" (Lk 14:22). There is room because many SDAs, just like the Jews, will reject the last invitation. The quotation referred to above from the Testimonies, Vol. 3, p. 266, is in the setting of Ezekiel 9. The angel with the writer's inkhorn declares that he has completed his assignment. (Eze. 9:11) It is done. What comes after the angel completes the marking? (See Eze. 9:5, 6)

Next, the servant is told to go outside the city (or church) and "compel them to come in". That is to urge them, press them earnestly. Do not hear their excuses, but urge them to overcome, to open their eyes, and lead them to the feast. In Adventism, we have taught and always understood that there would be SDAs that reject the gospel in the last days, and their places would be filled by an influx of believers into the SDA Church and the church would go through to the kingdom. This may have been true in 1888, but does it apply today? Why would the SDA Church have to be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary if she were unconditionally going through? (8T 247) The true Church is not the "administration", but the people who accept Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone, with the apostles and prophets as the foundation. We are lively stones built into a "spiritual" house. (Eph 2:19-22 & 1 Pet 2:4-6) It

Let's Talk It Over - from page 1, col. 1

theology. Believe what you want to believe but keep the tithe coming in." This emphasis comes through in the action taken by the North American Division Council at its 1992 year-end meeting. One reason cited in faulting the private organizations named, is that they "have drained away funds that could have been used in accomplishing the mission of the church, thus crippling the evangelistic outreach of the church." (p. 8) In the documentation given in the commissioned study itself, the fiscal irresponsibility of John Osborne is heavily emphasized. Money is the bottom line, whether it be the Church, or the Private ministries.

But we must return to one thing - truth. How big is the "tent" of truth? Finding its source in the mind of God, it encompasses the universe, but in this world of sin, where rebellion against truth is a way of life, the Scriptures picture it as the "narrow way" entered only by a "strait gate" which "few" find. (Matt. 7:13-14) The facts of our denominational history is that the Church has attempted to broaden the gate and widen the way, in other words, enlarge the "tent" to include theological concepts which the founding fathers did not include and spoke against.

In 1914, a year before the death of Ellen G. White, there was included in the Yearbook, a statement of "Fundamental Principles of Seventh-day Adventists" prefaced with these words:

The following propositions may be taken as a summary of the principle features of our religious faith, upon which there is, so far as is known, entire unanimity throughout the body. (p. 293, emphasis supplied)

Among those propositions, it is clearly stated that the "Lord Jesus Christ...took on Him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race." (ibid.) But in 1980, this statement was removed, and the "tent" so structured that you can believe any one of three views of the incarnation - the 1914 position, the Evangelical position, or the position of an Anglican divine - and still be in good and regular standing within the "tent." This was plainly set forth by a Secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate, Dr. Roger Coon, in another insert that appeared in the Adventist Review, Nov. 7, 1991. All three positions cannot be truth. But even among the "private ministries" named there is confusion. First their "patriarch" came out clear and distinct in harmony with the 1914 Yearbook, then he

decided that the Anglican divine's position was the correct view. When will come the next flip-flop? Who knows?

If God sent us a "most precious" message in 1888 concerning Christ's righteousness, and He did, and then declared that message to be "pure, unadulterated truth," how large can the "tent" become and still remain that message? This is a question that must be answered, not only by the Church, but also by Wieland who though not named, is still a Private Ministry. If truth is going to be adulterated, then let those who wish to risk their eternity abide in that adulteration, but those who want truth in its purity as it is in Jesus, then let them walk apart from the "tent." But the fact is that those "private ministries" named and Wieland do not want it that way. They want a "tent" within a "tent" as the Church leaders charge. They want to call themselves Seventh-day Adventists because it is easier to get money that way. Do they not know that if their work is of God, He will provide for them without the hypocrisy of pretending to be what they are not.

Let us face certain facts. The corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church in general conference session (1980) declared their beliefs to be the 27 Fundamentals. In general conference, they have also set up their structure and operating rules. This is the official Seventh-day Adventist Church of the present time. When therefore, a group decides to form their own organization, function separately from the Church structure, receive tithes and offerings, ordain men to the ministry, then why do they continue to seek to be a part of that organization from which they in reality have broken away? Does not the organization have a right to protect those who do not choose to follow the Private Ministries from what is perceived as false allegations, and which some of the allegations are? Do they not have a right to remove these private ministries from the "tent" even as they did Brinsmead and Ford?

Most of these "private ministries" are gung-ho for the distribution of The Great Controversy, yet they seem not to have read it for themselves. It might be well for the leadership of each of these Private Ministries to take time to read again and ponder the last paragraph of Chapter 2. One further suggestion, note the phrase, "faithful few," and compare it with Testimonies, Vol. 5, pp. 210-211.

whg

The Last Invitation - from p. 5, col. 2

is the truth that is going through to the kingdom, and the people of God who accept it. No organization of man's or any works of man will go through nor be found in heaven. Every individual must have on the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness, and our filthy rags given up, removed by Christ. (Zech 3) We must be members of Christ's organization!

There is another call; but this is a wakeup call. It comes at midnight. (Matt 25:6) But note carefully,--the call is to go out to meet the Bridegroom. Only those who have accepted the supper invitation will go into the wedding. The many who reject the last invitation are unprepared to go in, therefore the door is closed to them; they shall not "taste of My supper" (Lk 14:24). "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh...lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping." "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching:" (Mark 13:35-36; Lk 12:37)

Friend, you are among those that are invited. Are you too busy with worldly things to recognize the final invitation? Are you blind to the apostasy in the SDA Church and the confusion among the independent ministries by their refusal to advance in truth? "I [Jesus] counsel thee to...anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see...Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man [individual] hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev 3:20) Yes, Jesus wants to sit down and dine with you here and now. Will you answer His knock today?

<sup>1</sup>See Luke 14:12. Ariston (dinner) is used in the parable of Matt. 22:4; deipnon (supper) is used in the parable of Luke 14:16.

WVO

\*\*\*\*\*

A detailed study of Luke 21:24b may be obtained from Adventist Laymen's Foundation, P. O. Box 69, Ozone, AR 72854, by ordering The Hour and The End, \$4.00 postpaid.

Lines Being Drawn - from page 3, col. 2

the state of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Jesus knew the state of the Jewish Church? What are we - a Seventh-day Adventist, a part of a "sect" of Adventism, or simply a Follower of The Way?

<sup>1</sup> Seminar tapes on - - "The Book of Acts; Its Message for Today" are available through the Foundation office. 3 tapes - \$5.50 postpaid.

+++++

The truths of the Word of God are the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin had clouded the understanding, is removed. The words, "A new heart also will I give you," mean, "A new mind will I give you." A change of heart is always attended by a clear conviction of Christian duty, and understanding of truth. He who gives the Scriptures close, prayerful attention will gain clear comprehension and sound judgment, as if in turning to God he had reached a higher plane of intelligence.

Review & Herald, Dec. 18, 1913

+++++

God creates out of nothing. Therefore, until a man is nothing, God can make nothing out of Him.

Martin Luther

+++++

"Watchmen, What of the Night?" is published monthly by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., P. O. Box 69, Ozone, AR 72854, USA.

In Canada, write - The Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Canada, P. O. Box 117, Thorne, ON P0H 2J0.

Editor  
Assistant Editor

Elder Wm. H. Grotheer  
W. W. Oliver, Jr.

Any portion of this Thought Paper may be reproduced without further permission by adding the credit line - "Reprinted from "Watchmen, What of the Night?" - Ozone, Arkansas, USA."

First copy free upon request; duplicate copies --- 50¢.

+++++

Our 800 Number is - 800-4-LAYMEN