

*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

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

(Matt 25:6 RSV)



LABELS

Are You A

Seventh-day Adventist?

(Part Two)

In the Summer, 1988, issue of the Christian Research Journal published by Walter Martin, the feature article was captioned, "From Controversy to Crisis" which was an updated assessment of Seventh-day Adventism. After reviewing the SDA-Evangelical Conferences of 1955-56, and giving some interesting background details, the writer, Kenneth Samples, a research consultant at Martin's Christian Research Institute, declared that the debate within Adventism over the book, Questions on Doctrine, has given rise "to two distinct factions" - Evangelical Adventism and Traditional Adventism.

Within Adventism itself, the labeling is a bit different. Those classified as "Evangelical" Adventists would be perceived as having embraced what is termed "the new theology" and could be properly referred to as neo-Adventists. Those designated as holding to "Traditional Adventism" would prefer the label - "historic" Adventists. However, the attitudes and teachings of many of the spokesmen claiming to teach "historic" Adventism properly fit the category as perceived by Samples, that of a "traditionalist." And there is a **difference** between a traditionalist and one who is truly in the line of historic Adventism.

Samples also noted that it should be "mentioned that, though small, there was and is a segment in Adventism which could be described as being theologically liberal." (p. 13) He did not mention the groups on the periphery of Adventism which could be labeled as radical and extreme, not only doctrinally but in life-style. If one cannot fit any of the above categories with the assigned labels, what is he? So when one is asked the question - "Are you a Seventh-day Adventist?" - the accurate response would be - "Which one?" This is a sad state of affairs for an organization which was called of God, and to which was committed the sacred trust of God's final message to the world.

The article in Martin's Journal lists the five

major areas which divide the neo-Adventist from the "traditionalist" - 1) The teaching of "righteousness by faith;" 2) The doctrine of the incarnation; 3) "The events of 1844;" 4) "Assurance of salvation;" and 5) the "authority of Ellen G. White." (pp. 12-13) It is admitted, however, by the writer "that not every Adventist would fit neatly" on one side or the other of these issues. Again the question arises - What kind of an Adventist are you?

Certain facts must be reiterated. In 1980 at Dallas, Texas, the General Conference in session voted 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief and in so doing defined a present day Seventh-day Adventist as one who adheres to these statements. Now a "traditionalist" holds that when the General Conference speaks in session, this is the highest authority of God on earth and "private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered." (9T:260; emphasis supplied) This puts most of the "independent ministries" squarely on the spot. These must either continue to maintain the "authority of Ellen G. White" which means that the 27 Statements are God-approved, or else if they question them, they open for themselves a Pandora Box. This explains why the silence of the majority of the "independent ministries" to the Questionnaire which was sent to them. (See "A Report to Date," WWN, XXII-3) The bottom line is simply that most of these "independent ministries" are deceptive.

Not only does the present crisis in Adventism effect these "independent ministries" but also confronts squarely every member of the Church. The 27 Fundamentals are at variance with previous Statements of Belief which the Church and/or leadership approved in 1872, 1889, 1914 and 1931. Now God does not lie, nor does He change in truth. Was God in the Movement in 1872, or did He just "join-up" in 1980? Or if He was in and with the Movement He raised up in 1844, did He leave it in 1980? One could say that the Statements over the years merely reflect the progressive understanding of the truth committed to this people. If this were so, then there would be no problem; but even a secondary school student can tell by reading the 27 Fundamentals and comparing them with what was believed previously, that obvious changes were made in 1980. Many of these changes were critical in nature. The question comes sounding home again - "Are you a Seventh-day Adventist?" If you are, what kind?

In analyzing what kind of Adventist one may

choose to be, we need to first distinguish between a "traditionalist" and a "historic" Adventist. A traditionalist has been well defined in the Farewell Address given by John Robinson to the Pilgrims as they left Holland for the New World in 1620. He said:

The Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of His Holy Word. I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who have come to a **period** in religion, and will at present go no farther than the instruments of their reformation. Luther and Calvin were great and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God." (George Bancroft, History of the United States, Vol. I, p. 205; emphasis supplied)

A "traditionalist" is one who has come to a "period" in religion. In this category you have Spear, Standish, Crews and Ferrell. On the other hand a "historic" Adventist is one who reflects the attitude of those who pioneered the Advent Movement. They did not set a period on the message of William Miller, but discarded some of his teaching, and refined other parts. Ellen G. White has defined a true historic Adventist. She wrote March 30, 1897, the following:

The Lord has made His people the repository of sacred truth. Upon every individual who has had the light of present truth devolves the **duty** of developing **that truth** on a higher scale than it has hitherto been done.

It should be observed that Ellen White is **not** talking about speculative interpretations of Scripture, or prophecy which constitutes the essence of certain independent ministries but rather "**that truth**" which He made His people the "repository" of. It is a **duty** to develop it to a higher scale, and not place a "period" after it.

In the article by Kenneth R. Samples, he distinguishes the Evangelical [neo-] Adventist from the "traditionalist" in the area of "righteousness by faith" by stating that the neo-Adventist accepts "the reformation understanding of righteousness by faith." Here the Robinson counsel to the Pilgrims serves as a double-edged sword. Luther and Calvin "penetrated not into the whole counsel of God." That is why God raised up the Advent Movement, and gave them the light of present truth. This light of present truth involves the sanctuary teaching and the revelation of the final atonement resulting from Christ's High Priestly ministry in the Sanctuary of Heaven. Here the battle lines are drawn, and have been

IS INDIVIDUALITY IN RELIGION IN JEOPARDY?

When A. T. Jones wrote his small but monumental book on individuality in religion, the full title read - The Divine Right of Individuality in Religion or Religious Liberty Complete. After tracing through the Bible this divine right as related to autocracy, supremacy of law, union of church and state, then finally to the Church itself, he wrote:

And now, through denominational, national, international, and world federation and confederation in religion and of religions, again ecclesiastical imperialistic despotism will work with all worldly powers, deceiving signs, and lying wonders, systematically to rob man finally of every vestige of individuality. (p. 117)

Interestingly, in all the Bible illustrations which Jones used in discussing individuality in religion, none involved directly the Sabbath. But behind each illustration, whether in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar, or Medo-Persia ruled by Darius, there was a basic principle - man as an individual and how he was to worship and serve his Creator. Because of our personal convictions as Seventh-day Adventists in regard to the Sabbath, some who profess to be Seventh-day Adventists may seek to exploit for personal advantage, or commercial gain, the issue of a National Sunday Law. Any such exploitation, taking advantage of an emotionally charged issue due to past history, actually covers the real issue, and leads those who are deceived by such exploitation to believe the final conflict will be very obvious with no possibility of deception. Let us face the facts. We have been warned by no less a Person than Jesus Christ that the final delusion will, if possible, deceive the very elect. See Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22.

The real issue behind all religious coercion - the individual and his Creator - was featured in Church & State as its lead article and cover picture for January, 1989. However, it presents for a Seventh-day Adventist an unique twist. The question of individuality involves one who is fighting to preserve his right to refrain from secular work on Sunday. But in this case, we can see the thinking of the judiciary in the United

States as to individuality in religion.

William A. Frazee of Peoria, Illinois, was laid off from his job for 10 months back in 1984. In searching for a job, he found an employer who had a job-opening, but who refused to respect his conviction of no-Sunday work. Unable to find other work, Frazee sought unemployment compensation. He was denied, and this sparked a legal battle involving free-exercise-of-religion which has now reached the Supreme Court. The assistant editor of Church & State, G. Robert Boston, summarizes the issue clearly. He wrote:

This is a Sunday-work case with a twist. Illinois state officials, in a new argument, claim they were justified in denying Frazee unemployment benefits since his Sabbath is a personally held belief and not a central tenet of the church he attends. This distinction separates the lawsuit from several Sabbath work cases the Supreme Court dealt with in the past. It also means that, when a decision is handed down by the high court, it may break new church-state ground, either retaining broad protections of the constitutional right of free exercise of religion or narrowing them to apply **only to members of organized religious groups.** (p. 4; emphasis supplied)

The two Illinois courts who have heard the appeal of Frazee from the ruling of the Department of Employment Security, have sustained the Department. Although Frazee attends a conservative Presbyterian Church in Peoria, the appellate court ruled that his claim for unemployment compensation was not valid because he does not belong to a religious group that opposes Sunday labor. Brushing aside three previous Supreme Court rulings which sustained the individual's religious conviction, two involving Seventh-day Adventists, and the other a Jehovah's Witness, Justice Albert Scott of the Appellate Court of Illinois wrote:

Our examination of the foregoing cases reveals that a common thread was running through each case, namely, that in each case the claimant was a member of an established religious sect or church; that each of the claimants in refusing to work at a particular place or time was exercising what was believed to be a tenet, belief or teaching of an established religious body.

In the instant case the plaintiff [Frazee] does not claim that his refusal to work on Sunday is based upon any tenet of a church or religious body. He takes the position that he is a Christian and as such feels it is

wrong to work on Sunday. (p. 5)

Near the end of Scott's short opinion, he asked a question - "What would Sunday be today if professional football, baseball, basketball and tennis were barred?" Then he commented:

Today Sunday is not only a day for religion, but for recreation and labor. Today the supermarkets are open, service stations dispense fuel, utilities continue to serve people and factories continue to belch out smoke and tangible products... If all Americans were to abstain from working on Sunday, chaos would result. (*Ibid.*)

Fraze's lawyer, David A. French of the Virginia-based Rutherford Institute, told Church & State that -

If the Illinois courts' test stands, there is going to be an extremely small set of beliefs that would qualify as religious. Basically, unless a person was somehow a formal member of a recognized religious body his or her beliefs aren't going to be protected at all. (p. 6)

In the first case of this nature before the Supreme Court in 1963 - *Sherbert v. Verner* - there emerged what has been called "the Sherbert Test," wherein the high Court required the government to show "a compelling state interest" before restricting religious freedom rights even incidentally. However, Chief Justice William Rehnquist has bitterly denounced the "Sherbert Test" as reading too broadly the Free Exercise Clause of the U.S. Constitution. His position is that the federal and state governments should be given a greater degree of flexibility in laws which effect religious freedom.

A number of organizations have joined together to file a friend-of-the-court brief in support of Fraze. These include Jewish organizations, the ACLU, the National Association of Evangelicals, the Lord's Day Alliance, as well as the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. Filing separate amicus curiae briefs are the Council on Religious Freedom, the American Jewish Committee and the National Right to Work Legal Defense Fund. Interestingly, there is no mention of either the Seventh-day Adventist Church, or any Catholic organization entering the suit.

A decision is expected to be rendered by the high Court this summer. The outcome could effect in time dissident Adventists and possibly "independent ministries." If the decision goes against Fraze, there will need to be some real soul-searching among the

confused and confusing dissidents. The "no-organization" theorizing that has come from the West Coast for a number of years will need to be reappraised. From whatever perspective, the decision will be momentous.

#

A L S O

In the same issue of Church and State which featured the Fraze story, in the section, "People & Events" was a report of a speech by the failed Supreme Court candidate, Robert H. Bork. In November, 1988, he spoke before the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights on whose executive council his wife serves.

Bork's thrust was that the liberal thinking of the nation's court system has led federal judges to expand the interpretation of the First Amendment, and according to Bork has thus hindered religion. [Which religion?]

In this address, Bork asserted -

1) "The expansion of religious clauses tends to favor fringe religions and cults and discriminates against mainstream religions... The further courts expand the free exercise clause the freer groups are to create new sects and demand rights for them."

2) Most Americans are unaware of the great "struggle for the Constitution" currently in progress, and this struggle is a part of the larger struggle to control all of American Society.

3) The decisions of the courts have forced a "privatization of religion" on the American people through the strict application of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment and thus denies citizens the right to advance religion.

Bork's remedy revealed the source of his thinking. He suggested a return to what he called the "original understanding of the Establishment Clause," and that in so doing, there would be two immediate results - 1) more non-discriminatory financial aid to non-public [Catholic] schools and 2) more religious symbolism in public.

He attacked Thomas Jefferson's position that the First Amendment built a wall of separation between church and state, decrying that it "does not reflect what those who adopted the Constitution understood." He called the

BEFUDDLED AND MUDDLED!

In current issues of the Adventist Review, an Associate Editor, Dr. Roy Adams, presented a four part series on "The Christian Pilgrimage" which were primarily condensations of sermons presented at the 1888 Centennial celebration at Minneapolis. The last of the series - "One Pulse of Harmony" (March 23, 1989, pp. 14-16) - evidences the befuddled and muddled thinking that not only marked the presentations in Minneapolis, but also the condensations as they have appeared in the Church paper.

This last article discusses "the consumation of the atonement." While Adams uses the phrase, "final atonement," in connection with the sanctuary, his real thrust of a "final atonement" is the cleansing of the earth following the 1000 years of Revelation 20. Referring to that time, he writes:

The cosmic culprit is still at large. In other words, the sanctuary is not fully cleansed. Not yet fully justified. Not yet fully vindicated. Thus the atonement in sense of "atonement," is not yet here.

But with the coming of atonement, there will be "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (p. 16)

In the article, Adams refers to the typical Day of Atonement, but apparently he has not studied it. In the type, it is clearly set forth that not until the atonement is completed, does the symbol of the "cosmic culprit" actively enter the ritual of the day. The Hebrew of Lev. 16:20 reads - "And **having finished atoning** the sanctuary and of the tent and the altar and has brought the living goat, **then** shall Aaron lay his two hands upon the head of the living goat." The final atonement is made prior to the "cosmic culprit" being assigned in figure to a land uninhabited. In other words in the anti-typical reality, the cleansing of the earth by fire and the annihilation of the wicked including Satan does not represent the final atonement. This is begging the question and the real issue in Adventism today; and evidences befuddled and muddled reasoning. The "one pulse of harmony" follows the eradication of sin and sinners, but does not result from "the strange act" of God. Only the **cross** and the final atonement in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary is the source of the at-one-ment in the universe.

It would also appear that the new associate editor is not well informed in recent Adventist history. Referring to the ancient sanctuary type, he writes:

This phenomenon of a daily atonement complemented by a special annual atonement already hints at an activity with dual meaning or application. (p. 15, emphasis his)

However, accurately as Adams has stated this concept, the book Questions on Doctrine declares plainly - "**Adventists do not hold any theory of a dual atonement.** 'Christ hath redeemed us' (Gal. 3:13) 'once for all.' (Heb. 10:10) (p. 390; emphasis theirs) Of interest, the rest of the paragraph in Q on D follows the same teaching as Adams' - a final atonement with the eradication of sin by fire and a new creation. Here again is an example of confusion in official Adventism. Adams denies what the book, Q on D, says, but both arrive as the same end concept.

In 1983, Walter R. Martin wrote the General Conference asking for an official statement either "reaffirming or denying the authority of the Adventist book, Questions on Doctrine." In reply, Dr. W. Richard Leshar, then a vice-president of the General Conference stated: - "You ask first if Seventh-day Adventists still stand behind the answers given to your questions in Questions on Doctrine as they did in 1957. The answer is yes." (The Kingdom of the Cults, p. 410) Either Adams is making Leshar who is now president of Andrews University a liar, or else his mentor, William G. Johnsson, failed to tell him about this letter. Has the Dr. Johnsson forgotten about the Ankerberg Show?

In the article, Adams tried to have the atonement **finished** on the cross - never mind "the coming of atonement" when there will be a new heavens and earth. He quoted from the Writings for proof, but insisted the word, "complete" as used by Ellen G. White really means "completed" and thus equal to "finished." To accomplish this requires muddled reasoning and disqualifies in one stroke Adams as a creditable associate editor of the official Church paper.

The question then arises as to how he got there. The readers need to keep in mind that in placing Adams as an Associate Editor

of the Adventist Review, others with much longer experience and equally as qualified were by-passed. There are two possible explanations.

Dr. Roy Adams came to the Review staff from Canada where one of his responsibilities was the editorship of the Canadian Union Messenger. In this assignment, he also wrote some muddled articles in the area of theology, two such being on the Incarnation. But not only was he the editor of the Union Paper, he was also Secretary of the Canadian Union Conference. Using the prestige of this office, he interjected himself with his bias and prejudice into the work of the nominating committee of the Quebec Conference, so that the work for the Quebecois for all practical purposes was nullified through the conference's new leadership. In other words, it was time for him to leave Canada.

Being "picked-up" by Johnsson has another background. For his doctrinal dissertation at Andrews University, Adams wrote on The Sanctuary Doctrine in which he researched what he called three approaches to the doctrine during the Church's history. The teachings of three men were studied - Uriah Smith, Albion F. Ballenger, and M. L. Andraesen. This research became the first to be published by Andrews University in its Doctoral Dissertation Series.

In Adams final chapter of the dissertation - "Summary and Conclusions" - after negatively denegrating the pioneers for connecting Dan. 8:14 with Leviticus 16 (p. 264), he authors a section which he calls "New Approaches." He writes:

It is perhaps appropriate that this chapter should close with a few brief tentative suggestions for possible new approaches to the study of the sanctuary. These approaches are new, not in the sense that they have never been utilized before, but only in the sense that their use has not hitherto found either official or widespread acceptance in the Adventist church. (p. 271)

He mentions three such approaches, one of them being "A phenomological approach." Do not let this big word disturb you. Adams defines it as the attempt "to listen to, and to come to grips with, the common religious 'language' and experience of mankind - phenomena which often transcends cultural barriers." (p. 272) Now note carefully what he wrote next:

Adventist are fortunate to have already an important work in this area dealing with the book of Hebrews."

Who is the author of such a work? None other than the present editor of the Adventist Review, William G. Johnsson.

This work by Johnsson is his own doctoral dissertation which he wrote at Vanderbilt University. The theology presented in this dissertation is at variance with pioneer Adventist teaching as much as, if not more so, than anything Desmond Ford has ever written. Yet while Ford was rightly defrocked for his heresy, Johnsson was made editor of the Church's official paper.

The key to this befuddled and muddled situation in the top echelon of the official organ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to be found in a footnote in Adam's dissertation. It reads:

"Johnsson indicated that the significant experiences of his life which provided the impetus for his study came to him while a missionary in Southern India and in contact with Eastern religions." (p. 274)

How apropos the words - "Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east." (Isa. 2:6)

WHG

"WRONG THEOLOGY IS DANGEROUS THEOLOGY"

"Bad theology, unbiblical theology, can do a lot of harm to the life and mission of the church... Wrong theology is dangerous theology." This is the assessment of Sam Amirtham, who is director of the Programme on Theological Education for the WCC. He was addressing the Convocation of Serampore College held at the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College in Madras, India.

While the illustrations which Dr. Amirtham used were WCC orientated with little relevancy to us, the concept of "Wrong theology is dangerous theology" is very relevant. We need to know whether the 27 Fundamental Beliefs are correct or wrong theology!

There are those who are making a great profession of teaching "historic" Adventism who have not, so they say, taken time after eight years to make that determination. There are those professing to teach the Message of 1888 who will not commit themselves as to where they stand. Yet the message of Christ's righteousness is to be "pure, unadulterated truth." (TM, p. 65)

There are those who have seared their brains in the drug culture who are now trying to teach the people of God. (We thank God that He has power to deliver.) But

To p. 7, col. 2

Labels - From p. 2

drawn ever since the infamous SDA-Evangelical Conference in which Walter Martin took part.

Certain charges are made in Martin's Journal which every one who perceives of himself as a true Seventh-day Adventist must squarely face. Samples writes:

The crux of Traditional Adventism would certainly appear to rest squarely on the authority of Ellen White... (p. 12)

Two of the doctrines that had received confirmation through the prophetic gift were the sanctuary doctrine and the investigative judgment (i.e., the events of 1844). These two distinctives were at the center of the controversy that would ultimately lead to a sharp division within Adventist ranks. (p. 13)

The issue is **not** whether Ellen G. White confirmed these teachings. The issue is can these teachings stand the test of Scripture. It is on this point that the "traditionalist" because as charged, - has "in practice, if not in theory" made the writings of Ellen G. White "an almost verbally-inspired touchstone of interpretation which has resulted in an essentially biblically illiterate membership." A progressive Seventh-day Adventist is one who knows the truth, and can defend that truth - including the sanctuary truth - from the Bible. A progressive Seventh-day Adventist is one who recognizes that the truth he has received must be developed on a higher scale, even as his spiritual forebearers developed the light from William Miller. A progressive Adventist watches for every ray of promised light, and checks that light by the Holy Bible to see if it is in harmony with previously verified truth.

Are you a Seventh-day Adventist? If so, which one? In simple terms, one today who is accepted by God is one, who as the primitive, apostolic believer, is a follower of "The Way." (See Acts 9:2, margin)

WHG

Bork - From p. 4, col. 2

Jefferson view "the individualistic view", indicating also that "there is a communitarian view."

[This article was summarized from Church & State, January, 1989, p. 13]

"Dangerous Theology" from p. 6

Jesus told those whom He had delivered from the power of demons to go tell what great things God had done for them. He did not take them with Him to be sent forth to teach the people as were the disciples. Indeed, God's people are being destroyed by wrong theology coming from such. "Wrong theology is dangerous theology."

This danger is a serious matter. Paul indicated that if we do not have "the love of the truth," God will permit "strong delusion" to ensnare us that we will believe a lie. And the end is damnation. (II Thess. 2:10-12) It is not tiddly-winks we are playing, but the game of life; and it is for keeps! "Wrong theology is dangerous theology."

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