

The Seventh-day Adventists and the Ecumenical Movement

5

COSMAS RUBENCAMP

This article is reprinted by permission from the Journal of Ecumenical Studies, volume six, number four, fall 1969, pages 534-548.

PRECIS. While Seventh-day Adventists are wrongly understood as a sect or cult, they remain staunchly outside the ecumenical movement. For one thing, they greatly distrust the Roman Catholic Church, whose papacy seems to most SDA's to be antichrist. They see here, and in the ecumenism of other Protestant churches, fulfillment of dire predictions in the books of Daniel and Revelation. At the same time, individual Roman Catholics and Protestants may be true Christians and no defamation is intended.

Seventh-day Adventists thus condemn the ecumenical movement, seeing themselves, a "remnant church," as called to witness to Sabbath observance, the nature of man, and the imminent return of Christ. All of these are ignored in the World Council of Churches. However, at least a very small minority of SDA's have reacted favorably to the suggestion of the WCC that membership in this body, which is neutral on doctrinal and ecclesiological questions, would be an opportunity to witness to their faith.

The time has come for serious dialogue between Adventists and other Christians. The high quality of theological faculties at Andrews University in Michigan and the Séminaire Adventiste du Salève in France indicates the fallacy of dismissing this church as a group of fanatics. Contact with other scholars, as well as the changes taking place in the Roman Catholic Church, may help to bridge the gulf between them and other Christians. But one must also take into account the Adventist fear of becoming just one more denomination, losing distinctive doctrines and evangelistic concern.

Seventh-day Adventists feel that they are coming into their own. No longer so frequently misunderstood as a "cult," a "sect," or an offbeat body with a ghetto-mentality, but generally considered a respectable denomina-

tion of the Christian Church, they are anxious to communicate with their fellow Christians so that their message may make an impact on them.¹ This attitude is illustrated by the fact that SDA Elder LeRoy Froom's book on the history of the doctrine of conditional immortality was projected in order that "Seventh-day Adventists [would] no longer appear as upstart innovators, out of step and out of tune with all segments . . . of the past whose names we rightly venerate."² Rather, they want to be seen as "restorers and continuators" of the ongoing reformation of the Church.³ And, as the late Elder Francis D. Nichol put it: "The reformation calls for completion most notably on these two doctrines, the sabbath and the nature of man; this is simply another way of saying that we have here two very real reasons for the existence of the Seventh-day Adventists."⁴

6

The ecclesiological self-understanding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not widely shared by other Christians, and this is due to some extent to the SDA noninvolvement in the ecumenical activities of these churches. In exploring the causes of this, we will analyze first the SDA attitudes toward the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, and then their view of the worldwide ecumenical movement. This will lead to an exploration of the question whether or not there are in fact components of the Seventh-day Adventist faith-commitment which call for or prohibit their entrance into ecumenical relationships with other Christian churches. Finally, we will take up the problem of the response of these churches to the SDA phenomenon.

ADVENTIST ATTITUDES TOWARD THE OTHER CHURCHES

Throughout its history,⁵ Seventh-day Adventism has been preoccupied with a struggle to define its view of the Roman Catholic Church.⁶ In order to understand this preoccupation, it should be noted first that Adventism began at a time when nativist Protestantism both hated and feared the Catholic Church. The nineteenth-century Millerite movement (out of which the Seventh-day Adventist [movement] arose) was not loath to accept the identification of the apocalyptic beast and harlot and the Babylon of Revelation as "papal Rome," an identification made as a matter of course in the churches from which the Millerites had come.⁷ Their preoccupation with Daniel and Revelation did, however, make this identification more definitely a part of Adventist thinking, and it has remained such to the present day. As late as 1952, for example, at the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Conference (a kind of general council of the denomination), a paper was delivered by a then-professor at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Semi-

nary in suburban Washington, D. C., in which paper the papacy was analyzed quite seriously as the antichrist.⁸

Even *Questions on Doctrine*, a responsible and authoritative statement of SDA faith, did not refrain from including the identification of “the Catholic, or great Roman, apostasy” with Daniel 7:24-25.

7

As for the ten horns,
Out of this kingdom
ten kings shall arise,
and another shall arise after them;
he shall be different from the former ones,
and shall put down three kings.
He shall speak words against the Most High,
and shall wear out the saints of the Most High,
and shall think to change the times and the law;
and they shall be given into his hand
for a time, two times, and half a time.

In the same chapter the horn of the fourth beast with “eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things” (Daniel 7:8) is described as “Rome’s pagan and later papal phases.”⁹ In other places in this same work we read that “Seventh-day Adventists believe that the prophecies of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13, relating to the beast, refer particularly to the Papacy.”¹⁰ It further decries “such papal innovations as a mediating priesthood, the sacrifice of the mass, the confessional, and the worship of Mary, by which it [papal Rome] has successfully taken away knowledge of, and reliance upon, the continual ministry of Christ . . . and rendered that ministry inoperative in the lives of millions of professed Christians.”¹¹ It goes on for pages to condemn, out of a vast ignorance of Catholic theology, the so-called teachings of the Roman Church.¹²

Lest, however, there be any unfortunate misunderstanding, the compilers of *Questions on Doctrine* add that “our statements . . . do not have the defamatory character that some would impute to us. They are uttered in sorrow, not for invidious comparisons.”¹³ There is reason to believe that this latter statement is quite sincere; it is repeated later in the book:

This prophetic interpretation does not justify the charge that its holders are anti-Catholic. We do not deny credit for any good that has been done by Catholics, or discount the sincerity of earnest individual Catholics because we find the system condemned in the Scripture. We respect the freedom of every Catholic to worship God as he thinks right; and we hold the freedom to point out what we see as error and to seek to persuade men to accept what we believe is truth, without prejudice or bigotry.¹⁴

The “Babylon” charge applies to the papacy as an institution (“system”)

only, it would seem, for earlier in the book the reader is informed that “we fully recognize the [heartening] fact that a host of true followers of Christ are scattered all through the various churches of Christendom, including the Roman Catholic communion. These God clearly recognizes as His own. Such do not form a part of the ‘Babylon’ portrayed in the Apocalypse.”¹⁵ This apocalyptic Babylon, rather, is composed of “those who have broken with the spirit and essence of true Christianity, and have followed the way of apostasy.”¹⁶

That the Babylon question is nevertheless still unresolved is pointed up by the contradiction in the — admittedly unofficial — *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, published almost ten years after *Questions on Doctrine*. There we read concerning “Babylon:”

8

SDA interpretation today is essentially that of Uriah Smith and other early SDA commentators. Modern Babylon is understood to stand for all Christian churches that have departed from the “everlasting gospel” as set forth in the Scriptures, including both the great Roman apostasy of the early Christian centuries and the more recent departure of Protestantism [from God’s Word, beginning in particular with] their rejection of the 1844 message. The fall is understood to be progressive; it is not yet complete, but it will be so when the major Protestant churches collaborate with the Church of Rome in an attempt to coerce the conscience (Revelation 13).¹⁷

This statement illustrates the fact that Adventism has been almost as consistently critical of the churches of the Reformation as of the Roman Catholic Church. Ellen White, for example, strongly indicted Protestantism:

Many of the Protestant churches are following Rome’s example of iniquitous connection with “the kings of the earth” — the state churches, by their relation to secular governments. . . . Besides a sinful union with the world, the churches that separated from Rome present other of her characteristics.¹⁸

She goes on for seven pages in like vein. Furthermore, foreshadowing developments to come, eighty years ago the same Ellen White wrote:

Romanism is now regarded by Protestants with far greater favor than in former years. In those countries where Catholicism is not in the ascendancy, and the papists are taking a conciliatory course in order to gain influence, there is an increasing indifference concerning the doctrines that separate the reformed churches from the papal hierarchy; the opinion is gaining ground that, after all, we do not differ so widely upon vital points as has been supposed, and that a little concession on our part will bring us into a better understanding with Rome.¹⁹

She obviously did not approve of this changing attitude, but sounded a warning about what we today call a “false irenicism.” This view of Ellen White is still quite typical of Seventh-day Adventists. There is a widespread

presupposition that the Catholic attitude toward religious liberty and the ecumenical movement is (at least at the policy-making level) somewhat cynical, an astute power-play.

The 1965 papal visit to the United Nations headquarters was commonly looked upon by Seventh-day Adventists as a decisive step in the regaining of world leadership by "the Vatican." It was no ignorant country preacher, but the secretary of the Ministerial Association of the SDA General Conference, who commented on the visit in this fashion:

9

From our very early beginnings Adventist preachers, through the study of prophecy, have declared that Roman Catholicism will rise to the place where she will ultimately become the voice of the religious world. For many decades there was no indication that such a thing would or even could ever happen. The study of prophecy also convinced us that the United States . . . will increase in prestige until she becomes the most influential nation in the world. As such she will play a leading role in bringing about the full and final exaltation of the Papacy. . . . The prophecies of God's Word . . . should mean more to us today than ever, for we can surely 'see the day approaching.'²⁰

The fraternal contacts between Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras have been described in Adventist sermons as "signs of the times;" and the new attitude of most Protestant churches toward Roman Catholicism since the second Vatican Council likewise seems to the majority of Adventists as the fulfillment of Revelation 13:3: "One of [the beast's] heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth followed the beast with wonder."²¹

THE ADVENTISTS AND THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

As might be suspected from the foregoing analysis, Seventh-day Adventists do not participate in the ecumenical movement as such. They believe it has been foretold as one of the signs of the gathering darkness, and so they expect it to go forward and to reunite the Western Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, and ultimately to result in the union of the Protestant churches among themselves and with "Rome."

The ecumenical movement will then become a concerted effort to unite the world and to secure universal peace and security by enlisting the power of civil government in a universal religio-political crusade to eliminate all dissent. SDA's envision this crusade as the great apostasy to which John the revelator refers as "Babylon the Great." They understand, also, that God's last message of mercy to the world prior to the return of Christ in power and glory will consist of a warning against this great apostate movement, and a call to all who choose to remain loyal to him to leave the churches connected with it.²²

This quotation, of course, is not from an official source, and there has been no authoritative statement from the General Conference enunciating an official attitude toward the ecumenical movement. Published statements from individuals, however, have thus far been consistent with this quotation.

The SDA's see themselves vis-a-vis the churches engaged in the ecumenical movement as the "remnant church." In his introduction to Ellen White's *Patriarchs and Prophets*, Uriah Smith indicates that the first Adventists described this remnant simply as "the last generation of Christians, or those living on the earth at the second coming of Christ," who, according to Revelation 12:17, "keep the commandments of God" (including, of course, as Adventists insist, the sabbath commandment).²³ To this day Adventists maintain the validity of referring to themselves in this style because of their message to what they consider to be the last generation of men; they do not use the term in an exclusivist sense, they emphasize, for they recognize the Church of Christ existing wherever there are those individuals "who remain faithful to the light which God has given them."²⁴

But Seventh-day Adventists do feel especially called upon to transmit the angelic message of Revelation 14 to the whole human race:

If Seventh-day Adventists seem to differ in emphasis from some of our brethren of other Protestant faiths, it is because we believe we have a special message for this hour. We hold the "everlasting gospel" of Revelation 14:6 to be the apostolic gospel, understood and emphasized in the setting of God's great last-day judgment hour, and designed for the preparation of a people completely clad in the righteousness of Christ and fully following the revealed will of God as they prepare to stand in His presence at His imminent glorious appearing.²⁵

They maintain that the proclamation of the imminent return of Christ and of the proper preparation for this event would be incompatible, for instance, with membership in the World Council of Churches.

This is a view held by a majority within the denomination, a way of thinking represented frequently by Nichol. As stated editorially by him, the Adventist attitude toward the ecumenical movement must continue to be negative:

Though we should not judge them [the leaders in the movement], we cannot join them. That should be transparently clear to every Adventist who knows anything of the real spirit and nature of the Advent Movement. The essence of the ecumenical movement is "Come in." But at the very heart of the Advent Movement is "Come out." Indeed, only as we preach this command and call on men to be obedient can there be any Advent Movement. . . . Finally, the ecumenical movement should make us more conscious than ever before of the times in which we live. The end is near. . . . It is the uniting of the great religious bodies that makes possible the final conflict. And in that conflict we cannot be ecumenical.²⁶

In a later issue of the same paper this feeling was reiterated in the remnant-context by another member of the editorial staff:

The role of the remnant church is a difficult one in this age when "ecumenism" has become a shibboleth in the religious world. We favor true unity, but we cannot participate in the general ecumenical movement, for several reasons, among which are these: (1) the ecumenical movement seems to place the goal of unity above truth, (2) the Protestant wing is dominated by religious liberals, . . . (3) we have a message for all churches and could not give it clearly from within the ecumenical movement, (4) to join forces with churchmen and churches whose goals and beliefs differ from ours, yet pretend we are in harmony, would be dishonest.²⁷

II

The author of this statement is now the editor of the *Review and Herald*, the general SDA church paper. As press-observer at the Fourth Assembly of the WCC at Uppsala in 1968, he reflected editorially on his return: "The remnant church is unique, and while it should pursue its mission with a friendly, cooperative attitude toward fellow Christians . . . it cannot lock arms and step with the ecumenical movement as institutionalized in the World Council of Churches."²⁸

The WCC has in fact acknowledged the Seventh-day Adventist attitude toward the Council in a description of the denomination drawn up for the information of the member churches: "Seventh-day Adventists have a deep conviction that it is their duty to proclaim their distinctive witness, and the church therefore consistently rejects any kind of comity arrangements."²⁹ For its part, however, the Adventist Church does, on a nonofficial level, react favorably to the WCC's self-description as a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The difficulty, most Adventists feel, is not with the common calling, but with the possibility of distinctive witness. The WCC has, nevertheless, raised a question for Adventists to ponder: "whether in the light of the openness of the WCC Constitution and its neutrality on doctrinal and ecclesiological questions, a proper place of witness and engagement is not precisely within the movement rather than apart from it. Can the WCC . . . be seen as one more place where witness to the full truth of the gospel is needed and can be made?"³⁰

This is the question now being discussed quietly in ecumenical circles. Most moderately conservative theologians tend to be negative toward membership in the WCC and cautious about formal cooperation in WCC departments. Most progressive Adventist theologians, on the other hand, are decidedly positive toward the latter and even cautious toward the possibility of membership. It is worthy of note, in this connection, that at Uppsala one

Seventh-day Adventist became, along with nine Roman Catholics, a regular member of the Faith and Order Commission.³¹ Thus, to some degree, at least, Adventists have been willing to let their witness be made from within the WCC. Likewise in America, while Adventists are not members of the NCC, they are represented on some committees, mainly those concerned with evangelism.

Thus, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a well-thought-out position regarding the other Christian churches and the ecumenical movement in general. Its stance cannot be dismissed as fundamentalist, or as a haughty aloofness, much less as a holier-than-thou posture. Rather, its position is based on a conviction springing from its attempt to be faithful to its witness-responsibility to the churches and to the world.

12

ECUMENICAL POTENTIALITIES WITHIN ADVENTISM

The question arises whether the de facto stance taken by the Seventh-day Adventists is an attitude essential to their faith-commitment, or whether this same faith-commitment could, or even should, find its expression also within various levels of ecumenical relationships with other Christian churches, including the Roman Catholic. In this connection it seems possible to say that there are indeed forces within Seventh-day Adventism which of themselves impel its members toward increasingly greater involvement in ecumenical relationships.

One of these forces is the Adventist share of responsibility for the ongoing reformation of the Church. Adventists are, in fact, heirs of the Protestant reformation, and their theological self-understanding finds its expression within the Reformed tradition. Ellen White was a Methodist before her disfellowship because of her advent-expectation, and many of the early leaders came from either Methodism or the Calvinist-Arminian soteriological tradition of other churches.

Adventists have usually understood this responsibility to lie especially within three areas: (1) the return of Christians to seventh-day sabbath observance; (2) emphasis on the unity of man's nature in opposition to any Neoplatonist/Cartesian dualistic view of the body-soul relationship common in popular Christianity; (3) sensitivity to the imminence of Christ's coming.³²

It is this writer's conviction that in all three areas there is room for serious colloquy between Seventh-day Adventist theologians and theologians from other Christian communions. Too long have the latter simply assumed that the former are fanatics or at the very least "fundamentalists,"

and hence easily dismissed from serious consideration. Granted that SDA pamphleteering and preaching does frequently justify such an attitude, the high quality of the theological faculties of such Adventist institutions as Andrews University (Berrien Springs, Michigan) and the Séminaire Adventiste du Salève (Collonges-sous-Salève, Haute-Savoie, France) makes generalizations about a monolithic Seventh-day Adventist largely unwarranted.

13

A second force within Adventism with much potential is their tradition of biblical scholarship, especially in the area of biblical archaeology, a field where competent scholars like Siegfried Horn have distinguished themselves. Seventh-day Adventists now have increasing contact with developments in biblical studies; although the popular attitude toward these developments is that they are "modernist," SDA scholars are participating more and more in the professional societies. It would seem that this cannot but cause them at least to rethink such critical issues for their theology as the dating and literary form of Daniel, a process which in turn will affect their interpretation of Revelation. This, of course, will have profound repercussions in all areas of their theology, including their understanding of the Roman Catholic and other Christian churches.³³

A third force exerting pressure from within Adventism is, it seems, the almost innate SDA preoccupation with Roman Catholicism referred to above. One of the main reasons sustaining the negative SDA evaluation of Roman Catholicism has been the lack of direct contact with Catholic thinking. This situation, however, is rapidly changing, at least at the university and seminary level (where courses on Roman Catholic theology are offered by knowledgeable professors — though thus far no Roman Catholics have been invited to teach them). On the General Conference level, however, the change has not been so apparent. There is, furthermore, among American Seventh-day Adventists the frequently heard opinion that there is such a thing as "the Roman Catholic view" on almost every question, "religious," or otherwise.³⁴ The initiating of unofficial dialogue would seem, then, for this reason alone, if for no other, imperative — a need which was demonstrated in the reaction to an editorial in the denominational organ of the Seventh-day Adventists, which stated:

The church that never changes is making the most earth-shaking changes any church has ever made. In many respects the stereotype picture of the Catholic Church . . . is fading fast. Many things that have truthfully been said about the church in the past are no longer true, or will soon not be. In all Christian fairness we should not be guilty of misrepresenting the present by citing the past.³⁵

If the letters to the editor published a month later are any indication of the general SDA response to this view, the popular reaction was not very favorable.

On the personal level, on the other hand, this writer's contacts with SDA people, professors, and ministers have been usually warm and Christian. One occasionally encounters reserve, suspicion, or hostility, but this is unusual (and frequently embarrassing to other Adventists). Their sermons and popular literature, nevertheless, continue to take an apocalyptic view of contemporary developments in the Catholic Church, especially on the "Vatican" scene. Further progress toward a more positive attitude toward the Catholic and Protestant churches will depend, it would seem, on increasing contact by Adventists with developments in biblical scholarship and in other areas of theology. In regard to systematic theology, for instance, above we indicated that the Adventists feel that their call is to witness to, besides the imminent coming of Christ, the sabbath, and the nature of man. A case might be made for stating that the SDA doctrine of man is not incompatible with that of mainstream Christian thought. Contemporary eschatological theology has likewise given reason to insist on the doctrine of the "coming" of Christ as an integral, if difficult, element of the Christian message.

Finally, there is the force of the "angelic" element of Adventism. The SDA call is to participate in the communication of the message of the angels of Revelation 14 to mankind. Since the SDA experience has been that polemic is not the most effective way of accomplishing this, they must explore other methods of fulfilling their responsibility without compromise to their faith-commitment.

THE PROBLEM OF RESPONSE

In view of these forces among others within Adventism, and in the face of the SDA policy of "nonparticipation" in ecumenical relationships, what attitudes should the other Christian churches try to form at this juncture?

First of all, they should be sympathetically aware of certain problems confronting the SDA Church related to its own attitude toward the Christian churches and the ecumenical movement. For one thing, as the denomination becomes better known, more accepted, better educated, and more affluent, it is also in danger of becoming just another denomination (albeit with a few unusual, though tolerable, aspects, such as Saturday worship and dietary restrictions), with their distinctive doctrinal witness softpedaled. The new ecumenical spirit in a small but expanding SDA circle poses some serious problems for the denomination as a whole. As expressed by Elder William Loveless, a well-known SDA pastor with a great interest in ecumenism:

We do not hold that all our members have the earmarks of God's people as laid down in Revelation, namely, keeping the commandments. Merely attending church on sabbath morning does not mean that we are keeping the commandments necessarily or that we have a correct relationship with God.

The saving relationship is a personal one, which means that people from all denominations, people from no denomination, probably, will be granted the free gift of eternal life. . . . *However*, there is a rationale for the existence of the Adventist Church that transcends the rationale for the existence of most other churches and/or religious institutions.

This rationale is doctrinal. . . . We have a special message which, if properly understood and properly taught, will bring our neighbors and friends and certainly ourselves into a closer, more meaningful relationship with God. . . . While we do not believe that we have any corner on salvation, we do hold that through these understandings we can make salvation in this life more meaningful to anyone.³⁶

15

He feels that it is only in a self-denying obedience to their distinctive message that Adventists can avoid becoming just one more denomination.

There is likewise the problem that Adventists generally are persuaded that involvement with the ecumenical movement will result in a diminished interest in "soul-winning" and in their getting bogged down in programs of only a political, cultural, or sociological nature. SDA leader B. B. Beach, a delegate-observer at Uppsala, for example, has pointed out that "ecumenism has had a soporific effect in the field of evangelistic witness and individual conversion."³⁷

Keeping these and other SDA causes of hesitation in mind, however, it is nevertheless time for the other Christian churches to take a new look at the two-million member Seventh-day Adventist communion. Careful study will make it clear that these Christians are not a sect like the Jehovah's Witnesses, for instance (with whom they are frequently confused). In the witness of their personal commitment and in the essential aspects of their faith, Seventh-day Adventists are a Christian church. Ongoing dialogue will of necessity focus very quickly on the difficult question of the precise content of these "essential" aspects.

The sabbath question admits of no casual glossing-over; the problem of the sanctuary doctrine is a real one. No facile resolution of the differences between them and other Christians is possible. The real problem for immediate attention is the overcoming of the barrier of widespread misunderstanding of why Adventists feel that they have a reason for existing. On the SDA side, one problem needs more in-depth discussion: the question of whether the distinctive SDA witness can be effective if it is *not* made within the context of relationships of an ecumenical nature with other Christian churches.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 In addition to *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine: an Explanation of Certain Aspects of Seventh-day Adventist Belief* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1957), cited hereafter as *Questions on Doctrine*, and *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Commentary Reference Series, ten volumes; Don F. Neufeld and Julia Neuffer, editors; Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1966), cited hereafter as *SDA Encyclopedia*, referred to elsewhere in this article, for further information on the SDA message, see LeRoy Edwin Froom's two works, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1946-54) and *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1965-66).
- 2 LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Finding the Lost Conditionalist Witnesses* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1965), p. 4.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Francis D. Nichol, Bible Teaching Regarding Man's Nature Dissolves Doctrine Difficulties, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 110, 9 (September 14, 1933). See also *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 189, for a more recent and more official statement. In this work also is to be found a statement of the twenty-two SDA fundamental beliefs (pp. 11-18), among which are: the necessity of baptism by immersion, Saturday-sabbath observance, the conviction that immortality is a gift bestowed upon the righteous only, that in 1844 Christ began the investigative judgment phase of his priestly atoning ministry in the heavenly sanctuary (as predicted in Daniel 8:4), and that the imminent coming of Christ will mark the completion of this judgment and initiate the resurrection of the dead, the destruction of the wicked, the purification of the earth, the reward of the righteous, and the establishment of his kingdom.
- 5 Seventh-day Adventism developed from the Millerite movement of the last century, a premillennialist advent movement begun by William Miller (1782-1849), a Baptist layman. The Millerites expected a literal coming of Christ in 1844. When their expectations were disappointed, some fell away; others were convinced that 1844 inaugurated the premillennial coming of Christ in judgment, the final phase of which will take place visibly and imminently. A strong formative influence on this latter group was Ellen Gould (Harmon) White (1827-1915), who accepted Miller's advent message in 1842 and was disfellowshipped from the Methodist Church for so doing. Henceforth, her visions and writings were to help carry the Millerites through the "Great Disappointment." By 1863 the group was organized (congregational polity) as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with denominational headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan (subsequently moved to Washington, D. C.). An account of SDA beginnings can be found in Francis D. Nichol's *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1944).
- 6 Probably the most astute SDA interpretations of Roman Catholicism have come from Professor Raoul Dederen, chairman of the theology department at the SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. See, for example, his articles, A Crisis of Authority, and Is the Encyclical Reformable?, *Review and Herald* 146 (June 5 and 12, 1969).
- 7 Adventist pioneer James White, for example, identified the false prophet (or second beast) of Revelation 19:20 with the Vatican and Moscow. See Destruction of the Wicked, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 6, 96 (October 31, 1854).

- 8 Frank H. Yost, The Antichrist in History and Prophecy, *Our Firm Foundations* (volume one of two; Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1953), pp. 625-716.
- 9 *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 254. In a dissertation done on this latter symbol a few years before the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*, this same "little horn" was linked with both Romes. See Reuben Lynn Hilde, An Exegesis of the Little Horn of Daniel 8 (unpublished master's dissertation; Washington, D. C.: Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary 1953).
- 10 *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 181.
- 11 *Ibid.*, pp. 256-257.
- 12 It is interesting to note that Ellen G. White, the early SDA prophetess and very influential leader, though clearly a woman of her times, has nevertheless left testimony representing a somewhat different spirit: "We should not go out of our way to make hard thrusts at the Catholics. Among the Catholics there are many who are most conscientious Christians and who walk in all the light that shines upon them, and God will work in their behalf. . . . Let every one bear in mind that we are in no case [to invite persecution. We are not] to use harsh and cutting words. Keep them out of every article written, drop them out of every address given. . . . Let the spirit of Christ appear." See her *Testimonies for the Church* (volume nine of nine; Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association 1944), pp. 243-244.
- 13 *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 202.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 335n.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 197.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 Babylon, [Symbolic], *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 96.
- 18 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association 1911), p. 383.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 563.
- 20 R. Allan Anderson, The Pope and World Peace, *The Ministry* 38, 27 (December 1965).
- 21 See, for example, R. A. Anderson, Prophetic Fulfillment in Current Events, *The Ministry* 36, 8 (March 1963).
- 22 Ecumenism, *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 361-363. Others also have expressed the fear that the "unionization" of the churches would "effect a breach in the wall of separation between church and state, and the end result would be the ostracism and eventual persecution of dissident minority groups." Frederick Diaz, The Positive Side of Ecumenicity, *The Ministry* 39, 8 (August 1966).
- 23 Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Company 1908), p. xxi (introduction by Uriah Smith).
- 24 The Seventh-day Adventist Church in *An Ecumenical Exercise*, M. B. Handspicker, and Lukas Vischer, editors. Faith and Order Paper No. 49 (Geneva: World Council of Churches 1967), pp. 23-24. See also Remnant Church, *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 1068-1069.
- 25 *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 617.
- 26 Francis D. Nichol, Why We Cannot Join, *Review and Herald* 142, 14-15 (March 18, 1965).

- 27 Kenneth H. Wood, Archbishop Ramsey Visits Pope Paul, *Review and Herald* 143, 12 (April 28, 1966).
- 28 Kenneth H. Wood, Eight Convictions and Observations, *Review and Herald* 145, 13-14 (November 7, 1968).
- 29 The Seventh-day Adventist Church in *An Ecumenical Exercise*, p. 17.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- 31 Dr. Earle Hilgert, [then] academic vice president of Andrews University. Three delegate-observers represented the Adventists of the United States, the Soviet Union, and Finland.
- 32 For instance, what might come of a discussion with SDA theologians of Schnackenburg's suggestions about a "standing expectation" as more fundamental than "imminent"? See his *Christian Existence in the New Testament* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press 1968), p. 146, n. 21.
- 33 According to Dr. W. G. C. Murdoch, dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, however, such changes — as, for instance, a later dating for Daniel — would be regarded as representing unfaithfulness to the mission of the denomination. He does see, though, the possibility of Revelation's being interpreted in "a much broader light" than the Rome-centered approach of the the past allowed. He says, for example, that the various symbols of Revelation should be seen in their larger dimension (interview of August 1, 1967).
- 34 The phrase occurs in an otherwise objective article by Kenneth A. Strand, The Rise of the Monarchical Episcopate, *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 4, 67 (January 1966).
- 35 Raymond F. Cottrell, Post-Conciliar Shock Waves, *Review and Herald* 143, 12 (August 11, 1966).
- 36 William A. Loveless, Indian Summer, *The Ministry* 38, 25 (November 1965).
- 37 B. B. Beach, Should Christians Stop Proselytizing?, *The Ministry* 39, 22 (November 1966). See also his article, Christian Evangelism in an Ecumenical Age, *Review and Herald* 146, 13-14 (May 15, 1969).