

"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

A LETTER AND A REPLY

Since the first Thought Paper was published in January, 1968, we have endeavored to keep each issue as free as possible of "personalities". What we have written which involved individuals was not regarding their personal idiosyncrasies, but only those acts for which all of us in responsible positions must stand accountable. We have at no time written behind one's back, but said what had to be said plainly and openly in a way which we believe that Christ would have said it. We do not profess to have achieved this objective perfectly, but we have tried to keep this goal ever before us.

When accusations and innuendos continue to be made behind one's back so that honest people might be deceived, it becomes necessary to speak forth so that the facts may be known, and that those persons who want to know, can know and make intelligent decisions in regard to the matter. The copy of the letter below is one exhibit of such behind-one's-back activity, and our reply follows.

General Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists
6840 Eastern Ave. NW, Washington D. C.

February 26, 1976

Division Presidents
Division Ministerial Secretaries

Dear Fellow Leaders:

I understand that one who styles himself Elder W. H. Grotheer has been sending you some of his material from time to time. I happen to be on his mailing list, too.

I understand from one or two of you men that you have been under the impression that this man is a Seventh-day Adventist minister in good and regular standing. I feel that it is the best thing for me to tell you that he is not a Seventh-day Adventist church member. He used to be a worker. He has been disconnected from the church for several years on what grounds I do not know, but his subsequent activities lead me to believe that the brethren must have had good grounds for separating him from the organized work.

He has set up his own organization, and he has done it in such a way that he can ordain his own ministers, grant them credentials, and do all of the other things that usually a church does. I think that the kind of material that he sends out is self-evident. If he were interested in the unity of the church and the preparation of a people for the coming of the Lord, he would not write in the caustic, critical manner in which he does.

I wish that you would warn the folk in your division and if he is sending his material out your way, you will know what to do with it. What a wonderful thing it would be if some of the people with mimeographs would direct their efforts into a finished work instead of pulling down.

God bless you all.

Cordially yours,

(Signed)

Robert H. Pierson

OUR REPLY

July 12, 1976

Elder Robert H. Pierson, President
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Takoma Park, Washington D. C., 20012

Dear Elder Pierson;

Your letter dated February 26, 1976 which was sent to all Division Presidents and Division Ministerial Secretaries has come to my desk. It is sad that it came in a round about way, and that you did not manifest enough Christian courtesy to send me a carbon copy when you sent it to each of these men. Before publishing any issue that I might have with you directly, I have, as I am doing now, written to you prior to such publication. Further, what I have had to say in regard to your official actions in monthly thought papers, I have placed you on the regular mailing list so that you might know just what had been written and why it was written. I have documented the same so that it could be verified. This is not the case with your letter which contains gross misrepresentations.

In your letter you state "that the brethren must have had good grounds for separating him from the organized work." The facts are that I took a voluntary leave of absence from the organized work. In a statement dated November 29, 1966 on official stationery, Elder H. H. Schmidt, President of the Southern Union Conference stated: - "This is to establish the fact that Wm. H. Grotheer left the employ of Old Madison College and the Southern Union Conference strictly on his own, June 1, 1965. He was in good and regular standing as a denominational worker when he took this voluntary leave of absence." Not only has this statement been written, but my credentials were maintained until 1967 by the Southern Union Conference, when at the Session in that

year, they were allowed to "lapse". At no time have my credentials ever been taken from me, nor requested from me.

You also state in your letter that "he has set up his own organization, and he has done it in such away that he can ordain his own ministers, grant them credentials." No where in our charter granted by the State of Mississippi, which is a public document by the way, nor in our By-Laws have we been granted the authority to ordain men to the ministry, neither have we attempted to do so! Our charter reads that we support that which is in harmony with "the tenets upon which the Seventh-day Adventist church is based, viz: the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White." We do have power to grant credentials to "any minister ordained according to the rites of the Seventh-day Adventist church." This was written into the charter so that any minister who seeks to speak forth against the evils prevailing in the church, and who can no longer receive support from the church because he chooses to so speak, may still continue to exercise his rights legally as an ordained minister of the Gospel.

My brother, if you cannot write honestly concerning your fellow men whom you can see, how can you write truthfully about Jesus Christ and the Father whom you have not seen?

In your letter you state that you do not know "what grounds" were given to disfellowship me from the church several years back. Has one of your division presidents been so derelict in his responsibilities that he did not inform you of the committee he appointed to hear the case, and did he not give you a copy of the report issued by the committee? Let me refresh your memory by outlining for you the facts involved.

When the charter of the Adventists Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi was granted, action was forthcoming to remove me from the church roll on the grounds of insubordination as I was not recognizing properly constituted church authority. It was first attempted by board action alone, and then under pressure of the fact that such was not in keeping with the Church Manual, a business meeting was called for the purpose. At this business meeting, attended by the local conference president, action to disfellowship me was taken without me being able to speak in my own defense as is guaranteed in the Church Manual. Interestingly, also, is the fact that not another single board member of the Foundation at that time, and none since, have been called in question as to their membership. If I were in "sin" because I was a member of the board, then were not all members of the same board also in "sin"?

So I appealed the unScriptural and unconstitutional action taken. A committee of administrators, pastors, and laymen was set up, who came to Mississippi to hear the case. They issued a report entitled - "Grotheer Hearing Committee". Among the recommendations made was that the Foundation be dissolved and that "any assets of the Foundation be paid over to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and an accounting be given of prior receipts and expenditures." In 1972, I was totally unaware that you and other church leaders were playing in the legal "crap game" the world uses with the money the laity entrusted to you. (I use the term, "crap game" because that is how a Seventh-day Adventist layman in good and regular standing, and who is himself a stock broker, described the transactions of the stock market.) Now let me assure you that at no time has the Foundation had enough money to cover the paper and/or real losses sustained by your administration in the stock market. Further, at no time have we had enough money to invest in such a game, and even if we did, we would not play the stock market. We believe that the funds placed with the Foundation are a sacred trust to be used in harmony with the will of God for this time so that His

people might be warned of the apostasy in high places.

Now there are other aspects of this Committee report that you may not know. In a letter from one of the members of the committee after the hearing, I was told that if I met the conditions noted in the above paragraph, and others such as personally recognizing myself as no longer a minister of the Gospel, then I could be restored to church membership "on a basis different than would be in the case in most circumstances." This was explained verbally to me by the individual to mean that I would not need to be rebaptized, nor make a profession of faith. Now let the implications of this fact sink into your thinking. Further, I received a letter from still another member of the same hearing committee which stated - "On several occasions he [Elder L. L. Bock, the chairman] made it emphatically clear that whatever the problem was, it was certainly not in the area of theology."

Now let us do a little reasoning together. You know that I was once a minister in the organization - some twenty-five years holding regular credentials, the prime years of my life. From your viewpoint, I am now a lost sheep of the house of Israel. Have you as the first minister of the church as you style yourself, adopted a shepherd's role, and made any attempt to find the "lost sheep"? If I am in a lost condition, should you not seek to rescue me as you encourage your ministers to seek the lost in the world? Did not Christ die for me, as well as for them? Is my soul of no value to you? Or are you afraid if we sat down together, you could not defend the heresy and error you have placed your imprimatur upon?

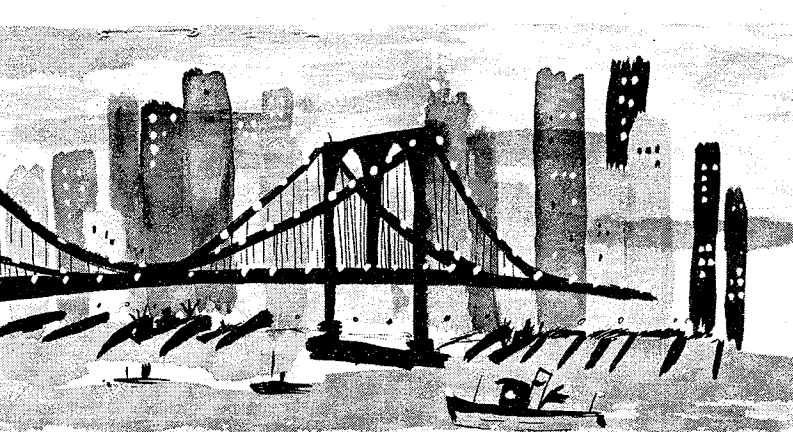
Elder Pierson it is time that you come clean with truth, and not continue to hide behind assumed ignorance and misrepresentations in dealing with your fellowmen for whom Christ died as well as you.

May the Lord help you to be intellectually honest and forthright, and what I request for you of the Lord, I ask likewise for myself.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Wm. H. Grotheer



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SPECIAL REPORT

OBSERVATION - #1

A tape recording of a presentation by Geoffrey J. Paxton on "The Reformation and Adventism" came to my attention this past week - July 15, 1976 - and I listened to it with a great deal of interest. Not only in the naming of names, but also in the analysis of the theological atmosphere within the Church, the presentation was very acute. Mr. Paxton divided what he called the theological "mentality" of the church into three categories; namely, the "Liberals" centered at Loma Linda, the "Traditionalists" as represented by the Review and General Conference leadership; (Do not confuse the term used by Paxton as synonymous with "historic" Adventism) and the Reformationists as represented at Andrews University and Avondale College in Australia, as well as Brinsmeadism itself.

One professor at Andrews University - Dr. Raoul Dederen - recommended a book by Bernard Ramm entitled - The Evangelical Heritage - commenting as quoted by Paxton - "It could have been written by an Adventist" - and that except for a minor point here and there in the book, he "subscribed unequivocally" to the theology of the book. Paxton read the book, and couldn't figure out in the last analysis "why Dederen wasn't an Evangelical in the technical sense of the term", or why he himself wasn't an Adventist if that was what Adventists believed. (Paxton is an Anglican clergyman, and a travelling partner with Robert D. Brinsmead.) I cite this from the taped message only to show how we are selling out our Adventist heritage for a bowl of Evangelical porridge served up by the theologians we have imported from the seminaries of Europe. Remember these are the men who are teaching our young ministers, who in turn are feeding you, the Laity, with adulterated concepts which are passed off for the truth!

The Main thrust of the message of Paxton lies in what he is holding out to the leadership of the Church. He stated that the Adventist Church - if they are willing to accept the theology of Dederen and LaRondelle at Andrews, and Ford at Avondale College in Australia - was standing on the threshold of a spiritual break-through which could enable the Church to make a real contribution to the Christian church at large. He pointed out that "P. T." (Present Truth, publication by Brinsmead) whose theology was synonymous to the "Reformationist mentality" within the Church, was widely accepted on the seminary campuses here in America, including Andrews University, and was making a great impact on the thinking of the leading lights of Evangelicalism. Even the editor of Christianity Today is reading "P. T." from a theological point of view. Furthermore, Paxton indicated that "P. T." had such a wide circulation, and reading clientele that it could no longer be ignored by the Church. This latter evaluation is true.

The closest parallel that I could think of between what Paxton was saying and the Bible itself was the experience of Christ in the Wilderness of Temptation. You will recall that the devil took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and suggested that He cast Himself down. To assure the Son of man that it would be alright, he quoted Psalm 91:11-12. But by comparing the actual words of the Inspired Psalmist and what the devil said he wrote, one finds that the words, "at any time", were added. (See Matt. 4:6) Now Paxton would have us believe that the messenger of the Lord endorses his theory of "justification by faith" by quoting her statement as found in the Review & Herald, April 1, 1890. But he, too, adds a word! The statement reads, and I place in brackets the word Paxton supplied:

Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith [alone] is the third angel's message, and I have answered, "It is the third angel's message in verity.

But while quoting Ellen G. White to give his position respectability, he also quotes Elder E. J. Waggoner and infers that he is teaching a false gospel in his presentation of righteousness by faith.

The second parallel between the Wilderness of Temptation and Paxton's appeal is that Christ was taken to a high mountain and showed the kingdoms of this world with the promise that if He would bow down to the devil, all could be His without the Cross. So Paxton suggests that if the leadership of the Church will bow down to Dederen, LaRondelle, Ford, Brinsmead, and Paxton, all the denominations and the glory of them could be the church's. Tragically, this is what the leadership of the Church has envisioned the "loud cry" to be - the Adventist Church accepted by the religious world and exalted before the eyes of the men of this world. This was the basis of the Barnhouse-Martin sell-out in the early fifties. We did not want to be considered a "sect" or a "cult". Paxton infers that this is still how we are viewed, by telling of a man he had interviewed who had written a book of the Cults which included Adventists. So now if we really want to get free from the stigma, join the cutting edge of the theology of Brinsmead, Ford, LaRondelle, Dederen, and all the churches will be ours. And because the Cross is too much of an offence to the administrative pride of men, we shall bow. Tragically, in the wrath of an offended God, "men, maidens, and little children all perish together." (5T:211).

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OBSERVATION - #2

[All comments made in this section, unless otherwise documented will be from a Preliminary Prospectus dated June 3, 1976, and issued by Morgan, Omstead, Kennedy, & Gardner, Inc., members of the New York Stock Exchange. The page quoted from this Prospectus will be placed in parentheses following the quotes. For example, (p.3)]

In harmony with a Declaration of Trust dated March 18, 1976, an Adventist Properties & Mortgage Trust was organized in California. This Trust was formed upon authorization by the General Conference Corporation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (p.5) While it was stated by the General Conference that this Trust "be operated independently of the Church", nevertheless, they advised "the Trust that the Trust will have first right of refusal. . . with respect to real estate financing transactions of entities owned or controlled by the Church." (p.5)

"The Trust has been formed to invest in properties or entities owned or controlled by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United States. Such properties include

office buildings, industrial properties, shopping centers, hospitals and other medical facilities, multi-family dwellings and educational institutions." (p. 3) "The affairs of the Trust will be managed by seven Trustees of whom four are affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church", however, the non-church members have veto power over all actions taken in regard to Church owned or controlled properties as such decisions must receive the majority vote of the "non-Church affiliated Trustees" (p.3).

The Adventist Trust Management Company, which is a general partnership "will advise the Trust with respect to investments and investment policy and will administer the day-to-day operations of the Trust, subject to the supervision of the Trustees." In this partnership, only one of the partners is a member of the Church. (p. 5) The Adventist member of this partnership, Mr. DeVere W. McGuffin II, will serve on the board of Trustees itself, and be Secretary-Treasurer of the Trust. (p. 20) For these services, the Management Company will receive annually between \$52,200 to \$181,800 depending on the amount of stock sold. (p. 5)

Other members of board of Trustees of the Trust include Elder Walter R. Beach, former Secretary of the General Conference and General Vice President. He will serve as Chairman of the Board. President of the Trust will be Elder Alvin G. Munson who is serving as President and Treasurer of the Adventist Radio-Television-Film Center. His choice to serve as a Trustee is most interesting. To finance the organization of this Trust, and to cover the costs of offering the stock, the Seventh-day Adventist Radio-Television-Film Center authorized a loan up to \$150,000 at 8.5% interest. Then as its initial investment, the Trust will loan back to the Adventist Radio-Television-Film Center under a first deed of trust up to \$3,000,000 for 19 acres of partially developed land located in Newbury Park, California. This will be secured by a 30 year note bearing an interest rate of 9.5%, plus a loan fee of 2%. (p. 15) Now it is stated that Elder Munson "will abstain from voting as a Trustee with respect to such transactions and any subsequent modification thereof" as has been noted above. (p.6) But he doesn't need to vote as a Trustee of the Trust, as he has used his influence as President and Treasurer of the Center itself!

For background, one needs to keep in mind that the Adventist-Radio-Film Center is a California Non-Profit Corporation which through its Television Operations Board controls Faith for Today, and It Is Written Telecast. Further through its interlocking Board Chairmen, it controls also the Voice of Prophecy operations. The Chairman, Elder F. W. Wernick, and Three Vice Chairmen, Elders Neal C. Wilson, Cree Sandefer, and Alvin G. Munson are the same on all controlling Boards, and where there are any variations in subcorporations, Elder Munson is both chairman and president of the Board of Directors. (See Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook, 1976, pp. 24-6)

In setting up this Trust, a minimum of \$5,000,000 and a maximum of \$17,000,000 in shares are being offered at \$10.00 per share, with a minimum purchase being \$1,000. These shares are being offered through the Underwriter, Morgan, Olmstead, Kennedy & Gardner, Inc., who "will receive a commission of 10% of the Offering Price upon the sale of the Shares." (pp. 32-33) This means simply that if the maximum offering is realized this company will receive \$1,700,000. Besides this, Parker Dale who is Senior Vice President and Director of Marketing of this stock broker company is also one of the non-Church members of the Trust.

There is another interesting aspect to what this Trust plans to do. The Prospectus states - "Entities of the Church [Conferences etc.] have interests in a wide range

of real estate located throughout the United States. Such interests range from fee simple title to leasehold interests." (p. 13) This latter investment of trust funds and other funds given by the laity to the Conferences lacks liquidity, and thus those conferences who have these monies in leasehold investments cannot convert readily in case of emergency. Now this new Trust which has set 80% of the appraised value of the property as the basis of mortgage loans, will give 100% in purchasing "lease back financing or other equity investments." (p. 3) As an example of "leasehold interests", some conferences have invested in the building of Federal Post Offices and then leased them to the government. "Equity Investments" are defined as "medical offices, shopping centers, office buildings, industrial buildings and multi-family dwellings units located on or near college and university campuses owned by entities of the Church." (p. 13)

The questions that could be asked in regard to what was the objective of the General Conference Corporation in authorizing this Trust could only be answered by an impartial probe of all the financial maneuvering of the hierarchy of the Church. Perhaps another article in the Review by the President of the General Conference would be timely, if this time instead of dwelling on the mimeograph press, he would be specific, honest and forthright. Otherwise, those who are interested might wish to write to Adventist Properties & Mortgage Trust, Lemmon Bldg., 1500 East Chevy Chase Dr., Glendale, California, 91206. The response and material you might receive, we would appreciate copies of the same for further evaluations to share with our readers. Send all such communications to P. O. Box 178, Lamar, Arkansas, 72846.

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WHAT SAITH THE LORD?

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"
II Cor. 6:14

"This means in a special sense, marriage with unbelievers, but it covers more ground than this: it means in our instrumentalities ordained of God, in our institutions for health, in our colleges, in our publishing houses. . .

"You are not in any case to become contaminated with the spirit or influence of unbelievers. Be afraid of uniting or binding up in bundles with them. Be afraid of communicating the works connected with the Lord's cause, to those who have no part with God, or sympathy with those who love the truth of God." Test. to Min., pp.271-2

"The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given to us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is our work. The world is to be warned, and God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them. They are not to engage in speculations, neither are they to enter into business enterprises with unbelievers; for this would hinder them in doing the work given them."
Counsels on Stewardship, p. 38

A Definition: "The word fellowship means participation, partnership. God employs the strongest figures to show that there should be no union between worldly parties and those who are seeking the righteousness of Christ."
Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 476