

CAST OUT OF THE SYNAGOGUE

Part 2

"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." (Romans 3:9, 10) During the reformation, neither Luther nor any of the reformers raised up by God claimed to have any self-righteousness. Luther realized that except by the grace of God he might have been the one sitting on a hierarchical chair ruling over God's heritage. The spirit of the Pharisee was not to be found in the Protestant reformation nor will it be found in its continuation.

While many attacks are being leveled on A. T. Jones today calling him a "bitter man," the true side of Jones is not being given a fair hearing. While it is true that Jones had many differences with the Brethren, it is also true that he treated the Brethren in a Christian manner. When faced with what he considered apostasy, Jones spoke in no uncertain terms. However, I do not believe anyone has found anything Jones wrote to be harder than what is found in John 8:44; Matthew 23:33; 3:7. The implication of Matt. 15:12 is clear! Jones, who probably understood the third angel's message better than anyone living in his day, understood clearly that he was nothing but dust, a sinner who could be saved only by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Likewise, those who are led of God, those who are working to see the reformation finished in their day, weep and pray over their own spiritual conditions.

Does having a realization of our own condition excuse us from speaking out during this great time of apostasy? No! By the grace of the Lord Jesus we may each one be prepared for His kingdom and be used of the Lord to help the Laodicean church member to see the state of "Baal" worship that the church has fallen into in these last days.

While writing the first part of "Cast Out of the Synagogue," I was mindful that I would be accused of being bitter and pharisaical by some, and even satanic by others. My position has not changed since the writing of the first part. I do not write with bitterness or hard feelings toward anyone for anything that was done to me. I account

many of the people involved as my friends. I have no desire to unnecessarily call names or label people. This is no laughing matter nor something to be taken lightly. The souls of those being misled are at stake and the truth must be presented.

This concluding article will pick up the chronology of events where Volume 1, No. 4 of Commentary left off.

Sabbath, October 11, 1986 - Our first Sabbath service apart from the recognized group. We rejoiced that we were at liberty to speak freely, and sad that we could not do it with those whom we consider to be our Brethren.

Sunday, October 12, 1986 - Those who attended the meeting come to discuss future plans for a ministry. We have no desire to start any "new organization." Our people are Seventh-day Adventists who love the Lord Jesus and His truth. Feeling the need to share the truth that God has given us we organize Smyrna Gospel Ministries. We view Smyrna Gospel Ministries as a vehicle with which to spread truth somewhat similar to other ministries operated by Seventh-day Adventists. However, there are some very important differences between Smyrna Gospel Ministries and other Adventist ministries. While we accept tithe funds, never at any time will there be any solicitation for tithe or any other kinds of funds. Second, we will not accept the conference as final authority on anything. The group asks me to lead out in pastoral lines and I accept.

Sunday, October 19, 1986 - Elder Earl M. Clough, former pastor at Indian Creek, came to visit with my family and Brother and Sister Ford. Elder Clough has always professed to believe in the pillars of Historic Adventism and we have had confidence in him through the years that we have known him. He wants to know if we would be willing to return to the Indian Creek Church if he came back as pastor. We tell Pastor Clough we love him and will support any part of his ministry that we can, but we will not be returning to Indian Creek if the rest of the membership still desires to support the hierarchy. We can see nothing but confusion as a result of so doing. (Please see Matthew 12:25.)

November 2, 1986 - Elder Clough writes to Elder Broeckel and invites him to come to Indian Creek to meet with our group. Elder Broeckel agrees to come and the time is set for November 14, 7:00 p.m. at the Indian Creek Church.

November 8, 1986 - The need for a place of worship had already been realized and after Sabbath we have a business meeting and decide to build a small chapel in which to meet.

November 14, 1986 - We meet with Elder Broeckel in the Indian Creek Church. Elder Broeckel offers to organize our group into a recognized (by the church) company if the differences cannot be resolved. His primary desire is to see the two groups reunited. While we desire to be able to worship with our Brothers, we make it clear that we will not do so just for the sake of unity, unless it is unity in the truth. We state that we cannot support the "New Theology" nor leadership that condones and/or supports it. One church member from Indian Creek asks Elder Broeckel if the atonement was finished at the cross. His reply is, "Yes, it had to be." The sadness that came upon that church member's face can never be erased from my mind. I also remember looking over at Elder Clough who had desired to work as a mediator of sorts between the conference and the group from Smyrna Gospel Ministries. His head is hung down in what appears to be despair. I believe that he realizes the challenge that would be before him if he were to accept the pastorate of the Indian Creek Church. Though Elder Broeckel is totally sincere in his beliefs, the group that represents Smyrna Gospel Ministries will not accept someone with the "New Theology" beliefs as a leader.

November 19, 1986 - Elder Broeckel writes to the members of the Indian Creek Church regarding the meeting of November 14. He states in part, "The meeting was conducted in a fine Christian manner, a spirit of love for one another being exhibited by all parties." Through this letter we are informed that Elder Clough has accepted the role of interim pastor at Indian Creek until at least the end of the year.

November 26, 1986 - We receive a letter from Pastor Clough outlining the minutes from a church board meeting of November 22. Pastor Clough in part writes:

New appointments include a Friday evening study/prayer meeting to begin on December 5 at 7:00 p.m., when we will consider the topic, "What are the pillars of our faith?" Come prepared to contribute! Saturday night at 7:00 p.m. will begin a series of evangelistic meetings. Through the miracle of electronics, Joe Crews of Amazing Facts will bring a stirring message, after a health message presentation by Jim Brackett. We encourage you to attend those services that appeal to you and/or which you can contribute.

Friday evening, December 5, 1986 - Several attend the study session from both groups. Pastor Clough discusses the pillars of our faith and hands out a page of Spirit of Prophecy quotations entitled, "Pillars -- Landmarks." Pastor Clough states that he would like for others to take part in the presentations and asks if I would be willing

to have a study next Friday evening. I accept Elder Clough's offer and the meeting is closed with prayer.

Saturday evening, December 6, 1986 - Several from both groups came out to see the Joe Crews video. Relations were friendly.

Friday evening, December 12, 1986 - The turnout for this meeting is much smaller than last Friday evening. Since the sanctuary is the central pillar of our faith, I thought that it would be good to speak on a topic related to the sanctuary. I chose the offering of the red heifer and its symbolism to the plan of salvation.

Sabbath afternoon, December 20, 1986 - We are invited to a dinner and social at the Indian Creek Church. We all attend even though some feel very awkward being there.

Sunday morning, December 21, 1986 - We had Pastor Clough and his wife Louise over to our trailer for breakfast. Our trailer is still behind the church on the back lot that we leased from the local church. (We have had no success in our efforts to sell our trailer and live behind the church for the next five months until it sold.) The men from Smyrna Gospel Ministries started work on a chapel for a meeting place.

Friday evening, January 4, 1987 - Pastor Clough has asked me to speak at the Friday evening meeting again. Since we have been discussing the pillars of our faith in order to determine what they were and if we as a church have moved away from them, I present the study, "Sacred Trust Betrayed!"¹

Saturday evening, January 5, 1986 - Elder Clough had Sid Young, a retired stipend minister, come to Indian Creek to speak. His sermon was on the covenants. When asked what his view on the nature of Christ was, he replied that he was still studying on that issue. The question that went through my mind was; how many years does the man need to study the incarnation? After the meeting was over Elder Young and I studied Revelation 3 in connection with the Philadelphia and Laodicea messages. After reading Revelation 3:8 - ("I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.") - I asked Elder Young what the "open door" represented. He quite frankly told me that he was sure that he had studied that years before, but that he could not remember what it meant! I was shocked. While I have never made any claim in the least to be a walking encyclopedia of the Bible, I believe that there are certain important texts of Scripture that Adventist ministers should know and this is one of them. Upon hearing Elder Young's admission I went to the church library and got an 1884 edition of Great Controversy. After reading chapter 19, "An Open and Shut Door" and discussing such texts as Revelation 3:7-22; and Revelation 14:1, Elder Young asked me if I believed that Laodicea was an apostate church and Philadelphia was a true church. I told him that I thought that he had it exactly correct. Upon hearing my reply, Elder Young shut his Bible, pushed it forward and stated that there was no use

studying any more with me.

January and February 1987 - The Cloughs continue their ministry at Indian Creek while we continue our ministry with Smyrna Gospel Ministries. The chapel is under roof without one offering or solicitation being made, and free from debt.

March 5, 1987 - As certain issues come to a head, Elder Clough and I have a very frank talk. I appreciate the fact that even though Elder Clough and I differ radically in the manner that we relate to the apostasy in the church, we can still discuss the issues in a Christian way. Our "frank talk" was precipitated by a letter Elder Clough had sent another minister in which he had misrepresented myself and the Smyrna group.

Sabbath afternoon, March 7, 1987 - Charmaine and I visited the minister and his wife to whom Elder Clough had written. They have been very close to us for several years and we desired to visit them and reassure them of our love for them. Our visit with them was pleasant. When in our discussion the subject of the incarnation came up, this minister told me that Mrs. White had said we should not study the incarnation! When I asked him for a reference he could not give one but said that he was sure it was so.² By this time I am beginning to understand why our people are in such a sad state. Many of our ministers either believe the New Theology or do not know what they believe about the nature of Christ and other important doctrinal issues.

April 15, 1987 - Elder Broeckel sends a letter to the members of the Indian Creek Church. In his letter he commends Elder Clough for his efforts to unify the Indian Creek Church. He is also critical of Elder Grotheer and while stating correctly that Elder Grotheer is not a member of of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he fails to mention that he was disfellowshipped for similar issues that I was facing. With his letter is a questionnaire asking whether those from the Smyrna group wish to be organized into a company recognized by the conference, or whether they "do not wish to be part of the Mountain View Conference of Seventh-day Adventists."

April 28, 1987 - Elder Broeckel visits us in our trailer. Elder Broeckel seemed to be lovey-dovey in some ways, quite critical in other ways. He accused me of using my influence to lead others astray, especially the "ignorant, backward people in Southern West Virginia." During this part of our conversation I became upset. I didn't believe that the people of southern West Virginia fit the stereotype that they had just been labled, especially the group from Smyrna. They are smart enough to know the difference between true Bible teaching and New Theology, and that makes them a lot more intelligent than many other Seventh-day Adventists!

The subject of our trailer still being parked on the church lot was also a topic of discussion. We had offered to sell it to the conference but they said that they did not have the extra money to purchase it. We had also been trying to sell it by advertising on the radio, in the newspapers, etc. Elder

Broeckel made it clear that we should move as soon as possible. We made it clear that we wanted to move out just as bad as the conference and the local church members wanted us out. However, we had found nobody to purchase our mobile home and because of the nature of the land, the cost of moving it and relocating was out of our budget. We reminded Elder Broeckel that we had two more years on our lease agreement with the church. To this Elder Broeckel stated that the lease probably was not valid because the church lot was owned by the "corporation" (conference) and that the local church really didn't have the right to make the lease to start with.

In an effort to help Elder Broeckel to understand the lack of insight our pastors have on the Scriptures and current issues I referred to my study with Elder Young (see notes on Jan. 5). I told Elder Broeckel that I wanted to ask him a question. Stating he feared that I was trying to trap him, I assured Elder Broeckel my question was sincere and that it was for the purpose of helping him see that not all the pastors were studying the Bible. After consenting to be questioned, I asked Elder Broeckel what the open door in Revelation 3 represented. To my surprise and shock, he didn't know either. I again requested to meet with the Conference Committee to express what we feel the issues are.

May 2, 1987 - Those of the Smyrna company reply to Elder Broeckel's questionnaire as a group. (Please see exhibit B.)

Exhibit B

SMYRNA GOSPEL MINISTRIES
Route 1 Box 128-B
Welch, West Virginia 24801
May 2, 1987

Elder Herbert H. Broeckel
1400 Liberty Street
Parkersburg, WV 26101

Dear Elder Broeckel:

Greetings with John 8:31,32. On behalf of Smyrna Gospel Ministries let me thank you for the personal interest that you have shown for the Indian Creek area in the past and for your most recent personal visit.

After counsel with Smyrna Gospel Ministries, we would like to answer your letter dated April 15, 1987. Instead of beating around the bush, let me comment concerning the questionnaire that was sent to the members of the Indian Creek Church. I believe that you have completely missed out on the necessity of Smyrna Gospel Ministries. The issue is not with Elder Clough or the local Indian Creek Church concerning basic fundamental doctrines that our Church had believed for over 100 years.

Neither of your proposals meets with our acceptance. We are Seventh-day Adventist people who love the truth as it is in Jesus. God has led us by His Spirit to exert our liberty in Christ Jesus. This being the case, we feel God can lead out in this program just as it is.

We have been called "critical", "hybrid Israelites", "apostates", and even "heathens" by Seventh-day Adventist Church members in southern West Virginia. However, none of these, nor others have told us what we were doing or believing that was so heretical.* We of Smyrna Gospel Ministries are dedicated to the truth. (Please see John 14:6; 3 John 4; Testimonies To Ministers page 65.)

I would at this time like to make a formal request to present to you and the Conference committee at your convenience what the issues are based on the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. If we are incorrect in our understanding of doctrines, then we desire to know where we are in error. However, if what we are stating is truth, then the issues are of the greatest importance and deserve to be heard.

We of Smyrna Gospel Ministries are Seventh-day Adventist people who love the truth and desire to teach and preach truth, pure and unadulterated. William Grotheer, whom you mentioned, does not hold S.D.A. membership because he has been disfellowshipped by the "corporation". However, one who believes the teachings of the Bible (or which Elder Grotheer does) is closer to a true Seventh-day Adventist than one who denies the final atonement, yet maintains membership in the organization.

Looking for your reply,
Allen Stump
Allen Stump
Allen Stump

* I did start a study with one of the conference pastors and evening after he preached at the Indian Creek Church. About half way through the study he was able to see the conclusion that the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy taught and he shut his Bible and would study no more.

Copies: Smyrna Gospel Ministries
Mountain View Conference committee
Elder William Grotheer
Elder Earl M. Clough

June 1, 1987 - An agreement is made on the purchase of our mobile home. To be able to sell the trailer we take a \$2,000.00 out of hand cash loss. The money is provided from the sale of some farm equipment that belonged to my father that I had hoped to keep.

June 10, 1987 - We receive Elder Broeckel's letter of June 8. The first part is a record of recent Conference Committee action concerning myself. (Please see exhibit C for that portion of the letter.)

June 12, 1987 - I reply to Elder Broeckel's letter by phone call in the the form of reading him a letter that I had written. That letter was then mailed to him for his records. (Please see exhibit D for an edited portion of that letter.)

June 27, 1987 - The first Sabbath services are held in the Smyrna Seventh-day Sabbath Chapel, debt free from start to finish.

July 15, 1987 - I receive a letter from Elder Broeckel stating that the Indian Creek Church has "taken action" on my membership. This is the first notice that I have been disfellowshipped. I had not been given notice as the church manual requires and Elder Broeckel understanding this states:

the Church manual does call for you to have an opportunity to appear in your own defense...

Therefore, as president of Mountain View Conference, I am recommending the following: That a hearing be granted to you if you choose to have one, and that I be chairman of the meeting in the absence of a minister assigned by the Conference Committee to the Indian Creek Church. [The conference moved Elder Clough earlier in the spring.] Further, that the discussion be limited to the matter in question--the establishment and operation of an independent ministry, operating in competition with the local Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A debate on theology, doctrine, etc., would not be appropriate and in fact, would be out of place, because you are not being questioned about those matters. Only the question of organizing another ministry is pertinent. (Emphasis supplied.)

July 17, 1987 - The local church elder visits my home. He apologizes for what has happened. He states that, as chairman of the meeting, the motion to disfellowship me took him by surprise and not having his church manual, he didn't know how to properly handle the situation. He informed me that he had been in contact with the conference president and further that the minutes from that portion of the business meeting would not be recorded. The clear impression left on my mind is that a new business meeting will be called to discuss and vote on my membership.³

Friday evening, August 14, 1987 - My trial is to start at 6.00 p.m. After a short devotional by the conference treasurer, the president takes the next hour discussing the situation and reading portions from the Working Policy, North American Division, 1986-1987 edition. I am informed by the conference president that the prior vote on my membership will stand even though he admits that I was disfellowshipped illegally. He states that the reason for meeting is to give me a chance to speak for myself. I tell

Mountain View Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



June 8, 1987

Mr. Allen Stump
Route 1, Box 1288
Welch, WV 24801

Dear Allen:

Please convey to those who signed the May 2 letter of request to me and the Conference Committee the following actions of the Conference Committee on June 1, 1987:

Action 87-44 "Allen Stump has requested to meet with the Conference Committee to discuss doctrinal problems. VOTED, to decline this request because 1) problems of doctrine should be referred to the General Conference; and 2) opportunity to discuss differences in doctrine with Earl Clough, official representative from the Conference Committee, has been provided in the local church setting.

Allen has indicated that he will be moving from the church property within a month. VOTED, that the committee convey its desire for, and appreciation of this move by June 30, 1987.

VOTED, that the Conference Committee recommend to the Indian Creek Church that action be taken regarding Allen Stump's church membership, since he has started another church body."

Allen, I convey these actions of our Conference Committee to you in full confidence that we have dealt with you, and the other members who attend your group, in Christian love, sufficient time for healing to take place, and through the ministry of Earl Clough offered every opportunity to keep the church body in Indian Creek in unity and harmony.

It is still my earnest prayer and desire that you respond to my appeal in my last visit with you and Charmaine in your home, that you use every effort to bring the group that meets with you back into full membership and attendance and support of the worldwide Adventist Church. Further, Allen, I have met with the Indian Creek Church concerning the future pastoral coverage of their church. I had that meeting last Friday evening, June 5. We shared, with much prayer, the actions of the Conference Committee contained in this letter. The members of the church conveyed to me that they will proceed with much

1400 LIBERTY STREET • PARKERSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA 26101 (304) 422-4681

Exhibit D

SMYRNA GOSPEL MINISTRIES
Route 1 Box 128-B
Welch, West Virginia 24801
June 12, 1987

Elder Herbert H. Broeckel
1400 Liberty Street
Parkersburg, WV 26101

Dear Elder Broeckel:

Thank you for your letter dated June 8, 1987. Please let me make the following comments concerning the actions voted at the June 1 Conference Committee meeting that were listed in your letter.

I am ashamed that the Committee will not meet with me. The idea that truth must come from the higher level is most papal in form. The mention of Earl Clough being your official representative will have to wait for later comment as Christian principle will not allow me to do so till I have first discussed the matter with him.

I did not indicate to Earl Clough, or anyone that I would be moving my mobile home from the church property within the month. I did tell Brother Clough that I had a party interested in buying my trailer, but that our deal fell through. I also confided to him that it truly was my desire to be gone within a month if something could be worked out. At that time (the time of my visit with Brother Clough) nothing was settled. To be able to be out by June 30, 1987 we have made a deal that will cost Charmaine and I \$2000. This may not seem like such a sacrifice to a full-time conference pastor on a full time "budget" or to a conference staff worker. However, to a teacher on the lowest pay scale, in the lowest paying state in the union, it is quite a sacrifice. May I assure you though that the Lord Jesus Christ has already blessed us in ways to help make up for this loss and I am not talking about tithe money received from Smyrna Gospel Ministries.

Concerning your third action regarding my church membership: If the Conference Committee wants this done, why ask the local church to do the dirty work? If the church has learned a lesson from what has happened in Hungary, then there will be no need to have the local church involved. It has been the practice of countries that practice democracy as well as men of Christian principle that a man is considered innocent until tried and proved guilty. The Committee has voted me guilty without even a trial and has asked the local church to perform the execution of their desire. How ironic that your first action against me does not allow me a voice and your third action does not even consider giving the accused a voice. Even the papacy gave Luther a trial before he was to be excommunicated, and that by leaders on a higher level of the papal hierarchy than the Conference Committee is on the S.D.A. hierarchical level.

Elder Herbert H. Broeckel
June 12, 1987
Page 2

Please excuse me for not saying these things face to face to you as I would have desired. I am just too pressed for time to make a trip to Parkersburg now due to my packing and relocating. That is why I am now reading you this letter over the telephone instead of just letting the mail service do it for me.

Thank you for your time and I will be praying for you and the Committee. May the God of Exodus 34:6,7 truly have mercy on you. Time and the courts of heaven will prove that this action was not taken against a sheep-stealer, but rather one of the least of the brethren of Christ which means that it was in fact done to the Lord Himself. (See Matthew 25:45.)

May I assure you that I write with much Christian love and a sincere desire to see a true heart-felt repentance among God's people. One that comes from the heart, and not a forced repentance.

Yours in the stand for truth and truth alone,

Allen Stump
Allen Stump

Elder Broeckel that is like sentencing a man to death without him being present, and then to be fair give the man a chance to speak in his behalf, but still go ahead and execute the man anyway.

Elder Broeckel states very clearly that in no way am I up for a moral charge of any kind. The charges are resisting church authority, and supporting and organizing a ministry that is considered to be "subversive to the denomination." Elder Broeckel, instead of showing impartiality as a chairman should, became in effect the prosecuting attorney. It must be sadly noted that most of the rest of the discussion did not involve the real issues - New Theology, the Omega, and our responsibility - but rather centered around the issue of whether I should have a whole new hearing since my first disfellowshipment was illegal by church manual standards. While readily admitting that I brought up this discussion, if the president would not be fair in respect to this procedure, how could he be fair in respect to anything else. I had already been told by letter and was reminded during the meeting that "theology, doctrine, etc., would not be appropriate." How does one discuss the omega without discussing theology and doctrine?

Further comment on the kangaroo court of that night would be useless with the exception of the last half hour. As the time of the Sabbath was drawing near and everybody started watching the clock so as to be finished before Sabbath a non-Adventist couple entered the church. The Indian Creek Church had been having some Friday evening meetings and the Bible worker had invited this couple to the services. However, he failed to inform them that there would be no regular meeting that night. One criticism that had been made of the Smyrna group by some of the Indian Creek Church members was that we were trying to air the church's problems to the world. This we have never believed in! Isaiah 58:1 says: "CRY ALOUD, SPARE NOT, LIFT UP THY VOICE LIKE A TRUMPET, AND SHOW MY PEOPLE THEIR TRANSGRESSION, AND THE HOUSE OF JACOB THEIR SINS." The text says to show "my people," not the world. However, when this non-Adventist couple came in they were not asked to leave, but instead the president and a few others kept discussing the situation. At this point I asked that the prior action be allowed to stand and that the meeting be adjourned. I believed that it was not the Lord's pleasure to see his people's problems taken before those not of our faith. After another 15 minutes of discussion the meeting was adjourned just before the arrival of the Sabbath.

Postlude

What is to be learned from this? Is it just the attempt of a bitter ex-pastor to give his side of the story, to have his own trial in which he can be judge and jury and thereby acquit himself, or can someone really be helped by understanding this experience?

Many in the Adventist community believe that as long as one is treated nicely by the conference and their pastors, that everything

is okay. What this experience does show is that even though the conference does a lot of sweet-talking and shows what appears to be patience and long-suffering with the individual church member, the end result is still the same if you do not come around to their way of thinking. The bottom line is: say what you want, teach what you want, do what you want, except for two areas: **finance and organization.** To the church, New Theology is fine. Many of our pastors preach it, even conference presidents endorse it; what one believes is not so important since we now have an open-end theology. The pastor's duty is to keep the money coming in and keep the membership content with the structure. The remedy for a sick church is to preach love and unity, unity that is based upon organization instead of truth. Well did Jesus speak of such: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

There is another lesson. If the church member just desires to retain his membership within the church, remaining silent and not speaking out on the issues will assure his continued membership. If he wants to go further, and be in "good and regular standing" with the Brethren, then he must be sure to return all his tithe (or at least all the conference knows about) to the conference. Today there is a lot of preaching done on Ezekiel 8 and 9 in reference to abominations in the church mixed with agitation on the question of separation. Most fail to read the whole vision which extends to the 11th chapter. In verse 15 we read, "Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly, are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, **Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession.**" The point being: if one speaks up for the truth, and against the errors as God designs, then given time, he will be "Cast Out of the Synagogue."

A. S.

Footnotes:

1 This study originally compiled by Elder Grotheer is available from the Adventist Laymen's Foundation in cassette form with a study guide.

2 Please see 7BC:904 and Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 244.

3 There is a certain amount of irony to the rest of this particular story. This last fall I requested from this elder a copy of the minutes from that portion of the business meeting in which I was disfellowshipped. How could it be proved that I was disfellowshipped without them? To this day, no copy has been provided. Perhaps the elder has made good on the promise that they would not be recorded!

"When men who profess to serve God ignore His parental character and depart from honor and righteousness in dealing with their fellowmen, Satan exults, for he has inspired them with his attributes. They are following in the track of Romanism." (TM p. 362)

More Dangerous than Ford?

The January 1988 issue of the Sabbath Sentinel contains at least two articles that should be of interest to Seventh-day Adventists. The first is "An Interview with Dr. Desmond Ford." The second is an article written by Dr. Ford entitled, "God's Bulwark Against Apostasy." It will be the first article that concerns this editorial. All emphasis is supplied unless noted.

While reading through the interview with Dr. Ford I came across some very interesting statements. When asked by editor Richard Wiedenheft about his "current relationship with the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference," Dr. Ford replied:

I have nothing but a friendly spirit towards the brethren in the General Conference, and with many of them that would be reciprocal. I have very good friends in the General Conference, but we don't have any official relationship. **My name is still on the roll of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Many think it should not be there, others are sure it ought to be there. But my belief is that the church invisible is the true church of God. The denominations are only a part of it.** (p. 5)

Fact number 1: Desmond Ford is still a member with good standing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Fact number 2: Dr. Ford does not see any uniqueness to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is further commented on by Dr. Ford:

The traditional Adventist believes that he or she is a member of the remnant church, the sole object of God's supreme regard. Other Adventists are coming to understand that the true church of God is a church invisible, composed of all the regenerate whatever their name or sign. (p.7)

On October 22, 1979, Dr. Ford, then a guest lecturer at Pacific Union College, gave an "address protesting the doctrine of The Investigative Judgement as being extra-Biblical." Dr. Ford's comments, about the influence of that lecture, were in part:

And many people in the church agreed with me; almost all the scholars agreed in essence with my protest against that doctrine. **It ceased to be taught at Andrews; it ceased to be taught at many places. Most of the scholars had given it up years ago.** (p. 4)

Fact number 3: Dr. Ford's theology had a great impact upon the theologians in the church in 1979 and the influence of that theology is still being strongly felt. Dr. Ford's position that the teaching of the investigative judgement is extra-Biblical has become the philosophy of many theologians and church leaders today. Some are asking, is the doctrine of the sanctuary Biblical? In response, how easy it is to quote: "The Scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and central pillar of the Advent faith, was the declaration, 'Unto two thousand and three hundred days: then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.'" (Great Controversy, p. 467) Without question, the quotation from the Spirit of Prophecy is true. Using the Spirit of Prophecy to prove this fact about the central pillar of our

faith only plays into Dr. Ford's hands! Remember, Dr. Ford claimed that the doctrine was "extra-Biblical." Unfortunately, most Adventist understanding of the sanctuary is not based in the Bible - but in the Writings. While a study of the Writings is to be commended, and especially those that deal with the sanctuary, the believer's faith must be based upon the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone. Try to give a "Bible" study on the Atonement with a non-Adventist using Ellen G. White's writings and see what kind of a reaction you get.

Concerning the ministry founded by Dr. Ford, Good News Unlimited, he states:

We now have access to millions if they choose to tune in to our programs; probably only thousands do. We're heard in northern California, in southern California, in different places across America on radio, in Canada, New Zealand, and parts of Australia. Our magazine, Good News Unlimited, goes to about 4200 people in 20 countries. **Australia sends out another one or two thousand, with some things Australianized.** (pp. 5, 6)

Fact number 4: Dr. Ford has a ministry with far reaching possibilities. No mention is made whether the message of Good News Unlimited contains any of the unique third angel's message outside of the Sabbath. However, the article mentions that emphasis is placed upon the preaching of the cross and salvation.

If a ministry is to work in cooperation with the church then it should be teaching the unique doctrines that have been given to us as a sacred trust. However, with the church voting the Statement of Belief at the 1980 Dallas General Conference Session, we have put ourselves in a position with which Dr. Ford has little problem agreeing. During the Glacier View Conference the denomination decided to maintain a strong line based upon the recently voted statement from Dallas. The editor of the Ministry magazine stated that the consensus paper, "'Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary,' adopted at the Glacier View meeting, is not the official view of the church other than that portion taken from our Fundamental Beliefs." As one studies the consensus paper he finds that there is no great deviation between it and the voted statement from Dallas. Elder Spangler writing in Ministry related some of Dr. Ford's thoughts concerning the Dallas Statement and the consensus paper formulated at Glacier View. He wrote:

Dr. Ford replied, in effect, that the statement of "Fundamental Beliefs" voted by the church at Dallas showed a very definite shift away from Ellen White's interpretation in the area of the sanctuary. He declared that the statement on the sanctuary voted at Dallas says nothing about two apartments in the heavenly sanctuary. He professed to be able to feel very comfortable preaching under the umbrella of the consensus paper just voted at Glacier View. In his opinion that paper showed a definite shift away from Ellen White's interpretations of the sanctuary. **He said that the church had moved considerably from its past position toward his direction, and that in a few years the church will eventually come to see things as he does ...**

Dr. Ford was then asked whether his doctrinal positions were more than tentative, to which he responded that the brethren had made tremendous progress in the past

THE TRUE CHURCH

With each member of the family having their own private Bible study, and family worship together each morning, what do you do in the evening? Noting that chapter four of Great Controversy is based in part on the History of Protestantism, book 16, by Wylie, we decided to read and discuss the reprint under the title - History of the Waldenses.

In the very first chapter, we found some key points that are very apropos to the present times, and gives a basis for the decisions of the associate editor as noted in his own "exodus" experience. Wylie cites the fact of the Waldensians direct descent from the apostolic church free from any connection with Rome. He noted this apostolic connection based in doctrine, "if doctrine be the life of the churches." (p. 9)

This is a very present day issue. Is "doctrine" the life of the church, or can we believe what we want to believe, the theology of the church being "open-ended"? This latter concept is being promoted during this 1888 Centennial Year. Our reaction to this ecumenical concept should be the same as the Waldensian when confronted with union with Rome. Wylie stated:

When their coreligionists on the plains entered within the pale of the Roman jurisdiction, they retired within the mountains, and spurning alike the tyrannical yoke and the corrupt tenents of the Church of the Seven Hills, they preserved in its purity and simplicity the faith their forefathers had handed down to them. (Ibid.)

We read history, and so long as it is past history, we applaud noble decisions, but when similar history becomes "now" time, we refuse to apply the experience.

Wylie has drawn the conclusion as to the status before God of the two groups at the time of their decision. He wrote:

Rome manifestly was the schismatic; she it was that had abandoned what was once the common faith of Christendom, leaving by that step to all who remained on the old ground the indisputably valid title of the true church. (Ibid.)

Paraphrasing Wylie's conclusion for the "now" time, it would read:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is manifestly the schismatic; she it is who has abandoned what was the common faith of Adventism, leaving by that step to all who remained on the old ground the indisputably valid title of the true church.

WHG

Commentary is published quarterly by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Miss., Inc., P. O. Box 789, Lamar, AR 72846. USA.

Editor Wm. H. Grotheer
Assistant Editor Allen Stump

You may obtain a copy free upon request as long as the supply of any issue is not exhausted.

few days and that the church's position was closer to his than it had ever been before. He expressed the thought that if we have come this far in four days, imagine how far the church will go four years in changing its position. (Ministry, October 1980, p. 9)

As I collected my thoughts concerning Dr. Ford I wondered why he had not been disfellowshipped? After all, he had caused quite a controversy in the world wide church. He had attempted to pull down the central pillar of our faith. He has organized a ministry, and he now fails to see any uniqueness to the remnant message. But as I thought, the pieces of the puzzle began to fit together.

Dr. Ford's position on the sanctuary is fast becoming the standard among many Adventists. The statement from Dallas and the Glacier View document bring us closer to Dr. Ford's position than before. Even though his doctrine has undermined our faith, the church is in no position to excommunicate him on the doctrinal issue. Dr. Ford does not speak against the organization and that is the key to his present membership. While I do not believe for one minute that his membership is so important that he refrains from speaking on that topic, I just do not think that organization is an issue with Desmond Ford.

So we come to the title of the editorial, "More Dangerous than Ford?" I hardly conceive of myself being more dangerous to the Seventh-day Adventist organization than Dr. Ford. Then why did I get the boot and not Ford? Is it because the conference looks upon Smyrna Gospel Ministries as more dangerous than Good News Unlimited? We can hardly claim the outreach they have. Is it because the conference thought that I have more influence than Dr. Ford? Hardly! Then what is the answer? Is it the association that I have had with Elder Grotheer? Possibly, but probably not. Elder Grotheer's daughter and her husband work here and help with the program of the foundation and have from the start and their names have never been deleted from any church books. Could the answer be the desire of a conference president trying to look good to the union men as he strives to climb his way up the hierarchical ladder? Perhaps it is a combination of some or all these possibilities. This seems like the most reasonable answer. As I stated in the article, "Cast Out of the Synagogue," the organization is important to the hierarchy, and in connection with the tithe issue is sure to strike a raw nerve.

In commenting upon the persecution of the early Christians by the Jews, A. T. Jones wrote:

For upon this whole story of the church of Israel against the apostles, there stands out with transcendent meaning a truth that is worthy of the most solemn consideration by every Christian: this truth is,-

That which until that time had been the true church, called and preserved by the Lord, then and there ceased to be the true church at all; and that which this church despised, and forbade, and persecuted, and cast out, became itself the true church.

And so it is forever. John 9:34-38. (Individuality in Religion, pp. 66, 67 - Emphasis in original.)