

COMMENTARY

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH FOR

EDITORIAL

To know what one believes and why one believes what he believes, one must know what the Bible states on a given doctrine. To be a Seventh-day Adventist in the truest sense of the name, one must adhere to teachings and have a life-style in harmony with the Bible. To anyone who has been a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the past three decades or longer, it is evident that there have been some major changes in the beliefs and practices of the church body. The question is simply - Have these changes been for the good of the Church and its members, or do these changes constitute apostasy from the truth both in belief and practice?

One way to determine apostasy from truth in doctrinal beliefs is to carefully compare various statements of belief either issued by the Church through official publications, or voted by the Church in its general sessions. Just a casual comparison between the 27 Statements voted at Dallas, Texas, in 1980, and the previous 1931 Statement reveals change. The 1931 Statement contained 22 articles rather than 27.

Change, if truly progressive, is not wrong in and of itself. The Bible declares the path of the just to be "as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Prov. 4:18) For example, the 1980 Dallas Statement has an article on "Marriage and the Family." In the light of the breakdown of the home in this late 20th Century with its impact being felt within the Church, such a statement is needful. The only question in considering this statement, as well as the other "new" statements, is - Is it in harmony with the Bible?

Ellen G. White wrote - "The Lord has made His people the repository of sacred truth. Upon every individual who has had the light of present truth devolves the duty of developing that truth on a higher scale than it has hitherto been done." (M.V.H., March 30, 1897) A change, therefore, which would correct a faulty position would not make a statement, apostate; neither would a statement which advances beyond a previous position in the formulation of truth, yet in harmony with it, be an evidence of apostasy. The question would be - Does the new statement develop "that truth" committed in trust,

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THE LAITY

In 1979, the Annual Council of the hierarchy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church voted to recommend to the General Conference in session a new Statement of Beliefs. While the identical articles as recommended by the Council were not presented to the delegates, the 1980 Session at Dallas, Texas, did vote a new statement of beliefs. This has become known as the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief. In the events, and decisions which led to this changed outline of beliefs held by Seventh-day Adventists, the laity of the Church had little if any say. It was expected of them to keep the machinery or organization oiled and operating with their tithes and offerings, and let the hierarchy do their thinking as to what to believe. Now the moment of truth has arrived for the individual member of the Church. Opportunity through the Sabbath School lessons will be given for each to decide whether they concur in that which has been done and formulated over the past three decades, especially the capstone of the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief as voted at Dallas.

In the April, 1988, Ministry, Elder Neal C. Wilson revealed the plan for the Sabbath School lessons of the last two quarters of 1988. He wrote:

The framework is already in place for intense study of the fundamental doctrines that make us a church. The Sabbath School lessons for the last two quarters of this year focus on our 27 fundamental beliefs. Seventh-day Adventist Believe..., the 325-page doctrinal book on which we have been working for two years, will be on the press by May 1. The manuscript for this book has been read and critiqued by more than 200 Adventist scholars and church leaders around the world. Each of the 27 chapters takes an in-depth look at one of our beliefs. And yet the book is written in such a way that every member can understand and grasp the importance of these great truths that bind us together. (p. 24)

While the book may be written in a style that the average layman can grasp what is being stated, if the laity are unable to make a comparison with what the previous position of the Church was on any given doctrine, they will be handicapped. They need to decide if indeed the 27 Statements are fundamental truths, or apostate formulations. As the Lord said through Hosea of

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old - "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (4:6) It is not that the laity have not had opportunity to obtain knowledge. The facts of what has taken place over the past three decades have been available to all who wished to know. But "false apostles" on the periphery of Adventism, while plucking leaves from the "pretentious" fig tree (DA 581), have, to lure the unsuspecting laity, given a show of discernment of the apostasy in the Church. Nevertheless, these agents of Satan (II Cor. 11:13-15) have urged the laity to keep in line with the 27 Statements of Belief so as to be accepted. Thus this segment of concerned laity have been robbed by these "false apostles" of the facts by which to evaluate correctly the up-coming lessons and new publication.

A vast segment of the laity who will study these lessons have been brought into the Church under men who have taught, and who were themselves taught, the apostate teachings arising from the compromises made with the Evangelicals thirty years ago. But with this plan for the Sabbath School lessons for the final two quarters of 1988, none will be able to say before God that he nor she did not have an opportunity to evaluate that which was done at Dallas in 1980, and to either concur or dissent. Once this decision is made, the destiny of each life is determined by his own evaluation.

When this decision is made - and every member of the Church will have that opportunity through the Sabbath School lessons - then the prophecy given years ago can be fulfilled and God stand justified. We are told in comments on Ezekiel 9:

"The church - the Lord's sanctuary (is) the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. (5T:211)

And we are told why:

The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light, and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. (Ibid.)

But the final sentence of this prophecy - "Men, maidens, and little children, all perish together" - could not be fulfilled until these would have an opportunity to make a decision in regard to the betrayal of the "ancient men." This opportunity will be given during the last six months of 1988 in the setting of the Sabbath School. How momentous this year is to be!

The fearful import of the final six months of this year cannot be fully perceived unless we understand clearly the lessons of the final years of the Jewish Church as a corporate entity before God, and the time of decision granted by God to the individual members of that Church. Further the close parallel between recent Jewish history, and Seventh-day Adventist history tells us to borrow the words of Ezekiel - "It is coming, the hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you, the hour and the end!" (Eze. 7:6-7 Moffatt)

We shall pursue these points in the next two articles.

WHG

"Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." (Ps. 97:11)

The Close of Probation for the Jewish Church

God in His foreknowledge had determined the time to be allotted to the Jewish Church and its Holy City. To Daniel was revealed that "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city." (9:24) Yet in the close of the probation of the Jewish Church, the time varied for the different segments of that Church.

A careful study of the book of Acts reveals the hierarchy of the Jewish Church passed the point of no return prior to the time that probation closed for the Church as a corporate body. Observe closely, with your Bibles open - the following points:

1) On the Day of Pentecost (31 A.D.), Peter preached to "devout" Jews (2:5), and called them to repentance (2:38). The hierarchy were busy with the festivities of that day in the Temple. 2) At an unspecified time after Pentecost, but prior to 34 A.D., Peter again called the laity who had gathered in the Temple courts at the hour of prayer, to "repent". (3:1; 19) 3) While speaking to the people, Peter and John were arrested by the temple guard, and on the following day were arraigned before Annas, Caiaphas, and other of the kindred of the high priest. (4:6-7) Peter boldly charged these top members of the Jewish Church with the crucifixion of Jesus (4:10); and proclaimed Him to be the sole source of salvation (4:12). But at no point did Peter call upon them to repent. The leadership of the Jewish Church had passed their day of probation prior to the time allotted to the Jewish nation as a corporate body.

In 34 A.D., Stephen standing before the supreme "council" of the Jewish Church arraigned them in judgment before God as the "betrayers and murderers" of "the Just One." (6:15; 7:52) There was no call to repentance; for the "seventy weeks" were completed. For the Jewish Church as a corporate body, probation had closed. Yet for another 36 years, the forms and ceremonies of the Jewish religion continued to be practiced before the "curtains" fell on the city of Jerusalem. Why that extended time?

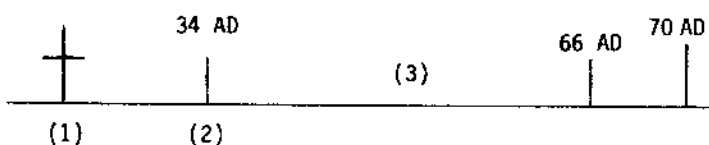
In the decision of the Jewish hierarchy to kill Jesus, the laity of the Jewish Church were not involved, although as a part of "the House of Israel," they shared accountability. (2:6) When Stephen was stoned, the decision was made by the Jewish "council". Again, the laity were not involved; but as a part of the corporate body, shared in the guilt. God, being a God of justice and mercy, granted time that the individual member of the Jewish Church might decide whether the decisions of the Jewish leadership were correct, or whether the testimony of the apostles of Jesus was true. This necessitated not only that the Jewish laity in Jerusalem receive the call to repentance, as on the Day of Pentecost; but also that

the laity scattered in the synagogues of the Diaspora be given the same opportunity. This is what the books of Acts is all about. Not only does Paul carry the gospel to the Gentiles, but he also enters the synagogues and tell the individual members what their hierarchy did at Jerusalem. (13:27-29) The book of Acts closes with a confrontation of Paul with the local Jewish leadership in Rome. (28:17, 23-29) This final picture of the book of Acts takes place within the shadow of the time when the "sign" Jesus gave marking the hour for the destruction of Jerusalem, occurred in 66 A.D. The end of all things for the Jewish Church was at hand! - Its ritual and its services - 70 AD.

In the fate of this once "holy city" we can see "a symbol of the world hardened in unbelief and rebellion, and hastening on to meet the retributive judgments of God." (GC, p. 22) But also in the history of this city, we see fulfilled events which Jesus connected with "the scenes which are to take place in the history of this world just prior to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Counsels to Writers, pp. 23-24) But in these final events, it is not the probation of the Jewish Church which is involved, it is the probation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, modern spiritual Israel" to whom sacred trusts have been committed as was to the ancient Jewish Church.

To this we must direct our attention. WHG

The Above Article in Diagram



- (1) 31 A.D. - Close of Probation for Jewish hierarchy.
- (2) 34 A.D. - Close of Probation for Israel as a corporate body.
- (3) Decision time for the laity of the Jewish Church.

The Jewish people cherished the idea that they were the favorites of heaven, and that they were always to be exalted as the church of God. They were the children of Abraham, they declared, and so firm did the foundation of their prosperity seem to them that they defied earth and heaven to disposses them of their rights. But by lives of unfaithfulness they were preparing for the condemnation of heaven and for separation from God. (COL:294)

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A Historical Parallel

The Seventh-day Adventist Church cannot divorce itself from the fate of the nations. To the Church was committed the trust of giving "the everlasting gospel...to every nation." (Rev. 14:6) In a special sense, to the Seventh-day Adventist Church was "entrusted the last warning for a perishing world." (9T:19) Following the Great Disappointment in 1844, as the minds of a small group of the disappointed ones were directed to the High Priestly ministry of Jesus, they perceived as "the closing work of the church" the giving "to the world the warning of the third angel of Revelation 14." (SP, IV, 272)

Jesus linked the fate and probation of the nations with events which were to take place in the history of Jerusalem. He plainly foretold the destruction of the city, and gave the sign by which His followers would know the time was imminent. In the same prophecy, Jesus also set the boundary of the probation of the nations as corporate entities. Jesus declared that Jerusalem - the city, not the temple - was to be trodden underfoot by the nations "until the times of the nations be fulfilled." (Luke 21:24) [In the Greek, there is one word for "nations" and "Gentiles."] Inasmuch as the fate of the Church is linked to the fate of the nations because the trust committed to the Church involved a final warning to the nations, this prophecy of Jesus assumes a major role in understanding the moment of truth that will come to the laity this year.

Further, the fate of the Jewish Church and the fate of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was linked in a letter sent to Elders George I. Butler, and S. N. Haskell in 1886. That letter read:

I think of His [Jesus'] great sorrow as He wept over Jerusalem, exclaiming, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under he wings, and ye would not!" [Luke 13:34] God forbid that these words shall apply to those who have great light and blessings. In the rejection of Jerusalem it was because great privileges were abused which brought the denunciation upon all who lightly regarded the great opportunities and precious light that were entrusted to their keeping. Privileges do not commend us to God, but they commend God to us. No people are saved because they have great light and special advantages, for these high and heavenly favors only increase their responsibility. ...

When Jerusalem was divorced from God it was because of her sins. ... The depths of our ruin is measured by the exalted light to which God has raised us in His great goodness and unspeakable mercy. Oh, what privileges are granted to us as a people! And if God spared not His people that He loved because they refused to walk in the light, how can He spare the people whom He has blessed with the light of heaven in having opened to them the most exalted truth ever entrusted to mortal man to give to the world? (Letter 8-55-1886)

The parallel between the history of Jerusalem in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus in Luke 21:24, and the history of the Church in the rejection of the truth entrusted to her is so interrelated that it dare not be overlooked. This parallel and the message of

the book of Acts tells us where we are in the stream of time as God's professed people today.

On June 21, 1948, Israel again became a nation. This did not fulfill a prophecy; coming events were merely casting their shadows before. This event did, however, force the Seventh-day Adventist Church to review its prophetic interpretation concerning Jerusalem. In 1944, the Pacific Press published a book - Palestine in Prophecy - which stated that "those who are holding the hope of national restoration of the Jews are following a theological will-o'-the-wisp." (p. 95) In 1947, the same Press published another book - The Jews and Palestine - with the same message. (p. 61) Yet within a year, what we said could not and would not be, did occur. We then backed up to the position that Edson White had taken in his book - The Coming King - first published in 1898 which stated:

We also read that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24. Jerusalem has never again come into the possession of the Jews, and will not until "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This will be when the work of the gospel is finished. (p. 98)

We publically proclaimed this position at the 1952 Bible Conference. Elder Arthur S. Maxwell in his presentation noted Luke 21:24 as one of the yet unfulfilled prophecies in 1952, stating that "Jerusalem is to remain trodden down of the Gentiles till the probationary time of all Gentiles has run out." (Our Firm Foundation, II, p. 231) But today, Jerusalem is under Jewish control, and has become the capital of the nation. We are again confronted with an interpretation of the prophecy which is not to our liking because our fate is tied to the fate of nations because of the message which was committed to our trust. God is trying to say something, and we will not listen.

In 1950, God sent to the Church two "messengers" even as He did in 1888. Elders R. J. Wieland and D. K. Short called for a denominational repentance, the **only solution** to the problem and need of the Church as it was faced with the fact of the soon fulfillment of Luke 21:24, resulting from the establishment of the Jewish State in 1948. What was the reaction to this call from God via His "messengers"? The first report in 1951 rejected the manuscript - 1888 Re-Examined - as too "critical." Another evaluation in 1958 also rejected it.

Between 1950 and 1958 a series of events occurred within the Church. The SDA-Evangelical conferences were held and the resultant book - Questions on Doctrine - denied the sacred trust committed to the Church. Then in 1967 (June 5-10) came the Six-Day War, and old Jerusalem was again in Jewish hands. This was the beginning of the final period of the times of the nations (Gentiles). Within days a series of events began:

1) June 27-29. A committee of the General Conference met in Washington and after hearing Wieland in person again rejected his and Short's manuscript because "its fruitage is evil."

2) July 30 - August 8. The triennial meeting

of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches met in Bristol, England. For the first time a representative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church - Dr. Earle Hilgert then of Andrews University - sat in session as a member so voted by the Central Committee of the WCC as recommended by the General Conference Committee.

3) October 17-24. The Annual Council gave recognition to the Association of Adventist Forums. It was from a podium of this organization that Desmond Ford launched his attack on the Sanctuary teaching of the Church in 1979.

4) December 15. The first issue of "Watchman, What of the Night?" was mailed to a then small list of names.

Prior to 1967, another series of events began to unfold which reached fruition in 1980. At the final session of Vatican II, an observer of the SDA Church and a member of the WCC Secretariat made arrangements for private dialogue. The first unofficial meeting took place in 1965. (So Much in Common, p.98) Also in 1965, Dr. Bernard Seton wrote from Switzerland to the General Conference of the need for a revised Statement of Beliefs. This beginning, though at first rejected by the General Conference, ultimately led to the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief voted at Dallas on April 25, 1980. (This Statement contains quotes from the WCC Constitution necessary for membership in the World Council.)

In 1967, when Israel took Jerusalem, the capital remained in Tel Aviv. However, on July 30, 1980, the Knesset [Parliament] of Israel made Jerusalem "the capital of Israel" and "the seat" of all government of the State. Thus was completed the fulfillment of Luke 21:24. What does this mean? We are now living in the time which would be parallel with the end of "the times of the Jewish Church" - 34 AD - 70 AD - when the Jewish laity had to make a decision regarding the actions of the Jewish hierarchy.

For the Seventh-day Adventist Church today, all the actions of the leadership of the Church from 1950 onward focus in one document - the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief. Thus the laity will be able to decide during the final six months of this year in the Sabbath School, what the laity of the Jewish Church had to decide in the 36 years given them after 34 AD. When 1989 dawns, we will stand at the same point of time for us as the inhabitants of Jerusalem stood just prior to 66 AD.

"It is coming, the hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you, the hour and the end!" (Ezekiel 7:6-7 Moffatt)

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The same article to which we referred on page 1 written by Elder Neal C. Wilson for the Ministry, now has been printed in the Adventist Review, April 7, 1988, pp. 1, 12-14.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER DOCUMENTATION

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:10, 11) Seventh-day Adventists have often quoted these words to others knowing that upon close investigation of the Bible, the truths presented would be seen to be just that - truth. However, we have often failed to follow the example of the Bereans when dealing with truth for these last days.

One might ask, "How have we failed to follow the example of the Bereans that we ourselves have promoted?" There are two areas: 1.) Listening to a sermon either in person, or through recorded medium (cassette tape or VCR) and failing to study for ourselves as to the truth of the matter presented. 2.) Reading printed materials that come into our possession without taking the time to carefully check all the references given to see "whether those things" be so. While this article will deal with the second area, the principles that are involved will apply equally to the first area as well.

Recently I received a photo-copy of correspondence between a retired pastor in Australia and the president of the South Pacific Division which was printed in the publication: Last Day Messages (March-April, 1988) As the letters were read, it became clear that here was another "battle" between the hierarchy and an awakened minister, though retired, of the church. The first letter written by the division president was in response to a letter written by the retired pastor to the Northern Star. In this letter, the president stated that there were "at least seven inaccurate statements" in the retired pastor's letter to the Northern Star.

As ~~one~~ reads the reply letter to the president, it becomes clear that **here is a historical Seventh-day Adventist who loves the truth entrusted to us and is desirous to defend the truth whatever the cost may be.** While the retired worker is to be commended for his desire to stand for the truth, the facts are that in his reply letter to the division president there are inaccurate statements concerning the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief (FSB), and the World Council of Churches (WCC). Not only were certain statements incorrect, but there were also improper uses of quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy. This article is not written for the purpose of critiquing the letter of this sincere, retired worker; but so that our people might understand that if we are to be taken seriously by the brethren, we must have facts - truth - and not misrepresentations.

An example of the importance could be given. In a court of law, if the testimony of a witness is found to have even **one** discrepancy, then a shadow is cast upon the integrity of

the witness and the validity of the whole testimony will be challenged by opposing counsel. In other words, the witness to be given for these last days must be wholly in accord with the message - "pure, unadulterated truth." The hierarchy are clearly guilty of treason and we need not misrepresent the true picture to prove it. Misrepresenting the picture through poor documentation only muddies the waters and tends to invalidate the correct portions of our testimony.

Perhaps one of the most unfortunate uses of the testimonies is the failure to consider time and place in the writings. This concept of using time and place was strongly urged by Sister White. She wrote:

Regarding the testimonies, nothing is ignored; nothing is cast aside; but time and place **must** be considered. (Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 57 - Emphasis supplied)

Spirit of Prophecy Misrepresentations

With this background, we will analyze certain references given by Pastor G. in his letter to the division president. Pastor G. states that "The evidence against Laodicea is overwhelming, as anyone can observe from reading the message to Laodicea in Rev. 3. I will confirm it from the Spirit of Prophecy." Pastor G. then gives a Spirit of Prophecy quotation without a reference. In the quotation a key phrase of the testimony is deleted, and the writer fails to take time and place into consideration. The quotation will be given below with the reference, date, and the ellipsis supplied in **bold** type.

What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right when they are all wrong! The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in sad deception, **yet honest in that deception.** They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. (3T, pp. 252-253, 1873)

The next quotation is correctly given from 5T, p. 217 - "The Church has turned back from following Christ her Leader, and is steadily retreating toward Egypt." The time of the writing of the testimony is 1882. Near the close of the letter is the following quotation with the proper references given:

The facts concerning the real condition of the professed people of God, speak more loudly than their profession, and make it evident that some power has cut the cable that anchored them to the Eternal Rock, and that they are drifting away to sea, without chart or compass. (R&H, July 24, 1888)

These testimonies give an inspired view of the condition of the church in 1873, 1882, and 1888. The church was "drifting away to sea, without chart or compass." So what did God do? "The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones." (TM, p. 91) Our history is clear that that "precious message" began with out people in 1888. (See 1893 G.C.B. page 183) To state that the testimony from July 24, 1888 is describing the condition of the people today - I am not denying that there is a parallel - without noting time and place and making the application by principle is improper reasoning and inadequate research. For example, note carefully the following two testimonies:

Men who have not learned to submit themselves to the control and discipline of God, are not competent to

train the youth, to deal with human minds. It is just as much an impossibility for them to do this work as it would be for them to make a world. That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be,--that is past. (G.C.B., April 3, 1901, p. 25 - Emphasis supplied)

At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the general management of the work have, in the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out unwise plans and to restrict God's work, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these few men, as the voice of God. But this is not saying that the decisions of a General Conference composed of an assembly of duly appointed, representative men from all parts of the field should not be respected. God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority. (9T, 260-261, May 30, 1909 - Emphasis mine)

Without using the principle of time and place, one would not be able to reconcile these statements. In other words, the dissidents can quote from the 1901 G.C.B and Vol. 5, p. 217, etc., while the hierarchy can quote from the 1909 G.C.B., etc., and each can "prove" their point by failing to take time and place into consideration. While the principles in the testimonies always hold true, item for item parallels cannot always be drawn between the condition of the church 115 years ago and today. This is not to say that certain parallels do not exist.

Again, for example, even though a testimony may have been written at a certain date, it does not mean that the application of the testimony is for the time of the writing. The context of the statement must be examined. The testimony in Vol. 5, 207-216 - "The Seal of God" - written in 1882, specifies the time of application - "Jesus is about to leave the mercy seat of the heavenly sanctuary." (pp. 207, 208) Any Adventist would define that time as just before the close of probation.

These examples should help illustrate the need for careful research and proper documentation before quoting from the Writings to prove the brethren are in apostasy. I believe that if Ellen G. White were alive today, she would be the first to condemn the improper use of her writings, regardless of the condition of the church.

Factual Inaccuracies Concerning Current Events

Another area that demands consideration is the misrepresentation of facts concerning current historical events. In his letter, Pastor G. wrote:

The changing of the SDA religion by official action of the church in plenary session was signalled when in 1980 the church produced what is known as "The 27 Fundamentals." In it, mostly by equivocation, the faith was, by premeditated deliberation, denied. Because the slumbering members are not aware of it, and will not believe it, these "27 fundamentals" are powerfully used in the church's deception strategy to disguise the fact of the changed religion, denuded of the distinctives which separated God's people from the world, and providing the common denominator with the apostate, Sunday-keeping churches.

Having now based the faith heretically on the triple papal heresies of (1) Original Sin, (2) the False Incarnation (False Christ - in the sinless nature of unfallen Adam), and (3) Christian Perfection (not the "Absolute" perfection of God) only at the Second Coming (Salvation in Sin), you are now standing on the platform with all false religions, and must agree with the conclusions of "comparative religion" as practiced by the WCC in accepting Buddhists, Hindus, Moslems, & Pagans as equal members of their organization. (Emphasis in printed letter)

When Pastor G. wrote that our religion was changed at Dallas in 1980 he was totally correct. However, the accusation that our faith is now based "on the triple heresies of (1) Original Sin, (2) the False Incarnation (False Christ - in the sinless nature of unfallen Adam), and (3) Christian Perfection...only at the Second Coming..." cannot be sustained by the 27 FSB. The facts are: 1) There is no direct statement on "Original Sin." (Expect through possible implication of statement # 7 - "The Nature of Man") 2) There is no statement that Jesus took the sinless nature of unfallen Adam. 3) Statement # 10 - "The Experience of Salvation" - although not using the word perfection, it does state: "Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life." (In His Steps, 1987 Edition - Emphasis mine)

Now while it is true that there are those in leadership positions that teach the three heresies mentioned above, they are not official doctrines of the church. The bottom line is that the 27 FSB are the standard the church members are to follow and they are told "not [to] raise a private doctrinal concern, no matter how dearly we hold it, to the level of the fundamentals." (William Johnsson, Editorial, Adventist Review, July 2, 1987) Now this does not in any way mean that the 27 FSB are all Biblical. In fact, close study reveals compromise, and/or error in a number of statements. For example, Statements # 9 and # 23 teach a completed atonement outside of the heavenly sanctuary. These statements reflect concepts taught in the book Questions on Doctrine (QOD), especially pages 355, 381, and 390. This should come as no surprise since Adventists still hold that the book QOD teaches official Adventist doctrine. On Feb. 16, 1983, Walter Martin wrote the General Conference asking for an "official statement reaffirming or denying the authority of the Adventist book, Questions on Doctrine..." (The Kingdom of the Cults, Walter Martin, p. 410 - Emphasis supplied) Then vice-president, Richard Leshar, responded to Martin as follows:

You ask first if Seventh-day Adventists still stand behind the answers given to your questions 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 Seventh-day Adventists are in harmony with the views expressed in Questions on Doctrine. (Ibid. Emphasis supplied)

The doctrine of the incarnation is not specifically spelled out in the 27 FSB, therefore, we cannot accuse the 27 FSB of

-Editorial (continued)

or does it divorce itself from "that truth"? What guidelines, therefore, can be used in the study of the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief in the Sabbath School lessons as they will be formulated?

In commenting on 2 John 9 - "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" - one scholar has well commented:

John does not condemn theological progress; he defines its limits: "abide in the teaching of the Christ." (1) We must never break with the past; the new truth is always an outgrowth of the old [truth]. A theology which is simply new is false (cf. Matt. xiii. 52) (2) We must maintain "the teaching of the Christ." (The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. 5, p. 203)

There is nothing wrong in and of itself to formulate a "new" statement of beliefs. To place a period at any point in our theological development would be to repeat the history of the churches of the Reformation. This is aptly stated by John Robinson in his farewell to the Pilgrims as they readied to embark from Holland for the New World. He charged them:

I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who have come to a period in religion, and will go at present no farther than the instruments of their reformation. Luther and Calvin were great and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God. I beseech you, remember it - 'tis an article of your church covenant - that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written Word of God. (Cited in Bancroft's History of the United States, Vol. 1, p. 205; 1888 edition)

How then should each statement of the 27 Fundamental Beliefs be evaluated? Key questions need to be asked: 1) Has the statement broken with past truth? 2) Is any part of the statement inconsistent with the Bible, and contradictory to "the repository of sacred truth" committed to God's people? If either of these two questions cannot be answered concerning any part of any statement of belief with a resounding - "NO!" - that statement is apostate. It would take only one such finding to render the whole of ~~the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief~~ a "Tree of the Knowledge of Truth and Error."

You ask, Why draw the line so close? Read carefully this counsel - "Many, many are very dull of comprehension in regard to their obligation to preserve the truth in its purity, uncontaminated by one vestige of error." (FCE, p. 501)

It will be our objective as editors to prepare at least a page on each of the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief giving for comparison, if a comparable statement exists in a previous formulation, that statement. We will also point out if there is a break with past truth, and wherein the 1980 Statement is inconsistent with the Bible. This will give those who wish, the opportunity to study with discernment each of the Sabbath School lessons for the last two quarters of 1988.

WHG

Note: Those interested in these special comments on each of the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief, please write immediately for details.

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teaching a pre-fall nature. Yet, we must most seriously question why the doctrine of the incarnation (as related to pre-fall or post-fall) was deleted when prior statements were clear on the subject. This does constitute a break in the past foundation of our faith.

A second area of factual inaccuracy that must be addressed is the statement concerning the WCC admitting "Buddhists, Hindus, Moslem, & Pagans as equal members..." To be eligible for membership into the WCC, a church must be in agreement with the "Basis upon which the Council is founded..." (Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches) The Basis states:

"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" (Ibid.)

The Adventist Laymen's Foundation receives certain news releases published by the WCC. To date, no mention has been made in reference to changing the "Basis" in the constitution, nor of admitting the above mentioned groups. Without that change, this writer cannot document the validity of his charge.

Now if Pastor G. had wished to witness against our involvement in the WCC, he could have sighted our involvement by having a member on the "Faith and Order Commission." He could have shown how that the church has voted the "Basis" for membership into the 27 FSB. (The "Basis" can be found almost word for word, in Statement # 2 and Statement # 11.)

In conclusion, false documentation will only cast reflection upon the integrity and whole message of the one using it. Thus if one wishes to confront the brethren, he/she must be sure that the witness for the truth is just that, TRUTH! There is an abundance of material to refute the fallacies of the 27 FSB with accurate and verifiable documentation. Let us stand on truth alone!

A. S.

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Our objective - The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.