



*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

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

WHERE HAS THE NINTH COMMANDMENT GONE?

**"Thou Shalt Not Bear
False Witness Against
Thy Neighbor"**

"THE STATEMENT OF FACTS IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO MISLEAD, IS FALSEHOOD. . . EVEN THE INTENTIONAL SUPPRESSION OF TRUTH, BY WHICH INJURY MAY RESULT TO OTHERS, IS A VIOLATION OF THE NINTH COMMANDMENT" (PP, p. 309)

During the month of January this year, I received several copies of a letter sent Elder Earl W. Amundson, President of the Atlantic Union Conference. This letter was regarding "The Pawtucket Nursing Villa" and was written by John J. Adam, Secretary & Treasurer of the Adventist Layman Council. It read:

"Our laymen group has been into these nursing homes and all the big business deals that no one knows about. Yours takes the cake! You gentlemen could give Davenport lessons on how to make money.

"CAN YOU IMAGINE GIVING AWAY 75% OF A NURSING HOME FOR THREE DOLLARS.

"I've just got to send a copy of this deal to Ellsworth Reile, he knows all about nursing homes, but, I bet he'll get spas-

tic when he sees this wheeling and dealing.

"Another thing you and Reile have in common is the fact that you don't answer your calls from me. It tells us something. Davenport and Des Cummings never talked to us and you have now joined a very elect group.

"We will roll the presses next week (we will send you the first copy).

"We still love you, but, you just can't go around protecting crooks and abusing laymen. All we want from our leadership is HONESTY. We continue to pray for you and the Lord bless you."

This letter, dated January 20, was not published in the SDA Press Release, (Vol. 1, No. 13) but another one dated, January 26, did appear calling for Amundson's resignation because it was alleged he had had a local layman in the Brockton SDA Church disfellowshipped.

After receiving copies of the first letter, I wrote to Elder Amundson as I had gone to school with him. Also, we had been fellow workers in the Indiana Conference a number of years ago. In sending him a copy of this letter, I indicated that the readers of the Thought Paper would be interested in this matter, and before writing up the matter, I asked what comments did he have to make. He replied in part in a letter dated February 1:

"Thank you so much for your note typed on a copy of John Adam's letter. It is good

of you to seek information on the other side of the question, and I do appreciate this courtesy you have shown. . . .

"I'm happy for the opportunity to respond to your question. A partnership was formed (which eventually included Fuller Memorial Hospital) to construct and operate a nursing home (Pawtucket). This was done prior to my arrival in the Atlantic Union. My name is not on any of the documents. The administrator shared the plan of development with several brethren in the General Conference office at the beginning of the plan. Fuller Memorial Hospital has operated Pawtucket Nursing Home from the very beginning. The goals and objectives as stated in the proposal are worthy.

"After arriving in this area, I learned of the development of the project, visited the nursing home, but did not get the full story for more than a year.

"In November, 1981, an auditing team from Adventist Health System North did a spot audit and wrote a report containing a number of questions that needed answering, including one of an apparent conflict of interest. I received the report early in 1982, and the president of AHSN and myself in discussing the matter agreed that we needed to share the report with the board immediately. The former administrator (who had played the leading role in the development of Pawtucket) requested the privilege of answered the questions at the same time the auditors' report was presented. We felt this would be the fair and right thing to do - the board would get both sides at the same time.

"Unfortunately, the person has procrastinated. We requested full disclosure -- nothing less would be acceptable -- we requested that he give priority to preparing his report. We made these requests in writing and also verbally. In fact, every time I saw him (and it was often) I pressed him for the information. I regret that it has taken much longer than what he had promised. . . .

"I shared this information with John Adam by telephone and requested that he not publish anything in view of the fact that the board will be receiving the report soon.

"We have tried to exercise patience in this

matter and have related to the person in question according to the Golden Rule. Our Lord has taught us that; at the same time, a day of accounting cannot be postponed forever. We are determined to see this matter through to an appropriate conclusion, whatever that may be."

After receiving this reply from Elder Earl Amundson, and the SDA News Release, #13, which contained documents exposing the Pawtucket Nursing Villa Partnership Agreement, I talked to Brother J. J. Adam on telephone and I asked him if he was aware that the Partnership had'nt been signed by Elder Amundson, but had been entered into during the time of his predecessor, Elder J. L. Dittberner. Adam replied that yes he knew that, but he didn't tell the laymen everything. Further Adam indicated their asking for Amundson's resignation was primarily because he had Brother J. M. Ware disfellowshipped, and this the Council could not tolerate. Then a few weeks later, I receive a copy of the following letter written by Brother Ware and addressed to the Adventist Layman Council in Collegedale, Tennessee. It addressed three subjects: 1) "SDA Laymen's Press Vol. 1, #13;" 2) Pawtucket Nursing Villa; and 3) Earl Amundson and James Ware. It reads:

"According to the information that I have been able to ascertain at this time, it is important for the sake of the truth that the facts of the above matter be known.

"First of all, Elder Earl Amundson, the President of the Atlantic Union Conference, was not a party in the purchase of Pawtucket Nursing Villa because he was not President of the Atlantic Union Conference at the time of agreement to purchase and was not a member of the Fuller Memorial Hospital Board. Consequently he could not have been a party to any transaction in reference to the above Nursing Villa.

"As for the allegation that Elder Earl Amundson influenced my dismissal from church membership in the Brockton Seventh-day Adventist Church, I can state at this time without any reservation that he did in no wise participate at any level in this matter and there is no evidence for the allegation.

"I believe that an apology is in order at this time and should be published immediately and circulated to all the areas throughout the North American Division to clear Elder Earl Amundson's name.

"I can fully appreciate that all parties involved have had and still have the best interests of the church at heart. I believe the cause of God is best served when we all show respect for the truth of the matter and to clear up some of the misunderstandings that have resulted from the articles that appeared in the above mentioned press release. It has been aptly said that "truth is violated by error but outraged by silence."

Where has the Ninth Commandment gone? This whole episode leaves a shadow over all that has been written and published in the SDA News Release. There is no question that the documents published in regard to the Pawtucket Nursing Villa leave some very serious questions even as in the case of the Davenport scandal documentation. But what was the reason to cover and withhold facts from the laity by laity professing to the keep the laity informed? Are there also other facts which have been withheld by the "visible" members of the Council when the SDA News Release was discussing the Southern Missionary College problems? What are the connections between the various members of the Council, and the Editor of the SDA News Release? It is obvious from a report in the present issue of the News Release (#13) that there is a personal business relationship between John Felts, the President of the Council, and J. J. Adam, the Editor and Secretary-Treasurer. Felts wrote - "I had known Brother Adam all my life and he was my personal stockbroker." (p. 2) Does this same thing hold true for other members of the Council? Not only is an apology due as suggested in Brother James D. Ware's letter, but an explanation is also due as to why certain informations are withheld from the readers when the image projected by the SDA News Release gives the expectation that its objective is to reveal the whole truth in regard to the devious financial activities that have marked the Church during the last decade. Then we might also ask, why with the information available to J. J. Adam, as to the dealings of the Wash-

ington hierarchy in the Stock Market, the Council has concentrated only on the actions of certain Union and local Conference officials, and said nothing about the dealings of the Curia on the Sligo in what Adam himself refers to as the biggest legalized "crap game" in the world? Where has the Ninth Commandment gone?

WILSON AND THE WHOLE TRUTH

On January 22, 1983, Elder Neal C. Wilson responded to a series of questions asked him by a panel at the Loma Linda University Church. Following the questions by the Panel, Wilson then made a statement regarding the Davenport scandal. He said:

"Beginning in about 1966, actually a year or two prior to that, 1964 and early 1965, we did become aware that Dr. Davenport was moving into the investment area, or into the development area, and was opening certain opportunities that seemed to be attractive to our organizations and institutions. By 1966, that was more crystallized. We examined some of those things in the General Conference during the latter part of 1966 and during the early part of 1967. In fact, through 1967. We began to realize that some of those who seemed to be attracted by these offers were not looking at all the facts.

"The General Conference itself was approached with the possibility of placing some of its funds in certain of these developments that Dr. Davenport had proposed in different parts of the country. They seemed to be reasonably secure. Land was leased backed up by Federal lease, running twenty or twenty-five years for a Post Office, or what have you, such as the one that we have at La Sierra. . . The problem that we faced in the General Conference in 1966 and 1967, as we looked at, was that we could not get an audited financial statement." (From a Released Taped Transcription)

What did the General Conference do with monies entrusted to them, and what did they want the conferences to do with their monies? This Wilson did not tell. The General Conference at this same time began playing the stock market. A financial officer of the General Conference reported through Spectrum (Vol. 5, #2, 1973, p. 52):

"Because the General Conference is responsible for a large pool of capital, the controlling investment and securities committee decided in 1967 to retain professional investment counsel. . . Lionel D. Edie & Company, Inc., of New York City, was chosen to do the research, analysis, and selection of securities for the General Conference portfolio. Members of the investment section of the Treasurer's Office work very closely with Edie & Company and keep in communication by telephone and in-person conferences for detailed review of current and projected trends in the economic and money markets."

Over the years since 1967, there have been no reports in the Review of the profits and losses as a result of playing the stock market. However, one conference's experience was revealed in the "Minutes of the Steering Committee of the Lay Advisory Committee." Its Sub-Committee on Conference Organization and Finance revealed from 1968 through 1973, this one conference's (paper) loss through the Stock Market was over \$2 Million. The General Conference was during this same period investing not only its entrusted funds, but those of other conferences outside of the Pacific Union Conference in the same stock market. What their total losses were during this period is a well kept secret. (Moreover, it is safe to say, those conferences and unions who had money with Davenport, were reaping returns on their monies.) It would not take many conferences with over \$1 Million losses, plus the losses of the General Conference to equal the total amount lost to Davenport. However, in this instance, the gamble paid off in the rise of the stock market, and the brethren in the Washington hierarchy didn't get caught holding the losses in their hands. It should also be noted that all that the leadership in Washington did during this period was to write letters to protect themselves in the event the worst should happen. No action was taken against those who violated GC Policy guidelines. It is not what you do, it is what you get caught doing that is the bottom line.

We have been advised in recent months that the General Conference still has hundreds of thousands of dollars in the stock market. Of this Wilson said nothing in his report on the Davenport scandal in the Loma Linda

University Church. Where has the Ninth Commandment gone?

[In all honesty, it should be noted that Elder L. L. Butler, Treasurer of the General Conference, has promised to give information to the Adventist Review concerning the Church's "investments." (March 10, 1983, p. 6) What will be interesting to see is how far back he will go in disclosing the hierarchy's activities in playing the stock market, and if he will tell the actual amount involved, and what stocks are in the GC portfolio.]

L. L. BUTLER AND THE WHOLE TRUTH

Recently Elder D. L. Bauer sent to me a folder of documents - letters and facsimile reproductions of pamphlets - showing relationships between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and National Council of Churches. Some of the material I had in my own files, and had seen some of the other documents. There was, however, one letter of current dating that I had not seen previously. It was written by L. L. Butler to an inquiry from a sister in Mississippi. From context, we can gather the inquirer was concerned about the report in the January, 1983, Reader's Digest about the use of funds by the various arms of the National Council of Churches.

Butler's letter read:

"Thank you for your letter of the 27th in which you wrote regarding the article appearing in the January issue of the READER'S DIGEST. Following the receipt of your letter I obtained a copy of the DIGEST and have glanced through the article. We have no financial relationships with this organization. All of the funds that we as a Church receive, whether by way of offerings; such as, Sabbath School, Disaster and Famine Relief, etc., or contributions from the public as we receive through the Ingathering campaign, are disbursed entirely through our own denominational channels. We understand them to be contributed on the basis that we shall use them to maintain the various programs operated by our Church, including of course our various welfare programs.

"The disposition and allocation of these funds are governed by our guidelines as contained in the General Conference

Working Policy, and these funds are channeled through the various areas of Church organization such as the divisions, the unions, the local conferences and their subsidiary organizations. So the brief answer to your inquiry is that we do not contribute any funds to this organization."

I decided as Editor of this Thought Paper to write to Elder Butler and see if I could get the truth our data indicated the letter did not contain. Here is our letter to Elder Butler dated January 31:

"Just this past week, there came to my attention a letter you had written to a "friend" in Mississippi in comment on the article in Reader's Digest for January, 1983.

"In reading the article myself, I found two organizations were being scored in the report. One was the parent, and the other 'the relief and development arm of the NCC,' or Church World Service. In your evasive comments, you named neither, thus permitting whomever reads your letter to assume that the Church has not given, nor is presently giving any funds to the NCC in any form, nor for any purpose. You indicate 'all of the funds that we as a Church receive, . . . are disbursed entirely through our own denominational channels.' You further indicate that 'the disposition and allocation of these funds are governed by our guidelines as contained in the General Conference Working Policy.' But you did not state what is allowed in the Guidelines in respect to giving monies to the NCC.

"In 1960, Mr. Donald P. Landwer, Assistant General Secretary for Finance [NCC] wrote that 'In 1959 the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church sent a total of \$6700 toward support' of program units 'to which it has one relationship or the other.' He was referring to units in which the Church has either 'non-voting' or 'associate membership.'

"In 1970, Constant H. Jacquet, Director of Research Library for the NCC indicated in a letter dated April 7, 1970 - 'In fiscal 1969, this body (SDA) contributed \$5,950 to the DOM Budget' of the NCC.

"Is this no longer being done in regard to any committee or commission of the NCC? Are the present Guidelines different than they were in 1959, and 1969? The new

Editor of the Adventist Review has indicated that he wants all the information to come to the readers first of activities within the Church. Why not clarify this openly and forthrightly in the Review, stating clearly what has been done in the past, and what is or is not being done at present."

As of this date (March 14), I have received no reply nor acknowledgement of this letter. Where has the Ninth Commandment gone?

DR WANG AND THE WHOLE TRUTH

This week there came to my desk an issue of "The Runner." This publication is edited by Mr. H. S. Lau. The article is entitled - "If I Were One of the GC Vice Presidents of the SDA Church:" Then he tells what he would do. Written by Dr. James D. Wang, it states among other items:

"I would listen to the words of Elder Kenneth H. Wood: ' . . . let me say that I have always been critical of the aspects of GOD that in my view represented a departure from historic Adventism. I wrote a 50-page paper on the question and presented it at the Nisoca Pines retreat of the General Conference officers several years ago.' (From a personal letter written August 14, 1981)."

As I read this "personal letter" these words were so familiar, yet "personal" as used in the documentation would refer to Dr. Wang. But no, when I checked it out, it was a letter to me, which I had shared with Dr. Wang to show him that his friend - Elder Wood - only stood for historic Adventism on occasion. The part of the letter which Dr. Wang did not share with his readers - answering a letter I had written to Elder Durand, Wood's assistant - read:

"In your recent letter to Elder Durand you asked whether I stand by the position on Questions on Doctrine set forth in Elder Durand's letter or the one I wrote in 1968. The answer is, I stand by both of them. My personal position has not varied on the book. It is important to recognize, however, that audiences vary."

To a layperson, Elder Wood had written - February 28, 1968 - the following:

BATTLE OF THE DECADE LOOMS ON THE HORIZON

"The book to which you refer is undoubtedly Questions on Doctrine, published in 1957. This book in no way changes our fundamental beliefs. In fact, it probably sets them forth more clearly than any publication that has been issued from our presses in many a year. I have been next to this whole program from the very beginning, and I have yet to hear any serious reader of this book offer a criticism that can bear examination. It is always possible that some statements might have been expressed more clearly to avoid misunderstanding, but rightly understood, the delineations of doctrine in this book are in harmony with historic Adventism."

The facts are simply these: Elder Kenneth H. Wood's mentor was F. D. Nichol who was a member of the committee "to prepare the document [which was to become, Questions on Doctrine] for distribution to church leaders, then to analyze and evaluate the feedback." (Adventist Heritage, Vol 4, #2, p. 41) Thus Wood's comments when writing to the laity was a position in harmony with the apostasy of the hierarchy. When he thought it was "safe" to do so, he questioned the positions of the book. In other words, Wood talked out of both sides of his mouth. Is this what Dr. Wang wishes the Vice Presidents to do, and is this what he would do if he were a Vice President? Why are we hiding all the truth and seeking to have Wood an adherent of historic Adventism when he plainly wrote that "the delineations of doctrine in this book [Questions on Doctrine] are in harmony with historic Adventism." Where has the Ninth Commandment gone? Just where?

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"Because the Spirit is to come, not to praise men or to build up their erroneous theories, but to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, many turn away from it. . . They are not willing to exchange their own righteousness which is unrighteousness, for the righteousness of Christ, which is pure, unadulterated truth. The Holy Spirit flatters no man, neither does it work according to the devisings of any man."

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 65

Christianity Today (March 18, 1983) reveals that on January 27, 1983, Elder Neal Wilson "telephoned Dr. Desmond Ford that he was giving the Australian Division the go-ahead to revoke Ford's ordination. Three days later, Ford received a telegram from his home division stating that his ordination had been 'annulled.'" (p. 23)

What reaction this will have in Australia is yet to be seen. No doubt it will put some of the "concerned" brethren who have fought for this action back to sleep. They have been able to pluck a giant "banana" leaf from the tree, but the tree still stands. Some of these so-concerned retired brethren have never been able to perceive that Ford is merely the fruition of the apostasy resulting from the SDA-Evangelical Conferences in 1955-1956. These men who were so gungho to "get" Ford never raised their voices - not even to a stage whisper - in support of Elder M. L. Andreasen when he openly attacked the result of those conferences - the book, Questions on Doctrine. The tree - The Statement of Beliefs voted at the Dallas Session - still stands. Are these men who profess to lead the forces for historic Adventism in Australia unaware of the fact that Ford himself stated he could live and preach under the Dallas Statement of Beliefs, and that if the "brethren" would move as far toward him as they did at Glacier View in a few days, what would years till the next GC Session bring? See Ministry, October, 1980, pp. 9, 11. Was the Sabbath School Lessons for the First Quarter of this year the beginning?

This is not all that Christianity Today reported. "A follow-up letter [from the Australian Division] also said he would be stripped of his church membership. However, [and here is the catch] Ford's membership is with the Pacific Union College Seventh-day Adventist Church in Angwin, California. . ." (Ibid.) According to the rules of the Church Manual, Ford has a right to appear in his own defense - and to appeal the decision should it go against him, which the hierarchy will bend every effort to achieve, since

now that "the fat is in the fire." If Ford chooses to exercise his rights, the battle of the decade looms on the horizon.

We hold no brief for Ford's doctrines, neither did we support the book, Questions on Doctrine, nor do we give lip service to the Dallas Statement of Beliefs, but stand in defense of historic Adventism. The action in regard to Ford is long overdue. The time that has been taken and the money expended is without justification. While Ford will have many advantages since his membership is at the PUC Church, this coming battle will bring the hierarchy to their moment of truth - truth they have been unwilling to face up to. What if Ford should show that Elder Neal Wilson placed his nihil obstat on the same basic doctrines for which he stands - and Ford can by merely quoting from Movement of Destiny. Will the PUC Church then ask that Wilson's ordination be annulled and that he be stripped of his church membership? If we are going to remove the apostates, we need to start at the top and work on down.

I have never yet in all my years of dealing with the hierarchy seen them conduct a fair and honest trial in dealing with any minister or person where doctrinal issues were involved. They will always try to turn them to the matter of authority - their authority. The Pastor of the Church who usually serves as chairman of the business session at which the trial is conducted serves many times as the "prosecuting attorney" as well. The conference president is usually there to lend his support to the rigging. I have actually heard a conference president say at one such rigged session - "The Prosecution rests its case." But when the person arose to speak in his own defense - a right guaranteed by the Church Manual - he was denied that opportunity and summarily dismissed. There will be one difference in this case if Ford chooses to use his options - the eyes of the press both secular and religious will be looking over the shoulders of the presiding hierarchs.

There is an interesting sidelight to this whole affair. Sooner or later this was inevitable. Elder Morris Venden surely could see this coming. Having talked both ways, was it to his advantage to accept a call to the Pastorate of the Union College Church, thus being able to avoid chairing the trial of the decade?

Christianity Today also revealed that "the Ordination of Ford's colleagues, van Rooyen and Mason, were also annulled, with calls for loss of their church membership." (Ibid.) It did not state where these men had their membership - but is van Rooyen's at the Andrews University Church?

The months ahead will be interesting, not that truth will triumph, but sheer naked power will become more manifest as besieged and desperate men seek to hold to their positions of authority. Will the laity awaken to the fact that the Church has been weighed in the balances of the Sanctuary (8T:247), or will most perceive of this as a purification to serve as a prelude to a so-called latter rain experience? Will they soon forget the Sabbath School lessons they had the first Quarter of this year?

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CHANGES

To accomodate a library acquisition and thus enlarge our research capability without adding building costs, and in line with what we reported as "personal" in the last Thought Paper, there have been some relocation of telephone numbers. Please note the following when calling the campus:

- Library & Research Study - (501) 292-3251
- Business Office ----- (501) 292-3721
- Printing Room ----- (501) 292-3253
- R. D. Renk Residence ----- (501) 292-3718

(The above are all on one "party line.")

Wm. H. Grotheer Residence - (501) 292-3288

(This is on another "party line" not connected with the campus. Care will need to be exercised in any conversation)

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