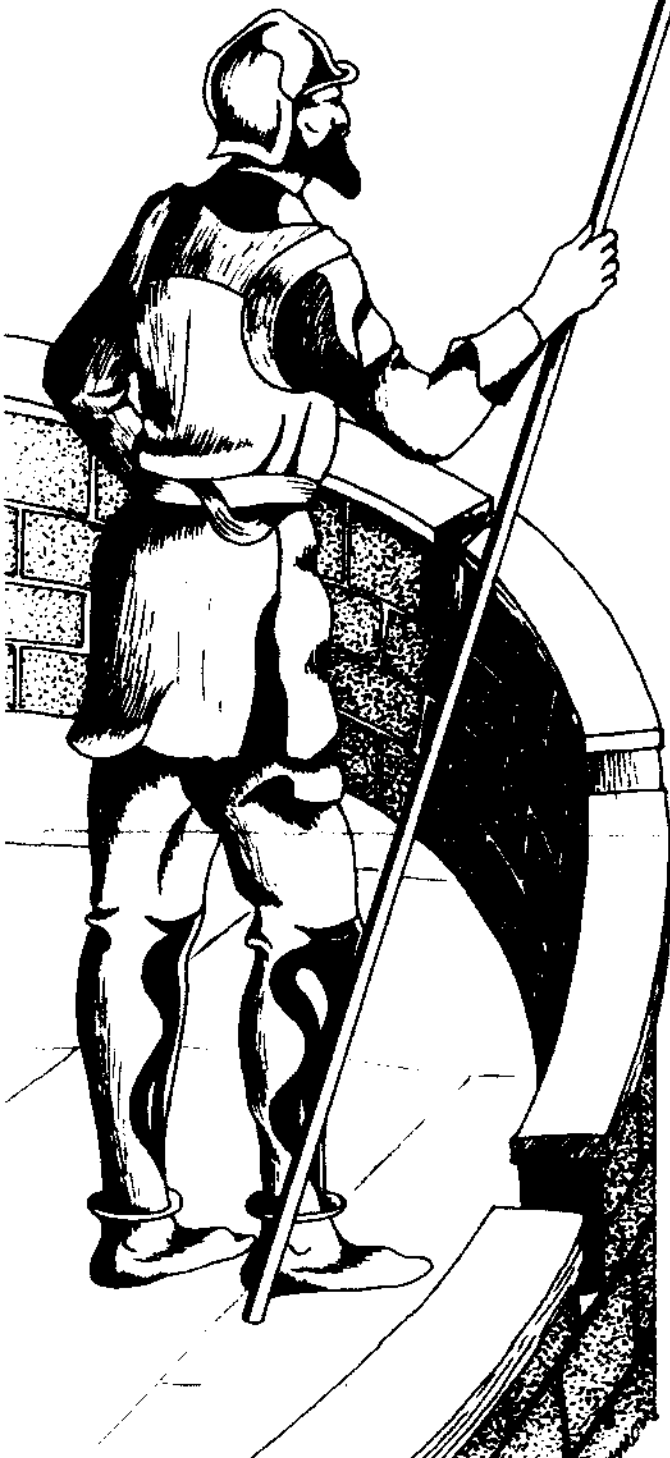


# "Watchman, what of the night?"

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

Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)

## THE PARABLE OF THE "FAT LADY"



Dr. George R. Knight, professor of church history at Andrews University, has written two articles on the same basic theme, one adapted to speak to the laity through the Adventist Review [AR], Feb. 14, 1991, pp. 8-10; and the other addressed to the clergy through the Ministry, June, 1991, pp. 6-10, 29. The title of the article in the AR - "The Fat Lady and the Kingdom" - reflected the parable which Knight created to introduce his challenge. The article in the Ministry forthrightly encompassed the issue in its title and sub-heading. - "Adventism, Institutionalism, and the Challenge of Secularism," stating - "Adventism has reached that critical point where it must deliberately choose and courageously act to reverse the patterns of institutionalism and secularization that threaten its heritage and mission."

The contrast between the attitudes with which the editors of the AR looked at the challenge presented by Knight, and the editor of the Ministry is clear and sharp. An editor's note prefaced the article in the AR. It read:

The editors and the author wrestled together on the wording of the title of this article - all of us keenly sensitive to avoid sexist stereotypes. After a multitude of alternatives proved unworkable, we fell back to the title that you see, finding it most in keeping with the image of Scripture in both Testaments. We anxiously hope that our readers will look past this detail to the message of the piece. We also feel it appropriate to note here that the opinions expressed in the article do not necessarily represent in every particular the views of the editorial staff.

Now mind you, these editors wrestling with the author over the title because of "sexist" terminology, indicates how decadent some of the editorial staff have become. Then they hasten to put distance between themselves and some of Knight's concepts. Perhaps one the "packages" the "fat lady" needs to discard is most of the editorial staff! On the other hand, the editor of Ministry wrote:

Two years ago, June 1989, we published a ground breaking article called "Church Structure - Servant or Master?" Since

that time the author of that article has become the General Conference president and has convened a commission on governance to examine how the church operates.

We continue looking at that topic with articles in this issue by George Knight and L. A. King. The problem with Laodicea is that it does not know its condition. Despite what many say, all is not well with the church. These articles might lead to a deep pessimism if we focused only on the difficulties. The authors point out that we will not reverse the trend by "business as usual." Some tough decisions need to be made. (p. 3)

The article to which Elder Newman referred was also noted by Knight in the AR article. Folkenberg's study in the Ministry magazine introduced the problem by discussing the fig tree Christ cursed. It had an abundance of leaves but no fruit! Then he wrote:

The Lord did not condemn the tree's foliage, but rather its fruitlessness - its lack of mission. Should we not evaluate the foliage-to-fruit (structure-to-mission) ratio in our own lives and in the church?

[Note: Accuracy of interpretation of this parable, should observe that Christ cursed the whole tree, foliage and all because of its unfruitfulness.]

While we have an outstanding system of church government, even the best of organizations deserve periodic self-evaluation. Robert Michels, a German sociologist, found over time an organization tends to be motivated less and less by its original sense of mission, and that it becomes increasingly bureaucratic. The preservation of the structure gradually overtakes mission as its dominant concern. He calls this phenomenon the "iron law of oligarchy." (June, 1989, p. 4)

While Folkenberg focused on the statistical data of structure to mission, Knight has placed the whole issue in a historical setting. Before discussing this approach of Knight and the conclusions he drew, let us note the force of the parable he set forth in introducing his article in the AR which set the staff afire over "sexist" imagery. Knight made up his own parable:

The church is like a fat woman returning from a shopping spree. (Matt. 13:44-49) [1844-1991]

Then he gives his interpretation:

The woman may be likened unto the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which in its maturity has grown "rich, and increased with goods," and has "need of nothing." (p. 9)

However, the "packages" the fat lady acquired on her shopping spree prevent her from opening the door into the kingdom of heaven. If she uses her hand to open the door, she will drop some of her packages, and unless she can open the door, she cannot get in. In the picture

drawn by Knight, the issue facing the Church is vividly portrayed. Either the church preserves its mission, or she preserves her "packages" - the institutional structures by which she is identified. The means by which the church seeks to preserve her "packages," Knight notes as "degenerative processes" which mark an aging church. He cites Moberg's analysis.

David Moberg, a sociologist, observes that churches, like other organizations, pass through five stages in their life cycle. These stages are labeled as 1) incipient organization, 2) formal organization, 3) maximum efficiency, 4) institutional, and 5) disintegration. Using Moberg's five stages, Knight defines stage 4, and comments:

In stage 4, the institutional stage, formalism saps the group's vitality, leadership comes to be dominated by an established bureaucracy "more concerned with perpetuating its own interests than with maintaining the distinctives that helped bring the group into existence," administration centers on boards and committees that tend to be self-perpetuating, and institutions tend to become masters rather than servants. It is Moberg's stage 4 that much of Adventism has definitely entered. (*ibid.*)

The question is asked - "Is life then hopeless? Is the church merely a cog in a sociological machine?" To these questions, Knight replied with an emphatic - "No! Not unless it fails to take corrective action." He cites Moberg as indicating the process may be reversed. But here is where the basic problem comes into the picture. The Church is not an ordinary organization; it was a called **movement** with a sacred trust. Its path along these stages as outlined by Moberg is conditioned by how it has responded to its sacred trust. Not by human judgment will the decision be rendered, but "in the balances of the sanctuary" will the Church be weighed. (8T:247) To understand the force of this factor, we must consider Knight's variation of this theme as it appeared in Ministry. He placed the five stages of Moberg into the setting of Adventist Church history:

- 1) "incipient organization" - 1844-1863.
- 2) "formal organization" - 1863-1901
- 3) "maximum efficiency" - 1901-?

Here is where the picture breaks down. Knight himself writes - "Even though it seems rather clear that Adventism arrived at the stage of maximum efficiency around 1901, it is much less clear where the denomination is in 1991." (p. 8)

Knight's first problem is that though a professor of church history at Andrews

University, he distorts the real history involving the events of the 1901 GC session as pertaining to organization. He writes:

That year saw the administrative reorganization of the General Conference along a more rational line. It also witnessed the election of Arthur G. Daniells as the first president who could be viewed as a "statesman." (*ibid.*)

The fact is that Daniells was not elected president of the General Conference In 1901. There was no General Conference president from 1901-1903. If the reorganization of 1901 was called "more rational," how would Knight describe the reorganization of 1903, when the 1901 Constitution was thrown out and another substituted in its place which set the groundwork for the very institutionalism Knight is now decrying?

Knight goes a step further in his evaluation of the history of the Church. He equates Stage 3 - maximum efficiency - as the period which brought the Church to its "adulthood." He writes:

If a specific date can be given for Adventism's arrival at "adulthood," it may best be seen as 1956, when the denomination had the "right hand of fellowship" extended to it by Donald Grey Barnhouse, editor of Eternity and a highly influential fundamentalist leader. (*ibid.*)

(Knight footnotes this event by referencing Barnhouse's article in Eternity, September, 1956. To this same article, we shall also refer in following paragraphs.)

Here is the basic issue again surfacing. The whole thrust of Knight's articles in both the AR and Ministry is that the present enmeshment In institutionalism and away from mission must be reversed. But to what "mission" will the Church revert?

In the 1955-1956 Seventh-day Adventist-Evangelical Conferences following which Knight states the Church received the "right hand of fellowship" by Barnhouse, the leadership of the Church betrayed its sacred trust, and in so doing denied its "mission." The "handle" on the door of Knight's parable which the "fat lady" must open is interpreted by him to mean - "Adventism's evangelistic mission to the world." (AR, 2/14/91, p. 9)

We need to face reality. To the Church was entrusted the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 as its "evangelistic mission" to the world. (9T:19) The first angel's message announced the fact that "the hour of (God's) judgment" had come. This was to be based in

the sanctuary message and involved the final atoning ministry of Christ. But what did the Church leaders tell Barnhouse so that he would extend to them the "right hand of fellowship"? Observe the Barnhouse report in Eternity which Knight footnoted. After noting the morning following the "Great Disappointment," he quoted Hiram Edson's conviction "that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month at the end of 2,300 days, He for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary, and that He had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth." Then Barnhouse commented:

It is to my mind, therefore, nothing more than a human, face-saving ideal! It should also be realized that some uninformed Seventh-day Adventists took this idea and carried it to fantastic literalistic extremes. Mr. Martin and I heard the Adventist leaders say, flatly, that they repudiate all such extremes. This they have said in no uncertain terms. Further, they do not believe, as some of their earlier teachers taught, that Jesus' atoning work was not completed on Calvary but instead that He was still carrying on a second ministering work since 1844. This idea is also totally repudiated. They believe that since His ascension Christ has been ministering the benefits of the atonement which He completed on Calvary. (Eternity, "Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?" Sept., 1956, p. 44)

This compromise was confirmed in the 27 Statements of Fundamental Beliefs voted at Dallas, Texas, in 1980. The Church today has no original "mission" to which to return. It has betrayed its sacred trust. The verdict of the sanctuary has been rendered. All that is left is stage 5 of Moberg's analysis - disintegration! #

**Note:** Available from the Foundation office is the manuscript containing the facsimile reproduction of the articles in the Eternity magazine plus T. E. Unruh's version of the SDA-Evangelical Conferences, plus a telephone conversation that A. L. Hudson had with Barnhouse. Also available is a documented taped study on "The Sacred Trust Betrayed." During the next thirty days, this material will be available for \$6.00 postpaid.

"If you were arraigned for being a Christian, would the evidence convict you?"

# REACTIONS OF SDA'S AT WCC

In reporting his observations of the Seventh Assembly of the WCC held in Canberra, Australia, in February, this year, Dr. Roy Adams of the Adventist Review staff noted the witness of some concerned Adventist young people with disgust. Here is his report of the witness given - he calls it "confrontation" - to the truth once held by the Church:

One hot afternoon, with the doors into the plenary hall wide open to let in fresh air, four demonstrators claiming to be Adventists entered the stage arena with a huge protest banner, helium-filled balloons attached. Once directly in front of the 3,000-member assembly, they let it go. Coming to rest against the ceiling, it provided a perfect camera shot as it spoke its message to all and sundry: "Seventh-Day Adventists Believe ... This Prophesied Romeward Unity Is the Spirit of Anti-Christ!" (See p. 5)

I found myself deeply embarrassed and sickened by this crude and unethical tactic on the part of these self-appointed "Adventist" demonstrators, and I'm sure the great majority of our people would have found it equally offensive and lacking in good taste. (Adventist Review, May 2, 1991, p. 10)

Adams indicates he was "sickened." But let him bear in mind that he could not have been as sick as some become in reading certain of his editorials. (See "Via Postal Service," p. 7) Adams' problem is that he has been so long drunk on the wine of error, that a taste of truth causes him to become nauseated.

In this same report, Adams lauds certain items of the WCC agenda, such as the "affirmation of youth." However, he condemns Adventist youth in Australia for their witness to truth which our spiritual forefathers bore with a strong voice based on their convictions of Bible prophecy. Now when their spiritual heirs see these very prophecies in the process of fulfillment, and witness to that fact, those who have abetted the apostasy in prophetic witness, such as Adams, condemn such a witness as "confrontational," "offensive," and "lacking in good taste." Last month [7(91), p. 5], we noted the report of this protest in the Australian Record. There was a response to this article by a reader from New South Wales, and this brief letter should give men such as Adams pause for thought. It read:

Concerning the World Council of Churches protesters

(RECORD, March 23), I would ask, Was the hand at Belshazzar's feast "moral and ethical"? Was John the Baptist following ethical practices when he called the leaders of the church "vipers and hypocrites"? Jesus Himself referred to them as "whited sepulchers." Was this polite? When was the invitation extended to Elijah to present his case through "proper channels"? (May 4, 1991, p. 3)

Since the last issue of WWN, we have received an on-the-spot description of the reaction of Beach and Adams when the banner was floated aloft. This tells much. Two young men who had Press credentials and who at the time were in the press box watched the reaction closely. Here is the report from one of them:

When the banner was raised, we were watching Beach, Adams and our local Religious Liberty Director, Coombe. At first Coombe was amused until he saw, "Seventh-day Adventists believe..." His amusement turned to horror. Adams had to run down the stairs of the press gallery to get a better view, so he could write down the wording of the banner. And last but not least, by any means, was Beach's reaction. He was sitting next to his ecumenical buddies when the banner went up. Although near the back of the building, the sign was large enough for all to see. Bert hung his head in his hands as he saw what it all meant. He shook his head from side to side, and then all of a sudden he must have realized where he was, and he turned to his ecumenical friends and pointed to the side of his head twisting his finger, indicating that this was the result of the "lunatic fringe" of Adventism. After all calmed down Beach raced up stairs to the press gallery and had a serious talk with Coombe and Adams. (D. J. Husk, Letter dated, May 3, 1991)

Some two hours after the witness, the other young man approached Adams and asked, "Did you like that? To the question, Adams replied, "No I didn't; it was very poor taste! And who are you?" He then took the brother's "name, rank, and serial number," and questioned - "You thought it was a good witness then?" The brother responded, "I thought it was excellent!" Adams replied, "Well, I and many others did not!" He then walked off. (Letter dated, May 23, 1991)

"And they overcame him [the dragon] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Revelation 12:11

Dr. Bert Beach is well known in the ecumenical circles of the WCC. His influence with certain leaders of the ecumenical fraternity is sufficient to block requested information of his activities and participation in the ecumenical services. His "buddies" help him cover his tracks.

It is hard to conceive that the leadership of the WCC does not know his true official position in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (See note under picture) However, they might not know that he is the Church's Secretary of State for Ecumenical Affairs. He was listed in the Who's Who Address List of the WCC's Seventh Assembly as the accredited "Delegated Representative" from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. (p. 25) This in and of itself says something about the relationship existing between the General Conference and the WCC.

## Assembly votes to reduce size of Vatican working group

The Seventh Assembly yesterday voted to reduce the size of the Vatican-WCC Joint Working Group (JWG) and to direct it to concentrate on obstacles that prevent a fuller WCC-Roman Catholic relationship.

"Most of its original mandate has been fulfilled, and Roman Catholic participation in the ecumenical movement has become a normal feature", it notes, yet obstacles and difficulties remain. It is, the report says, time to review the purposes and operations of the JWG.

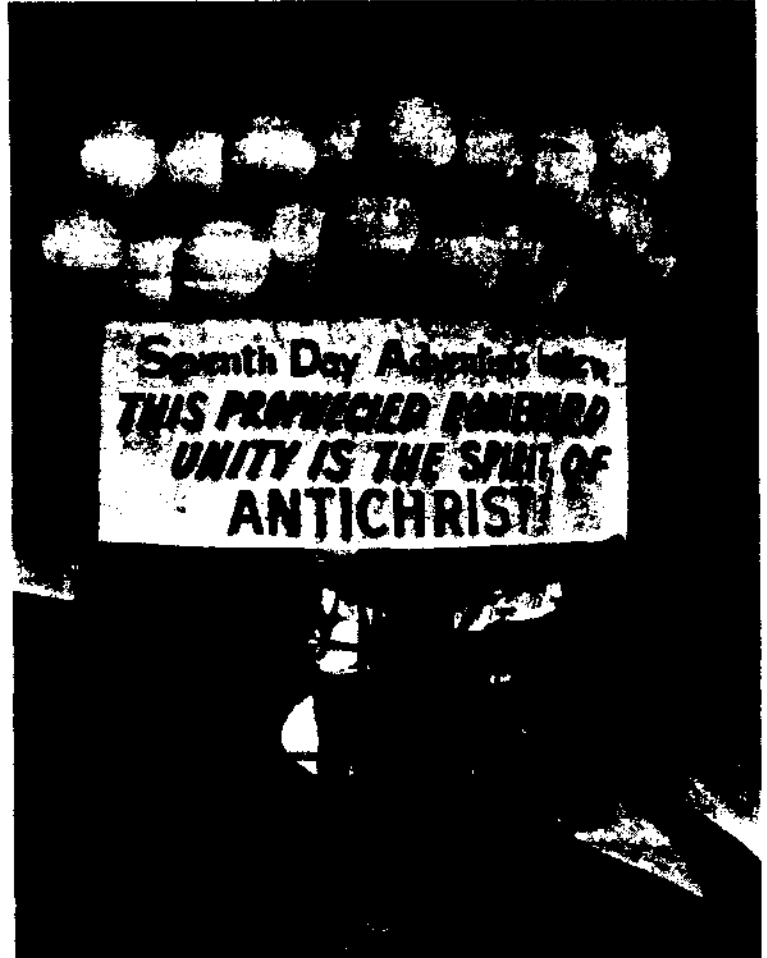
The report projects a "newly-composed JWG ... to concentrate its attention on a substantive review of the relationships between the Roman Catholics and the WCC ... in particular, to analyse more deeply the obstacles which have prevented the relationships from developing even more fully".

It suggests that JWG aim at "a common acknowledgement of the ecclesial character of the relationship which has grown between the RCC and the fellowship of churches in the WCC, and suggest ways of giving more substantive expression to it".

The Assembly accepted recommendations that JWG membership be halved, from 12 to six (plus two staff members from each side). The group is to be given the primary task of "assessing afresh the basis and common ground shared by the RCC and the WCC, and developing new perspectives for giving shape to this relationship".

This task, it said, will need to be placed in the context of the ongoing process of redefining the WCC vision and self-understanding.

The Assembly asked the group not to undertake any other major projects until it has reported on this task, allowing its parent bodies to 'agree on a new framework for the relationship'.



The head of the US Seventh Day Adventist Church apologized for the protest banner at yesterday's plenary, dissociated himself and his church from it, and called it a gross discourtesy.

This is to be completed before the next WCC assembly in seven or eight years.

In debate on the report, most speakers emphasized the need for WCC-RC dialogue to be maintained or upgraded. Several urged that more be made of ecumenical relationships involving Roman Catholics at the local level.

The assembly endorsed a move that JWG set up formal relationship with similar working groups in regional ecumenical organizations, and consult fully

with the three dozen or so national councils of churches which include Roman Catholic membership.

As the Assembly adopted the resolutions, three protesters entered the hall from a side door holding a banner tied to many white balloons. The banner, proclaiming that "Seventh Day Adventists believe this prophesied [sic] Rome-ward unity is the Spirit of AntiChrist", drifted up to the ceiling where it hung for the remainder of the plenary.

Invited to greet the Assembly on behalf of the Roman Catholic members of the Joint Working Group, English Bishop Alan Clark said "something has been happening, something has grown, and become rich with life".

"We need to explore what it means to be imperfect, limited communion ... We must push out our vision and discover what is the ecclesial reality" of WCC-RCC relationships," he said.

—David Busch

The above article and picture was taken from Assembly Line, a daily publication of events and news of the World Council of Churches Seventh Assembly. (#11, p. 3)

## LET'S TALK IT OVER

It is very difficult to understand how a professor of church history at Andrews University can garble the facts concerning his own church's history as Dr. George Knight did in his article for Ministry, (June, 1991). Knight writes speaking of 1901:

That year saw the administrative reorganization of the General Conference along a more rational line. (p. 8)

This is an understatement. At the beginning of the session, Ellen G. White clearly called for more than a "rational" reorganization. Speaking of the leadership of the Church, she stated:

That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be, - that is past. What we want to begin at the foundation, and to build upon a different principle. (1901 GC Bulletin, p. 25)

What was done at this session was indeed to reduce the organizational structure to its foundations, and to build upon a different principle. The end result was a committee of men who were to elect a rotating chairman to guide in the affairs of the Church. As the session came to a close, Ellen G. White asked a series of questions and gave an answer:

Who do you suppose has been among us since this conference began? Who has kept away the objectionable features that generally appear in such a meeting? Who has walked up and down the aisles of this Tabernacle? -- the God of heaven and His angels. And they did not come here to tear you to pieces, but to give right and peaceable minds. They have been among us to work the works of God, to keep back the powers of darkness, that the work God designed should be done and should not be hindered. The angels of God have been working among us. (ibid., p. 463)

But in 1903, this whole picture was changed, and this God-designed plan of organization guided through the 1901 session by His angels was thrown out. In its place was substituted an instrument of organization which P. T. Magan declared introduced "the same principles, and introduced [these principles] in precisely the same way, as they were hundreds of years ago when the Papacy was made." (1903 GC Bulletin, p. 150) Two weeks after the close of the session, Ellen G. White would write that the

Church "was being leavened with its own backsliding." (8T:250)

Unless the facts of our church history involving 1901 and 1903 are correctly set forth, a true analysis of the problems of the "Fat Lady" cannot be made. As laudible as is Knight's attempt to assess the problem of getting the "Fat Lady" into the door of the Kingdom, his garbling of church history, either through ignorance, or in an attempt to rewrite history thwarts the objective. No solution for the present could be possible unless there is an honest appraisal of what went wrong in the past starting with 1888.

Wieland and Short likewise stumble over these conferences. It is interesting to note that the brethren when replying to the original manuscript submitted to the General Conference in 1950, called their attention to Ellen G. White's evaluation of the 1901 session. (See "Further Appraisal of Manuscript, 1888 Re-Examined, September, 1958: A Warning and Its Reception, Green Tint section, p. 32) But Wieland and Short chose to ignore this evaluation to which the brethren in Washington directed them, and continued to focus attention on the reaction to the message given in 1888, by-passing its practical outworking in 1901, and its rejection in 1903 which called for a "denominational repentance." This incorrect understanding of 1901 and 1903 has become a stumbling block both to Knight in his analysis and to Wieland and Short in their emphasis. Thus today, we have tragedy compounded with the rank and file wandering in confusion.

WHG

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## The Pope to Jerusalem?

A Reuter's dispatch from Bonn, Germany, reported an interview with David Levy, Foreign Minister of Israel, given to a German newspaper concerning Arab-Israeli peace talks and the Palestinian question. Linked together in this dispatch was Levy's comments later in Rome. Concerning these the news report read:

Later yesterday, in Rome, Levy said Israel would welcome a visit by Pope John Paul II.

The Pope, ending a Vatican summit of Catholic leaders on the Persian Gulf war last week, said he wanted to go to Jerusalem to pray for peace with Jews and Muslims.

+ + +

"If the Pope has expressed a desire to visit Israel, we would be very happy and hope this trip can take place as soon as possible. He would be received with all honors," Levy said when questioned at Rome airport.

Levy is in Rome for a brief un-official visit before holding talks Sunday with Foreign Minister Gianni de Michelis.

The Vatican supports Israel's right to exist within secure borders, but has never established diplomatic relations with the Jewish state. The status of Jerusalem, which the Vatican wants placed under international protection as a holy city, and the Vatican's support for a Palestinian homeland are the two main obstacles to forging diplomatic ties. (Toronto Star, March 16, 1991)

Those who have either the second printing of the in depth study of Luke 21:24, or the third - The Hour and the End - can check closely Papal policy in regard to Jerusalem. It is set forth in a letter filed with the president of the UN Security Council, June 30, 1980 (Exhibit #7). Also the attitude of John Paul II toward Jerusalem is clearly stated in his Apostolic Letter released in L'Osservatore, April 30, 1984 (Exhibit #9).

Never for a moment dare we under estimate nor ignore the movements at play in the Middle East. We must never forget that when "he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain," we stand face to face with the moment when "Michael shall stand up." (Daniel 11:45; 12:1) "Evil on evil! says the Lord the Eternal - it is coming, the hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you, the hour and the end." (Ezekiel 7:5-7, Moffatt)

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"In the twenty-first chapter of Luke, Christ foretold what was to come upon Jerusalem, and with it He connected the scenes which were to take place in the history of this world just prior to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Counsels to Writers and Editors, pp. 23-24

"Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."  
Luke 21:34

**VIA POSTAL SERVICE -**

A "Deplorable Editorial" is just exactly what it was. You "hit the nail on the head." I was just as incensed over Adams' editorial as you were. Since I get only the NAD REVIEW, I did not see Johnsson's - which is just as well, since I can't take more than one a month of that paper. It causes me too much emotional stress. CA 922

**From National & International Religion Report**

A Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) agency called on the Supreme Court to scrap the 20-year-old test it uses to determine the line that separates church and state. The so-called Lemon Test, which got its name from a 1971 ruling, has created a form of "religious apartheid," "promotes secularism," and is "inherently hostile to religious liberty," the SBC's Christian Life Commission (CLC) declared in an amicus brief filed in Rhode Island's graduation prayer case. In departing from the strict separationist viewpoint many Baptists have long espoused, the CLC said public schools should transmit values, including the value of religious pluralism. The Lemon Test, it said, should be replaced with guidelines suggested by Michael McConnell, a University of Chicago Law School professor.

Vol. 5, No. 12, p. 4

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Errata - In the 6(91) issue of WNN, we noted the article, "When Will the Temple Be Rebuilt in Jerusalem?" as being published in News From Jerusalem. The publication's name was rather, News From Israel. Thank you Dr. C for calling this to our attention. The publication office is West Columbia, SC.

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Elder Wm. H. Grotheer

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