

*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

"BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM!
Come out to meet Him."

(Matt. 25:6 RSV)



A TIME TO FACE REALITY

The North Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has seen the formation of more independent ministries in recent years than any other union in the North American Division. It must also be remembered that this Union was foremost in "playing" financial games with Davenport. How much this contributed to the rise and proliferation within the Seventh-day Adventist Churches of that Union of these groups and individuals working independently of the Church has not been determined. However, it has become so intense that the Union Conference created an "Independent Ministries Study Committee" chaired by Dr. H. J. Bergman, president of Walla Walla College. This committee developed eleven "Guidelines for Acceptable Independent Ministries." These were approved by the Union Executive Committee and recommended to the membership of the Churches in that area.

Interestingly, these same eleven guidelines with a single explanatory deletion were presented to the North American Division Council held this year in Minneapolis just prior to "Celebration 88." They were approved as guidelines for the entire Division. This now brings to the fore the whole problem of independent ministries and their relationship to the regular Church.

Ever since the establishment of Madison College with the blessing of Ellen G. White there have been "independent ministries" operating within the framework of the Church. Located mostly in the South, they were called - "Self-Supporting Units." This is not saying that at all times there was harmony and unity of action between the units and the programs of the Church. Neither was it envisioned by Ellen G. White that these units should be self-supporting. In regard to the Madison School, and it would apply likewise to each of the units, she wrote in 1907 - "The Lord's money is to sustain them in their labors. They have a right to share the means given to the cause." (Series B, No. 11) The difference then between these self-supporting institutions and the regular Church was primarily in life style and educational philosophy.

A MEMO

From: The Adventist Laymen's Foundation

To:

Enclosed you will find a Questionnaire which is being sent to all who were named in the memorandum released by the Biblical Research Institute, January, 1988, captioned - "A Survey of Some Independent Ministries." Besides those named in the Institute release, we are also including some who are involved in other independent ministries - The 1888 Message Study Committee, and the American Cassette Ministries - at least, their spokesmen. This makes ten in all to whom this Questionnaire is being sent.

The reason why we believe this Questionnaire to be vital is that during the North American Division Council held in conjunction with "Celebration 88" at Minneapolis, a series of guidelines were approved for acceptable independent ministries. Number 2 reads - "The theological positions of the independent ministries are in harmony with the statement of fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church." Several to whom this Memo is being sent have either indicated in writing, or stated when questioned, that while the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief did not say all that could have been said, these did represent their thinking. However, one to whom this Memo is being sent wrote concerning the Statement of Beliefs that "it is not 'truly representative of [my] confession of faith' because it is not clear enough, specific and unambiguous."

In this Questionnaire, we have singled out clearly stated confessions, giving in "Notes" documented background, so that the answers can be an unequivocal, Yes, or No.

The reason why specific answers need to be given is that you are conducting an independent ministry. The laity are led to believe by this action, that the regular Church is either not fulfilling its mission, or else has deviated from its original doctrinal position necessitating your ministry. This Questionnaire will clarify one area of concern and also give you an opportunity to state the basis for your difference with the "mission" of the Church if that is the real reason for your independent ministry.

The fact cannot be denied that there is some difference or you would not be operating independently. The laity have a right to know where you stand doctrinally and what your mission is. The leadership of the Church is also justified in wanting to know where you stand. It is time to make your position clear. You cannot have it both ways without being a hypocrite.

We plan to write a report of the response or nonresponse to this Questionnaire following January 15, 1989, and would, therefore, appreciate your returning this Questionnaire signed by that date. Counsel we have been given should govern your response - "Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight. Truth is of God; deception, in every one of its myriad forms, is of Satan; and whoever in any way departs from the straight line of truth is betraying himself into the power of Satan." (MB, pp. 105-106, 1945 ed.)

Signed: _____

QUESTIONNAIRE

DO YOU BELIEVE ---- ?

Fundamental Belief #2

"There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons."

Yes ___ No ___

Note: The first part is quoted from the Constitution of the World Council of Churches (See So Much in Common, p. 33), which in turn was formulated from the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of A. D. 381. (See J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, pp. 87-88; rev. ed.)

Fundamental Belief #9

"In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin,... This perfect atonement...both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming."

Yes ___ No ___

Note: The Bible says - "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." (Lev. 17:11) The atonement as defined in this Fundamental Belief adds to the Bible, and is declared to be a "perfect atonement" which provides only "forgiveness." The "blood" atonement as taught in the Bible provides for "cleansing" also. (Lev. 16:30; I John 1:7) Further in Roget's Thesaurus of the English Language, "finished" is listed as a synonym when "perfect" is used as an adjective as in this statement. Was the atonement "finished" at the Cross?

Is the death of Christ - "expiatory"? Wieland and Short in their original edition of 1888 Re-Examined (p. 174) quoted the primary meaning of "expiation" - using Webster's Unabridged Dictionary - to be "some act by which his (the offended person's) wrath is appeased and his forgiveness is secured."

Fundamental Belief #10

"We...exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example."

Yes ___ No ___

Note: Do we place our "faith" in Jesus as our "Substitute" in the same way we look on Him as our "Example"? As our "Substitute", He takes the condemnation for our sins. Does faith in Him as our "Example" free us then from following Him as the Example?

Fundamental Belief #17

"As the Lord's Messenger, [Ellen G. White's] writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth..."

Yes ___ No ___

Note: Do we have a third canon of Scripture in the Writings of Ellen G. White?

Fundamental Belief #23

"In it (the Heavenly Sanctuary) Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross."

Yes ___ No ___

Note: This phraseology and concept did not appear in any of the previous Statements of Belief. It is found repeated in Questions on Doctrine (pp. 351, 352, 353, 355, 375) - a book stated to be "truly representative of the faith and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church." (p. 9) Further in this book, the meaning and limitations of this formulation are defined. It reads:

"How glorious is the thought that the King, who occupies the throne, is also our representative at the court of heaven! This becomes all the more meaningful when we realize that Jesus our surety entered the 'holy places,' and appeared in the presence of God for us. But it was not with the hope of obtaining something for us at that time, or at some future time. No! He had already obtained it for us on the cross. And now as our High Priest He ministers the virtues of His atoning sacrifice to us." (p. 381, Section: "VIII. Redemption Absolute by the Victory of Christ." Emphasis theirs; underscoring mine)

SIGNED: _____

Date: _____

If you have answered, Yes, to all of the above Statements of Belief, it can be assumed that you in no way differ from the doctrinal teachings of the Church in key fundamentals. Wherein, then, does your independent ministry differ in mission from the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to justify its existence? In the space below, please explain.

From page 1 - A Time to Face Reality

Today the picture is vastly different. In fact, so different, it would be difficult to draw a parallel. While in some instances, educational philosophy and life style are still issues, there are three other factors now which were unknown then; namely: 1) Doctrinal differences; 2) Perception of Mission; and 3) Ego tripping. This last factor is evidenced by the way certain leaders of "independent ministries" pictorially project themselves in their publications. It is also of note that one of these cried loudly when the North Pacific Union was adopting their guidelines. He even formulated a counter set of nineteen proposals. Such was not the spirit of the "self-supporting" work generated by Madison College. In all my association with the self-supporting workers over a number of years, I never found one of their leaders on an ego trip. Their agenda called for hard self-effacing labor.

The other two factors - doctrinal differences and mission - present major problems. The Church has taken a stand in the area of doctrine. At the General Conference in session at Dallas, Texas, in 1980, a creedal statement of 27 articles was voted. These articles have been heavily emphasized. During the last two quarters of this past year, the Sabbath School lessons were devoted to their study. A new book - SDA's Believe... - has been strongly promoted. This book amplifies in 27 Chapters each of the Fundamental Statements of Belief. The emphasis at "Celebration 88" in Minneapolis was that these 27

Fundamental Statements were in harmony with the 1888 Message of Righteousness by Faith, and the inference was clear that in the acceptance of these Statements, the rejection of the message in 1888 had been rectified.

One of the guidelines adopted by the North American Division for an acceptable independent ministry is that "the theological positions of the independent ministry are in harmony with the statement of fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church." The laity and the leadership of the Church do have a right to know where the leaders of the independent ministries stand in regard to these 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief. Therefore, we have selected the names of those listed in "A Survey of Independent Ministries" prepared by the General Conference Biblical Research Institute, and have sent them a Questionnaire. (See p. 3 and above.) These men are: Charles Wheeling, Robert W. Hasuer, M.D., John Osborn, Vance Ferrell, Ron Spear, Dr. Colin Standish, and Elder Joe Crews. To these we added, Elders D. K. Short and R. J. Wieland, who head 'up, in reality, The 1888 Message Committee; and Elder Alexander Snyman, spokesman for the American Cassette Ministries. We also allowed space on the Questionnaire, that if any of these were in full harmony with the Statements of Belief cited, and their purpose as an independent ministry involved mission rather than doctrine, they could so state. (See above.) We also sent a "Memo" along with this Questionnaire. (See page 2.) You will observe in this "Memo", we quoted some pertinent counsel

A REVISED EDITION? OR A REPRINTING?

In the first issue of Commentary, we included an article captioned - "Editor Our Firm Foundation Not So Firm." The evidence for such a conclusion was based on the book - Waymarks of Adventism - written by Ronald D. Spear. In it was found this concept - "In the prenatal experience while in her womb, Christ was inheriting Mary's love for God." (p. 39, 2nd ed., 1981) This blasphemous statement has no basis in Scripture. The Bible teaches that in the incarnaton "God was manifest in the flesh" (I Tim. 3:16); and "God is love." (I John 4:8) Jesus did **not** inherit Mary's imperfect love for God. In Himself, He is love!

Now a new edition, also noted as a "Second Edition" and/or "Fourth Printing" has been published. (Don't let this deception confuse you.¹) The blasphemous sentence is deleted and in its place is found this concept - "The good traits that Mary had were of value in both the prenatal and postnatal experiences of Jesus." (p. 42) I looked for a footnote, or a preface introducing this new edition explaining the why for this change, but found none. Another major deletion from this new edition was the "Appendix" by Vance Ferrell which he had plagiarized from a past issue of "Watchman, What of the Night?"

In the original "second edition," there was a major error which was not corrected in this new "second edition." In answer to a question proposed - "Did Christ really have an advantage over me?" - the book reads (in both editions) - "Yes, Christ had an advantage in one sense: He had a sanctified will from birth to the cross." (p. 41) [In the original second edition, Spear italicized for emphasis the clause - "He had a sanctified will." (p. 39)] He bases this conclusion on a statement from the Writings which reads: "Jesus Christ is our example in all things. He began life, passed through its experiences, and ended its record with a sanctified human will." (ST,

Oct. 29, 1894)

You will observe that when Spear draws his conclusion, he omits the key word from the quotation - "human". Now if Christ had a sanctified will "from birth to the cross" as interpreted by Spear, then He could not be my "example" in "all things" as the reference states. But to get around this point, Spear dips back to the teachings of the Holy Flesh men of Indiana on the doctrine of the incarnation, and writes that Christ came with "the same nature that becomes ours when we are born again..." In other words, Christ came born, "born again." (See "The Holy Flesh Alternative," WWN, XX-2)

A careful reading of the statement from the Signs of the Times indicates that Christ "was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet because He kept His will surrendered and sanctified, He never bent in the slightest degree toward doing evil, or toward manifesting rebellion against God." By so doing, He did end life "with a sanctified human will."

Let us consider further the implications of Spear's interpretation of this reference from the Signs of the Times. If Christ received through the "birth process" a sanctified human will, and in the whole context in which Spear writes, this concept is placed in relationship to the prenatal influences on Jesus, then Jesus received from Mary this "sanctified human will." Neither your mother nor mine could pass on to you or me a sanctified will. Spear's theology demands a Mary different from the mothers of the rest of humanity to give to Jesus this advantage which he claims Jesus had over us. This leaves us with but two alternatives, either the immaculate conception of the Roman Catholic Church, or the Evangelical concept. This latter concept teaches that the Holy Spirit sanctified a section of the womb of Mary, and from that sanctified section, Jesus developed. Since Spear would abhor being charged with teaching Roman Catholic doctrine - or would he? - he is left with teaching Evangelical doctrine.²

What difference is there between teaching one aspect of the Evangelical doctrines, and not teaching the other aspects? One may harangue against the Church's compromise with the Evangelicals in 1955-56, but if one is teaching some of the same, how much different is he? To pretend to be standing for historic Adventism, while propagating Evangelical errors, is to be a deceiver, and as John puts it, to be "an antichrist." (II John 7)

¹In a letter from the Managing Editor of Our Firm Foundation, I was told - "While your edition apparently is indentified as, "second printing," the current edition with which I am familiar is notated as, "second edition." (Letter dated, October 31, 1988) The fact is that the edition of Waymarks in Adventism from which I quoted in the Commentary reads: "Second Edition - July 1981." (See below) The new edition of the book - "Copyright 1988" - also carries the same notation - "Second Edition." However, on the back cover, it is indicated that this is "its fourth printing."

Some thing is wrong. The 1988 edition is different from the 1981 edition. Not only is the blasphemous sentence omitted and the "Appendix" deleted, but another chapter has been added called - "The 1888 Message." Thus the new edition is not a reprinting, but a revised edition. It should have carried a preface telling why a new edition was necessary and what changes were made. It is difficult to plead or charge ignorance with the staff Spear has thinking for him. We are left with the not-so-honorable conclusion - an attempt to deceive!

²There is another suggested alternative made by Leroy E. Froom in an unpublished manuscript - The Virgin Birth. He wrote - "A divine, creative miracle brought to pass this new union of Godhead and humanity, begun in the womb of Mary, which secured freedom from the slightest taint of sin." (p. 15) This theory has overtones of the Holy Flesh teaching on the incarnation. The men of Indiana emphasized Heb. 10:5 - "A body hast thou prepared me" - to mean that Jesus' humanity was in a special sense generated by God. Froom's conclusion was simply - "The human element was not determinative in that origin." (Ibid.) Jesus' humanity was a new creation, thus divorced from the Adamic lineage. It was a different humanity and could at birth have a "sanctified human will." Perhaps a few excerpts from Froom's unpublished manuscript would make a good "appendix" for this new "second edition - fourth printing" of Waymarks of Adventism.

Second Edition — July 1981

Historic Truth Publications, Inc.
Box 1684
Paradise, California
95960

WHAT ARE WE HIDING FROM?

If We Have the Truth?

In the December issue of WWN, we referred to a "dissident" publication which was distributed at the Minneapolis "Celebration 88." This SDA Press Bulletin among other items associated the "Human Rights" issue of 1888 with the "Trademark Lawsuits" in which the Church is engaged at the present time. On the front page a postal address is given supposedly indicating the home office of publication.

An attendant at the Minneapolis meeting brought a copy home. His wife wished another copy and sent to the Chattanooga address given. When the copy arrived, it carried an Altamont, Tennessee, postmark, with the Chattanooga return address. Inside a note indicated that it was being mailed from Pilgrims' Rest. In fact, it had been put together there.

This publication is very similar in layout and design to the SDA Press Release, edited by John Adam of Memphis, Tennessee, but published in conjunction with John Felts. However, this time John Felts had as his partner, Deone Hanson, M.D. The return address which was being used was that of a son of a sister - the evidence indicates - who is living at Pilgrims' Rest or near there.

The reason for the "cover-up" was also given. "Vance Ferrell preferred to use another address so as not to confuse ministries." Now think about this for a moment. A major part of the issue of the SDA Press Bulletin was devoted to the Trademark Suit. Vance Ferrell has put out reams on this same subject. There is not an article in the publication which in one way or another but echoes the "opinions" of Ferrell. How could the ministries become "confused"? Who is trying to hide from whom? How devious do we become, all in the name of the Lord?

This concrete evidence should send a signal loud and clear to every concerned Seventh-day Adventist. Here is a publication which contains documented reporting on a current issue. A very interesting and well-written article on "The Anti-Ecumenical Movement" contains excellent truth. But behind this were devious workings - human character manifestations. This fruitage of human reasonings will ultimately surface in some written

From page 4, col. 2 - A Time to Face Reality

from the Writings. It is time that deception ceased to be practiced by the leaders of the independent ministries. One is either a 1980 Seventh-day Adventist, or he is not. To tell the traditional Adventists, as a leader, you hold to the historic faith, and then through this front get into their pocketbooks; yet seek to stay under the umbrella of the regular Church to foster respectability is pure deception and hypocrisy. It is time to face reality. This reality applies likewise to the laity who have been duped into supplying the funds to foster some of these leader's ego trips.

Further, if these independent ministries are in harmony with the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief, and their "mission" coincides with the mission of the Church, they have no reason to remain independent. They should cease to be so and unite forces in the Church's program.

I am not suffering under any disillusionment. I am sure that only a few, if any, of the ten men to whom the Questionnaire has been sent, will reply. For the most part they will prefer to take "the Fifth Amendment" and find some excuse not to respond. However, as noted in the "Memo" to each, we will report what response is received, or the fact that they preferred not to be as "transparent as the sunlight." The hour is too late to wear the cloak of "Meroz" - to "wish to have Christ as their Saviour, but...not bear the cross and wear the yoke." (5T:77)

(The rough draft of the above article was written Nov. 28, 1988, the day the Questionnaire was posted.)

From page 6, col. 2 - "What Are We Hiding From?"

article, and will serve as a snare to catch some unwary soul. Thus a writer, or writers who stoop to devious methods become "untrustworthy" as a source for a correct understanding of truth. All "ministries" which condone or practice such methods are when you come to the bottom line, but one.

+++++

NEWS NOTE

*Hope International (Ron Spear) has now taken over the operation of Pilgrims' Rest. For many years PR has gleaned inside information on what is happening, especially in

regard to changed doctrines, under the leadership of Vance Ferrell who, we understand, is still on the committee operating the enterprise."

Alma Torch, October, 1988, p. 7

[Note: This Australian publication sponsors the Standish Brothers' meetings in Australia.]

+++++

NOTE

We will not issue a "1989 Encyclopedia of Available Materials" through the Foundation. However, below are listed a new publication produced in 1988, and new tapes from last year. You can use the same "Order Forms" as for last year also. If you need any, please write.

Cassette Tapes

- Palestine in Prophecy # C-41
- The Eighth Church of Revelation # C-42
- Is the War Over? # C-43
(This is a study answering a "Guest Editorial" in the Adventist Review by a neo-SDA Editor.)
- Christians and the Fall of Jerusalem # C-44
- An Introduction to the Man of Romans 7 # C-45
(This study is the first in a series on Romans 7 & 8. Others will follow in the Spring.)

Documentary

A Warning and Its Reception - This is a compilation of documents. -It contains the original 1888 Re-Examined, plus the responses of the General Conference to the manuscript, plus Wieland and Short's reply, plus letters to W. R. Beach, plus a letter from Wieland to Short.

D-5 (If included with other materials) \$6.75
Alone - postpaid - \$7.50; Canada & Overseas - \$8.50.

+++++

"Watchman, What of the Night?", is published monthly by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., P. O. Box 789, Lamar, AR 72846, USA

In Canada, write - The Adventist Layman's Foundation of Canada, P. O. Box 117, Thorne, Ont. POH 2J0.

Editor Elder Wm. H. Grotheer
Contributing Editor Allen Stump

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

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