

*"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)*

## A Search for Identity

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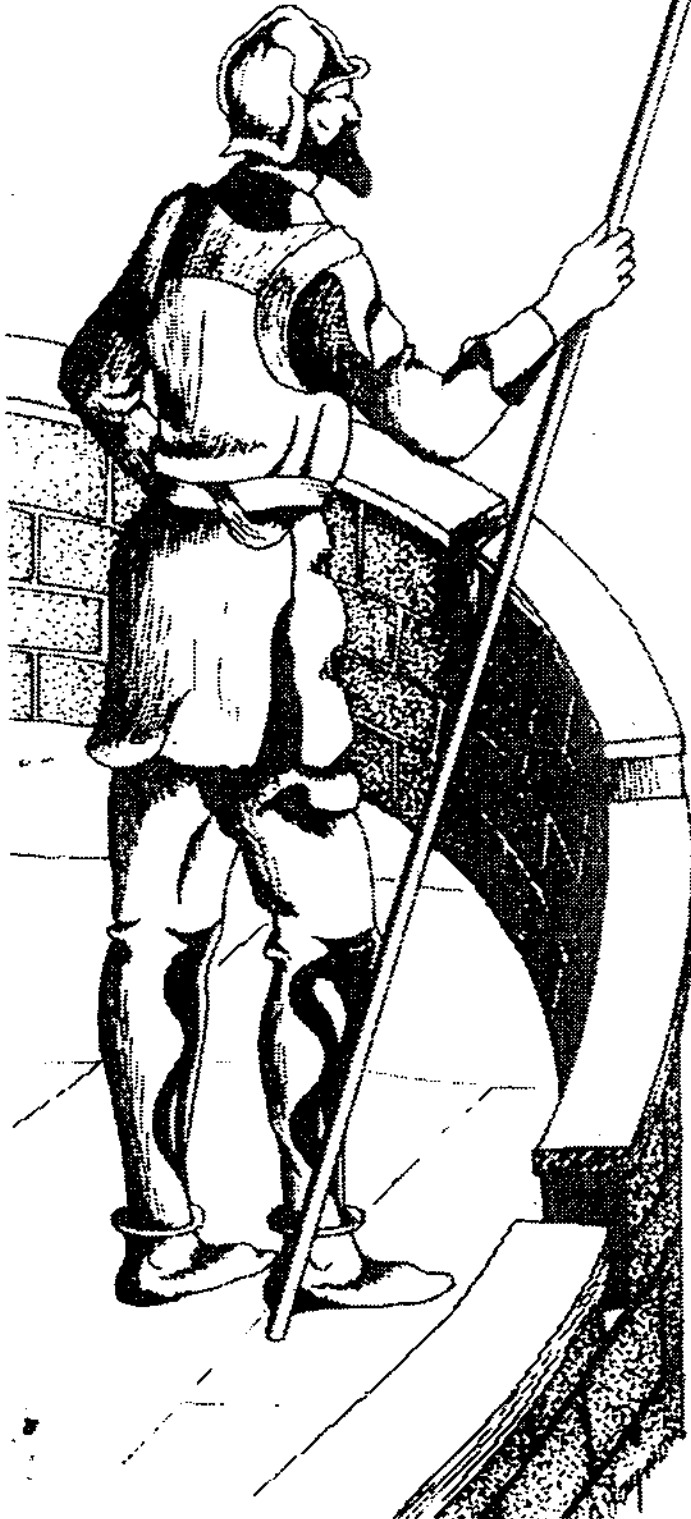
## THE DIVINE VIEWPOINT IN MEANINGFUL Symbols

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### *Editor's Preface*

Before Dr. Knight asked the question, "What does all this mean?" he discussed "Adventism in Theological Tension" from 1950 to close of the century. It remains in tension into the third millennium. Knight discusses various causes for this tension, and no doubt these have been contributing factors, but the one key event which plunged the Church into discord was the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956. The identity of the Church was lost as a result of these conferences and has not been recovered. The way the compromises were forced upon the Church only added to the self-inflicted wound. Nothing was allowed to stand in the way of this new movement. M. L. Andreasen who stood up against it suffered severe abuse at the hands of the Church's leadership at its highest level. Knight rightly observes that the actions of the General Conference "created a martyr." Even though prior to his death, they tried to rectify their action; but as Knight concluded, "the damage had been done." (p. 171). There are aspects of the SDA-Evangelical Conferences which Knight fails to discuss. Either he did not know, or knowing was forbidden to reveal the full deception practiced upon the Church. We discuss that aspect as fully as possible in this issue.

We return again to a discussion of the prophecy in Revelation 12 to 14. However, we devote special emphasis to the 13th chapter where the "two-horned" beast and his activities are defined in prophetic symbolism. There a reference to the history of ancient Israel is interjected. What is its significance when the prophecy given in the last book of the Old Testament is factored in? The whole prophetic picture, and current events which are moving in that direction declare loud and clear, it is the end time of human history.



# The Search for Identity

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Knight described the final period of Adventism's search for identity as "Adventism in Theological Crisis." Selecting 1950 as the beginning date, he listed no final date. He did well, for Adventism is still in crisis, and there is no end in sight as the Church enters the Third Millennium. This period has been marked by apostasy which is "increasing and waxing stronger, and will continue to do so until the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout" (Series B, #7, p. 56).

Changes both in the religious and political world were in place as time entered the last half of the 20th century. In 1948, the World Council of Churches began functioning, and Israel became an independent nation once again. This latter event forced the Church to re-assess some of its prophetic interpretations. By 1950, some theological changes were also in place in the publications of the Church. *Bible Readings for the Home Circle* had been revised in the crucial area of the Incarnation. The year 1950 witnessed changes in the leadership of two of its three top executive positions, president and treasurer.

Looking back with 20/20 vision, one must recognize that the most important event to occur in the Church in 1950 was the challenge brought by two youthful missionaries from Africa calling the leadership of the Church to account for what happened near the close of the previous century in 1888, the rejection of the message of righteousness by faith. The reverberations of this challenge continue to echo in the corridors of Adventism.

The new administration was not slow to respond to this challenge. In two years a world-wide Bible Conference was convened in the Sligo Park, Seventh-day Adventist Church. The doctrine which had been revised in *Bible Readings* was not even discussed. Knight mentions this conference only by a brief passing reference. He wrote:

The year 1952...saw...the first denomination-wide Bible Conference since 1919. The conference, as the General Conference president saw it, was not to deal with 'side issues that have no direct bearing on the plan of salvation' but to explore the central theological concerns of the Adventist Church (*Our Firm Foundation*, vol. 1, p. 47). The discussions do not seem to have anything very revolutionary about them, but the list of speakers represent to some

extent a younger generation of theologians. One shift of significance is that recently-retired M. L. Andreasen is missing from the roster while a younger man by the name of Edward Heppenstall is on it. Participants expounded Andreasen's theology, but also Heppenstall's understanding of the new covenant experience. (p. 162)

Knight, though a professed historian, failed to research sufficiently into this Bible Conference to grasp the flow of events which would occur in the decades to follow. First, it was a controlled conference. There was no time given for open discussion of the studies presented. Heppenstall's presentation did not go over smoothly. I saw a veteran Evangelist stomp his feet and walk out of the presentation as he had no other way to question or register his opposition to what was being presented.

Having responded to a survey made prior by one of the speakers in gathering data for his presentation, I was anxious to hear the results. These were given but did not reveal a result which the Church leadership wanted to hear. The delegates had been promised a full publication of all the presentations, but when the two volumes were published, this survey was missing. I wrote to the editor and asked him why, and if I could have a copy of the results of his survey. He told me that he could not give me a copy as he had been ordered to put the survey in deep freeze. To my knowledge, it has never been thawed.

Another respected retired Bible teacher was missing from the roster of speakers. The reaction was acute among a segment of delegates to what was presented in the area of eschatology. Since the Bible teacher had taught in the College adjacent to the Sligo Park Church arrangements were for a special meeting to be held in an auditorium on the campus of the college where the teacher could challenge the views being presented at the Bible Conference. I did not personally hold to the position taken by the retired Bible teacher. To me the one speaking at the Bible Conference was more in line with the Word of God. It was evident, however, that the control mechanism in place did not permit the discussion of any view at variance with a predetermined agenda. The fact was not recognized that in the presentation of truth, if the Spirit of truth is present, there is liberty. (II Cor. 3:17). And how can truth be presented if the Spirit of truth is absent?

Knight in his presentation of the data on the 1952 Bible Conference missed its real objective. One of the

last presentations to be given was by the General Conference President himself who had convened the conference. His topic was "The Lord our Righteousness." As he neared the close of his presentation he stated:

To a large degree the church failed to build on the foundation laid at the 1888 General Conference. Much has been lost as a result. We are years behind where we should have been in spiritual growth. Long ere this we should have been in the Promised Land.

But the message of righteousness by faith given in the 1888 Conference has been repeated here. Practically every speaker from the first day onward has laid stress upon this all-important doctrine (?), and there was no pre-arranged plan that he should do so. It was spontaneous on the part of the speakers. No doubt they were impelled by the Spirit of God to do so. Truly this one subject has, in this conference "swallowed up every other."

And this great truth has been given here in this 1952 Bible Conference with far greater power than it was given in the 1888 Conference because those who have spoken here have had the advantage of much added light shining forth from hundreds of pronouncements on this subject in the Spirit of prophecy which those who spoke back there did not have. The light of justification and righteousness by faith shines upon us today more clearly than it ever shone before upon any people.

No longer will the question be, "What was the attitude of our workers and people toward the message of righteousness by faith that was given in 1888? What did they do about it?" From now on the great question must be, "What did we do with the light on righteousness by faith as proclaimed in the 1952 Bible Conference?" (Our Firm Foundation, Vol. II, pp. 616-617)

Clearly this was a reference to the challenge which Wieland and Short had lodged with the General Conference officers in 1950; but few in attendance were aware of their manuscript, *1888 Re-Examined*. However, in the second question asked by Branson is the embryo of what would take place three years later. If the message of 1888 had been preached "with far greater power" at the 1952 Bible Conference, and if what actually happened in 1888 had been clearly perceived, the debacle of 1955-56 would not have occurred.

Knight summarizes the presentations by stating, "The

discussions do not seem to have anything very revolutionary about them" (p. 162). This was to a large extent true, and the conclusion which Branson drew cannot be substantiated by an analysis of the studies given.

We turn our attention next to "the debacle of 1955-56." If there was one single event which above all others produced the theological tension in Adventism, the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences was that event. The catalyst for this series of conferences was a letter written by T. E. Unruh, then president of the East Pennsylvania Conference, to Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, editor of *Eternity* magazine, commending him on his radio sermons on righteousness by faith from the book of Romans. Herein is the same faulty understanding, as voiced by Knight, of what the message of 1888 was all about. Knight perceives the messages of Jones and Waggoner as "the same as that taught by the evangelicals" (p. 106). Barnhouse responded to Unruh's letter expressing "astonishment that an Adventist clergyman would commend him for preaching righteousness by faith." The exchange continued until Barnhouse openly attacked the book, *Steps to Christ*, which Unruh sent him.

About six years later, Unruh received a letter from Walter Martin, a Southern Baptist clergyman, on the staff of *Eternity* as consulting editor, and a member of the Evangelical Foundation. He had been commissioned to write a book against Seventh-day Adventists, but wanted to have first hand contact so as to write fairly about them. Unruh contacted R. Allan Anderson and LeRoy E. Froom whom Martin requested to meet, and W. E. Read, a Field-Secretary of the General Conference. These Adventist conferees met with Martin and George E. Cannon, professor of theology on the staff of Nyack Missionary College in New York. Unruh served as chairman for all the sessions.

Four areas of disagreement became the focal points in the discussions of the conferences: "1) that the atonement of Christ was not completed on the cross; 2) that salvation is the result of grace plus works of the law; 3) that the Lord Jesus Christ was a created being, not from all eternity; (4) and that He partook of man's sinful nature at the incarnation." (Quoted by Knight (p. 165) from *Our Hope*, November 1956). Commenting on these issues and the answers given by the Adventist conferees, Knight wrote accurately:

It appears that Froom, A<sup>d</sup>erson, and their colleagues were not completely candid when they gave Martin and

Barnhouse the opinion that "the overwhelming majority never held to those divergent views." Or as Barnhouse put it in relation to the information that the Adventist leaders had provided on the human nature of Christ: "The majority of the denomination has always held to the sinless, holy, and perfect (human nature) despite the fact that certain of the their writers have occasionally gotten into print with contrary views completely repugnant to the Church at large." ... Historical investigation, however, indicates that just the opposite was true on the issue of the human nature of Christ and even such beliefs as the completed atonement and the eternal existence of Christ. (pp. 165-166)

Knight uses the more genteel descriptive language - "not completely candid" when the stronger word would better convey the truth - the Adventist conferees, Froom, Anderson, Unruh and Read, lied to the Evangelicals. Once one lie was spoken, more lies followed. Martin prepared a list of questions which covered most of the beliefs of Adventism. To these questions, the Adventist conferees responded in writings, and which in turn became the basis for the book, *Questions on Doctrine*. Here came the second lie. The answers which the Adventist conferees supplied to the Evangelicals are not the same in all detail as the answers as published in *Questions on Doctrine*. In other words, the book as given to the ministry and laity of the Church is itself a revision. The original answers are still unknown to the rank and file of both the ministry and laity of the Church. The question is, was there a conspiracy to cover the original answers when the conferences finally became known to the Church?

In the second of three articles written by Walter Martin in *Eternity*, (Nov. 1956) he quoted from the answers given him which he assumed would go into the book, *Questions on Doctrine*, unaltered. He quoted the entire answer to Question 3 (pp. 29-32). The alteration, though but one word, was crucial and would in the opinion of the Adventist conferees help allay the deep concern of those who alleged compromise of truth. The text from which Martin copied, read "But with the passage of years the earlier diversity of view on certain doctrines gradually gave way to unity of view . . . on the death of Christ as the complete atonement for sin. ... All this has made it desirable and necessary for us to declare our position anew upon the great fundamental teachings of the Christian faith, and to deny every statement or implication ...that His death on the cross, was not a full and complete atonement."

In both of the underscored phrases in the copy from which Martin quoted, the published book added one word: "complete *sacrificial* atonement" and "a full and complete *sacrificial* atonement." This one word, "sacrificial" permits the concept of a "final" atonement to be made by Jesus Christ as High Priest. How many more changes are to be found between the answers given to the Evangelicals and the book published for the entire Church to read can never be known until the copy of the original answers are released. Knight, if he had done his historical research as a reputable historian would have done, would have revealed the full extent of this duplicity and thus helped to dispel "the refuge of lies" which has created the tension in Adventism. Well did Isaiah describe the current problem as he spoke forthrightly concerning such a duplicity in his day:

Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we in agreement: when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come to us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. (28:14-15)

When Barnhouse's first article, giving the Evangelical perspective of the conferences, appeared in *Eternity* - "Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?" - Andreasen noted some of the statements the Adventist conferees made as alleged by Barnhouse. Barnhouse had written:

They (the Adventist leaders) do not believe, as some of their earlier leaders taught, that Jesus' atoning work was not completed on Calvary but instead that He was still carrying on a second ministering work since 1844. This idea is also totally repudiated. They believe that since His ascension Christ has been ministering the benefits of the atonement which He completed on Calvary. (Sept., 1956)

To this Andreasen responded:

To me, to repudiate Christ's ministry in the second apartment, now, is to repudiate Adventism. That is one of the foundation pillars of Adventism. If we reject the atonement in the sanctuary now, we may as well repudiate all Adventism. For this God's people are not ready. They will not follow the leaders in apostasy (Letters to the Churches, p. 53).

But they did follow the leaders into apostasy, and this is what produced the crisis in Adventism which to this

day remains unresolved.

With the publication of the book, *Questions on Doctrine*, the apostasy was confirmed. It stated:

Adventists do not hold any theory of a dual atonement (Entire sentence is in emphasis.) "Christ hath redeemed us" (Gal. 3:13) "once for all" (Heb. 10:10). (p. 390)

[In the above relating of Biblical texts, is one of the greatest perversions of the analogy of Scripture to ever appear in an Adventist publication and ranks with the illustration of such perversion: Judas "went and hanged himself" (Matt. 27:5); go "do (thou) likewise" (Luke 3:11).]

Again, under a section captioned, "Redemption Absolute by the Victory of Jesus," it reads:

How glorious is the thought that the King, who occupies the throne, is also our representative at the court of heaven! This becomes all the more meaningful when we realize that Jesus our surety entered the "holy places" and appeared in the presence of God for us. But it was not with the hope of obtaining something for us at that time, or at some future time. No! He had already obtained it for us on the cross. And now as our High Priest He ministers the virtues of His atoning sacrifice for us. (p. 381)

This book, *Questions on Doctrine*, was first published in 1957, and was never reprinted in a second revised edition. In the "Introduction" it was plainly stated that "No statement of Seventh-day Adventist belief can be considered official unless it is adopted by the General Conference in ... session." However, it did claim for the book that "this volume can be viewed as truly representative of the faith and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church" (p. 9). Since 1957, the 1980 General Conference session in Dallas, Texas, voted a new Statement of Beliefs. Did its wording annul the positions set forth in the book, *Questions on Doctrine*?

Walter Martin was also concerned about this question. In a revised and updated edition of his *Kingdom of the Cults*, Martin noted the turmoil in Adventism writing that "during the last ten years (since the early 1970s) the Seventh-day Adventist denomination has seen turbulence, both administratively and doctrinally, that is more extensive than any turmoil in the organization's history" (p. 410). This accords with Knight's evaluation that since

1950 Adventism has been in "theological tension."

Martin went one step further. On February 16, 1983, he wrote the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists asking for a "public and official statement reaffirming or denying the authority of the Adventist book, *Questions on Doctrine*. As one can see this was after the 1980 session at which a new Statement of Beliefs had been voted. He received an answer from W. Richard Leshar, then a vice-president of the General Conference and to become president of Andrews University and the Theological Seminary. It read:

You asked first if Seventh-day Adventists still stand behind the answers in *Questions on Doctrine* as they did in 1957. The answer is yes. You have noted in your letter that some opposed the answers given then, and, to some extent, the same situation exists today. But certainly the great majority of the Seventh-day Adventists are in harmony with the views expressed in *Questions on Doctrine*. (ibid.)

Where then does this leave the individual Adventist, whether he is still a member of the church who has continued to "follow the leaders in apostasy" which Andreasen thought they would not do, or whether he is a member of the Adventist Community seeking to maintain the truths which he believes was committed to the Church? While Knight has cited the fact that the Adventist conferees lied to the Evangelicals, he also observed that the leadership in the production of the book lied to the laity and ministry. This latter illustration is the more serious inasmuch as it reflects on the problem as to the authority of the Writings of Ellen G. White. In the back of the book, *Questions on Doctrine*, compilations from the Writings are added as Appendixes. Subheadings are supplied to give the intent that the leadership wishes the reader to see. A case in point is found in Appendix B. Knight comments, "On page 650, for example, we read that Christ 'took sinless human nature.' Not only did Ellen White not say that, but she stated just the opposite -- that Christ 'took upon Him our sinful nature.'" (p. 169)

A true "identity" cannot be based in falsehood, nor in an attempt to deceive. Therefore Adventism continues in a crisis of identity as well as in theology, and will continue in such a crisis until the guidelines which guided the pioneers in their search for truth are revived and pursued by the main body (which is a doubtful possibility), or by a segment of the Adventist community who truly wish an identity with which

Heaven can identify. This would produce the long looked for "remnant of her seed" (Rev. 12:17).

[The documentation for the above references to the SDA-Evangelical Conferences can be found in the manuscript by that title, and the study, "Betrayal of the Sacred Trust." Consult the "Order Form" of Foundation publications. If you do not have such a form, write to the office for one]

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## The Divine Viewpoint in Meaningful Symbols

Prophecy is given from the viewpoint of God. When God describes a power as a "little horn" with "the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" (Dan. 7:8), i.e., "great words against the most High" (v. 25); when He depicts the same power as a "beast" with "a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies" (Rev. 13:5); when He defines this power as "that Wicked (One)" [ὁ ανομοσ - "he in whom all iniquity has fixed its abode" - Thayer] (II Theses 2:8), he is not speaking of a saintly character regardless of how Billy Graham, James Dobson, or as the secular press reports him to be. If indeed, we would truly accept the significance of God's symbolization of earthly powers, we could keep our thinking straight in regard to events taking place before our very eyes and not be deceived.

The same forthright divine viewpoint is stated concerning the second beast of Revelation 13. It comes "up out of the earth" (ver. 11), while the first beast arose "out of the sea" (ver. 1). Its center of activity then will be the area (nation) represented symbolically by "the earth." It presents a conflicting contrast in its symbolism: it "had two horns like a lamb," but "spake as a dragon" (*ibid.*). In the symbolism of Revelation, the "dragon" is used as a symbol of the "Devil" or "Satan" (12:9); while the "lamb" is used to define Him as He "had been slain" (5:6) but Who is "alive for evermore" (1:18). It is safe to conclude that within the confines of, and period of existence of, this second beast there will be enacted the final scenes of that great controversy which had been vividly symbolized in Revelation 12:7-9, 11 (cmp with 13:15).

This second beast was to exercise "all the power of the first beast before him" (13:12). The first beast's power has been extensive, and was received from "the dragon" (13:2). There is noted a reciprocity between the two. One of the heads of the first beast

"was slain to death" (13:3); but the second beast "causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast" *after* an event occurs - "the deadly wound *was* healed" (13:12), in other words, the wound to the particular head. It should also be observed that the clause in the KJV which reads - "and all the world wondered after the beast" (13:3) - in the Greek text reads - "and wondered all the earth (symbolic?) after the beast."

Verse 13 is a pivotal verse. It reads:

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

Is this something that will be literally fulfilled, or is it a reference directing the "one who reads" to a specific experience delineated in history and the final prophecy of the Old Testament so that he may determine its meaning? The incident is clear as to emphasis and purpose. Elijah had summoned the nation of Israel to Mt. Carmel along with the prophets of Baal. To the people, gathered in answer to the summons of Ahab, Elijah challenged, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord is God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him" (I Kings 18:21). Then Elijah made a proposition: "The God that answereth by fire, let Him be God" (ver. 24). In the very prophetic description of the events leading to the final confrontation in the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the reader is directed to the confrontation on Mt. Carmel. Who is to be worshipped - "the first beast" (Rev.13:12), or "Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water"? (14:7).

Into this final picture is projected another factor. The final prophecy of the Old Testament reads:

Behold, I will send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:5-6)

No where can one find in the confrontation on Mt. Carmel, or in its national context any reference to an issue involving "family values." It is, however, interjected into the final picture by the prophecy in Malachi, as well as by prophetic symbolism in Revelation. A staff writer for *The Washington Post* began a series of articles in the Sunday edition, April 15, 2001, noting that the Bush administration believes that "government can and should play a large role in mold-

ling the private behavior of the citizenry." The article continues:

The Bush administration is devising proposals to strengthen American families, using grants to promote "responsible fatherhood," marriage counseling to prevent divorce, character education for children and tax credits to promote two parent homes and adoption. (p. A01)

Wade Horn, who has been nominated as the assistant secretary of health and human services for family support, "views the administration's efforts as four-pronged: strengthening fatherhood, strengthening marriage, strengthening community organizations that help families, and seeking a role for religious organizations in building communities." Prior to his appointment, Horn headed the National Fatherhood Initiative, whose core objective "is to change the idea we have of culture" (*ibid.*)

Two things need to be kept in mind as we seek to evaluate this from the Divine viewpoint: 1) Malachi's prophecy indicates that if the voice of "Elijah" is not heeded, the earth will be smitten with "a curse." Revelation reveals that this will happen. (Rev. 15:1). Further, the "beast" which "maketh fire come down" is, in reality, the "false prophet" who with the beast seeks to make war with the "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (19:19-20; see also 16:13-14). We need to understand the view of God on human events, and knowing, accept by faith, that which may not so appear in our evaluation as God reveals it to be.

Another factor of prophecy is that this second beast will cause "the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast" (Rev. 13:12) Another staff writer for *The Washington Post* wrote a day later that "since taking over the White House, President Bush and top advisors have been insidiously cultivating Catholic voters in an attempt to realign a once-Democratic constituency in much the same way that the Republican Party in the 1970s and 1980s won over southern evangelical Protestants" (p. A02).

Citing Bush's actions in this attempt, the staff writer notes that he has met with the Archbishop of St. Louis, the Bishop of Pittsburgh, and Cardinal McCarrick of Washington. "His staff has created an informal advisory group that includes *Crisis* [a conservative RC magazine] publisher Deal Hudson and Princeton University political scientist Robert George. Perhaps most important, Bush has incorporated language familiar to Catholics - what strategists call Catholic 'buzzwords' -

into speeches." ...

"The effort to recruit Catholic voters has led to a striking change in the political climate in Washington. George noted in an interview last week that 'in 1960, John Kennedy went from Washington to Texas to assure Protestant preachers that he would not obey the pope. In 2001, George Bush came from Texas up to Washington to assure a group of Catholic bishops that he would.'" (*ibid.*)

Bush's attempt to woo conservative Catholic voters has already led to the support of Paul Weyrich, head of the Free Congress Foundation. "Weyrich wrote that he recently asked senior Bush advisor Karl Rove to tell the president 'that he has mastered the art of Catholic governance.' Rove, according to Weyrich, replied, 'That's pretty good for a Methodist.'" (*ibid.*)

If we cannot see in the turn of events, the fulfilling of the prophecy of Revelation 13, we have lost our spiritual perception. If we cannot understand how heaven views these events, then we have lost our faith. Faith to be genuine must be based in the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), accepting current events as God sees them to really be.

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**Note: Rome never changes, although its face may. Today a former "stage actor" wears the Triple Crown. The Biblical word for "stage actor" in the Greek is ὑποκριτής. Jesus used the word to describe religious leaders of His day. (Matt. 23:27-28)**

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