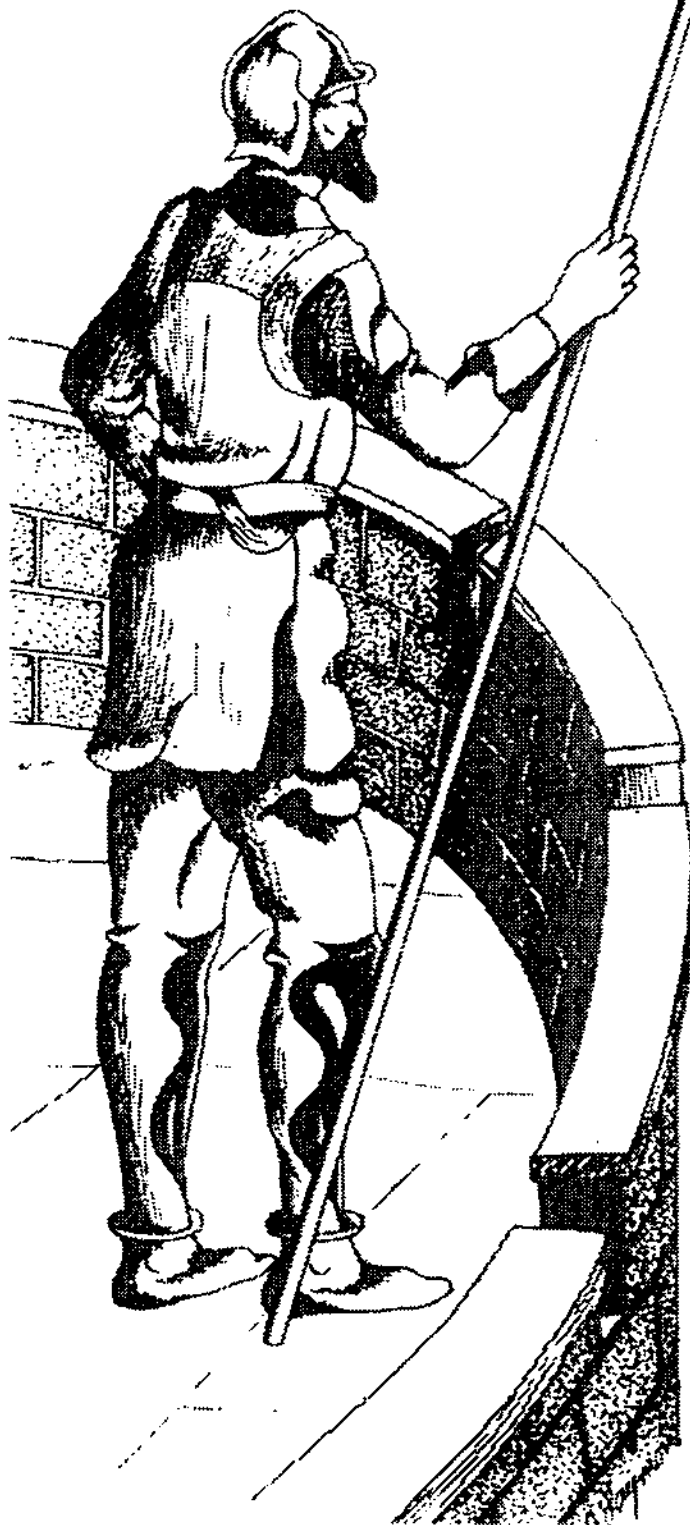


# "Watchman, what of the night?"

"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,  
the hour and the end!"

Eze. 7:6 (Moffat)



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### *Editor's Preface*

Each year with the November issue we include a listing of publications - manuscripts, books and tracts - available from the Foundation. This means a reduction of one page so as to keep within the postal weight for overseas mailing. In previous years we have devoted the four pages to reports of what took place during the year ecumenically among the Protestant Churches.

This year, the issue comprises three articles: 1) A report on a book copyrighted by the Ministerial Department of the General Conference and printed by the Pacific Press. The book, originally written as devotional essays by a Baptist Minister and his wife based on their tour to Mt. Sinai, has been edited and re-paged from the original edition in 1983. It is what was not edited that is so shocking! 2) For the past several decades at the General Conference sessions, various observers have been introduced to the delegates by B. B. Beach, Adventist Ecumenist. This session was no exception but revealed a new and more subtle approach to church union. 3) The final article is an abridgment of a homily by the Pope. This will no doubt be a surprise to most of our readers. But the Pope in this homily which preceded Mass in the Garden of the Olives outside of the monastic enclosure of St. Catherine's Monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai, placed himself affirmatively for the Ten Commandments declaring them to be "the Law of life and freedom!"

In a final comment, I suggest consideration of the difference between the close of this century, and the previous century. Too many with their eyes on a "guide" of things as they would have been had the end come then, will be unable to adjust to the enemy's new approach now one hundred years later.

# “Confessions...”

The issue of *Ministry* for January 1993 (p. 32) announced the appointment of Elder James A. Cress to the responsibility of Secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association. (He was re-elected at this session in Toronto) He had served previously as the associate ministerial secretary of the Lake Union, then ministerial secretary in the Ohio Conference followed by six years in the Mid-American Union. When elected to the General Conference post by the 1992 Annual Council, he was serving as pastor of the Marietta, Georgia Church.

If while pastor of the Church in Georgia, he followed the policy advocated by the Ministerial Association, he became active in the Ministerial Alliances of the metropolitan Churches. Two happenings in his leadership of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference reflect the possibility of such contacts. The pre-Easter services a year ago televised from the Pioneer Memorial Church on the campus of Andrews University included a non-Adventist pastor from the Atlanta, Georgia area, if my memory serves me accurately. The second item growing out of these assumed contacts while pastoring in the Atlanta area is the printing of a book by the Pacific Press with the copyright held by the General Conference Ministerial Association.

This book is titled - *Confessions of a Nomad*. It was first published in 1983 by Peachtree Publishers of Atlanta, Georgia. In obtaining the copyright to republish the book, the Ministerial Association also obtained the right to edit and re-page the new publication as stated on the copyright page. The original dedication remained - "To the congregation of the Wieuca Road Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia - our fellow travellers through the deserts and oases of life." Written by the pastor and his wife, Carolyn and William Self, it traces their tour through the Sinai peninsula and the spiritual application they perceived "for modern Christians crossing the desert of life." A major section of this devotional book covers the Ten Commandments, one by one. It is in this section that the trouble begins, and where editing was not done, not even an explanatory note! It stands as written:

The early Christians were obsessed with the fact that they came out of a Jewish background. Yet God did something new and real for them in the Easter experience, so they would have the Sabbath, and so they would gather together as the Christian sect on Sunday morning and celebrate the resurrection.

But there is a difference between the Sabbath and Sunday. You work until the Sabbath, and then you rest. Sunday is the day that gives you strength to work the six days in front of you. The Sabbath is the end of the week; Sunday is the beginning. The Sabbath is from sundown to sundown, but Sunday is from midnight to midnight. The Sabbath is a day of rest, but Sunday is a day of worship. The Sabbath has a penalty to it, if you break it; Sunday has no penalty, except that you short-change yourself.

The Christian draws his strength from Sunday. It's a time to let God talk to the inner man. It's a time when we make real that practice which says in effect, "Be still and know that I am God." The Christians took the value of the Hebrew Sabbath and added to it the great joy of the Christian resurrection. We have a marriage of the two in the Christian community.

The commandment said, "Remember the Sabbath Day." So we come together as a body of Christ and remember what God has done. It's a sacrament. Worship and Bible study make Sunday a day when the soul is rekindled, as well as a day when the body is rested (p. 118).

In the second chapter on the Fourth Commandment, the author wrote:

Thoreau said if you want to destroy the Christian faith, first take away Sunday. He was right; it is a holy day. For those who know Jesus Christ as Savior, it cannot be a holiday. For those of you who have gathered around the cross and have been saved and washed clean by His blood, it's a sacrilege to do anything else on that day except to celebrate what God has done.

If we abuse Sunday, we're going to destroy something beautiful that God has given. No Sunday means no church; no church means no worship; no worship means no religion; no religion means no morality; no morality means no society; no society means no government; no government means anarchy. That's the choice before us.

(Here is the logic to justify Sunday laws. Here is the thinking to enforce Sunday worship. Yes, and copyrighted and published by an arm of the General Conference)

So, what do we do with the day? Do you sit around and read the Bible all day long? That might not be a bad idea for some of us. There are always those people who say, "I

can worship God out on the golf course." Golf is a great sport, but it isn't worship! Those people who want to get out into God's great outdoors are God's great blue-domers. They're going to worship under the blue dome. But that isn't worship; it's recreation. Worship is when you're with the body of Christ (pp. 120-121).

Echoes of this thinking are to be found in the Papal Encyclical, *Dies Domini*, and associated with the celebration of the Eucharist, a sacrament. This book published by a department of the General Conference declares Sunday to be "a sacrament." Rome makes its chief sacrament an obligation to be celebrated on Sunday. The gulf between the two narrows.

With the publishing of *Confessions of a Nomad* - another book of "a new order" - it is decision time within the Church for those who wish "to hold fast the first principles of (their) denominated faith" (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, #7, p. 57). One of those principles is the Sabbath.

(Those desiring photocopies of the above quoted pages from *Confessions of a Nomad*, may send a self-addressed stamped #10 envelope to "Confessions," P. O. Box 69, Ozone, AR 72854)

#

## The Parade of the "Fallen"

At the beginning of the Ninth Business Meeting, July 4, Dr. B. B. Beach, Adventist Ecumenist *Emeritus* began his introduction of "observers" from the "Fallen" Churches with these words:

One of the happy traditions of General Conference sessions in recent decades has been to have honored guests and observers from other churches in our midst. ... We would like to welcome, first of all, Pastor Jean Arnold de Clermont, the president of the French Protestant Federation. And we also have in our midst Monsignor John A. Radano, an old friend with whom we've been in contact for many years, who attended the session in Utrecht five years ago, representing the Roman Catholic Church (*GC Bulletin*, #8, p. 25).

It is true that this ecumenical embrace at General Conference sessions is only of "recent decades." It is very revealing that the Catholic monsignor now has represented the Roman Church at two sessions,

and is one with whom "we've been in contact for many years." How inclusive is the "we"? Do we now have revealed in an off-handed way the line of communication between the General Conference and the Vatican? Does this reveal the reason for some actions of the Church, which have been attributed to "Jesuit" infiltration when in reality it was direct exchange with "a friend of many years" who has officially represented Rome?

Stop for a moment and perceive what the reaction would have been had a Roman Catholic monsignor presented himself as a "representative" of Rome at such General Conference sessions as 1888, 1901, 1903. What report would he have carried back to Rome had he heard P. T. Magan, make the comparison between the new proposed Constitution, and the Papacy? (*1903 GC Bulletin*, p. 150).

The "parade" continued. Next to be introduced was Dr. Donna Geernaert of the WCC Faith and Order Plenary Commission. She was hailed as "one of the top theologians of the world." It must be kept in mind that a Seventh-day Adventist theologian sits on the Faith and Order Commission, and has since 1967. Beach next introduced a representative of the Lutheran World Federation, in the person of the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada, Telmor Sartison. In the introduction of Sartison, Beach recalled that for a number of years the Adventist Church and the Lutheran World Federation have had conversations together with a resulting book being published.

Sartison brought a threefold greeting: first his own personal greeting "as a brother in Christ;" secondly, from the "sisters and brothers in Christ in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada" and third from the General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, Ishmael Noco, and "your sisters and brothers in Christ in that international body, the Lutheran World Federation." It will be remembered that Dr. Noco led out in the dialogue over Justification by Faith between the Lutheran World Federation and Cardinal Cassidy of the Roman Church. The emphasis on "sisters and brothers in Christ" can be understood by his remarks which followed. He held in his hand a greeting card which read - "A willingness to take risk and trust in God and in each other continues to bring meaning and joy to the journey of our friendship in Christ." Then he commented:

I give you these words today. Why? Because I believe that the Holy Spirit of God is struggling with the whole church, trying to bring us not into some gigantic union, but into an understanding and in mission together in the world. You are on your journey. We are on ours. Our willingness to take risks and trust in God and in each other will continue to bring meaning and joy to the journey of friendship and faith in Christ Jesus. May we be one in spirit, even as we are already one in Christ.

Little have we sensed the subtlety and current thrust of the ecumenical movement as the whole world is being gathered together for the battle of the great day of God Almighty. My father was a Lutheran; my mother was a Baptist, and into the faith she professed I, too, was baptized. Then there came to us the challenge of the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14. One of those angel messages declared - "Babylon is fallen, is fallen" (v. 8). Was this wrongly interpreted to us, when we, Baptist, Lutheran, were all one "in Christ Jesus" anyway? Or, was the trumpet then giving a "certain sound," and it has now become "uncertain"?

During the session in a discussion of *Church Manual* changes, the Baptismal Commitment was questioned on one point. A delegate moved that the 13th Commitment which reads - "I accept and believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy..." - be changed to read - "I accept and believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is part of the remnant church of Bible Prophecy." (*GC Bulletin*, #6, p. 26) A lively discussion evidently followed, because applause was accorded speakers who opposed this revision bringing a reprimand from the chairman, Calvin B. Rock, denouncing this expression of approval as "not really statesmanlike." The proposed change was defeated.

This position, that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a part of the remnant of Bible Prophecy, was the position taken in the SDA-Evangelical Conferences of 1955-56. (See *Questions on Doctrine*, pp. 186-196). This compromise in action is what has produced in recent decades at the General Conference Sessions, the Parade of the "Fallen." We either accept the fact that "in a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchman and lightbearers," and that with this commission "we have been given a work of the most solemn import, - the proclamation of the first,

second, and third angels' messages" (9T:19); or we have not. Over these past decades, B. B. Beach has flaunted this solemn work, and led in open revolt against the second Angel's Message, even to the extent of giving a gold medallion, symbolizing the Church, into the hands of the Pope. Now he reveals at this session that there has been "contact for many years" with a representative of the Papacy. This session again reveals a dichotomy between profession and practice.

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## "Ten Commandments Are the Future of the Human Family"

[Excerpts taken from a homily preached by Pope John Paul II during Mass on the Jubilee Pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai February 26, 2000]

Today, with great joy and deep emotion, the Bishop of Rome is a pilgrim to Mt. Sinai, drawn by this holy mountain that rises like a soaring monument to what God revealed here. Here He revealed His holy name! Here He gave His Law, the Ten Commandments of the Covenant! ...

God shows himself in mysterious ways -- as the fire that does not consume - according to a logic that defies all that we know and expect. He is a God who is at once close at hand and far away; He is in the world but not of it. He is the God who comes to meet us, but who will not be possessed. He is "I AM WHO I AM" -- the name which is no name! I AM WHO I AM: the divine abyss in which essence and existence are one! The God who is Being itself! Before such a mystery, how can we fail to "take off our shoes" as He commands, and adore Him on this holy ground?

Here on Mount Sinai, the truth of "who God is" became the foundation and guarantee of the Covenant. Moses enters "the luminous darkness, and there he is given the Law "written with the finger of God. But what is this Law? It is the Law of life and freedom! ...

This same God seals His love by making the Covenant that He will never renounce. If the people

obey His Law, they will know freedom forever. The Exodus and the Covenant are not just events of the past; they are forever the destiny of all God's people!

The Ten Commandments are not an arbitrary imposition of a tyrannical Lord. They were written in stone; but before that, they were written on the human heart as the universal moral law, valid in every time and place. Today as always, the Ten Words of the Law provide the only true basis for the lives of individuals, societies and nations. Today as always, they are the only future of the human family. They save man from the destructive force of egotism, hatred and falsehood...

To keep the Ten Commandments is to be faithful to God, but it is also to be faithful to ourselves, to our true nature and our deepest aspirations. The wind that still blows from Sinai ... carries an insistent invitation to dialogue between the followers of the great monotheistic religions in their service of the human family. It suggests that in God we can find the point of encounter: in God the All Powerful and All Merciful, Creator of the universe and Lord of history, who at the end of our earthly existence will judge us with perfect justice. ...

Sinai finds its fulfilment on another mountain, the mountain of the Transfiguration, where Jesus appears to His apostles shining with the glory of God. Moses and Elijah stand with Him to testify that the fullness of God's revelation is found in the glorified Christ.

On the mountain of the Transfiguration, God speaks from the cloud, as He had done at Sinai. But now He says: "This is my beloved Son; listen to him" (Mk. 9:7). He commands us to listen to His Son, because "no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matt. 11:27). And so we learn that the true name of God is FATHER! The name that is beyond all other names: Abba! (cf. Gal. 4:6). And in Jesus we learn that our true name is SON, DAUGHTER! We learn that the God of the Exodus and the Covenant sets His people free because they are His sons and daughters, created not for slavery but for "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21).

So when St. Paul writes that we "have died to the

law through the body of Christ" (Rom. 7:4), he does not mean that the Law of Sinai is past. He means that the Ten Commandments now make themselves heard through the voice of the Beloved Son. The person delivered by Jesus Christ into true freedom is aware of being not bound externally by a multitude of prescriptions, but internally by the love that has taken hold in the deepest recesses of his heart. The Ten Commandments are the law of freedom: not the freedom to follow our blind passions, but the freedom to love, even when to do so is a burden. It is not an impersonal law that we obey; what is required is loving surrender to the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 6:14; Gal. 5:18). In revealing himself on the mountain and giving His Law, God revealed man to man himself. Sinai stands at the very heart of the truth about man and his destiny. (*The Pope Speaks*, Vol. 45, #5, pp. 280-282)

Comment: The playing field as this century closes is very different than it was at the close of the previous century. This needs to be carefully noted and understood. While principles do not change, details do. Consider the impact in the final crisis of a religious world upholding the Ten Commandments instead of saying they were nailed to the Cross. Not only is the Pope setting forth the Ten Commandments as indicated in his above homily, but the "Religious Right" is doing likewise. A counterfeit, truth mingled with error, will ever remain, often disguised with Biblical support quotations. Compare the above presentation by the Pope with his Encyclical, *Dies Domini*. Mingling of truth and error is the hallmark of Satan, review Genesis 3, while truth, pure and unadulterated, is the hallmark of a saint (Rev. 14:12).

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"Watchman, What of the Night?" is published monthly by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., P. O. Box 69, Ozone, AR 72854, USA.

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