

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

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Straight and Narrow

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Huss, Melancthon, Zwingli, Luther, Baumgartner, Cruciger, and Calvin

Martin Luther, and other reformers, arose in the strength of God, and with the Word and Spirit, made mighty strides in the Reformation. The greatest fault we can find in the Reformation is, the Reformers stopped reforming. Had they gone on, and onward, till they had left the last vestige of Papacy behind, such as natural immortality, sprinkling, the trinity, and Sunday-keeping, the church would now be free from her unscriptural errors. (James White, Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, February 7, 1856)



Why Ecumenism Is Not for Adventists

Ecumenism is the principle or aim of promoting unity among the world’s Christian churches. In our title we have plainly stated that such unity is not for Adventists. In this article we want to see why ecumenism is not good for Adventists and then explore if Adventists have become involved in the ecumenical movement.

Does God Approve of the Ecumenical Movement?

There is nothing wrong with true unity. In fact, when it occurs within the guidelines of the Bible, it is a wonderful thing. David wrote, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Psalm 133:1)! Unity is important, and we are told “when we strive for this unity as God desires us to strive for it, it will come to us” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 243).

The word unity means “the state of being united or joined as a whole” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). The Hebrew word translated *unity* is *yahad* and means *togetherness* or *united*. It is closely related to *yahid* which means *only*, but upon what is this oneness or togetherness based? The concept of unity is not difficult to grasp, but understanding the basis for unity is vital. Writing in the New Testament, Paul says:

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. . . . One Lord, *one faith*, one baptism . . . Till we all come in *the unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:3, 5, 13)

Biblical unity is based upon having one faith that is built around “the knowledge of the Son of God” as the foundation of that faith. This certainly is reasonable, since the truth that Jesus is the Son of the living God is the foundation of Christ’s church (Matthew 16:16–18).

Christ calls for unity. But He does not call for us to unify on wrong practices. The God of heaven draws *a sharp contrast* between pure, elevating, ennobling truth and false, misleading doctrines. He calls sin and impenitence by the right name. He does not gloss over wrongdoing with a coat of untempered mortar. *I urge our brethren to*

unify upon a true, scriptural basis. (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 175; all emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted)

Those who would cry for unity without truth as the basis for that unity are not working in accordance with God. The cry to unify in error is not a new siren song, for that cry has been around a long time. During the Dark Ages, Satan, through the papists, attempted to induce the early Christians to unite with his church.

But there is no union between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness, and there can be no union between their followers. When Christians consented to unite with those who were but half converted from paganism, they entered upon a path which led further and further from the truth. Satan exulted that he had succeeded in deceiving so large a number of the followers of Christ. He then brought his power to bear more fully upon these, and inspired them to persecute those who remained true to God. None understood so well how to oppose the true Christian faith as did those who had once been its defenders; and these apostate Christians, uniting with their half-pagan companions, directed their warfare against the most essential features of the doctrines of Christ.

It required a desperate struggle for those who would be faithful to stand firm against the deceptions and abominations which were disguised in sacerdotal garments and introduced into the church. The Bible was not accepted as the standard of faith. The doctrine of religious freedom was termed heresy, and its upholders were hated and proscribed.

After a long and severe conflict, the faithful few decided to dissolve all union with the apostate

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church if she still refused to free herself from falsehood and idolatry. They saw that separation was an absolute necessity if they would obey the word of God. They dared not tolerate errors fatal to their own souls, and set an example which would imperil the faith of their children and children's children. To secure peace and unity they were ready to make any concession consistent with fidelity to God; but they felt that even peace would be too dearly purchased at the sacrifice of principle. *If unity could be secured only by the compromise of truth and righteousness, then let there be difference, and even war.* (*The Great Controversy*, p. 45)

The position of our spiritual forefathers was one of no compromise with sin and error. These men and women of courage and fidelity chose war rather than false unity. We who are living today have even more at stake than those giants of faith and obedience to be faithful to God, for we are living in the last days of the final atonement, and God has given us a special truth to share with the world.

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.

The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 19)

The three angels' messages are found in Revelation 14:6–12. The first message begins with the command to fear, or reverence, God and to give glory to him; however, beloved, we cannot give glory to God in error and in worshiping after the order of Satan and with Satan's church upon earth. The first message continues and says that the solemn hour of God's judgment has arrived and to worship God as the Creator, specifically through the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. Sunday-keeping, Easter sunrise services, and ecumenical prayer breakfasts do not fulfill the requirements of this command.

The second angel's message announces the fall of Babylon. How could God shine his light and bestow his favor upon a people who fail to come out of Babylon or, worse yet, retreat back into Babylon?

Protestants were once thus apart from this great church of apostasy, but they have approached more nearly to her, and are still in the path of reconciliation to the Church of Rome. Rome never changes. Her principles have not altered in the least. She has not lessened the breach between

herself and Protestants; they have done all the advancing. But what does this argue for the Protestantism of this day? It is the rejection of Bible truth which makes men approach to infidelity. *It is a backsliding church that lessens the distance between itself and the Papacy.* (*The Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1894)

Because Babylon has fallen God has given a cry to come out of her rather than for his people to stay for the coming destruction. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). This call to come out of Babylon is for the people that Jesus calls "my people." At the time of the call, they belong to him, but if they fail to obey his voice, they will not remain his children. Jesus will spew them out of his mouth, and they will receive of the plagues.

All who receive the call to come out of Babylon will unite upon the truth of the third angel's message, and in so doing, they will be with those who are standing with the one who is "the way, the truth, and the life."

The message of the fall of Babylon, as given by the second angel, is repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the churches since 1844. The work of this angel comes in at the right time to join in the last great work of the third angel's message as it swells to a loud cry. And the people of God are thus prepared to stand in the hour of temptation, which they are soon to meet. I saw a great light resting upon them, and they united to fearlessly proclaim the third angel's message. (*Early Writings*, p. 277)

Jesus calls his people to come out because the conditions in Babylon have become unbearable for him and for his true followers:

Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. (Revelation 18:2, 3)

Would you like to live in a house filled with devils? I doubt it. You would not only detest such a position, but you would realize that it would be spiritually unsafe to continue living in such a place.

God has ever wished for his people to be separated from sin and from that which is actually opposed to God. Through Isaiah he told his people: "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy" (Isaiah 8:12). The Hebrew word translated *confederacy* is *qesher*, and *qesher* is also translated *treason*. For example, in 1 Kings 16:20, we read:

Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason (*qesher*) that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

In God's eyes a confederacy with unbelievers is the same as treason. The spirit of inspiration has counseled God's people:

Let the watchmen on the walls of Zion not join with those who are making of none effect the truth as it is in Christ. Let them not join the confederacy of infidelity, popery, and Protestantism in exalting tradition above Scripture, reason above revelation, and human talent above the divine influence and the vital power of godliness. (*The Review and Herald*, March 24, 1896)

In the Old Testament God represented his people with the symbol of a woman. "I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman" Jeremiah 6:2, and in Isaiah 51:16 he declares that Zion is his people. The 144,000 are depicted in Revelation 14:4 as women, but more than this, they are virgins, thus representing that they have a pure faith. This means that there is no ecumenical relationship or approach between them and the fallen denominations. Adventists who wish to be a part of the 144,000 must stay away from churches and meetings where the true faith is denied:

I was shown the necessity of those who believe that we are having the last message of mercy, *being separate from those who are daily imbibing new errors. I saw that neither young nor old should attend their meetings, it is wrong to thus encourage them while they teach error that is deadly poison to the soul and teach for doctrines the commandments of men.* The influence of such gatherings is not good. If God has delivered us from such darkness and error, we should stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has set us free and rejoice in the truth. God is displeased with us when we go to listen to error without being obliged to go; for *unless He sends us to those meetings where error is forced home to the people by the power of the will, He will not keep us.* (*Early Writings*, pp. 124, 125)

If we do not listen to the warnings that have been given us concerning this ecumenical trap of Satan, we are in danger of accepting darkness for light.

The New Testament teaches that God's people must be separate from Satan, his teachings, and his ways:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing;

and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Corinthians 6:14–18)

We often see these verses quoted in the context of the problems of a professed Christian marrying a non-Christian person, but the principle is not restricted to only this. These verses warn all who would venture to join with any of Satan's forces in promoting the work of the prince of darkness, despite any holy-sounding appearance. God is plain—we will not be saved if we join forces with the hosts of Satan, but if we are separate, then he will be our God and Father.

The wicked are being bound up in bundles, bound up in trusts, in unions, in confederacies. Let us have nothing to do with these organizations. God is our ruler, our governor, and He calls us to come out from the world and be separate. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." If we refuse to do this, if we continue to link up with the world, and to look at every matter from a worldly standpoint, we shall become like the world. When worldly policy and worldly ideas govern our transactions, we cannot stand on the high and holy platform of eternal truth. (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, p. 87)

While the context of this statement deals with trusts, unions, and unnamed confederacies, the principle of being separate from the world clearly applies to the worldly churches. Continuing in the above statement, we read:

God promises that if we will separate ourselves from the world, He will receive us, and will be a Father unto us, and we shall be His sons and daughters. Shall we not separate ourselves from the world, and claim this sacred relationship now, that when our Father comes He may acknowledge us as His children?—Ms 71, 1903, p. 5. ("To Every Man His Work," E. G. White talk, June 18, 1903) (*Ibid.*)

Paul emphasizes the point of being separate in 1 Corinthians 10:21, when he writes: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." This axiom of truth is repeated in Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus:

Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. (Ephesians 5:6, 7)

God, who changes not, has the same plan for Israel today as he had for ancient Israel. "For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Numbers 23:9). God's people cannot be the "peculiar people" (Titus 2:14) that he is calling them to be, if they become like the nations and churches around them that do not know him and do not fear to keep his commandments.

The principles set forth in Deuteronomy for the instruction of Israel are to be followed by God's people to the end of time. True prosperity is dependent on the continuance of our covenant relationship with God. Never can we afford to compromise principle by entering into alliance with those who do not fear Him.

There is constant danger that professing Christians will come to think that in order to have influence with worldlings, they must to a certain extent conform to the world. But though such a course may appear to afford great advantages, it always ends in spiritual loss. Against every subtle influence that seeks entrance by means of flattering inducements from the enemies of truth, God's people must strictly guard. They are pilgrims and strangers in this world, traveling a path beset with danger. To the ingenious subterfuges and alluring inducements held out to tempt from allegiance, they must give no heed.

It is not the open and avowed enemies of the cause of God that are most to be feared. Those who, like the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin, come with smooth words and fair speeches, apparently seeking for friendly alliance with God's children, have greater power to deceive. Against such every soul should be on the alert, lest some carefully concealed and masterly snare take him unaware. And especially today, while earth's history is closing, the Lord requires of His children a vigilance that knows no relaxation. (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 570)

The Binding Doctrine That Holds the Ecumenical Movement Together

At this point we wish to examine the main point that binds the ecumenical movement together. With so many different churches in the United States and in the world, there must be something that can bind the many churches together, though some of the creeds conflict. That binding agent is the doctrine of the trinity. The trinity is considered to be the most important doctrine among Protestant churches and with the papacy. The trinitarian doctrine is the lowest common denominator that becomes the determining standard on whether or not churches can unite with one another.

The largest and widest ecumenical-movement organization is the World Council of Churches. In the constitution of the World Council of Churches (WCC), we find what is called the *Basis* of the Council:

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of *the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*. (The Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches, section I, Basis)

Notice that the only true God is said to be "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." This is the formulation for the trinity and the WCC claims that confessing Jesus as God (notice, not the

Son of God) and seeking to fulfill the common calling of bringing glory to the trinity is the "Basis" of the council. Agreement with this Basis is the only criteria for membership in the Council, for the constitution states in the section on membership:

Those churches shall be eligible for membership in the World Council of Churches which express their agreement with the Basis upon which the Council is found. (The Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches, section II, Membership)

God declares that the churches of Babylon are fallen and that his people are to come out from them immediately or be lost. As we noticed devils inhabit these churches, and Satan is in control of Babylon. The beast of Revelation 13 receives "his power, and his seat, and great authority" (v. 2) from the dragon, who is the devil:

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:9)

The Bible is clear that the fallen churches are under the control of Satan, and as such, God's people must not form friendships nor alliances with these churches:

Satan once endeavored to form a compromise with Christ. He came to the Son of God in the wilderness of temptation, and showing Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, offered to give all into His hands if He would but acknowledge the supremacy of the prince of darkness. Christ rebuked the presumptuous tempter and forced him to depart. But Satan meets with greater success in presenting the same temptations to man. To secure worldly gains and honors, the church was led to seek the favor and support of the great men of earth; and having thus rejected Christ, she was induced to yield allegiance to the representative of Satan—the bishop of Rome. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 50)

Now we can clearly see why the command of Revelation 18:4 is given to come out of Babylon. Babylon is full of demons and is controlled by Satan. There is no way that God's people can walk with Babylon any more than Christ can walk with Satan, for God asks the rhetorical question, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed" (Amos 3:3)?

Today, as in the days of Elijah, the line of demarcation between God's commandment-keeping people and the worshipers of false gods is clearly drawn. "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Elijah cried; "if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him." 1 Kings 18:21. *And the message for today is: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. . . . Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."* Revelation 18:2, 4, 5. (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 187)

We have been told that “the members of Satan’s church have been constantly working to cast off the divine law, and confuse the distinction between good and evil” (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 16). In spite of the fact that Adventists have been warned not to get involved in the confederacy of Satan, there has been a great deal of forbidden association and collaboration.

Adventist Association in the Ecumenical Movement

While the Seventh-day Adventist denomination is not an official member of the World Council of Churches, many Seventh-day Adventist pastors are members of the local ministerial associations and engage in pulpit exchanges and other such ecumenical practices. As we noted last month, Andrews University recently invited the former General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, Michael Kinnamon, to speak at Andrews University. Kinnamon’s main talk was entitled “The Ecumenical Movement and Why You Should Be Involved.”

Andrews University is named after John Nevins Andrews, an Adventist pioneer. Concerning Andrews we read that he was an:

. . . author, minister, missionary, and scholar. Born in Poland, Maine, in 1829, Andrews converted in February 1843 and began to observe the seventh-day Sabbath in 1845. He met James and Ellen White in September 1849. In 1850 he began itinerant pastoral ministry and was ordained in 1853.

Andrews was a significant contributor in the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology. Among his more memorable achievements was applying the identity of the two-horned beast of Revelation to the United States of America. In 1859 he wrote the first edition of his most famous book, *The History of the Sabbath and the First Day of the Week* (Battle Creek, MI: Battle Creek Steam Press, 1859). (Introduction to J. N. Andrews in the “Words of the Adventist Pioneers” CD)

Andrews knew the papacy to be the man of sin, and as noted above, he was the first Adventist to understand the role of the United States in the image to the beast. For example, Andrews wrote:

The Pharisees pretended that they had a tradition handed down from Moses, which authorized them to change the fifth commandment. *The Papist and Protestant Doctors of Divinity* pretend that they have a tradition handed down from Christ and the apostles, authorizing them to change the fourth. But if Christ rebuked the Pharisees for holding a damnable heresy, what would he say to the like act on the part of his own professed followers? Matt. xv, 3–9.

The same fathers which changed the fourth commandment, have also corrupted all the ordinances of the New Testament, and have established purgatory, invocation of

saints, the worship of the Virgin Mary and prayers for the dead.

The Protestant professes to receive the Bible alone as his standard of faith and practice. The Papist receives the Bible and the tradition of the fathers as his rule. The Protestant cannot prove the change of the Sabbath from his own standard, (the Bible,) therefore he is obliged to adopt that of the Papist, viz., the Bible as explained and corrupted by the fathers. (J. N. Andrews, *The First Day of the Week Not the Sabbath of the Lord*, p.15)

Clearly Andrews was under no illusion as to the place of the papacy or apostate Protestantism. Andrews is dead and resting in the grave today, but if he were alive, he would protest strongly against having an ecumenical speaker at an Adventist school, especially one named after him!

Remember that the trinitarian doctrine is the basis of the unity among the various churches and that J. N. Andrews was a non-trinitarian. His position was very clear. We know this for two reasons.

Firstly, in being with the Seventh-day Adventist people, he was with a church that was decidedly non-trinitarian. He would not have been elected to the highest position in that body if he had been in disagreement with them on their major doctrines.

Secondly, we have Andrews’s own testimony about this so-called unifying doctrine of the trinity. Writing in the official organ of the church, he noted:

The doctrine of the Trinity which was established in the church by the council of Nice, a. d. 325. This doctrine destroys the personality of God, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The infamous measures by which it was forced upon the church, which appear upon the pages of ecclesiastical history might well cause every believer in that doctrine to blush. (*The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, March 6, 1855)

Furthermore, if Andrews were alive today, he would object in the strongest terms to having someone speak at an Adventist school who dares to use a title (reverend) reserved only for God:

Protestants call their ministers, Reverend. This word which is used only once in the Scriptures, is there applied to God. Ps. cxi, 9. If it is a sin for the church to call her ministers Rabbi, or Master, how much greater one must it be for her to apply to them the title of Reverend which belongs to God alone! Not content with this, some of these professed servants of Jesus Christ become Right Reverend, and Very Reverend. And not a few of them become Doctors of Divinity, so great is their proficiency in the doctrines of Christ (*The Three Angels’ Messages of Revelation 14:6–12*, p. 48)

But this latest adventure of dipping into the ecumenical cesspool should not come as a surprise, if we know our history, because, since the death of Ellen White, the

Seventh-day Adventist denomination has been imbibing a great deal with Babylon.

The date for the first Bible conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church after the year 1888 was 1919. The prophetess had died four years earlier, and there was a controversy brewing about the authority her writings did or did not hold. Furthermore, theological issues were developing that threatened the church in far deeper ways than anyone could have imagined. A new guard was coming to the front, and they had a new way of thinking and new doctrines which included the idea of the trinity. At the 1919 Bible Conference, the two subjects debated the hottest were the divinity of Jesus and the place and authority of the writings of Ellen White. Concerning the first subject, there was a push to accept Christ as the second person of the trinity. Actually no one rejected Christ's divinity; both old guard and new accepted that. How that divinity was interpreted, however, was a different matter. As the new guard began to gain more control in the church, their theology became more accepted, so that by 1926, an ecumenical statement on our relationship to other churches could be published.

In 1926, the General Conference Executive Committee voted a statement for the working policy of the denomination that reflected our relationship to other societies or churches. That statement said, in part:

“We recognize every agency that lifts up Christ before men as a part of the divine plan for the evangelization of the world, and we hold in high esteem the Christian men and women in other communions who are engaged in winning souls to Christ.” (*So Much in Common*, p. 73)

This statement was later altered to say:

1) We recognize those agencies that lift up Christ before men as a part of the divine plan for evangelization of the world, and we hold in high esteem Christian men and women in other communions who are engaged in winning souls to Christ. (<http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/other-documents/other-doc5.html> accessed February 26, 2012)

Instead of “every agency” the new statement says “those agencies.” This change does not affect the intent. Both of these statements acknowledge that “other communions,” i.e., churches, are doing soul winning that heaven acknowledges, as they lift “up Christ.” But what Christ are they lifting up? The Christ that is said to be the second person of the trinity!

Five years later a new statement of beliefs which was not approved by the body of believers was published, and it contained a teaching on the trinitarian doctrine!

In 1957, when the apostate book *Questions on Doctrine* was published, the following questions were asked:

What is your attitude as Christians toward the general missionary program for the evangelization of the non-Christian world? Do you accept responsibility for as-

signed areas, leaving the rest for other Christian bodies? (*Questions on Doctrine*, p. 625)

The working policy of the Church was given as part of the answer:

We recognize every agency that lifts up Christ before men as a part of the divine plan for the evangelization of the world, and we hold in high esteem the Christian men and women in other communions who are engaged in winning souls to Christ. (*Ibid.*, pp. 625,626)

Interestingly, in research for this article, I came across a transcript of a Voice of Prophecy program done by Lonnie Melashenko on December 2, 2005. In this program Melashenko stated:

Let me share with you a few lines that come out of a wonderful old book in my own Adventist faith community about half a century ago. It was entitled *Questions on Doctrine* – a kind of Adventist response to common queries that come to us from those in other Christian bodies. ... (Voice of Prophecy program, December 2, 2005)

Melashenko then informed his listeners that he loved the statement he was going to next share. What did Melashenko share from *Questions on Doctrine*? He shared the working policy statement we have twice quoted above. After reading the statement Melashenko stated:

If you're a regular listener here on the Voice of Prophecy, you already know that WE feel this way, but it feels good to have the entire denomination say the same thing. (*Ibid.*; emphasis is Melashenko's)

It should not be difficult to understand Melashenko's position, for he called *Questions on Doctrine* “a wonderful old book.”

The compromises that were made in *Questions on Doctrine* concerning the high-priestly ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary, the incarnation, the truth about God, and the role and nature of the Spirit of Prophecy have become classical Adventist history. These compromises simply drew us closer to Babylon and her daughters and created less distinction between the people of God and Babylon. So much so that twenty years later, in 1977, a representative from the Adventist Church had a meeting with Pope Paul VI and presented him with a golden medallion.

Pope Given Gold Medallion in 1977

On May 18, 1977, Dr. B. B. Beach, then Secretary of the Northern Europe-West Africa Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, along with other representatives of the religious bodies which form the Conference of Secretaries of the World Confessional Families (Churches), had an audience with Pope Paul VI. The Pope welcomed these men as “representatives of a considerable portion of Christian people,” and he sent the greetings of the papacy through them “to your confessional families” (Religious News Service, May 19, 1977). Elder W. Duncan Eva, then a vice president of the General Conference, reported that on this occasion, Dr.

Beach presented the Pope a medallion which “was a gold-covered symbol of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” (*Adventist Review*, August 11, 1977, p. 23)

What events took place between 1957 and 1977 that led to the meeting with Pope Paul VI? In 1973 a book was published by the World Council of Churches that had been authored by Dr. B. B. Beach of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There was an introductory statement co-signed by Beach and Dr. Lukas Visser, then the Faith and Order Secretariat of the World Council of Churches. This book was ominously entitled *So Much in Common!*

Using the documentation in the book *So Much in Common*, the late Elder William Grotheer outlined seven steps that prepared the meeting with the pope. The following seven steps were originally published in 1986 in his book *Steps to Rome*:

STEP ONE

“Strange as it may seem, these yearly consultations [‘conversations’ between representatives of the WCC and the SDA Church] were an indirect by-product of Vatican II. In fact, while in Rome in connection with the Vatican Council a WCC staff member and an Adventist representative came to the conclusion that an informal meeting of a small group of Seventh-day Adventists with an equal number of representatives from the World Council of Churches would fulfil [sic] a useful purpose.” (*So Much in Common*, p. 98)

STEP TWO

“The first meeting was held in 1965, the participants being selected by the two organizers. Thus the conversations got under way on a completely informal basis and were held under the sole responsibility of the participants.” (*Ibid.*)

It should be carefully noted that up to this point the conversations between the representatives of the WCC and the Seventh-day Adventists were strictly an individual matter, and did not carry any official blessing either from the WCC, or the Adventist Church leadership.

STEP THREE

“Subsequent meetings have become somewhat more formal, in the sense that the employing bodies of the SDA participants have authorized and financed their presence and the executive committees of the three Adventist Divisions involved have given their blessings by facilitating the selection of the SDA representatives; the World Council of Churches has defrayed the expenses of its group. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has been kept informed regarding the meetings, though it has taken no direct, active part in the Consultations, except through its three European Divisional branch offices.” (*Ibid.*)

Herein is a very subtle situation which permits the leadership in Washington to say to the laity of the American Church sector who might inquire, that the General Confer-

ence is not involved with the WCC. However, through their divisions in Europe, direct consultations were being carried forward with the full approval and financial blessings of the respective Executive Committees, each of which was chaired by a Vice President of the General Conference voted to serve as a President over each Division.

From fifteen to twenty participants took part in each of the five Consultations from 1965 to 1969. The Adventist members included “SDA church leaders and educators.” (*Ibid.*, p. 99) “The Consultations [were] held on the basis of equal footing, each yearly meeting taking place part of the time at the WCC headquarters in Geneva and the rest of the time at the nearby Seminaire Adventiste at Collonges, just across the border in France.” (*Ibid.*)

STEP FOUR

“A very useful product of the Conversations is the statement regarding the SDA Church which was published in the January, 1967, issue of the *Ecumenical Review*.” (*Ibid.*, p. 100) (The *Ecumenical Review* is the official quarterly journal of the WCC. This article was written by Dr. M. B. Handspicker, assistant to Dr. Lukas Vischer, head of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC, who co-authored with Dr. B. B. Beach, the book—*So Much in Common*. However, at the 1966 Conversations, the Adventist participants “had the opportunity to discuss the draft statement and make some useful observations.” After the incorporation of “some relatively minor suggestions, the document was published substantially as originally written. The statement has had wide distribution, not only through the *Ecumenical Review*, but as a Faith and Order paper.” (*Ibid.*) This document contained 49 footnotes giving source references. Of these 49, over half, 28, were references to the book, *Questions on Doctrine*.

With the publication of this document in the *Ecumenical Review*, a very interesting series of events began to transpire. R. F. Cottrell, an Associate Editor of the *Review*—the “Official Organ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church”—reviewed the WCC document in a series of three editorials (March 23, March 30, and April 6, 1967). Cottrell stated why the Adventist Church could not join the World Council of Churches, but in concluding his third editorial, he invited the Adventist Church in through the back door of the WCC. Here is what he wrote:

“It is with no small measure of regret that SDA’s do not find it possible, as an organization, to be more closely associated with others who profess the name of Christ. On the other hand, if the Secretariat on Faith and Order, for instance, were to invite SDA’s to appoint someone competent in that area to meet with their group from time to time and represent the SDA point of view, we could accept such an invitation with a clear conscience.” (*Review*, April 6, 1967, p. 13) [Note: The Faith and Order Commission is the doctrinal arm of the WCC.]

The “back door” was quickly opened. Dr Earle Hilgert, the Professor of New Testament at Andrews University, was appointed by the WCC Central Committee to serve as a Seventh-day Adventist on the Faith and Order Commission. The respondent actions were so rapid-fire that Dr. Hilgert was enabled to attend the triennial meeting of the Faith and Order Commission in Bristol, England, from July 30 to August 8, of the same year, 1967. Hilgert’s place is now filled on the Commission by Dr. R. F. Dederen, also of Andrews University.

Herein is a “tricky” relationship which must be carefully worded to give the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The SDA Church *did not appoint* the Adventist representative to the WCC Commission on Faith and Order; but it did approve the selection made by the Central Committee of the WCC. Thus the hierarchy of the SDA Church can say—“We are not members of the WCC.” (emphasis in the original)

STEP FIVE

“Since the Conversations got under way, it has become the accepted procedure for the SDA Church to be represented at various WCC meetings, including the Assembly, by observers. These observers have not been present *pro forma*, but have taken an active interest in the meetings attended. An additional step was taken when the General Conference, as a world confessional body or church, was represented by an advisor in Canterbury at the 1969 meeting of the WCC Central Committee.” (*So Much in Common*, p. 101)

The hierarchy in Washington can have written in the *Adventist Review*, and in letters to the laity that the Church does not belong to the WCC—and technically this is correct—but how can they honestly leave the impression that the Church is not deeply involved in the work and procedures of the WCC when representatives of the Church attend the General Assemblies not *pro forma*, but as active participants, and when an “advisor” from the Church is present at the meetings of the WCC’s Central Committee? If we send advisors to their Central Committee meetings, what would prevent the WCC from being invited to send advisors to the General Conference Committee meetings, or Annual Councils?

It should be further noted that “As a kind of corollary to the Geneva Consultations, Consultations began in 1969 in the United States between Seventh-day Adventists and a WCC appointed group.” (*Ibid.*) Were the laity of the Church informed about these meetings through the *Adventist Review*? Why not?

These Consultations are filtering down to a national level in Europe. The same source reports:

“It is interesting to note that the contacts on the WCC level have, to some extent, filtered down to certain national levels. As examples one can mention the SDA

contacts with the British Council of Churches, the Finnish Council of Churches and the office of the German Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland.” (*Ibid.*)

STEP SIX

“Since 1968 the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has been actively represented at the annual meetings of ‘Secretaries of World Confessional Families.’ This participation is largely the result of the WCC/SDA Conversations and contacts that were made at the time of the Uppsala Assembly.” (*Ibid.*, p. 100)

What is this organization? What is its relationship to the World Council of Churches? We shall answer the second question first. Robert Welsh of the WCC Commission on Faith and Order, wrote under date of April 1, 1975, from Geneva, Switzerland:—“With regard to Dr. Beach, he is Secretary of the Annual Conference of Secretaries of the World Confessional Families. Faith and Order relates to this conference in a consultative manner.” (See Appendix H) Dr. Beach himself states—“The bodies represented there [at the Conferences] are between 12 and 15 world organizations such as the Lutheran World Federation, the Baptist World Alliance, the World Methodist Council, the World Reformed Alliance, the Roman Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, and the Anglican Consultative Council.” (Letter to Pastor A. G. Brito, dated, Nov. 15, 1977) In another paragraph of the same letter, Beach declares—“I would like to make it clear that this conference is not a part of the World Council of Churches.” However, RNS (May 19, 1977) quoted the president of the Conference, Bishop John Howe, as stating—“We have been able to decide how we shall work together more with the World Council of Churches in understanding the ecumenical role that all of us have.”

Now to the first question—Beach denies that this conference is an organization since he states it doesn’t have a constitution, nor are dues paid into it. However, he writes:

“I have been representing our church at this meeting for 9 years now and our involvement consists simply in attending the meeting and participating in the discussions and exchange of information. For the past few years I have served as Secretary of the Conference (this means that I am responsible for preparing the agenda and handling the minutes or report of the Conference). There is no usefulness in giving any publicity to this fact, but I do mention it for your information.” (Letter to A. G. Brito, *op. cit.*)

We shall let the reader decide whether there is an organization—officers, agenda, minutes! But please, do not give publicity to this fact, it will serve no useful purpose!

STEP SEVEN

It was our involvement in the Annual Conference of “Secretaries of the World Confessional Families” that led to the audience with Pope Paul VI. The Catholic Church

joined this Conference the same year that the Seventh-day Adventist Church did, and it was represented at these annual meetings through the Vatican Secretariat for Unity. Beach himself has written—“Since this year’s meeting [1977] was in Rome, it was felt that it might be appropriate to have a meeting with the Pope, who is the head of Vatican State and the religious leader of well over 500 million people in the world.” (Letter to A. G. Brito, *op. cit.*) In a letter dated, March 3, 1978, Elder W. Duncan Eva noted in a very clear manner—“The Northern Europe-West Africa Division Committee authorized Brother Beach’s trip to Rome and it understood that the visit to the Pope with representatives of the World Confessional Families was a probability.” This “probability” was so sure that the medallion given was “paid for from Departmental expense funds of the Northern Europe-West Africa Division.” (*Steps to Rome*, pp. 3–6)

During the time of some of the above events, a lawsuit was being conducted against the Pacific Press Publishing Association by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission over the wage scales used by the Pacific Press which paid women less than it paid men for the same work. In one of the legal briefs by the church, the following was noted:

Although it is true that there was a period in the life of the Seventh-day Adventist Church when the denomination took a distinctly anti-Roman Catholic viewpoint, and the term “hierarchy” was used in a pejorative sense to refer to the papal form of church governance, that attitude on the Church’s part was nothing more than a manifestation of widespread anti-popey among conservative Protestant denominations in the early part of this century and the latter part of the last, and which has now been consigned to the historical trash heap so far as the Seventh-day Adventist Church is concerned. (Merikay McLeod lawsuit, Docket entry #84: EEOC vs PPPA, c-74-2025-CBR. Feb. 6, 1976—Reply Brief for Defendants in Support of their Motion for Summary Judgment)

At the 1980 General Conference session in Dallas, Texas, the laity, for the first time, approved a new statement of beliefs. This statement approves the trinitarian doctrine which is the basis for the unity of the ecumenical movement.

During the eighth business session of the 1985 General Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, then President Neal C. Wilson referred to the General Conference vice presidents as cardinals:

If you compare vice presidents to “cardinals,” we already have a “cardinal” from Africa, and before this session ends, I predict we will have two African “cardinals”. . . (*Adventist Review*, July 3, 1895, p. 11)

If the vice presidents of the General Conference are cardinals, then what does that make the president of the General Conference? The pope of the church!

At the 1990 General Conference session in Indianapolis, Indiana, B. B. Beach introduced a Catholic priest to the conference during the ninth business session on July 10, 1990:

B. B. BEACH: I am pleased to introduce to the assembly this afternoon T. J. Murphy, pastor of Saint Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis, as an observer and official guest representing the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. He is here to give greetings on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church. [Applause.]

T. J. MURPHY: During this occasion, the fifty-fifth world session of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, I convey to you greetings and prayerful best wishes from the president, secretary, and members of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. I bring you personal greetings from the archbishop of Indianapolis, promising and assuring you that prayers are being offered within our community for the blessed success of this General Conference. It is a deep honor to be present as an observer of these momentous and Spirit-filled proceedings and deliberations. For it is the desire of the Saviour Himself that His disciples might all be one so that the world may believe.

I conclude with a prayer from our liturgy, a prayer we can voice from all our hearts. “Deliver us, Lord, from every evil, and grant us peace in our day. In Your mercy, keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.” (*Adventist Review*, July 13, 1990, p. 13; bracketed note for *applause* in the original.)

How appropriate that Beach would introduce the Catholic priest to the conference. How sad that the priest was greeted by the delegates with applause, especially when we are counseled against such practices. (See *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 3, pages 185 and 186.) How dare we invite a representative of the beast power to speak to, and then pray for, our people!

During the 1990 General Conference Session, some concerned brethren were passing out literature that represented our historic belief on the papacy. This was reported in the newspaper *The Indianapolis Star*:

Though Adventist officials conceded the history of the denomination has an anti-Catholic bent, they said the modern church is trying to move from that stance.

“They [the dissidents] want us to be like we were 100 years ago.” said Herbert Ford, news director for the 6.2 million-member church. “But, the church has to move, not away from the eternal principles of God, but things do have to change.

“These people are a thorn in the flesh, but the church tolerates them.” *United States in Prophecy* which was sponsored by Adventist Layworkers Affiliate of Tennessee, calls Catholicism a pagan religion and refers to the pope as a beast.

Shirley Burton, the church's communications director, admitted that the Seventh-day Adventist founder and prophet Ellen G. White, did warn her followers about the evils of the papacy in her book, *The Great Controversy*.

White, who based her prophecies on her interpretation of the biblical book of Revelation, feared that Catholicism would become the official religion of the United States.

If that happened, the government would enforce the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath White believed.

Adventists who want to cling to the church's historic anti-Catholic beliefs represent only about 1,000 in the North American division of 750,000 members, Ford said. (*The Indianapolis Star*, July 14, 1990; bracketed note for the dissidents in the original.)

It should be noted that Ellen White never "feared that Catholicism would become the official religion of the United States." She never wrote that the nation would have any official religion, let alone Catholicism; however, she did write:

Romanism in the Old World and apostate Protestantism in the New will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 615)

The Indianapolis Star quoted one of the dissidents as stating that the real reason for toning down of the anti-Catholic message was because of the "ecumenical movement."

The Adventist Church has certainly distanced itself from its past position on the papacy. The first statement of fundamental beliefs was published in 1872. Within that statement we find the following:

XIII. That as the man of sin, the papacy, has thought to change times and laws (the laws of God), Dan. 7:25, and has misled almost all Christendom in regard to the fourth commandment, we find a prophecy of a reform in this respect to be wrought among believers just before the coming of Christ. Isa. 56:1, 2, 1 Pet. 1:5, Rev. 14:12, &c.

This statement was published in every statement of beliefs until 1931, when a new statement was adopted. The 1931 statement removed the above belief, and the 1980 statement has nothing on the papacy, either. This exactly parallels the time that the ecumenically-binding doctrine of the trinity was brought into the denomination!

At the last General Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2010, Geoff Tunnicliffe, the CEO/Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance which brings together 600 million Christians, was invited to speak at the conference. Setri Nyomi, the General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, representing 80 million Reformed Christians, was also asked to speak to those assembled at the conference.

We could continue to list, case after case, a lowering of the wall between those who profess to keep the commandments of God and Babylon, but surely this is enough documentation to show that Adventism, while not always in word, has

in action thrown its arms open wide to Babylon and the ecumenical movement. It is written that the sins of Babylon must be laid open:

The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power, all will be unmasked. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 606)

As a consequence of this work, Babylon will be "aroused and enraged" and will finally take measures against us (*Early Writings*, p. 272); therefore, if we understand our mission, we will not be seeking friendship, harmony, or cooperation with the fallen churches.

Finally, we would like to present an illustration of how becoming partly involved in the ecumenical movement can lead to disastrous results.

In 1999 Pope John Paul II made an appearance in St. Louis, Missouri. A witnessing plan was developed, tracts specific for the occasion were printed, and a large group of believers was assembled to pass them out at scheduled rallies. I needed to find housing for the approximately forty believers involved. A sympathetic conference minister suggested I call a minister in St. Louis who used to be employed by the conference but was then working independently. This minister had the use of a large church building which could be of help to us. I contacted the pastor, and he was very willing to allow us to use as much church space as needed.

Unfortunately this popular pastor was involved with the ecumenical movement at the local level and was the head of a ministerial association in St. Louis. When the pope came to St. Louis, as the head of this association, he was to officially welcome the pope in behalf of the churches. This put the pastor in a very difficult position. He should have refused and resigned from his position in the association, but he was in deeply and did not know how to get out and save face. I was in his office just a few hours before he met the pope and saw the perspiration running down his face, as he tried to write his speech. He was trying to find words which could say the truth and please both God and man, but the words he wanted were impossible to find.

History records this pastor meeting the pope, calling him "Your Holiness," and agreeing to unite with the papacy in the ecumenical program "Faith Beyond Walls." Tragic! If this pastor had not become involved with the ecumenical movement, he would not have been in this position. His experience should be a lesson to us.*

Allen Stump

*It should be noted that some uninformed ministries condemned the General Conference for this pastor's actions, not realizing that he was no longer an official pastor under their supervision. While the General Conference has done much to make heaven weep, we cannot sustain false charges and be clear in the eyes of the Judge of the universe.

Exe



*"By outdoor exercise
and working in the soil*



Exercise



*men and women
will regain their health.”
(The Paulson Collection, p. 194)*



From Patmos, Messages for Seven Churches



O, When Shall We See Jesus? Laodicea, Part 3

All roads leading into Laodicea were broad and fair. The cobblestones were well-hewn and squarely set in place. As you neared the city, its wealth effortlessly drew you in, as you viewed its beautifully carved marble columns and the porticos that arched overhead. Here, under the canopy's shade, the tired and thirsty travelers found food and drink to strengthen them for the last part of their journey into the city. Here also they made arrangements for shelter within the city and for the care of their animals. The residents of Laodicea were known to be friendly and accommodating, and after the visitors' beasts of burden were stabled, the newly-arrived freely roamed the city, visiting its centers of attraction, worshipping at the shrines of their gods, and buying and selling in the beautiful, bustling marketplaces. Order was maintained throughout by Roman guards, so visitors and citizens alike could mingle with careless ease.

Everyone loved Laodicea, and few ever thought of leaving it once it had become their home, even when devastating earthquakes occurred, for scenes of damage were always quickly repaired, and commerce and lifestyles soon revived and continued on as before.

The centers of worship in Laodicea were thriving, for they were a part of its very lifeblood. No one of culture or intelligence would ever consider moving forward without the blessing of the gods. It just wasn't done, and, after all, weren't they, the assembly of the true God, prospering? But the God who knows all saw the spiritual condition of his professed people and sent them a solemn warning: You have cherished evil and have separated from me. Every one of you has gone astray.*

Even the aged leaders of God's people in Laodicea, who might otherwise have been tempted to leave because of the increasing worldliness, hesitated when they considered the long years they had given the cause of God. It seemed perfectly sensible to them to retire and enjoy the fruits of their labors, and what better place than in Laodicea, where there

*Some of the thoughts in this paragraph and a few succeeding ones are based upon statements in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 5, pages 62–84.

was plenty (both materially and spiritually) of everything? But God declared that, instead of being sensible, they were self-complacent and the more guilty because they, who professed to have an experience in the things of God, had not preserved their integrity and gone forward to perfection. Truthfulness one day, he informed them, did not atone for falsehood the next, nor did past faithfulness atone for current neglect.

These words of God, I am sorry to say, had little effect. Many cast them aside, saying they were only the opinion of the messenger giving them, influenced and molded by him and, therefore, could not be relied upon as the words of God.

So, the ancient men in Laodicea stayed, in theory, to counsel the young. It was a pleasant and progressive city. New light seemed to shine forth every day, and hundreds, if not thousands, professed to be followers of Christ. All could see much shepherding was needed or the flock would lose interest and scatter. In fact, many were already lukewarm—neither for nor against the great truths of God. They heard the words of Christ, nodded in agreement, even praised them, but somehow weren't moved by them. The spirit of the city was fast securing them in its lukewarm grip. Concord with unbelievers was diluting their holy calling. Instead of being like Enoch and walking *with God* in the city, as he had done, they walked *with the city* and, in so doing, lost their hunger for righteousness. Their relish for the things of God diminished to a standard that was acceptable to all, within and without the church, for why need one stand out in a peculiar way when one could blend in and do so much more good?

God again sent a message to his beloved people: You have drifted away from the old landmarks and are following your own understanding. When you seek to turn aside my counsel to suit yourselves, you are rebelling against me.

Solemn words when you think about what happened to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, but words that did not sink in. The pleadings of the Spirit were neglected because pleasure and inclination led in an opposite direction. A life of ease was valued by those young enough to have the energy to pursue it, and for the aged *worthies*, success was measured by the

good things they had been able to obtain in this fleeting life. Even under the garb of religion, success was measured by the number of spiritual books in one's library and by the value of the duties performed at church. Church members often found themselves counting (to themselves), not their silver, but the church programs attended and the Bible studies given. Ever-changing fashion ruled in the homes, and children were seen conforming to the world even faster than their parents.

All this, of course, was offensive to the God they thought they were serving, for he knows that anyone, and everyone, who, step-by-step, yields to worldly customs in matters of dress, diet, and secular affairs, will, instead of conforming to God's will, also yield when the laws in Laodicea, or anywhere, demand compliance in matters of worship. Rather than face ridicule, imprisonment, and the threat of death, the so-called God-fearing Laodiceans will accept the mark of the beast, for the voice they hear at that time, which they think is the voice of God, will actually be the voice of the beast. It will not be the still, small voice which will have, by then, been long silenced.

But before that final crisis comes, God himself promises to take charge of his flock. His leaders have often been false shepherds, yes. His sheep have been scattered, robbed and spoiled, yes. But not for long, for the great Shepherd himself will take over and will rapidly finish his work in a way completely unexpected.

At the General Conference session in 1888, A.T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner presented a series of sermons that uplifted the great sacrifice of Jesus for ours sins and that focused on "justification through faith" and "sanctification through the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit":

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure. (*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1336; letter written to O. A. Olsen May 1, 1895)

I have no smooth message to bear to those who have been for so long as false guideposts, pointing the wrong way. If you reject Christ's delegated messengers, you reject Christ. Neglect this great salvation kept before you for

years, despise this glorious offer of *justification through the blood of Christ and sanctification through the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit*, and there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. (*Ibid.*, p. 1342; all emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted)

Many of the leaders rejected the message and even taunted the messengers:

Light and power from on high have been shed abundantly in the midst of you. Here was evidence, that all might discern whom the Lord recognized as His servants. But there are those who despised the men and the message they bore. They have taunted them with being *fanatics, extremists, and enthusiasts*. (*Ibid.*, p. 1341)

Prior to this time, God had revealed to Ellen White several times that his people were in a Laodicean state. For example,

"I was shown that the testimony to the Laodiceans applies to God's people at the present time" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol.1, p.186; written in 1859)

"The message to the church of the Laodiceans is a startling denunciation, and is applicable to the people of God at the present time" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 252; written in 1873).

And in 1892 Ellen White said the message given by Jones and Waggoner was for the Laodicean church:

The message given us by A. T. Jones, and E. J. Waggoner is the message of God to the Laodicean church, and woe be unto anyone who professes to believe the truth and yet does not reflect to others the God-given rays [of this message] (*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1052; letter written to Uriah Smith in 1892)

This means that God's people were in great need of pure faith and love which is represented by gold tried in fire (*Ibid.*, p. 254); of spotless characters made pure in the blood of Jesus, of which the white raiment is symbolic (*Ibid.*) and which is also identified as the righteousness of Christ (*The Review & Herald*, April 1, 1890); and of the grace of God, which is signified by the eyesalve (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 252) and also identified with true spiritual discernment (*The Review & Herald*, April 1, 1890).

So, what did God do to help Laodicea? He sent a "most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones," a message that was designed to meet the very needs of their hearts. In the messages of Jones and Waggoner, Jesus was uplifted and faith in his life of perfect obedience was encouraged because many had lost sight of Jesus, but most of God's people, unfortunately, lacked the spiritual discernment to appreciate, or even understand, it.

Because the Laodicean message applied to them, the Adventist Church in 1888 had to have considered itself rich, increased with goods, and in need of nothing, so let's look at the church at that time. Church membership was approximately 28,000, up from the original 3,500 members and 125

churches of 1863, when the church was first organized. Mission work was started in 1874, when J. N. Andrews accepted the call to Switzerland. The *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald* was begun in 1850, the *Youth's Instructor* in 1852, and the *Signs of the Times* in 1874. The publishing house at Battle Creek, Michigan, began operation in 1855. The Health Reform Institute, later known as the Battle Creek Sanitarium, opened in 1866. The first Sabbath School was established in 1872, and in 1877 state-wide Sabbath school associations were formed. You can see that the work of Seventh-day Adventists had expanded greatly in many areas. It really had increased, and as of 2010, the Adventist Church has an established work in 201 countries and has 67,055 churches, 16,615 active pastors, and 16,049,101 members (adapted from *The Seventh-day Adventist Church Yearbook 2010*, page 4). This is a significant presence, but why are we still here?

According to the 2009 financial statement of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists presented at the 59th Session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in 2010, the church's total assets were \$398,978,507. This figure represents liquid assets and does not include the property value of the 67,055 churches that are under its umbrella, nor the value of the hospitals, learning institutions, and publishing houses owned by the various conferences and divisions of the General Conference. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is certainly a huge organization, but why are we still here?

We are still here because we still have not appreciated and accepted the most precious message God sent Laodicea in 1888!

I was shown that the testimony to the Laodiceans applies to God's people at the present time, and the reason it has not accomplished a greater work is because of the hardness of their hearts. But God has given the message time to do its work. The heart must be purified from sins which have so long shut out Jesus. This fearful message will do its work. . . .

God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel: "God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people." Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. Individuals are

tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: "They are joined to their idols, let them alone," and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 186, 187; written in 1859)

Jesus wants to come in and sup with us and for us to sup with him. What does this mean? An offer for a personal experience with Jesus? Perhaps. That Jesus is interested in our needs and will provide for them? Perhaps. The best answer, however, could be found in the following quotation in which Ellen White relates the symbolic use of eating and drinking to "working from the very same principles" as the one with whom you are eating and drinking: "The Lord has a controversy with all who by their unbelief and doubt have been saying that He delays His coming, and who have been smiting their fellow servants, and eating and drinking with (*working from the very same principle as*) the drunken" (*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1324; parentheses in original). In order for Jesus to sup with us and we with him, we must be working from the very same principles as those of our Saviour. We must have the same character as he has—the same faith, the same discernment, and the same love—and all this comes as a gift from him, if we heed the counsel of the True Witness and become "purified through obeying the truth" and overcome our selfishness, pride, and evil passions. If this does not occur, God has promised that his angels will pass us by and leave us to the control of evil angels.

We close this series on the seven churches of Revelation with the question asked in an early advent hymn. May God richly bless you as seek Christ and his righteousness.

O, when shall we see Jesus and reign with him above
And shall hear the trumpet sound in that morning?

Onycha Holt

Sudden Death for A Warrior

We are saddened to report that Elder Willis Smith has passed on to his rest, awaiting the return of Jesus. Willis, age 67, died of a massive heart attack on March 10. We will always remember Willis for his loving, easy ways, his ready poetry, and his determination to spread the three angels' messages with his radio and prison ministries. Let us remember his family in prayer during this difficult time. ✍

The Trinity—The Cornerstone of Ecumenism and Modern Spirituality

By Henri Rasolofomasoandro

(The following is a translation (by Elisabeth Fury) and edited copy of a sermon that Brother Rasolofomasoandro shared at the 2011 France camp meeting. Editor)

Our Father in heaven, We are so thankful for this occasion to worship you and to deepen together in your word in this place. We ask you to open our minds, but far beyond this opening, Lord, we ask you to sanctify us through your word, to prepare us for your coming. In Jesus name, Amen.

First, I want to share greetings to everyone. It is a pleasure to see new faces. There are those who come from far away—from Italy, from Moldova, and from the United States. We greet everyone that is present here in this brotherly communion around the word of God.

A few moments ago, Allen Stump said that he is glad to be living at this time in earth's history. A few days ago, I had the opportunity to speak in meetings where I said exactly the same thing. It is exciting to live in this time. It is exciting because we are taking part in the final battle and, more than that, because we are witnesses of the power of God.

You see, there is something fascinating (you are probably touched by it also) with this infatuation for unity in every field—political unity, economical unity, financial unity—but far beyond this, it seems that all these unities will be headed up by a religious unity. We need to ask ourselves what is the cement, the cornerstone, of all these unities and particularly of the religious unity that will somehow head up or inspire all these unities.

If you open your Bible to Revelation chapter 18, there you will find Babylon the great:

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations [you see, here this important gathering] all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. (Revelation 18:1–3)

Here you see, according to the text we just read, that Babylon the great is an inspiring power for all this gathering that is happening right now in front of our eyes. But please notice verse 3: “All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Here is a wine that is given to all nations in order for them to be indoctrinated and to be gathered and together. There is a need for a general teaching to be accepted

by everyone in order for this unity, this gathering, to take place.

I have been studying this subject for just a few months, and what I am discovering, my friends, is a current of thoughts that is crossing all the so-called Christian religions today.

There is a vocabulary that is somehow usurped. We have to lean on the word of God and in the book of Acts, where is found for the first time when the name Christian is mentioned. Please take your Bible, and let us read Acts 11:26 together: “And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” So what are the Christians? They are disciples, and what are the disciples? Let us, for example, take John 8:31: “Then Jesus said to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue [dwell in French]”—where?—“in my word, then are ye”—what?—“my disciples indeed.” So to be a Christian is simply to be a disciple, and to be a disciple is to dwell in the word of Christ.

Dear friends, let me ask a question that you may answer: Can a Catholic or a Protestant truly bear the name of Christian? Do they follow the word of Jesus? They usurp—they take—this title to simply indoctrinate others in order for the people to easily accept what the Bible is here calling the wine of their fornication. And the people are caught. Here is the power of propaganda. This is very strong. Yes. Don't forget that our adversary in Revelation 12:9 is a seducer. He knows how to seduce. His seductions are very strong. We need to understand the snares of Satan.

What I found, when I started to study a few months ago, is that at the foundation of this fundamental propaganda is the trinity, but the concept of a three-part divine being or beings is not limited to Christianity. If you look at the list below, the concept of a trinity or a three-person God (we will call it a triad) is very popular. In most of the religions that existed, there were triads. Please look closely:

- The number 3 fascinated the philosophies. Plato sees it as something strange; Aristotle thinks that it expresses fullness. Notice this foundation in philosophical thought right from the beginning.
- In Hinduism there is a triad—Brahman, Vishnu, Shiva.
- In the Babylonian religion there is Ea, Merodach (Jeremiah 50:2), Gibil (or Girru or Musku).
- In Egypt it is very important because there is an Egyptian influence in the establishment of the trinity—Osiris, Isis, and Horus, a triad found in art and literature.
- A little more in the south is the Theban triad—Amon “the hidden,” Mout “the mother,” Khonsou “the traveler.”

- In Iranian religion—Mithra, Sraosha, Rashnu. They are three divine judges, among whom the latter holds the scale to weigh good and evil.
- In Greece the concept of a trinity was very important because the *theologians* who established the doctrine of the trinity borrowed from the Greeks very important philosophical concepts. So there are Apollo, Artemis, and Leto. The first two are brother and sister, and the mother is Leto. There are also Zeus, Hera, and Ares, where Ares is the child of the couple, Zeus and Hera.

Let me just stop for a second on this Greek triad. Here they are trying to establish a relation, a link, in between their triad. This will be the object of the philosophies, theologians who have also established the doctrine of the trinity.

Not only the Mediterranean area was touched by these triads, in other words, three gods in their religion, but there were also:

- The Roman triad—Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus, and
- The Nordic triad—Odin, Thor, Frö.

You see that the notion of triad is something that crosses the centuries, the cultures, and the civilizations. This is the notion that in religion there are three gods. Do you see clearly now? This is from Hinduism to Nordic. In the book *Triads and Trinity*, we read the following:

On the distinct and clear idea of tri-unity*, we need to turn to Egypt, where the theology of the New Empire started to consider the triad as a trinity. During the first centuries of Christianity, this evolution was supported by the Greek influence: the triadic system of Plato was often coming close to the dimension of trinitarianism and the Greek popular syncretism was often ready to consider three gods as one. (J. Gwynn Griffiths, *Triads and Trinity*, p. 307; Cardiff University of Wales Press, 1996)

I found this book at the theological university in Geneva, and everyone can read it. Here the author is saying that we need to turn to Egypt. You see Egypt tried to start a theology from their triad. They started to deepen this relation between their three divinities. Then a second element comes in the process, and this is the Greek influence. But Greece is primarily characterized by philosophy. So you see first Egypt and then Greece. There is a link, a connection, between Plato's system and the trinity. I do not say it out of the blue—I find this in the book I just mentioned. Greeks, in their culture, in their philosophical thought, have a tendency to amalgamate different religions and are ready to consider three gods as one.

According to Griffiths it is clear that the “Christian” trinity (and I use quotation marks to show that I do not use this vocabulary all the time) seems to have its roots first in Egypt

* So the notion of tri-unity is a distinct and clear idea. It is the reason why we were talking about triads before because there is a particularity in “Christianity”. Something will be introduced that will mark this as a “Christian” particularity.

and then in the Greek thought. Does it say that the roots are found in the word of God? No!

So here is something that should put all true Christians on alert—those Christians about whom we read in John 8:31, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.” I don't understand why theologians don't seem to be able to grasp such a simple thought. Jesus said: “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Mathew 11:25). The Greek word for *wise* is σοφῶν (*sophōn*), from the word σοφός (*sophos*) which, combined with the Greek word φιλέω (*phileo*), forms the word *philosophy*. During the time of Jesus, Greek philosophy was bearing a lot of influence on the “wise and prudent.” God's truth, however, is revealed to them who are “babes.” There are children among us, but be aware that in this text the babes, or children, are the persons whose minds are not polluted by the wine of the fornication of Babylon the great. Be careful with this pollution. Our minds need to be independent from such a pollution.

We have seen earlier the influence that was upon the Christians. So they asked themselves, though I might caricature a little bit, *Why not do as the others?* It may be a shortcut, but that is exactly what happened. In Alexandria the question was: Is the Son of God of the same substance as the Father, or is he of a similar substance? Where is Alexandria? In Egypt. So, as we saw earlier, there was an Egyptian influence. Alexandria is characterized by a great philosophical activity. The historians are saying so. Is the Son of God of the same substance? The word *substance* may not tell you a lot of things because it is a philosophical word. The discussion was upon this—what is the substance? Is the Son of God of the same substance as the Father or of a similar substance? This was the fundamental question at the beginning to establish the trinity.

What was meant by *same substance* versus *similar substance*? If Jesus were of the same substance, that meant that he and the Father shared substance or that there was one being. If Jesus were of a similar substance, that meant that Jesus, though of divine nature like the Father, was a different being from the Father. To say that Jesus was the *same substance*, in this argument, would be like saying a father and his son were two persons but had one body. Sometimes the term *consubstantial* is used to express this idea. To say that Jesus was of *similar substance*, in this argument, would be like saying a father and his son were two persons and in two different bodies. The body of the son would be of like or of the *same kind of substance* as that of the father. The son's body would not be the same material but it would be made of the same quality flesh, blood, and bone as the father's body.

The disputes that arose over this issue were, at times, terrible. Sometimes these discussions finished with murders, with crimes, just for—is it *same or similar*? They were ready to do acts that were totally contrary to the Gospel to establish the trinitarian doctrine.

This is a philosophical question concerning the *hypostasis*, a word used by philosophers and theologians which means what is inside—the substance, the being. They want to know what is inside in God, in Jesus, etc., what is the substance of God, of Jesus, of the Holy Spirit. You see, I speak sometimes to students in Collonges [Collonges is the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in France] who are preparing to be pastors, and I ask them if they understand the doctrine of the trinity, and their answer is “No.” When I read books on the trinity in Geneva, at the library of the ecumenical center, I am sad to see the concepts that are introduced in these books. *Polyadic*—does it mean something to you? Is it a concept of which you know? I understand because of my mathematical background. *Polyadic* means “involving three or more quantities, elements, or individuals” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). In our time, when the sciences, mathematics, etc., have a certain weight in our century, the theologian who is trying to get an acceptance of the idea of the trinity borrows from the mathematician such a concept.

Jesus has said that religion should be understood by children. Why search for such complex ideas to understand God? Here is something that I just cannot understand, and it is probably the same for you.

We now arrive at the Council of Nicaea in AD 325, where Constantine, a very powerful emperor at that time, has taken a stand to impose upon the people who were present at this council the idea that Jesus is *consubstantial* with the Father. You see here this philosophical concept, and they used the Greek word which has a pure philosophical origin—*homoousion*. When you hear the word trinity today, know this doctrine has its roots in the Council of Nicaea, and you need to keep in mind that it means that Jesus is *consubstantial* with the Father. However, this man-made concept is useless in the pursuit of true doctrine. It is not what the Bible teaches. It comes from philosophical theologians who like to speculate on things that are not founded on the word of God.

“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes” (Matthew 11:25), whose minds have not been polluted by the wine of the fornication of Babylon the great.

A few years afterward, in AD 381, comes the Council of Constantinople that presents the Holy Spirit in order for the doctrine to be completed. Under the patronage of the emperor, the council is brought to consider the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Godhead. The doctrine is now complete.

This is a brief background to the origins of this doctrine. You see that it is not founded on the Bible. It has been established on philosophy, on human thought, and it is established in order for the *Christians* to come together, especially at the time of the end, now.

What did our pioneers say concerning the trinity? First I take James White, Ellen White’s husband. A lot of pioneers expressed their conviction concerning the trinity. You can read in Allen Stump’s book that has been translated recently. I encourage you to take this book and to spread it as the leaves of autumn. Don’t be afraid; don’t be ashamed. I say don’t be afraid because you will have troubles, I am telling you. When I have spoken about certain ideas among the Seventh-day Adventists, I have been summoned by the authorities. I received threatening, and even injurious, e-mails from high authorities in France, and I am not saying the names because I want to respect the privacy of these persons. It is the first time that in an e-mail I read: “You are a Boeotian, do not think of theology. You are a mathematician, stay where you are.” I quickly grabbed a dictionary to know what it means to be a Boeotian. Do any of you know what a Boeotian is? In this context, Boeotian means a person whose mind is not well-developed, someone who is ignorant!

Elder Andreasen and others were called the lunatic fringe—those who are not supposed to know what they are talking about. But I am not afraid of anyone—religious authority, political authority, military authority—whatever. If I put my trust in the God of the Bible, then I have nothing to fear. It must be clear. I had the opportunity to tell that to those people who wrote me, and of course, they were angry, but it is normal.

Here is what James White said:

As fundamental errors, we might class with this counterfeit sabbath other errors which Protestants have brought away from the Catholic church, such as sprinkling for baptism, the trinity, the consciousness of the dead and eternal life in misery. The mass who have held these fundamental errors, have doubtless done it ignorantly; but can it be supposed that the church of Christ will carry along with her these errors till the judgment scenes burst upon the world? We think not. (James White, *The Review and Herald*, September 12, 1854)

Fundamental errors—this is just the beginning, and it is very strong. The counterfeit Sabbath is Sunday. The trinity is listed among the fundamental errors. At the end James White says, “We think not.” It is very important to know that James White has listed the trinity in the fundamental errors, and up until now we haven’t found any condemnation from Ellen White concerning any such statement from her husband. According to what I know, never did Ellen White condemn her husband for such an important statement that the trinity is a fundamental error.

[*Editor’s Note:* Ellen White fully agreed with her husband and condemned the doctrine of the trinity. She spoke about people who had a wrong view of God and how God had sent her and her husband to clarify these things to the people. She called them the spiritualizers, and James White said that they were teaching the trinity. (See the April 2008 issue of *Old Paths*.)]

There are people who are taking statements from Ellen White to say that she believed in the trinity. I had, more than once, the opportunity to answer to these questions because it is a wrong reading of the work of Ellen White. I encourage you to read the book *The Foundation of Our Faith* by Allen Stump because the author has revealed that Ellen White was not trinitarian. I truly encourage you to read thoroughly this document because I find it very clear and exhaustive and will help you have a solid foundation on this question.

Another Adventist theologian, J. N. Andrews, wrote:

The doctrine of the Trinity which was established in the church by the council of Nice, A. D. 325. This doctrine destroys the personality of God, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The infamous, measures by which it was forced upon the church which appear upon the pages of ecclesiastical history might well cause every believer in that doctrine to blush. (J. N. Andrews, *The Review & Herald*, March 6, 1855)

This doctrine was “forced” upon the early church, in order for it to take root in the minds of the people.

At the beginning of the last century, the Spirit of Prophecy called the teaching of John H. Kellogg “the alpha of apostasy.” Last spring I had the opportunity to read the whole book Kellogg wrote entitled *The Living Temple*. On page 7 Kellogg says that God manifests himself through and in all objects, movements, and varied phenomenon in the universe, and Ellen White says that he was inspired by the trinitarian doctrine. He himself wrote that. I believe that in his book it proves it.

At that time Ellen White gives a warning. She gives a warning concerning what she calls “the omega of apostasy.” She says that there will be an omega, that this omega would be of “a most startling nature” (*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 197), and that it would come right after her death.

In the middle of last century, there were two brilliant theologians—Donald Barnhouse and Walter Martin. They called the Adventist church a cult. This is something that touches people because being labeled a cult means to be at the fringe of society, and for intellectual people, this is very insulting. So LeRoy Froom, Roy Allan Anderson, and others tried to bring and impose on our church the trinitarian doctrine. In order to do that, they used treachery (I am weighing my words).

In 1980 the doctrine of the trinity was officially accepted at the General Conference in Dallas, Texas. That was over thirty years ago, and it was already well-established then. Today we have a new generation that has grown up with this doctrine, with few knowing its origin or that it has not always been a part of our holy faith.

Concerning the omega, we have an absolute certainty that it is the forced introduction of the doctrine of the trinity in the midst of Adventism.

I saw the book of a prominent man in Adventism while in Geneva. The name of the man is B. B. Beach, and he is still

alive. I saw his book, *So Much in Common*. I copied it and read it, from the first to the last page, and I saw that he is a trinitarian. Not only that, he was close enough to the people of the World Council of Churches to say to them, “We have so much in common,” and the chief thing in common was the doctrine of the trinity. I call this a betrayal because those intellectuals are very intelligent. Intelligent to know better, and they are betraying the faith and the people.

The modern world is in mutation. Here is the list of some of the major challenges that we are currently facing:

- The great world wars
- The permanent gap between the rich and the poor
- Social problems and injustices
- Ecological problems
- A lack of a true Christian testimony in the world
- The failure of people and cultures to reconcile
- The work to finish the European construction and the eradication of all forms of nationalism.

In front of all these issues, the world’s leaders see the need for unity. This is all logical, for there is a need of unity to face these problems, and in the Christian world, they are saying: “We need to unite in order for Christianity to show a united position to the world.” Here the word *Christian* is a usurpation of the correct word that is used only for Christ’s followers.

The trinity is the cornerstone of the ecumenism:

The Charta Oecumenica (Latin for “Ecumenical Charter”) is a joint document from the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of European Episcopal Conferences (CCEE, Consilium Conferentiarum Episcoporum Europae) which contains guidelines for increasing co-operation among the churches in Europe. (Wikipedia: Charta Oecumenica)

Within the Charta Oecumenica we find the following statement:

With the Gospel of Jesus Christ, according to the witness of Holy Scripture and as expressed in the ecumenical Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381, we believe in the Triune God: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Because we here confess “one, holy, catholic and apostolic church” our paramount ecumenical task is to show forth this unity, which is always a gift of God.” (Charta Oecumenica)

The paramount ecumenical task is to show forth this unity with the trinity.

And, again, those who are in agreement with the Charta Oecumenica commit themselves “in the power of the Holy Spirit, to work towards the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ in the one faith, expressed in the mutual recognition of baptism and in eucharistic fellowship, as well as in common witness and service” (*Charta Oecumenica*).

“Mutual recognition of baptism” means that each church acknowledges the other’s baptism as valid and that through it you are entering in a church.

“The eucharistic fellowship” is something really sad. In the *Adventist Review* (French edition), the president of our conference was sharing freely that he was taking part of the communion service with other communities and was saying: “And so...?”— meaning, *What’s the problem? There is no problem.* He is taking in the wine of the wrath of the fornication of Babylon. Either this person knows the Bible well and is in rebellion, or this person doesn’t know the Scriptures and still goes ahead in inexcusable ignorance and apostasy. Yet despite this, he is a leader of the southern France churches.

This man summoned me into his office, and we talked three hours. He knows exactly what I am thinking and also what the Bible says. I know that because I shared what the Bible says about this to him.

Witness and Service

There is a goal to have a common witness and a common service. We see this through the Alpha Life course and A4. In our churches it is coming, very softly, to introduce the idea to witness together.

The Orthodox, Reformed Protestant, Anglican, Free and Old Catholic, and the Catholic Church signed the Charta Oecumenica.

Ecumenism is also the springboard for modern spirituality.

1) What is the modern spirituality? It is a form of contemplative life, built upon the *silence*. This word has a very important meaning. It means make silence in us—empty ourselves. This was introduced by Ignatius of Loyola and Master Eckhart to listen to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit talking in our hearts.

2) Do we find it elsewhere? Yes, in Hinduism. It is a spirituality whose roots are in Hinduism.

3) Where is it now in the midst of Christianity? It is practiced more and more in the Protestant churches, but for a long time in the Catholic Church. The papacy gives apostolic letters to introduce more and more in the liturgy the notion of silence. It doesn’t mean not making any noise or not talking. It is deeper than that.

4) Is the Adventist church touched by this? Yes. Leaders and pastors are studying and practicing this spirituality in places like Willow Creek, and some of our pastors here are sent to the United States, to Willow Creek, to study this form of spirituality.

5) What is the goal? To share more easily *the message* — not the message of the Bible, but the *Christian message*.

6) What is the heart of the teaching of this *Christian* current? God himself is always in us, wherever we are. To listen to him talking to our heart, we need to empty our mind of all conscience activity, to make silence in ourselves. Here is the teaching of this form of spirituality.

7) So? It is a method to appropriate God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, and to listen to them talking in us. Listen to the Holy Spirit talking in us. Don’t forget that in their conception, the Holy Spirit is a person of the trinity.

You will see this if you listen to modern Protestant meetings where the Holy Spirit is called upon with shouting, with hands raised up, with heavy rhythm music, as in bars. They also demonstrate that they perform healings. More than once my wife and I have seen through the televised services such things happening in front of our very eyes. The Bible tells us that the devil will try everything to deceive, if possible, the very elect of God.

8) What does Ellen White say? After October 22, 1844, young Ellen White was just seventeen years old, as she was born November 26th, 1827, and she received a calling from God to gather the fifty persons who still believed in this date. The others left and had some strange ideas, and she called them the “spiritualizers.” Somehow these people believed that on October 22, 1844, God had come and was living in them. Doesn’t it make you think of the doctrine of Kellogg? And Ellen White, when she talked to Kellogg about it, said, referring to the spiritualizers, that she had already met this form of error.

Ellen White called the Kellogg apostasy the “alpha of deadly heresies.” This apostasy contained views of pantheism in Kellogg’s book *The Living Temple* which said that God was everywhere. She said that she trembled for the people of God, for the coming of the omega would be soon after her death and would be of a most startling nature. (See *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 197.)

When I see the state of our churches throughout France, when I see a pastor inviting a Catholic priest—an official of a high rank of ecumenism—to preach in our church on a Sabbath morning, I realize we are really in the midst of this omega. This could not have ever happened if we had not accepted the doctrine of the trinity. This is the reason why I am saying that it is exciting to live right now, for we know that the end is just upon us.

9) What is the common ground of all these manifestations? They are all speculating upon God (remember how they used philosophy to obtain the doctrine of the trinity, in the first centuries), with human reasoning outside of his word.

10) How can we explain the involvement of Adventists in this kind of spirituality? How can we explain that Seventh-day Adventists are brought in this? It is because the church went astray in adopting the omega—the trinity. It is how we establish bridges, links, and we go further, one step at a time. Never all in one time, but a little here, and a little there.

Here is a quote from John Paul II, taken from an apostolic letter called *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*:

In the Church’s traditional spirituality, the veneration of icons and the many devotions appealing to the senses, as well as the method of prayer proposed by Saint Ignatius of Loyola in the Spiritual Exercises, make use of visual and imaginative elements (the *compositio loci*), judged to be of great help in concentrating the mind on the particular

mystery. (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20021016_rosarium-virginis-mariae_en.html)

He means that in this spirituality there is a need of concentration of the mind upon the mystery. The trinity is one of the mysteries.

Here is another quote by John Paul II from his apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*:

I thought of its celebration as a providential opportunity during which the Church, thirty-five years after the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, would examine how far she had renewed herself, in order to be able to take up her evangelizing mission with fresh enthusiasm. (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte_en.html)

Behind all this the objective is to evangelize, but not with the biblical concept but with the concept of all this false Christian unity.

In the Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee I expressed the hope that the bimillennial celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation would be lived as “one unceasing hymn of praise to the Trinity . . .” (*Ibid.*)

All this is said high and loud.

One aspect that we must foster in our communities with greater commitment is the experience of silence. We need silence “if we are to accept in our hearts the full resonance of the voice of the Holy Spirit and to unite our personal prayer more closely to the Word of God and the public voice of the Church.” (John Paul II, Apostolic letter *Spiritus Et Sponsa*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20031204_sacra-liturgia_en.html)

Here, of course, the Holy Spirit is viewed with the trinitarian mindset.

We should not be surprised that our relationship with Christ makes use of a method. God communicates himself to us respecting our human nature and its vital rhythms. Hence, while Christian spirituality is familiar with the most sublime forms of mystical silence in which images, words and gestures are all, so to speak, superseded by an intense and ineffable union with God, it normally engages the whole person in all his complex psychological, physical and relational reality. (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*)

Over the years, I have often repeated the summons to the *new evangelization*. (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*)

We see that the objective is very clear and is in relationship with this method.

“One should avoid talking on this point in such a way that, in returning to the Church, they (the Protestants) think they are bringing to it an essential element

which was lacking until now.” (*De motione Oecumenica*, December 20th, 1949, quoted from, <http://opuscula.blogspot.com/2010/01/goal-of-ecumenism.html>)

Here it is really clear that they will do all for the Protestants to come back to the Church (Catholic Church). I don't understand the Protestant leaders, as well as our leaders, who bring themselves in such relationships.

“The goal of ecumenism is the union with the Catholic Church.”

“When I talk about enrichment, I am not referring to additions of essential elements of sanctification and truth to the Catholic Church. Christ gave him all the fundamentals.” (Cardinal William Levada; <http://e-gli.com/role-of-the-roman-catholic-church-to-ecumenism>)

What Ellen White says is completely in accordance with the previous quotations from Catholics.

And this is the religion which Protestants are beginning to look upon with so much favor, and which will eventually be united with Protestantism. This union will not, however, be effected by a change in Catholicism; for Rome never changes. She claims infallibility. It is Protestantism that will change. The adoption of liberal ideas on its part will bring it where it can clasp the hand of Catholicism. (*The Review and Herald*, June 1, 1886)

I am living not far away from our theological seminary near Switzerland, and there is something very sad there. There is a teacher there, in responsibility of the White Estate for France, who very often goes to the diocese of Annecy to have meetings with Catholic leaders. He talks with the Jesuits of the group of the Dombes, who help the progress of ecumenism, but in relationship with what we said this morning, he is bringing students with him (students in theology) to convents to learn the silence which we talked about. I was able to warn the students, and the students are now protesting to the leaders. Now I am waiting! Just ten days ago, the pastor and the president of the school said to me: “We want to talk with you, because you are teaching different things to the students.” I am very willing and eager to talk to them!

Let's pray:

Our Father in heaven, We are so thankful to be able to gather together this morning to study your word. Lord, we pray that you may firmly root us in your truth that we may be free from sin, but, Lord, please prepare us for the times that are ahead of us now. Help us also to be your witnesses for the institutions and for the persons we may come in contact, whatever the conditions. It is our prayer in Jesus' name, Amen.

Youth's Corner—An-Fu, the Leper Boy

An-Fu was probably the most important member of his family because he was the only boy in a family of six girls. It was he who worshiped the ancestral tablets and it was he who offered the bowl of rice and said a prayer to the old grandparents who had passed on to the spirit world. He it was, rather than his sisters, who would be given an education because he lived in a China where boys were honored and girls were not educated—at least not in the farming section where An-Fu lived. After his father's death he was even more important, for though he had to work harder on their little farm to raise enough food for his family and to send to market, he had one more tablet before which he made an offering and prayer.

Soon after this, however, a great change came into his life. He began to have stinging pains in his hands. Later his mother found white spots on his arms which, when she pinched them, had no feeling. She knew what that meant—he had become a leper! Such a catastrophe for poor ten-year-old An-Fu! Instead of feeling sorry for him, his mother grew very angry and declared that he was no son of hers but only an evil spirit sent to give trouble. Sometimes he cried as he worked in the garden. The stinging pain was hard enough to bear, but added to it were the bitter words of his mother which made his suffering even greater.

Why did he not go to a doctor? Because there were four hundred million people at this time in China and only about four hundred trained doctors throughout the country. There was no doctor near An-Fu's little out-of-the-way village, and even in the nearest city no one had ever heard of a doctor. One day a neighbor came in and told his mother one of the terrible superstitions believed in his day. She said that if An-Fu were kept at home, evil spirits would come from him to afflict the rest of the family so that they, too, would have the disease. His mother became so excited and terrified that she called An-Fu to the door, threw the only coat he owned at him, and told him to leave immediately and to never come back.

He set out on the road which led to the nearest city, where he would beg for food. No one in his village would comfort a boy who was in such ill-favor with the gods. No one even offered him a begging bowl. When he remembered the lepers in the city, he thought to himself that they would understand and tell him where to find food. So he decided to look for them.

Outside the city wall, huddled together in the sunlight, he found them, holding out their begging bowls and calling out, "Unclean, unclean! Help a poor suffering leper!"

An-Fu told them of his troubles. One gave him some rice, another gave him a begging bowl, and others told him terrible tales of ill-treatment.

One thing which these lepers told brought him a little cheer—the first bit of comfort that had come into his heart

since the day his mother ordered him out of the home. They said that certain foreigners, people from another land, had come to China and were doing kind things for lepers. They fed them and built them a place of shelter. When asked where these people lived, the lepers shook their heads sadly, for they had only heard about them and did not know.

The cruel words and rebuffs of the passers-by caused An-Fu to grow more and more timid and more and more afraid to ask for help.

One day he saw a leper woman, whose face was badly marked with the disease, being led along by a little girl about his own age. They were hurrying in such a manner as An-Fu had seen villagers do when frightened by bandits. There were no hills in this section of the country, so why were they in such haste, wondered the boy. He followed them, and finally saw them enter a building which was not built like the Chinese homes, but a large place like a temple, where many people came and went. He watched earnestly, and after several hours saw a white-faced man come out with the leper woman and her little girl. As he stood talking with them, he drew something on paper and gave it to the woman, along with a package of food. "Good-by," he said, courteously, as the Chinese do, with many bows and good wishes. An-Fu did not understand what he said, as he spoke Kuanhwa (Mandarin) very poorly. It was his kindly manner which gave the boy courage to speak.

"May I follow you? I have no home," he begged.

The woman replied: "Why should you want to follow us? I am a leper!" He simply held out his hand with the white spots on it. She nodded her head and said, "Come, follow us." Then she added an explanation: "I am going blind with the disease. It may overtake me as I go. The child doesn't have the disease, but I have brought her to lead me. It is far, and we must go there before my eyes get worse. Those who follow the true God's religion have given us directions."

After hours of walking and resting and walking and resting, the woman opened the bundle and shared her food with the boy and girl. They said little to him, but they let him lie down with them at night wherever they could find shelter by a wall or in a temple court. Over a week of walking brought them at last to the Yangtze River, where the woman offered a boatman some money to take them to a certain place she showed him marked on the plan drawn by the kind man. Toward night they were set down on the opposite shore. There, in the evening light, the strangest sight met their eyes. Outside a wall surrounding a large group of buildings sat many miserable-looking people, clothed in rags.

As they drew nearer An-Fu saw that they were all lepers. When asked why they did not enter the gate, one leper replied: "We cannot go in yet. We have to wait until friends from their far Western land send more money to care for

more lepers. They of the *home* hope it will not be long. You can wait outside the gate with us. It may be days, or it may be only a short wait.”

The mother sank down, discouraged. The boy and girl, however, were fascinated with the glimpses they got inside the wall. There were well-kept walks and green grass, clean new buildings, little cottages in front of which ran narrow, well-kept roads, and groups of people. Some were hardly able to walk, but others were working. Some cared for the flowers, and some were sawing wood to make a cottage. Were these also lepers? An-Fu asked the others who waited outside the gate. “Yes, all are lepers; those who are not very sick take care of the feeble ones. Only the Christians who are in charge, the Western man from over the sea, are not lepers.”

“What makes them come from their homes to care for lepers, these men you call *Christian*?” asked An-Fu.

“It is their God, for whom they are named—the Christ—who told them to go forth and serve those in need, to care for the sick and suffering, and to cleanse the leper. That is how they came from the Christian country to care for us here.”

As darkness came on, a bell rang, and all inside the gate walked into one of the larger buildings, some singing as they walked. A little later a few came out carrying trays upon which were many small bowls. Others followed with large plates. What could it be? The newcomers looked closely to see—could it be possible? Yes, they were bringing food to them! Steaming, savory rice and vegetables—they could smell its taste even before it reached them. Straight to the fence came the procession. An-Fu and his little friend reached up their arms, calling, “Please, we cannot reach!” Over the fence the able, strong lepers, who cared for the crippled ones, handed the offering of food which they had denied themselves to give.

Several days went by. An-Fu stood beside the gate looking wistfully at some boys playing ball. A kindly voice spoke a greeting in Mandarin, though not perfectly, as a Chinese would. An-Fu was to see for the first time the Christian about whom the lepers had told him so much. He replied with a bow, then another and another.

“Kind friend from far-away land,” he said, “is there a place inside the gate for a boy such as I? I come from two hundred miles away. See, I have not so much of the disease as others, and I can work hard. I know how to work in gardens!”

The missionary, who for twenty years had served the Master in China, replied: “We have only enough to keep the lepers already in the hospital, but I will take you, because you are strong and can work for the old and feeble. I cannot take the others.”

“Honorable sir,” answered An-Fu, “I was guided here by a stranger who was on her way here when I joined her. How can I go to the joys within when she must be left outside?”

The missionary looked sadly down at An-Fu. “Honorable son,” he said, “you ask me the question which I ask myself—How can I go again within and leave these outside.”

He thought a moment and then said kindly, “Wait here until I return.”

He went within. An-Fu saw him call the lepers together and watched while he talked with them. He saw them go down on their knees, as if before an idol, but he saw no idols.

An-Fu was then allowed to hold the gate open for all the lepers to pass within. And there he found out the meaning of the pantomime he had witnessed between the lepers and the Western Christian. They were all going to deny themselves still more and share their food and comforts with these new inmates.


Why were they willing, even eager, to do without for these strangers? Again the answer was found in that word *Christian*, and An-Fu determined to become acquainted with this Christ whom these people served and find out for himself what that word meant.

Adapted from a story in *The Youth’s Instructor*, July 10, 1928, by Gertrude Cody Wheaton

Onycha Holt

WV and CA Camp Meetings Planned

SGM and PVF wish to announce the dates for the West Virginia camp meeting (June 26–30) in Smyrna Valley and the dates for the California youth/family camp meeting (July 24–29). This is a combination of the planned California camp meeting and the youth camp meeting we have earlier mentioned. Please put these important events down on your calendars now.

For the California youth/family camp meeting, we are considering Lassen Volcanic National Park. We hope to have some group camp sites, where we can all be together. All attendees will need to provide their own transportation and camping gear, but we will be preparing food for a minimal cost. Since we will all eat together, if there are any special needs in this area, please let us **know** ahead of time. If you would like to attend, or think you would like to attend, please contact Pastor Stump (allen@smyrna.org) or call 304–732–9204 as soon as possible. 

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