



*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

*The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye wil
enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12*

"BEACH BOYS" WRITE THEME GC DELEGATES SING "TUNE"

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According to the official report of the 1985 General Conference Session in New Orleans, "Brad Braley, veteran Adventist organist, wrote the 1985 General Conference theme song, 'Christ Our Hope Forever.'" (Bulletin, #1, p. 9) This is true. This was the theme for the "on-stage" view of the Session, that which was orchestrated to feed the imagination of the viewer, and dazzle the sensory perceptions. It is also true that the "Beach Boys" theme song was sung "on-stage" at the official business sessions but well concealed behind the facade of pageantry and "off-stage" conferences. There were some protests as the "music" was played and the words, "sung" - but in the end, it came through virtually as written.

Early on in the Session, Friday afternoon, June 28, at 2 p.m., the "report of the Role and Function of the Denominational Organizations Commission" was introduced to the delegates. (Bulletin #3, p. 20) Elder Neal C. Wilson made an introductory statement. He said - "The modern trend in our world today is toward decentralization. ... We cannot allow even the beginnings of a congregational-type of church government, which would ultimately totally destroy the thrust of our world mission and dilute our message." (Ibid.) As the

Session progressed, and the delegate response to what was offered in motion was weak, Elder Wilson again took the floor. This time he said:

I am a little uneasy, because I sense uneasiness among the delegations on the voting. The vote on both the previous motions was very weak. I don't mind people expressing different views. I don't mind someone challenging these positions, but when we complete the discussion I would like to feel that there is a strong vote from this body in support, and I am not sensing that at this point. If we aren't together, then let's take some more time to look at it. Perhaps because we are so scattered, we should vote by a show of hands. Organizationally there is no real autonomy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church." (Ibid., p. 21)

During this Session - though not reported in the Bulletin - Wilson urged all the delegates to obtain and carefully study the "Beach Boys" theme song. This publication was written and readied for the Session by Elder W. R. Beach, former secretary of the General Conference, and his son, Dr. B. B. Beach who gave to Pope Paul VI a medallion - "a gold-covered symbol of the Seventh-day Adventist Church." (Review, Aug. 11, 1977, p. 23) The paperback book - Pattern for Progress - on the role and function of church organization has a "Preface" by Neal C. Wilson.

In the Introduction, B. B. Beach admits the book has as its immediate background the work of the GC Commission on the Role and Function of Denominational Organizations, with which he was personally involved. He writes - "The reflections in this book come from a mix of organizational theory and history held together by the cement of experience

on the various levels of church structure." (p. 11) The intent of the book is clearly stated. It reads:

The authors have limited the scope of the book to dimensions of church organization - that is, to the larger view of the measure, extent, capacity, importance, and consequence of Seventh-day Adventist Church organization. The reflections present, in their historical context, achievements and problem areas of the organized church. The authors believe that there is here an organizational "pattern for progress" in accomplishing the mission of the church. (p. 12)

Every chapter - a part from the "Introduction" - is prefaced with a quotation from the Writings of Ellen G. White. This gives the impression that the concepts expressed are based upon inspired authority. Thus to question the book, puts an individual in the position of questioning what the "messenger of the Lord" has written. Tragically, the "Beach Boys" do not deal with all that Ellen G. White has said or written on organization - and this involves some very key pronouncements, which, had they considered them, would have led to different conclusions.

The heart of Pattern for Progress is to be found in Chapter 19 - "Unity in Organization and Structure." The first paragraph reads:

In contrast to most other churches, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a world church. Her organization possesses both a centralized structure demonstrating an authoritative and effective world headquarters with divisional offices, and a decentralized church structure, broadly sharing in all parts of the world administrative and promotional responsibilities with thousands of individuals and many organizations on four constituency levels. Enhancing the basic Seventh-day Adventist organizational structure thus becomes an important ingredient of practical down-to-earth unity in working methods and soul winning. The part of wisdom suggests, therefore, that the unity of the basic Seventh-day Adventist organization and structure be affirmed and enhanced. (p. 125)

Note carefully the wording - "the unity of the basic... organization and structure be affirmed and enhanced," - in the light of the important definitive second sentence which declares that the Church "possesses... a centralized structure demonstrating an authoritative and effective world headquarters." Further, they indicate there is a sharing of "administrative and promotional responsibilities" with individuals

"on four constituency levels." The fact is that the Church in General Conference Session had not voted this structure when the book was written and published. The "Beach Boys" were writing the "theme song." (See note at the end of this article.)

The first section of this Chapter - "Ways to Maintain Organizational Unity" - states as its first point - "1. Faithful adherence to the Church Manual, applicable throughout the world." (Ibid.) Here is where a very interesting confrontation took place. The actual commission report on "Role and Function" to the Delegates read - "5. Faithful obedience to the Church Manual, applicable throughout the world." (Delegate Agenda and Support Material, p. 99) When the "smoke" had cleared from the debate - again not reported in the Bulletin - as to what word should be used to express an individual's relationship to the Church Manual, the delegates voted to stay with the "Beach Boys" theme song and adopted the word - "adherence" - being only a shade of difference in meaning from the word - "obedience." (Bulletin, #7, p. 9)

All of this needs to be carefully analyzed. The Church has a "centralized structure" but supposedly also "a decentralized" organization which shares "in all parts of the world administrative and promotional responsibilities" down to the local church level - the fourth and bottom rung of the constituency levels. But now catch the picture - the individual church member throughout the entire world must faithfully adhere to the Church Manual. And where is the Church Manual formulated? The 1985 Session voted:

Areas of authority and responsibility delegated to the General Conference in session are: 1. Church Doctrine. 2. Church Manual. (Bulletin #7, p. 9)

So as Wilson stated - "Organizationally there is no real autonomy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church." The individual members of the Church throughout the world march to the cadence of the one "drummer boy" - the Church Manual. Is this the unity wrought by the Holy Spirit?

The second stanza of the "Beach Boys" theme song for the maintenance of organizational unity is to have "respect for constitutional structures" as contained in the General Conference Working Policy. It was suggested that "perhaps more such constitutional models should be worked out and included." Then

it was written:

These are to be followed closely and adhered to in essence at the various levels of church organization. When a constitution is adopted or revised by a church organization, it should be with the counsel of the next higher organization and only in harmony with the General Conference Working Policy, (p. 125)

This was duly voted at the New Orleans' session. (Bulletin #7, p. 9) Now the Working Policy formulation is not limited to the General Conference in session, but can also be altered and "enhanced" by the Executive Committee between Sessions (Ibid.) This becomes awesome when one understands that at the 1985 Session, it was voted:

During the interim between sessions the Executive Committee shall constitute the body of final authority on all questions where a difference of viewpoint may develop. (Bulletin #8, p. 8 emphasis mine)

This concentration of power in the General Conference was the 5th stanza of the "Beach Boys'" theme song. They wrote: "5. A strong, effective central authority with ability to achieve the mission of the church," (p. 126) is essential to maintain "organizational unity."

Echoes of EEOC vs PPPA

The reorganization effected at the New Orleans Session merely mandated the position taken in Federal Court in the EEOC vs PPPA case. In the Opening Brief for Defendants in Support of Their Motion for Summary Judgment, the hierarchy of the Church through their legal counsel declared:

The General Conference, being the general body embracing the church in all parts of the world...The General Conference, then, is the Seventh-day Adventist Church. So the term "General Conference" has three overlapping meanings:

a. The embodiment of the Remnant Church as a Christian denomination, in a unified worldwide organization to which all baptized Seventh-day Adventist owe spiritual allegiance.

b. The actual quadrennial (now quinquennial) meeting of delegates, the General Conference of the Church, the only body having the authority to alter the structure of the church either in doctrine or organization.

c. The permanent staff at world headquarters in Washington, D.C., which acting through the Executive Committee attends to the work of the Church between the quadrennial conferences. (p. 10, Excerpts-Legal Documents.)

In Reply Brief for Defendants in Support of Their Motion for Summary Judgment, the hierarchy through counsel explained:

First, the phrase "General Conference in Session" is not an entity or an organism but is one facet of the Church (the most important and powerful, of course, but still only one facet of the phrase "General Conference"), and they [plaintiffs] fail to recognize that between the quadrennial (now quinquennial) sessions of the delegates in General Conference, the Executive Committee wields all of the powers of the Church, excepting two: the power to alter the structure of the Church and the power to alter its doctrine. Everything else, without exception, which can be accomplished in General Conference when it is in its infrequent sessions can similarly be accomplished by the General Conference Committee between those infrequent sessions. (General Conference Working Policy, p. 36;... the Working Policy "is recognized as the authoritative voice of the Church in all matters pertaining to the work of the SDA denomination in all parts of the world.") (Ibid., p. 44, Emphasis theirs)

Neal C. Wilson, then Vice President of the General Conference of the North American Division, stated unequivocally that it was "necessary for the Church [defined as the General Conference] to establish its authority in the community of believers." (Ibid.

While the expression - "community of believers" - is usually used to describe the essence of what is truly the church, the thrust intended by Wilson was that the institutions of the Church, such as the publishing houses and hospitals, were such communities, and that the General Conference had authority to govern, regulate, and control not only the operations of these institutions, but also the people who work therein without interference by the State. In the Opening Brief, cited above, it was stated - "Those who work for the Seventh-day Adventist Church respond to a religious vocation in exactly the same sense as does a cloistered nun." (Op. cit., p. 18) However, the Federal Court did not perceive these institutions of the Church, nor the employees in this light. Now at the New Orleans Session, among the actions voted is the following relating to "The Church's Institutions":

Seventh-day Adventists see in the gospel commission and the example of the Lord and His apostles the responsibility of followers of Christ to serve the whole man. In their world outreach they have therefore followed the pattern of their beginnings in the development

SUMMARY REPORT - 7

In this report we shall seek to conclude the section of "Factual Allegations" contained in the Complaint filed by American United for the Separation of Church and State seeking to set aside the appointment of the U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican. Summary Report-6 is to be found in WNN, XVIII - 8.

Factual Allegations (Concluded)

Under Article II, section 2, clause 2, the President has the power to appoint ambassadors and officers of the United States. Under Article II, section 3, the President has also been given the authority to receive ambassadors and other public ministers. Plaintiffs, however, claim that the President's authority is not unlimited in that the President of the United States has not, by Article II, been granted any authority to appoint ambassadors to a church.

Further, under Article II, section 2, clause 2, of the Constitution, the Senate is empowered to grant or to withhold its advice and consent to the appointment of an abassador. Under Article I, section 8, the Congress of the United States is empowered to tax and spend. However, the taxing and spending powers are subject to the limitation of the Religious Clauses of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution which prohibit any law respecting the establishment of religion. Plaintiffs claim that the Congress of the United States is without constitutional authority (a) to consent to the appointment of a diplomatic representative to a church organization; or (b) to consent to the use of tax funds for the aforesaid purpose. Plaintiffs further claim that by these congressional acts, taken together, Congress acted outside of its constitutional authority and in violation of the First Amendment. Any additional congressional appropriations to fund the diplomatic mission to the Holy See, that is the Roman Catholic Church, will directly violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Since annual appropriations will be required, there will be repeated congressional violations of the First Amendment unless this Court enjoins such further action by the Congress.

The action here complained of violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution because it prefers one religious denomination over all others, has the effect of advancing one religion and inhibiting all others, creates the potential for excessive church-state entanglement, provides the means whereby the federal government can openly or secretly participate in the affairs of a specific religious organization and provides the means for a specific religious organization to openly or secretly participate in the affairs of the federal government, requires the government to use the agency of a religious organization acting directly through members of its clergy and as a part of its "spiritual mission" to carry out the nation's governmental purposes, and provides the potential for a divisive conflict based on religious interests. In this regard, plaintiffs show that the contact between the United States government and the Roman Catholic Church, through the ambassador to the Holy See, requires that such contact, in large measure, will take place at the administrative and spiritual headquarters of the largest Christian denomination in the world. The atmosphere where the ambassador to the Holy See functions is pervasively sectarian. Those with whom the ambassador deals are, in large part, high ranking religious leaders, thus, creating the circumstances under which the likelihood that religion will be eventually entailed.

Under the Religion Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and Supreme Court decisions interpreting the same, the government must be certain that tax supported diplomatic representatives of the United States Government do not become entangled in religious affairs. Plaintiffs claim that in the context of the diplomatic relationship carried on within the religiously dedicated lands of a world church there, by necessity, is a fusion of governmental and religious functions. This is particularly true because "Papal Diplomacy rests essentially upon the spiritual sovereignty of the Holy See." because the Holy See functions under its spiritual and moral authority. In such a situation any secular aspects of the diplomatic contact would be

A MIX BETWEEN 1901 & 1903 A TROIKA HEADS THE CHURCH

In amending the Church Manual, the General Conference at New Orleans voted that between sessions "all subordinate organizations and institutions throughout the world will recognize" the Executive Committee of the General Conference "as the highest authority under God among Seventh-day Adventists." (Bulletin #8, p. 8) Also during the Session "a statement regarding the committee system of church governance in a conference organization" was adopted. This was "to further develop the report of the Role and Function of Denominational Organizations Committee" the main thrust of the whole session. (Bulletin #7, pp. 19-20)

Recognizing that the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its conferences function on the local, union, and General levels by what is called "the committee system," the Statement declared - "The committee has policy-making, executive, and oversight functions." Noting that a conference constituency not only elects the president, but also the other officers and departmental directors, it stated, "they all work under the authority and direction of the conference executive committee." (Is not the "all-powerful" executive committee itself elected by the constituency?) In authenticating the committee system, the Statement noted that Ellen G. White "repeatedly counseled to avoid 'kingly power' in church structure," but gave no references. Her strongest statements were made "at a meeting in the Battle Creek College library, April 1, at the General Conference of 1901." (See Spalding & Magan Collection, pp. 162-174)

A new and different constitution was adopted at the 1901 Session. It set up an Executive Committee of 25 members to administer the affairs of the Church. The By-Laws, Art. 1, Sec. 3, reads - "The Executive Committee shall have full administrative power during the intervals between sessions of the conference." This committee was to be presided over by a rotating chairman, - no president! (1901 GC Bulletin, April 22, p. 379) Thus the "committee" concept with full power

to act between sessions was embodied in the 1901 Constitution. But the 1901 Constitution lasted only two years, and in 1903 it was superseded by a document which created anew the office of president of the General Conference.

The 1903 Constitution still declared that between sessions "the Executive Committee shall have full administrative power." The President in his duties functioned "as the Executive Committee may advise." The other officers - secretary and treasurer - were not given administrative roles. In fact, the treasurer was mandated to disburse funds received by his office "by order of the president." (1903, GC Bulletin #10, pp. 145-46)

The 1985 definitive statement on the "committee system" creates a "troika" to head the General Conference and each sub-section of it. While a president remains "the first officer and chairman of the executive committee," he is only "first among equals." And while the co-officers" - the secretary and treasurer - are "to acknowledge his leadership," they exercise "collegial authority" with him. These officers are "not a substitute for the committee," but rather have a "management function, supported by the department directors, and supervise executive implementation of the actions of the committee." (Op. cit.) This constitutes a real mix between the 1901 and 1903 Constitutions with the added troika concept of collegial authority exercised by the three chief elected officers.

It appears that in the mix of concepts from 1901 & 1903, one problem was not addressed. Ellen G. White in evaluating the 1901 Session indicated a "thorough work" had not been done. (Test., Vol. 8:106) While this lack of a "thorough work" referred to structural reorganization, it also included a heart work on the part of those chosen for leadership. Wilson's rhetoric during the session - Vice Presidents compared to Cardinals - hardly conforms to the concepts of committee

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so inextricably intertwined with the spiritual mission of the Roman Catholic Church that it would be impossible to sever the secular from the spiritual.

As a result of the foregoing there would be the ever-present temptation for the government of the United States to tailor its foreign and domestic policy to satisfy the private urgings of one church or to influence, or seek to influence, the internal affairs of a church, or to use the same instrumentality of a church to try to effect the policies of our nation.

In addition, the mere appearance of a continuing joint exercise of church and state involvement of the United States Government with a church headquarters provides a significant symbolic benefit to the Roman Catholic Church and a corresponding detriment to all other organizations.

Plaintiffs further show that, unlike most instances where the government's activity has the effect of advancing one religion and inhibiting all others, here there is not even the opportunity to provide for a continuing governmental surveillance of the governmental involvement with religious affairs because so much of the diplomatic contact is under the veil of secret private meetings and exchanges memorialized in classified State Department documents. Thus, the only guarantee of protection from violations of the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment lies in the elimination of the potential for diplomatic assurances being negotiated in the halls of the Holy See with the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church.

Certain plaintiffs herein listed are members of the Roman Catholic Church or are organizations whose members belong to the Roman Catholic Religious Orders or are lay members of the Catholic faith. Those plaintiffs specifically contend that the presence of a representative of the White House at the Vatican with the direct access to the Holy Father is almost a direct invitation to civil interference in internal American church affairs. Plaintiffs contend that there have been historical examples of attempts by presidential advisors to cause the President to use his diplomatic representatives to solicit the support of the Holy Father for the appointment of an American church official

to a church post. An attempt was made by President Theodore Roosevelt to cause the Pope to appoint a certain American archbishop to the position of cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church. In addition to the possibility of White House interference in domestic ecclesiastical affairs, there is also the danger that the government might seek to influence Catholic opinion on legislation through the machinery of the official diplomatic contact between the United States Government and the Holy See. As Vatican observer Reverend F. X. Murphy stated:

The real fear, I think, among Catholics, you know, committed Catholics, is that the President may try to use the connection to put pressure on the bishops. For example, when they were working out the pastoral letter on peace, that the -- Mr Clark sent a letter to Archbishop Bernardin, and then the State Department sent General Vernon Walters to talk to the Pope about it. Well, we don't like that type of interference, and you know, that has happened in history. (An excerpt from the Sunday, January 15, 1984, CBS Television's edition of "Face the Nation.")

When spiritual and moral issues espoused by one church and political concerns merge, the potential of governmental intrusion into the internal affairs of a church is constantly present.

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of educational, health-care, publishing, and other institutions.

In Seventh-day Adventist theology and philosophy of church operations, such institutions have been from their inception integral parts of the church, direct instruments in the carrying out of its divine commission. Therefore, the Seventh-day Adventist Church makes use of its denominationally owned and operated institutions such as health-care institutions, publishing houses, and schools as integral parts to fulfill health, literature, and teaching ministries; therefore, they are indispensable to and inseparable from the church's total ministry in carrying the gospel to the world.

The multiple units of the world church, whether congregations, conferences, health-care institutions, publishing houses, schools, or other organizations, all find their organizational unity in the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in which they have representation. (Bulletin #8, p. 8)

Iron Teeth

In the voted actions, it was clearly

defined what non-compliance with the General Conference Working Policy would mean. [This was also stanza 7 of the "Beach Boys'" theme song. (p. 126)] The action reads stating how unity may be maintained:

9. Church leaders and organizations operating the the church in their area of responsibility in full harmony with the General Conference Working Policy. Thus unity of working methods and organization are maintained. (Church officials not able or not willing to do this should not be continued in leadership positions.) (Bulletin #7, p. 9)

This same spirit was expressed during the discussion on the merger of the various departments into one "Church Ministries" department. Elder "Ted" N. C. Wilson (son of the GC President) commented:

With all due respect to the Role and Function Commission and to those who have worked on it, it simply appears to me that the problem is administrative rather than organizational. In the Africa-Indian Ocean Division we work together in a fine way. If at the General Conference level there is difficulty between departments, let the Nominating Committee take that into consideration and make some personnel changes. (Bulletin #4, p. 12)

Is this a "like father, like son" comment? Does this explain some unexplained changes at the General Conference-Division level, even the Africa-Indian Ocean Division?

NOTE: - The revised edition of the Church Manual, 1981, Chapter 4, section 3, reads:

Five Steps in Our Organization

Among Seventh-day Adventists there are five steps leading from the individual believer to the worldwide organization of the work of the church. (pp. 53-54)

These "five steps" or levels were - local church, conference, union, division, and the General Conference. At the New Orleans Session, this section of the Church Manual was amended to read:

FOUR CONSTITUENT LEVELS IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST ORGANIZATION

Among Seventh-day Adventists there are four constituent

levels leading from the individual believer to the worldwide organization of the work of the church:... (Bulletin #8, p. 8)

These new four levels are - local church, conference, union, and General Conference. The former fourth level - the Division - is now perceived as the General Conference in that particular area of the world field.

However, prior to the Session - and keep in mind that only "the General Conference in session" has the authority to amend the Church Manual - the publication of the "Beach Boys" was written and off the press. In it the Church was described as having "four constituency levels." (p. 125) And keep in mind, the "Preface" was written by Neal C. Wilson! Was the tremendous expense justified in calling the delegates together merely to rubber stamp what had been previously decided ----- in other words, to sing the "Beach Boys'" theme song?

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1901 & 1903 Mix - from p. 5

governance as outlined in the Statement. Further, one of the delegates to the Session aptly fingered the problem. He noted in reference to the committee system of governance:

"All of us recognize that when an administrator of this church is elected, one of the very first questions that he is asked is who he wants to serve with him. In my estimation his vigorous work to get his staff in place does not sound like a committee system of governance. Many times the real will of the people is lost because one who has ascended to a position of responsibility is, by charisma, determination, and intellect, able to get his way. (Bulletin #5, p. 12)

When time passes judgment on the reorganizational concepts of the 1985 Session, and their implimentation, an unheeded recommendation may then be seen as the only viable solution of the structural and personnel problems of the Church. Elder John Stevens said: "Our base problem in the church is not structural, it is not economic; it is spiritual." Then he recommended - "I would like to recommend that we give far more serious study to our spiritual condition." (Bulletin #4, p.12)

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