

COMMENTARY

SDA RELATIONSHIP TO WCC

The presence and activity of various groups within the Community of Adventism this year at the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Canberra, Australia, again focuses attention on the relationship which the General Conference has with the World Council. The issue became acute enough in Australia so that R. L. Coombe, Director of Public Affairs & Religious Liberty for the South Pacific Division issued a formal statement on the subject. It is reproduced in full on p. 3. A quick run-down of this statement reveals some very interesting things:

1) The key is that the Adventist Church does not hold "full" membership in the "main" ecumenical bodies such as the WCC.

2) The relationship of the Adventist Church with the ecumenical movement does indicate that it is involved. Dr. Bert Beach is noted as secretary of the Secretaries of the World Confessional Families [Churches]. While this body is not a member of the WCC, the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC relates to it in "a consultative manner." (Robert Welsh, WCC, Letter dated, April 1, 1975; See Appendix H, Steps to Rome) This Secretaries of World Confessional Families is stated as "not an organization" but how much organization must there be to be organized? Dr. Beach on his own admission prepares the Agenda and keeps the minutes. (See Appendix G, *ibid.*) How can the Faith and Order arm of the WCC consult and advise a non-entity?

3) It is admitted that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is involved with various national church councils as full members or associate members. This is hard to deny when the WCC's Directory of Christian Councils so lists the Adventist

Church, yet the first sentence of Coombe's statement reads - "The Church has consistently maintained that it is not involved in the ecumenical movement,..." Are the National Councils of Churches not a part of the ecumenical movement? It is true that these national and regional councils do not hold membership as "councils" in the WCC, but their status at Assemblies of the WCC, such as Canberra was, is the same status as afforded the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This will be documented in this Commentary.

4) Dr. Beach attended the Seventh Assembly of the WCC as a "Delegated Observer." While Elder Coombe admits this, he indicates that such a status involved "no voting rights." BUT the question is - what did it permit in contrast to being merely an "observer"?

The WCC issued a Who's Who of registered participants at the Seventh Assembly. In the category of "Delegated Observers, Delegated Representatives and Observers," Dr. Beach is listed as a "Delegated Representative" of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. (See page 4) On May 28, after receiving a copy of Who's Who, I wrote to the WCC asking for clarification of these various categories, plus a category listed as "Stewards." To this letter, I received a reply dated, June 5, 1991. (See page 5, Letter #1) In a letter dated June 26, I asked for further clarification. It questioned:

What is the difference in the WCC relationship to a church which is granted the opportunity to send a "delegated representative" with the privilege of speaking in plenary session, but not voting, to a church which is granted only an observer status with no opportunity to speak?"

On July 15, I received an answer indicating - "The churches which send a delegated representative to the assembly are associate members of the WCC." (See page 5, Letter #2) It is obvious that the criterion noted in the next sentence did not apply to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, so I wrote for a listing of all "associate members of the WCC." The Adventist Church was not on the list, and it was explained in an accompanying letter that the minimum membership for full participation in the WCC must be 25,000, and "associate members" must have at least 10,000 on the rolls. [The letter was written by a different person from the one writing the two previous letters. Further, the omission of the name of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from the list sent, cannot be taken as the final word that the Church is not an "associate member" of the WCC] The bottom line from the presently documented evidence is that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has such a relationship to the WCC, that while it is not permitted to vote in any plenary session of the WCC's Assemblies, its delegate can speak to any issue raised.

Another interesting factor is that the status of the delegate from the General Conference is the same as any delegate from the Regional or National Councils of Churches, and such organizations as the Baptist World Alliance, and the Anglican Consultative Council. (See page 6 where sections from Who's Who are reproduced) The evidence is sufficient to show that while the Seventh-day Adventist Church has as Coombe stated, "consistently maintained that it is not involved in the ecumenical movement," the facts speak contrary to this assertion. It is involved in the ecumenical movement, and its relationship is as close as it can get to the WCC without becoming a full member of that body. Further the ground work has all been laid for full membership when it is convenient to so request. See article, "Historical Review," of relations of the SDA Church with the WCC.

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HISTORICAL REVIEW

Since 1965, Conversations between representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) have been taking place. At first, informally and of a private nature, they developed into annual and fully authorized Consultations. After the fifth of the series of Consultations, November 24-26, 1969, Dr. B. B. Beach wrote an assessment of these meetings, giving their background and results. This analysis was made a part of a book issued by the WCC in 1973, and co-authored by Beach and Dr. Lukas Vischer of the WCC's Faith and Order Secretariat. From this publication, So Much in Common, we give Beach's story and assessment.

"Strange as it may seem, these yearly Consultations are an indirect by-product of Vatican II. In fact, while in Rome in connection with the Vatican Council a WCC staff member and an Adventist representative came to the conclusion that an informal meeting of a small group of Seventh-day Adventists with an equal number of representatives from the World Council of Churches would fulfill a useful purpose. ...

"The first meeting was held in 1965, the participants being selected by the two organizers. Thus the Conversations got under way on a completely informal basis and were held under the sole responsibility of the participants. Subsequent meetings have become somewhat more formal, in the sense that the employing bodies of the SDA participants have authorized and financed their presence and the executive committees of three Adventist Divisions involved have given their blessing by facilitating the selection of the SDA representatives; the World Council of Churches has defrayed the expenses of its group. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has been kept informed regarding the meetings, though it has taken no direct, active part in the Consultations, except through its three European Divisional branch offices. ...

"The original purpose in meeting together was quite simple, straightforward and unpretentious: to acquaint each side with the structure, functioning and thinking of the other side. This frank exchange of views was to be accompanied by a sincere endeavor to remove misconceptions and improve understanding. Because of the incontestable usefulness of the first meeting, it was felt by all participants that the Conversations should be continued on a regular

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6 *The present tragic situation of our troubled world confirms once again humanity's need for reconciliation, its need for an ever more authentic witness to the biblical message of peace, justice and the integrity of Creation. But the sad fact is that our testimony to these values is less convincing to the degree that the world continues to be confronted by our divisions. Herein lies the urgency of the ecumenical task.*

— From Pope John Paul's message to the WCC Assembly in Canberra.

(Taken from page 1, The Catholic Leader, Feb. 24, 1991; see article, p. 8)

STATEMENT ON SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Questions have been raised concerning the Seventh-day Adventist Church's relationship with the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical bodies...

The church has consistently maintained that it is not involved in the ecumenical movement, nor does it hold full membership in the main ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches or the Australian Council of Churches. This does not mean that Seventh-day Adventists do not have any relationships with other churches or cooperate with church associations at various levels. To the contrary, Adventists have endeavoured to build up positive relations with other Christians in ways that do not compromise their beliefs or practice.

For example, since 1968 the General Conference of SDAs has been represented at meetings of the Secretaries of World Confessional Families, also known as Christian World Communions. For many years, Dr Bert Beach has been the secretary of this group - which is not an organisation but simply an informal forum for the exchange of information. Although this group of Secretaries have contact with the WCC, they do not hold membership in the WCC.

Similarly in many countries around the world, Seventh-day Adventists have working relationships with various national church councils or ecumenical groups because they represent a significant percentage of the population. Many of these are listed in the WCC's Directory of Christian Councils. However in most cases Seventh-day Adventists are listed as "Associate Members" or "Observer-consultants" indicating that the church does not have full voting membership. In a few instances where SDAs are listed as full members (eg. Cook Islands, Belize, Bahamas, Hong Kong) it is because no alternative relationship is available or the organisation is a government-sponsored advisory group on religious matters. However it is significant to note that none of these national church councils are members of the WCC - because membership to the WCC is restricted to individual church organisations NOT to ecumenical councils. This means that even membership in a national church council does not imply membership in the WCC.

Seventh-day Adventists are also frequently involved with other churches at local levels, through the participation of church pastors on Ministers' Fraternal and in such community programs as Women's World Day of Prayer, Bible Societies, CWA, WCTU, etc. So there is ample evidence that Seventh-day Adventists have working relationships with other churches and ecumenical groups - but this in no way diminishes the fact that Seventh-day Adventists are separate and hold no membership in the World Council of Churches.

At the recent WCC Assembly in Canberra - General Conference Director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, Dr Bert Beach, was listed along with other non-member delegates as a "delegated representative" of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This meant he was only an "observer" delegate with no voting rights and he sat in a special area allocated for observers and visitors. Such status was granted to other non-member churches (eg. Salvation Army, Baptists) and to non-Christian faiths (eg. Buddhists, Bahai's, Hindu, etc) as well.

R L Coombe
Director, Public Affairs & Religious Liberty
South Pacific Division



**WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
SEVENTH ASSEMBLY • CANBERRA • 1991**

Frontier Internship in Mission	MOYER	Rev.	John	Delegated Representative	Switzerland
General Conf Seventh-day Adventists	BEACH	Dr	Bert	Delegated Representative	USA
Generale Diakonale Raad	BOER	Rev. Drs	Bert	Observer	Netherlands
Hong Kong Christian Council	TSO MAN-KING	Rev. Dr		Delegated Representative	Hong Kong
ICCO	OSKAM	Mr	Cees	Observer	Netherlands
Igreja "O Brasil para Cristo"	SILVA	Pastor	Orlando	Observer	Brazil
Int Jewish Committee Interrel. Cons.	APPLE	Rabbi	Raymond	Observer	Australia

LETTER #1



FROM 21 APRIL 1990:
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WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

GENERAL SECRETARIAT
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Elder Wm H. Grotheer
Executive Secretary
Adventist Laymen's Foundation
P.O. Box 69
OSONE, AR 72854
USA

5 June 1991

Dear Elder Grotheer,

Your letter dated 28 May 1991 has been forwarded to the Seventh Assembly Office for attention and reply.

"Stewards" at a WCC assembly comprise a group of young persons who work together with staff and volunteers to service the meeting (e.g. distributing documents, delivering messages, etc.), while at the same time experiencing a programme of ecumenical education. Many persons who have served as stewards in the past are now in leadership positions in their church. However, young people do not necessarily have to belong to a member church of the WCC in order to serve as a steward; rather, they should be committed in their faith and praxis of an ecumenical vision.

"Delegated representatives" are persons representing organizations with which the WCC maintains relationship, such as associate councils of churches, certain world ecumenical organizations, etc. They have the right to speak in plenary but not to vote.

"Observers" are persons representing organizations with which the WCC maintains a relationship but which are not represented by a delegated representative. They represented by delega vote.

I hope the above



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WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

GENERAL SECRETARIAT
SEVENTH ASSEMBLY OFFICE

Elder Wm H. Grotheer
Executive Secretary
Adventist Laymen's Foundation
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OSONE, AR 72854
USA

15 July 1991

Dear Elder Grotheer,

I apologize for the delay in responding to your letter of 26 June but have been away from the office.

The churches which send a delegated representative to the assembly are associate member churches of the WCC. Associate member churches are churches whose membership is not sufficiently large to entitle them to full member status.

Churches which are not members of the WCC may send an observer to the assembly. Some "ecumenical officers" of member churches were also present at the assembly as observers.

Yours sincerely,

Delegated Observers, Delegated Representatives and Observers

<u>Action of Churches Together Scotland</u>	CRAIG	Rev.	Maxwell	<u>Delegated Representative</u>	UK
<u>African Spiritual Churches Association</u>	MOFOKENG	Rev.	Kenosi	Observer	South Africa
<u>All Africa Conference of Churches</u>	CHIPENDA	Rev.	José	<u>Delegated Representative</u>	Kenya
	TETTEH	Rev.	Rachel	Observer	Ghana
Amnesty International	CAMPBELL	Mr	Douglas	Observer	Australia
	FRANKOVITS	Mr	André	Observer	Australia
Anglican Church Canada/ Primate's Fund	HOATH	Mr	Colln	Observer	Canada
<u>Anglican Consultative Council</u>	ANDERSON	Rev. Dr	Donald	<u>Delegated Representative</u>	UK
Anglican Diocese of Hong Kong & Macao	KWONG	Rt Rev. Dr	Peter	Observer	Hong Kong
Anglican Diocese of Kuching	KLABU	Mr	Roland	Observer	Malaysia
<u>Angolan Council of Evang. Churches</u>	CHIPESSE	Rev.	Augusto	<u>Delegated Representative</u>	Angola
ANZATS	TABBERNEE	Rev. Dr	William	Observer	Australia
Arbeitsg. Christl. Kirchen Deutschland	BASDEKIS	Dr theol.	Athanasios	Delegated Representative	Germany
Asian Christian Art Association	TAKENAKA	Prof.	Masao	Observer	Japan
Asian Church Women's Conference	KIM YOO SOOK	Mrs		Observer	Korea
ATESEA	YEOW CHOO LAK	Rev. Dr		Observer	Singapore
<u>Australian Council of Churches</u>	GILL	Rev.	David	<u>Delegated Representative</u>	Australia
Australian Council of Churches/Mission	WILLIAMSON	Rev. Dr	Raymond	Delegated Representative	Australia
<u>Baptist World Alliance</u>	ADCOCK	Rev.	Neil	Observer	Australia
	VOSE	Dr	Noel	<u>Delegated Representative</u>	Australia
<u>Botswana Christian Council</u>	GAPE	Mr	Churchill	<u>Delegated Representative</u>	Botswana
Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Univ.	GOODMAN	Mrs	Maureen	Observer	UK
<u>Canadian Council of Churches</u>	BROWN	Dr	Stuart	<u>Delegated Representative</u>	Canada
Caribbean Conference of Churches	BISNAUTH	Rev.	Dale	Delegated Representative	Barbados
CEPAC	RAMCHARAN	Mr	Michael	Observer	Trinidad
CESE	ROCHA SOUZA	Sr	Enilson	Observer	Brazil
CEVAA	ADA	Pasteur	Samuel	Delegated Representative	France
Chapel of the Healing Cross	OLAITAN	Rev. Canon	Samuel	Observer	Nigeria
China Christian Council	HAN WENZA0	Mr		Observer	People's Republic of China
* Lutheran Church Missouri Synod	NAFZGER	Rev.	Samuel	Observer	USA
Lutheran Church of Australia	WIEBUSCH	Rev.	Robert	Observer	Australia
Lutheran World Federation	BRAND	Dr	Eugene	Observer	Switzerland
	STAALSETT	Rev. Dr	Gunnar	Delegated Representative	Switzerland
Maori Council of Churches	JACOBS	Mr	Pto	Observer	New Zealand
Melanesian Assoc. Theological Schools	AVI	Rev.	Dick	Observer	Papua New Guinea
Melanesian Council of Churches	KEREPIA	Mrs	Anne	Delegated Representative	Papua New Guinea
Mennonite Central Committee	LAPP	Dr	John	Observer	USA
Middle East Council of Churches	JARJOUR	Rev. Dr	Riad	Delegated Representative	Cyprus
Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation	MAKAMBWE	Ven.	Francis	Observer	Zambia
Myanmar Council of Churches	WIN TIN	Rev.		Delegated Representative	Myanmar (Burma)
National Christian Council Sri Lanka	STEPHEN	Rev.	George	Delegated Representative	Sri Lanka
National Council Churches Philippines	CARINO	Dr	Feliciano	Delegated Representative	Philippines
National Council of Churches in India	LUNGMUANA	Rev.	Khawlhiring	Delegated Representative	India
National Council of Churches in Korea	KWON HO KYUNG	Rev.		Delegated Representative	Korea
National Council of Churches of Kenya	KOBIA	Rev.	Samuel	Observer	Kenya
National Council of Churches Pakistan	SAR0IA	Mr	Yousaf	Delegated Representative	Pakistan
National Council of Churches USA	HAMILTON	Mr	James	Delegated Representative	USA
	RHEE	Rev. Dr	Syngman	Observer	USA
NCC of American Samoa	TAPUAI	Rev.	Fa'atauva'a	Delegated Representative	American Samoa

basis. As a result, subsequent Consultations have been more in the nature of dialogue, by moving from the level of information to the niveau of serious theological discussion." (p. 98)

Among the results obtained from these Conversations and Consultations, Beach lists nine. Four need to be briefly reviewed:

1) In the January 1967, Ecumenical Review, the official organ of the WCC, a paper prepared by the Faith and Order Commission concerning the Seventh-day Adventist Church was published. Beach writes that "Seventh-day Adventists consider this article as one of the fairest and finest statements published by non-Adventists about Adventists." (So Much in Common, p. 100) A careful examination of this paper reveals that its primary source documentation is the book, Questions on Doctrine, which formalized the compromises with the Evangelicals the previous decade. [Forty nine footnotes are referenced; of these twenty seven are from QD. The entire article is reproduced in So Much in Common, pp. 57-68. The book may be obtained from the Adventist Laymen's Foundation, \$5.00 postpaid]

2) In 1967, the Central Committee of the WCC appointed a General Conference recommended theologian from Andrews University to the Faith and Order Commission. It must be kept in mind that this Commission "provides theological support for the efforts the churches are making towards unity." (Faith and Order Paper; #111, p. vii) Further the stated aim of the Commission is "to proclaim the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ and to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and eucharistic fellowship." (ibid., p. viii)

3) "Since 1968 the General Conference has been actively represented at the annual meeting of 'Secretaries of the World Confessional Families' [Churches]" (So Much in Common, p. 100) This is the "non-organization" of which Beach is the Secretary, and through which he had opportunity to place the Seventh-day Adventist Church symbolically into the hands of the Pope by the presentation of the gold medallion.

4) "Since the Conversations got under way, it has become accepted procedure for the SDA Church to be represented at various WCC meetings, including the Assembly, by observers. These observers have not just been present pro forma, but have taken an active interest in the meetings they attended. An additional step was taken when the General Conference, as a world confessional body or church, was represented by an advisor in Canterbury at the 1969 meeting of the WCC Central Committee." (ibid., p. 101)

Too often overlooked in this recital of SDA relationships with the WCC is the fact that in 1965, the very year that the Conversations began, and very possibly from one of the Adventist participants at that first meeting, came the request to the General Conference that "our Statement of Fundamental Beliefs needed revision both from a theological and literary point of view." (Spectrum, Vol. 11, #3, p. 60) While at that time, the General Conference responded negatively, the matter was dropped, but it was not forgotten. When the one making the suggestion from Berne, Switzerland, Bernard E. Seton, became an associate secretary of the General Conference in 1970, he pursued the objective till the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief became a reality in 1980. Then he retired. But what was accomplished?

The Constitution of the WCC sets forth certain specific confessions which a joining church must accept. In 1965, when the Conversations began, the Statement of Beliefs did not contain the confessions. The 1980, 27 Statements of Fundamental Beliefs as voted did contain them.

First, the WCC Constitution - it reads:

I. Basis

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

II. Membership

Those churches shall be eligible for membership in the World Council of Churches which express their agreement with the Basis upon which the Council is founded and shall satisfy such criteria as the Assembly or the Central Committee may prescribe. (So Much in Common, p. 40)

Observe now the parallel concepts in the 27 Statements of Fundamental Beliefs as voted in 1980. These concepts are not found in any previous Statement.

Statement #11

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Statement #2

There is one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons.

Thus in two statements we encompass the

"Basis" for membership in the WCC, borrowing for the most part the very language of the Constitution.

Further, the Faith and Order Commission in pursuing its goal of "visible unity in one faith" has chosen the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of A.D. 381 for the basis of this unity. (One World, Jan-Feb, 1988, p. 15) Commenting on the background and development of the doctrine of the Godhead contained in this Creed, J. N. D. Kelly, in his book, Early Christian Doctrines, writes:

The doctrine of one God, the Father and creator, formed the background and indisputable premiss of the Church's faith. Inherited from Judaism, it was her bulwark against pagan polytheism, Gnostic emanationism and Marcionite dualism. The problem for theology was to integrate with it, intellectually, the fresh data of the specifically Christian revelation. Reduced to their simplest, there were the convictions that God had made Himself known in the Person of Jesus, the Messiah, raising Him from the dead and offering salvation to men through Him, and that He had poured out His Holy Spirit upon the Church. Even at the New Testament stage ideas about Christ's pre-existence and creative role were beginning to take shape, and a profound, if often obscure, awareness of the activity of the Spirit in the Church was emerging. No steps had been taken so far, however, to work all these complex elements into a coherent whole. The Church had to wait for more than three hundred years for a final synthesis, for not until the council of Constantinople (381) was the formula of one God existing in three co-equal Persons formally ratified. (pp. 87-88; emphasis supplied)

Where do we find this confession made by the SDA Church? Look at Statement #2 again of the 27 Fundamentals:

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons."

While we may not be a "full" member of the WCC, perhaps only a "closet" associate member, nevertheless, the stage has been set in the apostate 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief, not only for a "full" membership in the WCC, but we have also acknowledged the basis for "a visible unity in faith" as perceived by the Faith and Order Commission. Do not forget that this Commission is being manipulated by Rome which has 12 of its theologians as members, and on this Commission is a Seventh-day Adventist theologian with full approval of the hierarchy of the Church - the General Conference.

‡

"WCC and CHURCH:"

The Catholic Leader, official paper for Australian Catholics, headed its front page article in the February 24, 1991, issue with the bold caption - "WCC and Church: Rome's vision of the future." Written by Special Writer, Ian Mathews, it was primarily a digest of the remarks of Australian Archbishop Edward Cassidy of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity "at an international Press conference at which some 400 journalists fired questions" at Cassidy.

To appreciate the full force of the report in The Catholic Leader, one needs to see the accompanying photographs. Two pictures in full color share the page with the article under another caption - "United in diversity." These pictures were of a worship service conducted according to the Lima Liturgy. "The liturgy was first used by the Faith and Order Commission after the Lima Document was issued in 1982." The first picture shows the "Cross [crucifix] carried in procession" during the liturgical service. The second shows the preacher at the service, Jacqueline Grant of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (USA). The article begins with these words - emphasis theirs - "When you've on to a good thing stick to it. That is the current and continuing philosophy coloring the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to the WCC." The first picture emphasizes this - the crucifix adopted in the celebration of worship. The second picture represents the block toward full unity for Cassidy clearly stated - "The ordination of woman for us is also a question of understanding the doctrine of ministry." This doctrine does not include such ordinations.

Cassidy, a special "guest" at the WCC Seventh Assembly, indicated in the Press Conference that from Rome's point of view "the WCC was rather long on social and political issues and short on theology and doctrine." Noting however, that the links between the Roman Church and the WCC were "close and constant," he cited the joint working group between the two organizations which "seek to identify areas where we can work together; where we can cooperate; look at issues together; to try to promote the multilateral dialogue between the Churches." The Roman Catholic Church is the "tail" that is wagging the WCC. "Liaison between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC is maintained by a permanent liaison officer attached to the WCC in Geneva."

Further, "the Vatican's team of 24 observers was able to take part in much of the Assembly's work 'through the generous arrangements of the WCC.'"

The key revelation by Cassidy is the importance which he attaches to the Faith and Order Commission. Noting that the Commission had 12 Catholic theologians as "full members," he said:

The commission was of particular interest to the Roman Catholic Church as it dealt with matters of doctrine, questions of faith and order "and those other questions in which we are primarily concerned in our relationship with the WCC."

"Those other questions" were defined as "the Petrine role of the Bishop of Rome; the questions of the infallibility of the pope and so on." The question of taking part in the "Eucharist" did come up as reported in the Ecumenical News Service (91.02.74), but Cassidy indicated "that sharing the eucharist is the 'ultimate sign and seal' of church unity." The bottom line is bow to the Pope and he will give you the wafer.

The primary emphasis of Cassidy as reported in The Catholic Leader was that the Roman Catholic Church was "working towards the unity in faith and in communion." Note:

Archbishop Cassidy said that any form of union would open up the whole area of very interesting ecumenical dialogue, "namely the diversity that one would look for in eventual unity of the Churches. I think that is something we have no doubt about in our ecumenical approach.

We are not working toward uniformity among the churches of the world. We are working towards the unity in faith and communion."

He said the Ukrainian Church is in communion with Rome "but it has its own liturgy, its own traditions, its language and, to a great extent, its own discipline and way of nominating its bishops through its synods.

"So I think we have no desire to make everyone look like a French or Australian Catholic, but to create a true unity of faith with a diversity of peoples and cultures as the situation will develop." (p. 3; emphasis theirs)

Two things need to be re-emphasized: 1) The Faith and Order Commission's stated aim is "to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship." 2) They are attempting the latter through the Lima

Document, and are proposing the expression of unity in a common faith based on the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of A.D. 381. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is already represented on the Commission and took part in the formulation of the Lima Document. (It should be noted that officially the hierarchy reacted adversely to the Lima Document in a paper presented to the WCC, yet they still held the "Delegated Representative" status at the Seventh Assembly of the WCC) Through the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief as voted at Dallas in 1980, the Church expressed its unity with the Creed of A.D. 381.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

The lead article in The Catholic Leader noted Cassidy as "President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity." His viewpoint should accurately express the Roman Church's design for world dominance and recognition of Papal supremacy. In fact, the article's title included the concept - "Rome's vision of the future." This vision as explained by Cassidy clearly states - "We [Rome] are not working towards uniformity among the Churches of the world. We are working towards the unity in faith and in communion."

This same approach was echoed in the Ecumenical Review, (January, 1967), official organ of the WCC, in discussing Seventh-day Adventism. In a comment on keeping the seventh day Sabbath, a footnote read:

"It may be of interest to draw attention to the fact that advocacy of the seventh-day Sabbath is itself characteristic of one WCC Church. The Seventh-Day Baptist General Convention has been a member since Amsterdam... Such differences provide occasions for dialogue rather than being an obstacle to fellowship in the ecumenical movement." (So Much in Common, p. 58)

While Rome does not change, and it is holding firm on the "Petrine role of the Bishop of Rome," it is obvious from Cassidy's remarks that certain concessions will be allowed for diversity of expression in worship so long as the major objective is realized. Mass is being celebrated on Saturday night to accommodate the "family" recreation on Sunday. In fact, a bold advertisement, under the concluding part of the lead article in The Catholic Leader on Cassidy, announced that at the Shrine of Our Lady of Grace would be "First Saturday Devotions" starting March 2 for five months. Interestingly, the Sabbath is becoming less an obstacle, with the emphasis on "worship." Is this not the contrast in Revelation 14 - "worship Him who made" or "worship the beast"? Did not Ellen White, when in Australia, set forth the "Difference between Sunday Closing Laws and Laws Forbidding Sabbath-keeping"? See Ms. 163, 1898. Isn't it time we did likewise, and get the issue clear?