

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Psalm 25:14

Highlights From the General Conference Session in Toronto

The 57th General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists took place June 29 through July 8 this year. Unfortunately it was “business as usual.” While there were no earth shaking events at the conference, there were some business and events that received notice from several different observers.

Paulsen Elected GC President

The session began with the election of Jan Paulsen. Elder Paulsen had filled the unexpired term of Robert Folkenburg who had resigned amidst allegations of corruption.

Images

A series of sculptures by Victor Issa was unveiled at Toronto. These were fashioned to represent the second coming of Christ. The main sculpture has ten people (one representing each continent) looking in the same direction as if viewing Jesus coming back. One of the ten is lifted about the rest as if already rising up to meet the Master. Two other sculptures depicted angels. One of these presents an angel holding a toddler-size infant. The angel definitely has a female appearance. The other sculpture depicts Christ’s second coming surrounded by angels. Two of the angels are blowing trumpets. We have been counseled that “Neither God nor heaven nor Christ, who is the image of the Father, can be truly represented by the art of man. . . . We need not any external representations of the person of Christ.” (*The Publishing Ministry*, p. 220)

These statues or images were very popular with the people. Sadly, these images do not uplift the spiritual mind. When I first viewed the images on the church’s web site, I thought the woman who is supposed to be rising in the group of ten, was naked. Upon closer examination, it can be seen that she is supposed to be clothed, but so done in a manner to appeal to the lower passions. The workers who were in Toronto passing out literature, that saw the image, also came to the same conclusion. The image of the female angel was clothed in a similar manner. Yet the

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Newsletters now available by E-mail

We wish to remind our readers that *Old Paths* and *Present Truth*, as well as nearly all the books we publish, are available on the Internet at <http://www.smyrna.org>.

Several readers have been asking if we could send *Old Paths* and/or *Present Truth* by e-mail as well as, or in place of, postal mail. To help with this need we are currently compiling an Internet mailing list for those who would like to receive the *Old Paths* and/or *Present Truth* in Adobe Acrobat PDF (Portable Document Format.) The software to view the files is available as a free download from Adobe at: <http://www.adobe.com>

If you may e-mail your requests to request@smyrna.org.

Editor

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WITNESSING REPORT FROM THE TORONTO GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

by Lynnford Beachy

(The events you will read about in the following, thrilling report from Brother Lynnford Beachy were possible due to the prayers and faithful support of the saints whom the Lord used to provide for the large amount of literature that was distributed. When you read this report, remember that you helped to make it possible. We would also like to acknowledge the Smyrna family who worked so hard to help get the materials ready, especially Sister Ann Ford who labored long and hard at the book making machine. Please pray that the literature distributed will be read and the message received.

Editor)

On June 29-July 8 the Seventh-day Adventist Church held their 57th General Conference session in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. My family and I had planned to visit the session to distribute literature. A few weeks prior to the session the Lord moved upon the hearts of several others to go to Toronto and help with the literature distribution. Malcolm McCrillis and Benjamin Vela arrived here at Smyrna the day before our departure. We loaded our vans with literature and traveled together up to Toronto.

We arrived in Toronto on Wednesday, June 28, with 10,000 books entitled *Who is Telling the Truth About God?* by David Clayton. This book documents what the Bible says about the doctrine of God, then it documents that Ellen White and the early Adventist pioneers were in agreement with the Scriptures and then contrasts the truth about God with the teachings of the corporate Adventist Church, independent ministries, and the Roman Catholic Church.

We also had 1,000 books entitled *What Did the Pioneers Believe?* which documents the beliefs of the early Adventists on the truth about God. We also had 2,300 books entitled *The Formulation of the Doctrine of the Trinity*. We had inserted each of these books with the flier entitled "The Truth About God." Along with all these books we also had about 20,000 fliers entitled "Help Stop Religious Intolerance" and 8000 extra of "The Truth About God" fliers. Needless to say, we had a large amount of work to do to get all this material distributed.

We arrived in Toronto on Wednesday, June 28, and the Lord provided us with a place to park our vans right next to the Skydome where the session was being held. Even though most of the hotels in the area had been booked for months, the Lord also provided a hotel for us within walking distance of the Skydome. We were very thankful for God's watch care over us.

THURSDAY

The following day we attended the first meeting of the GC Session at 3 p.m. A devotional study was presented to begin the session, followed by the first business meeting. Shortly after the opening business meeting began most of the people started to exit the stadium. At this time we went outside to begin distributing the literature. The Lord blessed us with good success right outside the Skydome where many people were walking back and forth.

Our backpacks emptied very quickly and Brother McCrillis had to make several trips to the van to keep us supplied with literature. With God's blessing, we were able to get out about 3,000 copies of *Who is Telling the Truth About God?* even though we were harassed by security guards. A security guard asked some of our group to stop passing out literature on their property. This security guard directed them to a place where they could distribute literature. This was to be repeated several times. However, it seemed that each time we were moved, we were directed to a better spot to pass out the literature. Within the small area where the meetings were being held there were three separate portions of property: the Skydome on the west, the CN Tower in the center, and the Convention Center on the east—all of which were owned by different people. So when the security from the CN Tower moved us off their area, they said they could do nothing if we were on Skydome property and when the the Skydome security moved us they said they could do nothing if we were on CN Tower property. To make it even more challenging for the security guards there were several areas where there was some debate as to who owned the property or if it was public property. All of this worked out to our advantage for

the first few days. We will share more about this later in the report.

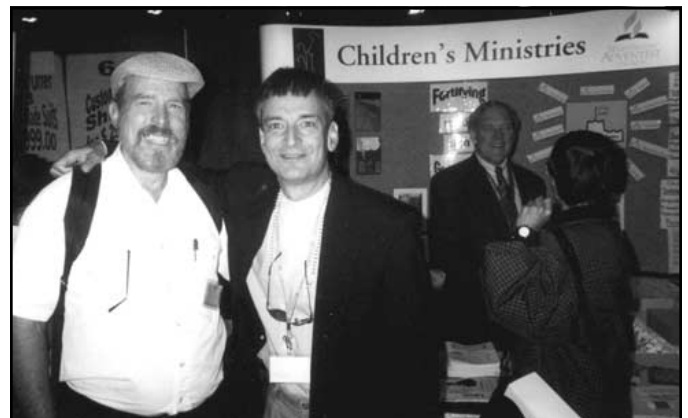
CONTACT WITH SOME OF THE LEADERS

The Lord blessed us with opportunities to meet some of the Adventist Church leaders and share with them some of our literature. Benjamin Vela approached Dwight Nelson, senior pastor of Pioneer Memorial Church at Andrews University, with the literature but he would not accept it. I also tried to give Dwight Nelson the literature twice with the same response. Ben approached Doug Batchelor, speaker and director of Amazing Facts, with the literature and he would not take it either. Later that evening Malcolm and I approached Doug Batchelor and he said he did not want the literature because he had already studied the subject. Malcolm asked, "Have you read this book?" Doug said, "I think I have that book already." Malcolm replied, "This is a brand new book, I am sure you don't have this one yet." Doug then accepted the book and said, "I have studied all of this out before. I almost became a Jehovah's Witness because of it." Malcolm said, "The Jehovah's Witnesses believe Christ was created and there is a big difference between that and what the early Adventists taught." Doug said, "Yeah I know, I have heard all the arguments. I really have to get going."

Later that night as we were leaving our vans for the hotel we met a pastor from Jamaica. We happened to be walking the same direction so we had a nice talk about Jamaica and other things. He said he is a pastor of six churches in Jamaica. I handed him a book and said, "This was written in Jamaica." He asked, "Who wrote it?" I answered, "Pastor David Clayton in Manchester near West Indies College." He said, "I think I know David. Isn't he a pastor of an independent group?" I said, "Yes, he is" and asked him, "Do you remember some articles that were printed in the Jamaican newspaper entitled 'Strange church arises in the West' about a church that offered human sacrifices and drank blood and many other terrible things?" He answered, "Yes, I remember that." I informed him that those articles were written about David Clayton and his group, *but they were lies*. He responded, "So those stories were not true?" I answered, "No, they were very far from the truth. They were written because some people were angry with David Clayton's group for spreading the truth across the island." I encouraged him to read the book, and we parted.

Malcolm noticed that George Knight, professor of history at Andrews University, walked by us on our way back to our hotel. Benjamin and I greeted him, offering him a free book. He was very friendly and cordial to us. Benjamin pointed out to George that he was quoted in the book we were distributing (*Who is Telling the Truth About God?*) and said, "We would like to know if you are quoted accurately in this book." Ben turned to the place where he was quoted and let George read it. It said, "Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination's Fundamental Beliefs. More specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the Trinity." (George Knight, *Ministry Magazine*, October 1993, p. 10) George said, "Yes, you quoted me correctly, but you should have quoted a little more of it where I dealt with the nature of Christ."

We gave George the book and pulled out a copy of *What Did the Pioneers Believe?* and asked him if he had seen this book. He said that he believed he had a copy but he would like to take one to make sure he had it in his library. I also gave him a copy of the July 1999 issue of *Old Paths* which addresses the article regarding the early Seventh-day Adventists and their beliefs regarding the Trinity, written by Jerry Moon and printed in the April 22, 1999 issue of *Adventist Review*. George assured us that he would read all the material we gave him, but counseled us to go and start our own church and work for the unconverted world and leave the denomination alone. As much as we appreciate this counsel and do work and pray much for the unconverted, we still have a special burden for members of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. "*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*" (Romans 10:1)



Malcolm McCrillis with Clifford Goldstein

Malcolm also saw an old friend of his—Clifford Goldstein, editor of *Liberty* magazine. Elder Goldstein gladly took a copy of *Who is Telling the Truth About God?*.

FRIDAY

The next day the Lord blessed us with another good day to distribute literature. We were able to get out about 3,000 more copies of David's book. One thing that hindered us was that someone started a false rumor that we were part of the "Shepherd's Rod" movement, associated with the Branch Davidians who were burned up at Waco a few years ago. This stigma was not helpful to our cause. Even though we assured people that we were not in any way connected with the "Shepherd's Rod" movement many people cried out when they were near us, "That's Shepherd's Rod material, don't take it from them." We had sev-



After being harassed at first, the Branch Davidians—Shepherd's Rod were allowed to stay and even play taped messages!

eral people so sure we were Shepherd's Rod that when we assured them that we are not, they argued with us saying we were lying and that we really were Shepherd's Rod. It was challenging for us to work in these conditions, but the Lord still blessed.

One man came up to me saying that what I was distributing was error and I should go home. I asked him if he had read the book. He said, "I don't have to, I know if it is being distributed out here [meaning outside the Skydome where the official meetings were held] it is no good." I told him about how the Adventist Church had accepted the Trinity doctrine and that we are reprinting the writings of the pioneers to let people know that the early Adventists were non-trinitarian. He stayed near me for a while telling

everyone around me not to take the literature. Pretty soon two ladies joined him in his goal to keep people from receiving the literature. When I ran out of books I went to get more and Malcolm took over while I distributed literature in another location. Shortly afterward three men came up to the people who were opposing us and adamantly argued in favor of our position, stating that the trinity doctrine was a Catholic invention and should not be part of our beliefs. As quickly as these men came they left, and our opposition left as well. We were again able to distribute the literature freely. We thanked the Lord for sending some help in time of need.

Later that day we met Marvin Moore, editor of *The Signs of the Times*. We talked a little and I gave him the same material I had given George Knight. He was very friendly and said he would read the literature. Please pray that this material will be a blessing to these precious souls.

That evening the Lord provided reinforcements by sending Elder Willis Smith, Steve Sutton, the Kritzell family, and the Arredondo family to help distribute literature. We were very thankful for the much needed help.

SABBATH

The following day we all met together shortly before noon while the meetings were still in progress. A few of our group went in and saw the incredibly large number of people who were there. The Skydome was almost full with approximately 50,000 people. Most of the lunch tickets had been purchased the day before so when the meeting was over most of those people were headed to the large eating facility. To get there they had to cross a bridge that was about thirty feet wide. This bridge happened to be one of the areas where it was not clear who owned the property. Even the police were not sure. A huge crowd of people began to press across the bridge. Several of our group pressed close to the side of the bridge distributing literature to the now slow moving crowd. The bridge was covered shoulder to shoulder with people. We could only reach those who were on the far left side of the bridge. Every once in a while someone would come through yelling "Shepherd's Rod material, don't take it." We tried our best to convince them otherwise. One thing that helped us in this task was that the Shepherd's Rod had arrived and we could hold up a piece of their literature and say, "Shepherd's Rod are here somewhere but they are distributing this other literature."



Lynnford passing out literature on the bridge

One highlight of the experiences on the bridge was that every once in a while some of the people near the middle of the crowd wanted literature but there was no way they could get over to get it, so we handed it to people who relayed it to the people in the center. This made the distribution go much faster. A man came through the crowd at two different times near the middle of the bridge and motioned for me to give him a handful of books. As fast as I could get them to him he distributed them among the crowd. I refilled his hands several times before he was beyond where I could get them to him. Later on this man said, "I don't know what the literature was, but I thought the people needed to get a chance to see it." I was very encouraged by this.

Another incident that was very encouraging was when my wife and I met two young men who wanted to understand what we were doing and why. When I started sharing about the Trinity doctrine the one young man said, "You are right, I have studied the Bible and I cannot find the Trinity in there." His friend Josiah was not convinced, however. He had joined the Adventist Church eight months earlier, and was very eager to follow God's will. He wanted to know why the trinity issue was so important. I gave him some literature and explained to him that Christ truly is the Son of God and He died



Debbie sharing a book

completely for our sins. At the end of the conversation Josiah said, "My brother, I am going to study this out and if you are right about this I will be right there with you helping you preach it, but if you are wrong, I will pray for you." My wife and I both enjoyed conversing with these young men and appreciated their dedication to God and His truth.

On Sabbath we were again able to distribute about 3,000 more copies of *Who is Telling the Truth About God?*. In the evening we moved to the southeast side of the Skydome and decided to bring out our 1,000 copies of *What Did the Pioneers Believe?*. These books were gone in about half an hour. Many people had already received the other book, so they were glad to get something new. We also were able to get out about 1,000 copies of *The Formulation of the Doctrine of the Trinity* at that time.

MORE OPPOSITION

That evening a man came up to 15-year-old Nicholas Arredondo and said, "I suggest you go put down that literature before I call security." He then came up to me and said the same thing. I answered, "Go ahead, I have already spoken with them." He acted a little surprised and got out a cell phone to make a call. A few minutes later he was gone and we never saw him again. Nicholas told me, "If nobody comes in two minutes I will be right back out there helping you." True to his word, Nicholas was out there in a few minutes, and security gave us no more trouble that night. Nicholas had several good experiences witnessing for his faith, giving an answer for the hope that is in him.

It was still a little difficult for us to distribute literature because people associated us with the Shepherd's Rod group who were now all around us distributing literature. They had big flip charts with pictures of the beasts of Revelation and tables set up with big stereos playing some of their taped sermons. Ironically, they didn't seem to be getting much trouble from the security guards. We were located on the southeast side of the Skydome in front of a large fountain. This was another spot that was being debated as to who owned the property. Some of the security guards and police officers said it belonged to the CN Tower, some said it belonged to Skydome, and still others claimed it was public property.

That night I became a little discouraged. There were a few Adventists from another country who came up to me and said, "I can't believe you are distributing that literature here. What you need is a good beating. If you were in my country we would give you a



Nicholas and Cindy passing out literature on the bridge

beating.” I just continued distributing the literature, but these people would not leave. They got around me and said I needed a beating and stayed right near me. It felt as if evil angels were surrounding me—I wanted to get away. I walked several feet away and continued distributing the literature, but these people just stayed nearby watching me, and talking, for about half an hour. The Lord blessed, though, and protected me from harm. I was glad that God had promised that “The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” (Psalms 34:7) I was still able to get out some literature that night. Later that night I found out that my wife, who had been resting in the hotel, awoke about the time these men came and obeyed a strong impression to pray for me. I thank the Lord for the way He works in every situation. It made me think of a time in the near future when we will get much worse than a beating for standing up for the truth. Yet I know the Lord will be with us.

SUNDAY

By Sunday morning we had distributed nearly all the books we had brought with us. We had three very long days of exhausting work behind us, and we were very tired and worn out. Malcolm McCrillis, Willis Smith, and Benjamin Vela had to leave that morning. We were all very glad they had been able to help with the task—they were very valuable help in distributing the literature.

On Sunday we began distributing the flier entitled “Help Stop Religious Intolerance.” This flier was a reprint of a study that appeared in the June 2000 issue

of *Old Paths* entitled “Religious Liberty Forsaken,” by Allen Stump. It deals with the concept of religious liberty and how it was compromised by the denomination in suing Pastor Rafael Perez and the Eternal Gospel Church in Miami, Florida for using the name “Seventh-day Adventist.”

On Sunday afternoon, after helping distribute more literature, the Kritzell family had to leave. They were a very big help in distributing the literature.

POLICE INTERVENTION

Unfortunately, on Sunday we had more trouble than ever from the security guards who called the police over to where we were and told us to leave. I asked the police officer where I could pass out literature on public property.

He said, “The nearest public property where you can pass out literature is down there by the lake [Ontario].” I said, “Sir, but aren’t there public sidewalks nearby where we can distribute literature?” He said, “Now we are not going to get into that are we? You’re not going to argue with me about this are you?” I replied, “I just want to know where I can find some public property.”



This time Lynnford is passing out literature, to a friendly group of Adventist.

I was quite discouraged, but decided we would gather up our things and go out on a street corner where there was some traffic from the convention. As I was gathering up the literature my wife came up to me and said that she had just talked with another officer who said we did not have to leave, so we continued where we were for a time. Pretty soon the security guard came over to where we were and said we had to get off the property. She told us that we had to move about twenty feet closer to the road, on the sidewalk,

which was public property. She said she could not do anything to us if we passed out the literature there. In a friendly manner she said, *“It’s not the security guards who have a problem with you distributing this literature. If this were a football game you could pass out that literature anywhere you wanted. The people who are renting the Skydome have called me several times, bugging me to get you to stop passing out this literature. I don’t understand why they have a problem with it, but I am just doing my job.”* At this time she also made the Shepherd’s Rod people get off the property, along with some people from Hartland Institute who were distributing an invitation to some meetings they were having with Rafael Perez as a guest speaker.

We tried distributing the literature from the sidewalk, but there were only a very few people who came out that far. Most of the people were walking on the large walkway between the convention center and the Skydome. A couple of us went to the front of the building where we were able to distribute several hundred books and fliers.

By this time everyone was extremely exhausted and we decided to take the counsel of some of our brethren and take the next day off. This gave us an opportunity to rest and attend to other temporal matters.

TUESDAY

On Tuesday we returned to the Skydome to find that the Shepherd’s Rod people were still there but they were no longer on the sidewalk, but in front of the fountain from which we had all been banned on Sunday. They were right out in front of the fountain with all their signs, tables and radios just as before, yet they were having no trouble with the security!

My wife and I were able to locate a couple of police officers and ask them if it was all right for us to distribute literature in front of the fountain. They asked, “What type of literature are you passing out?” I showed him one of the “Help Stop Religious Intolerance” fliers and explained to him that it was a paper explaining the principles of religious freedom. He said, “You are the ones being intolerant by passing this literature out here.” I explained that it dealt with religious intolerance and protested the action of the General Conference in their lawsuit against Rafael Perez for using the name “Seventh-day Adventist.” I told him that Rafael Perez had full page ads printed in many newspapers across the country where he used quotations from a Seventh-day Adventist book entitled *The Great Controversy* to reveal the identity of the antichrist and the church is suing him for using



Ben passing out literature.

their name. The police officer was not sympathetic. He said, “By passing this literature out you are being intolerant of other’s beliefs. You cannot pass out the literature here. If you want to pass it out on public property you can do it, but if any fights break out, or any other problems arise you are the one we are going to take to jail.” I asked him what would happen if the security called the police if they found us distributing literature on their property. He admonished, “You have already been warned, so we would take you to jail.”

That evening my family and I worked on the north side of the convention, on the sidewalk, while the Arredondo’s stayed on the south side by the fountain. On the north side the distribution of literature went quite well. We were able to get out about four hundred books without any trouble from security.

WEDNESDAY

The next day we put literature on the cars in the parking lots in the area. We asked for permission from the people running the parking lots, and were able to distribute a lot of literature in that way.

By this time we were all a little discouraged by the way we had been received, and Debbie prayed that the Lord would send some encouragement. About that time we met a man walking down to his car, and Nicholas handed him one of *The Formulation of the Doctrine of the Trinity* books. The man asked, “So you don’t believe in the Trinity?” Nicholas paused, expecting the usual response to his answer, then said, “No sir, I don’t.” He said, “Good, it is not taught in the Bible.” Nicholas was a little shocked to hear such an encouraging answer. The man said, “I study the Bible very deeply and the Trinity is not found there.” We had a nice conversation with him. This was an answer



Alisha Kritzell sharing a book.

to Debbie's prayer. One thing that made this experience even more special was that we were in a four level parking garage and only saw about ten people the whole time we were putting the books on cars. This man was the only person around at that time, and he was a non-trinitarian.

We met several other non-trinitarians, but space does not allow us to cover every experience. We met several people from Jamaica who know David Clayton, many of whom were non-trinitarian.

That night the Arredondos again returned to the south side of the convention, and my wife and I went to the north side. There we met a Bible worker from Chicago. She said that she does not believe in the Trinity and wanted me to explain what I believed. As I shared, she listened with interest and said she would read all the literature given her. At the same time my wife, Kendra, was talking with two young men from Loma Linda University, one of whom was a trinitarian, and the other a non-trinitarian. The non-trinitarian said that nearly half the Bible scholars there at the university do not believe in the Trinity. I would like to be able to verify that report.

We were able to get about 500 books and tracts out that day. However, judging from the way we were being harassed by the security, and the drastic decrease in the amount of literature we were able to distribute, we decided it was no longer profitable to stay longer, and to make that our last day of literature distribution and leave for home the next day.

THURSDAY

The following day we attended a meeting sponsored by Hartland Institute and Hope International that was being held a few blocks from the GC Session. Rafael

Perez was the speaker of the hour and he recounted some of the events surrounding the trial in Miami, Florida where a lawsuit had been filed against him for using the name Seventh-day Adventist. I gave some literature to Rafael, and he had already received some of the literature from Benjamin Vela in Miami.

Colin Standish, Hal Mayer, and Clark Floyd all received some literature from us, and I gave a couple books to a man who promised to get them to Ron Spear, who was not present at the meeting we attended. I pray the literature will be beneficial to these dear souls.

Rafael shared that the following day one of the Toronto newspapers would print his full page "Earth's Final Warning," along with an open letter from Rafael Perez to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Rafael said that for several weeks the General Conference had been calling the Toronto newspapers asking them not to print anything from Rafael Perez. After trying many newspapers, Rafael contacted the *Toronto Tribune* which agreed to print his article. The next day he and several others distributed about 10,000 copies of the newspaper ad at the GC Session. Unfortunately, I was not around the next day to see how the distribution of that paper was received.

That afternoon my family and I left Toronto and headed home. All in all the Lord blessed us richly in our efforts, and I pray that many others will be blessed also.

OVERVIEW

Five years ago at the 1995 GC Session 4,000 books were distributed that reveal the truth about God. Through that avenue many people from all over the world have come to understand, accept, and appreciate God's love more fully. Please pray with us that the literature distributed at the 2000 Session will have an even greater impact upon the world. Thanks to the Lord working through several faithful brothers and sisters we distributed fifty-six cases of literature at the 2000 GC Session. Praise the Lord!

THE DANGER OF BLINDLY FOLLOWING LEADERS

One thing I learned from this experience is the incredible dependance many Seventh-day Adventists have upon their leadership to tell them what is truth. I pray this attitude will be removed from all of God's people. We had a great many people tell us that they only wanted to receive literature that was approved by the General Conference. They said, "We get all we need in there, we don't need it if you have to distribute it

outside.” Some said, “Go get a booth in the exhibit hall and then we will take it.” (Brother Stump had called three times to try to arrange for a booth but no one would ever return his call.) Some said, “We don’t need any of that garbage.” I asked, “How do you know it is garbage, have you read it?” They answered, “I don’t need to read it, if it is being passed out outside, I know it is bad.” These reactions were startling to me. I have helped distribute a lot of literature at the Promise Keepers conventions and other large Christian meetings, and I have never had such a response from the people. I was even at the Pope’s visit to St. Louis, Missouri in 1999, and we were much better received there by the large Catholic crowd.

The Catholic leadership uses what is called an imprimatur on all of their officially approved books, to ensure to Catholics that it is approved reading for a Catholic. An imprimatur is used to signify “Official approval or license to print or publish, especially under conditions of censorship. 2. a. Official approval; sanction. b. A mark of official approval: a directive bearing the imprimatur of high officials.”

(*The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, Third Edition copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company) Books that teach official Catholic doctrine carry an imprimatur. An example of an imprimatur can be found on the book entitled *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuel Bacchiocchi. It carries the official Catholic imprimatur from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Right on the cover there is a picture of the papal triple crown with two keys crossed under it representing the keys to heaven and hell.



The imprimatur on the book: *From Sabbath to Sunday*

After the meetings in Toronto I could see that there were at least some Seventh-day Adventists who would probably appreciate it if the Seventh-day Adventist Church would adopt a similar way of marking their approved books to ensure the safety of anything they may wish to read.

However, the Bible says, “*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*” (1 Thessalonians 5:21) John wrote, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but *try the spirits whether they are of God:* because many false

prophets are gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1) How can we prove all things if we do not examine all things? How can we try the spirits to see if they are of God if we reject them before trying them? Solomon wisely wrote, “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.” (Proverbs 18:13)


Please keep all these precious souls, for whom Christ died, in your prayers. The Lord has a work to do that is not finished yet, but He will finish it soon. Praise the Lord for that! I pray that you enjoyed reading this brief account of our experiences in Toronto. I am sorry for not recounting more of our experiences, but memory fails me, and space and time limit me, in the task of relaying to you our experiences. Keep looking up, for your redemption draweth nigh! ✍

STOP TRACTS

While God greatly blessed with the distribution of literature at Toronto, we still have several of the tracts on Religious Liberty which we nicknamed, “Stop Tracts.”

For those within the United States, we have included one of these tracts in this mailing, and we wish to offer more of them free to any who can and will help distribute them. They carry a very important, eye-opening message and we encourage all to share these with their Adventist friends. If you would like a bundle of 50, 100, or more, just write, e-mail, or phone in your request and we’ll share them as long as the supply lasts. ✍

Help



Religious Intolerance

“And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.” (Luke 9:49, 50)

When our Saviour walked upon the earth He earnestly sought to change men’s hearts from stone to flesh. He healed the sick, raised the dead, comforted the sorrowful, and brought peace to the distressed. But there was one thing that Jesus Christ never did. He never, never, used force to enlist men and women into His kingdom. Neither did He ever ask or request the civil government to enforce His teachings or wishes. In fact, our Saviour taught that the church was not to be involved with the affairs of the state.

When John told the Master that a man was casting out demons in Jesus’ name but didn’t follow with them, John said that he “forbad him.” Jesus did

Reformation of Christian Unity

(This study is based on the tenth chapter of A. T. Jones' book, Lessons from the Reformation. It has been edited and adapted by Ben Vela. Editor)

When the students at the University of Miami fill the chapel, sometimes their chaplain is a Methodist minister and at other times an Episcopal minister fills the pulpit. As many Christian denominations nationwide share both clergy and traditions, it's getting more difficult to tell if the minister is Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, or a preacher of the United Church of Christ. In this new millennium, the ecumenical movement has made it appear that all the mainline denominations are seeking the unity of John 17, that Christ's followers "may all be one." Unity is thought to be the key to survival as donations and offerings drop off in many churches. Their hope is in a common purpose to be the tie that binds a blessed union of success. While many denominations are comparing notes, the unions that are formed often leave truth and right with the appearance of confusion. *Because resources are shared and old condemnations are retracted, the feud between denominational traditions has become blurred under a cloak of unity.*

John Huss said: "Christ alone is the all-sufficient Head of The Church. The Church needs no other. And therein consists its unity." He also said, "All true unity must have its foundation in Christ."

Here is the following standard definition of the "Mark of Unity" of the Roman church:

"This unity is two-fold; it comprises:

"1.) Unity of doctrine and faith, which consists in the common accord of all the Faithful in admitting and believing all that the teaching Church proposes to them as revealed or confirmed by Jesus Christ.

"2.) Unity of government, which produces unity of communion, and which consists in the submission of all the faithful to their respective bishops and in particular to the Roman Pontiff, supreme Head of the Church.

"To break the unity of faith, by rejecting even only one point of doctrine, constitutes heresy; to break the unity of government, by rejecting the authority of the legitimate heads, produces schism." (*Christian Apologetics*, Section 313.)

Christian unity is different from that. Christian unity is far more than any unity of Christians upon a platform of belief, doctrine, or of principles. True

Christian unity is far above that. Combine the unity of submission to church government, or any unity for a cause, or association, or brotherhood of Christians; and heavenly unity is far higher than that. Christian oneness is far more than all unity of denomination, or of federation, even if all the Christians in the world were *united*.

"Christ alone is the all-sufficient Head of The Church. The Church needs no other. And therein consists its unity."

Christian unity is nothing less than the divine unity itself, "The unity of the Spirit." (Ephesians 4:3) Note that it is not unity from the Spirit. Nor is it a unity of people, derived from the Spirit. Nor yet is it, primarily, a unity that is caused among people by their possessing the Spirit. It is "the unity of the Spirit" of God Himself. "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3) Christian unity, then, is only the divine unity, as that unity is in the Divinity and of the Divinity Himself!

See this in the Scriptures of Truth, for there it is plainly stated. First, in the Saviour's promise of the Comforter: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (John 14:16-20) There is Christian unity. There is "the unity of the Spirit." It is the unity of the individual Christian with, and in, the Father and the Son. This unity is accomplished by the mighty grace of "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost." And just to accomplish this divine unity is the primary purpose and the grand object in the gift of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit is holy, because God is holy. This Spirit is the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ. It is not two Spirits, but is One Spirit, the One Divine Unity of the Father and His Son.

This is plain in the Scripture again as shown in the prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19: "That He would grant

you, . . . to be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man; that” — so that, in order that — “Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; . . . that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”

Next, read the Saviour’s prayer for Christian unity: and see there the same thought expressed: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on Me through their word: that they all may be one.” That is the prayer. How is that prayer to be fulfilled? How is that unity to be accomplished? What is the real key of it? Here it is: “That they all may be one:

(1) “As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, THAT” — so that, in order that — “they may be one IN US.” (2) “And the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them, THAT” — so that, in order that — “they may be one, EVEN AS We are One.” (3) “I in them, and Thou in Me, THAT” — so that, in order that — “they may be made perfect in One.” (John 17:21-23)

So, He tells how unity is to be found. Here is its key, its idea: only in unity with the Father and with the Son, in the very unity of the Father and the Son, is Oneness. That, and that alone, is Christian unity. Christian unity then is nothing less and nothing else than the divine unity itself, as that unity is in the very Godhead. The unity of the Godhead is the unity of Spirit, in the Spirit; for the Godhead is only Spirit, and it is the Spirit of the Father. For the Father shares His divine nature with His Son in an infinite way, whereas a human father would share with his son in a finite way. Thus God the Father has shed upon His Son His Divine Spirit, so that His Son has the same fullness of Divinity that His Father has. Therefore, the Father and Son are one in purpose, mind and character because God, the Father, has given all the fullness of the Godhead to His Son. Then in and through His real Son He imparts all blessing to us, that in His Son we may be one with them.

All who “have been made to drink into this one Spirit,” (1 Corinthians 12:13) of the “one Lord,” through the “one faith” of the one Christ, and of the “one God and Father of all,” (Ephesians 4:5, 6) and who are possessed of this “one Spirit,” and “live” and “walk” “in the Spirit,” — all these are one in Him and with Him in the very “unity of the Spirit,” which is the divine unity itself.

Besides, see this description of Christian Fellowship. “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us: and truly *our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.* . . . This then is the message which

we have heard of Him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship *with Him* and walk in darkness we lie and do not the truth: but if we walk in the Light *as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another.*” (1 John 1: 3-7)

By this Scripture it is plain that Christian fellowship is not *primarily* fellowship with *one another*; *but first fellowship with the Father and with the Son.* Then fellowship with one another is the consequence of this fellowship with the Father and the Son. It is only when Christians “walk in the light as He is in the light,” it is only when we have “fellowship with Him,” that “we have fellowship one with another.” That light is God. Walking in the Light is walking in God. Thus, we have fellowship with Him: and having fellowship with Him we have it with one another. And this Life and Light is “declared” in order that, having the Life, and walking in the Light, we may have fellowship with Him: and this in order that we may have fellowship with those whose fellowship is,” primarily, “with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

Christian fellowship is not *primarily* fellowship with *one another*; but *first* fellowship with *the Father and with the Son.*

Ephesians 2:11-18 speaks of breaking down separations, and disagreements, when God would put an end to the enmities, and spites, and separations, between Circumcision and Uncircumcision, and would “make both one,” He did it by “reconciling both unto God in one body by the Cross,” so that, “through Christ, we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Thus again is Christian unity portrayed; and again it is only unity with the Father, through the Son, by the spirit, in the very unity of the Godhead. All schism in the one body of Christ is solved by total submission to one head, the head of Christ. Also, Christ has submitted to His Father who is His Head. It is the Head that does all the thinking, and the Head that provides all the thought, and the body will accept truth from the Head. Our Head is the Son of God, and His Head is God the Father, who is “all in all.” Thus doctrine comes out of Divine Thought, and is revealed by the Word of God. Through all the Holy Scripture His will, truth, and creed is known. So unity of beliefs comes out of the

whole Word of God, by the Word of the Son, of the Divine Spirit of the Father, who is above all.

Schism in the one body of Christ is solved by total submission to one head, the head of Christ.

Here is the *reformation of unity*. And all other so-called unity of “church governments” of organizations, associations, federations, and confederations, is only a hollow sham. These are a sheer counterfeit. When a church goes about to supply the lack of unity by constructing mere human policy and worldly unity, it is an open confession that they have not real unity. All who are of true unity are one. They are one already by the very virtue of the divine unity itself; and they need no man-made church governments, federations, confederations, organizations, nor associations to cause them to be one. The prayer of Jesus is fulfilled in all such. They do not have to feel around to see whether it is so. It is so already, and they know it; they know it by the Spirit of Him in Whom alone the unity is found. They are one, from God and in God. And their unity being in God and coming from God, nothing that can ever come from man can ever affect it in the least. It being of heaven and from heaven, nothing from earth can ever spoil it.

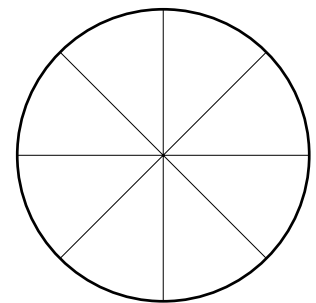
And among all these, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female.” (Galatians 3:28) “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.” (Colossians 3:11) As applied to modern conditions, there is neither Gentile nor Jew, Circumcision nor Uncircumcision; there is neither white nor black, red nor yellow, American, European, Asiatic, nor African: “for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” “Christ is all, and in all.” “The one God and Father of all is above all and through all and in you all;” with “the Son also himself subject” unto the Father, “that God may be all in all.” (1 Corinthians 15:28) That is Christian unity; and nothing else is. And this is only the revelation of “the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in ONE all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth; even in Him.” (Ephesians 1:9, 10)

Jesus prayed for this divine unity of believers, in order “That the world may know that Thou hast sent

Me.” (John 17:23) Today there are more denominations, creeds, and federations than there are days in the year. Is all of this convincing the world that God sent Jesus? Instead of that, the effect of it all is rather to cause the world to doubt whether God or anybody else ever sent Him. And now national and international “unity” will no more convince the world of that great and glorious thing than has denominational “unity” convinced it.

Let only the true Christian unity be sought and courted by each individual soul who names the name of Christ and of God — the unity of the believer with the Father and with the Son, in the very unity of the Father and the Son. Then will the prayer of Jesus be fulfilled. They will all be one as the Father is in Jesus and Jesus in Him; and the world will know that God sent Jesus, and that He loves us as He loves Him.

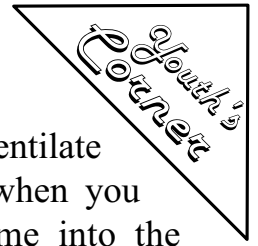
The time has come when Christian unity as it is in truth — “the unity of the Spirit” — will be known and manifested. For now is the time when “the mystery of God should be finished.” (Revelation 10:7) This mystery is “God manifest” in the flesh, “Christ in you the hope of glory,” through the divine Spirit. And thus is the divine Spirit making manifest the divine unity in Christians, and thus true Christian unity. David tells us in Psalm 133:1, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” The secret of true unity in the church is not management, not superhuman effort to overcome difficulties, nor is it diplomacy, though much of these are required—but it is a *union with the Spirit of Christ*. Picture a large circle, and from its edge are many lines all running to the center. The nearer each line approaches the center the closer each is to the other. So it is with the Christian life: the closer we are to the Spirit of God the closer we are to each other. And the culmination of this true Christian unity is that there will be a “glorious Church” which the divine Lord “will present to Himself” without “spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish” at His “glorious appearing.”



The closer we come to God, the closer we come to each other.



Confession of Christ.



Now is the time to confess Christ before the world; by a consistent life and conversation to be a witness for Jesus Christ. By so doing you will exercise an influence over others, and will aid others to confess that Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The more light you have, and the more Christ works through the Holy Spirit to win you from a course of guilt, the more responsible you will be for resisting his mercy and refusing his invitation. The Jewish nation rejected Christ, and the darkness that came upon them corresponded to the great light that had been given them. So it will be with you. The greater the light you have, the greater will be the darkness that will enshroud you. You will press closer to the enemy of Christ, and make it more manifest than before that it is your choice to be Satan's slave rather than Christ's free man. Not enlisting in the service of the Captain of our salvation, you show to the world that you have chosen another leader.

The kingdom of heaven has come near unto you, and you have seen the Father and the Son. You think that the time will never come when you will mock and deride Jesus. You think that if you had lived upon earth when Christ was here, your voice would not have been raised with that of the multitude who cried, "Away with him! Crucify him!" But if you persist in rejecting Christ, you will be at the mercy of the enemy, and will do his bidding at last. I beseech of you to take your stand without delay on the side of Christ. Jesus has bought you with an infinite price because he loves you. Why not reveal to the world that you do not hate and reject Jesus? Why do you not manifest that you love the attributes and the service of Christ more than you love the attributes and the ser-

vice of Satan? Why do you ventilate what you call skepticism, when you know that Jesus Christ came into the world to save just such foolish sinners as yourselves? Why do you look upon religion as a restraint, when the practise of godliness will keep you from ruining your happiness in this life, and will give you a title to the future, immortal life? O let it not be said of you, "Ye have seen and hated both me and my Father."

Jesus has done much for you, and he is willing to do much more. Every blessing, every talent, every capability you possess has come to you through Jesus Christ. Those who reject Christ, reject their only hope of happiness in this life, and cut themselves off from the hope of eternal life. Every step of rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of the goodness of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit. It is evident that not one who stands under the banner of Jesus Christ, who serves him as a faithful soldier, has committed this sin. The sin against the Holy Ghost is not confined to any one period of time, or limited to any one generation. The Jewish nation who rejected Christ committed the unpardonable sin, but by taking the same course that they took in refusing the invitation of mercy, we may commit the same error. You offer insult to the Prince of life, and put him to an open shame before the synagogue of Satan. "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." You should not delay one day. The peril is too great. You may lose your life. Satan is watching every opportunity in order that he may destroy both soul and body; but Jesus is ready to pardon all your sins, and to make you a child of God, an heir of heaven. (Mrs. E. G. White—*Youth's Instructor*, August 8, 1895)

“Highlights ...” from page 1

Bible never gives any hint that angels are feminine in nature. They are at times referred to with masculine pronouns, however.

The manner in which people flocked to the images was sad. Parents were putting their children besides these images for pictures. It became clear that the Catholics are not alone in the manner of images. These images are scheduled to be permanently displayed at the General Conference offices.

Message Versus Methods

An interesting observation of the session was made by, of all people, Samuel Bacchiocchi, in an Internet newsletter. He stated under a section entitled “MESSAGE VERSUS METHODS”:

“The evening reports from the various world Divisions, seemed to underscore a difference between message and methods in the church growth strategies in different parts of the world. For example, the report from the North American Division was built around the theme ‘This is My Church,’ and focused primarily on the various methods and programs sponsored by the church in this territory. During the course of the report I was hoping that some of the testimonies about ‘This is My Church’ would mention also how the Adventist message has brought new meaning, faith, and hope to the life of many people. However, references to the Adventist message were minimal, presumably because Church growth in industrialized countries seems to be largely linked to the implementation of various programs and worship styles.”

“By contrast, the reports from Africa, Inter-America, South America, former communist countries and Asia-Pacific Division dealt more with the proclamation of the Adventist message, not only by evangelists, but also by the laity, women, and youth. Adventist women and youth in the so-called third world are at the forefront of evangelism and soul-winning. They are not going around presenting frivolous youth programs with drama, puppets, and beat music, masquerading them as evangelism. Instead, their passion is to share the Good News of the Risen Savior who is working hard in the heavenly sanctuary to bring to speedy consummation His redemption achieved on the Cross.” (*ENDTIME ISSUES*, No. 50: GC SESSION IN REVIEW)

“Spirited and Colorful” Music

Another item that brought different reviews was some of the music presented. While some of the music

presented was very fine and uplifting, there was a marked demonstration of contemporary and rock-based music at the session. This music was at times very loud and reminded many of worldly music. Dr. Bacchiocchi wrote:

“A colleague from Andrews who teaches at the Seminary told me that he walked out from one of the meetings of the World Ministers Council because the music was very offensive to him. It appears that the Ministerial Association of the General Conference supports the use of beat music for worship and evangelism as part of the church planting strategy to reach the Baby Boomers who have grown up addicted to beat music.” (*Ibid.*)

The seventh bulletin, the *Adventist Review*, of July 7, 2000, noted that one of the children’s groups presented what the *Review* termed as “spirited and colorful.” Many of these types of presentations were responded to positively by the crowd with hand clapping and swaying.

Resolution on “Biblical Teachings on Divorce”

On the theological side, the church’s stand on divorce and remarriage was changed. The change will be reflected in the new *Church Manual*. This issue was somewhat controversial and after some discussion it was referred back to the Church Manual Committee to examine the theological concerns about the “abandonment” clause. It was to be brought back again at the 2005 session in St. Louis.

The part of the document that caused the controversy is the one dealing with the “Grounds for Divorce,” which says: “Scripture recognizes adultery and/or fornication (Matt. 5:32) as well as abandonment by an unbelieving partner (1 Cor. 7:10-15) as grounds for divorce.” The controversy centered around the concept “abandonment by an unbelieving partner.”

This area was left gray without specific definitions being given to the key words in the statement. Neither “abandonment” nor “unbelieving partner” are defined.

Would abandonment of one year, one month, one week, or even one day be sufficient grounds for divorce? Is abandonment left only to the physical sphere of life, or can it include spiritual or emotional abandonment?

Who should be considered an “unbelieving partner”? Is this to mean non-Christian, non-Adventist, non-practicing Adventist or something else? Without giving any perimeters on these terms the door is left

open for a partner to divorce a spouse with very little reason.

As stated earlier, the matter had been tabled on Wednesday, July 5, to be studied out and then brought back for discussion at the 2005 session in St. Louis. However, two days later, Friday, July 7, something very different happened. Koranteng-Pipim, Ph. D., an official delegate and member of the Biblical Research Committee, offered a first-hand account of what happened.

“Many of our delegates, particularly from the developing countries, thinking that the major theological issues had been discussed, were not there at the Friday morning business session. About 150 people were present. And taking advantage of the absence of the overwhelming majority of the delegates, the people who really are pushing this new view of divorce and marriage, (mostly from segments in North America, Australia, and Europe—the regions that constitute less than 10% of the world Adventist membership), came in and staged their theological coup d’etat.

“But the overwhelming majority of delegates from Africa, Inter-America, South America, the Pacific Islands, etc.—those from the developing countries, where the church is growing, where they are more Bible-based—they were not there. Only about 150 people (about 7 or 8% of GC delegates) were present. Do you understand the dynamics? A-hundred-and-fifty people from certain segments of the industrialized countries took advantage of the absence of a large segment of the delegates, and overturned a prior decision by an overwhelming majority of delegates. Some may dispute the 150 number, but I believe that my criticism would still be valid, even if 50% of the delegates made the decision to overturn the previous action.

“There wasn’t really a quorum. But when a church business meeting is called, if you are there, you are there. That is the mistake our people made by not being there. So, 150 people came around; a majority of them from these industrialized countries; which generally tend to be liberal and not as serious about theological issues, were there. And they moved and made a motion that the decision that was made on the previous two days, to refer the document to the Church Manual Committee, be rescinded. It was seconded and voted upon. And so, within a few minutes, a decision that was arrived at by an overwhelming majority of delegates including nominating committee members while the whole house was there, was

overturned by a few people—less than 150 people in attendance. Remember, the number of delegates who earlier had referred the document to the Church Manual Committee was almost 2000. But it took less than 150 people to overturn their decision!

“They rescinded the decision and then there was another move. They made a motion that we should accept ‘as is’ the Church Manual Committee document, including the abandonment clause and some of these things that we objected to. There was a second to the motion. Some of us who understood what was going on wanted to debate that issue again since they had brought it to the floor. Before we could effectively speak to that issue, another person makes a motion that we should cut off discussion, that there should be no debate because we had already debated it the previous days. So using the parliamentary procedures, they cut off debate and were able to vote it in because they were there in numbers. I’m talking about how a small group of people, mostly from the industrialized countries, maneuvered the parliamentary procedures to overturn the majority decision.

150 “people from certain segments of the industrialized countries took advantage of the absence of a large segment of the delegates, and overturned a prior decision by an overwhelming majority of delegates.”

“I want to emphasize that what they did, procedurally was O.K., because once you call a business meeting, whether the people are there or not, you know, it is a business meeting. Our people from the developing countries can be faulted for not being there. Perhaps they were too naive or trusting, oblivious to the many ideological currents at GC sessions. Undoubtedly, they have themselves to blame for this theologically questionable position now enshrined in the Church Manual.

“But the question before us is, did the individuals from the industrialized countries act rightly and fairly? I have spoken to many people, including people who disagree with me theologically; I’m talking about even liberals. And they all concede that the action was really wrong. It doesn’t show maturity and a sense of fairness. It’s almost like a coup d’etat by a few determined people who think they can overturn


the decision of the overwhelming majority by just capitalizing on the fact that a majority of the people were not there.

“So what now stands today in the Church Manual is going to contain a clause that is not biblical, that goes contrary to the Spirit of Prophecy, that goes contrary to the overwhelming consensus [sic] of the larger body that met to refer it back to the Church Manual Committee, but which a few people, from a particular segment of the world church, decided it could overturn and liberalize. So that is what this document now is. And it will create problems for pastors in the field, who believe that the Bible is against any kind of divorce except in the cases of adultery and fornication.

“If, for example, you are a pastor, and your church member comes to you and says, ‘Pastor, I’m going to divorce my husband because he has abandoned me; he’s a Methodist, or a Baptist, a non-believer. He’s abandoned me for two weeks,’ or for whatever reason. And the pastor says, ‘Sister, or brother, you cannot do so, because it is not biblical,’ that person will tell you, ‘The Church Manual gives me permission.’ So you, as a minister, you have to decide between what is biblically binding, and what the *Church Manual* has now instituted through legislation by a small group of people. And if you, the pastor, choose not to go along you can be accused of undermining the *Church Manual*. And a liberal conference president can use this as a reason to fire you, claiming that you are placing your individual judgment above ‘the counsel of the brethren.’ Now, if you are a liberal pastor, this new proposal grants you license to do what you weren’t authorized to do before. But if you are a conservative pastor, this new proposal places you in a dilemma of choosing between the Bible and the Church Manual, your conscience and a questionable policy.”

(<http://www.greatcontroversy.org/documents/papers/pip-interview10july2000.html>)

“If I were the Devil”

Of all the studies presented at the GC session, George Knight, professor of history at Andrews University, presented perhaps the most controversial one entitled, “If I were the Devil.” This sermon wove truth and error together in such a way as to confuse truth with error. Space and time do not allow us to comment any more in this issue, but “Lord willing,” we will be publishing a detailed report on this study, as well as other items, next month. 

THE SILVERSMITH

(The following story was passed on to us through the Internet. It is an excellent illustration worthy of sharing. Editor)


Some time ago, a few ladies met to study the scriptures. While reading the third chapter of Malachi, they came upon a remarkable expression in the third verse: “And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver (Malachi 3:3)”

One lady decided to visit a silversmith, and report to the others on what he said about the subject. She went accordingly, and without telling him the reason for her visit, begged the silversmith to tell her about the process of refining silver.

After he had fully described it to her, she asked, “Sir, do you sit while the work of refining is going on?” “Oh, yes ma’am,” replied the silversmith; “I must sit and watch the furnace constantly, for, if the time necessary for refining is exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver will be injured.”

The lady at once saw the beauty and comfort of the expression, “He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.” God sees it necessary to put His children into the furnace; but His eye is steadily intent on the work of purifying, and His wisdom and love are both engaged in the best manner for us. Our trials do not come at random, and He will not let us be tested beyond what we can endure.

Before she left, the lady asked one final question, “How do you know when the process is complete?”

“That’s quite simple,” replied the silversmith. “When I can see my own image in the silver, the refining process is finished.” 

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