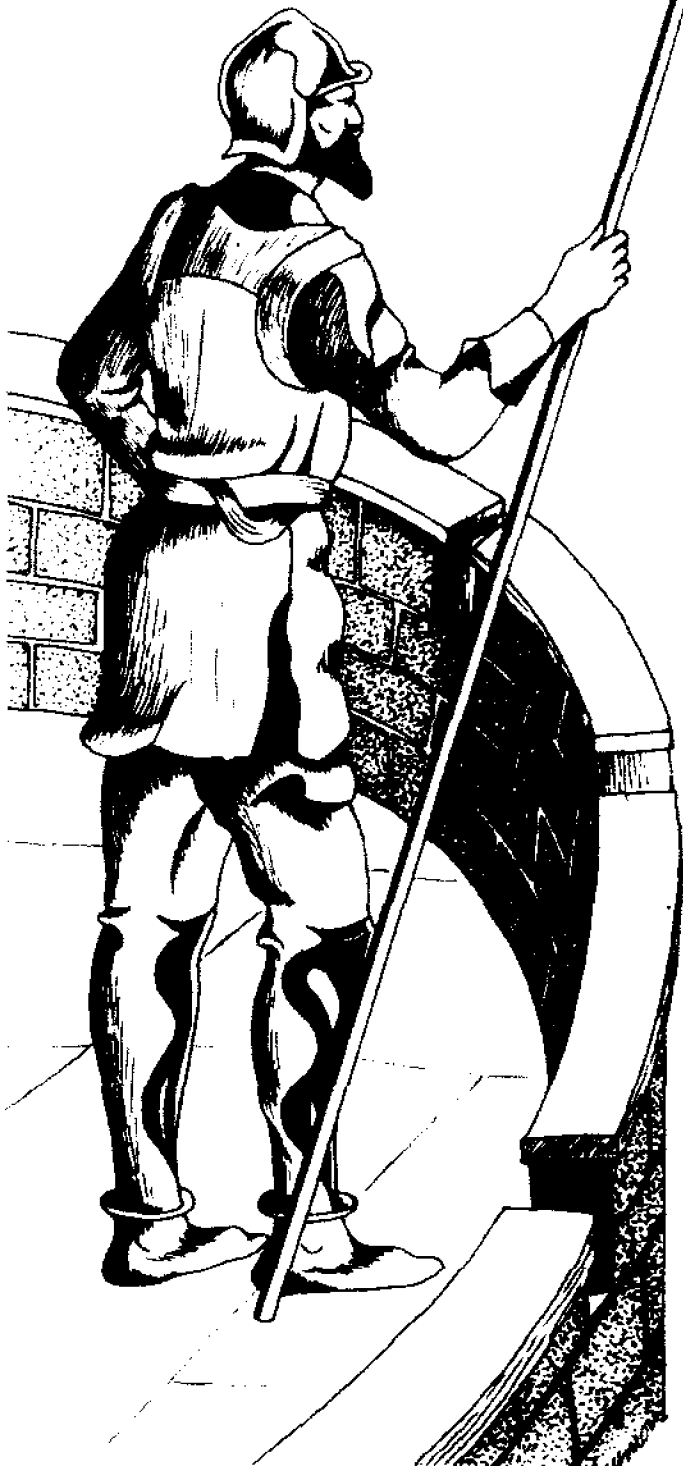


"Watchman,
what of the night?"

"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,
the hour and the end!"

Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)



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Editor's Preface

The first article in this issue will serve as a preface to the series of articles which will begin with the January issue of *WWN*. In this series on the "Eternal Verities" - the Godhead, Incarnation, and the Atonement - we will put in summary form the studies of the 1997 Seminar. Too long have we held our peace while a new Gnosticism has been sweeping through the corridors of Adventism in America and spreading its deception to three other continents. The denigration of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the projection of the papal doctrine of the Trinity under the guise of professing to oppose it, needs to be exposed so that all who honestly want truth can find it.

The second article on the new thrust which the ecumenical movement is seeking to take, has been largely confined to books and articles in German. We have been able to get bits and pieces through the ENI releases from the WCC. Material received from Germany has been translated, and our Librarian, Terrie Lambert, has been working diligently to put together this information so that our readers can be aware of this new emphasis which will include all the religions of the world. This new emphasis carries as its slogan - "Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation." And as the brother in Germany, who supplied us with the German documents, asks, "Are you not for Justice, Peace, and the integrity of Creation?" Yet behind this new force is the Spiritism of the Eastern religions combined with Socialism ideology. One is reminded of the words in *The Great Controversy*, "Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion." (p. 562)

On the last Sabbath in September, Darren Lambert and I visited, as observers, the weekend Campmeeting of the Reformed Seventh Day Adventist Church held near Springdale, Arkansas. The speaker for the Sabbath service presented a challenge to those who embrace "historic" Adventism. We invited him to carry through on his own challenge, and make suggestion in "Let's Talk It Over" that it would be a good idea for all who profess "historic" Adventism to do likewise.

Why Study? ---

When we first announced at the beginning of this year that our seminar studies in connection with the 1997 Annual Fellowship would be on the Godhead - Incarnation - Atonement, some asked, Why these subjects? Yet, when the hour arrived for the fellowship, we were pressed as to where to place all the folk who came. It was evident from the start that God was blessing the study of His Word. So again the question - "Why study the topics of the Godhead, Incarnation, and Atonement?"

The Godhead

An ancient heresy which plagued the Early Church has again reared its diabolical head. There is a new Gnosticism being foisted on the unwary. As with the old pagan Gnosticism which perceived of one supreme deity from whom emanated lesser aeons, and the Christian version which perceived of Jesus Christ as one of the aeons, so today in neo-Gnosticism, Jesus Christ is perceived as having emanated, or generated from, or was "birthed" by God the Father. In America a quartet of "voices" - Allabach, Beachy, Goslin, and Stump - promote this ancient heresy, while in Australia, Pittard and Gibbons resonate this concept. Basically, the issue, or bottom line, is the denigration of the pre-existent Logos, who was with God, and who was God as much as the Father is God. (John 1:1-2)

The Incarnation

While the ever-existent, self-existent I AM is being denigrated on the one hand, the victory which this same I AM achieved in the flesh is being denied or muted by those whose faith cannot grasp the reality of the Mystery of Godliness - God manifest in the likeness of a flesh of sin. (I Tim. 3:16; Rom. 8:3 Gr.) Yet man's redemption cannot be separated from a true understanding of the condescension of the Eternal Logos. (John 1:14) Tragically, various "alternate" theories of the Incarnation have arisen in the community of Adventism which are but a "generation" removed from the Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Many of these "voices" come from "high" places in the regular Church.

The Atonement

Within the community of Adventism, there are few who would deny that an "atonement" was achieved on the Cross, but by far the larger portion of the community conceive of this atonement as completed, thus denying the "atonement of atonements," or final atonement prefigured

in the typical service of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary. Living at the very time of the closing work in the sanctuary above, little is said, or discussed as to what is involved in this last work of Christ as the great High Priest. The very heart of Adventism has ceased to pulsate. It is true that an understanding of what is meant by the "final atonement" is fraught with perils of extremism, and must be grasped by faith, because the "evidence" is not seen. Movements of the past with their failures and errors stigmatize any attempt to forthrightly discuss what the "final atonement" actually means or could be.

Limitations

Returning to the subject of the Godhead, we need to note the limitations which the Scriptures impose on this study. Paul, writing to Timothy, clearly stated that God dwells "in the light which no man can approach unto: whom no man hath seen, nor can see." (I, 6:16) By the senses, we cannot define or describe God. The curtain is drawn over His Being. The only One through which a revelation of God has come is the monogenes theos, as indicated in John's preface to his Gospel. (1:18; alternate Gr. Text) This God, Jesus Christ, we likewise have not seen. But John did. He writes:

That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word (λογος) of life; ... declare we unto you. (I John 1:1, 3)

Further, John declared that He whom they saw and with whom they had had physical contact, was "that eternal life, which was with the Father"- the Logos (ver. 2). While the curtain is drawn on aspects of God, there is no question expressed as to the "eternalness" of Him who was with God from the beginning. The challenge "to comprehend as far as mortal can, the deep things of God" (*Great Controversy*, p. 599), is further heightened by Paul when he states that Jesus Christ (the Word made flesh) "in His times shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." (I Tim. 6:14-15) Yet when He shall return the second time, on His vesture dipped in blood is the name written - "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." (Rev. 19:13,16) How shall He show the *only* Potentate as "King of kings and Lord of lords", and He Himself carry the same name emphasized on a garment dipped in blood? This picture, if meditated upon, opens a rich field for thought. This unique revelation of God, we shall discuss more completely when we study the linguistic aspects of the Shema of Israel in upcoming issues of WWN.

In noting the limitations imposed on our understanding of the Incarnation, the curtain is drawn over the "how." We can know that God was manifest in the flesh, but the "how" is wrapped in mystery incomprehensible to men. It was the question Mary asked when Gabriel revealed her role in the unfolding of the purposes of God. (Luke 1:34)

The answer Gabriel gave did not explain the "how" but merely emphasized the fact that the One who "shall be [not "is" nor "was"] called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35) was "conceived... of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 1:20)

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

While the curtain is drawn over aspects of the Godhead, and the "how" of the Incarnation, certain symbolic representations given in the "unveiling" of Jesus Christ can enlarge our thinking as we "exert all the powers of the mind in the study of the Scriptures." The post ascension revelation given to John in Chapter 4, pictures God seated on the throne clothed in light which bars penetration. Out of the throne "proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices." Before the throne were seven torches of fire declared to be "the Seven Spirits of God." (Rev. 4:3-5)

As the next scene comes before John, he again sees the throne. This time there is an added dimension to the vision. He beholds a Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne, and a changed relationship of "the seven Spirits of God". In symbolism, they are represented as "seven horns and seven eyes" of the Lamb "sent forth into all the earth." (Rev. 5:6)

In seeking to understand the meaning of these symbolic representations, are we to study them in the light of John's Gospel and Epistles? This possibility and meaning will be explored as we begin the articles in the 1998 issues of WWN. John does begin his Gospel with the Logos ("Word," KJV) and God, and defines the relationship between them, and the work of the Logos (John 1:1-3). This Logos became flesh and dwelt among us. He is declared to be "the Lamb of God." (John 1:14, 29). In his Epistle, John describes Jesus as the Paraclete ("Advocate"- I John 2:1). In his Gospel, he quotes Jesus as saying, when He returns to the Father He would send "another Paraclete." Yet the relationship would be so close that they could conclude that He had come to them. (John 14:16, 18) Much of this we have missed as we have indulged in a surface reading and comprehension of the revelation God has given in His Word.

Indeed a veil is drawn on aspects of God and the Incarnation, and the "how" remains a mystery - the "secret things belong unto the Lord our God." However, there is much that is revealed, and these "things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children." (Deut. 29:29) Facts are revealed in clear pronouncements and in symbolism. The problem is in how we read them. Jesus spoke to Nicodemus in metaphor, and he asked - "How can these things be?" To this "how," Jesus responded - "Art thou a teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (John 3:9-10) Tragically, the siren "voices" sounding in the corridors of Adventism today, professing to be "teachers" of Israel, are giving only surface answers which echo heresies which have plagued God's people in times past. It is time that we gave heed to the admonition of Paul to Timo-

thy:

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (II Tim. 2:15)

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The "Conciliar Process" The Ecumenical Initiative

The ecumenical movement in Europe is in commotion. The new goal-objective - "The Conciliar Process for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation" has raised the feelings of many, as Christians from all different denominations, from laymen to leaders in high positions, have been disturbed. However, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has applied for membership with the Working group of Christian Churches (ACK), which lists the pursuit of this conciliar process as one of its duties. What is the background of this initiative, its goals and terms?

One of the main players in the "conciliar process" is the famous nuclear physicist and philosopher, Carl Friedrich von Weizsacker. Von Weizsacker had been frightened about the catastrophic effects of his own discoveries and inventions and started to search for a way out of the recognised danger. In 1985 he used the platform of the German Evangelical Church Convention in Duesseldorf, to call for a universal peace council. He said:

We ask the churches of the world to call a council of peace. Peace is necessary today for the survival of mankind. It is not ensured. At an ecumenical council that is called in the name of peace, the Christian churches must make a statement of common responsibility, which mankind cannot ignore.

Time is running out. We ask the church leaders to do everything in their power, so that the council can meet as soon as possible. We ask the church communities to call for a council and give it strength through their explicit support. (The Conciliar Process - Utopia and Reality, p. 15)

The leading head of those who are strongly opposed to the conciliar process is Dr. Peter Beyerhaus, Professor for Mission-Science and ecumenical Theology at the University of Tubingen, Germany. He, together with Lutz von Padberg, Professor for Church-History at the Evangelical Theological Faculty in Lowen, co-edited the book "The Conciliar Process - Utopia and Reality", a compilation of 23 chapters from 19 different authors. Commenting on von Weizsackers call for a Universal Peace Council, Beyerhaus writes:

This call first found support among the communities and church leaders of the Lutheran Church in Germany, with the Lutheran World Union and with a series of other churches and church or-

rganisations in central Europe. Through a number of lectures, essays, television appearances and not the least through his widely published books "Change of Consciousness" and "Time is Running Out" (200,000 sold in 1988!), the initiator of the Duesseldorf Call passed over geographical and denominational boundaries in his drive to win endorsement for his cause. Additionally, the Day of the Prayer for Peace of the Churches and Religions, which Pope John Paul II presented the following year on October 27, 1986 in Assisi, was the echo of this initiative (*ibid.*, p. 16).

The question needs be asked - from what philosophical background did von Weizsacker develop this conciliar vision? On a study trip to India in 1969, von Weizsacker found a long-sought contact with Indian wisdom. At the grave of the Hindu guru, Maharshi, he experienced a mystic vision, which he later described in his autobiographical report, "The Garden of the Humane." He wrote:

*As I took off my shoes and stepped in ashram in front of the grave of Maharshi, it hit me: "Yes, this is it." Actually, all the questions have been answered.... Afterwards I sat next to the grave on the rock floor. The knowledge was here, and in thirty minutes everything had happened. I still knew what was going on around me, the hard floor, the humming mosquitoes, the light on the rocks. But in no time the layers to the core were broken through, it can only be hinted at with words: "You" "I" - "Yes". Tears of bliss. Bliss without tears. I became somebody different... With a gentle tenderness, the experience left me in the following days and weeks. Its substance will always stay with me. (*ibid.*, p. 25)*

Von Weizsacker termed this experience as "a cosmic-mystic experience of unity in all beings." He concluded that the atomically threatened world peace, even the survival of mankind is only possible by the common efforts of all leaders in responsible positions, based on a spiritual union of western technology and eastern religions. Originating from hinduistic pantheism, von Weizsacker views "development and decay, success and failure, western and eastern thought as developmental stages toward a mutual understanding and life" or "an evolution of consciousness" (*ibid.*, p. 155). Thus evolution is seen as more than the recent theory of the Cosmos, but the goal of all nature towards the total unity of mankind. This is the basis of the ecumenical thought - the uniting of all religions and ideologies through dialogue.

In the conciliar process, truth is seen as relative; i.e. nobody knows the truth, but rather that a lot of people strike to find it together. A parable is given as an illustration, where there are five people living together in a cave, each of them having just one of the five senses; seeing, feeling hearing etc. One day water starts rising in the cave, leaving only one alternative, - "either they have to take a chance and use a completely unknown path, or they will die. The five step toward the exit. The one with the sense of feeling touches the wall and feels that the cave ends here and after that there is 'nothing.' If he would be dependent on himself he would have to jump into the 'nothing.' But the one with the sense of sight describes the 'nothing': a wide field and in some distance some kind of frame, which he can't recognise as a tree. They step forward and out of the cave. The one with the

sense of hearing hears a predator growling at them from behind. Only he can warn the others etc. All five depend on each other. It would have been completely wrong if the group would have sat down in the cave and thought about which one of them had the 'true' sense. Everyone has only one perception; all perceptions combined lead to the ultimate truth" (*ibid.*, p. 165).

It is at this point that Beyerhaus and others are opposed, as they fear that the truth of the Christian belief loses its uniqueness when it unites with non-christian religions. The "Conciliar Vision" offers an alternative salvation story to that of Christianity. The redemption of mankind "must be recognised under the pressure of surviving in the present of 'the one' (Hinduism), the 'yourself' (Buddhism), 'cosmic harmony' (Confucius), and in the 'good' (Judaism and Christianity)" (*ibid.*, p. 177) Christ and His gospel are seen as only part of the wisdom of mankind and the unique role of Jesus Christ as Son of God and redeemer of the world are removed. When confronted with this criticism, von Weizsacker remarked: "It dissolves one of those wonderful myths, which Christians have believed for so long a time. God will know if this myth should be removed or not. I don't care." (*ibid.*, p. 26)

The catholic response to this conciliar process has been interesting. Pope John Paul II, excited by von Weizsacker's idea, conceived of a plan to invite all high-ranking officials of churches and world religions to a big common day of prayer for peace, on October 27, 1986 in Assisi. Earlier in the year, February 1, 1986, he had the sign of the God "Shira" painted with red powder on his forehead while on his visit to India. On September 21, on the eve of the gathering in Assisi, he said: "Nobody can be surprised when members of different religions meet to pray together." In attendance in October were almost all of the Christian denominations and next to them Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hinduists, Sikhs, Parsens, Shintoists, Indian shamans and African wizards.

In John Paul's address before the gathering of representatives, he explained in pontifical style that the historical development of humankind, according to God's will, should be "a brotherly migration, in which we move together toward a mutual, transcendental goal, that He set for us." In Assisi the following were called by name: a Bodhisattva, Vishnu (Brahma), the Indian spirit, Allah, Mother Earth, the four winds, the thunder and African spirits, at the same position with Jesus Christ. Many more such days followed this first common day of prayer for peace, and the Pope is reportedly determined to make this interreligious meeting into a world-wide movement.

In 1991, the conciliar process was continued at the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra, Australia. Under the theme: "Come, Holy Ghost, Renew Thy Entire Creation", the Korean theologian Chung Hyung Kyung, one of the two main speakers, generated much audience enthusiasm. After ritually calling on the souls of the dead, she spoke not only of her polytheistic beliefs, but also introduced her concept of a female Christ. In addition, there were thirteen representatives of non-Christian religions participating; a further step toward world unification.

While the "New Age" background of "The Conciliar Process for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation" is evident, terms like justice and peace, which at first sound biblical, are meant to be socio-political. Its goals are based on common social questions and extend from social concerns to economy and politics, to questions of environmental protection. They deal, therefore, with areas which in the past have been considered the responsibility of worldly authorities.

In 1983, at the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, Ulrich Duchrow, a regional worker for Ecumenism and World Mission in the National Church in the province of Baden, Germany, presented his plans. He stated:

We want to develop a network of Christians who see the fight for justice, peace and the preservation of creation world-wide and start to act according to it. During this time, we have to act as a Christian group, be politically purposeful, work critically and with solidarity, work with political groups for peace, Ecumenism and the Third World (The Ecumenical Connection, Inter-Euro Publishing, pp. 164, 165).

The resulting program rules from Vancouver state the following:

The crucial point of the conciliar process...deals therefore with forming Christian resistance groups against the demonic powers of death in racism, sexism, economic exploitation, militarism and abuse of science and technology (ibid.).

Beyerhaus suggests that because Duchrow developed the program for the conciliar process, we should watch very carefully his future plans and activities. For example, Duchrow writes in his book "World Economy Today" that:

In the fight for justice and human dignity we must oppose the powers of oppression. We are called upon to show solidarity with the ones who fight for the power of the people to develop a strong participatory society through the legitimate practice of power.... From this point, international networks for support of churches should be enforced and expanded... These networks help the poor to pool their strength to oppose the powers of oppression (ibid.).

Commentators have noted that this book is nothing but Marxist and Socialist ideology. The question then arises as to why this conciliar process with its obvious "New Age" and political background could take off as it has? The answer is simple: Fear!

The task is to use the words "concern" and "fear" and through this, to convince the dispositions to accept this ideology (The Conciliar Process - Utopia and Reality, p. 283).

As von Weizsacker has stated; "Mankind at present is in a crisis, whose catastrophic climax is probably still before us." By listing up the dangers to mankind - poverty, wars, environmental decline - which have existed for decades, and which keep the population in fear, they can in turn be used by radical movements to demand drastic solutions as an alternative to the present political situation:

1) The starvation and famine in the explosive growing population of the Third world, which splits the world in two unequal pieces [Justice]; 2) in the wake of the re-armament threatening outbreak of a nuclear holocaust [Peace]; 3) the ever expanding environmental destruction, either by negligence of chemistry or cause of exploitation [Preservation of Creation] (ibid., p. 22).

Von Weizsacker has proved a marketing wizard, as the success of his strategy shows. He does not speak as a fatalist, but has turned the expressions - "Misery, War and Environmental Destruction" - around into their opposites - "social justice, political peace and preserving nature." Beyerhaus comments; "He uses his crisis analysis as a compassionate appeal to the common sense of the leaders, yes, even to the whole of mankind, to get them to a determined change of course" (ibid., p. 23). As a brother in Germany put it: "The conciliar idea will fly! We hear it on the news, church news and elsewhere. They all ride on the slogan *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation*. With this slogan they will get everyone, because... are you not for Justice, Peace and integrity of Creation?"

This slogan certainly has "got" the Adventists in Europe. One example are the German Unions. Having fallen from the purity of truth, and therefore from the power of the gospel, their leaders greedily grasped for the power of the Ecumene. During a session, April 6-8, the North German Union (NDV) voted 80% in favour of membership in the Working Group of Christian Churches (NCC). Later the same month, April 20, the delegates of the South German Union voted 129-109 for guest membership in the ACK. Many members now fear the possibility of a split and those opposed being thrown out, as they would be in the minority. It is interesting to recall that the East German Adventists are now a part of the North German Union (NDV). Prior to the unification of Germany in 1991, this union held full membership in the ACK (NCC).

It is tragic that certain evangelical voices can discern that the entire conciliar process is in absolute opposition to biblical thought, while the Seventh-day Adventist Church is seeking alliance with those that advocate it. Beyerhaus aptly puts this down to theological confusion over six points:

1. A General disregard for the Holy Scripture: It is shown by the twisting of the meaning or careless use of important statements, in the use of violating "contextual" methods of interpreting the Bible, which is typical for the so-called freedom theology, and in the consulting of other known sources from non-Christian Religions and ideologies;

2. A false picture of creation and history, in which the death fall has been turned upside down and portrayed optimistically as a steady upward trend, and in which the history of salvation and of the world are mixed together and nature is idolized;

3. An ideologically distorted understanding of salvation, which, in its establishment of inner-wordly harmony through the autonomous man, has replaced the forgiveness of sins and peace with God;

4. A trivializing of the person of Christ, who is degraded to the

position of a religious founder beneath others, or to a historical principle;

5. A secularizing change of the essence of the church, where the Body of Christ expands universally to the "Body of Mankind," in which the community is obliged to disregard the reforming message about the relationship between church and state, and support the executing organ of political assignment;

6. A one-sided portrait of the biblical promise of the apocalypse, which rejects the mission, and in which the future kingdom of God is taken away through an inner historical order of world peace, and biblical hope is eventually displaced. (ibid., p. 364)

How true it is that a disregard for the Scriptures has led to confusion in Adventism. It is a sad day when the organised structure seeks justice and peace on the basis of a political world order, and not the peace of Christ and the justice of God, which are gifts only to be received through faith. To be working towards the preservation of creation might seem a worthy duty to the secular world, but the church should be with those looking "for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Peter 3:13), recognizing that God Himself will destroy this earth as a final judgment on impenitent mankind.

One last point that Beyerhaus makes should give some sobering thoughts to the thinking Adventist:

This systematic strategy is preparing Christianity, step by step, for the organization of a coming world peace council of all churches, religions and ideologies, which would give, in the name of God, obliging instructions for living in a political-religious world order. Biblically-ground Christians recognize in such "conciliar visions" alarming parallels to the kingdom of the Antichrist, which was prophesied to us (Revelations 17:12-18). (The Ecumenical Connections, p. 218, Emphasis ours)

The warning is clear and strong that only "biblically-ground Christians" will recognize the conciliar process for what it truly is. We also have to come to terms with the fact that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has ceased to be the proclaimer of the genuine Three Angel's Messages, although they continue to give lip service to them. Therefore, what courage will the individual have to have to be able to stand alone against these "seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" in earth's final hours!

(We are indebted in this article to Brother Jurgen Krahn of Augen/Germany, for alerting us to this issue and for source documentation relative to the conciliar process.)

It is impossible to mentally or socially enslave a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the ground work of human freedom

Horace Greeley

Let's Talk It Over

The last Sabbath in September, we attended the campmeeting of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement in northwest Arkansas. We had several reasons in mind for doing so. Over a decade ago, we had attended a like gathering near Leslie, Arkansas. We wanted to see what changes, if any, had taken place in the Reform Movement. We were aware of the call in the Reformation Herald, their official publication, to members of the regular Church who had become concerned with trends within the Church, to come and take a look at them. It was evident from the enlarged attendance and from comments which interlaced testimonies and conversations, that a number of those present had done just that, and having taken a look, remained.

Present at this campmeeting were two veteran ministers of the Reform Movement whom I had met and had conversed with on previous occasions. One was a former president of their General Conference, and the other the head of their Sabbath School department. Neither of these men were asked to speak during the Sabbath School or to offer prayer at the noon day Worship service that I attended. The head of the Sabbath School Department and editor of their quarterly was not even asked to teach a Sabbath school class. (He sat in the same class as I as the teacher floundered through the lesson.) Either protocol is not known by the younger men who are leading out, or the accent of the senior leadership of the Movement is considered a negative in their present objective in the States.

The Worship service was semi-formal, and in some aspects seemed in disarray. The one who spoke, Elder Peter D. Lausevic, was a third generation minister in the Reform Movement. He was pastor of the Nashville, Tennessee, area of the Movement. His presentation both in substance and delivery was excellent, closely resembling the "old time" Adventist campmeeting sermons with which I have been familiar. This would have an appeal to members of the regular Church who can no longer countenance the present trends. The music also reflected the type with which concerned Adventists were familiar.

The Reform Movement has been long on standards especially in women's dress codes, and ministerial attire. I sense an easing up in both areas. The pianist even wore a red dress, and the minister's suits varied in the darker shades from the standard black (2T:610) Their friendliness, openness, and hospitality, were the same as on previous occasions with a few exceptions. One can count on a frank and open exchange of ideas with the leadership present from their General Conference, at least, I have found it so. The younger men who are now leading out seem fearful and apprehensive of observers.

The morning sermon by Elder Lausevic was a call to recognize the meaning of Christ's counsel to the apostolic Church, to tarry until endowed with the power to witness. He noted that one cannot win converts to the Gospel, unless endowed with the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit which convicts of sin; man cannot. He correctly exegeted the promise of Jesus that "the gates of hell" cannot prevail against the Church. He recognized that this was a call to aggressive witness, even penetrating the gates of hell in warfare against Satan and his hosts.

Near the conclusion of his presentation, he asked - "Do you want to know what should mark true 'historic' Adventism?" He then directed the large congregation to a message found in *The Review & Herald*, July 26, 1892 titled - "Search the Scriptures." The question is asked - "How shall we search the Scriptures?" It is answered by another question: "Shall we drive our stakes of doctrine one after another, and then try to make all Scripture meet our established opinions, or shall we take our ideas and views to the Scriptures, and measure our theories on every side by the Scriptures of truth?"

What was the "historic" experience and example? Ellen White testified:

"We would come together burdened in soul, praying that we might be one in faith and doctrine; for we knew that Christ is not divided. One point at a time was made the subject of investigation...We did not generally study together more than four hours at a time.

"If dissension arose, the study would be adjourned so that all could pray and contemplate the issues and questions in private study, then they would return to the task, because they knew that "it is necessary that our unity today be of a character that will bear the test of trial."

This challenge and experience is apropos to the present when division marks the community of Adventism. I challenge the voices in "historic" Adventism, Dr. Ralph Larson, Drs. John Grosboll, Colin and Russell Standish, Elders Weiland, Marcussen, Spear and perhaps others to meet together with me, and discuss, one at a time, the major doctrines of Adventism which are in controversy, such as the Sanctuary, Incarnation, the Atonement, the Godhead, the prophecies of Jesus, and the place of the Writings in formulating doctrine. No single discussion would be more than four hours in length.

A report would be rendered in each one's published journal as to the progress made, the issues raised, the points that divide, so as to keep the laity informed as to the progress made toward the unity for which Christ prayed. It should be kept in mind that the "messenger of the Lord" has specifically cautioned that "we have many lessons to learn, and

many, many to unlearn." The unlearning process will no doubt be the most difficult. But "as long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed."

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A Statement Questioned

In the Special Issue - "The Bottom Rung of the Ladder" - I wrote that "Willard Santee, Minister of Reconciliation for the Oregon Conference, was sent to Florida by the General Conference to 'reclaim' John Osborne." I stated this on information received through the Church where Santee is pastor. A call from a person connected with *Prophecy Countdown* stated that he had originally recommended Santee, and that the request was made by Osborne via the Florida Conference President to the Oregon Conference President, and was thus approved. Anyone aware of hierarchical procedure must know that the two administrators, because of the nature of this request, would not unilaterally concur without consultation with higher authority, perhaps even to the level of the North American Division. The one calling me indicated that he did not know in advance the direction which Santee's presentations would take, and that until a tape of one of Santee's sermons was heard by a prophecy countdown officer, they did not know who Santee was. I was also informed that *Prophecy Countdown* paid for the travel of Willard Santee to the Florida appointment. We respect the integrity of the Oregon Church source of our original statement, but should have tried to verify it further.

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