



*"Watchman,  
what of the night?"*

*The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12*

# ARE WE UNABLE TO TELL THE TRUTH?

## Duplicity of Hierarchy Revealed in CHRISTIANITY TODAY News Report

Christianity Today (Nov. 20, 1981, pp. 64, 69) contained a news report of the recent Annual Council held in Takoma Park, Oct. 6 - 14. It quoted Elder Neal C. Wilson's analysis of the theological dissension in the church, and the accusations of plagiarism in the writings of Ellen G. White as "Satan's subtle sophistry and cunningness." [Or should these dissensions and accusations be viewed as God's judgments on an apostate hierarchy?] Discussing the friction between the theologians and the administrators of the Church, Dr. Charles Hirsch who headed the Educational Department of the General Conference, and who at the Annual Council was elevated to the position of Vice President, was noted as believing that "academic freedom must be balanced by academic responsibility." [In this he is correct.]

The third leader of the Church's hierarchy to be quoted in the news story in Christianity Today was Dr. Richard Leshar, who until the Annual Council was director of the Biblical Research Committee of the General Conference, and like Hirsch was elevated to serve as one of the Vice Pres-

idents. He is quoted concerning the issue of the authority of Ellen G. White in Adventist's theology and beliefs. The news report reads:

He said Adventists consider the Bible their ultimate authority and that the Bible's unity makes it "its own interpreter." Still, Leshar said in a telephone interview, White holds an important place in determining church belief.

He said the SDA has clearly affirmed the Old and New Testaments as the "only unerring rule of faith and practice." White is looked to for "comfort, guidance, instruction and correction," but does not stand above the Bible. Nonetheless, Leshar admitted "most Adventists would be more reluctant to disagree with White than Presbyterians with Calvin, or Lutherans with Luther." And he said it is "difficult" for an Adventist to say that White makes any errors in her interpretation of Scripture. (p. 64)

Before discussing these comments attributed to Leshar, the reader needs to be aware of some background information. At the Dallas General Conference Session where the Fundamental Statement of Beliefs was revised, Dr. Leshar served on a special committee appointed by Elder Neal C. Wilson "to do some editing" of the Statement as submitted to the delegates bringing it line with alterations voted following the floor discussions. (Adventist Review, April 23, 1980, p. 14) In other words, Leshar had full knowledge of what

transpired at the Dallas session in regard to the beliefs of the Church. Further, as Director of the Biblical Research Committee of the General Conference, he should possess the qualifications required of a researcher to know what is truth.

Now let us carefully observe the comments by Dr. Leshar. He stated that the Church affirmed the Old and New Testaments to be the "only unerring rule of faith and practice." But no where - no where - in the voted Statement of Beliefs at the Dallas session is this affirmation to be found. It is, however, to be found in the 1931 Statement of Beliefs which was affirmed at the 1950 General Conference Session. With only one word different and a synonym is used, this same affirmation is to be found in all Statements of Belief prior to 1931 save the Statement drawn up by the Battle Creek Church in 1894. In other words it was revised out of the 1980 Statement. Dr. Leshar was in a position to know this better than most persons. Yet he tells Christianity Today, this is the Church's present doctrinal position, which it is not!

Dr. Leshar is further quoted as stating that because of the unity of the Bible, it is "its own interpreter." Yet the Glacier View Document on "The Role of Ellen G. White in Doctrinal Matters" declared - "We believe her authority transcends that of all noninspired interpreters." The reason given is also stated - "Ellen White was inspired in the same sense as were the Bible prophets." (Ministry, Oct. 1980, p. 19) To further complicate the picture, Dr. Leshar quoted from the 1980 Dallas Statement that the writings of Ellen G. White are looked to for "comfort, guidance, instruction and correction." What he quoted is correctly stated, but he omits the vital part of that section of the Dallas Statement. The vital part reads - "As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction and correction." (Adventist Review, May 1, 1980, p. 25) This fiat in regard to the writings of Ellen G. White is to be found in no previous Statement of Beliefs. In fact, it was not until the 1950 General Conference Session which affirmed the 1931 Statement adding the

concept that we believed that the gift of prophecy "was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White" that her name appeared in any Statement of Belief.

It is obvious to even a casual reader that we cannot affirm that the Bible is the "only unerring rule of faith and practice" and at the same time declare that the writings of Ellen G. White constitute "a continuing and authoritative source of truth." Dr. Leshar knows this, and in his statements as quoted in Christianity Today introduced a previous nullified Statement of Belief regarding the Bible, and omitted the core of the present Statement of Beliefs in regard to "The Gift of Prophecy." Why are the hierarchy unable to tell the Truth to those that ask them? Do they know they have fostered error at Dallas, and are unwilling to come clean with the laity, or the non-Adventist religious world?

The fact is simply this. The Statement of Beliefs as voted at Dallas has so completely boxed the hierarchy in, that they are presently unable to deal in an objective manner with the facts of history involving the formulation and publishing of the writings of Ellen G. White by the Estate, and previously by Willie White. Also fearful of their loss of authority, they are not willing to accept Ellen G. White's own statement as to how her writings are to be used. And this applies to others as well. She wrote:

My brethren, God has given you but one standard and that is the Bible. The Bible and the Bible alone is to be your guide. The Testimonies should never be preached from our pulpits. They should be read at home and used as stepping stones to the study of the Bible. You have no right to use the testimonies to prove doctrines. Had you studied your Bibles as you should there never would have been any need of the testimonies for it is God's perfect and complete guide to all who would know the way of life. ("Proper Use of the Testimonies", pp. 4-5)

If this counsel were taken seriously by all who profess to believe the Third Angel's Message, there would be seen in our midst the greatest searching of the

Scriptures since the days of the Bereans. If we would do so, we would not be led into the Ford-van Rooyen heresy, but would find from our Bibles that our faith based in the study of the Sanctuary and Daniel 8:14 was absolutely sound. We would need to enlarge our perception to include all that the light from the study of the Word would cause to shine upon our pathway - but we would have truth, truth that is to shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. (Prov. 4:18) But this light will not come to us as long as we continue to approve and support the hierarchy in their duplicity. May God help us to be honest with truth.

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### TITHE FUNDS INVOLVED IN DAVENPORT SCANDAL

We have been advised by a very reliable source that \$800,000 of the \$17 Million plus funds invested with Davenport were tithe monies. The two Union Conferences principally involved with the investment of tithes according to the informant were the North Pacific Union Conference and the Mid-America Union Conference, formerly the Central Union, headquartered at Lincoln, Nebraska.

Among the creditors whom Davenport listed in his bankruptcy suit filed July 13, 1981 was the "Pacific Union Income Fund." We have before us copies of documents which note the North Pacific Union as having had investments in this Fund at the close of 1980, totalling - \$196,183.68 - but with a market value at that time of only \$151,975.68. This item from Schedule 2 noted as "Securities and Investments" is a part of the Balance Sheet Schedules of the "TITHE FUND" for that Union.

One individual who has checked various financial statements involving the North Pacific Union and the Oregon Conference wrote - "To say tithe funds are not involved [in the Davenport scandal] just is not the truth."

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"Though the mills of God grind slowly,  
yet they grind exceeding small;  
Though with patience He stands waiting,  
with exactness grinds He all."

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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### ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MICHIGAN ISSUES CEASE AND DESIST ORDER AGAINST GENERAL CONFERENCE AND LAKE UNION

On May 12, 1981, Richard T. O'Neill, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Section, on behalf of the Attorney General of the State of Michigan, issued a Cease and Desist Order against the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the Review and Herald Publishing Association, The Lake Union Conference and the Home Health Education Service (HHES) of that Union, the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and the Book Centers (ABC) operating under the Conference. The Order alleges that the named respondents combined, conspired, and agreed "with one another to restrain and monopolize trade and commerce of Seventh-day Adventist literature and articles as well as religious literature and articles distributed by others."

The specific allegations read:

- (A) Using monopoly status in refusing to deal with others in the resale and distribution of Adventist literature and allocating customers that may be sold to by others.
- (B) Fixing, raising, stabilizing and maintaining the effective resale prices of all religious literature or other material published and distributed by Respondents.
- (C) Interfering with the business relationships and dealings between other publishers and distributors or retailers or religious literature in competition with Respondents.

The complaint which initiated this Order against the Church to desist and cease its violations of the Michigan Trusts, Monopolies and Combinations Acts was made by Dr. Dick Proctor, Associate Professor of Psychology at Andrews University. Proctor owns and operates the Library & Educational Services, a book store in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Since the issuance of this Order by the office of the Attorney General of the State of Michigan, Proctor has filed his own suit in Federal Court

in Illinois against the General Conference and other entities of the Church. Reporting this suit, The Herald-Palladium of Benton Harbor - St. Joseph, Michigan, on October 8, 1981, noted:

In the suit, Proctor claims that from 1976 to 1980, he purchased religious material from Your Story Hour, Zondervan Corp., Samuele Bacchiocchi and Home Health Education Service. In 1980, he said, he began purchasing SDA books published by Review & Herald and which were sold to him through the Illinois, Michigan, Indiana and Carolina associations of SDA at a 30 percent discount even though the associations were competitors for customers.

His suit also claims that Home Health Education Service [HHES] sold SDA books at a 70.78 percent discount. Proctor said the associations, Review & Herald and HHES have a total annual gross of \$55 million in North America.

He said that during 1979 and 1980, he sold religious material at prices below those charged by the suppliers and competitors and refused proposals to quit selling the materials at discount prices. Proctor said that beginning in 1979, some suppliers either refused to sell religious books and materials to him or reduced their discount. As a result, he claims in the suit, the percentage of his SDA sales to his total sales went from 46.7% in 1977 to 19.2% as of the end of May 1981.

Proctor claims the defendants have fixed and maintained prices for resale of SDA and other religious books and materials, combined and conspired to refuse to sell materials to him, and allocated territories so as not to sell to him.

Proctor is quoted as stating that his reason for the original complaint and now his suit is that he takes "Ellen White's statement seriously that we should distribute our literature like the leaves of autumn." Then he added - "My main concern is that the different versions of the Bible and other religious books become

widely distributed at the lowest prices possible without any controlling of prices or availability."

Among the claims of Proctor is that pressure was applied to his suppliers of books not to sell to him except at full retail prices. To the accuracy of this charge, we can add our testimony. The Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Arkansas provides for the laity of Seventh-day Adventist persuasion, manuscripts, books, and tracts. Besides what we produce, we obtain books from other publishers, such as Ingram Book Company of Nashville, Tennessee. On May 20, 1981, we made inquiry of the Review & Herald Publishing Association asking at what price we could obtain certain sets of books for resale. We received no reply so a month later we sent a certified letter asking about our first inquiry. Within a week, we received a communication from the Publishing Secretary of the Ark-La Conference of Seventh-day Adventists stating that we could obtain the sets requested at the full retail price as sold by the Literature Evangelists. The price quoted, as an example, for The Bible Story set by the Ark-La ABC was \$249.50. This same set could be purchased through Proctor's book company for about \$80.00. This should tell the laity of the church something about the "big business" the hierarchy are engaged in.

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## CUTTS FOLLOW-UP

When we published the story of Ray Cutts, and his experience with representatives of HHES in the Oklahoma Conference and the Southwestern Union of Seventh-day Adventists (See WWN, XIV-7 (July, 1981), p. 10), we were approached by another Literature Evangelist of the Oklahoma Conference who had been in contact with the same leaders who had asked Brother Cutts to ask for an indefinite leave from the Literature Ministry until he could become "a modern Seventh-day Adventist" in his belief. This other Literature Evangelist suggested that we had not given the full story, and by omitting certain details we gave a distorted and inaccurate picture of what took place, and what the real issues were. As

a result of publishing the story, we also received an inquiry from Brother Ken Cortner of Stockton, CA, asking for Brother Cutts' address and telephone number. Resulting from this inquiry, the following letter was sent by Brother Cortner to both Mr. Barry George and Mr Ralph Sellers, the men representing HHES who had visited with Brother Cutts. It reads:

August 11, 1981

Mr. Barry George, Director  
Publishing Dept. Oklahoma Conference SDA.  
4735 NW 63rd St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73123

Mr. Ralph Sellers, Assistant Director  
Publishing Dept. Southwestern Union Conf.  
304 N. College Dr.  
Keene, TX 76059

Dear Brethren;

Report is being widely circulated among the membership upon the west coast that you men as officials of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in that area follow the procedure of ascertaining if literature evangelists working in your departments are paying tithe to the Church, and that you have either fired or forced the resignation of Ray Cutts, partially or in whole over this issue.

Will you kindly respond to the following questions?

- (1) Is this a true report?
- (2) If so, to what degree?
- (3) By what method was determination made of Brother Cutts' tithe-payings habits?
- (4) Do you routinely check upon tithe-paying of those people employed in your departments?
- (5) What action is usually taken in a non-tithe-paying situation?
- (6) Has HHES in fact, withheld funds due Ray Cutts?
- (7) If so, on what basis were they withheld and for how long?

Thank you for helping us to understand the situation that reportedly exists in your Publishing Department.

Your friend and brother in the work of the Church,

(Signed)  
Ken Cortner

Neither George nor Sellers replied to this letter. However, Brother Cortner received a telephone call from one stating that he was Chuck Williams, Publishing Department Secretary of the Southwestern Union. Following this call, Brother Cortner wrote out in detail the conversation from the notes he made during the call. He then wrote the following letter to Chuck Williams:

September 9, 1981

Elder Charles Williams, Director  
Publishing Department  
Southwestern Union Conference SDA.  
304 North College Drive  
Keene, Texas 76059

SUBJECT: FORCED RESIGNATION OF LITERATURE  
EVANGELIST RAY CUTTS OF OKLAHOMA  
CITY.

Dear Elder Williams:

This is a follow-up of your telephone call to me on August 26, 1981 wherein you stated that you were "not about to put any thing into writing" but by phone would respond to my correspondence.

The correspondence that brought about your phone call to me was not anything that I had written to you, but letters I had sent on August 11, 1981 to Barry George, Publishing Department Director of the Oklahoma Conference, and to Ralph Sellers, Assistant Director of the Publishing Department of the Southwestern Union Conference, who were directly involved with relieving Ray Cutts of his position of five years duration as a colporteur literature evangelist.

One must assume that Brother George and Brother Sellers were nervous about responding without consulting their boss, and when they did you took the prerogative that superiors possess, and you called me. During that telephone conversation I made numerous notes regarding what was said, and from these notes I am now setting forth the impressions gained.

The repetition by you that "everything was done according to policy and by regular committee action and procedure" indicated that this was no simple resignation on the part of Ray Cutts, for in that case the letter of resignation would have been

received by the Publishing Department and that would have been the end of the matter but this entailed deliberations by a Committee over firing an employee unless he presented a letter of resignation. So Ray Cutts was not fired, but coerced by his superiors into resigning under pressure, and hence wrote a letter of resignation.

Ray was well-liked and was, and had been, doing a good selling job. but he was caught up in dishonesty; TO WIT: Contrary to direction by his employers, and illegally in your opinion, he had provided the down-payments, or a portion of the down-payments on book sale contracts out of his own pocket, and you believed that such assistance to be contrary to policy and to interests of his employers.

Ray was a faithful tithe payer but his tithe was not being turned in to the Seventh-day Adventist Church through regular local church channels, but was instead paid to a body described by you as a "non-Adventist group."

You conceded that tithe-paying is not a test of fellowship in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and that a non-tithe-paying member is in good and regular standing in the Church, but your personal opinion is that an employee of the Southwestern Union Conference Publishing Department under your direction must be an honest and faithful tithe-payer to the Church through regular channels in order to be employable and that you approve the on-going scrutiny of church treasurer records for this purpose.

The policy of your Publishing Department in ascertaining and monitoring tithe-paying habits of Ray Cutts and other employees, is however, a closely guarded secret evidenced by your refusal to directly answer questions that were put to you in that regard, skillfully skirting those questions by responding philosophically.

The Home Health Education Services (HHES) are withholding for one year following Ray Cutts' termination, \$300.00 of his commission earnings, which amount will then be paid to him after deducting any bad checks or problem contracts that Ray entered into with his customers.

These are some of the impressions from your phone call, Brother Williams.

I would like to reiterate a truth that was expressed to you by phone. There is no blessing in the forcing of returning a tithe. Nor is there a blessing for anyone involved in the scrutiny of the church treasurer's records for the purpose of forcing tithe payment, or for applying sanctions upon a non-tithe-payer. As you well know, this is a matter solely between an individual and his God.

Again, I will make the prediction to you, that if you, or any segment of the church organization, persist in forcing resignations, or in firing people over the non-payment of tithe, we can expect to defend ourselves in court and become additionally besmirched by adverse media publicity by those who will contend that they were fired because they refused to kick back 10% of their salary or earnings to their employer.

Finally, if you are not doing so, I would advise that you immediately start paying interest on the \$300.00 you are withholding for one year from Ray Cutts and others and that you examine your records over the past five years and forward such interest as may be due to anyone whose funds you have had the use of.

It is my hope that these observations by an interested layman who had never heard of Ray Cutts prior to termination of his employment by you, might be of some value.

Sincerely yours;

(Signed)

Ken Cortner

[Carbon copies were sent to C. E. Bradford, Kenneth Emerson, L. L. Butler, C. Ralph Thompson, and Union Presidents.]

COMMENT - At not time while Brother Cutts was working in the Oklahoma Conference prior to his forced resignation did he send any tithe to the Adventist Laymen's Foundation. Further, in the light of the HHES' price-fixing as alleged under the suit and Order filed in Court, is it not laudatory for a Literature Evangelist to seek to help needy souls obtain what truth they still can acquire through Church publications?

The bottom line still remains that one must be a "modern Seventh-day Adventist" in belief to remain in the employ of the Church in the Southwestern Union of Seventh-day Adventists.

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