

*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

*The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,
he hour and the end!"*

Eze. 7:6 (Moffan)

E & C T - 3

Page 2

AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS

Page 5

AN UPDATE UPDATED

Page 7

Adventists & Catholics Together in Colorado

EDITOR'S PREFACE

As we continue to discuss the various essays of the new book, Evangelicals & Catholics Together, the second essay by George Weigel states without equivocation the Roman Catholic view of the Religious clause of the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights in the American Constitution, and how the Papacy wants to see this Amendment changed. Yet Weigel seeks to profess belief in what is termed, "the American experiment" which is, in reality, the separation of church and state. Admittedly, this does not make for light reading; however, thoughtful, analytical reflection is a must.

One reader who proofread the copy for us, wondered at my capitalization of "Catholic" and the non-capitalization of "evangelicals." As you read, this differentiation occurs in direct quotes from Weigel's essay. He consistently made this difference of reference. Furthermore, he regularly capitalized, "Church," and the force appears to be, the one Roman Catholic Church.

Having read carefully, Weigel's comments and prologue he wrote in the book he edited on John Paul II's encyclical, Centesimus Annus, which marked the 100th Anniversary of Leo XIII's Rerum Novarum, I decided to write to Mr. Weigel himself and discuss the incongruity between how he presented John Paul II, in his edited book, as a "Pope of Freedom" and the "paper trail" of Leo XIII. In the book he edited, Leo XIII is portrayed as the one who "began the papal tradition of modern Catholic social teaching," while John Paul II is presented as advancing this "social teaching" into a proposed "new worldly order." Both my letter and his reply are discussed in the second article of this issue.

Since sending out the Special Issue of WVN, we have received another updating of events in connection with the management merger of the Adventist Health system of Colorado with the Roman Catholic system. As one compares statements made to the laity of the Church, and the press releases, he is left with the feeling that all has not been told, and only time will reveal the true nature of the compromise.



EVANGELICALS & CATHOLICS TOGETHER - 3

Each of the Essays in the book, Evangelicals & Catholics Together is prefaced with a quotation. The Evangelical writers quote a Protestant, while the Roman Catholics quote either Pope John Paul II or a Cardinal. The Colson Essay quote was from Francis Schaeffer - "Truth demands confrontation; loving confrontation, but confrontation nevertheless." George Weigel, author of the second Essay, quoted from John Paul II on a similar theme but with a different objective - "If there is no transcendent truth to which man achieves his full identity, then there is no sure principle for guaranteeing just relations between people."

George Weigel is president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. His Essay is captioned - "Faith, Freedom, Responsibility: Evangelicals and Catholics in the Public Square." He is the author or editor of fourteen books on religion and public life. One of his edited books is - A New Worldly Order - essays on the recent Papal encyclical - Centesimus Annus - marking the centenary of Pope Leo XIII's Rerum Novarum; and to set the future intellectual direction of Catholic social teaching, or in other words, Catholic dominance of society.

Weigel comes right to the point as he begins his Essay. He cites, as an illustration, a speech given in 1952 by Dean Acheson, former Secretary of State, at a meeting held by the NCC for the presentation of the newly completed Revised Standard Version. Acheson noted the place that the Bible and its inspired moral order had in the founding of this nation. Using this emphasis as his take off point, Weigel writes - "Were some secretary of state to do today what Dean Acheson did in 1952, grim warnings of a terrible breach of the 'wall of separation between church and state' - a polysyllabic neologism in certain vocabularies - would rumble forth from the New York Times editorial and op-ed pages, across the Associated Press wire, on the network news shows, and in faculty lounges from sea to shining sea." (E&CT, p. 47)

The use of the word - "neologism" - by Weigel is of interest. It has two meanings: 1) "A new word, usage, or expression; and 2) "A meaningless word coined by a psychotic." In context, one could easily assume the second definition to be the one in Weigel's mind, because the idea of a wall of separation between Church and State is

not a new concept. Thus this would reflect the attitude of the Roman Catholic thinking toward the American experiment in religious liberty.

Weigel calls for a "moral-cultural reformation" of America and declares this "will be the task of Christians; specifically of Roman Catholics and evangelical Protestants, the two growing ends of American Christianity on the edge of the twenty-first century." Then he writes:

"Moreover, this is a task for **evangelicals and Catholics together**. The job is sufficiently difficult, the opposition sufficiently formidable, and the odds of success sufficiently long, that Christians of common conviction about the moral reformation of the American Republic can no longer afford to indulge their ancient biases. An ecumenism of the trenches is the order of the day in the American cultural war. But there are also substantive reasons why the attempt to reclothe the 'naked public square' (in Richard Neuhaus' memorable image) is a joint task for evangelicals and Catholics.

"Evangelicals and Catholics share a common affection for the American democratic experiment. Unlike many in the leadership of the mainline/old-line Protestantism, evangelicals and Catholics do not regard America as an ill-founded republic... Rather, evangelicals and Catholics tend to think, together, that America remains a providentially guided experiment in religious freedom, religious tolerance, and the possibility of constructing political community amidst luxuriant diversity." (ibid., p. 49; emphasis his)

This statement of objectives in the call to arms of the impending cultural war raises a number of critical questions: Are the divisions between Catholicism and Protestantism merely "religious biases"? What will "the public square" look like when these two groups together "clothe" it? What is this "luxuriant diversity"?

One would have to be illiterate in church history to assume that the differences between Protestantism and Catholicism were mere biases. Then the word, "diversity" keeps returning to describe the ecumenical objective, but what is "luxuriant" diversity?

First, let us consider the "public square." This is government, period. What has history taught us? For milleniums, church and state were united. The monarchs of the ancient kingdoms were in many instances the heads of the state religion. The State dominated religion. Then a change came and for another thousand years the

Church dominated the State. This was the Dark Ages. Finally, a new nation arose dedicated to the separation of Church and State, where neither dominated the other. It was the American experiment. Now is religion to return to the "public square"? Which religion? A union of two - the evangelicals and the Catholics? Is this then a return to the Dark Ages?

What agreement has been reached between Evangelicals and Catholics as to reclothing the "naked" square? Note - "Moreover, evangelicals and Catholics are agreed that any reclothing of the public square must engage the ancient moral wisdom of our elder brothers and sisters in faith, the Jewish people." (*ibid.*, p. 50) There is no question about the inspired wisdom of the Old Testament. The question is - Is this to be enforced by law called "ordered liberty."

Weigel plainly states what the first item on the agenda is. He writes:

"The issue here is the direction that evangelicals and Catholics together should take in reconstructing the moral foundations of American public life. Not surprisingly, the first item on that agenda is the reconstruction of genuine religious freedom in the United States." (*ibid.*)

What does this mean? Weigel's response: - "The most important thing that evangelicals and Catholics can offer America... is a **new understanding of the First Amendment religion clause.**" (*ibid.*, p. 54; emphasis his)

One must read carefully how Weigel writes what he has written. He himself calls attention to the fact that he uses the singular, "clause," and not the plural, "clauses." He faults the Supreme Court for insisting that there are "two religion clauses" - an "Establishment Clause" and a "Free Exercise Clause." Further, he avers that the Court's primary concern has been "no establishment" and "free exercise" accomodated to it. He wants to reverse this by adding one word to the First Amendment, so that "No establishment" is in the service of "free exercise." By doing so, what is to be accomplished? Note very, very carefully -

"It would clarify, for example, the meaning of that ubiquitous [omnipresent] phrase, 'the separation of church and state.' America needs to be reminded that the phrase is not in the Constitution, but in fact involves an inter-pretation - and, arguably, a tendentious [one-sided] interpretation - of the Constitution. The "separation of church and state" cannot mean the separation of

religion from public life, or the proscription of religiously grounded moral argument from public life, for to do so would involve a profoundly undemocratic discrimination against citizens on the basis of religious belief. The 'separation of church and state' should, therefore, be understood minimally, as a description of the fact that, in the American constitutional order, the state claims no theological expertise and the Church rejects any partisan political role. Thus the state is, by definition, a limited state. And the Church, primarily for theological reasons, declines to have its truth-claims buttressed by the coercive power of the state." (*ibid.*, p. 55)

This is strange language when set against the backdrop of history, or even of current activity. Consider - "the Church rejects any partisan political role." [It might appear to be nitpicking to observe Weigel's use of Capital letters, but in the above quoted paragraph, he capitalizes "Church" when used of itself, but not "state." In the phrase, "separation of church and state," it is not so done. One is led to conclude that he means by Church - the Roman Catholic] The Church - the Roman - has been in partisan politics, and the "Religious Right" today - a union of both Catholics and Evangelicals - is openly involved in the political process. History is replete with incidents of papal involvement in the affairs of nations. Then to state that the Church "declines to have its truth-claims buttressed by the coercive power of the state" flies into the face of historical fact.

Since history does not sustain a track record of the Roman Church divorced from "partisan politics," nor a Church "declining" to have its dogmas enforced by the State, just what is Weigel saying, and what does he mean by what he is writing? Observe further, and we shall place our comments in brackets:

"That phrase (the "separation of church and state") and Mr. Jefferson's equally extra-constitutional 'wall of separation' image have been understood in recent years as placing a limit on the Church. But 'disestablishment' and 'free exercise' also places crucial limits on the state."

[Does the First Ammendment limit, or does it restrict the state? The Ammendment states - "Congress shall make no law concerning an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." It says "no law" period. I fail to find in this amendment any restrictions beyond this period having any bearing on religion. But not so Weigel! He continues]

"No established church means no sacred state. [Who wants a "sacred state"? Will the union of church and state, make the state "sacred"?] No established Church implies the **limited** or **constitutional** state. No establishment means that the state acknowledges its **incompetence** in the most important arena of life: the arena of personal conscience, in which men and women encounter God and his (sic) law. [emphasis his] And that confession of incompetence clears the social space in which a politics of persuasion and consent can replace the politics of coercion, which is no mean accomplishment under the conditions of modernity. [A "social space" for a "politics of persuasion and consent" in place of a "politics of coercion" - what does that mean? Should "personal conscience" ever become a part of "politics" whether of "persuasion" or "coercion"? It does not need to have a "social space" created for it. It needs to be left alone - "no law!"]

Granted that the men and women need to be persuaded of right as opposed to wrong. God places that power to so persuade within His Church guided by the Holy Spirit, and not in a church empowered or sustained by the state. Thus to Caesar there is a sphere, and God reserves unto Himself His sphere. The Church does not need a "social space" but merely the freedom to operate where there is no prohibition against the free exercise thereof.

Weigel proceeds to call for a "Genuine Pluralism." His position and the basis for this pluralism becomes even more unbelievable in the light of the historical record. He writes:

"Evangelicals and Catholics committed to restoring the priority of free exercise would also help achieve the desirable end if they were to **reframe the debate over pluralism and tolerance**. ... Christians [are] to see in the facts of plurality and difference the inexhaustibly creative love of God who brought the world into being and sustains it by his providential care. Thus Christian attempts to create a monistic state - an antipluralist state, in which the coercive power of the state is used to enforce Christian truth-claims - are to be rejected, precisely on Christian theological grounds. For the Church, when she is truly being the Church, acts by persuasion and witness, not by imposition through coercion." (*ibid.*, pp. 56-57)

To this last statement, we could whole-heartedly agree. But where does Weigel want to take religion in relationship to the "public square"? He declares that America "is living through a profound moral crisis." With this, too, we can

agree. He indicates that this is based in another crisis - a crisis of personal responsibility. We hear about human "rights" but fail to address human "wrongs." Here is where the fine line starts to be drawn between where the State has a right to enter in defining "wrong" and enforcing "right," and the church has a responsibility to define by moral persuasion what is right and what is wrong. A politically motivated Church having divorced herself from union with the true Husband, seeks an adulterous relationship with the State.

Weigel introduces the abortion question and follows it by the issue dear to the heart of the Roman Church, questioning - "Why... should publicly collected funds be expended only in government-run schools?" (p. 70) So what is the design to alter the First Amendment all about? "The virtual monopoly of the public purse by government schools must be broken. It is *prima facie* unjust." (p. 72)

The final section of Weigel's essay is called "The Partisanship of Truth." In it he outlines the agenda of "political persuasion." It calls for "a restoration of religious freedom in its primary meaning of 'free exercise,' for a rollback of legal endorsement of the sexual revolution, for laws protective of the unborn and supportive of the traditional family, for the empowerment of the parents and the breaking of the government-school monopoly." (p. 73) He indicates that while "Roman Catholics and Southern evangelicals were once part of the bedrock of the Democratic coalition," and that while now the Republican Party projects these initiatives, there is no guarantee it will carry out the designed agenda. The results, if the Republican Party does not do so, Weigel predicts, will be a new party based on this agenda.

Certain final observations made by Weigel, and his choice of words, need to be carefully noted. He wrote - "If democracy necessarily engages arguments of a real moral substance, then democracy has to be **tethered**, to the **truth** about the human person, human responsibilities, and human community. Some will ask, 'Whose truth?'" (p. 74, emphasis mine) That is the question! As Weigel continues his argument, he quotes John Paul II that genuine democracy can only exist "on the basis of the equality of all its members, who possess common rights and duties. When it is a matter of moral norms prohibiting intrinsic evil, there are no privileges or exceptions to anyone." (p. 75)

Weigel admits that to construct a genuine plural-

ism is difficult but not impossible if as the pope suggests a "social coexistence" is based on "a morality which acknowledges certain norms as valid always and for everyone without exception." He then asserts that this "sense of common moral obligation is the basis of democratic community in a civil society: a society in which the chasms of racial, ethnic, and religious differences are bridged for the purposes of achieving the common good." (ibid.)

How will it be achieved? "Legal and regulatory structures are essential for channeling the explosive energies of free people into enterprises that support genuine human flourishing and that advance the common good." (p. 76) Would such a people be any longer free?

How does one reconcile "tethering," roping "democracy" (the State) to "truth" with the First Amendment? You cannot, for "truth" means the Church as the church is to be the pillar and the ground of truth. (I Tim. 3:15) Then how is this to be reconciled with his stated concept that when the Church "is truly being the Church," she "acts by persuasion and witness, not by imposition through coercion"? Or does "tethering" - "legal and regulatory structures" - constitute "the politics of persuasion and consent" which replaces "politics of coercion"? Pray tell, what is the difference?

‡

An Exchange of Letters

BETWEEN THE EDITOR AND GEORGE WEIGEL

It should be obvious from reading the above analysis of George Weigel's essay that his call for a "politics of persuasion and consent" is incongruent with what the American experiment established as religious liberty - the separation of church and state. Further, Weigel himself edited a book - A New Worldly Order - which discussed the Papal encyclical, "Centesimus Annus." In his Prologue, Weigel attempts to set forth Pope John Paul II as an advocate of true human freedom. He writes that "the image of John-Paul-the-Polish-authoritarian" is in error. "The truth of the matter is precisely the opposite: were one to hang a moniker on this remarkable Bishop of Rome, one might well call him the 'Pope of Freedom.'" (p. 3)

Then Weigel adds:

"What John Paul II means by 'freedom,' of

course, is not what America's cultural elites have had in mind since the fevered 'liberations' of the 1960s. And so an argument is engaged: What is this freedom that is a 'great gift, a great blessing of God'? How is it to be lived by free men and women, in free societies that must protect individual liberty while concurrently advancing the common good?" (ibid.)

The picture is being blurred. Actually, what John Paul II means by "freedom" is not what the founding fathers of the American experiment perceived as "freedom." Excesses of the 1960s, under the guise of "rights" which permitted the moral decay of society to surface cannot be interpreted as equivalent to the genuine liberty projected in the Bill of Rights. To use the moral breakdown of society as an excuse to destroy the basic religious freedom assured in that Bill under the pretense of promoting the common good is treasonable.

It must also be kept in mind that Pope John Paul II in proclaiming a "new worldly order" in his encyclical, was marking the centenary of Pope Leo XIII's "Rerum Novarum," which "began the papal tradition of **modern** Catholic social teaching." (ibid., p. 1; emphasis mine) [Keep this in mind as you read the exchange of letters which follows, and note, if you have the book, Facts of Faith, pp. 256-260]

With this background in mind, I decided to write to Mr. Weigel. My letter and his response follows:

Mr. George Weigel, President
Ethics and Public Policy Center
Washington DC 20005

Dear Mr. Weigel:

This morning I was reading your essay in Evangolics & Catholics Together. One statement appears to me to be incongruous with the data available. You wrote - "Catholics do not regard America as an ill-founded republic... Rather... Catholics tend to think... that America remains a providentially guided experiment in religious freedom." (p. 49) You introduced your essay with the remarks of Dean Acheson, and faulted the Supreme Court for the present preservation of the separation of Church and State. You cited certain decisions with which you disagreed, one of which was written by Justice Kennedy, himself a Roman Catholic. You also noted Justice Souter's argument in which you say he followed Justice Brennan, also a Roman Catholic.

The problem I have with your statement in E&CT, is that the "experiment in religious freedom" to which Acheson referred is the experiment which Leo XIII condemned. The Pope wrote in an encyclical letter of January 6, 1895 - "It would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church, or that it would univervally lawful or expedient for state and church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced." The head of your church in 1895 did not approve of the "American experiment in religious freedom" of which Acheson was speaking.

The present Pope, trained in an hierarchical system, reared under a totalitarian regime, appears to have an affinity for Leo XIII's positions writing of them in a centenary motif. I am well aware of your publication - A New Worldly Order - which you seek to mitigate the force of Leo XIII's position and present the present Pontiff as a promoter of "ordered freedom." (p. 2) However, it comes through that "ordered freedom" is not "religious liberty" as perceived by our founding fathers, but rather as Leo XIII in the letter referred to above, stated, the Roman Church should enjoy "the favor of the laws and the patronage of the public authority." Such would be neither freedom nor liberty.

The question remains as to how forthright you have been in your statement as it appears in the book, E&CT.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed)

Wm. H. Grotheer, Editor
Publications and Research

To this letter, Mr. Weigel responded January 10, 1996:

Dear Mr. Grotheer:

Thank you for your letter of 30 December.

As you may be aware, there has been a development of social doctrine in Roman Catholicism on the issues of religious freedom, church establishment, and juridical or constitutional state, since Leo XIII wrote Longinqua Oceani in 1895. You may wish to consult the Second Vatican Council's "Declaration on Religious Freedom" (issued in 1965) or the recent address of Pope John Paul II to the U.N. General Assembly for explanations of the current state of the question. As a matter of historical fact, though, Leo XIII did

not "condemn" the American arrangement on Church and State; it was, rather, tolerari potest - something that "could be tolerated." As I say, things have moved a considerable way since then.

By the way, in Evangelicals and Catholics Together I did not fault the Supreme Court "for the current preservation of the separation of Church and State." I faulted the Supreme Court for a tortured Church/State jurisprudence which resulted in something verging on the establishment of secularism as an officially-sanctioned national creed.

The Church/State jurisprudence of Justices Brennan and Kennedy, like their jurisprudence on the abortion license, shows little familiarity with Catholic social theory; but that is perhaps a question of primary interest to Roman Catholics. All Americans ought to be concerned that the jurisprudence in question demonstrates little familiarity with the classics of the American constitutional tradition.

With kind regards,

Your sincerely,

(Signed)

George Weigel

In this letter, Mr. Weigel referred me to two papal pronouncements which he said reflected the current thinking of the papacy in regard to religious liberty. On October 5, 1995, Pope John Paul II addressed the U.N. General Assembly. His remarks were captioned - "Freedom Cannot Be Suppressed." In the section on "Respect for differences," the Pope declared:

"Our respect for the culture of others is therefore rooted in our respect for each community's attempt to answer the question of human life. And here we can see how important it is to safeguard the fundamental right of freedom of religion and freedom of conscience as the cornerstones of the structure of human rights and the foundation of every truly free society. No one is permitted to suppress these rights by using coercive power to impose an answer to the mystery of man."

Admittedly, this is not the Papal thinking of the past. The document on Religious Liberty coming from Vatican II, on the surface, is even more pronounced. What is meant by what is being stated requires further research and analysis. ¶

AN UPDATE UPDATED

ADVENTISTS & CATHOLICS TOGETHER

A Press Release dated January 23, 1996 indicated that the Operating Company for the merged Adventist and Roman Catholic medical facilities in Colorado was named Centura Health. The name was chosen to represent the past one hundred years of health service provided by both systems and expresses its position "to be a leader in providing a new level of care for the next century." And "each system will retain its own distinctive identity, beliefs and missions"? Has it been forgotten that one of those beliefs expressed by the name "Adventist" is that Jesus is coming soon! Of course, the one quoted in this release is the new CEO for Centura Health, Gary Susnara, the head of the Roman Catholic Sisters of Charity Colorado Health Care System.

The structure of this organization is the first of its kind in the United States. "It calls for Centura Health to manage the **assets** of both ... health care organizations." Yet, Terry White, of PorterCare, informed the Church through the Outlook (January, 1996, p. 21) that PorterCare "will retain ownership of its **assets**." The Release further stated that "all operating management and income statements will be consolidated." Centura Health has its own Board of Trustees, yet the article in the Outlook, told the Adventist Church that "the two systems will operate under a combined management company overseen by the separate system boards." Truly a unique - first-of-its-kind - arrangement! Or is it one way, and the laity of the Church are being fed a different story so to make it more palatable?

The officers of the new controlling company are: a Roman Catholic CEO; a senior vice president of corporate development called from the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, parent of the Colorado Catholic organization; an officer from Provenant as senior vice president of human resources, and Terry White of PorterCare as senior executive of the Denver market service area. This is a 3 to 1 Catholic dominance on the "senior management staff"

The Board of Trustees is chaired by Terrence O'Rourke, M.D, with Charles Sandefur, who as president of the Rocky Mountain Conference chaired this give-away of the Adventist Health System of Colorado, serving as vice chairman. One would have thought that with the CEO, a Roman Catholic, the Board of Trustees would

have been chaired by an Adventist, or, at least, an Adventist be the co-chairman. It probably would have made little difference in this incidence with Sandefur's track record in Hawaii, and then in Colorado. It seems that the Church is cursed with men, who though not Jesuits, do as good a job as the Jesuits would have done. One is left to ask - "Was it the purpose of God that the "right arm of the message" be grafted to a Roman Catholic body? If "it is a **backsliding** church that lessens the distance between itself and the Papacy" (ST, Feb. 19, 1894), then it is a **backslidden** Church which grafts its "right arm" to a Roman Catholic body!

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1996 ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP August 5 - 10

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"Watchman, What of the Night?" is published monthly by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., P. O. Box 69, Ozona, AR 72854, USA.

In Canada, write - The Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Canada, P. O. Box 117, Thorne, ON POH 2J0.

In Australia, write - The Adventist Laymen's Foundation, P. O. Box 846, Belmont, Victoria 3216.

Editor Elder Wm. H. Grotheer

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FAX - 501-292-3745