

"Watchman, What of the Night?"

COMMENTARY

Volume V

Number One

LETTERS AND EXCERPTS

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EDITORIAL PREVIEW

Sometimes personal letters emanating from the Adventist "curia" do not say the same things as said by the same person in published stenographic reports appearing in the Church's official publication. One such instance is given in this issue of the Commentary. (See page 3) A sister on the West Coast wrote directly to Dr. B. B. Beach questioning his request to the Vatican to send an "official observer" to the 1990 General Conference session in Indianapolis. The reply she received was forwarded to us. We, then, wrote to Beach ourselves, and to that letter there has been no response. You will note that this was back in October of last year. Perhaps, Dr. Beach was too busy getting ready to attend the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra, Australia, as an "Observer," to respond. But the WCC's Seventh Assembly did not convene till February. The plain simple fact is that it is most difficult to explain double-talk!

[Note: - To conserve space, the letters were reduced in size and pasted up in layout, but nothing essential was omitted in the process.]

During 1990, a new book by Malachi Martin, The Keys of This Blood, was published. It outlines from the Vatican viewpoint the struggle for world dominion between Pope John Paul II, Mikhail Gorbachev, and the Capitalist West. Martin, a devout Roman Catholic, eminent theologian - though a poor Church historian - is also an ex-Jesuit. Well known as an "expert on the Catholic Church," he has written among his previous publications, The Jesuits, and The Final Conclave. What is interesting is that the book points out that while John Paul II is bent on coming out on top of this struggle for control of "the new world order," he has not confronted the "deterioration" in the Roman Catholic Church "that began during the fifteen-year reign of Pope Paul VI." How far this deterioration has gone and is going in what was formerly a bulwark of Roman Catholicism is not widely known. An article in the World Press Review taken from the newsmagazine, Der Spiegel of Hamburg, Germany, tells what is happening in areas of Latin America. In this issue, we will summarize the article with comments. (p. 4)

As noted above, the Seventh Assembly of the WCC convened in Australia during the month of February. While various social issues were high on the agenda, the continuing stand-off between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church as far as "visible unity" is concerned, received considerable space in the WCC's Ecumenical Press Service. This we will note for you, and give from the new book, Keys of This Blood, the present Vatican attitude toward the WCC and why.

At the Seventh Assembly an ingenious witness was made for truth, and the historic prophetic position of the Adventist Church. Read the report taken from the EPS in the article - "Seventh Assembly Highlighted." (p. 8)

No picture can be complete of John Paul II's devotion to the virgin Mary without the full statement by St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori regarding Mary - "All graces are dispensed by Mary, and that all who are saved are saved only by the means of this Divine Mother. It is a necessary consequence that the salvation of all depends upon preaching Mary, and exciting all to confidence in her intercession. (Glories of Mary, p. 8) See page. 9.



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October 16, 1990

Dear

At the recent General Conference Session in Indianapolis, we invited many representatives of other Christian churches to attend our Session as observers. We wish to witness to all and sundry regarding Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and work around the world. We don't want to be bigots, like the pharisees, or like the papalists throughout history.

We felt the GC Session was a unique opportunity for ministers of other churches to become acquainted with Seventh-day Adventism. Every one of these Christian leaders has a soul to be saved.

Thomas Murphy of the Catholic Church was one of many who accepted our invitation. I believe that this gesture of ours was useful and helped break down prejudice against us. Especially, Catholics need our witness. Pastor Murphy responded positively to what he saw and heard.

Yes, we stand for the pillars of the truth and shall not be moved. We know the anti-Christian track record of the Vatican. My many articles and books show this clearly. We pray that the Lord will give you clarity of understanding and vision to support your Christian zeal.

Very sincerely yours,


B B Beach

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*Watchman,
of the night?"*

Wm. H. Grotheer, Editor

Ozone, AR 72854

Oct. 29, 1990

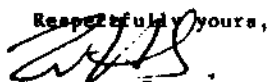
Dr. B. B. Beach
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General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Silver Spring, MD 20904

Dear Dr. Beach:

Before me is a copy of a letter written to a sister regarding the appearance of Mr. Thomas Murphy at the recent General Conference session. In this letter, you infer that the invitation was extended to Mr. Murphy on a personal basis. The report in the General Conference Bulletin (#7, p. 8) quotes you as stating he was "representing the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity." The Arkansas Catholic official organ of the Little Rock Diocese quoting the Catholic News Service stated that the Seventh-day Adventist Church invited the Vatican - not Mr. Murphy - to send "an official observer to the conference." This was noted by the diocesan paper as evidence of "the new position of co-operation with the Catholic Church." (See July 29, 1990 issue)

You cannot have it both ways. You are either seeking to deceive the laity of the Church, or you have deceived the leadership of the Catholic Church of your intents in regard to them.

The editor of the Arkansas Catholic is disturbed by what she believes to be anti-Catholic literature distributed by Adventists both at the Conference and in Little Rock. Her second article even quotes from her contact with Kenneth Wood. (Sept. 9, 1990) Your comments are as anti-Catholic as any of the material that was distributed.

Respectfully yours,


"A QUIET REVOLUTION IN LATIN AMERICA"

The question asked in Der Spiegel, a news-magazine published in Hamburg, Germany, reads - "Is Latin America on the road of becoming Protestant?" This area of the world has long been considered as a "Rock of Gibraltar" for the Roman Catholic Church. Its 400 million people were predominantly Roman Catholic although in some places the adherents mingled their former pagan rites with Catholic ritual. This area explored by the Conquistadors of Spain since its discovery by Columbus brought Catholicism in its wake. The Roman Catholic Church, even in the revolt of the various colonies from Spanish and Portuguese control, remained all-powerful, the dominant religion as well as a political force in the new governments established. This "golden age" for the Roman Church is drawing to a close, "and a quiet revolution comparable to the Reformation in 16th-century Europe is taking place."

One July day in 1974, a Max Mejia Vides was "born again" in a Los Angeles hotel room. From El Salvador, he was a Roman Catholic. He was conscious of some of his sins, and feared death "terribly." His American host was an evangelical preacher named, Derik Prince. Prince asked Mejia if he would like to be presented to the Holy Spirit. Consenting, "Mejia says that he heard Prince speak in a strange language, saw a bright light, and was flooded with warmth. He suddenly felt loved and purged of all sin." He believed that he "experienced the complete gospel."

Mejia owned a television advertising company in San Salvador, his nation's capital. Today at 72, he still works in television, but says it is "for God's mission." He operates in the Capital Channel 25 which "is a subsidiary of the United States Trinity Broadcasting Network, one of the

largest evangelical television companies in the world." Mejia is one of the more than 40 million evangelical Latin Americans who are spearheading the "quiet revolution" in various parts of the region.

The article from Der Spiegel reports:

Disillusioned Catholics are forsaking their church in droves, seeking salvation in radical evangelical sects. American anthropologist David Stoll estimates that if fundamentalism continues to grow at the rate at which it has in the past 15 years, Brazil, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras will be predominately of an evangelical faith by the year 2000. It is expected that 40 percent of Chileans and about one-third of Costa Ricans and Bolivians will belong to the sects by then. Thirty-five percent of Mexicans are already evangelicals. Sociologists of religion estimate that 30 million Brazilians now believe in being reborn, and more than 600,000 Brazilian Catholics convert to the sects annually. The church of the Pentecostal Brazilians for Christ sect in Sao Paulo is supposedly the world's largest evangelical temple. About 20,000 believers stream in for services each week.

Not content with merely religious persuasion to accomplish their objectives, and knowing nothing but the union of church and state, these "arch-reactionary Pentecostal congregations" are doing what Roman Catholicism did before them, entering the political arena and either seizing power or obtaining influence. Peru's president Fujimori has the support of Pentecostal preachers, as did Chile's former dictator, Pinochet. During the Reagan administration, it was Oliver North who enlisted "Right-wing U.S. television evangelists" for the battle against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Even the CIA saw to it that the Pentecostal sects received money and assistance to help them in their offensive against Catholic "liberation theology" in Latin America. The evangelicals consider the Catholic priests who view their mission as a call to social action as godless Marxists. Interestingly, this is not far from the view of John Paul II.

Here we have a conundrum. These evangelical fundamentalists have been much more than merely an instrument to battle communism in Latin America. Their message and "spirit" answers a yearning among the masses in Latin America that the Catholic Church no longer satisfies. Herein also, is a basic problem confronting Adventism. Is the "spirit" of Pentecostalism to be the instrument by which "numbers" are to be reached with a compromised message now presently being projected as Adventism?

The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International has become one of the most powerful evangelical organizations in Latin America. Its founder, Demos Shakarian, on his first visit to a regional convention of his Central American followers held in San Salvador's Hotel Camino Real told those gathered through an interpreter - "God has conceived a special task for the business people. You are messengers of a kingdom that is not of this world!" The audience of some 500 business people, high-ranking military officers and politicians were meeting in a hall adorned with a Bible and statues of Christ. These with Mejia cheered Shakarian's remarks. The influence of this organization reaches into the cabinet of the El Salvadorian president, Alfredo Cristiani, and includes officers of the General Staff of the armed forces. El Salvador's Lutheran bishop, Medardo Gomez says - "The middle and upper classes think that the Catholic church has betrayed them, because it serves mostly the poor and often criticizes the military."

The Pentecostal sects thank a double strategy for their success - missionary work among the Indians who live in poverty, while acting as the uninhibited agents of a thinly veiled capitalism among the upper and middle classes. This has worked remarkably well in Guatemala, the most populous country in Central America. "About four hundred sects have overrun Guatemala with a network of tens of thousands of evangelical temples, and it is expected to become the first predominately evangelical republic in Latin America by the end of the 1990s." In January of this year, they elected as president, Jorge Serrano Elias, a fundamentalist.

The article, excerpted from Der Spiegel closes with this summary:

Many Latin Americans no longer believe that the U.S. and the other industrialized countries were solely responsible for the "lost decade," as the impoverished 1980s are called in Latin America. The scapegoat is now the Catholic church: Its legacy of patriarchal Spanish colonialism, it is said, has made the people sluggish and fatalistic. Salvation, therefore, lies in a reformation, says Francisco Bianchi, general secretary of the Verbo sect. "Prosperity began with Luther."

[The Verbo (Word) sect was founded by members of the North American Gospel Outreach Church of Eureka, California. It is described as "arch-reactionary."]

The majority of the evangelical sects in Latin America would not have been so successful without radio and television. The Catholic church has nothing comparable with which to confront this media power. It has even

called for a great "offensive" against the Pentecostals and appointed "sect fighters" in most Latin American countries. Among the prescriptions: The Catholic "charismatic movement," an offshoot long frowned upon by the church, should give the sects a dose of their own medicine of conducting services that include speaking in tongues, dancing, and exorcisms. But the charismatics are encountering resistance even within the Catholic clergy. As a bishop in Guatemala City says, "Too many of the charismatics themselves are converting to the sects."

As the conflicting forces surface in the Latin American contest for power, we need to keep in mind the "sure word of prophecy." This light tells us that "the spirits of devils" not only come out of the mouth of the "beast" but also out of the mouth of the miracle working "false prophet" as "the kings of the earth and the whole world" are gathered "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." (Rev. 16:14) From a strictly Biblical viewpoint, one could conclude that the peoples of the Latin American nations are merely jumping from the "frying pan" into the "fire."

(The factual data and major quotes in the above article can be found in World Press Review, March, 1991, pp. 30-31)

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WCC-RC UNITY STALLED?

U.S. News & World Report (March 4, 1991) noted that "that last week in Australia, as the World Council of Churches ended its seventh assembly almost unnoticed, there were few signs of progress toward the 'unity of faith, life and witness' it has sought for more than four decades." (p. 50) A senior editor writing the report commented, "The ecumenical movement, in short, seems stalled."

It is not hard to understand why this Seventh Assembly of the WCC received little world-wide press coverage. They had the unhappy misfortune of being in session at the time the Gulf War was reaching its momentous climax. Further, on February 20, the Assembly called for an immediate ceasefire in the War. This

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was no more welcome in America than Gorbachev's intrusion into the Allied process.

The search for visible unity, apparently stalled, is not dead. It has in some instances merely shifted focus of operation from the world organizational level to the regional and national levels. A key factor in the process is the Roman Catholic-WCC dialogue. On February 19, the Seventh Assembly voted "to reduce the size of the Vatican-WCC Joint Working Group (JWG) and to direct it to concentrate on addressing obstacles preventing a fuller WCC-Roman Catholic relationship." (Ecumenical Press Service (EPS), 91.02.82).

While the WCC has been functioning for more than four decades, since 1948, the JWG has been only working since 1967. It developed out of a boost given the ecumenical movement by Pope John XXIII when he "convened the Second Vatican Council which decreed that Christian disunity 'openly contradicts the will of Christ.' But Catholic zeal for ecumenism has faded in recent years. 'It's clearly not a high priority for the present Vatican administration,' says Dr. Thomas Rausch, a theology professor at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles." (U.S. News, op. cit., p. 51)

The report of the WCC Reference Committee which made the recommendation voted by the Assembly in regard to the JWG indicated that "most of its original mandate has been fulfilled and Roman Catholic participation in the ecumenical movement has become a normal feature.." (EPS, op. cit.) In the debate on the report, several speakers urged "that more be made of the ecumenical relationships involving Roman Catholics at the local level. The assembly endorsed a move that JWG set up formal relationships with similar working groups in regional ecumenical organizations, and consult fully with the three dozen or so national council of churches which include Roman Catholic membership." (ibid.) Three of the eight regional ecumenical organizations - for the Caribbean, the Pacific, and the Middle East - include Roman Catholic jurisdictions as full members; and the same is true of about 36 national council of churches.

This relationship with the WCC by the Roman Catholic church on the national levels, holding full membership in those national councils, but avoiding membership in the world body, the WCC itself, is the same policy followed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in various localities. In the Pacific region, the SDA Church holds membership in the Cook Islands,

and associate membership in the Solomon Islands. In the Caribbean region, the Adventist Church holds full membership in the Bahamas and in the Belize Christian Council. In Europe, the church is a member of the Swedish Ecumenical Council, and a Consultant-observer along with the Roman Catholic Church in the United Kingdom. This data is to be found in the Directory of Christian Councils published by the WCC. In the introductory statement, Emilio Castro, General Secretary, wrote: (Castro is an ex-Roman Catholic priest, converted (?) to Methodism) "The Rules of the WCC recognize the regional ecumenical conferences and the national councils as essential partners in the ecumenical movement." The Directory closes with a paragraph on "Ecumenical relationships" It reads:

In addition to the relationship with regional and national council of churches mentioned [in the Directory], the WCC is in working relationship with many Christian World Communions, including the... General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists... (p. 244, emphasis supplied)

The day following the vote on the restructuring of the JWG, February 14, a news conference was held jointly by the Australian Roman Catholic Archbishop, Edward Cassidy, president of the Vatican Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and Jacques Maury, the WCC co-chair of the JWG. Neither man saw membership of the Roman Catholic Church in the WCC as likely any time in the near future. Cassidy, however, noted that after 25 years of dialogue, there had developed a mutual confidence so that the two groups could "now openly speak of our difficulties." Both men emphasized the direct involvement of the Roman Church in the regional, national and local ecumenical councils. One questioner suggested to Cassidy in the light of the Pope's message to the Seventh Assembly that the Vatican should officially allow Christians to receive the eucharist under Roman Catholic auspices, and visa versa. The reply was "that sharing the eucharist is 'the ultimate sign and seal' of church unity, and thus a step with many and major doctrinal implications." (EPS 91.02.74)

There was an informal meeting of Roman Catholics at the assembly. Some of the participants took strong issue with the official ban on shared eucharist. At the meeting, the Roman Catholic co-chair of the JWG said that "for Roman Catholics to receive the eucharist under ecumenical auspices, as some have done at the assembly, 'does not advance the cause of

Christian unity one inch." (ibid.) This raises another important question. B. B. Beach was present as an official observer according to reports available. Did he partake of this ecumenical eucharist? What about Roy Adams of the Adventist Review who was also to be present as an "reporter/observer"?

Pope John Paul II did send a message to the Seventh Assembly of the WCC. In this message, he said:

On the occasion of the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches, I send warm greetings to you and all the participants, and assure you of my closeness in prayer as you gather to consider the theme: "Come Holy Spirit: Renew the Whole Creation." ...

The ecumenical movement, of which your assembly is an important forum, has been "fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit." It is in fact the Spirit who sustains our prayer, our openness to conversion of mind and heart, and our faithfulness to the word of life transmitted in the Gospel and in the Church. ...

In the seven years since your last Assembly, the Spirit has brought us further along the road towards unity. My visit to the World Council of Churches in 1984 and your subsequent visit to Rome underlined the significant efforts towards unity in which we are engaged. At Assisi in 1986, when the representatives of many Christian communities and of other religious traditions generously responded to my call for a Day of Prayer for Peace, we had a moving experience of the direction in which the Spirit was leading us.

Theological dialogue too has made important contributions to the search for unity and is helping to clarify issues which need to be further studied. In this connection, I am mindful of the value of the consultation undertaken with regard to the document Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM). Such positive aspects of our search for visible unity in faith are surely a sign of the Holy Spirit drawing us closer to the unity which Christ wishes for his disciples. (EPS 91.02.78; emphasis mine)

The emphasis on the WCC document, BEM, is very interesting. When the WCC Central Committee Moderator, Heinz-Joachim Held, addressed the assembly, he, too, emphasized the BEM document. He declared it "demonstrates our growth in mutual understanding and our ability to reach at least an intermediate stage in common convictions." When asked at a press conference about relations with the Roman Catholic Church, Held "noted that the Catholic Church had responded to BEM - the first time it has responded officially to any WCC document. 'That in itself is progress,' he said." (EPS 91.02.61)

This document - BEM - is the Faith and Order Commission Paper #111. The Seventh-day Adventist Church does have representation on this commission of the WCC. A paragraph in the preface reads:

Those who know how widely the churches have differed in doctrine and practice on baptism, eucharist and ministry, will appreciate the importance of the large measure of agreement registered here. Virtually all the confessional traditions are included in the Commission's membership. That theologians of such widely different traditions should be able to speak so harmoniously about baptism, eucharist and ministry is unprecedented in the modern ecumenical movement. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the Commission also includes among its full members theologians of the Roman Catholic and other churches which do not belong to the World Council of Churches itself. (p. ix)

On the back cover of the Paper is found this conclusion:

The statement published here marks a major advance in the ecumenical journey. The result of a fifty-year process of study and consultation, this text on baptism, eucharist and ministry represents the theological convergence that has been achieved, through decades of dialogue, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Over one hundred theologians met in Lima, Peru, in January 1982, and recommended unanimously to transmit this agreed statement - the Lima text - for the common study and official response of the churches. They represent virtually all the major traditions: Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, Methodist, United, Disciples, Baptist, Adventist and Pentecostal.

The question arises as to why the present Vatican administration - Pope John Paul II - has placed the ecumenical process on the "backburner" even though he sent "warm greetings" to the Assembly. The new book by Malachi Martin, The Keys of This Blood, explains that the Pope perceives of the WCC as "an instrument of Soviet policy since 1966." (p. 304) A Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace which consistently endorses the main themes of Soviet Marxist policy cooperated with the WCC to establish in 1968, ten years prior to John Paul II assuming the Papal Throne, a joint Committee on Society, Development and Peace (SODEPAX). Martin best tells the present pope's attitude toward SODEPAX. He wrote:

SODEPAX fell into lockstep with the WCC on two capital points.

First, SODEPAX joined with the WCC in the condemnation of Pope John Paul's claim to head the one, true Church of Christ. Rather making liberal use of the local offices of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, SODEPAX promotes the WCC's Mega-Religionist brief for the equivalence of all religions.

[The term, "Mega-Religionists" is used by Martin to describe one of three groups of "one world-community builders." The other two groups, he notes as the Humanists and New Agers. These are in John Paul II's judgment "globalist-minded groups contending for supremacy in the millennium endgame." (p. 292)]

The second point on which SODEPAX fell into step with the WCC concerned the redefinition of "church," to give it the broadest possible interpretation. True to Mega-Religionist principles, the WCC decided in 1970 that the word should no longer be confined to "church of the Christian faith," or even to believers. Rather, it should encompass people of any faith, and no faith at all. This, it was maintained, was the new and genuine ecumenism, the true culmination of the ecumenical movement. Accordingly, it became a matter of principle for the WCC and its lackey, SODEPAX, to enlarge their "interfaith" meetings and "ecumenical" activities to include such ideas as would promote their adopted anticapitalist and anti-Western themes of Soviet foreign policy. (pp. 304-305)

This redefining of the scope of the WCC outreach to include all worldwide religious traditions was the emphasis which dominated the preparation for the Seventh Assembly. (See WWN, XXIV-1(91), p. 5 - "Enroute to Canberra") Herein is revealed Papal doubletalk. Note that in his message to the WCC (p. 7), John Paul II cites his calling together "representatives of many religious communities and of other religious traditions" which included the Dalai Lama, to Assisi in 1986 in a Day of Prayer for Peace as evidence of the direction the "Spirit" is leading. The real issue is power, and who will lead the "new world order" in what the Pope has perceived as "the millennium endgame."

Well did Louis Veillot in his book, The Liberal Illusion, state the case when he wrote:

"When the time comes and men realize that the social edifice must be rebuilt according to eternal standards, be it tomorrow, or be it centuries from now [1939], the Catholics will arrange things to suit said standards. Undeterred by those who prefer to abide in death, they will re-establish certain laws of life. They will restore Jesus to His place on high, and He shall be no longer insulted. They will raise their children to know God and to honor their parents. They

will uphold the indissolubility of marriage, and if this fails to meet the approval of dissenters, it will not fail to meet with the approval of their children. They will make obligatory the religious observance of Sunday on behalf of the whole of society and for its own good, revoking the permit for free-thinkers and Jews to celebrate, incognito, Monday or Saturday on their own account. Those whom this may annoy, will have to put up with the annoyance. Respect will not be refused to the Creator nor repose denied to the creature simply for sake of humoring certain maniacs, whose phrenetic condition causes them stupidly and insolently to block the will of the whole people. However, like our own, their houses will be all the more solid and their fields all the more fertile on that account.

"In a word, Catholic society will be Catholic, and the dissenters whom it will tolerate will know its charity, but will not be allowed to disrupt its unity." (pp. 63-64; emphasis his)

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Seventh Assembly Highlighted

As the Seventh Assembly of the WCC was concluding its debate on the future direction and structure of the Vatican-WCC Joint Working Group, and the resolutions were being adopted, "three protesters entered the hall from a side door holding a banner tied to many white balloons. The banner, proclaiming that 'Seventh Day Adventists believe this prophesied [sic] Romeward unity is the Spirit of Antichrist,' drifted up to the ceiling where it hung for the remainder of the plenary." (EPS 91.02.82)

This splendid witness told so eloquently what the official church consigned to "the trash heap of history" a few years back, besides telling the assembled delegates and "official observers" what "spirit" was being sought to renew the whole creation.

One wonders how B. B. Beach reacted to this as well as Roy Adams of the Adventist Review who will no doubt be reporting to the Church on this Seventh Assembly. Will he note this witness? How did Beach explain this to his ecumenical buddies? Did he borrow the

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language of the Adventist conferees at the time of the SDA-Evangelical Conferences and declare this witness as coming from the "lunatic fringe" of the Church?

One thing only marred this witness - simple spelling. This cast reflection upon those making this witness, and played into the hands of Beach and Adams. As minor as the error was, a "c" for an "s," it does point up the failure of accuracy and correct documentation which so frequently mars the witness on the periphery of Adventism today. I would hope that this will not only be a challenge for more positive and effective witnessing, but also a humbling experience so that hereafter such a witness will be flawless. And it can be, if we unite knowledge with zeal.

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"THE POPE OF THE MADONNA"

The obsession of John Paul II over the role he is to play in the "new world order" cannot be divorced from his devotion to the virgin Mary. In fact, his invocation of the virgin the moment of his first appearance on the balcony of St. Peter's after being elected to the Papal throne, caused traditionalist groups in Rome to dub him immediately as "the Pope of the Madonna."

When talking about his visit to Poland in 1979 (June 2-12), the pope emphasized that the high moment would be his pilgrimage to the "Black Madonna" of Czestochowa. The dark-toned picture of the Madonna has hung for nearly 600 years as a symbol of divine protection and freedom from tyranny. This symbol fitted perfectly into the pope's plans for the liberation of Eastern Europe from Soviet control.

In his visit to Mexico earlier in 1979, the pope opened the Conference of Latin American Bishops at the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe. This church was built on the site where Mary supposedly appeared in 1531 to an Aztec convert named Juan Diego. Mary is designated as the Patroness of all Americas by the Vatican. The pope presented the Virgin of Guadalupe as the seat of wisdom stating that she guides the future, the past, and the present. He offered her to the Latin American church as the one who provides the spiritual unity which binds the Roman Catholic church together. This was his answer to the social and political pressures in Latin America that are fragmenting what was once considered an indivisible church. (See p. 4)

Today, that which moves the pope in his ambition to head the "new world" order, began in a series of appearances of "the Virgin Mary" to three peasant children at Fatima in 1917. In these appearances, "she" gave them a detailed set of instructions and predictions that were intended for papal action at a certain time in the future. The final visit in October ended in a miracle which reminded those who heard the children's description of the prophetic symbol of the woman in Revelation 12. While the messages from Fatima were accepted as authentic, John Paul II like his predecessor, John XXIII, concluded they did not "concern Our time." This all changed as a result of the attempt on his life by Mehmet Ali Agca.

At a certain moment on May 13, 1981, during an open-air papal audience in St. Peter's Square...Pope John Paul spied a little girl wearing a picture of Christ's mother as Our Lady of Fatima. Just as he bent from his slow-moving "popemobile" in a spontaneous gesture toward the child, hired assassin Mehmet Ali Agca squeezed off two bullets, aimed precisely where his head had been... Two more shots rang out, and this time John Paul's blood stained his white cassock. (The Keys of This Blood, p46)

During the six months of painful recovery, the pope noted certain events connected with Fatima. The first appearance to the children was on May 13, and the last on October 13. For him, it was the 13th of May when the attempt was made on his life. Had it not been for the picture of the Virgin pinned on a little girl's blouse, his skull would have been shattered by the first bullets of Ali Agca's gun. Add to this what the pope calls a "personal communication from Heaven" during his recovery, and one can see why John Paul sees in the Fatima appearances and messages the same kind of a mandate which Constantine perceived on the eve of the battle at Milvian Bridge.

Suddenly, Constantine had seen the Sign of the Cross appear in the sky, accompanied by the Latin words, In hoc signo vinces. "In this sign you will conquer." Improbable as it was, Constantine took that sign as anything but unrealistic or unworldly. He took it as a guarantee. With miraculous confidence, he not only conquered at the Milvian Bridge but proceeded to conquer his entire world, transforming it into the new civilization of Christianity. (ibid., p. 49)

Today, instead of a "Cross," John Paul has seen "Mary" and has heard "her" messages, and in this sign, he intends to dominate the "new world order" making it a Roman Catholic society. With the sainted doctor, De Ligouri, the pope believes, "the salvation of all depends upon preaching Mary." (The Glories of Mary, p8)

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