

"Watchman, What of the Night?"

COMMENTARY

Volume VII

Number 1

THE 27 STATEMENTS: **SOME HISTORY**

PAGAN INFILTRATION

In a SPECIAL REPORT by a Senior Editor of the Reader Digest's European Bureau in Paris, Vijay Menon, an Anglican delegate of Indian origin to the Seventh Assembly of the WCC held in Canberra, Australia, in 1991, is quoted as declaring, "Pagan culture has infiltrated the WCC." Of "the animism, spiritism and New Age beliefs" presented, Menon said, "I left that behind to become a Christian." (Feb. 1993, p. 68) What took place? The report reads:

Before the opening worship service at the last general assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), in Canberra, Australia, delegates passed through the smoke of burning leaves. This was a pagan cleansing rite. The congregation then listened to recorded insect noises and watched a male dancer impersonate a kangaroo. The next day, as two painted, loin-clothed Aborigines cavorted, South Korean theologian Chung Hyun Kyung invoked spirits of the dead and exhorted the audience of more than 4000 to read the Bible "from the perspective of birds, water, air, trees" and to "think like a mountain." (*ibid.*)

At this Seventh Assembly was Dr. B. B. Beach as a "Delegated Representative" of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He was accompanied by Dr. Roy Adams, from the Adventist Review, as well as Church leaders from Australia. Some questions arise. Did these men walk through the smoke of burning leaves, or did they avoid this ceremony? They alone know. When Chung Hyun Kyung presented her theology based in Spiritism, did Beach walkout in protest? Did he disassociate the Adventist

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On January 3, 1989, Ron Spear addressed a letter to us through his Associate Executive Director, Joe DiGiacomo. In part it read - "Up to this time we have not performed a thorough analysis of the 27 fundamental beliefs." This was nine years after they had been voted. It is interesting that ISSUES cites a statement in OFF, (June, 1989) just six months later in which Hope International does give a summary of how they perceive the 27 Fundamentals as voted at Dallas. It reads:

The official Seventh-day Adventist statement of beliefs is couched in such a way that pivotal doctrines such as victorious Christian living, the nature of Christ, and the atonement are left sufficiently general that all but the most rabid New Theology teachers can give confident assent to them. Thus it is hard to take a strong action against them. (ISSUES, p. 13)

Whether in this article, the writer explains why there is such generality and confusion, we cannot tell ~~not~~ ^{not} having the whole article available. However, the record behind the history of the 27 Statements which resulted in their present general formulation reveals that Spear himself played a part, as well as others. Now he complains about their lack of forthright expression in certain areas.

From the same locality and in the same year that the informal Conversations began between Adventist leaders and the World Council of Churches, a letter was placed before the General Conference administration suggesting a revision of the 1931 (1946) Statement of Beliefs. While at Vatican II, "a WCC staff member and an Adventist representative [B. B. Beach] came to the conclusion that an informal meeting of a small group of Seventh-day Adventists with an equal number of representatives from the World Council of Churches would fulfill a useful

purpose." (So Much in Common, p. 98) The first meeting was held in 1965, the participants being selected by the two organizers." (ibid.) That B. E. Seton was one of the Adventist conferees chosen by Beach, this editor has not been able as yet to verify, but circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that he was one of the participants. However, it was B. E. Seton, writing from Berne, Switzerland, in 1965, who made the suggestion for a revision of the statements of beliefs "both from a **theological and literary point of view.**" (Spectrum, Vol. 11, No. 3, p. 60; emphasis mine)

The leadership of the Church at that time, gave no encouragement to the suggestion. However, in 1970 a series of interesting events began to unfold. At the General Conference session held that year in Atlantic City, New Jersey, B. E. Seton became an associate secretary of the General Conference and was assigned to serve as secretary of the Church Manual Committee. He immediately began to work on revision of the Church Manual overcoming strong opposition. Because of the "official reluctance to change a jot or tittle of the Manual," Seton refrained from including the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs in the initial editorial suggestions. At the 1975 Session, editorial revisions in the Church Manual were voted. After the session, Seton perceived the time to be ripe for an attempt to revise the Fundamentals but found himself as "the only one convinced of the need for revision." He, therefore, produced a one-man revision and presented it to the chairman of the committee. A subcommittee was appointed by the chair which in turn, "with the initial one-man revision as its base," spent many hours producing a revision for presentation to the full Church Manual Committee." Seton continues the recitation of what happened:

At every step, however, it was dogged by the tradition of untouchability concerning the Fundamentals: indeed, there appeared to be an aura of "inspiration" that hamstrung most suggestions for refinement and improvement of each Statement of Belief. This greatly hampered the work of the committee. If that aura could have been laid to rest, the way could have been opened for a much more effective revision. Under that weighty handicap the subcommittee revised the original Statement and presented it to the full committee for its reaction. An ad hoc committee was then appointed, early in 1978, with the specific task of preparing a document that, via the Church Manual Committee, would prepare a Statement for presentation to the 1980 Session.

That ad hoc committee was commissioned to work within the framework of minimal revisions in deference to the generally held idea of the sacrosanct nature of the Manual and the sensitivities of the church membership respecting any change that might appear to touch the doctrinal beliefs of the Church. Once again, the brakes were on, and revision had to be carried out on a very limited basis.

When that further limited revision was completed in mid-1979, I [Seton] ventured to suggest that it would be wise to submit the document to our professional theologians, on the basis that it would be better to have their reactions before the document went further rather than to await their strictures on the Session floor. There was some hesitation, but eventually the suggestion was accepted, and the document went to Andrews University, with the request that it be studied, that comments and emendations be referred back to the ad hoc committee. Those terms of reference did not register, for the University prepared its own set of fundamentals, which were presented to the 1979 Annual Council for eventual presentation to the 1980 Session.

The University's action accomplished what a timorous interpretation of Church Manual procedure had failed to effect. Hindsight suggests that it would have been wiser if the Church Manual Committee had worked closely with Andrews' theologians from an early date - but the traditional reticence to touch the Manual would probably have made that a too-revolutionary suggestion! (ibid., pp. 60-61)

Elder W. Duncan Eva, chairman of the ad hoc committee, had sent the draft of the Statement of Beliefs which the committee had prepared to Dr. Joseph Smoot, then president of Andrews, who in turn selected nine members of the Seminary faculty along with the vice president for academic affairs to review it. This committee of ten was further enlarged to twelve with two more of the seminary faculty added later. How did they view this document? It was noted that in general, the statement was "a genuine improvement over the 1931 statement." However, some questions were raised. The ad hoc committee document had read that Christ "was born of the Virgin Mary" (virgin with a capital "V") (Spectrum, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 3)

On October 16, 1979, the Annual Council adopted without change, the Statement from Andrews University which had been submitted by the General Conference Church Manual Committee with only slight committee modifications. This

Statement was supposed to have been published immediately in the Review so that as much reaction as possible could be received from the field prior to the 1980 session in Dallas. "Unfortunately, for reasons never disclosed, it did not appear for four months." (*ibid.*, p. 6) Finally, the February 21, issue of the Review (pp. 8-10) carried the Statement, inviting "church members to consider it carefully and to send comments or suggestions" to Elder Eva.

At this time, Ron D. Spear, was serving as field representative for the Review. It is my understanding that he and Elder David L. Bauer united their efforts to seek to derail this proposed Statement of Beliefs. I urged Bauer to let the hierarchy proceed so that the lines would be clear and distinct between truth and error. Bauer had prepared a paper entitled - "The 1980 General Conference Session and the Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists." The subtitle read - "Come to the help of God against the mighty." (*Emphasis his*) He scored the Romish vocabulary used in certain sections, and documented well his challenge to the "new theology" expressed in the Statement.

How widely this was circulated, I do not know, but the position which Ron Spear occupied did give him access to a large list of names. Responses to this new proposed Statement did come in to Elder Eva, and revisions were made in co-operation with the Andrews University Committee. On March 11, Eva mailed to the delegates with a cover letter, the copy of the proposed Statement as amended. But the letters to Eva continued to come in; how many as a result of the Bauer-Spear campaign no one can tell. The end result was that when the delegates reached Dallas, they were presented a Statement that they had never before seen, captioned - "X-1535 Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists - Church Manual Revision." One summary to this altered statement presented to the delegates reads:

At the first business session at Dallas, delegates expressed shock that the version of the statement to which they had prepared responses had been substantially changed and that, therefore, they were now suddenly unprepared to discuss so critical a document as a Statement of Fundamental Beliefs. Those who had been involved in formulating the earlier draft felt that the new version was disastrous in form, if not content. (*Spectrum, op. cit., p. 8*)

It should have been clearly seen at this point that the resulting statement, which would be

voted, would be so worded as to be general in content in order to serve as a "tent" over all the various voices which had been raised due to the agitation which had been aroused. Spear does not need to be crying now "that it is hard to take a strong stand against them" because they are so general, when he helped to create the situation. I asked Bauer why he did it, and he responded that he "felt sorry for the 'brethren.'" This is misplaced sympathy. One to whom has been committed the feeding "of the church of God" should take heed to "the flock" rather than be sympathetic to the "grievous wolves" which enter in "not sparing the flock." (Acts 20:28-29)

One can read the reports in the 1980 General Conference Bulletins to learn much about the discussion that ensued over X-1535, the Statement submitted. However, these accounts were edited, and some "interesting exchanges do not appear fully, ... and one long dispute was completely stricken from the official General Conference minutes (by vote of the delegates)." (*ibid.*, p. 9) Elder Ralph Larson, who at the time was pastor of the Loma Hill Church, made a 12-minute speech which "decried the whole process as pre-mature and ill-advised during this time of theological crisis and uncertainty." He asked that the entire Statement of Fundamental Beliefs be tabled. When questioned, it was found that he was not even a delegate, "whereupon Neal Wilson declared him out of order." (*ibid.*)

The only way which one can adequately judge between the Statement formulated by the Andrews University theologians; the Statement presented (X-1535); and the Statement voted (GC Bulletin, No. 9), is to place key beliefs from these statements side by side for comparison. This we shall do beginning on page 4. It should be kept in mind, however, that when Elder Duncan Eva distributed the ad hoc committee's preliminary draft of the Statements of Belief to the General Conference officers, division presidents, and union presidents in North America, he noted in an accompanying letter "that formal and **substantive** changes in the 1931 statement had been made." To get the fullest impact of these changes, one should have available a copy of the 1931 (1946) Statement for comparison.

There is some other informative detail which should be known to those interested in what has taken place. Actions do not result without people acting. The ad hoc committee which had the oversight of this new Statement of Beliefs was chaired by Elder Duncan Eva as noted above. The members of this committee were B.

COMPARISONS
(All emphasis is supplied)

Adventist Review, Feb. 21, 1980

X-1535

GC Bulletin, No. 9, 1980

1. The Holy Scriptures

That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through "holy men of God" who spoke and wrote as they were "moved by the Holy Spirit." These Scriptures are the all-sufficient, authoritative, and effective revelation of His gracious purpose and will. They are the source of all true doctrine and the only unerring standard of faith and practice. (2 Pet

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. These Scriptures are the living, all-sufficient, trustworthy and authoritative revelation of God's gracious purpose and will. They are the source of all true doctrine and the only infallible standard of faith and practice.

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (2 Peter 1:20, 21: 2

Comment: The omission of "only" is to accommodate the "new theology" expressed in Statement #17. (See page 6)

2. The Trinity

That there is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a self-existing Unity in Trinity. God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, transcendent and immanent, the absolute Reality whose infinite and personal being is a mystery forever beyond human comprehension.

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of Three co-eternal Persons, the Godhead or Trinity. God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-present, above all, through all and in all. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He acts in and through nature and history. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation.

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Deut.

Comment: Consistently and unaltered the emphasized sentence comes through in all three Statements. This formulation never appeared in any previous statement. Why? See page 7.

4. God the Son

That God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became truly man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a man, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's Messiah. According to the Scriptures He suffered and died voluntarily for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people. (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-

God the eternal Son is He through whom all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became truly man, the man Jesus, the Christ. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. As our Example He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, yet without sin. He perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. He suffered and died voluntarily for our sins and in our place, was raised bodily from the dead on the third day. He was attested as God's promised Messiah by His miracles, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and His resurrection from the dead. He ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things.

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived (of) the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22;

Comment: Omitted is the 1931 (1946) declaration that "While retaining His divine nature, He took upon Himself the nature of the human family."

9. The Death of Christ

That in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, God Himself provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who accept this atonement by faith may have eternal life, and the whole creation understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This act of atonement forever establishes the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and forgives it. Thus the death of Christ is a complete and perfect atonement, substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Rom.

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, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This act of atonement forever establishes the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over the forces of evil, suffering and death, and makes possible personal victory for those who accept the atonement. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow.

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, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow.

Comment: Both the Andrews statement, and the Voted statement speak of the atonement of the Cross as "perfect." The word, "sacrificial" in connection with the atonement is not used. The objective of "this perfect atonement" is "our forgiveness." What about our cleansing? Statement #23 spells this out. Does it? See pp. 6 - 7.

11. The Church

That the Church is the company of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for instruction in the Word, for fellowship, for the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and for the world-wide proclamation of the gospel. The Church finds and exercises its authority in Christ who is the incarnate Word, and in the Scriptures which are the written Word. The Church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The universal Church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ; but in a time of widespread apostasy a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant Church now calls all humanity to repent and prepare for the kingdom of God.

The Church has ever held a central place in God's design for the salvation of the human race. From Abraham, through whom all families of the earth were to be blessed, to the Church of the Exodus, to the nation of Israel, to the remnant returned from exile, the Lord was seeking to establish a community of chosen people to be His representatives. With Christ's advent, the foundations of the Christian Church were laid, first in the apostles and then in those who responded to their witness. The Church is the community of Christian believers who confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God and claim Him as their Saviour and Lord. Called out from the world, they are the people of God, His household or family; adopted by God and heirs in Christ, they live on the basis of the new covenant...

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the world-wide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word. The church is God's family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His

Comment: No previous statement of beliefs contained a statement on the Church. Consistent in all of the above formulations is the concept that the Church is a community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. This is borrowed language. See page 7. In the voted statement, Statement #12 preserves the concept that - "The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ." The Scripture says - "The devils also believe, and tremble." (James 2:19) Belief is not enough. The "church of the living God" is "the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. 3:15)

That the presence of the spiritual gift of prophecy is an identifying mark of the remnant Church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger she provided guidance to the Church, instruction in the Scriptures, and counsel for spiritual growth. Her writings uplift the Scriptures as the standard of faith and practice, and function as a continuing source of divine counsel. (Joel 2:27, 28; Acts

The presence of the gift of prophecy, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, is an identifying mark of the remnant Church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger she provided guidance to the Church, instruction in the Scriptures, and counsel for spiritual growth. Her writings, which uplift the Scriptures as the ultimate standard of faith and practice, provide a continuing source of truth and divine counsel.

17. The Gift of Prophecy

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth and provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28,

Comment: A careful reading of these three statements reveals an "evolution" in concept in regard to the Writings, which ultimately led to the deletion in the voted statements of the word, "only" from the statement on the Bible as the word of God. (See p. 4) From "a continuing source of divine counsel," to "a continuing source of truth and divine counsel," it was finally stated that the Writings were an "authoritative source of truth." Since Jesus declared, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17), the voted statement is saying that the Writings are of the same authority as the Scriptures, hence the Church has a third canon of Scripture. This is "new theology." The original statement of beliefs (1872) declared simply - "That the Spirit of God was promised to manifest itself in the church through certain gifts, enumerated especially in I Cor. 12 and Eph. 4; that these gifts are not designed to supercede, or take the place of, the Bible, which is sufficient to make us wise unto salvation,..." It was not until 1946, when the 1931 Statement was voted as the official statement of the Church did the name of Ellen G. White appear in a statement. Two sentences were added which read - "That the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church. The remnant church recognizes that this gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White."

That there is in heaven a sanctuary in which Christ ministers in our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once or all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension; He entered the second and last phase of this atoning work in 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days. Thus began an investigative judgment, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. This work reveals who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore worthy of a part in the first resurrection, and who among the living are abiding in Him and therefore worthy of translation. The completion of this work will mark the close of human probation before the second coming of Christ. (Heb. 8:1-5; 9:11-28; Dan. 7:9-

At His ascension Christ was seated in majesty and authority at God's right hand. He watches ceaselessly over the affairs of His Church and of the race for whom He died. As High Priest of the heavenly sanctuary He draws all to Himself and makes available to those who receive Him the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. At the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, in 1844, He entered the second and last phase of His ministry; He began a final work of judgment which is a part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, a work typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the day of atonement. To the heavenly intelligences this investigative judgment reveals who, among the dead, are asleep in Christ and in Him deemed worthy of a part in the first resurrection. It also reveals who, among the living, are abiding in Him, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him therefore are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God despite persecution and misrepresentation, shall receive the Kingdom. The completion of this

23. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who, among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for

ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent.

translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Heb.

Comment: Through these three statements runs a common thread - "making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross." This phraseology never appeared in any previous statement of beliefs, not even the voted one in 1946. While the voted statement does use the phrase - "atoning sacrifice" - elsewhere in the Statement this "atoning sacrifice" is declared to be "this perfect atonement," not "this perfect atoning sacrifice." In the book, Questions on Doctrine, it is declared, "Adventists do not hold any theory of a dual atonement. 'Christ hath redeemed us' (Gal. 3:13) 'once for all.'" (p. 390, emphasis theirs) Further, the new phraseology is defined. In the same book, it is stated:

When, therefore, one hears an Adventist say, or reads in Adventist literature - even in the writings of Ellen G. White - that Christ is making atonement now, it should be understood that we mean simply that Christ is now **making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross;** ... (pp. 354-355; emphasis theirs)

Thus in the very statement which supposedly defines the church's unique teaching on the doctrine of the sanctuary, is the denial of the final atonement, even to the point of seeking to re-define what Ellen G. White has written on this subject. And this after setting the Writings forth as "a continuing and authoritative source of truth." The words of Daniel the prophet aptly describe the present situation - "confusion of faces." (9:7)

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F. Seton, C. E. Bradford, N. R. Dower, C. O. Franz, W. J. Hackett, Richard Hammill, G. M. Hyde, Alf Lohne, and A. L. White. The "Committee of Twelve" who wrote the Andrews University Statement included among others, Dr. Raoul Dederen who was at that time serving (and still is) on the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC; Dr. William Johnsson who now serves as Editor of the Adventist Review.

In our comments (pages 4 - 7) on two of the statements - the one on the "Trinity" and the one on "The Church," we noted in the "Comments" that these were new statements, and never used previously. We also commented that they were "borrowed," the phraseology of which can be found elsewhere. The Constitution of the WCC reads:

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (So Much in Common, p. 40; emphasis supplied)

Why was this particular language borrowed from the WCC Constitution? The answer is to be found in Article No 2 of the same Constitution. It reads:

Those churches shall be eligible for membership in the World Council of Churches which express their agreement with the Basis [Article 1 quoted above] upon which the Council is founded and shall satisfy such criteria as the Assembly or the Central Committee may prescribe. (ibid)

The leadership of the Church denies that they are members of the WCC. This may be true, but the General Conference holds "associate membership" status in the body. It cannot be written off as a happen stance that the request to rewrite the 1931(1946) Statement of Beliefs came immediately following the first meeting between Adventist leaders and leaders of the WCC. The 27 Statements of Fundamental Beliefs voted at Dallas, Texas, in 1980 incorporates the compromise made with the Evangelicals in 1955-56, and reflects the requirements for uniting with the WCC.

Paganism - from page 1, col. 1

Church from such theology? Or was he more interested in disassociating the Church from the protest of concerned Adventists?

When Adams reported his observations of the Seventh Assembly, he noted the theology of the Korean professor, writing that she sought "to explain the Holy Spirit in the context of the indigenous gods of Korean (and Asian) folklore." (AR, May 2, 1991, p. 9) He described the reaction of the various WCC leaders to her theology, even noting what the general secretary, Dr. Emilio Castro said - "Dr. Chung has the right to utilize [native] traditional categories to plant the gospel in Korean culture. Let us listen! Let us correct! Let us review. Let us challenge. But let us not condemn." While in the three article report, Adam's personal bias broke through on various topics discussed, he did follow the advice of Dr. Castro. He did not condemn or react to Dr. Chung's theology, as he reacted to protests by dedicated Adventist. He declared that their protest "deeply embarrassed and sickened" him. (*ibid.*, p. 10) Evidently pagan spiritism didn't.

In summary of how the Seventh-day Adventist Church should react to the WCC, Adams called for a cooperative attitude instead of urging the Church to disassociate itself from the WCC and bring their Statement of Beliefs into harmony with the Bible rather than the Constitution of the Council.

The Special Report in the Reader's Digest also revealed the Marxist thinking dominating the WCC. The editor noted that when "a study group at the Canberra assembly wanted to consult the Bible on a point, a WCC staffer protested, 'Oh no. It's Christian imperialism to suggest that the Bible has more to say than other books.'" (*op. cit.*, p. 69) This same editor pointed out that the retiring General Secretary, Dr. Castro, in 1989, at a reception in the Kremlin stated that Karl Marx "was dreaming out of the same biblical tradition from which we come." (*ibid.*, p. 72) Castro is a "liberation theologian." There appears to be little hope for the future of the WCC. Castro's successor, Konrad Raiser, served for 10 years as a deputy to Philip Potter a Marxist, whose "roots" come from the same region as does Adams. All through Adam's three article report were echoes of the same Marxist agenda. And if this reporting reflects the thinking of the Church's

hierarchy, there is little hope that the course pursued by the Church since 1967 will be rectified, or that there will be a restructuring of the 27 Fundamentals to reflect the Biblical truth once held by the Church.

The bottom line is truth, pure and unadulterated. The "church of the living God" is to be "the pillar and the ground of the truth." (I Tim. 3:15) There is to be no agreement between the "temple of God" and paganism. We can not eat of both "the table of the Lord and the table of devils." (II Cor. 6:16; I Cor. 10:20-21) The course the Church has pursued in relationship with the WCC, and is still pursuing, denies to it the status as "the Church of the Living God."

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A CORRECTION AND CLARIFICATION

In "Part Two" of the series of responses to ISSUES, we devoted a section to "Statements of Belief." (WWN, 3-93, pp. 4-5) Regarding the 1931 Statement we wrote:

It was the 1946 General Conference session which finally voted the 1931 Statement as the official position of the Church. Two sentences were added at that time to Article 19. (p. 5)

In rechecking our manuscript, Key Doctrinal Comparisons, p. 3, we noted that we had used the date 1950 as the date of the General Conference session which added the two sentences in regard to the ministry of Ellen G. White. Realizing that both dates could not be correct, we decided more thorough research was in order. Here is what we found.

In 1946, the General Conference in session voted in regard to the 1931 Statement of Beliefs - "No revision of this statement of Fundamental Beliefs **as it now appears** in the Manual shall be made at any time except at a General Conference session." (GC Bulletin, #8, p. 197) This represented the *de facto* recognition of the 1931 Statement as the official Fundamental Beliefs of the Church.

In 1950, the General Conference voted - "in harmony with the action of the 1946 Session of the General Conference that no change is to be made in the statement of Fundamental Beliefs as it appears in the Church Manual except by approval of a session of the General Conference,

we recommend that paragraph 19 of this statement be amended to read as follows:

'That God has placed in His church the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as enumerated in I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. That these gifts operate in harmony with the divine principles of the Bible, and are given for the perfecting of the saints, and the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ. ... That the gift of the Spirit of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church. ... The church recognizes that this gift was manifest in the ministry of Ellen G. White.'" (1950 GC Bulletin, July 23, p. 230)

Written, Feb. 10, 1993

THE GOSPEL OF GOD

The correction of the detail associated with the 1946 and 1950 General Conference sessions casts light on another important factor in the present controversy which was raised by ISSUES. In 1950, when the first alteration was made in the 1931 Statement of Beliefs by the addition of two sentences, it dare not be overlooked that the statement defining the nature of the incarnation was left standing and untouched. It read concerning Jesus Christ - "While retaining His divine nature, He took upon Himself the **nature** of the human family."

It also needs to be recalled that at this very time, alterations had been made in the book, Bible Readings for the Home Circle, which changed the teaching on the Incarnation that had appeared in the book for over three decades, and which teaching was in harmony with the 1931 Statement as well as the previous Statements. Also in 1950, Elders R. J. Wieland and D. K. Short presented to the officers of the General Conference their original manuscript in which they clearly warned that to deny that Christ "took upon Himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin" - "the nature of the human family" - would be equivalent to Baal worship, the worship of a false christ. (See A Warning and Its Reception, White sec., p. 152, 135) But as Elijah in days of old ran to the desert of Sinai, so these men ran back to Africa, and now the Baal worship of which they warned has overtaken the Church.

In five years, Adventist conferees during the SDA-Evangelical Conferences would declare that Christ was "exempt" from the "nature of the human family." (Questions on Doctrine, p. 383) This change would be reflected in the 1980 Statement voted at Dallas by omission of the 1931 confession and thus enlarge the "tent" of Adventism so "there are at least three views on the nature of Christ current in Adventist circles" today. (Tithe, Supplement to the Adventist Review, p. 3)

We are not willing to perceive the enormity of the Church's backsliding into Baal worship. Even Wieland has put his own spiritual eyesight out. In his latest book, he writes - "Our problem is not our '27 doctrines' or our history. Their general validity is unquestioned." (Corporate Repentance, p. 30) But what did the "omission" of 1980 do?

To the Church was committed "the everlasting gospel" (Rev. 14:6) It is the basis of the whole of the Three Angels' Messages. This gospel is clearly defined by Paul. It reads:

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, ... concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. 1:1, 3-4)

To deny that Christ took upon Himself the flesh of the seed of David received through Mary with all that this involves is to deny the gospel - the everlasting gospel which God "had promised aforetime by his prophets through the scriptures." Further Paul wrote - "if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:9) By the official action of the Church in General Conference session they have denied the trust committed to them in the Everlasting Gospel of Revelation 14, and have come under the curse of God.

For further study read and listen to the documentation in "The Sacred Trust Betrayed." (Postpaid, \$3.00)

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