

"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 (Moffau)

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Editor's Preface

For the past several years we have reserved the November issue of WVN for a review of the ecumenical happenings taking place during the year. These items of interest were gleaned from the *Bulletin* of the Ecumenical News International (ENI). This year we planned the same, and gave the assignment several months ahead of schedule. Hours were spent by the assignee in gathering the material, but in the end no copy was given to the editor. This necessitated a quick rescheduling. At the time information on several fronts was coming to my desk, and from this material we have prepared the present issue of WVN. In the area of ecumenism the Nicene-Constantinopolitan again resurfaced. Some interesting comparisons were discovered.

Within the Roman Church in the United States there is a division among the Bishops which also reflects the same division which exists among the laity and the educators. There are liberal Roman Catholics and there are those who strictly follow the papal edicts. In the annual American Bishop's conference, these divisions surface and the press makes capital of them. The result is that an old policy of closed conferences is being reactivated. Beyond this, the 1998 conference was followed by a special Papal pronouncement which added to the Canon Law of the Church "teeth" so that if any theologian or bishop strayed to far afield, he could be disciplined.

The *Los Angeles Times* dropped a "bomb" on the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Two staff writers opened up old issues which have plagued the Church for the past two decades, and revealed the relationship existing between the Federal government and ADRA. Beyond the tragedy of the corruption revealed, is the use made of tax dollars to further the religious objective of the Global Mission program. The millions of dollars received and their use belie the position taken by the Religious Liberty Department opposing Federal support to church related schools through vouchers. Folkenberg was allowed to respond prior to the *Times* Report release. His answers!?!



Dissent in Romanism

On August 12, 1996, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago "established the Catholic Common Ground Initiative," at the same time releasing a statement, *Called to Be a Catholic: Church in Time of Peril*. This statement "describes the current situation of polarization in the church and calls for dialogue regarding issues of critical importance in the church's pastoral life." A committee of prominent Roman Catholics agreed to work with him to begin this dialogue. At the first meeting of the committee a year later, the Cardinal had learned that his illness was terminal, and asked the Archbishop of Mobile, Alabama, to succeed him as chairman.

"The Initiative is a call to Catholics to try to move beyond the kind of polarizing spirit that divides the church into camps. It also calls for the broadest possible range of views within the boundaries of church teaching in order to find ways of addressing matters of importance to the church. The very concept of breaking through the barriers of distrust and engaging in honest and open dialogue has captured the imagination of Catholics throughout the church since the announcement of the Initiative. The call aroused hope among the parishioners, parish priests and pastoral ministers, college and university administrators and faculty members. They expressed hope that a new level of discussion might revive the spirit of Vatican II, best expressed in the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*."

The quotation from this Vatican II document is of interest from two points of view: 1) What the statement quoted says, and 2) What the preface to this Constitution states. First the two paragraphs quoted in support of the Initiative:

In virtue of its mission to enlighten the whole world with the message of the gospel and to gather together in one spirit all women and men of every nation, race, and culture, the church shows itself as a sign of that amity which renders possible sincere dialogue and strengthens it.

Such a mission requires us first of all to create in the church itself mutual esteem, reverence and harmony, and to acknowledge all legitimate diversity; in this way all who constitute the one people of God will be able to engage in ever more fruitful dialogue, whether they are pastors or other members of the faithful. For the ties which unite the faithful together are stronger than those which separate them: let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is doubtful, and charity in everything. (par. 92)

The Common Ground Initiative of the late Cardinal Bernardin is an attempt to unify "all legitimate diversity" in the Roman Church so that the Church can by its example point the way "to gather together in one spirit all women

and men of every nation, race, and culture." It needs to be remembered that the ecumenical unity for which Rome is professedly willing to settle is a "unity in diversity." At the moment their own house is not in order. The Pope is on one side, while many of the American Catholic Bishops are on the other.

The "Preface" to the Constitution quoted indicates that Vatican II addressed "all men." It reads:

Now that the Second Vatican Council has deeply studied the mystery of the Church, it resolutely addresses not only the sons of the Church and all who call upon the name of Christ, but the whole of humanity as well, and it longs to set forth the way it understands the presence and the function of the Church in the world of today.

Well is it stated in *The Great Controversy*, "Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion" (p. 562) - and this delusion is Spiritism in its modern guise. Do not forget that the prophetic Word indicates that "the spirits of devil" like frogs were seen coming from the mouths of all three symbols involved in the final confrontation. (Rev. 16:13-14)

The very guideline by which the proposed unity is to be achieved as noted in this Constitution of Vatican II - "unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is doubtful, and charity in everything" - is echoed in the Statement of Faith of Grace Place in Colorado. The affirmation in prefacing their Statement reads - "In essential beliefs we have UNITY. In non-essential beliefs we have LIBERTY. In all our beliefs we have CHARITY." Again "unity in diversity" wrapped in "love." [See WWN 7(98), pp. 2-4]

In *The Catholic World Report*, a magazine voicing the conservative Roman stance of John Paul II expresses deep concern that the annual meetings of the American Bishops of the Roman Church will after twenty seven years of open general meetings become closed sessions. A featured news article in the August/September issue concludes that in this decision for closed sessions "there seems to be more at stake here than a mere procedural technicality. The recent move toward secrecy reflects new tensions in the bishops' relations with Rome." (p. 32)

The writer explains:

While the bishops like and respect Pope John Paul, informed sources within the bishops' conference report that some of them are increasingly annoyed at what they consider "provocative" interventions in their affairs by the Roman Curia. Other bishops side with Rome, giving rise to some clear and pronounced differences of opinion. (ibid.)

Issues noted by the article in *The Report* involved "Liturgical translations," "Priesthood and lay ministry,"

and "Catholic higher education." This last issue arose from a document released by John Paul in 1990 - *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. This document called attention to a canon law which mandates that all teachers of theology in Roman Catholic colleges and universities have formal approval by the local bishop. This the Roman higher educational establishment strongly resists. The first reaction of the bishops was that they would study the mandate question. The Holy See told the bishops to try again.

The change to open sessions began after Vatican II with some regulated attempts. The "open-meeting" policy went into effect at the annual meeting in 1972. A large press corps joined the bishops as the first general session began. The write-up is a bit humorous:

Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia, the president of the bishops' conference, rose to speak, and the reporter's eyes popped. The cardinal was speaking in Latin. There was nervous coughing and shuffling of papers. Cardinal Krol stopped and fixed the press with a wicked grin. "We told you we'd let you in," he said, "but we didn't tell you what language we'd speak." (p. 35)

The Pope has reacted to the dissent among the American bishops. He, with a strong assist from Cardinal Ratzinger, "has issued a new apostolic letter, in the form of a *Moto Proprio*, tightening the disciplinary provisions of Canon Law that deal with theological dissent." (CWN) A *Moto Proprio* is a document issued on the Pope's own initiative and authority. The document in question is *Ad Tuendam Fidem* meaning "To Defend the faith." This "short, four-page document ... adds new paragraphs to the Code of Canon Law. The purpose of the change is to defend the integrity of the faith against theological dissent." (CWN) Released on June 29, 1998, the month the Bishops had convened in Pittsburgh, this document added "teeth" to certain sections of the Law.

"Although Church leaders and theologians are asked to make a Profession of Faith indicating their acceptance of all the truths taught definitely by the Church, the Pope points out that there has been no provision in the Code of Canon Law which corresponded directly to that oath." Therefore, he added a second paragraph "making it clear that anyone who refuses to accept a proposition definitely taught by the Church is thus 'in opposition to the doctrine of the Catholic Church'." Then "a canon dealing with ecclesiastical sanctions for those who reject authority is amended to stipulate that anyone who violates" the newly inserted second paragraph "is to be punished with a just penalty'." (ibid.)

It should be obvious that "unity in diversity" which appears to be the goal of the Catholic Common Ground Initiative is directly at odds with the Pope's objective. Is, therefore, the Ecumenical stance projected by Cardinal Edward Cassidy, president of the Vatican Council for Promoting Christian Unity, only double-talk when he stated -

"We are not working towards *uniformity* among the Churches of the world. We are working towards *unity* in faith and in communion." (*The Catholic Leader*, Feb. 24, 1991, p. 3; emphasis theirs) Or is the Cardinal really saying outward diversity in form, yes; but in regard to faith and communion, no dissent.

The Oath and who takes what parts of the Oath is enlightening:

"The 1989 Profession of Faith, which is required of certain categories of Church officials, consists of the familiar Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of the Church which all Catholics are obliged to profess aloud at Mass on Sundays, Holy Days, and Solemnities. This basic Creed is followed by three short paragraphs, or propositions, by which the person who is making the Profession of Faith specifically affirms the kind of belief that is to be reposed in the teaching of the Church at several levels. Thus the person subscribing professes that:

"1) With firm faith I also believe everything contained in the Word of God, whether written or handed down in Tradition, which the Church, either by a solemn judgment or by ordinary and universal magisterium, sets forth to be believed as divinely revealed.

"2) I also firmly accept and hold each and every thing definitely proposed by the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals.

"3) Moreover, I adhere with religious submission of will and intellect (*religioso voluntatis et intellectus obsequio*) to the teachings which either the Roman Pontiff or the college of bishops enunciate when they exercise magisterium, even if they do not intend to proclaim these teachings by a definitive act." (*The Report*, p. 45)

Those holding ecclesiastical positions, besides affirming the Profession of Faith, also take an Oath of Fidelity "This Oath of Fidelity includes a promise to remain in communion with the Catholic Church, to carry out one's duties in accordance with the requirements of Church law, to remain faithful to the deposit of faith and the common discipline of the Church, and to obey the bishops as the authentic teachers and rulers in the Church of Christ." (p. 46)

In the Roman Church at the present time, there are "liberal" forces represented by various American bishops, and the conservative element world-wide who find their voice in Pope John Paul II. The American bishops involved in the Common Ground Initiative which was begun by the late Cardinal Bernardin want to see the spirit of Vatican II revived. While John Paul gives lip service to the Vatican II Council, his Encyclicals indicate that his whole outlook is more in harmony with Pope Leo XIII whose concept on Church and State did not reflect the American model, but rather opposed it. #

The Creed Re-Surfaces

In the Profession of Faith, noted above, which every Romanist confesses aloud at each Mass he attends, is the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. This Creed is closely associated with the objective of the World Council of Church's aim "to discover whether Christians today can confess their faith together ecumenically." To this end, the Faith and Order Commission developed a study - "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today." "For this study, the Faith and Order Commission has chosen the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of A.D. 381 - already officially recognized by many churches - as a summary of the apostolic faith." (*One World*, No. 132, p. 15) Interestingly, at the Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 1993 Faith and Order Conference, Jean Tillard, a vice-moderator of Faith and Order, and a Roman Catholic, without specifying a date, "suggested in his address on the last day that consideration be given to 'a gathering of all the major leaders in the churches - perhaps in Jerusalem - simply to sing the creed together. That would be a wonderful expression of the degree of unity already present and of its origin.'" (*One World*, No. 189, p. 15) [Would Folkenberg be there with his singing voice?]

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed proclaims the Trinity doctrine, which "is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church." (*Handbook for Today's Catholic*, p. 11) At the world conference of the Faith and Order Commission in Spain, the moderator, Mary Tanner, declared that an important task at this conference was "to re-vision the goal of visible unity" in terms of *koinonia*, which she called "the most promising theme of contemporary ecumenical theology." Drawing on the WCC's Seventh Assembly statement Tanner defined "the fullness of *koinonia*" as being realized "when all churches are able to recognize in one another the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church." (*One World*, op.cit.)

This thought was developed further by theologians who spoke. One stated that "the notion of the church as *koinonia* is rooted in faith in God as trinitarian." A report summarizing the work of the 1993 Faith and Order Conference "depicted this shared life of Christians as rooted in the Triune God, who is 'the ultimate reality of relational life.' Consequently, 'unity and diversity are inseparable.'" (*ibid.*)

Note the expression - "rooted in the Triune God." Keep in mind that this expression was used in the Report coming from the Faith and Order Conference in 1993. Thirteen years previously in 1980, a statement placed in the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Unity in the Body of Christ," concluded with this affirmation - "Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in

one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children." (Statement #13) No such statement appeared in any previous Statement of Beliefs. The whole statement speaks to the theme of "unity in diversity." A prior statement (#11) defines the Church as "the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour" echoing the Constitution of the WCC, art. I. (See *So Much in Common*, p. 40) Is it any wonder then that when the Faith and Order Commission chose as its confession of faith the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed the comment could be inserted that it was "already officially recognized by many churches"? This should give us pause for thought. Did the Seventh-day Adventist delegates to the Dallas General Conference Session by the adoption of the language chosen - "the oneness of the triune God" - inspire the ecumenical dialogue thirteen years later of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC, or is there a common spirit at work gathering all to the place called in the Hebrew tongue, Har-Mo'ed? (Rev. 16:13-14, 16)

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The LA Times Report

Perhaps by the time this issue of WVN is read, the two reports on internal Adventist Church affairs appearing in the *Los Angeles Times*, August 13 and 14, will be "old hat" to many readers. While it will be impossible to even summarize the two articles in the remaining space available in this issue, there are certain key revelations that need serious reflection.

The articles were the results of an investigation conducted by two Times Staff Writers - Tom Gorman and Eric Lightblau. The first report headlined on the front page read - "Currents of Change Roil Seventh-day Adventists." As one begins to read this first report, he must wonder why the historical inaccuracies which mark these first paragraphs, and ask himself if this is the type of research that will mark the whole lengthy outlay. The question is further heightened when the writers did not even get Folkenberg's middle initial correct in his name. One might reply that this is merely small detail in a veritable sea of data, most of which is negative. To the credit of the staff writers, they did interview and obtain information from sources both within as well as from dissidents without the Church structure. Folkenberg was allowed to reply to the information gathered in the research. His weak responses coupled with acknowledgement of a very grave misappropriation of funds tilts the report toward the staff writers. It will be of real interest to see if the Church leadership will reply to the two reports and what they say. It is also evident that much of what was gleaned of the situation in the Church in America came from La Sierra University, some of whose staff including its president gave a negative picture.

It is the second article, again headlined on the front page,

which causes real concern. It was captioned - "A History of Complaints Dogs Adventist Aid Agency." This is a report involving ADRA - the Adventist Development and Relief Agency. The report begins by revealing that two tennis courts were built in Rwanda "with U.S. government relief aid - the second constructed so players would not have to squint into the sun. A tennis pro was hired with money kicked back to the Adventist group from local Rwandans who had improperly received huge amounts of government food intended for the needy." This revelation was based on an U.S. government investigator's report.

ADRA "received \$85 million in federal cash, food and freight, plus tens of millions more from other nations and donors, during the last two years for which reports are available. ADRA was given more funding than all but three groups out of more than 400 federal program participants. Along with that assistance have come serious questions about how it has been used - from accusations of corruption to complaints of unlawful proselytizing."

The government funding unit, Agency for International Development (AID), rejected \$2.8 million in billings from ADRA because of an AID auditor's report in 1995. ADRA had billed the amount for "public relations, fund raising, and other overhead expenses. The agency also questioned whether ADRA charged the government twice for some items, amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars in possible double-billings."

"In Mozambique, U.S. auditors found in 1994 that ADRA employees purloined commodities and profited by selling food 'unfit for human consumption' to unsuspecting villagers. Auditors also voiced concerns over \$105,000 in U.S. funding forwarded to an Adventist owned university in Michigan for hunger research - including some money that appeared to be pure 'profit' for the school."

The most serious charge made in the *LA Times* report is that the line between humanitarian relief and religion is blurred. The Church's formal mission arm known as Global Mission is headed by Folkenberg's brother, Donald. While Mario Ochoa, ADRA's executive vice president, declared that "no one's ever confused Global Mission and ADRA," the staff writers noted that Global Mission called ADRA "a bona fide ministry of Jesus Christ and the Seventh-day Adventist Church," noting that its work "provides a strategy to reach people previously untouched by other church institutions. The church's mission is incomplete without ADRA's distinctive ministry."

Hal Butler, planning director at Global Mission until 1995, is quoted as indicating that officials from his agency and ADRA met together "to plan potential joint projects. ... If ADRA went in there first and had some health programs or whatever to get things going, we might be able to come in later." The interaction is cited in the report. Global Mission has in several incidents built medical clinics, and then turned them over to ADRA to operate. "The arrange-

ment obeys 'the letter of the law. They are not out there proselytizing,' said Folkenberg. ... He acknowledged, however, that the effect has been to heighten the denomination's profile with local residents whose lives have been improved through the clinics. 'That's a way to what the church is all about,' he said, 'Spread Christianity and spread Adventism.'"

The report quotes Elder Robert S. Folkenberg's reaction as flippantly declaring ADRA to be "99.44% pure, like Ivory soap" even in the light of all the documented evidence researched by the staff writers.

The question lingers - How can this connection with the Federal government of the United States be harmonized with what was thought to be our position on the separation of Church and State?

"For generations, the U.S. government has worked to foster America's image as benevolent benefactor to the world's needy. Most people do not realize, however, that this often amounts to goodwill by proxy. AID has come to rely more heavily than ever on a net work of 417 private groups, sharing an annual pot of more than \$1.4 billion." Into this "pot" is the official hand of the Adventist Church. As one Adventist who was interviewed remarked - "The Church has become 'an arm of American foreign policy.'" Then the backside of the coin reads - The State is helping to forward the Global Mission of the Church via Federal tax dollars through ADRA.

The staff Report included a comment from an Internet site. They quoted one writer who complained about "a lack of top level accountability, advising rebels to cut off contributions or leave the church altogether - 'vote with your wallet or vote with your feet,'" was the suggestion. It has precedent. Jesus walked out of the Temple declaring, "Your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. 23:38; 24:1)

(All direct quotes in the above article are from the *Los Angeles Times* August 13 & 14.)

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