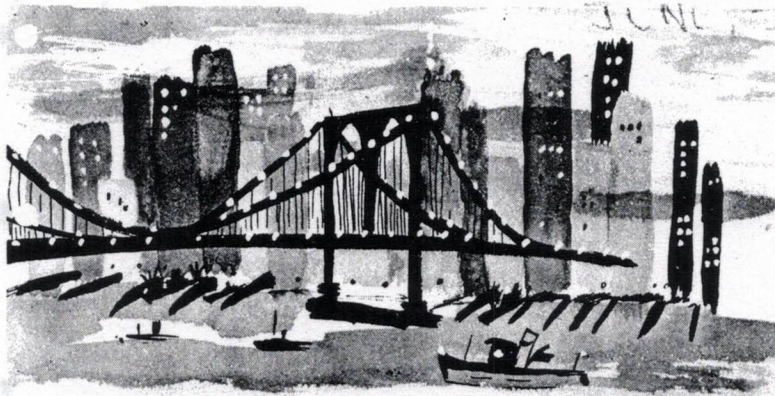


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*Special Summer 1973.*



# "Watchman, what of the night?"

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

## MORE ON ZAIRE

In a recent Review, the editor attempted to explain "two news items that seemed to link Seventh-day Adventists with the institutional ecumenical movement."<sup>1</sup> One of these items had appeared in Christianity Today, November 24, 1972, and was used as a basis for a special thought paper (January, 1973) under the title, "A Cover Up?" The editor commented on this thought paper in two paragraphs of his editorial. This special issue is in response to the editor's comments.

The editor, Elder Kenneth Wood, captioned his attack - "False Charges by Critic." He stated - "One voice - and only one, so far as we know, has stood in judgment on our believers and their leaders in Zaire." It is to be concluded that because my voice was the lone voice raised in question of what has taken place in Zaire, its credibility is to be doubted. This has been the tactic of churchmen in other times when voices have been raised in question of the actions of the religious hierarchy. It was used on Luther by his enemies. To this attack, Luther replied:

"Who knows if God has not chosen and called me, and if they ought not to fear that, by despising me, they despise God Himself? Moses was alone at the departure from Egypt; Elijah was alone in the reign of King Ahab; Isaiah was alone in Jerusalem; Ezekiel alone in Babylon. . . God never selected as a prophet either the high priest or any other great personage; but ordinarily He chose low and despised men, once even the shepherd Amos. In every age, the saints have had to reprove the great, kings, princes, priests, and wise men, at the peril of their lives. . . I do not say that I am a prophet; but I say that they ought to fear precisely because I am alone and that they are many. I am sure of this, that the word of God is with me, and that it is not with them."<sup>2</sup>

I am accused of wrongfully labeling the changed status of the church in Zaire as a "surrender." Let us take the editor's own explanation of what happened and

then ask the question - "Was it a surrender?" He wrote:

Imagine then their [our church leaders] shock and disbelief when the government announced through its news media that Seventh-day Adventists, along with 79 other Protestant groups in Zaire, had been recognized and registered, not as a separate group, but as a part of the CCZ! This is how our church in Zaire came to have "the distinction. . . of being the only SDA group that is a part of a united church," as reported in Christianity Today.<sup>1</sup>

When this fact was learned by our leadership in Zaire, did they refuse to accept the government's mandate? Or did they accept the status imposed upon them by the State? What was said by the church leaders to the representatives of the State in response to this action has not been revealed, but it is a confirmed fact that the Seventh-day Adventist church of Zaire is a part of the united Church of Christ of Zaire (CCZ). What would you call this? I called it a surrender!

What a contrast is pictured between the reaction of our leaders to the announcement of the government of Zaire, and the reaction of the three men on the plain of Dura to the announcement of the government of Babylon. An invitation to come to the special dedication of a project of King Nebuchadnezzar was given the leadership of the provinces of the Empire. All responded. Imagine the shock of the three friends of Daniel when it was announced after their arrival that all had to bow in worship to that image, or else face the fiery furnace. How did they react? To the questioning of the King - "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do ye not serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?" - these men responded - "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. . . be it known unto thee, O king, we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou has set up."<sup>3</sup> Under such a witness, the God of heaven could respond and identify Himself with His beleaguered servants. Christ Himself stood with them in the furnace of fire!

It was Nebuchadnezzar's desire to consolidate his empire, and to show its continuity. Through the image designed - all of gold - and the act of worship,

he sought to establish an allegiance to himself that would thwart any divisive elements that might prove a threat to his sovereignty. A careful reading of Christianity Today indicates that a similar objective was behind the move in Zaire. The history of Zaire since its independence in 1960 has been marked by "one full scale rebellion, two *coup d'etats*, three military mutinies, and two abortive secessions."<sup>4</sup> The continuing development of many religious "prophetic movements, secret cults, and splinter churches" harbored, in the thinking of President Mobuto, a breeding ground for further insurrection. To unite the people religiously, would solve at least a part of the problem. Mobuto chose to place the Protestant groups under the head of one - Dr. I. (Jean) Bokambanza Bokeleale, president of CCZ - who "had linked church unity to politics since he took office in 1969. He preached that opposition to organic unity was tantamount to rebellion against the regime."<sup>5</sup> It was to this situation that we surrendered. And where does it place us? The next step from being a "community" within CCZ, with a degree of autonomy, is the full organic union within the CCZ. What justifiable reason can we give against such a move, since we acquiesced in the present situation? The editor of the Review admitted that "pressure is being exerted for payment of a membership fee to the CCZ."<sup>1</sup> Now what logic can be maintained that after joining the CCZ, we now say we cannot pay such a fee? We are caught in our own policy actions. Further, if we do not pay, could not the government step in and take the fee from the money placed on deposit? The road of compromise is a dead-end road leading to only one point - unconditional surrender!

In the second paragraph of his attack, the editor of the Review made a sweeping allegation writing - "Moreover, the attempt of this critic to connect the situation in Zaire with some aspect of the 'mark of the beast' is a gross distortion of theology."<sup>1</sup> This high sounding charge could only be made by taking out of context what I did write, which is not a very good evidence of sound scholarship. Here is what I did write in full context:

Too many of us "think far too favorably of this present time," warned the servant of the Lord. When we consider that the "mark of the beast" is in reality a mark of religious conformity, the events in Zaire, and our reaction to them should cause us to tremble. We are warned:

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands, and conformed to worldly customs, will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men." [5T:81]<sup>6</sup>

The ultimate as far as the mark of the beast is concerned is as we have always said, the acceptance of Sunday in the place of the Bible Sabbath. But what is that but religious conformity? It will not come in one single event to try the people of God. It will first be "urged upon us", rather than legislated. And those who have step by step yielded to the powers that be rather than stand in defense of the truth that God has given us, will not find it a hard matter to accept the ultimate mark. The reaction of our leaders to the events which took place in Zaire should cause us to tremble. It is a step in the direction of the ultimate compromise which will establish the mark of the beast! The mark of the beast will come through what is called, spiritually, Babylon in the book of Revelation. To link up as a part of Babylon, either willingly, or under government duress is a sell-out of the prophetic principles that have been given to us telling us to be separate in every respect from spiritual Babylon.

What justification is offered for what we have done in Zaire? Listen to this unbelievable statement by the editor - "*The church [in Zaire], as a supporter of law, accepts the legal and organizational status imposed upon it.*"<sup>1</sup> Need more be written as evidence as to how far we have gone in compromise and worldly policy, and rank apostasy! When the book of Revelation is once more understood as it should be, we shall have a different religious experience, and different editorial pronouncements in our general church paper.

Before us, as we approach the end of all things, will be a continual struggle to maintain the purity of truth against compromise with government edicts, subsidies and grants, and all other inducements that will be offered to corrupt our faith. On this point we are warned:

*There is a prospect before us of a continued struggle, at the risk of imprisonment, loss of property, and even life itself, to defend the law of God, which is made void by the laws of men. In this situation worldly policy will urge an outward compliance with the laws of the land, for the sake of peace and harmony.<sup>7</sup>*

The Word of God calls for His church to be fully separate from Babylon.<sup>8</sup> But the laws of Zaire place the church in with the CCZ, and we complied. The editor of the General Church paper now defends it in a pure worldly policy statement - the church as a supporter of law accepts the legal and organizational status imposed upon it by the State. Is this then the beginning of the fulfillment of what the servant of the Lord said would occur as we enter into the final phases of the contest between the commandments of God and the commandments of men?

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<sup>1</sup>Kenneth H. Wood, "F. Y. I." (Editorial) Review, April 19, 1973, p. 2

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Great Controversy, pp. 142-143

<sup>3</sup>Daniel 3:14, 16-18

<sup>4</sup>Robert L. Niklaus, "Politics Goes to Church in Zaire", Christianity Today, November 24, 1972, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 10

<sup>6</sup>William H. Grotheer, "A Cover Up?", "Watchman, What of the Night?" January, 1973, Special, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, p. 712

<sup>8</sup>Revelation 18:4

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