

*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

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

(Matt 25:6 RSV)



THE GOALS OF THE FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION OF THE WCC

Seventh-day Adventist Involvement

Forty years ago this year, the World Council of Churches was formed by the union of two ecumenical movements; Life and Work, and Faith and Order. Joining these two movements in the World Council formation was the International Missionary Council. The Constitution as adopted at Amsterdam in 1948 declared that among the functions of the WCC would be the responsibility "to carry on the work of the world movements for Faith and Order and Work and Life and the International Missionary Council." (*So Much in Common*, p. 34) The work would be done through "Commissions."

The Faith and Order Commission was charged in this constitution "to proclaim the essential oneness of the Church of Christ and to keep prominently before the World Council and the churches the obligation to manifest that unity and its urgency for world mission and evangelism." (*Ibid.*, p. 36) In keeping with this charge the By-Laws of the Commission state as its work the duty "to proclaim the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ and to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, in order that the world might believe." (*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, p. viii) Because of these accepted goals, the primary work of this Commission has been "the study of what keeps churches divided - differences in doctrine, church order and liturgy. ... This focus has kept the ecumenical theological work at the centre of Faith and Order's agenda." (*One World*, No. 132, p. 15.)

The reason why this Commission, its goals and its work, should be known and understood by every member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is that the Church is represented on this Commission, even though the Church itself is not officially a member of the World Council of Churches. Another point should be kept in focus. The General Conference Committee did not elect its representative to the Faith and Order Commission, only nominated. The Constitution of the WCC clearly states that the various "Commissions may add to their membership clerical and lay persons approved for the purpose by the Central Committee." (So Much in Common, p. 36) However, no one would be approved by the Central Committee, to represent the Seventh-day Adventist viewpoint, except he be first recommended by the General Conference Committee. Some history is in order.

Growing out of contacts made at the Vatican II Council of the Roman Catholic Church between Adventist and WCC observers, the Ecumenical Review (January, 1967), official organ of the WCC, published an "essay" introducing the Seventh-day Adventist Church to those interested among "the membership of the WCC." The documentation for this "essay" was based largely on the book - Questions on Doctrine. The "Essay" concluded by suggesting that the Adventist witness might be more properly found within the WCC "rather than apart from it." (So Much in Common, pp. 57-67.) The Church was quick to respond. In a series of editorials in the Review, then "the official organ" of the Church, R. F. Cottrell, an associate editor, while declining the invitation for open membership in the WCC, suggested an appointment to the Faith and Order Commission. (Review, April 6, 1967, p. 13) Things moved swiftly. Dr Earle Hilgert, then of Andrews University, was recommended by the General Conference Committee, and approved by the Central Committee of the WCC. It was done quickly enough that Dr. Hilgert was able to meet as a member of the Commission on Faith and Order at its meeting in Bristol, England, from July 30 to August 8, 1967. His place is now held by Dr. R. F. Dederen, also of Andrews University.

In the WCC magazine - One World (No. 132), - is an article captioned, "Models of Unity." This article was written by Thomas F. Best, executive secretary of Faith and Order. Under the title is a brief paragraph reading - "The WCC constitution lists 'calling the churches to the goal of visible unity' first among the WCC's reasons for being. But what

would 'visible unity' look like?" With this article is a picture of a reopened church in Nanjing, China. It was built by the Anglicans in the 1920's, but used as an optical instruments factory during the Cultural Revolution. Now a part of China's "post-denominational" church, it has "pastors of Presbyterian and Seventh-day Adventist backgrounds." (p. 13) [The picture would indicate it was well attended.] The article itself begins:

The goal of the ecumenical movement is visible unity among the churches. In practice this would mean the following:

- [1] a common faith (basic agreement on fundamental theological issues)
- [2] mutual recognition of baptism and membership
- [3] mutual recognition and sharing of eucharist (holy communion)
- [4] sharing in evangelism, witness and service
- [5] some means of common decision-making on critical issues of faith and life. (Ibid., p. 12)

While the idea of "a single monolithic structure" is denied as a part of the goal, in other words, no "super church," yet the objective is to enable "Christians, in their proper diversity, to experience themselves as belonging to the one body of Christ and, when necessary, to speak and act as one." Then a question is asked as to how even such a goal can be achieved "from our fragmented state"? The writer observed that "despite many growing areas of agreement and cooperation, Christians still differ over important issues of faith and practice." The work of the Faith and Order Commission is to bridge this gap, and have churches mutually recognize each other's baptism (thus membership), eucharist (holy communion, whether the mass or the Lord's Supper, or something in between) and Ministry (ordination).

Giant strides have been made. At Lima, Peru, in 1982, Faith and Order adopted a convergence statement on "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry." (Faith and Order Paper No. 111). This Lima Text "has become the most widely discussed document in modern ecumenical history. About 350,000 copies have been circulated all over the world in 35 languages."

"Over 160 churches have already presented their official responses to BEM [the Lima Text] to the Faith and Order office in Geneva. These include several churches and communities

which are not members of the WCC, such as the Roman Catholic Church (which is, however, officially represented on the Faith and Order Commission)." (One World, No. 132, p. 17)

The conclusion is drawn - "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry has become an integral part of the current ecumenical movement and an impetus for renewal, mission and growth in Christian community..." (Ibid.)

The Roman Catholic response to this document was heralded in the Ecumenical Press Service of the WCC as an affirmation "in a concrete, authoritative and unambiguous manner its commitment to the full participation in the one and comprehensive ecumenical movement." (87.09.32) The final form of the Roman Catholic response was prepared by the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Input included suggestions from the national conferences of bishops and theological faculties. While critical questions were raised to the section on "Ministry", the Catholic paper considered BEM "a significant result and contribution to the ecumenical movement" which "demonstrates clearly that serious progress is being made in the quest for visible Christian unity." Then they added according to the news service - "We recommit ourselves to this process with other churches and ecclesial communities..." (Ibid.)

The significance of the Lima Text is given in the Faith and Order Paper No. 111. It reads:

This Lima text represents the significant theological convergence which Faith and Order has discerned and formulated. Those who know how widely the churches differed in doctrine and practice on baptism, eucharist and ministry, will appreciate the importance of the large measure of agreement registered here. Virtually all the confessional traditions are included in the Commission's membership. That theologians of such widely different traditions should be able to speak so harmoniously about baptism, eucharist and ministry is unprecedented in the modern ecumenical movement. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the Commission also includes among its full members theologians of the Roman Catholic and other churches which do not belong to the World Council of Churches itself. (p. ix)

On the back cover of this booklet is to be found the following two paragraphs:

The statement published here marks a major advance in the ecumenical journey. The result of a fifty-year process of study and consul-

tation, this text on baptism, eucharist and ministry represents the theological convergence that has been achieved, through decades of dialogue, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. [?]

Over one hundred theologians met in Lima, Peru, in January 1982, and recommended unanimously to transmit this agreed statement - the Lima text - for the common study and official response of the churches. They represented virtually all the major church traditions: Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, Methodist, United, Disciples, Baptist, Adventist and Pentecostal.

But BEM was only a beginning. "If BEM can be described as a search for a new way to approach sacramental questions that divide churches, so as to promote unity, a second Faith and Order study is seeking to discover whether Christians today can confess their faith together ecumenically.

"This study, 'Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today', will not write a new ecumenical confession of faith. Rather, it asks whether churches today can 'witness to, confess, live out and celebrate in common ...the same apostolic faith that was expressed in the Holy Scriptures and summarized in the creeds of the early church.'

"For the study, the Faith and Order Commission has chosen the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of A.D. 381 - already officially recognized by many churches - as a summary of the apostolic faith." (One World, op. cit., p. 15)

But why this particular Creed? In a textbook on early Christian doctrines, one finds a summary of this creed formulated by the Council of Constantinople:

The doctrine of one God, the Father and creator, formed the background and indisputable premiss of the Church's faith. Inherited from Judaism, it was her bulwark against pagan polytheism, Gnostic emanationism and Marcionite dualism. The problem for theology was to integrate with it, intellectually, the fresh data of the specifically Christian revelation. Reduced to their simplest, these were the convictions that God had made Himself known in the Person of Jesus, the Messiah, raising Him from the dead and offering salvation to men through Him, and that He had poured out His Holy Spirit upon the Church. Even at the New Testament stage ideas about Christ's preexistence and creative role were beginning to take shape, and a profound, if

often obscure, awareness of the activity of the Spirit in the Church was emerging. No steps had been taken so far, however, to work all these complex elements into a coherent whole. The Church had to wait for more than three hundred years for a final synthesis, for not until the council of Constantinople (381) was the formula of one God existing in three co-equal Persons formally ratified. (J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, rev. ed., pp. 87-88; emphasis mine)

It is this creed concerning the Trinity which was placed in the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief as voted at Dallas, Texas, in 1980. Statement #2 - The Trinity - reads:

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

The hierarchy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is well in line with the objectives of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC in seeking to realize a common ecumenical faith.

"Since common recognition of the creed would mean little unless accompanied by a common understanding of it, the first step in the Faith and Order process is an 'ecumenical explicitation' of how this 1600-year-old creed expresses the apostolic faith for Christian faith and life today.

"As with BEM, the process involves a series of provisional drafts, to which as wide a range as possible will be sought, before a text is submitted to the churches for official response." (One World, op. cit., pp. 15-16; emphasis theirs)

[NOTE: On page 5, we have reproduced "The Nicæno-Constantinopolitan Creed" as found in Philip Schaff's The Creeds of Christendom, Vol. II, The Greek and Latin Creeds.]

WHG

C O M M E N T S

In 1972, the Central Committee of the WCC approved and authorized for circulation to member churches revisions to the original Constitution. The revised Constitution was approved by the Fifth Assembly. The "Functions and Purposes" of the WCC were more clearly defined. No "i" reads - "to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe." (So Much in Common, pp. 40-41) We need to keep in

mind that the Faith and Order Commission "has been charged by the Council members to keep always before them their accepted obligation to work towards manifesting more visibly God's gift of Church unity." (Faith and Order Paper No. 111, p. vii) Thus the very "Purpose" of the WCC as defined in the 1972 constitutional revisions are a part of the "By-Laws" of the Faith and Order Commission. (See p. 1, par. 2) Now we can technically say, that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not a member of the WCC, but in reality it is represented by a voting member on the Faith and Order Commission whose objective is the same as the WCC, and mandated by that Council to carry forward the work of "visible unity in one faith." The fact is, the SDA Church is on the cutting edge to achieve that goal! In releasing the "agreed" Lima Text, the Faith and Order Paper (No. 111) indicated that it was sent to the churches for their official response by unanimous recommendation. Among those "church traditions" listed as participating in this unanimous decision was the "Adventist." (See page 3, col. 2)

Now that the Faith and Order Commission has decided to move forward from a "sacramental" unity study to an actual "creedal" basis for "visible unity in one faith," the Seventh-day Adventist Church is in the vanguard having anticipated this advance step by bringing the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief into line at the Dallas General Conference Session. Circumstantial evidence even indicates that the Constantinopolitan Creed suggested by the Faith and Order Commission was in mind as the proposed "new" statements of belief were being readied by an ad hoc committee appointed by the officers of the General Conference. This original statement as prepared by the ad hoc committee was sent to Andrews University for "comments and emendations." Commenting on this statement as received, Dr Lawrence Geraty, then a part of the Seminary faculty wrote:

In general, the statement prepared by the ad hoc committee in Washington and sent to the Seminary professors was a genuine improvement over the 1931 statement. I did have some questions: for example, Christ "was born of the Virgin Mary" (virgin with a capital "V"?); ... (Spectrum, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 3)

You will observe that "Virgin" is also capitalized in the Constantinopolitan Creed. (See p. 5) This is not common usage in either Protestant nor Adventist terminology. Not

κατὰ καὶ ἐπὶ ἐν προκεινομένοις καὶ
 ἐν-δοξαζόμενον, τὸ λαλήσαν διὰ τῶν
 προφητῶν· εἰς μίαν, ἁγίαν, καθολο-
 γικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν· ὁμο-
 λογοῦμεν ἓν βάπτισμα εἰς ἄφεσιν
 ἁμαρτιῶν· προσδοκῶμεν ἀνάστασιν
 νεκρῶν, καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰ-
 ὄνος. Ἀμήν.

NOTES.

¹ See the History, pp. 24 seq. The Greek text is found in the Acts of the First Council of Constantinople in Mansi, Conc. Tom. III. p. 585, and twice in the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Act. II. Tom. VI. p. 257, and Act. V. Tom. VII. p. 111; also in the Acts of the Third Constantinop. Council, Act. XVIII. Tom. XI. p. 458. See Hahn, p. 111, and Hahn, pp. 78 seq. The Latin text is chiefly from the Quæstiones Cælestines, or *Interp. Dionysii* EPISC. in Mansi, Tom. III. p. 567 seq. For the different readings, see *Notæ*, pp. 94-108, and Hahn, pp. 112-116, who compared with it the translations in the *Code de Commerce et de Commerce Eccl. Rom.* in Opp. *Laurenti Magni*, ed. Quærel, Tom. II. p. 56; in the *Sacrosanctæ Gelasianæ*, as given by *Muraatori, Liturg. Rom.* vol. Tom. I. p. 541, and *Ancient Manuscripts*, ed. Tom. I. p. 11; the old translation of the *Quæstiones Cælestines* by *Isidorus Mercator* in Mansi, Tom. III. p. 574; *Actus Conc. Trulensis*, of the year 868, given by *Mansi*, Tom. IX. pp. 977 seq.; *Erzerum et Basiliæ Conciliorum*, lib. I. in *Bibl. P. P. Legat.* Tom. XIII. p. 868; *Actus Concilii Chalcedon.* Act. II. in *Mansi*, Tom. VI. p. 362, and Act. V. in *Mansi*, Tom. VII. p. 111; *Code de Commerce et de Commerce Eccl. Rom.* published by *Fort. Flor. Beck*, in his *Année de la Grèce*, except *Armenian's* (a convert to Romanism), who inserts, on his own authority, and *res videt*. A Syriac version is given by *Carman*, l. c. Vol. I. p. 108.

(b) *Forma Recensita Ecclesie Occidentalis.*

<p>THE RECEIVED TEXT OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.¹</p>	<p>THE RECEIVED TEXT OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES.²</p>
<p><i>Credo in unum Deum Patrem omnipotentem; factorem cæli et terræ, visibilibus omnium et invisibilibus.</i></p>	<p>I believe in one GOD THE FATHER Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.</p>
<p><i>Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula [Deum de Deo], Lumen de Lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri; per quem</i></p>	<p>And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds [God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance [essence] with the Father;</p>

omnia facta sunt; qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de cælis, et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto et Maria virgine, et homo factus est; et crucifixus est pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est; et resurrexit tertia die, et ascendit in cælum, sedet ad dexteram Patris; et iterum venturus est, cum gloria, judicare vivos et mortuos; cujus regni non erit finis.

And [I believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceedeth from the Father [and the Son]; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. And [I believe] one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

[The Western additions, of which the *Philippus* is the most important, are enclosed in brackets. Compare Vol. I. pp. 24-28.]

NOTES.

¹ The Latin text is from the *Comma and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, third session, held Feb. 4, 1546, when the Nicæno Creed was solemnly professed by this Synod as the '*symbolum fidei*, quo sanctis Romanæ ecclesiæ ritibus, antiquæ præcipuum titulus, in quo omnia, qui fides Christi præstat, necessario continentur, ac fundamentum firmus et unicum, contra quod præteritis hæresibus prævaluit.' The same text is incorporated in the *Profession of the Tridentine Faith*. The punctuation varies in different editions.

² From the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, with which the text in other Protestant liturgies agrees, with slight variations. The Lutheran symbols subdivide, in the article on the Church, the term *christianæ* (Christian) for Catholic. Luther did the same in his German version of the Apostles' Creed; unwisely leaving the Romanists to monopolize the name *Catholicæ*.

only that, it has yet to be denied that the prime mover for a new statement of beliefs was not directly involved with the conversations carried on between the WCC and the Seventh-day Adventists beginning in 1965. Keep in mind that the design of the Faith and Order Commission to project the Constantinopolitan Creed as "a summary of apostolic faith" wasn't conceived overnight, but had been in the planning stage for some time.

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed is actually an enlarging of the Apostles' Creed. (See bottom of this page) The main difference is that the creed of the Council of Constantinople clearly sets forth the trinity concept. The Apostles' Creed merely states - "I believe in the HOLY GHOST" - while the formulation in A.D. 381 says - "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life;... who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified." This then allows for a summary statement on the Trinity to read - "There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons."

A major problem arises for the individual member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, whether a lay person, or a rank-and-file minister. The 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief including the statement on the Trinity was voted by the General Conference in session. Was this the work of the Holy Spirit? In other words, is the General Conference in session "the voice of God" on earth? Now the WCC believes that BEM (Lima Text) was achieved "under the guidance of the Holy Spirit." (page 3, col. 2) The Seventh-day Adventist Church through its representative joined all the other members of the Faith and Order Commission in an unanimous vote for its transmittal and study. The General Conference

in session voted the statement of the Church Council of Constantinople into our 27 Fundamentals. Is this all one and the self same "Spirit" at work? It is obvious that here is a "common denominator" working both in the WCC and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Either the Holy Spirit is working in both organizations and was in control of the formulation of the Statements of Belief which were finally voted at Dallas, Texas, or else "the spirits of devils" has taken possession of the General Conference. This "either-or" must be faced and faced squarely.

WHG

COUNSEL ADAPTED

"The [WCC] must not be introduced into the church, and married to the church, forming a bond of unity. Through this means the church will become indeed corrupt, and as stated in Revelation, 'a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.'

"Through association with the [WCC, individuals] will become unsubstantial, unreliable; because these [individuals], introduced and placed in positions of trust, are looked up to, as teachers to be respected, in their educating, directing, and official position, and they are sure to be worked upon by the spirit and power of darkness; so that the demarcation becomes not distinguished between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. The parable is given by Jesus Christ in regard to the field in which it was supposed had been sown pure wheat, but the intrusted ones look upon the field with disappointment, and inquire, 'Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?' The master of vineyard answered, 'An enemy hath done this.'" (TM, pp. 265-266)

Philip Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, Vol. II, p. 45

I. THE APOSTLES' CREED. (a) RECEIVED FORM.

I believe in God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ his only (begotten) Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell [Hades, spirit-world];² the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven; and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body [flesh];² and the life everlasting. Amen.

NOTICES

45,000 ADVENTIST HOMES INVADED

A special issue of Wieland's official organ - "The 1888 Message Newsletter" - came to the desk. In it was a letter from the editor, Helen Gate, telling that this issue was being sent to 45,000 new names. As one reads this report of "the most precious message," he becomes aware that it contains only half-truths - in other words, deception!

Dr. A. V. Wallenkampf's centennial year book - What Every Adventist Should Know About 1888 - was given front-page introduction. The book review lauds his positions which harmonize with Wieland and Short's analysis of our 1888 history. Reading the review, one could conclude that now a man retired from the Biblical Research Institute has come out 100% in favor of the position of "the messengers" of 1950. This is a deception. One of the major premises of Wieland - "denominational repentance" - Wallenkampf rejects. He writes:

The church never officially rejected the teaching of righteousness by faith. And even if a vote had been cast by the assembly and the majority had voted against the 1888 message, the sin committed still would not have constituted corporate sin, but would be sin on the part of each person voting against it. (p. 55)

This leaves us back at "square one." A "corporate repentance" was called for - 8T:250. This reference was used in the original edition of 1888 Re-Examined. But it doesn't fit the 1888 Message, only its application. This "special report" doesn't explain this to you, again deception!

Then an edited summary of a study by Lewis Walton is given front-page play-up. As one reads his study - it sounds so "good," - so "easy". You do not have to "strive" anymore to enter the narrow way! A few things are left unreconciled. Are we "born sinners"? Christ died for us, while we were yet sinners. How can this be aligned with "Christ came into human flesh" with "the very same tissues and nature" that we have? Perhaps Walton's Roman Catholic trained mind will be able to come up with a variation of the "immaculate conception" theory? This will only compound the deception.

But to those who know and have had correspondence with the editor, half truths are her trade mark. Sad that Wieland has chosen such a surrogate to be his voice for "the most precious message." Such a message demands a higher representation.

WHG

After September 15, your editor will be out of the office most of the time till after the 1888 Centennial Celebration in Minneapolis in early November. He will be returning to the office only long enough to get the Thought Paper into the mails. This will mean that answers to letters received will be delayed much longer than is normal for us. We solicit your patience, and plan by December 1 to be back to normal again.

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You will observe that Brother Stump is listed as a "Contributing Editor" in this issue. The last of August, he returned to West Virginia to further and strengthen the cause of truth there. From time to time you will see his initials - A.S. - at the close of an article he will be contributing.

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At the annual fellowship, both the Morning Devotionals on the Three Angels' Messages given by Brother Joseph Cooper, and the afternoon Bible studies chaired by your editor were in part recorded. Due to a poor connection in the lapel microphone, one morning devotional was not recorded, and the free discussion during the Bible studies did not lend itself to good transcription. However, we will reproduce what we have upon special request.

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"As we near the end of time, falsehood will be so mingled with truth, that only those who have the guidance of the Holy Spirit will be able to distinguish truth from error."

Ms. 43, 1907; 7BC:907

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