

*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

*"The hour has come, the hour is striking and striking at you,
the hour and the end!"*
Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)



BACK DOOR EXIT

Page 2

"SPIRITS OF DEVILS"

Page 3

A RIVAL TO NOTRE DAME

Page 5

Editor's Preface

During the Year, as we noted the history of the doctrine of the Incarnation as taught by the Adventist Church, we had to limit comment on other things which were transpiring including the 58th General Conference Session that was held in St. Louis, Missouri. It is now past. Several items need comment, but we will limit ourselves to the topic of the first article of this issue of WWN – the gain and loss in Church membership. With the emphasis being placed on "back door" exits, it will be doubtful if a correct assessment will be addressed or even recognized by the new vice-president charged with the responsibility of closing the "door." If the Church ceases to be the Church you joined, and you believe you joined the final "remnant of her seed," what do you do? Will Finley really address the issue? If he does discern the problem, will he have the courage to stand up to the hierarchy of which he has now become a part?

The Roman Church is also seeking to address its own problem of a morally corrupt clergy by the erection of a new University in Florida. It will be an Ave Maria instead of a Notre Dame – the same Mary, but with an intensified worship of the "wafer" on Sunday. The new Pope was involved with Ave Maria as Cardinal Ratzinger; he is voicing the same agenda as Benedict XVI.

Other topics will be reviewed during 2006, one of which we hope to begin discussing in the next issue of WWN.

Back Door Exit

At the recent General Conference Session in St. Louis, the Director of Archives and Statistics, Dr. Bert Haloviak, noted in his report to the Session:

For the first time in (their) history, Seventh-day Adventists received into membership more than 5 million new believers within a five year period. During that same period, however, more than 1.4 million left (the) community (*GC Bulletin #8*, p. 27).

He observed that the "bottom line" for the five years which the session closed "is that for every 100 accessions, more than 35 others decided to leave." This is considerably more than the 24 subtracted for every 100 as reported to the previous session of the General Conference in 2000.

To seek to close what is thought of as "the back door" of the Church, the Session picked one of their international evangelists who has had no previous administrative experience and placed him as a vice president of the Church with the assignment to find the means, to close the door.

There is no question but that the situation has worsened during the past quinquennium. I recall that during the time I was privileged to work with Fordyce W. Detamore in his evangelistic crusade in the Globe Theatre at the Fair Park in Dallas, Texas, he told us in a worker's meeting that he expected a 25% loss in the total baptisms performed. This was the ratio as reported at the 2000 Session. It has now advanced to 35%.

Jesus referred to the apostolic calling as bringing "forth fruit," and that that fruit "should remain" (John 15:16). There are several ways to gather "fruit." One, "shake" the tree and gather more quickly a quantity of fruit, but it will be bruised in the fall and must be preserved promptly. If not, it will quickly spoil. Or one can hand pick the ripened fruit; it is more time consuming to do so, but the loss is much less. To apply this figure of speech properly to the problem of "soul-saving" requires study and serious thought.

Even in the apostolic period of the Christian church, there was attrition of membership. Paul noted that "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (II Tim. 4:10). He warned the elders of Ephesus that even some of them would depart from the faith and carry others with them (Acts 20:30). In these notations of apostasy in Apostolic times, there can be found two basic causes for the current attrition of church membership. With some the ardor of their "first love" waned, and they went out "the back door." But there are others who have gone out the "front door" because of the direction the "elders" have taken in permitting apostasy from the truth to prevail. Some have even been escorted out the "front door" because they have dared to speak up regarding the direction being taken by the hierarchy.

In past decades, a part of the Church's ministry was Bible workers, not woman "officials." If the Church is going to make "officials" so as to be like "the nations" around about it, then the question needs to be asked, "have these 'officials' made full proof of (their) ministry" by doing "the work of an evangelist"? (II Tim. 4:5). It was a retired credentialed Bible worker who brought to my mother and me the truth of the Three Angels' Messages and then welcomed us into a "home" church, which was hers and her retired minister husband's personal residence. The group who met there was called a "company."

Even after finishing my college work and entering the ministry, as a conference evangelist my team consisted of the song leader, a Bible worker and myself. At the same time, there was developing the big city evangelistic crusades, into which were brought young ministers for training. These supplanted the Bible workers, and the personal contacts and Bible studies which the Bible worker(s) gave those who attended the meetings disappeared. The emphasis shifted to "numbers," and the quality of the "fruit" changed. The "numbers game," and "quality fruit" are not synonymous. The elevation of women to "position" instead of restoring the service motif which the Bible

worker represented is not a solution to the "exodus" problem.

During this period, when the Bible worker was a part of the ministerial team, one individual stands out in my mind as qualified to be an "official," which she never assumed to be, -- Mary E. Walsh. On an occasion of a visit to Canada by Sister Walsh, while I was serving as pastor of the First Church in Toronto, I asked her to speak at the Divine Worship service. She accepted the invitation, and in the message presented, and the Spirit which accompanied it, I sensed what it must have been like had I been privileged to hear Ellen G. White speak from the sacred desk.

The exaltation of women to ministerial positions in the Church will not contribute to the closing of the back door, but will contribute to the agitation for the ordination of women to the ministry. All, and I mean ALL, the problems which the Church faces could be solved by one thing, and one thing alone: the crucifixion of self. The selflessness of a dedicated pastor could not only close the back door, but could possibly lock it! But when young ministers see "ladder climbing" rewarded and the mark of attainment in the ministry, an "official" position, the whole objective for ministry -- service -- disappears.

All the 1.4 million who have left the Church during the past five years did not leave the "truth." Many merely walked out the "front" door into "home churches." They could no longer take the "Pentecostalism" which marked the services of the regular church. Nor could they continue to wrestle with the ideas being promoted through the Sabbath School lesson quarterlies. Many longed for what they perceived to be a "full course" spiritual meal at the Sabbath morning worship service, instead of a shallow just "love Jesus" message. It is true that a number of the "exiting voices" have had their own "hobby horses" they wished to present, and they themselves have their "egos" massaged. All in all, vice president Findley will not have an easy time fulfilling his commission, and will learn much about church administration.

"Spirits of Devils"

The prophetic scriptures picture the gathering together for the battle of the great day of God Almighty as energized by "the spirits of devils" under the symbol of "frogs" coming "out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet (Rev. 16:13-14). We have perceived these symbols -- the dragon, beast, and false prophet to represent the religious forces at work to accomplish the designs of the devil. This interpretation has led to the designations of paganism, papalism, and apostate Protestantism to the symbols. A new symbolism is added as the prophetic picture describes the final conflict -- "frogs." Frogs are marked by their tongues by which they catch their prey and its unintelligible croaking noise in its spring mating season. Another part of the symbolism which we appear to have missed needs consideration. The symbolic powers involved in the final conflict -- dragon, beast, and false prophet -- are set in "heaven," "sea" and "earth" -- when first revealed to John. The "dragon" is specifically declared to be "that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan" (Rev. 12:9). Another reference is very definitive: the text reads -- "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan" (20:2). The first conflict is revealed as being in "heaven" -- "There was war in heaven" (Rev. 12:7). The final conflict is in a "place called in the Hebrew tongue -- Har-Magedon" (16:16 ARV). "Har" in the Hebrew means, "mountain." The phase of the conflict that brought "salvation" (12:10) was settled on a "mount" outside Jerusalem, Golgotha, "the place of the skull" (John 16:17). The final phase of the conflict both before and after the 1,000 years will be settled at the place called in the Hebrew tongue -- Har-Mo'ed -- "the mount of the congregation" -- Jerusalem, and even as the first phase -- outside the gates of the city (Rev. 20:9).

From the symbolic "heaven" the prophetic picture passes to "sea" and "earth" (12:12). The "beast" that comes up "out of the sea" is marked by the prophetic symbolisms of the beasts of Daniel 7 in reverse order -- leopard, bear and lion, and is empowered by the dragon

(13:2; cmp. with Daniel 7). The designation in history was the papacy. The first protest – the original Protestantism – arose in the same area in which this “beast arose.” The “false prophet” was to come “up out of the earth” (13:11). To this differentiation, we have not given sufficient study as the events of the present unfold before us. No longer using the designation of “Protestant” they speak of themselves as “Evangelicals” and are in lockstep with Rome. A part of this evangelical body is Pentecostal. Their “voice” is *Christianity Today (CT)*, a publication founded by Billy Graham. It is now edited by one with previous Seventh-day Adventist connections.

In a recent issue of CT (July, 2005), Jack Hayford was featured as “the Pentecostal Gold Standard” in a “cover story.” A year ago he was elected president of the Foursquare denomination which was founded by Aimee Semple McPherson. While seeking to bring Pentecostals together with other Evangelicals, and involvement in interdenominational activities, he does all this “without toning down his Pentecostalism one decibel.” The preface of the cover story warrants careful consideration. It reads:

In 1969, a 35-year old Jack Hayford pulled up to a traffic light in front of the First Baptist Church of Van Nuys. Like any other pastor in Southern California, he knew of the Baptist congregation. It was growing like a weed, drawing nationwide publicity under the leadership of Pastor Harold Fickett. Hayford’s church, a few blocks down Sherman Way, was an aging Foursquare congregation with just 18 members. Two weeks before, Hayford had taken on the church temporarily while serving as dean of students at L.I.F.E. Bible College (now Life Pacific College), an institution of his Pentecostal denomination, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel.

Parked at the light, Hayford felt a burning sensation on his face, a startling physical sense of the church’s intimidating presence. Through an inner voice God spoke to him reprovably: “You could at least begin by looking at the building.”

He turned and saw nothing but a modern brick structure. “What now?” Hayford asked. “I want you to pray for that church,” God said. “What I am doing there is so great, there is no way the

pastoral staff can keep up with it. Pray for them.”

As Hayford began to pray, he felt an overflow of love for Van Nuys Baptist. It seemed to take no effort. Through the days to come, the same sensation came to him every time he passed a church – any church. “I felt an overwhelming love for the church of Jesus Christ. I realized I had them in pigeonholes.”

A few days later, he approached a large Catholic church. Having been raised to take strong exception to Catholic doctrine, he wondered whether he would have the same feelings. He did, and heard another message from God: “Why would I not be happy with a place where every morning the testimony of the blood of my Son is raised from the altar?”

“I didn’t hear God say that the Catholics are right about everything,” Hayford says now, remembering the experience that changed his ministry. “For that matter, I didn’t hear him (sic.) saying the Baptists are right about everything, nor the Foursquare.”

The message was simply that people at those churches cared about God. These were sites dedicated to Jesus’ name. And he, Hayford, was supposed to love and pray for them (p. 25).

What conclusions can be drawn from these experiences of Hayford? Number one – *it was not God Who spoke approvingly about the Catholic mass.* He had already spoken through His Word – “But this Man, after He had offered *one sacrifice for sins forever*, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:12). Jesus Christ does not come down from that throne and descend to the Roman altar every time a priest calls Him! It was the “spirits of devils” who were approving the eucharist of Rome and mingling it with the “miracles” of Pentecostalism.

We have observed in recent issues of WWN the objective of Benedict XVI to bring about the unity of the Christian Church under Rome. In a homily given at the Mass to close the 24th Italian National Eucharistic Congress in Bari, Italy, the Pope declared, “I would like to reaffirm my desire to assume as a fundamental commitment working with all my might for the re-establishment of the full and visible unity of all of Christ’s

followers" (*L' Osservatore Romano*, June 1, 2005, p. 7).

In the same Homily, Benedict XVI declared:

The Eucharist, let us repeat, is the sacrament of unity. Unfortunately, however, Christians are divided, precisely in the sacrament of unity. Sustained by the Eucharist, we must feel all the more aroused to striving with all our strength for that full unity which Christ ardently desired in the Upper Room (*ibid.*).

He closed the homily with these words:

Dear Friends who have come to Bari from various parts of Italy to celebrate this Eucharistic Congress, we must rediscover the joy of Christian Sundays. We must proudly rediscover the privilege of sharing in the Eucharist, which is the sacrament of the renewed world.

Christ's Resurrection happened on the first day of the week, which in the Scriptures is the day of the world's creation. For this reason Sunday was considered by the early Christian community as the day on which the new world began, the one on which, with Christ's victory over death, the new creation began.

As they gathered round the Eucharistic table, the community was taking shape as a new people of God. St. Ignatius of Antioch described Christians as "having attained new hope" and presented them as people "who lived in accordance with Sunday. ...

Then he closed with these words:

It is this that gives rise to our prayer: that we too, Christians of today, will rediscover an awareness of the crucial importance of Sunday Celebration and will know how to draw from participation in the Eucharist the necessary dynamism for a new commitment to proclaiming to the world Christ "our peace" (Eph. 2:14). Amen!

How will this be achieved – the Sunday Mass as the unifying factor? The prophecy of Revelation 16 gives that answer – "spirits of devils."

A Rival to Notre Dame

The Foundation Library subscribes to *The Catholic World Report*, a conservative Catholic journal. The founder of the journal and its publisher, the Ignatius Press, was Joseph Sessio, S.J. who is now Provost of the new university being erected near Naples, Florida. The seed money for the new Ave Maria University was given by the multi-millionaire founder of Domino's Pizza, Thomas S. Monaghan, who is serving as Chancellor of the school. Being on their mailing list as a subscriber to the *World Report*, we received a 32-page report of their progress, which is being used to solicit more Catholic funds to add to the millions already received. However, there are some interesting facts revealed in this brochure.

The reason for the establishment of Ave Maria University is what is perceived by the founders to be declension from what are Catholic norms. In a letter by Monaghan, he wrote that they must rely on conservative Catholics to keep sending students who might "attend Catholic colleges that often are, incredible as it may sound, debating whether or not to have crucifixes in class rooms ... routinely putting young men and women together to live on the same dorm floor ... teaching blatantly unsound theology that questions some of the basic teachings of our Faith" (pp. 10,11).

A Franciscan friar, Benedict Groeschel, who has taught in several Catholic schools of higher education and who has joined the Board of Directors of Ave Maria University gave as his reason for withdrawing from the schools, is that "they (have) lost their Catholic identity." He wrote, "To call a school Catholic and not teach the Catholic faith is to take the name of the Lord in vain. If you run something you call Catholic, you must take care that you are not teaching something else or counter to what the Church teaches" (p. 15). This friar cited that at a recent conference involving Catholic colleges, a professor of philosophy from one of the largest universities "gleefully presented himself as an atheist to those assembled." This state of affairs is unacceptable and it is Ave Maria University which seeks to reverse the trend in Catholic

higher education on a large scale, more or less immediately" (p. 16).

In the Chancellor's letter names are given. He wrote, "We are enormously blessed to have the enthusiastic participation, as advisors, four of the Holy Father's trusted Cardinals: Schonborn (Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna, and primary author of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*), Pell (Australia), Stafford, and Arinze (Africa)" (p. 10).

Further:

Ave Maria has several highly respected Catholics in the nation who have welcomed us. Men like Fr. Richard Neuhaus, the brilliant editor and Lutheran convert; Fr. Benedict Groeschel; and Florida's own Governor Jeb Bush, the president's brother, who is a convert to Catholicism. Women who have welcomed our effort include the much-admired activist and writer Phyllis Schafly; Professor Mary Ann Glendon of Harvard, who also serves as a lay advisor to the Holy Father; and my friend, Mother Angelica, who has offered her steadfast support and holy prayers (p. 11).

There is a close connection between Ave Maria University and the new Pope, Benedict XVI. The Provost, Fessio, of the University took his doctoral work under the direction of Benedict when, as Cardinal Ratzinger, he was professor of theology at Regensburg, Germany. He has seen Ratzinger every year for the past thirty-three years. It was Ratzinger who approached the Jesuit General asking that Fessio be assigned to Ave Maria University. Fessio reports that every year for the past three years, Ratzinger has inquired about the progress at Ave Maria. He wrote that Benedict "has great hope for us" and stated that when Ratzinger took the name Benedict, he "realized at once what a powerful symbolic meaning that had for ... Ave Maria University" (p. 2). He explains:

In the Sixth Century the great super power of the ancient world, the Roman Empire, was in terminal decline. It was rotten from within. There was moral corruption, hedonism, hatred of children – abortion and infanticide. And it was besieged from without by barbarians, who while unlettered and uncultured themselves, were far stronger than the effete Romans who had lost all their moral bearings.

Benedict was a magistrate in Rome and he didn't try to change the Roman Empire. He fled it. He went into the hills south of Rome and prayed and offered his life to God. Others joined him and the first Benedictine monastery was established. His goal was to pray and to work – *ora et labora*. And their greatest work – their *Opus Dei* – was liturgical: to offer fitting praise and worship to the Divine Majesty.

From that monastery more were founded, and still more, until by the year 1200 there were over 40,000 Benedictine monasteries throughout Europe. The great classics of Greek and Roman culture were carefully copied and transmitted. Whole generations were educated, churches and cathedrals built. Gothic spires soared to the sky. Benedict has rightly been called the Father of Europe. He is in the origin of that great artefact of history: Christian Europe, Christendom.

I knew that Cardinal Ratzinger took the name Benedict because he would work tirelessly for the re-Christianization of Europe and the West, and for the evangelization of all the world. But like St. Benedict, he will not do it by force, not by violence, not by political machinations or revolutions. But by the power of prayer, especially liturgical prayer (sic). He is a great lover of the liturgy. He was born on Holy Saturday and his mother took him to the church for the Easter Vigil where he was baptized just a few hours after his birth. His life has been immersed in the liturgy. It is his great love. So I know that his desire is to renew the Church from within. To change hearts by rounding and enfolding them in the Divine Mysteries that reach their apex in the Holy Sacrifice of the Holy Mass (pp. 2-3).

Then Fessio referred to Benedict XVI's opening address – "four pages single-spaced in Latin which he must have penned rapidly because there was little time between his election and Mass the next morning!" Fessio commented that Benedict "made it crystal clear that his very first priority was the Holy Eucharist." The pope said: "I ask everyone to intensify in the coming months love and devotion to the Eucharistic Jesus and to express in a courageous and clear way the real presence of the Lord, above all through the solemnity and correctness of the celebrations" (p. 4).

Questions: Will the "Sunday" issue come riding in on the wings of the Sunday Mass? Will it be seen then whether Fessio's assessment of

Benedict XVI is correct – “He will do it not by force?”

Postscript:

The Brochure from which we have gathered most of the data for the above article closes with a summation by Fessio, the Provost. In part it states:

“The last few years have been very discouraging both for Holy Mother Church and for this country founded on faith, family and freedom. To recall only the most obvious wounds: priestly sexual abuse and “gay marriage” (which of course, is neither gay nor marriage). In the midst of this surrounding darkness, I am experiencing at first hand the grace-filled beginnings of what could become a spiritual and cultural counter-revolution with a profound impact on both our Church and our country. ...

“God chose to begin his first spiritual and cultural counter-revolution in a little known village that was sanctified by the presence of a young woman named Mary. From that Mustard Seed grew a world-wide, culture forming, holiness engendering Catholic Church that transformed the failing Roman Empire into Christendom. ...

“In the Fall of 2003, a group of Catholics – laymen, priests, and religious sisters took the first steps to build a new Catholic university in a little known place called East Collier County, Florida. There isn’t even a village there. But there soon will be. Both the new university and the new town have been placed under the patronage of that counter-revolutionary, civilization building-woman, Mary: Ave Maria.

“We opened Ave Maria University’s interim campus in Naples, Florida, with 101 pioneering students. There were so many blessings in that first year – and second – that even a long letter would not have space enough to recount them all. Here’s a sampling:

> A nightly, student led, Rosary walk around the campus
> Regular adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

> Nearly 25% of our young men discerning a priestly vocation
> Extended visits by Cardinals Christoph Schonborn and Francis Arinze
> Inaugural Annunciation Mass, with the Vatican Choir, at the site of the new campus. ...

“One of the most respected and authentically Catholic theologians in the United States, Fr. Matthew Lamb, joined Ave Maria in the summer of 2004 to become Dean of the Graduate School of Theology. In only our third year, Ave Maria University has launched under his direction both a doctoral program in theology and the most rigorous Master’s program in North America.

“Thanks to Thomas Loome, the largest seller of used Catholic books in the world, our graduate theological library has more than twice as many volumes as one of the oldest and most prestigious Catholic graduate schools in the country (which shall remain un-named).

“Why is this important? Because we intend to teach the future teachers of theology, preparing them for positions in universities and – more critically – seminaries across the country. Think about the origin of the present crisis in the Church.” (pp. 17-19).

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WEBSITES

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Take Note

We are living in the time of the end. The fast fulfilling signs of the times declare that the coming of Christ is near at hand. The days in which we live are solemn and important. The Spirit of God is gradually being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude.

The agencies of evil are combining their forces, and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.

Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 9, p. 11