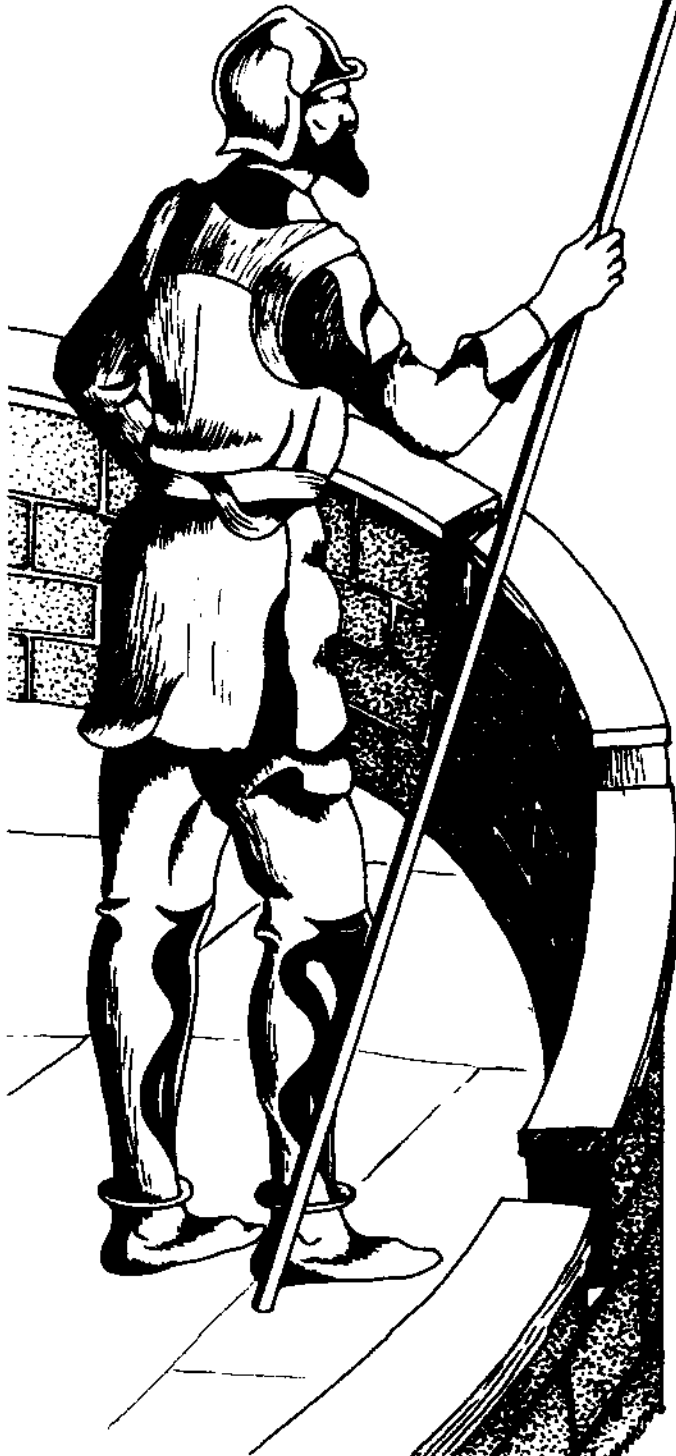


*"Watchman,  
what of the night?"*

"BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM!  
Come out to meet Him."

(Matt. 25:6 RSV)



## **"IN DISARRAY"**

**Evangelical, Traditional,  
or Liberal?**

**"Which is the true Adventism?"**

Periodically, the Peoples Church, one of the largest, if not the largest evangelical church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, sponsors a series of lectures on the "cults" and/or false religions as their pastor perceives them. In times past, they never failed to include Seventh-day Adventism as one subject of the lecture series. (I remember attending such a lecture presented in their old church on Bloor Street when serving as pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist First Church in Toronto.) The founder and long-time pastor, the late Oswald Smith, has been succeeded by his son, Dr. Paul Smith. This past year from August through November, another series was held by a Ron Carlson. It included, Christian Science, The New Age Movement, The World Tomorrow, Mormonism, the Jehovah Witnesses, and even two lectures on Roman Catholicism. But Seventh-day Adventism was not on the list!

Some friends in Toronto with whom we have had continued contacts over the years decided to call and find out why Adventists were no longer on the "hit" list of the Peoples Church. Reaching one of the assistant ministers, they were told, "We couldn't cover everyone, and besides, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is in disarray." How sad, but how true! Presently divided over issues which should never have been issues in the first place - women's ordination to the ministry and the "celebration" type of worship services - had the Word of God been followed, the Church has lost its bearing - the message given it by God as a sacred trust. No longer sounding a prophetic warning - it has gone to the trash heap of history - the trumpet is now giving an uncertain sound. The sanctuary teaching, uniquely Seventh-day Adventist, is not perceived by the rank and file of the laity of the Church, and the ministry and theologians are in disarray as to its importance and meaning. Discarding chart and compass, the Church is adrift.

The Laodicean blindness of the church's leadership does not keep others from seeing the true state of

affairs. In an article appearing last year in Christianity Today, Kenneth Samples, correspondence editor of the late Walter Martin's Christian Research Institute, wrote:

The last three decades have brought much controversy to Seventh-day Adventism as key doctrinal distinctives were challenged from within the denomination. This in-house doctrinal debate has resulted in several distinct factions and strong disagreement as to which doctrinal perspectives represents "true Adventism."

Seventh-day Adventism is experiencing an identity crisis. Ironically, the present confusion is in direct contrast to the confidence of Adventism's pioneers. (Feb. 5, 1990, pp. 18-19)

Samples, then categorizes Adventists into three groups as embracing either Evangelical Adventism, Traditional Adventism, or Liberal Adventism. Then the question is asked, "Which is the true Adventism?" He admits that every member of the Church does not fit "neatly" into these defined groups because "many are theologically neutral." This only compounds the disarray because many of these "neutralists" are church administrators bent on maintaining the status quo power-wise, who themselves know little Bible and less of their own church history.

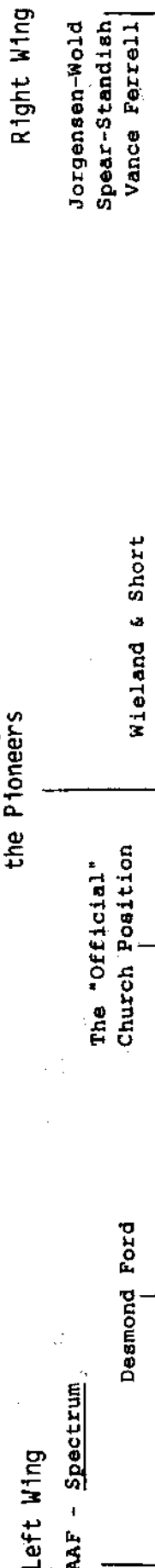
Perhaps, we could obtain a clearer picture of the present disarray in Adventism by using a graph with the center point representing the teachings of the pioneers. (See Column 2) The first self-evident fact is that the divergence between those on the extreme right and those on the extreme left is marked by their difference of attitude toward the Writings of Mrs. Ellen G. White. Those on the extreme right hold the Writings to be either equal to, or above the authority of the Bible. Vance Ferrell in his publications combines the Bible and the Writings calling the combination, the Sacred Scriptures. Dr. Colin Standish teaches that "the acceptance of the prophetic gift in the ministry of Sister White is essential not only to the preparation of God's people for the eternal kingdom, but also to the acceptance of the Scriptures as inspired." (Our Firm Foundation, April 1989, p. 15)

Standish's position is not only contrary to the very teachings of Ellen G. White, but also completely out of harmony with the position of the pioneers of Adventism. In an article on the "Benefits of Bible Study," Ellen White wrote - "In the Word of God is contained **everything essential** to the perfecting of the man of God." (ST, Jan. 30, 1893) The position of the

To page 3, col. 1

THE "DISARRAY" IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH +

The "Teachings" of the Pioneers



\* These "27" Statements contain formulations of belief which confirm the compromises made during the SDA-Evangelical Conferences in 1955-56.

The "remnants" of the Brinsmead Movement which arose just following the SDA-Evangelical Conferences are now scattered across the full spectrum, that is, those which either remained in, or returned to the Church. Vance Ferrell is one example on the extreme Right Wing.

+ The names on this "graph" include only those known to have their names on the roll of some local Seventh-day Adventist Church. There are "many voices" on the periphery of Adventism, but these for the most part are clustered around the extreme right wing.

"In Disarray" - from page 2, col. 1

pioneers was well stated by George I. Butler in an article, "The Visions," where he wrote:

We do not hold them to be superior to the Bible, or in one sense equal to it. The Scriptures are our rule to test everything by, the visions as well as other things. That rule, therefore, is of the highest authority; the standard is higher than the things tested by it. If the Bible would show the visions were not in harmony with it, the Bible would stand, and the visions would be given up." (R&H, August 14, 1883) [Butler wrote this as president of the General Conference, and received no rebuke from Ellen G. White for so stating.]

This very issue over the Writings is used by Samples in CT to categorize "traditional Adventism." He wrote:

Traditional Adventism rests squarely upon the authority of Ellen G. White. Traditionalists strongly defend distinctive Adventist beliefs, especially those that received their stamp of approval from Mrs. White's prophetic gift. Some among Traditional Adventists emphasize her writings to a degree that they become the infallible interpreter of Scripture, using them as a shortcut to Biblical understanding. (CT, op.cit., p. 20)

Now we have the authority of the Writings carried even further by Colin Standish: you cannot even accept the Bible as inspired unless you derive that fact from the Writings. Further, Ron Spear in publishing the Standish brothers' article took this position and placed it in an enlarged block to focus attention upon it. Really there is no need to wonder why Adventists are in such a state of disarray as they are today. I was taught by my Baptist mother that the Bible was the inspired Word of God long before we ever heard of Ellen G. White.

Those on the right can be differentiated among themselves by their attitude toward the 1888 Message of Jones and Waggoner, as well as the un-Scriptural position on the Writings. Those who take such a position on the Writings also take a position on righteousness by faith contrary to the stated position of Waggoner and teach concepts in harmony with those who opposed the two men at Minneapolis. Wieland and Short accept the position of the pioneers on the Writings and are the evident spokesmen for the message of 1888.

Coming now to the left, we find the "official" church expressed in the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief. These beliefs do not reflect the teachings of the pioneers on the doctrine of the incarnation or the atonement. While "official" Adventism gives lip service to the

Writings of Ellen G. White to shore up the authority of the organization, there is little belief in, or practice of counsels contained in the Writings.

To the left of the Church is Dr. Desmond Ford. He is still a member in good and regular standing as far as this editor knows, and I dare say that there are many among the theological elite of the Church who are more in agreement with him than they are with the official stand of the Church including the Editor of the Adventist Review. The fact is that Ford has merely carried to the ultimate and logical conclusion the compromises made with the Evangelicals by the leadership of the Church during the 1955-1956 Conferences. Keep in mind that Desmond Ford, and the late Walter Martin were good "buddies."

On the extreme left, one finds the Association of Adventist Forums with their publication, Spectrum. These are the liberals. The reason for their liberal stance is well described by Samples in his article. He wrote:

The theological perspective represented by Liberal Adventism does not arise out of the same doctrinal controversies as the (Evangelical and Traditional) perspectives. In part, Liberal Adventism comes out of that church's attempt to achieve theological and cultural respectability. In the 1950s and 1960s, many Adventist students began receiving graduate degrees from non-Adventist universities. In many cases, the schools attended by these Adventists were theologically liberal. Thus, Adventist scholars were influenced by modern biblical criticism and liberal theology. (ibid. p 21)

Into this disarray of Adventism, come the "mavericks." There is Charles Wheeling on both sides of center, teaching Dr. Ford's perceptions of prophecy plus some of his own speculative interpretations, besides proclaiming his belief in fundamental Adventist Christology, and printing and distributing The Great Controversy. Then what should one say in regard to "Yo-Yo" Osborne? One minute he writes about the Spirit-filled meetings he has had with the leadership of the conference; the next minute one receives letters telling how bad the "brethren" are. There is a change every time Osborne finds a new "windmill" to attack. The bottom line is simply that whoever or whatever at the moment will best serve the furtherance and support of his "ego trip," that organization or issue receives his focus. Sadly, there are those who will serve as promoters and convenors for Osborne because his current emphasis coincides with theirs.

Besides all of this disarray within the organized Church, and all named are members of the Church as far as I have been able to determine, there is the "community" of Adventism outside the perimeters of the Church which forms a large segment of Adventism today, and which is steadily growing. The vocal part of the "community" of Adventism would be placed to the right of center, and mostly in the extreme right sector. This sadly, because the same factors which distinguish the extreme right within the Church, also mark for the most part those who make up the "community" of Adventism. Those of the liberal wing who have left the confines of the Church say little because they believe to do so would be an exercise in futility. They simply go their own way.

There is a question which those on the periphery of Adventism must answer. Is their stance anti-church, or pro-truth? There is a vast difference in these two positions. There can never be true spiritual growth which prepares one for entrance into Heaven merely with an "anti-menu." Not only must one hate iniquity, but he must also love righteousness to reflect the image of Jesus fully. (Heb. 1:9)

Truth and truth alone can bring an end to the present disarray within Adventism. But truth demands a selfless honesty, a willingness to lay aside preconceived ideas whether derived from one's perceptions of what the Writings say, or from worldly educational influences. One must ask forthrightly - What does the Bible say? - and then reorder one's thinking to harmonize with the teachings of Scripture. The conflict then - and such will come - will be truth versus error. The lines can be clearly drawn, instead of the present disarray because now you have error proclaimed for truth on both sides of where the pioneers stood. Because of this, confusion now reigns.

The selfless honesty demanded by truth requires something more. Those involved in "independent ministries" whether in the Church, or in the "community" of Adventism must be willing to say what God wants said rather than what the people want to hear. But to do so would involve in many instances the "cash flo," and here enters the human "ego." This present disarray will continue as long as the "messages" given are used as a facade to cover the real motive - money and personal acceptance.

Another factor must be considered. The Bible teaches that "the path of the just is as a shining light, shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Prov. 4:18) Truth is eternal for

its source is the Eternal. However, our understanding of truth is progressive. "We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible." (TM, p. 30) History also has a lesson to teach us. It reveals that even God-ordained movements or messages have not been free from error because those whom God has chosen to lead the movement or give the message did not perceive all aspects of even "the present truth" for that time. Consider John the Baptist. Consider William Miller and the Great Second Advent Movement. What about our own Adventist history and teachings? If, however, we have indeed reached the end-time, and the path of the just is about to be transferred from earth to heaven, then should not the light from the Throne be such that present truth be pure and unadulterated? Is not this what Heaven intended when it sent the message of Christ's righteousness to His professed people in 1888? See TM, p. 65. Where only can truth, pure and unadulterated be found? In the Bible, and the Bible only! "The Bible, as the word of God [is] the only sufficient, infallible rule." (GC, p. 173)

In answer to all the disarray must come a study of the Bible such as has not been seen since the "upper room" which preceded Pentecost. The counsel reads:

God would have all the bearings and positions of truth thoroughly and perseveringly searched, with prayer and fasting. Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Their faith must be firmly founded upon the word of God, so that when the testing time shall come, and they are brought before councils to answer for their faith, they may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear. (5T:708)

If this present disarray in Adventism continues, and there seems to be no prospect on the horizon of a change, how are we going to stand when "the testing time" comes, and come it will. The answer is simple, we won't unless we have our positions based in the Bible, and know what that book teaches. Where then can I place myself in the family of Adventism whether in the organized church or outside its perimeters? First, I must be pro-truth, being neither pro-church, nor anti-church. Then I must be willing to advance in the study of that truth, correcting errors in my faith received from tradition. In other words, I must be a progressive Seventh-day Adventist being neither an evangelical, nor a traditional, nor a liberal Adventist. Being such an Adventist, I will

## BEACH GAMES

In the last issue of the Adventist Review for 1990, a feature article by Dr. B. B. Beach was highlighted. (Dec. 27, pp. 16-18) It was actually more of a book review of The Church in Anguish, co-edited by Hans Kung, well known Roman Catholic theologian, and Leonard Swidler. Some 25 respected Roman Catholic theologians and priests contributed to the book. The subtitle more accurately conveys the intent of the book - "Has the Vatican Betrayed Vatican II?" "The original German title states that the book is written 'against the betrayal of the council.'"

Beach suggests that "Seventh-day Adventists would do well to read this book." The analysis given of the book in the feature article indicates that the suggestion has real validity. However, it is the introduction to this part of the article where one finds the games Beach is playing with the laity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ostensively written to discuss the problems in the Roman Catholic Church 25 years after the Vatican II Council, Beach pats himself on the back as having perceived immediately after the Council what the Roman Catholic theologians are indicating has happened within their church.

In 1968, Beach wrote a book - Vatican II - Bridging the Abyss - in which he concluded: "To adopt the view that Rome has taken the path of reformation is reading much too much into the adopted documents and events of Vatican II." He observes that "some starry-eyed journalists and Protestant observers waxed downright eloquent regarding a changed Catholicism." What he did not say was that among the journalists and observers was the late Arthur S. Maxwell who did just this. Read Maxwell's sermon after returning from Rome given at the Loma Linda University Church - "The Outstretched Hand." (Present Truth, #3, 1968) Maxwell's enthusiasm for the "reformed" Roman Catholic Church is reflected in his son, C. Mervyn Maxwell's commentary on Daniel - God Cares, Vol. I. (pp. 126-127)

Beach credits his insightful evaluation of Vatican II Council to his belief in the Writings of Ellen G. White in an off-handed way. He writes in his article - "Some considered my view too pessimistic. I was told by one writer [Was it Maxwell?] to take off my 'Ellen G. White glasses'\* and see things as they really were and would become!" The asterisk indicated a

footnote at the end of the article directing the reader to Chapter 35 of The Great Controversy. Indeed the warning is there - "And let it be remembered, it is the boast of Rome that she never changes." (p. 581)

This stance of Beach, with the connivance of the Editor of the Adventist Review, is a wonderful note to end the year which saw one of the department heads of the General Conference refer to a tract quoting from the book, The Great Controversy, as "trash." Now as the old year closes, it is heralded as a book to keep our perspectives of the Papacy in balance. But if Beach based his conclusions on his faith in what was written on page 581, he evidently failed to read carefully what was written ten pages prior. It counsels:

The papacy is just what prophecy declared she would be, the apostasy of the latter times. It is a part of her policy to assume the character which will best accomplish her purpose; but beneath the variable appearance of the chameleon, she conceals the invariable venom of the serpent. "Faith ought not to be kept with heretics, nor persons suspected of heresy," she declares. Shall this power, whose record for a thousand years is written in the blood of saints, be now acknowledged as a part of the church of Christ. (p. 571)

Beach did not tell his readers that he was so carried away with the results he worked out through contacts made during Vatican II, that on a visit to Rome, he had an audience with the Pope which "marked the first time in history that the Seventh-day Adventist Church, through an official representative, had met with a Roman pontiff." (RNS, May 19, 1977) He did not tell the readers that he on that occasion "submitted to Radio-Vatican an announcement in which he distinctly emphasized the importance of that first meeting of an Adventist with the pope," referring to the pontiff as "the Holy Father." (Glas Koncila, Katolicke Dvojedne Novine, 5 lipnja 1977)

Further, Beach did not mention the fact that at this audience with Pope Paul VI, he presented to him a medallion. "The medallion was a gold-covered symbol of the Seventh-day Adventist Church." (Review, August 11, 1977, p. 23)\* How can Beach who placed in the hands of the Pope, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in symbol, now talk about wearing "Ellen G. White glasses"? This is a part of the game Beach is playing.

We can go one step further. When Beach was called to head the Department of Public Affairs

## LET'S TALK IT OVER

Samples' analysis in Christianity Today - "The Recent Truth About Seventh-day Adventism" - has much merit. (See first article) He pinpoints a disturbing fact in discussing the category of Adventism which he defines as "Traditional." He writes - "Traditional Adventism rests squarely upon the authority of Ellen G. White." This category includes the vast majority of the concerned Adventists both within the Church, and those on the periphery. To even discuss this fact places one in jeopardy. The charge is immediately hurled with emotion, "You don't believe in Sister White!" This is not the issue. I can believe that Ellen G. White was used by God as His "messenger" to the Remnant without resting my perceptions of truth upon her authority. The problem is created when one rests all of his concepts of truth upon her Writings rather than on the Bible. To do so will result in serious eternal consequences. Let me illustrate.

Among various groups who have chosen to meet either separately from the Church for their hour of worship, or have chosen to meet in study groups at a time which does not conflict with the Church's hour of worship, their study menu has been some book or compilation of the Writings of Ellen G. White. One of the choice books for reading and study is The Great Controversy. But you can read and study this book until the last great crisis envelopes us, and you will come up short at that time. The book itself teaches - "None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict." (p. 593) It is good to know about what is coming, and the nature of the final crisis, but if one is not prepared to stand, how much good did the reading and studying The Great Controversy do him? We need to stop thinking with our emotions, and start thinking with our heads. One of the things which the gospel is to accomplish is the restoration of "the kingly power of reason."

These concerned people are not wholly to blame for their predicament. There are pastors, and men who call themselves pastors, who are by their very presentations leading the concerned people down a path which will cause them to be unprepared when "the last great conflict" breaks in all of its fury. These "pastors" become "circuit riders" either literally or through their missives giving the hungry people of God only continuous quotes from the Writings, instead of

seeking to fortify their minds with the Bible. The people having faith in these men come to assume that the reading and the studying of the Writings is the order of the day. What a fearful accounting will have to be given by these men in the final day of reckoning.

To place the basis for our authority for truth where it ought to be placed - on the Bible - is not saying that on occasion we should not study and present the rays of light given on a vital topic solely from the Writings. I have done so, but in so doing I have sought to follow the guide lines laid down in the Writings themselves for such study. For example, the study - "End Time Line - Resurveyed" - is not only wholly based on the Writings, but it is prefaced by the specific injunctions which Ellen G. White laid down for such study.

The real puzzling question in this whole picture is why men who are pastors indeed, and by this I mean men who have been ordained, are setting this example. Every man ordained is charged at the time of his ordination with the words of Paul to Timothy -

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word." (II Tim. 4:1-2)

What answer will we give when we stand before God for not so doing?

On April 1, 1901, Ellen G. White spoke to a group of ministers in the Battle Creek College library. As she concluded her lengthy remarks on "Kingly Power," she said:

But don't you quote Sister White. I don't want you ever to quote Sister White until you get your vantage ground where you know where you are. Quote the Bible. Talk the Bible. It is full of meat, full of fatness. Carry it right out in your life, and you will know more Bible than you know now. You will have fresh matter - O you will have precious matter; you won't have to be going over and over the same ground, and you will see a world saved. (Spalding and Magan's Collection, p. 174)

Then there are those who either call themselves "pastors" or parade as pastors, who have not been so ordained. In this case they feel free to preach as they choose to preach - and they do! Every wind of doctrine is blowing today from such voices. We were warned by the Lord's messenger that the "many voices" would come at this time in the final events, and they have come. (See R&H, Dec. 13, 1892) The justification for such activity is that at the end time men will be called from the ordinary vocations of life rather than from "literary

institutions of higher learning. This I do not question. But the context is that these humble men are called to reveal "the fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy by rapid progress of the papal power." (GC, p. 606) In other words, as Timothy was instructed - "Do the work of an evangelist" so as to make proof of one's ministry. (II Tim. 4:5) But where do these unordained "voices" want to work? Not as evangelists, but as teachers of God's concerned people, when they themselves need first to be taught.

Why do first the work of an evangelist? Go out and see how many people you can interest in the truth and quote nothing but Ellen G. White. An evangelist must know the Bible. If these "voices" would do this, then when God calls them to minister to His flock, they would know how to do so. They would not deceive God's concerned people by the false example they set in placing the authority for truth where it ought not to be based. They would indeed be a help to the scattered and bruised flock by helping them to fortify their minds with "the truths of the Bible."

WHG

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Note and Think -

"Maine voters (1990 elections) repealed the state's Sunday closing law, 52 percent to 48 percent. ... In New Jersey, voters approved Sunday horse racing, 85 percent to 15 percent." (Church & State, Dec. 1990, p. 5)

"The Council of Mosques of the United States has become the first Islamic group to join Religion in American Life (RIAL), an organization that uses advertising agencies to design messages on the role of faith in society." (Adventist Review, Nov. 29, 1990, p. 7) The number of those professing Islam in the United States exceeds those professing Methodism. We need to get our heads out of the sand in regard to end time events.

"In Disarray" - from page 4

appreciate the rich heritage received from the pioneers, yet willing to correct their errors which further deep searching of the Scriptures may reveal that the bright light which shown at the beginning of the Movement might shine with full intensity today.

‡

Beach Games - from page 5

at the 1980 General Conference session in Dallas, Texas, this department was given a new status - General Conference State Department. (Liberty Sentinel, 1980). This year as the General Conference Secretary of State, B. B. Beach invited the Vatican to send an official observer to the 1990 Session in Indianapolis. This the Vatican did in the person of Thomas J. Murphy representing the pontifical Council for Christian Unity. (See "GC Snapshot," Bulletin #6, p. 7) Where has Beach's "Ellen G. White glasses" gone since 1968? But the laity are being told in regard to Indianapolis that the reason for so doing was to witness, the same reason used to justify giving the gold medallion to Pope Paul VI. Games, yes, the Beach Games - and condoned in the highest circles of power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

\*The full story of Medallion given to the Pope, Paul VI, is documented in the manuscript - Steps to Rome - obtainable from the Foundation. \$3.00 postpaid.

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**"It is a backsliding church that lessens the distance between itself and the Papacy."**

Signs, Feb. 19, 1894

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Editor

Elder Wm. H. Grotheer

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