

*"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 (Moffan)



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EDITOR'S PREFACE

In 1994, Dave Hunt, an Evangelical writer and publisher released his book, A Woman Rides the Beast. The first chapter of the book, not a preface, but appearing to be an insert as he was about to go to press with the book, begins with this startling pronouncement:

"The most significant event in nearly 500 years of church history was revealed as a fait accompli on March 29, 1994. On that day leading American evangelicals and Catholics signed a joint declaration titled 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the 3rd Millennium.' The document in effect, overturned the Reformation and will unquestionably have far-reaching repercussions throughout the Christian world for years to come." (p. 5)

This forthright summary judgment of the document needs to be carefully considered. I have not found his name mentioned in the answers made to critics in the book, Evangelicals & Catholics Together, but the allegations Hunt makes are discussed in the book by two of the writers of Essays. The core of Hunt's dissent is the gospel. Interestingly, this is the heart of the controversy swirling in the Adventist Community today.

In this issue, we shall continue our review of what is stated in the Essays, and give a critical analysis of the positions taken. We shall also include a summary of what Hunt has said in this preliminary chapter of his book, carefully observing some of the sources quoted.

Since beginning this issue of WWN, we have obtained a video of a CBS Report - "Faith and Politics - The Christian Right" - moderated by Dan Rather. It was such an outstanding and insightful presentation that we decided to call attention to a certain comment made by one who was interviewed which presents basic problems in maintaining true religious liberty in the days ahead.

E & C T - 2

Charles Colson closes his Essay, in the book which he and Neuhaus edited in defense of the Accord they initiated, by telling the experience of two men, one a Roman Catholic priest in Poland - Jerzy Popieluszko - the other a Reformed evangelical pastor in Romania, Laszlo Tokes. Both opposed the Communist regime under which they lived. The Roman priest disappeared. Later his body was found floating in the Vistula River with evidences of the supreme torture he had endured. The Reformed pastor likewise suffered much at the hands of the secret police. When they came to remove him from his church, they could not get to him as the Church was surrounded by thousands of parishioners acting as a human shield. Colson reports that "soon more and more Romanian believers gathered around the church, among them Baptists, Adventists, Pentecostals, Orthodox, and Catholics. Pastor Tokes called out, 'We are one in Christ! We speak different languages [beliefs], but we have the same Bible and the same God. We are one!'" (Evangelicals & Catholics Together, p. 42)

Then Colson wrote:

"In Romania, Catholics and Orthodox and Reformed and Baptists massed together in front of tanks to protect an evangelical pastor and his church. In America, our confrontation with the ideologies of nihilism demand of Christians a similar unity - a similar willingness to close ranks and defend one another against a common adversary.

"Francis Schaeffer foresaw the loss of our cultural foundations at the twilight of the second millennium. Until the very day he lay dying of cancer, he declared, 'The great issue is truth! We have got to defend truth!' This also was the declaration of Father Jerzy Popieluszko: 'Preach the truth. Defend the truth. Stand for the truth.' On the threshold of the twenty-first century, this will be the task for Christians in America. It is a task for evangelicals and Catholics **together.**" (p. 43; emphasis his)

This theme of truth permeates Colson's essay. He writes - "The message of the Church is that there is truth, whether people like it or not - intellectual, moral, and spiritual truth. The Church is proclaiming Christ, 'the way, the truth, and the life.'" (p. 17; emphasis his) He perceives that "the collapse of truth" to the

point of doubting "the existence of truth itself," inevitably leads to the descent of society "into decay and disorder."

What is Colson's solution? He adopts from a Baptist theologian, Timothy George, the concept of "an ecumenism of the trenches." He comments - "Believers of all traditions are discovering what that means as our culture grows increasingly hostile to Christianity." Then he writes:

"In front of abortion clinics, Catholics join hands with Baptists, Methodists, and Episcopallians to pray and sing hymns. Side by side they pass out pamphlets and urge incoming women to spare their babies. ...

"Both evangelicals and Catholics are offended by the blasphemy, violence, and sexual promiscuity endorsed by both the artistic elite and the popular culture in America today. On university campuses, evangelical students whose Christian faith comes under frequent assault often find Catholic professors to be their only allies. Evangelicals cheer as a Catholic nun, having devoted her life to serving the poor in the name of Christ, boldly confronts the president of the United States over his pro-abortion policies. Thousands of Catholic young people join in the True Love Waits movement, in which teenagers pledge to save sex for marriage - a program that originated with Baptists.

"This new ecumenism bears no relationship to liberal ecumenism, which seeks unity by disregarding doctrinal differences. Conservative evangelicals and Catholics understand and maintain the distinctives of their respective traditions. All the same, they take united stand on the common ground of Scripture and the ancient confessions - what C. S. Lewis called 'mere Christianity.'" (ibid., p. 2)

C. S. Lewis perceived, "mere Christianity" to be the essential elements of Christianity upheld by all theological traditions, such as "the triune nature of God, the literal incarnation and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and traditional Christian ethics." (ibid., p. 35)

How can we relate to all of this? There is no question but that Scripture, the Word of God, is the truth, but does not Colson know that the same "ancient confessions" is the basis upon which "the liberal ecumenism" is seeking to bring about a visible unity of all churches? Does he not also know that the Roman Catholic church is just as involved in this objective of the World

Council of Churches as Neuhaus is involved with him in this Accord of Evangelicals and Catholics Together? Jean-Marie Tillard OP, Moderator of the Apostolic Faith Steering Group of the Faith and Order Commission is of the same Roman Church as Richard John Neuhaus. Rome has only one objective. Neuhaus forthrightly states in his essay - "The Catholic Difference" - "There is no salvation apart from the Church." (*ibid*, p. 220)

"Mere Christianity" may suffice for an "ecumenism of the trenches," but will it suffice for the revelation of the unity for which Christ prayed? The sanctification of the believer is by the Word of truth. (John 17:17) That truth is absolute, unconditionally so. In confessing the Biblical truth about baptism, what does the Word say? Then does any mode of baptism suffice? Do I have a choice as to how I shall express my confession of the Lord Jesus Christ? No, not if truth is absolute. So, also does not the same infallible Word declare which day is the Sabbath of the Lord God? Do I have a choice as to which day I rest with Him? Are there no absolutes, or are there? Can I relate to one absolute, and ignore another? Real unity can only come in the acceptance of the absolute truth as revealed in the Word of God. It is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth to which the follower of Him, who is the Truth, swears undying allegiance.

How does Colson propose this "ecumenism of the trenches" operate in combating the secularism and permissiveness of this age? He writes:

"It means that Christians must serve God not only in church but in their families, as husbands, wives, and parents; in their jobs, as factory workers or business executives, teachers or bureaucrats; as citizens, through voting and voluntary associations, righting wrongs and influencing public policy. All Christians, not just pastors and priests, have a ministry - to be found wherever they find themselves, which is exactly where God has placed them to contend for his lordship in every day circumstances and relationships.

"The church is the place where believers gather together, not primarily to influence the culture, but to grow in Jesus Christ. As a result of this spiritual growth, however, Christians must go out into the world to confront, convert, and renew the larger culture, taking God's truth into every highway and byway of common life." (*ibid*, p. 33; emphasis his)

As lofty and as accurate as some of these

observations may be, basic questions arise from this type of agenda. What did Jesus mean when He said - "My kingdom is not of this world"? (John 18:36) If this is true, then how should we understand Paul's defining experience of conversion that God "hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son"? (Col. 1:13) If the Christian's citizenship is not of this world, how should he relate to the governments of earth? Does he have a dual citizenship? Was not Daniel a government officer, and was not Mordecai elevated to such a position?

How are we to understand Colson's objective - "influencing public policy" - as a Christian? Does that mean becoming an "activist" in some cultural cause? Do I join the "Christian Right" and vote as a "block" to alter the course of governmental policy? There is no question but that our duty as Christians involves "moral persuasion" that reaches out into "every highway and byway of common life." That means evangelism, but is the Roman Catholic concept of evangelism, the same as the "Evangelical"?

Some of these basic questions we shall explore in the following essays of this issue. In the next issue we shall continue the discussion of the book - Evangelicals & Catholics Together.

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FAITH AND POLITICS

CBS has produced a video presentation on "Faith and Politics - The Christian Right" moderated by Dan Rather. In it is found some very revealing attitudes as Roman Catholics and Evangelicals join forces to combat through intervention in government, aspects of the secular culture which they do not approve. It is defined as a "Cultural War." Many of the secular forces and life-styles which are antithetical to the Christian Right should be equally abhorrent to any Christian. The question arises: To what length does one go to combat these forces?

Colson, in his essay discussed in the article above, notes a growing attitude that dare not be overlooked. He writes:

"Millions of Americans have become so fearful of violent crime that they are beginning to clamor for public safety at all costs - even at the expense of fundamental rights and responsibilities. For example, a poll of the residents of

Miami showed that 71 percent would favor random search and seizure by police if suspension of Fourth Amendment protections would result in lower crime rates." (E&CT, p. 13)

What is the attitude when it comes to the First Amendment - separation of Church and State - the very basis of our religious liberty? The CBS Report noted that rather than suspension of the protection of the First Amendment, it is a matter of re-interpretation. The film gives the background of the election of Congressman Ron Lewis from Kentucky. He was one of thirty new Congressmen elected by the Religious Right in the 1994 election. In an interview with him, the film records his understanding of the First Amendment. Lewis stated:

"Government cannot get involved in religion. That is what the First Amendment means. But religion can get involved in government."

The First Amendment does not say this nor mean this. However, before entering that area, let us first note the possible implication of "religion can get involved in government." This is what the "Christian Right" is all about. The first question is - Whose religion? Roman Catholicism? If Protestant, which one? If we limit it to an "Agenda" then that Agenda is the combined Roman Catholic and Evangelical Agenda. Further, if "religion" enters what has been termed the "naked Public Square," how far away are we from the union of Church and State?

What does the First Amendment actually say in regard to "religion"? It reads:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; ..."

The first question would be - "prohibiting the free exercise thereof" where? The simple answer is in the church and in the home? "In the home" means basically that the parents have a right to direct their lives and the lives of their children according to their religious convictions in worship as well as in education. What about the "Public Square" and the Public schools?

To illustrate, let us consider a top issue on the Agenda of the Religious Right, prayer in the Public school. First, is prayer a part of the religious experience? The answer is, Yes. Then where is it to be exercised? If you include the classroom, then religion is brought into the Public Square. With this comes the question: Is there such a thing as a "generic" prayer? If not, then

whose prayer is to be prayed? The Lord's Prayer? The Rosary? The Islamic Prayer to Allah? Would it not be better to recognize that "prohibiting" preserves the home religiously free? If then Christian parents decide to send their children to public schools, should they not be sent each day only after prayer is offered to God for their keeping? Should not that child know that he can alone offer a silent prayer on his own before taking a test? Should the teacher be required to do what the parent has failed to do at home? No!

What about public service? Ministers in politics? If God has called a man, that call is unique and for one purpose only - God's service. Did not Jesus declare - No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62) However, if a dedicated, converted layperson should choose to enter "politics," how should he exercise religion in the "Public Square"? The answer can be found in the life of Daniel, the Hebrew Statesmen who served two great Empires of antiquity. Nowhere do we find that he encouraged the King - and he was close to both Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and Darius of Medo-Persia - to decree religious legislation which would favor the one true God of Israel. It was his associates in government who encouraged religious laws against him. Why? Because his record was without flaw. They could "not find occasion against Daniel," except it be found "against him concerning the law of his God." (Dan. 6:5) This is not the message the Religious Right is projecting. They want power to enforce their agenda, right or wrong.

Christ wanted to change human life styles. He did not use the force of Roman government to do it. He sought by moral persuasion, and the sacrifice of Himself to accomplish His ends. The kingdom of God had to begin in the person, not enforced upon the person. (Luke 17:21)

The First Amendment by removing government from the Church - "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" in its own realm, created a division between the two powers as distinct as did Jesus when He called for a separation between what was God's from what was Caesar's. (Matt. 22:21) The moral Law itself divides between worship of God and right relationships with our fellowmen. In the six commandments governing human conduct, man may legislate in accordance with that which is stated.

Let us consider: Murder is rampant in today's

society. God has given to man the authority to deal with it. He declared - "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." (Gen. 9:6) Further, if we adapted a page from the decree granted to Ezra for the re-establishment of the government of Israel, we would shorten the prolonged time of litigation. It reads: - "Whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death,... or to imprisonment." (Ezra 7:26)

Many aspects of the Agenda of the Christian Right are good. They are at war against homosexuality; abortion on demand as a contraceptive measure; and pre-marital sex. In the area of homosexuality, they are on solid ground if they push for legislation to outlaw this adulterous and shameful practice. It does not come under the purview of the first four Commandments, and is thus subject to human regulation as has been granted by God in maintaining correct relationship between neighbor and neighbor. The conduct is condemned in the Bible as a vice of the most sordid sort. (Rom. 1:27)

All the Agenda is not negative. They encourage "home" schooling where the parents cannot conscientiously send their children to the public school system because of the nature of the curriculum. However, out of this has developed some very questionable items. Many, not wishing to go the "home" school route, have moved to take over the school boards and enforce their own curriculum content. Also a segment of the Christian Right, largely the Roman Catholic, want tax dollars for their parochial schools. If I am not satisfied with the education provided at public expense, and choose to help establish a church oriented school system, or to go the "home school" route that becomes my responsibility to maintain without State aide.

It is truly a "cultural war" and the Christian Right activists are in it for the long haul. Why has this crisis developed? Many of the Right believe that the advocates of Liberalism through court decisions and legislation have caused Congress to create an "establishment of religion" in making the tenets of secularism the "religion" of the Public Square. They further believe that these tenets are the root cause of the breakdown of society thus creating the climate for immorality and crime. They intend to accomplish their objective, but what will the price be in the end. The line is being blurred between Church and State, with **genuine** religious liberty being placed in jeopardy.

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REASONED Opposition

The Statement of Accord - "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" - released on March 29, 1994 produced a "fire storm" among Evangelical spokesmen. Dr. J. I. Packer, in the book, E&CT (p. 160), tells of a meeting, requested by Charles Colson, and hosted by Dr. James Kennedy, Pastor of the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Non-signers of the statement present were big-name Evangelicals - Ankerberg, Horton, MacArthur, Sproul, Stowell, Woodbridge, as well as Dr. Kennedy as the host. Packer states that the discussion focused "on evangelical distinctives, particularly the definition and nature of the gospel." (E&CT, p. 160) Resulting from this conference, Packer drew up a statement to be signed by the Protestants who affirmed the Accord.

Author and Lecturer Dave Hunt is not listed as being in attendance at the Coral Gables conference. From his pre-Chapter in the book, A Women Rides the Beast, it is obvious that he is not buying any compromise with Rome. He charges that "each step in the preparation of the Accord was continuously monitored and approved by the Vatican." (p. 3) In his judgment, "this bold move to 'unite Catholics and evangelicals' will divide evangelicals as nothing else could." (p. 4)

Hunt then goes for the jugular. While noting that "key differences" between Evangelicals and Catholics was acknowledged in the Accord, he writes:

"Unfortunately, the most important difference - **what it means to be a Christian** - is not mentioned. In fact, that such a difference even exists is denied. This compromise of the gospel lies at the heart of the agreement.

"The key element behind this historic declaration is the previously unthinkable admission on the part of leading evangelicals that active participation in the Catholic Church makes one a Christian. If that is indeed the case, then the Reformation was a tragic mistake. The millions who were martyred (during a thousand years before the Reformation and since to the present time) for rejecting Catholicism as a false gospel have all died in vain. If, however, the Reformers were right, then this new agreement between Catholics and evangelicals could well be the cleverest and deadliest blow struck against

the gospel in the entire history of the church." (p. 6; emphasis his)

Hunt emphasizes that mere assent to the Creeds of Christendom does not make one a Christian. Yet this was the basis for the Accord, and is the thrust of the ecumenical process being forwarded by the WCC.

One of the commitments in the Accord stated - "In view of the large number of non-Christians in the world and the enormous challenge of our common evangelistic task, it is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources for one Christian community to proselytize among active adherents of another Christian community." (E&CT, p. xxx) With this muting of the Evangelical witness, Hunt takes real exception pointing out that "while evangelicals signed a truce, Rome is stepping up its evangelization of Protestants into the Catholic Church." (Hunt, op. cit., p. 8)

Following, the signing of the Accord in March, 1994, the Roman Church sponsored a "John Paul II and the New Evangelization: Implementing the Vision" Conference in Ypsilanti, Michigan, May 11-14. Charles Colson was a featured speaker at this conference. He shared the podium with such Catholic leaders as Fr. Tom Forrest who heads "Evangelization 2000" from the Vatican.

Evangelicals perceive of evangelism as leading people to Christ. However, for Catholics it means bringing people into the Roman Catholic Church. Hunt cites Fr. Tom Forrest's explanation of "Catholic evangelism" as given to a group of Catholic charismatics. Forrest stated:

"Our job is to make people as richly and as fully Christian as we can make them by bringing them into the Catholic Church."

He then cites Pope Paul VI's prescription for evangelism. The commitment to Christ "must be given concrete and visible form through entry... into the [Catholic] Church our visible sacrament of salvation." Then Forrest comments - "That's what the Church is, and if that is what the Church is, we have to be evangelizing into the Church!"

Then Forrest continues:

"No, you don't just invite someone to become a Christian, you invite them to become Catholics... Why would this be so important? First of all, there are seven sacraments, and the Catholic Church has all seven... On our altars we have the

body of Christ; we drink the blood of Christ. Jesus is alive on our altars, as offering... We become one with Christ in the Eucharist...

"As Catholics we have Mary, and that Mom of ours, Queen of Paradise, is praying for us till she sees us in glory.

"As Catholics we have the papacy, a history of popes from Peter to John Paul II... we have the rock upon which Christ did build His Church.

"As Catholics - now I love this one - we have purgatory. Thank God! I'm one of those people who would never get to the Beatific Vision without it. It is the only way to go.

"So as Catholics... our job is to use this remaining decade evangelizing everyone we can into the Catholic Church, into the body of Christ and into the third millennium of Catholic history." (Quoted in Hunt, op.cit., pp. 9-10)

We see Evangelicals and Catholics Together; we see Adventists and Catholics Together. The end - Roman Catholics all! Except? - and that is the question you must answer.

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LET'S TALK IT OVER

As I read Charles Colson's Essay, and then reviewed the News Release announcing the merging of Adventist and Roman Catholic Health services in Colorado, there was a common rationalization expressed justifying these accords. Colson defending the Document - "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" - declared: "This new cooperation requires neither evangelical nor Catholic to compromise their respective doctrinal convictions." (E&CT, p. 36) The News Release prepared by Terry White of the PorterCare Adventist Health System affirmed that "as a part of the agreement, each system will retain its own distinctive identity, beliefs, and mission." The similarity of assurance causes one to wonder - Is there a single mind at work suggesting this rationale? It almost echoes Eden, the Roman Catholic Church is still the same as it always has been, but "ye shall not surely die."

I found another rationale expressed by Colson to justify an accord between professed Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church. It reads -

"Christians of all traditions have a unique opportunity, and in my judgment a profound

obligation, to present a united front before a world captive not only to unbelief but to new forms of ancient errors ranging from the New Age to the neopagan." (E&CT, p. 35)

Is Colson so uninformed about Church History that he does not know that Roman Catholicism is neopaganism itself? Has he never read what John Henry Cardinal Newman, Anglican converted to Roman Catholicism, wrote in An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine? He stated:

"We are told in various ways by Eusebius, that Constantine, in order to recommend the new [Christian] religion to the heathen, transferred into it the outward ornaments to which they had been accustomed in their own... The use of temples, and these dedicated to particular saints, and ornamented on occasions with branches of trees; incense, lamps, and candles; votive offerings on recovery from illness; holy water; asylums; holydays and seasons, use of calenders, processions, blessings on the field; sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure, the ring in marriage, turning to the East, images at a later date, perhaps the ecclesiastical chant, and the Kyrie Eleison, are all of pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption into the Church." (p. 373)

Colson is well read. He it is who popularized the catch phrase - "Born Again." However he, as well as others, believe that that and the acceptance of C. S. Lewis's "mere" Christianity is all that is required to present a common front to the enemy. However, we are to add to our faith knowledge. (II Peter 1:5) That "knowledge" includes how God views certain powers of earth as revealed in prophecy. Of this, Colson is seemingly ignorant.

However, imagine my surprise, when after noting this rationale of Colson's, I opened the Adventist Review (January 11, 1996) and read similar editorial thinking. There, blocked off in the center of the page (4), was this conclusion - "We must join forces with all decent people in society to hold back the tide of smut and violence." The editorial closed with a quote from the President of the General Conference - "We need to be God's activists in changing the values of society."

Is this our mission? The apostolic church was "other worldly" in their outlook. Is the end really near? If so, do we seek to recreate an earthly society, or do we seek to point the way to the Heavenly world? "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (I John 2:17) whg

NOTE

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**1996 ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP
August 5 - 10**

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FAITH is believing what God says simply because it is God who says it.

FAITH believes the Word of God for what it cannot see, and is rewarded by seeing what it believes.

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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, Ozona, AR 72854, USA.

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