

"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)

"John Paul's Global Vision"

This is the title given to an article in the February, 1997, issue of the *Signs of the Times*. Pictured on the cover is a photo of John Paul II taken from the Catholic News Service. The author of the article is Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi of Andrews University. The article is not only informative as to the objectives of John Paul II, but it also raises some questions as to where Adventists now stand in regard to the Pope and Catholicism.

First, let us note some of Bacchiocchi's observations: He wrote:

A major goal of John Paul's pontificate has been to forge a united church, updated in its external forms but strongly traditional in its adherence to church discipline and teaching. One of the first steps he took to achieve this goal was to revive the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, formerly known as the Inquisition. (p. 16)

This revived Inquisition has already been at work within the Roman Church. Head[ed] by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, it has dealt with liberal theologians removing them from their teaching posts. Bacchiocchi observed that the Catholic revisionists and feminists here in the States who accuse the Pope of being out of touch with the Roman Church of America "are out of touch with the reality of the Church in Rome. They do not realize that John Paul is not running a democracy, but a hierarchy whose head is the pope and whose center is Rome." The question is then, how soon will the "inquisitional" forces of Rome move against the dissidents in their own ranks in America, and then how soon will it move against all who challenge its authority. For as noted in the article - "John Paul aims to make the pope the undisputed spiritual leader of mankind.

Certain facts of history are noted by Bacchiocchi. When in 1987, the Pope visited America, President Reagan travelled to Miami to welcome him. This was the first time that an incumbent president travelled to another city to welcome a head of state to these shores. In welcoming him, Reagan declared him to be "the spiritual leader not only of Catholics but of all Americans." Further, the President urged the Pope to preach freely to the American people declaring, "As you exhort us, we will listen." Then an important change of history is noted:

Reagan could hardly have done this forty years ago, when conservative Protestants nourished a deep hostility toward the papacy. In 1951, President Truman had to abandon the plan to extend

diplomatic recognition to the Vatican because of strong protests from Protestants. By the 1980s, however, Reagan was able to appoint an official ambassador to the Holy See without stirring significant Protestant reaction." (p. 18)

Why? Bacchiocchi sets forth what he terms three important factors for this change. However, the key factor is ignored. In 1980, the final act was put upon the prophecy Jesus gave in Luke 21:24. On June 29, 1967, the official reunification of Jerusalem took place, and the old city to which Jesus referred was once again under Jewish control. "On 22 July 1980, in a move which created instant international protest, the Knesset voted ... to annex East Jerusalem. 'Jerusalem, complete and undivided, is the capital of Israel,' the Jerusalem Bill began." (*Jerusalem in the Twentieth Century*, p.327) In this fulfilled prophecy, God gave notice that the probationary time of the nations was fulfilled. The final movements would begin, and "the spirits of devils" would begin their work to marshal the nations to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. The place to which they would be gathered was called in the Hebrew tongue, Har Magedon (*Har-Mo'ed* - Mount of the Congregation). * Thus with God's mercy withdrawn from the nations, and spiritism taking over the White House, events were beginning to move to the final drama.

Bacchiocchi concludes his article by emphasizing that John Paul II is strongly Roman Catholic, and that doctrinally "the great truths" of the Reformation, "are still unacceptable to Catholicism." He is for an ecumenical unity but only if there be "no deviating from the true Catholic doctrine." This commitment to "traditional Catholic teaching" constitutes a challenge "to seek for saving truth in the Word of God, not in the broken cisterns of human traditions or of contemporary social values. That Word, the Bible, is the only source of the truth that can make us free and secure for eternity." (p.27)

Why are we citing this article by Samuele Bacchiocchi in the *Signs of the Times*? There is a missing piece in the picture. Whether deleted by the editor, or not in the original manuscript submitted by Bacchiocchi, that part of the Word of God which can make us truly free is omitted. Nowhere in the article is found the prophetic fingering of the Papacy, "whose head is the pope" as "the little horn" of Daniel 7, "the man of sin" in Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians, or the "beast" of Revelation 13. Yet this is an evangelistic publication of the Seventh-day Adventist

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Church, whose Consulting Editors are none other than Mark Finley and Lonnie Melashenko. "Red lights" should be flashing from all sides. It should be obvious that no longer is "the trumpet" being given a certain sound, but that the evangelistic "voices" in Adventism are either muting their testimony, or their training was sadly deficient in the fundamentals of prophecy. In the "Golden Years" of Adventist evangelism, one of the key subjects in any series of meetings was the topic, "The Anti-Christ, Who Is He?" No holds were barred; it was given forthrightly from the Word. I know because I conducted many series of such meetings during those years.

* Note the use of Revelation 16:13-14 in *The Great Controversy*, pp.561-562