



*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

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

CRUCIFIXION IN HUNGARY

NEAL C. WILSON in
ROLE of CAIAPHAS

The January 31, 1984 issue of *Népszabadság* leading daily in Budapest and which covers all of Hungary, published the following news release from MTI in German, English, and Hungarian. It read:

"N. C. Wilson, the president of the world organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, along with other high-ranking church officials, stayed in our country at the invitation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hungary between January 18 and 30. They discussed church related matters and visited local congregations.

"N. C. Wilson and Denes Zarka, the president of the church in Hungary and their respective retinues visited Imre Miklos, the undersecretary of State and president of the Office for Church Affairs. At this meeting N. C. Wilson informed Mr. Miklos of the steps they were going to take concerning the matter of the splinter group within the Hungarian Church. N. C. Wilson stated that, as in other countries, the Seventh-day Adventist world organization recognizes only one church organization, the one elected at the electoral conference, and which also the state has recognized.

"N. C. Wilson has expressed his appreciation for the useful and beneficial attitude

of the Hungarian State toward the church, as well as for the high degree of religious liberty he had experienced in Hungary."

Resulting from this meeting in Hungary and the action taken by Elder Neal C. Wilson, a report has been filed regarding the "Adventist Church Leaders in Hungary" by one who was for twenty years in the Church in Hungary. This report reads:

"For 8 years now [The Pierson-Wilson Administrations], 1400 Hungarian Adventists have been vehemently struggling to survive, that is, to be able to remain within the church from which they have recently been excommunicated at one stroke.

"For 8 years, they had been hoping and expecting the leaders of their world organization (General Conference - Washington D. C., and Division - Bern, Switzerland), to act according to the knowledge they had about the situation in Hungary, that is:

1. Call sin by its right name.
2. Call on the Church leadership in Hungary to resign.
3. Declare invalid the excommunication of the 1400 church members, which the Hungarian leadership unjustly carried out.

[No redress was made] "Even though the leaders of the General Conference had clearly seen the entanglement of the whole story from the beginning;

"Even though during the past 8 years they attested to the fact that the excommunicated church members were unjustly treated

by their fellow church members, since they always lived faithfully to the Bible truth and were loyal to the faith and [were] people of integrity;

"Even they knew about the hundreds of malevolent accusations and denunciations, which this leadership has directed against the excommunicated brethren and [how] they reported them to the police, the courts of justice and other authorities;

"Even though their knowledge, that this leadership has steered the whole church into a course of deterioration, [involving] their principles of faith, their conduct of life style, schooling, mission, etc. A brief explanation to the above follows below:

"In 1957 the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hungary became a member of an organization called The Council of Free Churches (Hungarian abbreviation: SZET), which unites all smaller, that is almost all small Protestant denominations in Hungary. 'Reduce, while giving the impression of growing' - was the call of betrayal to the union president. From 1958-1979, Sandor Palotai was president of the Council of Free Churches. (He was a former Adventist, who was disfellowshipped from the church because of adultery, but whom the Baptist received into their church.)

"In 1965, the Council of Free Churches, joined the Ecumenical Church Council with all its member churches, most of which had already been in the ecumeny, therefore also the Adventists - even if only indirectly. As a rule, the current president of the Council of Free Churches is also the vice president of the Ecumenical Church Council. After the sudden death of S. Palotai, Jozsef Szakacs succeeded him, and he was at that time the president of Hungarian Adventist Union Conference.

"Membership in the Council of Free Churches means that all denominations make a financial contribution to it; share one theological seminary and thus receive the same training at the seminary; strictly obey the rules and regulations of the Council of Free Churches (concerning elections!!), proclamation of the Gospel, financial matters, mission, etc. - even if clear Biblical instructions are sacrificed or violated.

"The true Adventists saw where all this was leading - on the one hand, a looser, much freer life style - mixed marriages (because permitted), divorces, worldliness; and on the other hand, the gradual prohibition, discouragement or cunning paralysis of all possible projects for children and youth, the use of literature and other means of evangelization.

"One prohibition after another was passed down concerning the proclamation of the Advent message: 'This is not allowed'; 'That is not expedient'; 'That should be stopped.' Ecumenical weeks of prayer were obligatory.

"In 1961, 19 pastors were dismissed with the explanation: 'Reduction of the number of ministers' (They had received orders to trim and cut back - the most successful in soul winning).

"The president of the Hungarian Union Conference, J. Pechtöl, and the treasurer, K. Berzenczey, abused the trust placed in them. Their wickedness wasn't limited to the area of religion; it affected their morality as well. J. Pechtöl committed adultery - divorced - remarried. K. Berzenczey was caught in embezzling almost 1 million Hungarian Forints - he was given a prison sentence.

"The situation got so bad that faithful ministers, young and old, wept together, fasted and spent many nights in prayer. They became convinced it was time to stop this degeneration. In 1965, their determination was followed by action. They raised their voices in protest. The result: 6 pastors were dismissed and 300 church members were excommunicated.

"The prospect of becoming excommunicated frightened many ministers into silence and obedience, and later they even became determined defenders of those who had introduced and then continued to foster all this evil.

"There arose serious controversy among the church members. Since then, the ministers and church members, who delighted in the loose, free life style have become malevolent, treacherous and hostile toward the faithful.

"Full of hatred, they have terrorized and

boycotted them with full force whenever and wherever they could:

- 1) They ostracized and excommunicated them enmasse from the church;
- 2) They forbade them to enter the churches;
- 3) They took their church buildings away from them (where the whole congregation decided to remain faithful to God);
- 4) They blocked the entrances of their churches on the Sabbath;
- 5) They vandalized their main place of worship several times and made it completely unusable;
- 6) They threatened old, retired church members to be cut off their pensions if they dared to join 'the outcasts.'

"The influence of these opponents of the faithful Adventists reached to their employers, who then dismissed them; or when they applied for a job, the prospective employers had already been warned not to hire so and so, as if they were criminals. The influence reached even as far as the Hungarian State Department and to other authorities so that they have been, for example, denied visas to travel abroad. The reason given was 'Your travel abroad would be injurious to the general order.'

"Such are the "fine brothers" who are in leadership positions of the Adventist church in Hungary today, and these are recognized by the state. Why not, when they are doing, what is serving the purpose of the State which is to exterminate slowly but surely the true Adventist religion.

"Although the leaders of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists had clearly been informed of these conditions by ample proofs in the form of documents, magazines, rulings and resolutions about these conditions and events over the past 8 years, and in spite of their professed intention to work out a just solution, granted recognition to that godless, wicked leadership on January 26, 1984.

"WHAT COULD BE THE REASON BEHIND IT?"

[This Report was received by Air from the Netherlands, and verified by a telephone call to Switzerland.]

The final question of these persecuted true believers in Hungary remains unanswered for 10, these eight months. How

much longer will it be before an answer is given? Perhaps a deluge of letters to Elder Wilson might bring forth an "official" explanation from some member of the Curia on the Sligo.

A LETTER TO ELDER WILSON

(On February 9, 1984, a group of twenty plus Hungarian Adventist refugees living in Switzerland addressed the following letter to not only Elder Neal C. Wilson as President of the General Conference, but also to the "President's Advisory Committee.")

"Dear Brethren:

As you may know, we Hungarian Seventh-day Adventists outside the borders of Hungary - including hundreds of brothers and sisters inside Hungary - have been deeply shocked at your recent action in that country. We have high respect for the General Conference when they diligently work to carry on the vindication of the 3 Angels' Messages around the world.

But the present situation in regards to your decision made in Budapest on January 26, 1984, is seriously grave; not only in Hungary for the 1300 faithful Seventh-day Adventists whom you have disfellowshipped, but also Seventh-day Adventist members outside the Hungarian border.

With Christ-like love, sorrow and pity in our voices, we must protest against this very sad situation you have created by your decision.

May we remind you that in the past 8 years, you have been well informed as to the problems through the Euro-Africa Division plus previous General Conference officers' personal visits to Hungary. You have previously admitted that these 1300 brothers and sisters [are] faithful to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. With this knowledge we do not understand why you have disfellowshipped them from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. According to our world-wide Seventh-day Adventist position it is no reason to disfellowship members of the Seventh-day Adventist church for NOT uniting with the Council of Free Church (CFC), a branch of the World Council of Churches (WCC) - (Hungarian branch called SZET).

You must be aware of our Seventh-day Adventist position on this subject. Recently the Adventist Review has published our view on the World Council of Churches in the August 11, 1983 issue, p. 4:

'The Seventh-day Adventist Church is not a member of the World Council of Churches or the National Council of Churches and never has been; nor do we seek to join either body. . .

An action of the General Conference Committee of June 8, 1950, summarized our concerns. In part it read: 'It is advisable that we avoid any form of union which might result in restraining the full proclamation of the message we feel called upon to bear to the world, or that would identify this denomination with any movement among the churches involving any program, or pressure on government, or any public announcement with which we could not be in accord.'

That is, we are for unity, but not at any price. We are not prepared to sacrifice our distinctive identity, doctrines, or mission. Only by keeping complete freedom of doctrine and evangelistic action can we bear a faithful and effective witness to our Lord.'

According to all the documents you have received previously during the past 8 years and now with your recent visit to Hungary in January 1984, you are well aware that the Hungarian Seventh-day Adventist Union is a member of the Council of Free Churches (World Council of Churches).

This Council of Free Churches has set up seminaries as you well know, that are mainly financed by the Hungarian Seventh-day Adventist Union because Seventh-day Adventists are the only one from their members who have a regular financial system through the tithes. Along with this our young people who desire to study for the ministry are sent to these Protestant seminaries and taught by Protestant scholars who are financed by Seventh-day Adventist monies.

According to the Bible and the pen of inspiration, our mission is to proclaim the 3 Angels' Messages that 'Babylon is fallen, . . . Come out of her, my people, . . .'
(Rev. 18)

The faithful 1300 Hungarian Adventists recognized this danger of compromise 8 years ago. They spoke up and protested against it. They did not want to be members of the World Council of Churches.

Perhaps you know in 1969 in the DDR (East Germany) Dr. Lupke, his son and one other member were disfellowshipped because they wanted to make the Seventh-day Adventist church in that country a member of the World Council of Churches. But now when the faithful members do NOT want to join, you emphatically disfellowshipped them at once.

Dear Brethren, you know the above mentioned facts to be true. We do not understand your decision to disfellowship those who love this church. We have just received the reports from Hungary that our brothers and sisters are in tears across the whole country. With hearts torn and disappointed for the solution you gave to the problem they have there.

We are in deep sorrow and mourning over this sad situation you left behind on your recent visit to this country. As we wait for your response we close this sad letter with Christ-like love.

Your brothers and sisters"

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[According to the one who formulated this letter, no reply has been received to the time that I talked with him by telephone in Switzerland.]

COMMENTS

This report from Hungary brings into sharp focus several areas of concern for the whole of the Church. Paul stated concerning the church - "There should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all members suffer with it." (I Cor. 13:25-26a) But here in Hungary there has been a suffering member of the Adventist body for eight years through the third Pierson administration, and thus far in the Wilson presidency, and the laity of the Church

as a whole have not been informed about it through the official organ of the Church - The Adventist Review. The action reported in the Budapest daily, Nepszabadsag, January 31, 1984, cannot be found in the pages of the Adventist Review. A close check of the index on the issues from January through June, 1984, reveals nothing under the subject of "Hungary," nor anything written by Wilson about his trip to Hungary.

Here in Hungary has been an "excision" from the body of 1300-1400 faithful members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, yet the rest of the Body has not been informed. Yet this is a time proclaimed as a "Thousand Days of Reaping"! Should it not rather be turned into a thousand days of weeping that we might unite our tears with the tears of our brothers and sisters of the faith who are crying in Hungary?

There has been a breakdown of the "central nervous" system so that all parts of the body have not felt the pain and anguish of the "excised" part. Who has taken over the "mind" control of the professed body of Christ so that the objective set forth by Paul has not been realized in the Adventist Community?

This situation becomes even more acute when one recalls the high sounding objectives printed in the Adventist Review when the new Editor - Dr. Wm. G. Johnsson - announced his policy for the church paper. He wrote:

"The ADVENTIST REVIEW holds that the church is best served by keeping its members abreast with developments. Even when the news is bad, it is better that the members hear it through the REVIEW than from rumor or some other source." (Jan. 20, 1983, p. 13)

The news from Hungary is "bad" news. We are sorry that Dr. Johnsson has been so remiss on his promise that we have had to publish this "bad" news for our readers first. Or could it be that he was not given any knowledge of this situation? We will suspend final judgment until the matter is clarified in the pages of the Adventist Review.

There is a second concern voiced by the Hungarian refugees in Switzerland. It

has to do with the relationship of the Adventist Church to the World Council of Churches. The Appeal Letter addressed to Elder Neal C. Wilson quoted from the Adventist Review what is supposedly the policy of the Church, at least in theory, toward the WCC. Of special interest is the fact that the article from which the Refugees quoted was one of three filed by the Editor in his coverage of the Sixth General Assembly of the WCC which was convened in Vancouver, BC, July 24 - August 10, 1983.

It was emphasized in both the first and third Reports by the editor that the SDA's were not a member of the WCC. (Vol 160, #32, p. 4; #36, p. 11) However, the GC Committee action quoted by the Editor, and which was noted in the Appeal Letter, was taken in 1950. While the Hungarian Adventist had very little opportunity, if any, to know what has taken place in the actions of the leadership of the Church since 1950, the Editor surely has known. Here is the record:

1) In 1965 informal talks began between ministers of the SDA Church and members of the WCC staff.

2) Formal meetings on an annual basis began thereafter between representatives of the Adventist Church and representatives of the WCC. These meetings were both authorized and financed by the Executive Committees of the three European Divisions involved in these official conversations. The General Conference was kept informed about these meetings. Five such meetings are known to have been held.

3) In 1969, Conversations began in the United States between Seventh-day Adventists and a WCC appointed group. How long these conversations continued is not yet known.

4) From the initial contacts involving the three European Divisions of the Adventist Church, there have been contacts between the SDA Church in Great Britain, Finland, and Germany, and the national counterparts of the WCC.

5) Resulting from these Conversations, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been represented on the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC - its doctrinal arm - since 1967. (Source for the above 5 facts

can be found in So Much in Common, pp. 98-101) *

6) Since 1968, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists have been actively represented at the annual meetings of "Secretaries of World Confessional Families [Churches]" It was out of this relationship that Dr. B. B. Beach on May 18, 1977, gave a Gold Medallion to Pope Paul VI as a "symbol of the Seventh-day Adventist Church." (Review, Aug. 11, 1977)

7) At the 1980 General Conference Session in Dallas, the delegates wrote into the new apostate Statement of Beliefs the very language of the Constitution of the World Council of Churches which is set forth in that instrument of the WCC as the basis for membership in the Council.

Further, what happened at the Sixth Assembly of the WCC in Vancouver, BC? "Adventist representatives ["observer/visitors"] at the Assembly hosted a dinner for the leaders of other churches." (Adventist Review, Sept. 8, 1983, p. 10, under picture of the Editor and others at the dinner.)

The Canadian Union Messenger noted this event as "a highly-profiled dinner in order to meet approximately 25 Christian clergyman on common ground." (Sept, 1983, p. 5) It was held in the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Vancouver. The tab was picked jointly by the General Conference and the Canadian Union. The sources of these monies was not given in this report. If you should make inquiry, and you get the answer - "Departmental Expense Fund," be sure to ask -- "From what section of Church income did this come?"

One picture of note which appeared in the Canadian Union Messenger, showed Dr. Douglas Devnich, Director of Public Affairs for the Canadian Union. The caption reads - "Dr. Devnich takes special delight in standing beside Father V. Borovoy of Russia." This should tell the Hungarian Refugees something, and give some answers to why certain attempts of appeal were aborted.

On occasion, Dr. Denvich has sought to justify such dinners by noting that Jesus ate with those who were of different religious convictions than He was. But there is a difference! Jesus was not the

"host" for such dinners; He came as an honored guest. We have turned His example around backward.

All of these facts should help us to see that while we with our lips declare that - "The Seventh-day Adventist Church is not a member of the World Council of Church or the National Council of Churches [that is, in the USA] and never has been; nor do we seek to join either body." (Adventist Review, Aug. 11, 1983) - our "sign language" gives a different "message." It can be seen in the light of the facts, why Elder Neal C. Wilson came down on the side of the Hungarian counterpart of the World Council of Churches against the faithful members of the Adventist faith.

FROM PREVIOUS REPORTS

When the name - Sandor Palotai - became known to the American Adventist community through The Voice of Prophecy News, we made a series of reports to the laity through "Watchman, What of the Night?" The VOP news item noted that Sandor Palotai was "a Seventh-day Adventist," and as president of the Council of Free Churches had sponsored Billy Graham's week-long visit to Hungary (WVN, Dec. 1977, p. 8)

As further information became available, we published an "Update" on Sandor Palotai which read in part:

"The Reader's Digest (July, 1978) published from the Diary of Dr. Billy Graham telling of his visit to Hungary last September. The first notation reads:

Saturday, September 3. A delegation of church leaders, led by Rev. Sandor Palotay, President of the Council of Free Churches, met us at the airport. (p. 110)

Spotlight. . . in its July 3 issue, also commented on the Graham Crusade in Hungary. It noted:

In Hungary the recent Billy Graham Crusade was the apparent victim of extortion. The agent who arranged both sites and audiences for the crusade was Sandor Palotay, a communist whose only allegiances are to money and state - in that order.

A. . . news item appeared in the Southern

Tidings (Sept., 1977, p. 9), the official of the Southern Union Conference. . . It read:

Evangelist Billy Graham has accepted an invitation to hold a crusade in Hungary. Graham's acceptance was announced jointly by the evangelist and Sandor Polatai chairman of the Council of the Free Churches in Hungary. Polatai extended the invitation to Graham while in the United States for a General Council meeting of the Baptist World Alliance. Himself a Seventh-day Adventist, Polatai represents the eight evangelical churches in Hungary.

Religious News Service in its "Week in Religion" (Oct. 14, 1977) observed that 'Mr. Graham's visit. . . was sponsored by the Council of Free Churches, an alliance of Baptist, Pentecostal, Methodist, Seventh-day Adventist, and other denominations.' The Voice of the Martyrs, a publication of Jesus to the Communist World, Inc., told of repression in Hungary. It stated: 'Those harassed by the Communists denounce a certain Palyotai as one of the traitors who gave them into the hands of the police; this is the man who invited Billy Graham to preach in Hungary.' (Jan. 78, p. 2)'

We suggested that our readers write to the Editor of the Review for clarification of Sandor Palotai. As a result we received a letter from the Assistant to the Editor, which stated - "Mr Palotay is no longer even a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At one time he was a member and a colporteur." We responded with a letter asking a series of questions among which were the following:

"You state that Palotay is no longer a colporteur, nor a member of the Church. When and what do the records state was the cause of his dismissal from the work and the Church?

"Since you have access to the RNS to which I have access, you are no doubt aware that RNS reported that the Council of Free Churches, chaired by Sandor Palotay, includes the Seventh-day Adventist Church. If this man was such that he was dis-

fellowshipped and removed from the colporteur ministry, how is it the Church in Hungary is still under his influence - an influence evidently great enough that he could represent himself as an ordained minister and attend the General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, and invite Billy Graham to Hungary on behalf of the Council of Free Churches? And the press did not note him as a Baptist, but as a Seventh-day Adventist!" (WWN, Oct. 1978, p.5)

The response to these questions was a referral to Elder Alf Lohne, who in turn referred me to the Euro-Africa Division. At this point, we stopped in 1978, but asking the following questions:

"Is the General Conference unaware of what the Church is doing in Hungary? Does the editorship of the Adventist Review, who still consider the paper as the official organ of the Church, lack the knowledge of what is taking place in the worldwide Church? . . .

"But we still must wonder - what is being covered up, and what does the leadership of the Church not want us to know?" (WWN, XI-12 [Dec, 1978])"

Now the things we wanted to know some six years ago are coming to light with the part the hierarchy have played in the tragedy of Hungary.

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NOTE: This issue of "Watchman, What of Night?" is being mailed two weeks early so as to expedite the information which has been given to us. The next issue will be mailed soon after September 15th. This will make for a longer time period between these two issues.

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So Much in Common can be obtained through the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Ark. The price postpaid is \$5.00 per copy.

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"Watchman, What of the Night?" is published monthly by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., P. O. Box 178, Lamar, AR 72846, USA. It is sent free upon request. For Canada write - The Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Ontario, P. O. Box 117, Thorne, Ontario, POH 2J0.