

Guide to Adventist Theologians #1
Recent Adventist Scholarship

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CHURCH & POLITICS

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Sakharov Versus Solzhenitsyn

We SHOULD Be Involved in Politics

Limits to Religious Freedom?

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About This Issue

What is the difference between the church's cozying up to the government authorities and what the Bible calls idolatry? How can a church claim to have the spirit of the prophets if it concerns itself with politics only when its own welfare is threatened and has no explicit interest in the wider claims of man for justice, dignity and food?

These are the kinds of questions raised by the articles on church and politics in this issue of SPECTRUM. The cluster begins with two historical studies of the response of Seventh-day Adventists in Germany to the government of Adolph Hitler. Following Joe Mesar's reflection on the political philosophies of the Russian dissidents Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn, Tom Dybdahl criticizes the traditional view of separation

and church and state. Edward Vick reflects theologically on the relation and the church to the world. Kenneth Walters describes the complexity involved in the American constitution's protection of religious freedom.

On page 57, there appears a bibliography, by no means exhaustive, of recent publications by Seventh-day Adventist scholars. We print it as an experiment. If our readers regard such a bibliography as valuable, we will offer updated bibliographies, including the work of scholars in nondenominational institutions, in future issues; if the bibliography is greeted with silence, we will not trot out another one.

Ron Walden's analysis of Edward Vick's theology begins a series, as we point out in an editorial note on page 48. Our premise is that if the church's theology is to undergo constant renewal, we must take notice of those who labor as theologians.

Living in a Time of Trouble: German Adventists Under Nazi Rule

by Jack M. Patt

The period of National Socialist rule was a difficult one for German Seventh-day Adventists, and one about which they were and are still quite reluctant to speak. Information concerning some aspects of the Advent Movement during this period is, therefore, very limited. Not much was said of Adventist difficulties in the published reports of the time, since church leaders feared that incautious statements might fall into the hands of the "Reformers," Conradi and his Seventh Day Baptist followers, and other foes of the Adventists who could have used them to add to the church's troubles.

The Nazi political order was not friendly to religion generally. The Evangelical and Catholic churches suffered government discrimination and hundreds of ministers and priests were interned. The Faith Movement of German Christians sought to harmonize Christianity with the tenets of National Socialism and make the churches a pillar of the new Reich. This effort precipitated within the Protestant churches the so-called Confessional Church, whose members became the uncompromising opponents of the German Christians. Some of the small sects, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, were silenced by the

government. The Jews also were constantly persecuted, even those who had become members of Christian denominations. Adventists, however, were allowed to continue their church organization and missionary activity.¹

The Faith Movement of the German Christians based their program on the supposition that the rise of Hitler was an event in which God was revealing Himself. In line with their ideology, they condemned the teaching of a fallen world and emphasized faith in man. They also advocated the rejection of the Old Testament and a revision of the New Testament in such a way as to repudiate the divinity of Jesus Christ. Seventh-day Adventists were opposed to these principles of the German church, but did not voice their opposition publicly for fear of reprisals.²

In fact, Seventh-day Adventists considered the attempt to unify Evangelicalism and National Socialism as an ominous portent; they feared that it was the beginning of an effort to subdue all religious organizations to the Nazi order. German Adventist leaders were aware of their weakness as a small sect and admonished their members on the importance of following the counsel of Mrs. Ellen G. White's writings and the General Conference to remain out of politics. They further asked the membership to be careful of their words and actions in order to avoid giving offense to the government; such offense might

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be used as an excuse to restrict Adventist church activity.³

Despite the government's antagonism toward religion and restrictions of it, Seventh-day Adventists laid plans for continued missionary endeavor in all of their churches. This program, adopted in 1934, was intended to maintain the increase in church membership. It included an organized campaign in each church to give away, lend and sell Adventist periodicals, journals and books to friends and relatives and other persons at every opportunity, to issue personal invitations to give Bible readings, to mail missionary letters and publications, and to pray for specific persons who were interested in the Adventist doctrines. From time to time in the ensuing years, officers of each church made further appeals to inspire greater missionary activity.⁴

With the introduction of compulsory military training and labor service in Germany in 1935, Adventists faced the problem of adjusting themselves to government service. Under the terms of the Law of May 21, every German man between the ages of 18 and 25 was liable to military service for one year, and by the Law of June 24 both sexes of the same ages were obliged to serve in the Reich Labor Service for six months. By the terms of the Law of August 24, 1936, the term of military service was increased to two years. These requirements accounted for some apostasies, because it was difficult or virtually impossible to observe the seventh-day Sabbath in the labor service or in the army.⁵

German Seventh-day Adventists remembered the experience they had gone through between 1914 and 1918. Their unilateral decision to bear arms and work on Saturdays had been condemned by the General Conference Executive Committee as contrary to the traditional stand of the denomination. German Adventist officials later acknowledged their mistake and accepted the traditional church belief that their first obligation was to God and second to the state. They acknowledged their patriotic duty to their country only as long as they were not required to violate their religious principles. According to the Gland (Switzerland) Declaration of 1923, the official position of the German Adventists became that held by the denominational headquarters—opposition to arms-bearing and refusal

to perform duty on Saturday, except in medical service. Some Seventh-day Adventists actually declined to serve in the armed forces and were imprisoned.⁶

In 1936, Baldur von Schirach moved to place all German youth in the organization, Hitler Jugend. The movement was anti-Christian, but it assured its members future employment and advancement. The temptation was great for Adventist young men to accept the security thus offered. Young women not concerned about employment and the men who planned to enter denominational employment were not affected by these incentives. Officially, the church was opposed to the Nazi attempt to engulf Adventist children but the denominational authorities and journals thought it wise to make no public issue.⁷

Adventist adults also had to face the dilemma of joining the Nazi Labor Front or facing unemployment and other hardships. Since there seemed to be no other way of solving the problem, most Adventist workingmen succumbed to the pressure and became members of the labor service to save their families; some joined the party organization.

German Adventists could not approve of the Nazi program of racialism, nationalization of religion and anti-Semitism, all of which were contrary to the principles of Christianity, their church as well as their own consciences. They did, however, actively support sterilization of mental defectives. Some Adventists were caught in the quickened pride of German nationalism, but most opposed Hitler's 25 points in *Mein Kampf* since their attainment was based upon the use of force. Many German Adventist leaders foresaw that this program would end in disaster for Hitler and Germany, although the majority, as good Germans, supported the remilitarization program.⁸

In 1935, the Seventh-day Adventist Church came under the threat of immediate dissolution. The German government notified the denomination's Berlin headquarters that every church in Prussia was to be closed. No explanation was given for this order, which caused great anxiety and perplexity among the Adventists.⁹

William Spicer, a vice president of the General Conference, who was in Denmark at the time, received a cablegram from headquarters in Washington, D.C., informing him that the Adventists

in Germany were in trouble. Spicer immediately went to Berlin to assess the situation and to see what could be done. He contacted government officials but could receive no satisfaction. He therefore advised the German Adventists to engage in prayer and fasting. Shortly thereafter, a government official who had been reared as an Adventist advised the church authorities, through his mother, to retain legal assistance, and they did so. Several days later the closure

“Adventists realized that the authorities were watching more closely to see that government orders were obeyed; the church realized that it must follow these orders in order to save itself from closure.”

order was rescinded as unexpectedly as it had been announced. The Adventists, through their attorney, endeavored to determine the reason for the order, but the government officials only stated that someone, formerly an Adventist of great influence, had initiated the case and had made erroneous charges to the effect that the Adventists were disloyal to the government and had violated the laws of the land. The government officials would not elaborate on these accusations. The Adventist leaders concluded that their accuser was Louis R. Conradi, former president of the Central European Division and a pioneer of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany and in eastern Europe, but then a bitter enemy who was zealously trying to make trouble for his former colleagues.¹⁰

With each succeeding year of the National Socialist regime, government restriction against religion became more severe. Seventh-day Adventists realized that the authorities were watching them more closely to see that government orders were obeyed; the church realized that it must follow these orders in order to save itself from closure. Adventist religious meetings were under close observation by police officers, who dropped in unexpectedly, accompanied by stenographers to take notes of what was said and done. In 1938, the Adventists were informed

that the term Sabbath School was not to be used henceforth since it sounded Jewish. Therefore, the Adventists changed the name to *Bibelschule* (Bible School), and the word Sabbath on church bulletin boards was changed to *Ruhetag* (Rest Day).¹¹

In 1938, colporteurs faced new regulations. House-to-house canvassing with religious books was not permitted unless the colporteurs were on a salary from a responsible concern. Since colporteurs in Germany had always worked on a commission basis, this order necessitated a fundamental and expensive change of procedure. Still, German Adventist leaders were determined to continue this part of their missionary program as long as possible.¹²

The Nazi government looked with favor upon Seventh-day Adventist welfare activity, not only accepting the social help of the Adventist churches, but also at different times recognizing their efforts through documents signed by the leader and minister of the state department with which the Adventist welfare activity was connected.¹³ Since the Adventist organization worked in close cooperation with the government in the social welfare program, Adventist leaders hoped that this cooperation would help to break down prejudice against them, prevent dissolution of the church and its other missionary activities, and be a means of gaining proselytes for the church. These reasons, however, were not the primary object of Adventist participation in welfare work. The Adventists believed that the welfare work was based upon the authority of the Bible and that they had a Christian obligation to help their country and mankind.¹⁴

This welfare program included readiness to do everything necessary for the welfare of the country (not contrary to first obedience to God), such as providing assistance to the needy in the form of food, shelter and clothing, caring for the sick, caring for the weak and the aged, caring for orphans, promoting abstinence from the use of tobacco and alcohol, furtherance of morality in every form, help of the religiously oppressed, and the protection of widows and minorities. Adventists emphasized that these were services in which all Christians should participate for the benefit of the entire nation.¹⁵

The German government recognized the need of organizing the entire population to assist in a welfare campaign. The German Welfare and Winter Relief was started in the winter of 1933-1934 and was a campaign in which all welfare organizations were ordered to assist. Each year the Adventist churches took part in the national winter welfare and relief work. Thousands of Adventists helped meet the great social need by selling welfare stamps and joining various women's welfare groups. At the end of each successful campaign, the government sent letters of appreciation to the Seventh-day Adventist headquarters in Germany.¹⁶

During the year 1933, the German Adventists helped over 55,000 persons; spent \$18,610 for welfare; distributed over 50,000 articles of clothing, 3,900 pairs of shoes and \$9,440 worth of food. In 1934, \$13,214 was spent for welfare, 42,000 articles of clothing were distributed, 4,500 pairs of shoes were given away, \$9,369 was spent for food and over 40,000 persons were helped. During the ensuing years, the church made similar contributions to welfare.¹⁷

Throughout the war years in Germany, Adventists continued their activity in social health and welfare of various kinds, including temperance work. Many Adventist churches organized groups of women who cooperated with the *Frauenbund für alkoholfreie Kultur* (Women's Union for Alcohol-Free Society). This organization published *Das Weisse Band* (The White Band), a pamphlet to propagandize its work. A similar close relationship existed with the *Deutscher Bund zur Bekämpfung der Tabakgefahren* (German Union for the Fight Against the Dangers of Tobacco). The Advent Welfare Work (*Advent-Wohlfahrtswerk*) organized a division in 1939 with 7,367 active participants devoted to fighting the use of tobacco and alcohol.¹⁸ Through this department, the Advent Welfare activity became a part of the *Reichsstelle gegen die Alkohol und Tabakgefahren* (State Office Against the Alcohol and Tobacco Traffic). At the end of 1939, this society embraced 38,282 members. The Adventist monthly journal *Gute Gesundheit* (Good Health), with a circulation of over 22,000 copies, vigorously campaigned against the use of alcohol and tobacco.¹⁹

Adventists continued to help in the sale and purchase of stamps for the Winter-War Relief

Work. During the winter of 1939-1940, Seventh-day Adventists sold over \$89,500 worth of stamps, an increase of almost \$40,000 over their sales of the previous winter. Solicitors sold these stamps in guest homes, hotels, railroad stations and in house-to-house canvassing.²⁰

Adventist welfare activity became an integral part of the Reich welfare program. The Advent Welfare Organization gave clothing and other items to the needy in the war areas of eastern Germany, to soldiers at the front, to the wounded in the hospitals, and it assisted in packing and sending parcels. Many Adventist women helped in the German Red Cross activities and in other welfare organizations. They likewise helped soldiers' wives and children in need, and assisted with their housework and other duties. For this work, the Seventh-day Adventists received expressions of thanks from the German Red Cross, and found favor as well with the Reich Welfare Office.²¹

Adventists also contributed free social work in their hospitals and sanitariums. In 1939, the Friedensau Sanitarium and Hospital and Marienhöhe Convalescent Home took care of 50 undernourished boys and girls from Austria and Sudetenland for six weeks. The Waldfriede Sanitarium provided 27 beds for needy patients and rendered service for a total of 625 days. The Bad Aibling Sanitarium took care of 30 patients, representing a total of 630 days. The Friedensau Sanitarium donated services to 30 patients; and the Marienhöhe Convalescent Home, to 20 patients. The Adventist children's vacation home at Johannesberg near Königshöhe in the Sudetenland cared for 21 young people without cost. The Sonnenhof near Dresden and the Friedensau Home for the Aged also rendered free service.²²

The Friedensau Sisterhood, consisting of Adventist nurses graduated from Friedensau, volunteered their services for needy patients. They worked in various private clinics, in army hospitals and in private nursing.

The work of the Adventist nurses, the Advent Welfare Organization, and the sanitariums at Friedensau, Waldfriede and Bad Aibling represented the main Adventist missionary activity in the Central European Division during the last year of the war. When the German armies were reeling from defeat, it was virtually impossible to conduct missionary activity in other areas. By

the end of the war, Adventists were themselves in great need of food, clothing and financial assistance. Fortunately for them, aid was forthcoming from their brethren in the United States.²³

The prewar Nazi years were filled with trial and difficulty for Adventist children and parents. Since the Adventist church did not operate elementary and secondary schools, attendance at public schools six days a week was obligatory. It was usually impossible for Adventist parents to obtain permission to have their children excused from attendance on Sabbath.

It was different in Adventist seminaries, where the administration was conducted by church leaders. However, there were other difficulties. The Central European Division leaders decided in the autumn of 1934 to close the Neandertal Missionary Seminary and to discontinue the ministerial course at Friedensau and Marienhöhe. This action was taken out of fear that no more Adventist young people could be placed in denominational missionary work. For two years, there was no training whatsoever of Adventist ministers in Germany.

Even so, 106 students enrolled at the Friedensau Missionary Seminary during the school year 1933-1934. In 1934-1935, the enrollment dropped to 70 and in 1935-1936 decreased still further to 47. Even the introduction of a course in colporteur-evangelism in 1934, which was designed to increase the enrollment, did not stop the decline. There was, however, an increase in 1936 lasting until the outbreak of the war in 1939. In the school year 1936-1937, there were 76 students; in 1938-1939 there were 106, and the same number during 1939-1940 school year.²⁴

In the autumn of 1936, Friedensau began to train ministers again. Of those who had left in 1934 only a few returned to complete their ministerial education. Threatened since 1933 by the probability of having to close the school, Marienhöhe Missionary Seminary was finally forced to discontinue its operation in the spring of 1939. Consequently, as before 1921, Friedensau became the only Seventh-day Adventist educational institution in Germany.²⁵

The outbreak of the war in 1939 inevitably affected Adventist educational activity in Ger-

many. Most students enrolled in the educational institutions were in the younger classes. During the first year of the war, only 12 enrolled in the ministerial and teaching courses at the Friedensau Missionary Seminary and the number dropped to six in the following year. In the autumn of 1941, these courses had to be discontinued. The total enrollment, however, was large enough to keep the school in operation. From 1941 to 1942, this total increased from 85 to 103. It is possible that the bombings of the cities induced some parents to send their children to the sure refuge of the forest tranquility at Friedensau. In 1943, the government closed the school and the Wehrmacht converted the buildings of the school into a hospital. For the second time in its history, the Friedensau school had to close its doors because of war. Until 1945, the buildings served the Germans as a place of convalescence, and after the war they were used as a hospital for the Soviet occupation forces. Not until March 1947 was the school able to resume its operation.²⁶

Information about the Seventh-day Adventists and their church activity during the war years from 1939 to 1945 is quite limited. The scarcity of source materials is largely due to the destruction of the Adventist archives at Hamburg and Berlin by Allied bombings. Furthermore, the leaders of the church in Germany were reluctant to divulge much information about those years because of the embarrassment it might bring to them; some church members had been swept along with the tide of nationalism, had joined the Nazi party, borne arms, worked on the seventh-day Sabbath and supported the Nazi war effort wholeheartedly.

The majority of church members, however, clung to the official stand of the denomination, not wishing to repeat the experience of Adventists during World War I. Many German Adventist leaders foresaw that the war would end in disaster for Germany, although the majority supported the war effort and hoped for victory. Those who believed that the war would end in Germany's defeat were convinced of the injustice and unchristian principles of the Nazi regime.

For the most part, because of their religious convictions, German Adventists inducted into

the army during World War II were able to enter the Medical Corps, Quartermaster Corps, or some other noncombatant branch of the military service. The German Adventist leaders, remembering painfully the church's earlier experience, strictly followed the 1923 declaration, made at Gland, Switzerland, espousing the principle of noncombatancy and the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.²⁷ In the second World War, the government unofficially recog-

“Several Adventist young men who refused to perform military duty were apprehended and put in concentration camps without trial. Others were placed in insane asylums. A few received the death penalty.”

nized the noncombatant position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Officially, no German was exempt from arms-bearing except the Catholic clergy.²⁸

Nor was there any provision in the German army for exemption from performing duty on Saturday. Every Seventh-day Adventist had to meet and decide this problem personally. Not all military officers were Nazis, and the difference between party and nonparty men was very apparent in their treatment of nonconformists. No Seventh-day Adventist could expect any consideration from a Nazi.²⁹

Seventh-day Adventists endeavored to cooperate with the government as far as conscience permitted, realizing that those who refused military duty were subject, officially at least, to the death penalty. Several Adventist young men who refused to perform military duty were apprehended by the SS (Schutzstaffel) and put in concentration camps without a trial. Others were placed in insane asylums or other kinds of mental institutions. A few received the death penalty or a heavy sentence of imprisonment.³⁰

Religious propaganda and missionary activity had to be restricted more and more after 1939 and finally the distribution of publications became impossible. In order to continue opera-

tion, the publishing house at Hamburg became a private business enterprise in 1938; it was thus possible to supply Adventist churches with publications until 1940. But in that year no more paper was allotted to Seventh-day Adventists for the publication of religious books and journals. The official government explanation was that the publishing house produced nothing essential for the war effort. In order to prevent confiscation by the government, the publishing house concentrated its efforts on commercial printing.³¹

The cessation of the publication of religious literature resulted in a great shortage of Bibles, Adventist books, journals and periodicals for the church members. Colporteur activity was greatly hampered. In fact, soon there was no choice but to suspend completely this traditional work of the denomination, and to advise the colporteurs to seek new means of employment.³²

Liberties and religious privileges varied in the different *Kreise* (districts). In some areas, religious services were restricted, while in others meetings were allowed. Much depended upon the reaction of the local commanding officer of the Gestapo or the police officers. Almost everywhere, however, government agents sat in the congregations to observe what was said and done. Any criticism of the government, or of the National Socialist party, would bring speedy retribution. Consequently, Adventist church leaders and members were very careful about their public statements.³³

At the outbreak of the war in 1939, an ordinance issued by the government prevented ministers from taking offerings at church services or collecting donations from house-to-house solicitation. By a strange quirk of the regulations, however, it was permissible for the local church pastors to levy fees on their members. In this way, it was possible to circumvent the restrictions, and thus financially support the needs of the church.³⁴

The threat of dissolution hung over the German Seventh-day Adventist Church during the war years as menacingly as it had before 1939. In 1940, the government issued a pamphlet entitled *Das Reichsministerium für Kirchliche Angelegenheiten* (The Ministry of Church Affairs for the Empire) which offered some reassurances. It stated, “Other groups which limit themselves in their peculiar teachings to the field of religion may continue to exist, for

instance, the Salvation Army, the Mennonites, the Quakers, the New Apostolics, the Roman Apostolics, and the Seventh-day Adventists.”³⁵ In view of that statement, the Seventh-day Adventists should have been able to expect tolerance; still, they did not completely trust the Nazis and continued to fear dissolution.

Actually, Adventist church activity was generally tolerated but there were a few exceptions: it was forbidden in Upper Silesia on January 24, 1941, in Danzig and West Prussia on April 4, 1941, and in Lower Silesia on May 9, 1941. On these occasions, petitions and negotiations brought no success. But members still met surreptitiously in various homes in order to conduct their church services. Again and again, the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath caused trials, warnings and penalties for individual church members, but despite these difficulties most Adventists had the courage to remain faithful to their convictions.

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination in Germany was allowed to operate as a church for two major reasons. It voluntarily restricted its activities to the “religious” field and excluded any “political” comment. It gained favor with the government through its commendable welfare work. Even though ministers, church officers and church laymen were limited in some ways, a wholesale confiscation of church property, which might have resulted in the complete collapse of the Advent Movement, did not take place.³⁶

Adventists, like all other Germans, suffered severe losses from Allied bombing raids. More than 2,250,000 homes or over 20 percent of all dwellings within the area of the Federal Republic of Germany were totally destroyed by the war. A further 2,500,000 homes were more or less heavily damaged and made uninhabitable.³⁷ In Germany alone, 9,891 Seventh-day Adventists lost their homes and everything they possessed, including their Bibles and other books, through Allied bombings. Seven hundred church members lost their lives. The Adventist church in Cologne was destroyed in the first bombing of that city on May 30, 1942. On July 28, 1943, Allied bombers severely damaged the four-story food factory and publishing house at Hamburg. After 11 months of repair work, the

factory was reopened and again produced bread, biscuits, breakfast cereals and other foods. The food factory was able to survive only because its products continued to find a market in the general public as well as among the church members. The main difficulty was the acquisition of sufficient raw materials.³⁸

The part of the publishing house left standing after the July attack was the building which housed the machinery; consequently, publishing could be continued. The bombings destroyed the Adventist headquarters building at Hamburg,

“Any criticism of the government, or of the National Socialist party, would bring speedy retribution. Consequently, Adventist church leaders and members were very careful about their public statements.”

a stunning blow since most of the records of the church in Germany were thereby lost. Allied bombings also burned out the Berlin Seventh-day Adventist headquarters building and the headquarters building at Frankfurt-am-Main, and church buildings in Krefeld, Bielefeld, Herford, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, the two in Nürnberg and all six in Hamburg. In all, 150 chapels, meeting halls and office buildings were destroyed. The union headquarters building at Stuttgart was severely damaged. Consequently, evangelistic meetings were forced to be curtailed in the larger cities, and the primary missionary activity was making house-to-house visits in search of persons who were interested in having Bible studies.³⁹

Food became scarce in Germany during the last years of the war, and it became progressively scarcer as the bombings increased in intensity and destructive effect. Most Adventists, as well as other Germans, ate black bread without butter and drank weak ersatz coffee, without milk or cream, for breakfast. Other meals consisted almost entirely of potatoes and gravy. No fresh vegetables were available for the city population. Most of the stores in the metropolitan areas were either destroyed or had little or noth-

ing for sale and many people suffered from malnutrition.⁴⁰

The Adventist hospitals and rest homes continued to operate during the war. In the Waldfriede Sanitarium and Hospital at Berlin there was throughout the war a daily average of 138 patients in the 160-bed hospital. The staff included five physicians, 34 graduate nurses, 21 student nurses and 47 other employees. The Bad Aibling Sanitarium, the Friedensau Sanitarium and Hospital and the Marienhöhe Convalescent Home had their quarters filled to capacity during most of the war years. Nursing training was conducted at the Friedensau Sanitarium and Hospital and also at the Waldfriede Sanitarium and Hospital. The nurses' course consisted of a half-year of pre-nursing and one and one-half years of specialized training. Eight demolition and 30 incendiary bombs fell on the Waldfriede grounds without hitting the buildings or inflicting serious injury to persons.⁴¹

During the Nazi period, the German Seventh-day Adventist church comprised three unions, West German, East German and South German, which were part of the Central European Division.

The organization of Germany into three unions had existed since 1910. The membership increase between the inception of the National Socialist government in 1933 and the outbreak of World War II was from 36,278 to 38,323, an increase of 2,045. Church leaders felt that it was satisfactory considering the numerous difficulties which confronted the church. The increase was attributed to the concerted missionary program which was commenced in 1934.⁴²

With the loss of much of the territory controlled by Germany during the war, the three German unions, including 17 local conference organizations, suffered reductions in church membership. The loss of territories to Poland and Russia resulted in an automatic transfer of 16,468 members to these nations. After the boundary changes were made, the Central European Division comprising the three German unions consisted, on January 1, 1946, of 26,891 members in 653 churches with 280 ordained ministers.⁴³

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany has survived the reign of National Socialism including the war period, although in a weakened condition.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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Seventh-day Adventist Publications and The Nazi Temptation

by Erwin Sicher

The nations of the world are increasingly ruled by nondemocratic regimes. As an international church, Adventism often faces a serious challenge from such governments, especially those which reach beyond simple political authoritarianism in an effort to recast all of society in a totalitarian mold. Since the majority of Seventh-day Adventists now live outside the developed West—and not infrequently under authoritarian governments—one of the most crucial questions for the church involves the attitude it should take toward such governments. Is the traditional Adventist political philosophy effective or even moral in an authoritarian or totalitarian environment?

An effective starting point in an examination of this issue would be a study of a specific case of interaction between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and an authoritarian regime. For this there is no better example than the church in Nazi Germany. The Nazi regime no longer exists. Neither do most of the Adventist contemporaries. Yet, most of the printed publications of the German Seventh-day Adventist Church do

survive. This essay focuses on these sources, including the rough equivalent to the *Review and Herald* in America, *Der Adventbote*, the church's youth publication, *Jugend-Leitstern*, the religious liberty magazine, *Kirche und Staat*, the health journal, *Gute Gesundheit*, the family paper, *Der Christliche Hausfreund*, and the evangelistic publication, *Herold der Wahrheit*.

To examine the subject responsibly, however, the nature of totalitarianism must be recognized. In a totalitarian state, the people know virtually only what the rulers want them to know. Any other knowledge depends upon chance or upon rumors which are often very distorted. Furthermore, the rulers bend the information they allow to be published to their own purposes and tell lies without reticence. Hence, some developments among Adventists in this dark period of German history may be explained or even partly excused. The lack of accurate information was particularly hard on true Adventists, who are taught to love their neighbors, even their enemies, and to look for the good in everything. Such an inclination, together with insufficient knowledge, made it easy to believe the best about the Nazi movement. Furthermore, Hitler and his party had only one aim, absolute power, and to achieve it, they were willing to use any method, including violence and repression. Naturally, therefore, the church was at a terrible disadvantage. Still, these difficulties do not com-

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pletely explain German Adventism during this period. Innate weaknesses within the German Adventist church helped make it susceptible to the Nazi temptation.

The Adventist political philosophy and its German interpretation contained one such weakness. Basically, Adventists believed that all government is established by God and every citizen is obliged to obey it, except when it makes demands against one's conscience.

In imperial Germany, the Adventist conscience allowed most members to espouse extreme nationalism and active military collaboration even on Sabbath. They sincerely believed that such an attitude was neither against conscience nor against the Bible. An Adventist author wrote in December 1915 that "the Bible teaches first, that participation in war is not against the sixth commandment; second, that fighting on the Sabbath is no transgression of the fourth law."¹

With the end of World War I, the German church leaders recognized the error of their policies; they confessed at the European Division meeting at Gland, Switzerland, on Jan. 2, 1923, that they were in complete "harmony with the general teaching of their brethren of that denomination throughout the world." But this declaration was weakened by the additional pronouncement which read: "We grant to each of our church members absolute liberty to serve his country, at all times and in all places, in accord with the dictates of his personal conscientious conviction."²

The personal convictions of German Adventists, insofar as they were reflected in church publications, were largely those of the German middle class. Adventists opposed what they regarded as the vengeful peace of Versailles, believing it had been motivated by a "satanical spirit of destruction and by a never-ending hatred against Germany." They further suggested that the attack upon Germany would in the end benefit the papacy.³

The Weimar Republic, too, came under considerable criticism in Adventist periodicals. Its constitution, they claimed, was a failure. It was supposed to build a unitary state but instead there were dissension and party squabbles everywhere. Only a radical reorientation by the demo-

cratic parties could save Germany from destruction.⁴ Pastor W. Binanzer argued that the state was without power; it could neither stop the destruction meted out to Germany nor help its own people, who were unemployed, hungry and without housing. In despair, he said, many citizens were turning to unhealthy and immoral activities, which the democratic state allowed to flourish unhampered.⁵

Adventists also criticized the Weimar Republic for granting freedom to all democratic parties, including the Catholic Center party. One writer stated apocalyptically, "the priest—today Party chairman, tomorrow chancellor of Germany. This is the outcome of ten years of

"Basically, Adventists believed that all government is established by God and every citizen is obliged to obey it, except when it makes demands against one's conscience."

German Republic. . . . Germany may become a province of the Papal states."⁶

Not all writers were discouraged. One noted that domestic difficulties sometimes can be overcome by a grand foreign policy.⁷ Such a foreign policy might be directed against France or the Vatican, two foes of Germany which shared a common "fear of the spiritual, cultural and economic superiority" of Germany.⁸

In this serious hour of German history Adventist writers expressed repulsion at the thought of being on the sidelines. W. Mueller, one of the most influential German Adventists, said: "Every thinking man must take a position on all questions of the present or he ceases to be. As Solon said in his day: 'Who does not participate in the battles of his people is without honor.'"⁹ Adventist participation consisted in continuing to question the shortcomings of the Republic and the sincerity of the allies,¹⁰ as well as the usefulness of the detente of Locarno and even the League of Nations.¹¹

Some Adventists, apparently, even agreed with the contemporary anti-Semitism. The

church's religious liberty magazine *Kirche und Staat* reprinted an article from the non-Adventist journal *Der Leuchtturm* which stated:

Some friends have counseled us not to fight a two-front war, not against the Jews and Jesuits at the same time. They are still being fooled by these two international enemies of Germanism. For the sad situation of Germany since November 1918 we can thank the . . . Jews and Jesuits . . . The Jesuits are no less dangerous enemies than the Jews.¹²

Catholicism, however, received the most attention in Adventist writings. In certain issues of some journals every second article dealt with Catholicism.¹³ The writers believed the conspiracy of Catholicism lurked everywhere,¹⁴ its aim being the destruction of religious liberty¹⁵ and the persecution of all who resisted Catholicism.¹⁶ Nothing was safe from Catholic machinations, neither the German nation and culture, nor the well-established evangelical church which Social Democrats and Catholics were collaborating to destroy.¹⁷

Another threat, Adventists believed, came from Socialists and Communists. The Social Democrats indoctrinated the youth with a moderate, atheistic-materialistic ideology. The Communists inculcated the same ideology in a more extreme form.¹⁸ Once these youth had been won, it was suggested, they would abolish Christianity and religion and enthrone their new secular faith. All this had happened in Russia; but it could not be allowed to occur in Germany.¹⁹

In response to these dangers, one Adventist wrote, every German, young or old, was calling for a strong "Führer." "A people, a church, a city or a land which has no good Führer is destined for perdition. Moreover, the Adventist church needs good Führers . . ."²⁰ Another writer added that "Führers" cannot be valued enough even in religion.²¹

This mystique of the "Führer," the embodiment of a movement or a nation with absolute power, permeated German writings, as well as Adventist publications. Article after article dealt with this "Führer ideal," expressing it in such combinations as "Führerschaft,"²² "Führertum,"²³ and "Führerdienst."²⁴ Even Jesus was transformed into a great "Führer."²⁵

While Adventists debated, sometimes in eschatological terms, the Versailles treaty, the Weimar Republic, the Jews and the Catholics, and while they called for spiritual "Führers," a "Führer" did arise and was even then achieving political success. Adventists were perplexed, for he was expressing many of the feelings they held. Adolf Hitler promised that through a strong "Führertum" (leadership) and a courageous foreign policy he would end the humiliation of Versailles and abolish the weaknesses of democracy. He promised to reunite under the Reich all Germans outside Germany. No one, according to Hitler, would be allowed to interfere with the reemergence of Germany. Under his leadership, Germany would check the scourge of atheistic Bolshevism and neutralize the international conspirators of Jews and Jesuits. The Catholic Church would be forced to give up its political influence and would be allowed to exercise only its religious functions in Germany. Hitler would support absolute freedom of religion—as long as the churches remained nonpolitical.

Hitler also promised economic revival and full employment. Moreover, the "Führer," the moral leader who did not drink or smoke, emphatically supported the moral rejuvenation of Germany after its many years of immorality under the Weimar Republic. Germany, he assured the people, would become one of the greatest nations on earth.²⁶

Despite Hitler's appeal, Adventists hesitated. W. Binanzer, a minister who had earlier demanded that Adventists take positions on political issues,²⁷ in 1931 stated: "The Lord wishes that we bypass political questions. We cannot give our voice with certainty to a political party. In such circumstances being quiet is better than speaking."²⁸

What made Adventist leaders call for caution and silence? It was probably their uncertainty as to the Nazi stand on religious liberty. Although Hitler promised religious freedom, there was no consensus within the party on this issue.

Hitler's personal position seemed clear and it was acceptable to Adventists. M. Busch, a departmental secretary of the South German Union Conference, approvingly quoted Hitler's statement in *Mein Kampf* that "for the political Führer all religious teachings and arrangements are untouchable . . ." Still, point 24 of the Nazi party program stated that the Party supported

positive Christianity, without tying itself to any particular confession. What was positive Christianity? Adventists were not quite sure. The same party program said: "Certainly some day the German people will find a form of confession . . . which will be in accord with its nordic blood; certainly only then will the trinity of Blood, Faith and State be complete." Pastor Busch demanded that the conflicting statements of Hitler on religious freedom "and the world view of the party program must be clarified." In the meantime, he and others counseled that the Christian must oppose the religion of the blood and instead serve God and His Word.²⁹

Hitler, of course, never clarified these contradictions. Anyway, such discussions were soon academic. The Führer became dictator of Germany.

On January 30, 1933, after a little more than ten years as National Socialist party leader, Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. With incredible speed, he transformed Germany into a totalitarian society, using terror and pervasive propaganda and taking advantage of economic progress and the support of the populace. A racist Nazi elite subverted traditional beliefs and institutions and quickly replaced the former ruling classes. After abrogating the Treaty of Versailles, Germany rearmed and then invaded the Rhineland, Austria and the Sudetenland. In 1939, Hitler plunged Europe into the second world war, conquered most of the continent, perpetrated some of the most hideous crimes in history, only to suffer in the end a dramatic defeat. In 1945, the Thousand-Year Reich collapsed after only 12 years—12 years that changed the world's history.

How could this have happened in a highly civilized country? The answers are obscure. Nazism had been difficult to understand from the very beginning: if it had been easier to understand, it might never have succeeded. Part of the answer, however, lies in the acquiescence of millions of Germans, among them thousands of sincere Christians. Adventist writers welcomed the apparent rebirth of Germany, saying that Christianity and the Word of God were again being honored.

Fresh, life-giving and creative Reformation spirit blows through German lands. With the renewal of the state, there is also a desire for a

positive transformation of the whole mental and spiritual life. . . . The movement again goes upward, toward a living goal. . . . Such thrust is truly divine, may it come from where and whosoever it wants. With this our position as youth toward the new state, the new arrangement of things has been indicated. . . . We have helped toward this new Spirit of Light, Truth, Discipline and Morality. Thus we have to continue.³⁰

Kurt Sinz, the editor of various Adventist church papers, exclaimed: "We have just experienced it . . . to be saved from hopeless sinking in the last minute . . . when God sent our land a Führer who took strong command of the controls of the ship of state."³¹ The president of the East German Conference, W. Mueller, said that the Christian

welcomes with joy the reawakening of Germany and the fight of the Hitler government against unemployment. He is happy for the defense of Christianity, for morality and order, incorruptibility and justice in government, for the attack on class consciousness and the elevation of the ethnic community [Volksgemeinschaft]. . . . The Christian is happy to know that the direction of his country is in the hands of a man like Hitler, who frequently emphasizes that he received his post from God to whom he is responsible. As nondrinker, nonsmoker and vegetarian, he stands close to our conception of the reformer of life . . . Still, some worry.

There was no need for Adventists to be concerned, Pastor Mueller advised. Jesus' statement, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and God what is God's," meant that every Adventist should be subject to the government, pay his taxes, assist the government with good works and pray for the authorities.

Yet, the Nazi regime demanded more. Mueller said that Adventists needed to adjust quickly to these new circumstances, but unfortunately some church members were slow in changing. They refused to salute the Swastika flag and to use the Hitler greeting. This refusal, Mueller argued, was bad for the church's image. Besides, every "Christian can without concern" salute the Nazi flag, the symbol of sovereign Germany. Likewise, he said, Adventists could raise their arms and give the Hitler greeting with a clear conscience.

Mueller concluded that under no circumstances did any Adventist have the right to resist the government, even if the government prevented him from exercising his faith. Resistance would be unfortunate because it would mark Adventists as opponents of the new state, a situation that should be prevented.³²

Nevertheless, Adventist flexibility was in vain. On November 26, 1933 the Secret Police dissolved the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Prussia and Hesse and ordered church properties confiscated.³³

“How could this have happened?” asked Pastor Mueller in a circular letter to all east German ministers and elders. Adventists have been faithful citizens, he argued; they have prayed for the government, they have done their welfare work, and in the Adventist town of Friedensau have voted 99.9 percent for the Nazi parliamentary state. He advised all Adventists to be

“On January 30, 1933, Hitler became Chancellor of Germany . . . Adventist writers welcomed the apparent rebirth of their country, saying that Christianity and the Word of God were again being honored.”

completely quiet, to raise no objections and to wait. The church immediately retained legal assistance with the good effect that on December 6, 1933 the police rescinded the previous order.³⁴

Thankful for the happy turn of events, the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Germany submitted to the Nazi Ministry of Interior an official memorandum on Adventist teachings, church organization, social activities and attitude to the government. This document contained some deviations in addition to many of the standard Adventist statements.

It said, for example, that the Sabbath had been renamed the rest day, or “Ruhetag.” The authors emphatically differentiated the day from the Jewish Sabbath. Furthermore, they claimed that in the mission-field their mission-

aries forcefully promoted German attitudes and culture, defending the present government and effectively challenging anti-German propaganda.

Another section of the document dealt with the Reform Adventists, a group which emanated from the Seventh-day Adventists during World War I. The writers accused them of a wrong attitude toward the government and of many intemperate doctrines.³⁵ (The Nazi government banished the Reform Church and many of its leaders perished in the concentration camps.³⁶)

The concessions and explanations put forward by the church did not ultimately satisfy the government, however. The Nazi regime insisted on total control, not only of the outward man, but of his mind and soul. Independence was abolished as Germans were required to feel as the Führer felt and to think as the Führer thought.

Hitler believed that every German had to accept the Nazi world view. This world view was a form of social Darwinism, holding that life is a constant struggle in which the strong survive and the weak perish. As Hitler put it, “on earth and in the universe force alone is decisive. Whatever goal man has reached is due to his originality plus his brutality.”

The struggle involved not only individuals, or people and nations, but also and primarily races and racial communities. Success in the struggle was a consequence of “pure racial blood,” of which the Aryans possessed the best type. Because most Germans were Aryans, they alone “founded a superior type of humanity; therefore, they represent the archetype of what we understand by the term, MAN.” Hitler added that “everything that is not of [such] sound racial stock is like chaff.” Pure Aryans, in other words, have a right to subject all other inferior races, the worst of whom were the Jews. The chief task of the Nazi government, Hitler declared, was the “protection of the race and the care for the race; all other tasks are conditioned by this primary duty.”³⁷

Adventists were for some time aware of these ideological innovations of Nazism, what was called in the Adventist press the “radical spiritual revolution,” a revolution whose chief concern was the idea of Volk and race. Kurt Sinz, the editor of *Der Adventbote*, stated that his-

tory itself was being radically reinterpreted, according to Germanic, racial and “völkisch” (ethnic) concepts.³⁸

Otto Brozio stated in the same journal that the National Socialist Revolution was the greatest of all time, because it made the maintenance of a pure inheritance the basis of its ethnic life. His meaning may be detected from a framed quote by Hitler—on the question of blood—that appeared on the same page.³⁹

One Adventist wrote that, according to the Bible, the domination of the world belongs to the descendants of Japheth.⁴⁰ Another said that

“Adventist adjustments, though minor, assisted the Nazi government’s purposes. They raise serious questions about the moral strength of Seventh-day Adventism in a totalitarian environment.”

these Japhethites had replaced the Semitic people as carriers of culture.⁴¹ Then Semites, more precisely Jews, would not dominate the world, though they might strive after it. According to another writer, the Bible clearly “witnesses against the ‘chosen’ people.”⁴²

Since the Bible condemned the Jews, their fate in Germany was partially justified. Adventists hurried to affirm that such teachings as the Sabbath, which seemed Jewish, were, in fact, not Jewish. This effort had already appeared in the document the church submitted to the Nazi Ministry of Interior. Later, H. F. Schubert, president of the Central European Division, asked the question: “Is the Sabbath of Holy Scripture a Christian or a Jewish holy day?” He answered ambiguously that the Sabbath was not made for the Jews but for all men.⁴³

Some went still further. A reader of *Der Adventbote* wrote in a letter to the editor that he had heard both in his church and during a tent meeting that Christ “belonged to no nation and that he was no Jew.” The editor responded that he was born a Jew, but that Jesus rejected the corruption of his own people. He warned that too much discussion of this issue could lead

one to miss Christ’s real mission.⁴⁴ E. Gugel said that Christ was “no Jewish Savior but the Savior of the world including the German people.”⁴⁵

Outspoken racism seldom appeared in Adventist publications; writers often tried to perform a balancing act. As E. Gugel wrote, the Gospel was for all people, yet it was particularly for one’s ethnic community. He added that “the Gospel bridged all borders, languages and races, but it does not disregard the latter. . . . Happily, the evangel does not overlook the ethnic character [Völkische Art] and the national significance of the ethnic concerns [Völkische Belange].”⁴⁶

But Adventists did frequently print negative comments about the Jews. A missionary, writing in an official church paper about Palestine, said that the Jewish race was sick, for the Jews exploited one another.⁴⁷ Someone else made a slanderous report about the behavior of orthodox Jews in Hungary.⁴⁸

Adventist adjustments went still further. They were always minor for sure, but they assisted the Nazi government’s purposes. Insignificant though these contributions were, they raise serious questions about the moral strength of Seventh-day Adventism in a totalitarian environment.

German Adventists believed citizenship entailed certain responsibilities. O. Haase went so far as to tell Adventist youth that they “must under no circumstances forget the clear and justifiable responsibilities which arose for them from Germanism [Deutschtum].” The responsibilities of ethnic affinity were the more easily fulfilled since “discipline and harshness [Härte] are valued again.” Haase explained that this entailed “harshness against oneself, sin and injustice, harshness against all undecided spirits, harshness against those who live not in peace with God and the world”⁴⁹

Church leaders often attempted to transmute Nazi concepts through theological reinterpretation. The idea of discipleship [Gefolgschaft] for example, which was so popular in Germany, had supposedly originated among the Germanic tribes. Every disciple was required to accept the absolute will of his leader [Führer]. “What a sacrifice, what a subjugation of the member to the whole!” an Adventist youth leader exclaimed. The revival of this demand was con-

sidered “certainly a blessing to our generation and people.” It was also a biblical concept, because it received the greatest realization in the discipleship of Jesus.⁵⁰

Linguistic collaboration also appeared. An Adventist teacher advised his students that in German classes they must learn to “will and to think in German, to speak and write in German.”⁵¹ To will in German was a mystical Nazi concept, for the Party taught that Germans “will” differently than other nationals. Furthermore, to speak and to write in German meant not only to reject words of foreign origin, but it meant the use of words containing a Nazi meaning. Adventists used Nazi words such as *Führer* and *Gefolgschaft*. Adventists also used the words *Volk* and *Volksgemeinschaft*.

The *Volk*, according to the Nazis, was a people of common blood and soul. When organized, it formed a *Volksgemeinschaft*, or ethnic community. Adventists should be among the very best members of such a community, a church writer stated.⁵² To realize this goal, young Adventists were encouraged to study history in order to root themselves deeply in God, Volk, State and the home soil.⁵³ Then they would be able to serve successfully the family, church, Volk and Fatherland in the spirit “of our old principles . . . and in the frame of the national economy and the national socialist outlook.”⁵⁴

Belaboring the point, the Adventist welfare leader, Otto Brozio, stated that

today not the individual, but the Volk in its totality is in the center of thought. Every member of the Volk should feel himself a part of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The value or valuelessness of his actions are to be judged only on the basis of their usefulness or uselessness to the whole Volk. . . .

Only the person who operates in the context of the Volk community could be considered a comrade of the people [*Volksgenosse*],⁵⁵ he concluded.

Adventists accepted this Nazi standard. As P. Staubert, an Adventist educator, said, “We Christians welcome happily this attitude toward life of National Socialism; it contains truth. Every good on earth comes from the idea of community; everything bad is from the I.”⁵⁶

The Volkcommunity Hitler envisioned was a heroic one. Nazis despised weakness and admired the strong and the heroic, since heroes were best

fitted for victory in struggle. “The heroic, the unconquerable is today the high goal of mankind,” an Adventist wrote, and all opposition to this goal is rightly suppressed. Although certain people claimed that Christianity produces weaklings, he argued that “Christianity is not for weaklings; it is for men with courage and strength above the average.”⁵⁷

Another writer asserted that “Christians are able through divine grace to lead a heroic life”⁵⁸ and to perform heroic deeds for Volk and Fatherland.⁵⁹ The renewal of Germany, which had changed so much for the better would continue, another author thought, if a “praying, believing group of youth matures into heroes through whom God can work, improve and complete . . .”⁶⁰

Adventists performed many “heroic” deeds for Volk and Fatherland through their Welfare Organization. At first operating independently, it soon came under the control of the National Socialist Peoples Welfare Department (NSV), the official governmental welfare authority. By 1938, the government suggested strongly that welfare workers join the NSV. Adventist leader Otto Brozio wrote that this would not only demonstrate social concern, but be a “good witness to the close relationship with the Volk. It corresponds completely with our biblical position toward Volk and State.”⁶¹ With most Adventist welfare workers in the NSV, the independence of the Adventist organization was superfluous and it was coordinated with the Nazi department.

The NSV was largely concerned with health, welfare, family and propaganda matters. It was organized, and here we see again the singularity of the Nazi pursuit, in complete accord with the National Socialist world view; the NSV considered itself the guardian of the biological inheritance and race laws of the state.⁶² This analysis of the NSV appeared in a key Adventist journal. But no one pointed out the incompatibility between the Adventist message and the Nazi aim.

The Nazi government asked the church to continue its health program, the purpose of which was to be not only the preservation of the individual “temple of God” but, as the Nazi Health leader Dr. L. Conti stated in a speech

reprinted in an Adventist health magazine, “to maintain and strengthen the German defensive might.”⁶³ The editor of the Adventist journal *Gute Gesundheit* (*Good Health*) made a similar point, writing that Germans

are mentally and technically already superior to most people. This strength of our people must be maintained and promoted by all means, so that this people might be able to defend its birthright in every situation.

The governmental policies have already proven successful, Dr. E. Schneider stated. The Germans are healthier today than they were in peacetime. It is precisely in war that the health and productivity of the Germans have to be maintained, because they are weapons of the inner Front against the enemy.⁶⁴ Therefore, every German had the responsibility to live healthfully.⁶⁵

In actual welfare work, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the needy and the collaboration with the Nazi Winter Assistance Program (WHW), the Adventists had an excellent record. Many congratulatory official declarations bear this out.⁶⁶

And yet, even in this area, the Nazi spirit revealed itself. Help went primarily to Germans. “Asocial elements,” which could have included Reform Adventists and Jews, among others, were to be excluded from assistance.⁶⁷ The ultimate aim of all the activities was the well-being of the Germans, the successful challenge of Bolshevik expansion,⁶⁸ and the victory of Germany.

Adventists assisted also in Nazi family policies. “The Nazi state has rediscovered the family,” one article exclaimed.⁷⁰ It was a significant event, Adventists said, “that the close connection between the family and the fate of the nation has been seen.” Therefore, it was again fun to raise families;⁷¹ Adventist leaders called on their young men to marry early.⁷² The leaders counseled that after marriage they should refuse to raise one-child families because it was bad for the child and the family as well as for the nation.⁷³ Willful limitation of births was to be rejected because it damaged the nation quantitatively and qualitatively.⁷⁴ Since struggle was the essence of life, a weak and underpopulated nation was continuously in mortal danger, according to Nazi ideology. Only a populous

nation, a churchman said, would discourage attack by one’s neighbor.⁷⁵

Because offspring of these unions were to be healthy and racially pure specimens, they were to be bred carefully. To guarantee this outcome, Adventists assisted in many government-sponsored programs for women, teaching not only hygiene and child care, but also such Nazi topics as eugenics, race and civics.⁷⁶

The government asked all free churches and denominations to defend these and all other Nazi policies at home and abroad.⁷⁷ There is sufficient evidence to conclude that many Adventists accepted this demand. Hulda Jost, Adventist welfare leader until 1938, stated as early as 1933 that after her return from Sweden, she reported to the Nazi propaganda ministry “that I was able to defend our present government in a choice society. . . .”⁷⁸ Another German wrote about his visit to America and how interested the Americans were about the New Germany. “It was not difficult at all . . . to produce understanding for the situation at home.”⁷⁹ It was a really “happy feeling as an Adventist and faithful citizen of the German Reich to represent the Fatherland.”⁸⁰

Even the hallowed halls of the Adventist educational institutions did not escape the corrosive Nazi influence. When the government insisted that Adventist schools nurture “the National Socialist Spirit,” educator W. Eberhardt said that Adventist schools fulfilled this requirement between class periods three and four, when they reviewed the news, studied Nazi ideas and sang German songs.⁸¹

But the pressure for greater collaboration grew. The Nazis believed that the total control, in mind and body, of every German could best be achieved by establishing a government monopoly in education and training.

Every German, beginning in childhood, was required to join the *Jungvolk*. As teenagers, they were asked to become members of the Hitler youth, later of the *Arbeitsdienst* (Labor Service) and eventually of the army.

Many Adventist boys and girls joined these clubs before it was even mandatory. This was true in the case of the Hitler youth, as Kurt Sinz, the editor of the church paper observed. Sinz declared that in such clubs youth were educated

“physically, mentally and morally according to the National Socialist world view.”⁸²

On the next level of Nazi indoctrination, the Labor Service, Adventists found a satisfying rationalization for participation. Johannes Langholf wrote that Adventists approved, in accordance with their biblical understanding, every effort that brought people closer to work. “We expect every member,” he continued “to follow the divine command, ‘pray and work.’ It would be absolutely contrary to our understanding if we refuse the Labor Service.” The author, however, was fully aware that a significant percentage of the Labor Service participants were members of the SA, SS and Stahlhelm, the most fanatical Nazi groups who indoctrinated and militarized the youth.⁸³

The outcome of all this was that most Adventist students joined the Hitler Youth, the BDM [Association of German Girls], the Labor

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Service and the German Red Cross.⁸⁴ And, in 1937, the Adventist college town, Friedensau voted 100 percent for Adolf Hitler.⁸⁵

At least some Adventists came to support sterilization, whose overriding aim, like that of most Nazi programs, was the protection of the German blood. Years before his assumption of power Hitler had demanded in *Mein Kampf* the sterilization of all physical and mental degenerates. Until July 14, 1933, however, no sterilization law existed. The issue, therefore, was open for discussion. An author in *Staat und Kirche* took a clear stand against it. He wrote: “. . . one has to warn emphatically against the promulgation of the sterilization law.”⁸⁶

After the passage of the law, though, discussion ceased and the church supported sterilization either through direct Adventist statements or through the reprinting of non-Adventist articles. The mentally weak, schizophrenics,

epileptics, blind, deaf, crippled, alcoholics, drug addicts—all were to be sterilized.⁸⁷

“This law,” an article in the Seventh-day Adventist paper *Jugend-Leitstern* said, was “a great advance in the uplifting of our people.”

Because it was for the good of the nation as well as for the individual, the article argued, the ethic of the state and of Christianity were in full accord on this point. “The national socialist state is aware of its responsibility to heighten the physical and moral values of its people through purification of its blood.”⁸⁸ Although sterilization was hard on the patient, it was said, once he understood the contribution he is making to the well-being of his people he would accept it.⁸⁹

“Only sterilization can protect a people from the decline of their race,” another article claimed.⁹⁰ Furthermore, some writers suggested, the chronically ill should be sterilized because they place too great a financial burden on the state, for the costs go into the billions of reichsmarks.⁹¹

Adventist writers also approved Hitler’s foreign policy and, eventually, the war, probably because of Nazi pressure but also because of the assumption that the Führer was a man of peace and did not want war. As Kurt Sinz, editor of *Adventbote*, said, “The Führer of the German people . . . works with truly passionate seriousness and with all his might for the understanding of nations. But do the other nations want the same?”⁹²

The other nations did not have the same peaceful intentions as the Führer. They had always opposed the rightful claims of Germany and of all German-speaking peoples, Adventist writers argued. When Germans in Austria were brought into the Reich, a German Adventist wrote, “We share the happiness over their return home to the motherland.”⁹³

The Austrian Adventists responded with enthusiasm. “The eternal God had done more for us than we ever expected. . . ,” they wrote to the *Adventbote*. Austria had been falling back into medieval conditions while Germany was rising fast. “A strong hand, an arm directed by God has saved this miserable and enslaved German land in the last hour from the abyss.” The strong hand and arm was Adolf Hitler. Through

God's choice and through "God's assistance our capable Führer Adolf Hitler became the liberator of Austria. No one else should or could fulfill this great task." The German editor then prodded the readers of the *Advenbote* in Austria and Germany to be aware as Christians of their ties with the ethnic community and of their civic responsibilities to vote on election day "for Germany and for the Führer." Urging Adventists to approve Hitler's annexation of Austria, he said "that membership in an ethnic community is a gift of God, the political organization of this people is a divine order and service to the people a divine command." He pointed out that because as German Christians, Adventists were partaking of the blessings of peoplehood, they had, in return, "a responsibility for its preservation and promotion."⁹⁴

Some writers suggested, however, that the German Volksgemeinschaft was not complete, for many Germans still were not in the Reich. Although the Sudetenland was "a German land to the core,"⁹⁵ said one article, the Germans there were separated from the homeland and their Volksgenossen by the totally unjustified Treaty of Versailles. One writer said that

"Adventists cautiously opposed the government when their vital interests were at stake Sometimes the government changed its demands."

"thanks to the will of peace of the Führer . . . and the understanding collaboration of the statesmen of Italy, England and France the way home . . . has been opened . . ." It was completely in accord with the divine will, the same writer argued, that people with the same blood, history and language should live together. After October 1, 1938, they did live together.⁹⁶

"Hard times . . . lie behind our ethnic comrades in the Sudetenland," the writer continued, and Adventists will do everything possible to

help.⁹⁷ Already the school at Friedensau was caring for many refugees, who had suffered "inhuman cruelty and destruction by a hateful enemy. . . ."⁹⁸ They were now happy to have experienced the great deed of the Führer, it was said, and they were proud to be Germans. "We thank God that he resolved things in the last hour."⁹⁹ The Sudeten German church in Goblonsz rose during the opening choir number in thankfulness for the liberation through God and Führer, the *Advenbote* reported.¹⁰⁰ The same paper said that although certain international powers had tried to prevent the work of liberation they had failed because of the unity of the German nation and the Führer's leadership.¹⁰¹

With the separation of the Sudetenland, "the new Czechoslovakia will find a greater security than she has ever enjoyed in the past," Neville Chamberlain, the British prime minister, said. Hitler had signed a contract at Munich.¹⁰² But what was a contract for Hitler? Six months later on March 16, 1939 Hitler liquidated the rest of Czechoslovakia.

Adventists did not object. Bohemia and Moravia, with their many Germanic islands, and the city of Prague, which played such a fateful role in German history, "belongs to our reunited Reich," the Adventist editor of *Der Adventbote* wrote. He said that Czechoslovakia "has been dissolved through the creation of a German protectorate." It could not have been different, for Czechoslovakia was an unnatural creation, formed through the "hateful, artificial borders, drawn by the fathers of Versailles." Now it was joined to the land to which it naturally belonged, to its own great advantage.¹⁰³

With the liquidation of Czechoslovakia, all pretense that Hitler simply wanted to rightfully unite all Germans should have vanished. Yet, Adventists agreed with the Nazi extinction of Czech sovereignty. Then came the attack on Poland, an even more brutal act. Still, an Adventist author could write that in view of the "inhuman tortures our Volksgenossen have suffered among this foreign people" the German attack was probably justified. The Führer wanted only to correct these injustices. "In the East there is now peace. Humanly everything is being done to strengthen and secure it . . . Meanwhile, the Führer has shown the way to peace also in the West. By the time this *Adventbote*

reaches the readers, the dice will have fallen. What will the enemy have decided? Certainly, there exists not a single German who does not want peace like the great Führer of our people.” But if this wish should be unfulfilled, “we know that God is in control, and that things happen only through his will and permission.”¹⁰⁴

God, according to this version, apparently did not want peace, because war erupted also in the West with the German invasion of Denmark and Norway on April 9, 1940.

Still, Adventists continued to support Hitler. In fact, they sang his praises on his 51st birthday, which came on Sabbath, April 20, 1940. The *Morning Watch Calendar* stated:

Trust in his people has given the Führer the strength to carry through the fight for freedom and honor of Germany. The unshakable faith of Adolf Hitler allowed him to do great deeds, which decorate him today before the whole world. Selflessly and faithfully he has struggled for his people; courageously and proudly he has defended the honor of his nation. In Christian humility, at important times when he could celebrate with his people, he gave God in Heaven honor and recognized his dependence upon God’s blessings. This humility has made him great, and this greatness was the source of blessing, from which he always gave for his people. Only very few statesmen stand so brilliantly in the sun of a blessed life, and are so praised by his own people as our Führer. He has sacrificed much in the years of his struggle and has thought little about himself in the difficult work for his people. We compare the unnumbered words, which he has issued to the people from a warm heart, with seeds which have ripened and now carry wonderful fruit.¹⁰⁵

It is clear, insofar as we may extrapolate from published evidence, that Adventists supported the Nazi leadership and many of its undertakings. But Adventists also insisted strongly on their traditional teachings. “Conscientiously, we want to observe and live the traditional principles of our message. We want to give up not a single one. . . .”¹⁰⁶ These principles, particularly the Sabbath, had to be defended even if they necessitated sacrifices.¹⁰⁷

In 1928, an outside observer, Dr. Friedrich Loofs, stated that Adventists would insist upon religious liberty, which for them meant “only the opposition to the Sunday laws.”¹⁰⁸ And so it remained in Nazi times. “The Sabbath question is and remains the great question of faith.”¹⁰⁹

For these and similar principles, Adventists fought and suffered. As a result, the government frequently accepted their view. For example, the Nazi Minister of War wrote to all the supreme commanders of the army, navy and air force, instructing them to excuse Adventist soldiers on Sabbath between 9 and 12 o’clock so that they might attend church. An Adventist commented on this order by admonishing his readers to fulfill their duties with exemplary devotion in return for the privilege so that they might earn the respect of their superiors.¹¹⁰

Adventists also defended the Bible (including the Old Testament)¹¹¹ and Christian missions,¹¹² both of which were being questioned by the Nazis. Yet, besides the biblical reasons for world missions, some strange justifications appeared. For example, world mission was the Christian contribution to the struggle against Bolshevism,¹¹³ Adventists argued. Adventists cautiously opposed the government when their vital interests were at stake. Sometimes their opposition was successful and the government changed its demands.¹¹⁴ Therefore, the silence of the church on many critical issues of the time is regrettable.

Adventist publications said nothing about the 1933 purges when hundreds were murdered in cold blood. Nor did they raise a voice against the persecution and execution of countless Jews. Neither the atrocities in the concentration camps or the occupied territories received mention, nor the euthanasia program, which the Catholics, largely alone, were able to stop. The war itself was never questioned.

Although some individual Adventists seemed to have resisted the Nazi temptation,¹¹⁵ no active official opposition to the inhuman Nazi regime seemed to have existed nor even to have been permitted among Adventists.¹¹⁶ Yet, many Adventists did die, unfortunately, for the diabolical policies of that state. Then it was possible to pen a parting word for the dead, saying, as happened in one instance, that in “faithful execution of his duty he gave his

young life, so that his Volk might live and prosper."¹¹⁷

Finally, even such statements ceased. There

was only silence as the government ordered all church publications to close. All raw materials, including paper, were needed for the war.¹¹⁸

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Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn: Dialogue on the Good Society

by Joe Mesar

In an unprecedented display of ecumenical solidarity, a Russian group of 28 Christian clergy and laymen last month published an open appeal to Soviet authorities for a "a rational way of co-existence between the state and Christian congregations in our country" The petitioners urged the state to recognize the rights of all religious societies to publish and sell their literature, to hold services outside of churches and to make religious instruction an alternative to the atheism that is taught in Soviet schools. . . . The fact that organizers were able to persuade leaders of the Seventh-day Adventists, Pentecostals and other "churches in the catacombs" to join people from Orthodox and Catholic churches was significant.

—*Newsweek*, July 26, 1976

Adventist participation in this appeal for religious freedom is especially significant because the church is not in the habit of challenging government policy in any setting. To hear that Adventists have publicly protested their government's actions is, therefore, startling news—particularly since these members have spoken out in the

restrictive atmosphere of the Soviet Union. Whether or not the sentiments expressed in published reports represent the attitude of the majority of Adventists in Russia, they do give some indication that our members there are struggling with what to do when their Christian conscience collides with their responsibility as citizens.

Adventists in the U.S.S.R. live in circumstances which have been addressed in the work of two recent Nobel Prize winners from their own country. During the last decade, Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Andrei Sakharov have been among the world's most respected voices on behalf of freedom of belief and expression. Their common commitment to freedom is based on two profound, but quite different points of view about the character of the ideal Russian society. Moreover, the alternatives these men articulate are so fundamental they cannot be ignored by persons of conscience wherever they live.

Of the two, Solzhenitsyn is much better known in the West. He first attracted public attention in 1962 with the publication of his novel *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. In this book, with its account of the routine horror of the Siberian work camps, he drew on eight years of prison life and three more spent in exile. *Ivan Denisovich* was originally sanctioned by Nikita Khrushchev as part of his program of

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de-Stalinization. However, this official approval of Solzhenitsyn's writing was short lived. In 1965, many of his private papers, including the unpublished novel *The First Circle*, were seized by the secret police. The government began a campaign of harassment and surveillance against Solzhenitsyn; he was denounced in the press and popular literary journals and, in 1969, expelled from the Soviet Writer's Union. Awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970, he could not travel to Sweden to accept it for fear that he would be unable to return to Russia. Four years later, after publication of *The Gulag Archipelago* in the West, Solzhenitsyn was deported.¹

Andrei Sakharov's background is strikingly dissimilar. While Solzhenitsyn was serving time in the labor camps, Sakharov was part of a top-secret research team at the prestigious Lebedev Institute of Physics in Moscow. More than any other scientist, he was responsible for the theoretical breakthrough that led to the production of the first hydrogen bomb. This achievement gave the Soviet Union an important military and strategic advantage in the cold war, and Sakharov was rewarded accordingly. He became the youngest member ever elected to the Soviet Academy of Sciences and received all the material benefits conferred on a person of his status. His standing in the Russian scientific community was probably greater than that enjoyed by Oppenheimer or Teller in the United States.

Because of his position at the pinnacle of his profession, Sakharov's criticism of his own government carries enormous weight. On the other hand, precisely because he was an insider, his initial opposition to the state was cautious, often lacking the sweeping moral force and bitter humor that animates Solzhenitsyn's work. Since 1970, he has moved into open conflict with the authorities, beginning with his founding of the Committee on Human Rights. His efforts to end torture and imprisonment of dissidents won him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1975.²

Because both men have been internationally acclaimed, the differences in their thinking have often been obscured by events. For example, relatively few Westerners know that Alexander Solzhenitsyn is a Christian. His religious convictions lend a moral urgency to his critique of Soviet policy. His principal remedy for his

country's evils is not political reform, but spiritual renewal. His writing stresses the need for Russia to return to the Christian virtues of repentance, sacrifice, forgiveness and love.

Solzhenitsyn's protest against his government is grounded on one simple, unyielding claim: the state is held together by a network of lies. Not only does the state deceive its people, but it demands their conscious participation in its deceit. Citizens are expected to acquiesce in ethical judgments about each other that run contrary to their consciences—for example, signing petitions condemning innocent people for one sort of unorthodoxy or another. Most destructive of all is the metaphysical lie. Men and women are called upon to repudiate their private system of values altogether, in particular to deny the symbols and power of religious belief.³

This dishonesty does not result from ordinary human frailty. Rather, it is built into the system. "In our country the daily lie is not the whim of corrupt natures but a mode of existence, a condition of the daily welfare of every man. In our country the lie has been incorporated into the state system as the vital link holding everything together, with billions of tiny fasteners, several dozen to each man."⁴

The results of this cooperation with tyranny have been real and terrible. Solzhenitsyn cites the 66,000,000 Russians who have been killed in civil wars and political executions in the twentieth century, not counting the casualties of the two World Wars!⁵ Close to 40 percent of the population, Solzhenitsyn says, still lives in conditions of poverty.⁶ Thousands of churches have been razed, their art work and relics sold outside the country. Russian history has been distorted or obliterated.⁷

In the face of all this damage, and the almost absolute power of the government, what is to be done? Solzhenitsyn's answer is direct: Stop supporting lies. "When oppression is not accompanied by the lie, liberation demands political measures. But when the lie has fastened its claws in us, it is no longer a matter of politics! It is an invasion of man's moral world, and our straightening up and refusing to lie is also not political, but simply the retrieval of our human dignity."⁸

Each person must draw the line as to where the falsehood intrudes on the conscience. But

once drawn, resistance to pressure must be total, even at the cost of great sacrifice. This is not necessarily an activist position. It does not ask people to always say what they think. It merely enjoins them never to say anything they do not believe.⁹

Solzhenitsyn is skeptical about the ability of an intellectual elite to take the steps necessary to change the direction of the nation. New moral leadership is required, and it can only be

“Solzhenitsyn condemns the compromises of the Orthodox bishops during World War II, when institutional survival was maintained in exchange for support of Stalin’s regime.”

provided by a spiritual vanguard purified by the ordeal of suffering, by what he calls “a sacrificial elite.” No one will object to the use of the term elite in this context, he observes wryly, for it is a distinction earned only at the price of great pain.¹⁰

Solzhenitsyn wants the church to lead the community of sacrifice. He condemns the compromises of the Russian Orthodox bishops during World War II, when institutional survival was maintained in exchange for support of Stalin’s regime. This agreement did not prevent subsequent religious persecution or guarantee freedom of worship. While the Soviet leaders now allow a measure of tolerance “insofar as they need the church for political decoration,” Solzhenitsyn has repeatedly urged Orthodox believers to end this subservient relationship.¹¹

The artist is also central to the process of renewal. Literature creates a common spiritual fabric that can be a barrier against the spread of lies. In fact, art can do more to counteract false ideology than an alternative political program. All political solutions, whatever their merits, are based on expediency. A writer in his attempt to speak the truth is not limited by the assumptions of political debate.¹²

As courageous men and women declare their

opposition to the official picture of the world, others will come forward to confess their sins of dishonesty and submission. In this way, a movement of national repentance will occur. Because of the demands of the system, all Russians have participated in the evil done to their countrymen. A community of guilt exists. As more individuals repent, the community itself will be cleansed.

To be genuine, national repentance must cause a transformation of policy. For Solzhenitsyn this means an inward focus, a turning away from international adventures, and the goal of a zero growth economy. It means a return to the soil, and settlement of the vast Russian Northeast with the excess population of the large cities. Solzhenitsyn sounds remarkably like Thomas Jefferson, or Ellen White for that matter, when he comments that closeness to the earth is a source of spiritual strength. As the nation turns inward, he reasons, so will its people, rejecting the idol of material acquisition for the old values of goodness, beauty and purity of heart.¹³

Andrei Sakharov shares his friend’s anger at the actions of the Soviet authorities, but he has a very different vision of Russia’s ideal future. His first semipublic protest detailed his objections to the official endorsement of Trofim Lysenko’s theories of genetics. Sakharov and most reputable biologists considered Lysenko’s views erroneous and dangerous, but they were more concerned with the way state support of Lysenko had crippled scientific inquiry. Here Sakharov strikes one of his dominant themes: freedom of access to information is essential to progress.¹⁴ He makes his point as a loyal Socialist. In order to operate a system of central planning, economic managers need accurate, sophisticated data. If it is not forthcoming, socialism’s supposed advantage in efficiency is lost.¹⁵

Sakharov’s intimate involvement with the development of atomic weapons has led him, like many of his Western counterparts, to publicly warn of the dangers of nuclear war. In his 1968 book, *Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom*, Sakharov advocates convergence between the socialist countries and the democratic West. The worldwide problems of poverty, hunger, destruction of the environment, and the

threat of thermonuclear war demand worldwide solutions and international cooperation. The desirable end of convergence will be some form of world government, democratic in its politics and socialist in its economic organization. Sakharov sees this process happening in four

steps. First, internal reforms must take place in the Soviet Union. Second, progressive forces in the United States and Russia will create a constituency for a cooperative relationship between the two countries. Then, the superpowers will unite to assist in the economic development of

Mesar Interview With an

To obtain background on the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Russia, Joe Mesar interviewed M.P. Kulakov, a member of the General Conference Committee who came to the United States for the 1976 Annual Council. Kulakov also represented Russian Adventist believers at the 1975 General Conference session in Vienna, where he was one of six delegates from the Soviet Union. He offered the following observations:

On himself: My grandparents on both sides were among the earliest Adventists in Russia. My paternal grandfather lived in a small peasant village on the river Don. In 1906, he was elected to the Duma (Russian Parliament). While at the capital of St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), he attended a series of lectures on Daniel and Revelation. As it happened, the speaker was not an Adventist at all, but a man who translated the church's books into the Russian language at the publishing house in Hamburg. This translator was so impressed with the contents of the literature that he went to Russia on his own to lecture about biblical prophecies. After this encounter, my grandfather wrote away to Germany for more books about Adventist doctrine. Meanwhile, he began to keep the Sabbath. When an Adventist minister eventually came to his village 15 years later, his entire family was baptized.

My father was one of the pioneers of the church in Russia. He had been educated in economics and accounting before becoming a minister. Because of this background, he was asked to work as an auditor for the church at the center in Leningrad. Some years later, he

served as pastor of the church there, and it was at this time that I was born.

On the history of Adventism in Russia: The first Adventists in my country were German immigrants. In 1886, when the first Adventist minister came to Russia, he found a group of believers in the Crimea already observing the Sabbath. The growth of the church has been slow but steady since that time.

At present, we have about 30,000 members in the Soviet Union. Most of our people live in European Russia, particularly in the Ukraine, Latvia and Estonia. We have a number of large congregations in these areas; some churches have as many as 700 members in regular attendance. In Asia, where I worked for 20 years, we have about 3,000 members. The church is growing in this area as well, partially because of the high birth rate. Adventists in this region, like their neighbors, have large families, sometimes with as many as ten children. The membership in Moscow, on the other hand, is large but more stable, with a higher proportion of the elderly.

On the ministry: Most of our large churches in the Soviet Union have full-time ministers. In smaller towns and rural areas, however, the pastors support themselves with other occupations. Young men are trained for the ministry by participating in the activities of the local church and by counsel and Bible study with the older clergy in their district. I received my training through this process.

Some ministers have had extensive education at Russian universities. For example, two of my close friends and coworkers were trained as architectural engineers. They are well versed in Russian Orthodox theology and can discuss its relation to Adventist belief

the Third World, devoting 20 percent of their gross national product for this purpose. Finally, by the end of this century a structure for merging the two societies will be devised.

The group that will lead the world to this more mature state will be the intelligentsia.

Their concerns already transcend national boundaries. Since the nature of their work requires freedom of thought and research, they are best equipped to promote these values for society at large.¹⁶

Sakharov recognizes that some nations and

Adventist Pastor from Russia

with fluency. Our most promising young ministers have similar backgrounds. But, in general, one of our greatest needs is to have pastors who are knowledgeable about theology.

On young people: We are working very hard to see that our young people remain in the church. They are encouraged to join church choirs or to develop ability in public speaking. At the different seasons of the year, the church sponsors festivals for a whole area, giving the youth an opportunity to meet other Adventists and to lead out in special programs. Also, whenever there is a wedding in one of our churches, we invite all the young people in the vicinity to attend. At one recent wedding, there were over 1,200 people at the reception dinner.

Our young men and women are given different materials to help them study the Bible. We have a number of old American textbooks that cover Bible doctrines. In addition, a few copies of Ellen White's books translated into Russian are available to our members.

In our country, all young men are required to serve in the military. A number of Adventists fought in the Soviet army in World War II. At present, we make arrangements to ensure that sincere Adventists are allowed to keep the Sabbath while on military duty.

On religious freedom: The law permits all religious believers to confess their faith in any manner they choose. Discrimination between religious groups is forbidden. Adventists, and all other denominations registered with the state, have the right to worship in churches as often as we like. Besides Sabbath services, we have meetings on Sunday nights to assist new members and, in some places, on Friday eve-

ning as well. We may invite guests to worship with us at these times. Printed songbooks and Morning Watch devotional writings will soon be distributed to aid our people in the worship experience.

Church property in the Soviet Union is owned by the state, but it is assigned to the local congregation, which is responsible for the upkeep of the building. In some cities, we share our facilities with other church groups. While churches are not allowed to tax their members, we raise enough money through free-will offerings to sustain our work.

On the membership: Most of our members are working people, peasants and artisans, or are retired and living on pensions. However, we do have a number of professional people in the church—engineers, doctors, dentists, even a psychiatrist. A few Adventists, including my oldest daughter, have attended university. In some instances, these students have taken correspondence courses to avoid conflict with Sabbath observance.

On Russian culture: Some Adventist young people, particularly those in the European republics, are quite familiar with Russian literature and music. Many of the books of authors like Dostoevsky and Tolstoy raise questions of truth and religious value that are helpful in reaching an understanding of the Christian gospel. I am familiar with the work of the novelist Leskov. In his writing, he indirectly presents issues of religious belief in stories about the problems people face in everyday life.

On Adventists in America: I have been very impressed with the loving kindness of the Adventists I have met here and with their concern over the progress of the work in Russia.

political philosophies will not join this emerging world consensus. Among the “extremist ideologies that reject all possibility of . . . compromise,” he lists Fascism, racism, militarism and Maoism.¹⁷ These forces must be isolated and controlled.

Sakharov’s statement, while clearly going beyond actual Soviet policy, is couched in the language of a responsible critic. While he does not hesitate to call his own government to task, particularly in its treatment of dissenters, he is careful to support its position when he agrees with it, on the war in Vietnam, for example. *Progress* was circulated in *samizdat*—the informal network of Russian underground literature—

“While praising Sakharov’s courage and the scope of his ideas, Solzhenitsyn’s response offers a different vision of the good society. That vision is best described as Christian authoritarianism.”

during 1969 for comment and discussion. At that time, Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote a reply which he shared personally with Sakharov, and a dialogue between the two men began.

While praising the author’s courage and the scope of his ideas, Solzhenitsyn’s response, published in 1973, offers a different vision of the good society. That alternative is best described as Christian authoritarianism. Sakharov, he argues, like most secular men, has set up false gods, the idea of unlimited progress, the faith in science to provide answers to human problems, the reliance on the leadership of an informed and enlightened elite. The promise of progress is illusory. The chief job of modern science has been to counteract the damage done by earlier technologies. Sakharov’s credo just does not take into account the pervasive presence of sin in the world. Evil is present in all classes and nations and social systems. Without a spiritual revival to combat personal wickedness, new structures of government can only be of limited benefit.

Indeed, the specific solution Sakharov advances—convergence with the West—will actually be harmful. America is a nation that has lost its spiritual vigor, that is riddled by greed and corruption, that has lost its desire to defend human rights. Without moral reform in the two societies, merger would exacerbate the evils they both contain, producing a culture “immoral in the warp and woof.”¹⁸

Besides, despite all the efforts of thinkers with an internationalist bias, national feeling and patriotism have not disappeared. Nor is Solzhenitsyn persuaded that the disappearance of these emotions would be a good thing. National identity gives a people a sense of history, a common language, makes great literature possible. Its demise would lead to a numbing standardization of thought and culture. “Does not national variety enrich mankind as faceting increases the value of a jewel?” Solzhenitsyn asks.¹⁹ The conflict between nations he ascribes to the clash of ideologies, brittle doctrines not related to true national interest in any way.²⁰

He is also dubious about the value of a democratic, multiparty system. An enthusiasm for popular elections is inconsistent with Sakharov’s desire for rule by the intelligentsia. The democratic process seldom elevates the most outstanding scholars to positions of leadership. Parties are based on the clash of competing interests. They can only represent a part of the people, and thus can only obtain a limited perspective on truth. To get elected, they must excite popular passions, thereby decreasing the prospects for national repentance and self-limitation.

In Russia’s case, the nation has no tradition of democratic practice. Therefore, Solzhenitsyn proposes instead a transition into another form of authoritarianism, one founded on Christian principles. Autocratic regimes are not evil per se. In Russia, he claims, people survived for centuries at least as well as at present, and the arts flourished under the Czarist government. The problem with Communist rule is not the fact that the people are not consulted about decisions, but that there is no higher standard against which to measure the use of power. Christian authorities may possess the same unlimited freedom of action, but their conduct is restrained by their duty to God and the sense of their own capacity to sin.²¹

Solzhenitsyn sums up, "After the Western ideal of unlimited freedom, after the Marxist concept of freedom as acceptance of the yoke of necessity—here is the true Christian definition of freedom. Freedom is self-restriction! Restriction of the self for the sake of others!"²²

In the face of this response, Sakharov has not retreated from his basic convictions about the shape of the world's future. He is, however, now more pessimistic about the speed at which the changes he envisions will take place. The current Soviet-American detente, he believes, is a facade, masking the persistent poverty and intolerance in Russia, not an honest step toward international democracy. The West must be firm in its dealings with the socialist nations in order to prompt genuine reforms, not just cosmetic concessions.

Although he admits his earlier predictions have not come to pass, Sakharov continues to believe that convergence is the only alternative to disaster. Solzhenitsyn's call for national repentance may cleanse the country of its guilt for past wrongdoing, but it cannot prevent the repetition of these atrocities in the present. This posture, contends Sakharov, leaves no practical role for all those who do not profess religious faith. Furthermore, Solzhenitsyn's advocacy of purification by sacrifice is suicidal. We have had more than our share of martyrs, Sakharov retorts. What we need now is patience and discipline, and a commitment to the gradual introduction of democracy.²³

Where do Adventists stand in this dialogue? Our first impulse would probably be to agree with Solzhenitsyn. He is, after all, a Christian, and the ideas he articulates are familiar to us—the emphasis on individual renewal, not structural change, the fear of international union, the distrust of scientific wisdom, the belief that political decisions should be informed by moral considerations.

Yet, some tensions lurk beneath the surface of Solzhenitsyn's analysis. Is he willing to concede that other nations need to adopt an inward focus as a means to restoring their lost values? Would he be happy, for instance, if the United States followed the policy he outlined for the U.S.S.R.—military strength only for defense and noninterference in the internal affairs of other

countries? By contrast, Sakharov's views seem more conducive to international protection of civil liberties and to worldwide support for Russian dissidents.

More importantly, is Solzhenitsyn's Christian authoritarianism consistent with our concept of religious freedom? In theory, the Christian ruler is accountable to higher values. But, how, as a practical matter, is this accountability enforced? The Czars never let their consciences get in the way of political or religious persecution they considered necessary, as even Solzhenitsyn admits.²⁴ And what if the religious tradition to which the heads of state profess allegiance is itself authoritarian? In this situation, no channels of political or ecclesiastical influence exist to prevent capricious and arbitrary actions. This system gives opportunity for a redoubled repression aimed at both religious and secular opponents.

Sakharov offers the democratic response to this problem. The competition among the numerous minorities in society provides the best guard against domination by any one group. Since power is attained by persuasion and coalition, it is in everyone's long-range self-interest to keep the free flow of information and discussion alive and vibrant.

Sakharov's picture of the world has its own hazards, however. Solzhenitsyn's observation that the rituals of modern democracy are foreign to most societies is a powerful one. Attempting to impose them from the outside may lead to the tearing away of old and proud indigenous cultures.

Despite his Marxist training, Sakharov is a liberal in his views on intellectual freedom. As such, he absorbs all the weaknesses and evasions of the liberal position. The liberals' defense of freedom of expression borrows its primary metaphor from laissez faire economics. It posits a marketplace of ideas, where various notions compete against each other for acceptance. At bottom, liberalism offers a procedure for arriving at truth, not a set of propositions to be believed.²⁵ By contrast, most religious faiths proclaim an absolute, revealed truth. When these close off debate, they constitute an attack on the liberal process of an open competition of ideas. Thus, the basic intellectual assumptions of secular, liberal societies stand in conflict with the claims of religious faith.²⁶

Which world view would Adventists find more congenial, or would some kind of synthesis accord best with what we stand for? The Solzhenitsyn-Sakharov debate raises this question for us, and other questions, too. Our historical position in favor of the separation of church and state is based in large part on American constitutional principles. What is the effect of applying these ideas in nations with authoritarian regimes, particularly where the government imposes extensive regulation of religious affairs? Is the concept of absolute separation sound even in a democracy? Does divorcing religion from politics mean that the two spheres are separate but equal? Who decides where the realm of political control ends and the arena of religious concern begins?

We typically approach these questions with the same perspective we bring to most church/state issues—what is best for the survival and growth of the church. But this outlook is a limited one, for it dulls our senses to the evils the state inflicts in other contexts. Solzhenitsyn (and the Bible) warn that the church may sacrifice the integrity of the gospel to survive as an institution.

Whatever the limitations of either Solzhenitsyn or Sakharov, they have forged their ideas in relation to a strong commitment against injustice and at considerable personal risk. So have our brothers and sisters in Russia. Without this kind of courage, our vision of the ideal society will soon lose its persuasive power and appeal.

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15. Andrei Sakharov, Roy Medvedev and Valery Turchin, "Appeal for a Gradual Democratization," trans. by Marilyn Vogt, *Samizdat—Voices of the Soviet Opposition*, George Saunders, ed. (New York: Monad Press, 1974) pp. 403-406.
16. Sakharov, *Progress*, pp. 30, 81-85.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
18. Solzhenitsyn, *From Under the Rubble*, p. 15.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
20. Solzhenitsyn, *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*, pp. 12-13, 35-36.
21. Solzhenitsyn, *From Under the Rubble*, pp. 17-18.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
23. Andrei D. Sakharov, *My Country and the World*, trans. by Guy V. Daniels (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976) pp. 5-6, 11-24, 45-46, 103-104.
24. Solzhenitsyn, "Letter to the Third Council of the Russian Church Abroad," quoted in Nielsen, *Solzhenitsyn's Religion*, pp. 152-53.
25. But even liberals cannot entertain certain ideas—because they would close the market. Sakharov himself would exclude "extreme, sectarian ideologies like Maoism and Fascism from the process of international convergence."
26. For a more complete critique of liberal assumptions about freedom of inquiry, see Garry Wills, *Nixon Agonistes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969) pp. 314-27.

We SHOULD Be Involved in Politics

by Tom Dybdahl

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

William Blake, "Milton"

"Would to God all the Lord's
people were prophets."

Numbers 11:29

Seventh-day Adventism is an American religion. It was born, nurtured, and it came of age here, shaped wholly in American culture. Despite its wide spread, there is still remarkable uniformity among Adventists throughout the world. And today, with about one-fifth of the membership, Americans in America control the world church.

That is by no means all bad. Part of Adventism's genius was its reflection of America's best values and ideals: its energy and optimism and hard work. America provided a relatively peaceful base for the church to grow and expand, while maintaining a solid financial structure.

But to an apocalyptic body, close identification with any state is dangerous. A state seeks to

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build and maintain an earthly kingdom; apocalyptists look for a city whose builder and maker is God. A state uses earthly power, military might, to achieve its goals; apocalyptists depend upon divine intervention. In our case, close association with America has become a seductive liaison.

Recently, the metamorphosis of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its relationship to the American state has been examined historically.¹ But what we have not done is to ask what these changes have done to the soul of Adventism. For America cannot be transformed in Adventist picture rolls from a great and terrible beast to a gamboling little lamb without a corresponding change in the church's attitudes and beliefs. And that is just what happened.

In the beginning, Adventists saw the state as irrelevant. The world and its governments were passing away. Adventists were considered to be strange, otherworldly people. They had little concern for the state and its activities, and no desire to be involved with government.

By 1860, this view had shifted. The government was viewed as a once benevolent, but now corrupt, power. The church felt that its duty was to point out the sins of the state. The *Review and Herald* thundered against slavery and those leaders who tolerated it.

But the war passed, the church grew, and so

did its desire for acceptance. Jesus was coming soon, but He wasn't here yet, and there was the time being to deal with. So the great beast began to lose its horns, and the church became more tolerant of the state. In this century, that tolerance has become active affection.

The result is that in its life-style and outlook, Adventism has virtually become Americanism. We accept America's basic social, cultural and economic values. We support the status quo, favor conservative politics, and eagerly seek our share of America's wealth and power.

Why this eager embrace? A major reason for our positive view of America is that it has "separation of church and state." We are free to practice and spread our religion as we see fit, without government interference. That is, indeed, a great blessing. And we are anxious to oppose any threat to this crucial principle, and to support a government that maintains it.

The problem, however, is that we have taken this principle too seriously. The constitution says simply: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The intent is clear: that the state should not have control over any church or its activities. But what has been read into this idea is something far broader, and far different.

Adventists—along with most American fundamentalists—not only accepted this principle, they accepted its converse (which did not logically follow): that the church should have nothing to do with the state or with its laws. Separation of church and state became separation of religion from politics. We arrived at a sort of gentleman's agreement, unspoken of course, that since the state had to leave churches alone, then churches should leave the government alone. Most politicians thought that was just fine. The church's work was to "preach the gospel" and "save souls," while the government took care of "politics." (These phrases are not caricatures. They are still employed regularly in discussions of this issue.)

But there are some serious problems with this neat view. It denies a basic reality of human existence. Our lives do not fit into totally separate slots; we cannot always make clear-cut distinctions between social actions, or religious

actions, or political actions. All our actions are a result of what we believe, and flow from our convictions. One of Adventism's most important insights is that man is a unity, a whole being. The body cannot be divided from the soul. Saying that the church should preach the gospel and not be involved in politics is a way of saying that the church should not concern itself with a major part of the daily lives of men and women. It is impossible and undesirable.

This assumption also led to the idea that while it might be all right for individual church members to be involved in politics, it was certainly no business of the church organization.

"Adventism has virtually become Americanism. We accept America's basic social, cultural and economic values. We support the status quo, favor conservative politics, and eagerly seek our share of wealth and power."

This meant that the church not only failed to give its members concrete guidance on difficult moral issues, it also abandoned its role as the ethical leader of society. Further, it naively failed to recognize that much of the evil in modern society is bound up with powerful forces and systems—institutions—and that the church as an institution must stand over against these powers if it wishes to be heard.

Its brand of noninvolvement meant that the Adventist Church ended up giving tacit endorsement to whatever rulers or policies prevailed. Because, when it comes to history, nobody can just stand on the sidelines. We are all in a concrete historical situation, in a particular time and place, for better or worse. We cannot be neutral in the struggles that go on around us. To say nothing in the face of evil is to condone it. We can only pretend to be neutral.

Garry Wills aptly describes the kind of church-state relationship that has evolved from these beliefs: "We have, therefore, a very one-sided arrangement, based on mutual aggrandizement—the state will leave the church alone, so long as the church never criticizes state. Such criticism would be 'politics,' in which the church

should not meddle. But agreeing with the state—to congratulate and celebrate it—is not ‘politics.’ Thus is religion trapped, frozen in its perpetual de facto accommodation of power. . . . Religion is invited in on sufferance, to praise our country, our rulers, our past and present, our goals and pretensions, under the polite fiction of praying for them all. That is what Americans quaintly call ‘freedom of religion,’ and what the Bible calls idolatry.”²

But enough for description of the problem. What should we be doing? The church and the state have vastly different aims, and surely the church would be in trouble if it tried to do the work of the state. Just how should we be involved in politics?

It is generally agreed that the church should not get tangled up in partisan politics.³ It should not endorse political candidates, and exclusively support their efforts, or urge members to vote for specific people. It need not take a position on every bill or issue that comes before a legislative body. But between our noninvolvement and total immersion, there is a wide range of possibilities. And we begin to find our proper place when we ask why we should be involved at all.

We cannot take the gospel seriously without being involved in politics. It is not a matter of picking an issue we like, choosing to take a stand, or choosing not to take a stand. It goes beyond preference or inclination. It is a matter of deciding whether we shall be fully faithful to Jesus or not. We become involved in politics because if we are true to the gospel we are forced into it. We cannot live our beliefs without being involved.

How can we care for a person and have no concern about the laws that affect the life of that person in society? How can we care for the victims of injustice without caring about the system that created the injustices? It is hypocrisy to feed and clothe the poor while participating silently in the systems that make and keep them poor. How can we care about man without caring about his politics?

Yet, that is what we seem to do. When an apartment building across from a church I used to attend burned down, the members made heroic, self-sacrificing efforts to provide for the homeless. They displayed true Christian concern

for the victims of this disaster. But the church showed little interest when it was learned that the owner of the building—a wealthy developer—had ignored the city fire codes, and these violations had led to the fire. There was no effort on the part of the members to help bring him to justice, no attempt to make the city enforce its fire laws more strictly. In short, nothing was done to prevent more needless apartment building fires.

It is not a question of whether we should use “worldly power” or God’s power to accomplish our aims. We do not become involved with the world, with politics, primarily because of what we hope to accomplish in that sphere; we do not become involved because we think we can turn this world into God’s kingdom. The goal is faithfulness, not effectiveness. We get involved because God cares, and He asks His children to become involved. If we identify ourselves with Jesus, we must also identify ourselves with the poor and lonely and oppressed.

We who would be shaped by Christ have let ourselves be shaped by those who do not know Him. When something is labelled political, we accept that definition. And then, we refuse to get involved. It would sidetrack us from our mission. We do not stop to ask how we can express a concern or be involved in the fear of the Lord and in faithfulness to the gospel.

What I am trying to say is that many issues are not only political issues. They may indeed have a political nature, be debated in legislative bodies, or argued about by public officials. But many issues have a more important dimension—the human dimension. They involve the lives and fates of human beings—God’s creatures. And so, whatever else they may be, they are, indeed, the legitimate concern of Christians.

A good example is the Civil Rights activities during the last decade. This was, indeed, a hotly debated political issue. And so, all during the serious struggle of black people to gain the rights proclaimed in our constitution, this church refused to take an official, public position. We weren’t to involve ourselves in politics. But what was at stake was whether or not black people in America would be treated as human beings; whether this country would be a land of equal opportunity and equal justice, or whether it would not. Through it all, we offered no moral leadership. We kept silent.

Probably, this sad past would not be worth repeating if we had learned our lesson. But there is much evidence that we have not. Yes, the church has made some advances. But we are never at the forefront of loving all God's children, and treating them all alike. More often, we have been near the rear. We have literally been forced into taking more humane, more Christian, positions.

The early Adventists didn't suffer from this distorted view. This church was young when it faced the tough question of slavery. It would be hard to find a more political issue in American history. But under the conviction of the gospel, the early Adventists saw that it went much deeper than that; it was primarily a human issue. Millions of people were daily being brutalized, oppressed, destroyed. Church leaders did

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not care that the world called it political. They saw it for what it was, and refused to quietly ignore the slavery problem, or claim it was not their business.

It even became a church issue. No one could be an Adventist who held slaves, and we lost some members. Ellen White called slavery a “high crime,” and “a sin of the darkest dye.”⁴ She urged members to disobey the Fugitive Slave Laws, which required citizens to turn runaway slaves back to their masters.⁵ Her primary concern was to do what was right, to be faithful; not to be careful, noncontroversial and socially acceptable.⁶

The early Adventists did not spiritualize away Christ's proclamation of freedom to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those that are bound. They made it real, concrete.

We have lost this courage and understanding. We cannot see that part of the church's mission is to spend and risk for others, to identify with the victims of injustice and greed, to place the power and wealth of the church at the disposal of the poor and needy; or that in so doing we follow the example of our Lord, who poured out His life for the world although none were worthy.

Our present policy is that unless we are directly threatened as a church, we have nothing to say to government. We have sat quietly through wars, struggles for equality, mass starvation and torture, corruption and immorality in government—all under the guise of “not being involved in politics.” We are too busy “preaching the gospel.”

And our noninvolvement goes on. Consider the problem of torture, particularly torture of political prisoners. This is practiced extensively in China, the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, and in such diverse places as Chile, Uruguay, the Philippines, Indonesia, South Africa and Uganda. But in those countries where the Seventh-day Adventist Church is allowed to preach freely, and carry on its work, we have nothing to say about the denial of human rights and the systematic degradation of other human beings. Such actions would be meddling in politics, and might jeopardize our work. After all, Christians have been expelled from South Korea, and from Brazil (countries where we have very active churches), for daring to criticize the sins of the ruling powers.

But the question we have not faced is this: after we have silently acquiesced to the torture and death of innocent human beings, what gospel do we have left to preach? If we ignore the cries of the oppressed, the pleas of innocent victims, what does our good news mean?⁷ If the church does not have the courage of its convictions, if it cannot be Christian, what is the point of its existence?

John the Baptist's life and ministry stand in judgment on our silence. He was the forerunner of Christ, and a type of those who will prepare the way for the second advent. He had a very successful ministry. But he met an untimely end—he was beheaded—because he would not keep quiet about the political problems of his day.⁸ He could have reasoned that it was not his job to suggest a redistribution of goods, or to

point out specific immorality and wickedness in high places. He could have pointed out that it would jeopardize his work, which it certainly did. He could have said it would be just meddling in politics. But John understood the demands of the gospel, and he spoke out.

What I have been saying about being involved in politics for the sake of the gospel, and for the sake of others, is not radical. That it seems radical is a measure of how little understanding we have. America has successfully convinced us that government is basically good and benevolent that we need not—indeed, should not—have a concern for its activities.⁹

Ironically, the usual claim that the Adventist Church is not involved in politics is a false claim. We are involved in politics, but it is a highly selective involvement. There are two areas of concern: temperance and religious liberty. And both are sectarian issues. They show a primary concern for ourselves and our standards, rather than a concern for others.

It is unfortunate that this limited involvement is not seen as an outworking of the principle of concern for the lives of others. If it were, we

could then discuss particular issues, and whether they were legitimate concerns of the church or not. But we have opted to view the situation in a completely different way. These political activities are seen as *exceptions* to the ideal of noninvolvement. And noninvolvement remains the guiding principle.

If it is true that the gospel is continually at war with the world, that its aims and ideals and principles are contrary, we would expect to find a great tension between the church and surrounding society. In every sphere of life—economic, social, political—we would expect to find Seventh-day Adventist Christians questioning, opposing, showing new ways. But no, we find ourselves fitting in, going along, nodding our heads. We are fond of talking about how wicked the world is; we seldom wonder why we fit in so well.

It is time to reexamine our close and adoring relationship to the American state, and to ask whether a gospel that turns away from the concrete political situations of human beings and refuses to address them is any gospel at all. We can continue to ignore the world, using the self-righteous claim that we must “not be involved in politics.” But, at least, we should not be surprised that the world ignores us.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See Jonathan Butler, *The Rise of Adventism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), pp. 173-206; and Ronald D. Graybill, *Insight*, November 30, 1971.

2. Garry Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs*, (New York: Doubleday and Co. 1971), p. 260.

3. It is possible for the church to arouse needless controversy by being involved in partisan activities. We are a world church, and should not take the side of one country against another. But this does not free us from taking public stands on important moral issues; sooner or later we are bound to offend every earthly government if we do. The fact that we are a world church gives us an even better reason to take stands: we can be the salt of the earth everywhere.

4. See *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1*, 264, 358 ff.

5. See *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1*, p. 202.

6. On this issue, and other moral issues, Ellen White urged members to be involved. But she raised some questions about voting for political parties or individuals. (See FCE 475 ff.; 2SM pp. 336, 337) Today we tend to do the opposite; vote for individuals but not get involved with issues.

7. It is also worth asking if, after we have kept silence over the suffering of others, anyone will protest when we become the sufferers.

8. John's message was much more than a simple “Repent.” When he preached, and the people came and asked, “What should we do?”, he answered: “The man who has two shirts must share with him who has none, and anyone who has food must do the same.” (Luke 3:11, NEB) and John's judgment on Herod's adultery was a reminder that Herod's action had brought on war with his first wife's father, Aretas IV of Nabatea. According to Josephus, John was in prison because Herod feared he would start an insurrection. (*Antiquities*, xviii, 5.2.)

9. Another whole aspect of this problem is that our positive view of the state has served us badly in other countries. One article in this issue discusses the relationship of the German Adventists to the Nazi government during World War II. Having been taught an unquestioning acceptance of the powers that be, how could we expect our German members to see what was happening, and to suddenly stand up against the state?

Against Isolationism: The Church's Relation To the World

by Edward W. H. Vick

Is there such a difference between the world and the church that if we are faithful to the church we can have nothing to do with the world? Can we say that the world is the sphere of ignorance and the church the sphere of knowledge, that the world is the sphere of darkness and evil, and the church the sphere of light and goodness? Can we say that persons in the world are outsiders and we are insiders, that they are the lost and we are saved?

Let us take as our point of departure that this position of radical division between believer and nonbeliever is based on the proper and necessary insight that there is some important sense in which the one is different from, even opposed to, the other. There is separation between believer and unbeliever. But that is only one side of the matter, only half the truth. There is also community between believer and unbeliever. That side of the matter is important, too. The question we need to ask is: *In what sense* separation, and *in what sense* community?

First, we must sort out what we mean by "world," since the term is used in apparently opposite ways. When we look at the world's

beauty, we sing, "This is my Father's world." When we look at its sin and ugliness, we call Satan the "prince of this world." Jesus himself said his disciples were to be *in* the world but not *of* the world. They were to be worldly (in-the-world) and not worldly (of-the-world) at the same time. Is there, then, more than one meaning of the term "world" and of the corresponding adjective "worldly"? It will help if we go briefly to the New Testament and clarify how the expression "world" is used there.

The New Testament uses the term "world" in several senses. We shall distinguish three of these.

1) "World" stands for *the whole created order*. God created the world, that is "the heavens and the earth," the totality of what is. Jesus, according to John 17:5, shared the glory of the Father "before *the world* was made." "World" here simply means "creation," that which is other than God but which was brought into being by God, and continues to be dependent upon God. In this sense, the term "world" is neutral as far as evil is concerned.

2) The term "world" may also mean *men as they group themselves in social unities and institutions*. The clan or the nation would be examples. It is as men live in such social unities that the demand of God is made on them. They may respond either positively or negatively. Jesus said, "I have come as light into *the world* that

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whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness" (John 12:47). This is the world of human relationships, united and structured in specific ways. Again, this is a neutral sense of the term. It is the world in which, by virtue of being human, we necessarily participate.

3) When the rejection of Jesus Christ has taken place, the world becomes *the realm hostile to God and independent of him*. Evil permeates the structures of society, human life becomes alienated from God. "World" now comes to mean man unbelieving, man at war with God, man hating and resisting good. In this sense,

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a too-simple distinction**

between church and world . . .

**The question is not whether the
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"world" means sin and sinfulness; it is to be shunned by the disciple. Says the author of First John: "We know that we are of God and the whole world is in the power of the evil one" (5:19). He also writes: "Little children, you are of God . . . they are of the world" (4:4, 5). Here the term is no longer neutral. World is evil.

This brief reference to certain New Testament passages (and the evidence could be much more extensively examined) indicates that we cannot simply say, "The Christian has nothing to do with the world." We must say this in a certain sense, and yet at the same time we must urge that Christians should participate in the world, again understanding what it is that we are saying.

Why must the believer share in the world's work and participate in its activities? The fundamental theological answer is: "Because it is God's world; He is its creator and goal; there is goodness here." If we ask, Why must the Christian separate himself from the world? the

theological answer is: "Because and to the extent that the world is opposed to God, resists his demands and refuses his revelation." When "world" represents what is opposed to the Kingdom of God (the third sense listed above), it stands for all that should be shunned by the believer. It is then simply equivalent to evil.

As for the former senses of "world," we must remember that whether we are Christian or not we live in the sphere of human relationships. We share in the structures of the world. Unless we live in an artificial subculture our own religious community has created, we have to work in the world in order to live. Not only that, but we *all* willingly share, indeed take for granted, the benefits which the modern world has handed down to us: cars, time-saving devices, medicine, communications, etc. Moreover, we are citizens of this country or that. We pay our taxes and we vote or we refuse to vote, either way participating in the structures of society. We cannot escape our social involvement. To do nothing, to refuse to recognize our involvement, is also involvement, even if it is negative.

So it is extreme, indeed, to hold that believer and nonbeliever have nothing in common. The Gospel says something to our *human* condition, and that is a condition we go on sharing after faith is born.

We shall now briefly expound the implications of the following propositions:

Sin is in the believer.

The believer is in the church.

The church is in the world.

The world is sinful.

The world is in the church.

The church is sinful.

No believer has to be reminded that he has difficulty in doing good. But we may need reminding that the reason for this is that we find it easy to respond to sin, that sin, so to speak, dwells *in* us (Romans 7) *wherever we go*. One of the places we find ourselves is in the believing community, in the church. This means that, as elsewhere, sin manifests itself within the church. So, bearing in mind the different meanings of the term "world," we cannot say simply: world sinful, church holy. And it is naive to think we can diminish or eliminate temptation by withdrawing from the world. By withdrawing, we simply change the context of our sinfulness. We need to remember these words written to the

early Christians, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1:8).

Sin takes particular forms in different contexts, but a change of context does not eliminate sin. Indeed, the forms it takes inside the church whether in the individual or in the religious community as a whole, will have striking parallels to those of the worldly community from which we may have tried to flee. Pride, selfishness, lovelessness, unreasonableness, thirst for power, neglect of the feelings of others, injustice, lack of charity, prejudice, greed, monopolizing, cowardice, lust, failure of nerve, indolence, egoistic introversion, self-centered extroversion. They are the same sins wherever they show up.

And sin is no less sin because done by believers. What is the difference between adultery in a believer's bed and adultery in a non-believer's? What is the difference between a believer's and a nonbeliever's failure to respect the person of another? What is the difference between the corporate selfishness of a business concern and that of a church community that takes an interest in politics only when its own interests are threatened and has no real care for the wider claims of man for justice, for dignity, or for food?

The New Testament does not endorse the distinction between the church without sin and

the world as sinful, even if it might seem to do so upon a superficial reading of the more familiar passages. In the New Testament, the church is constantly to guard itself against its *own* sinfulness. The community's need is to put on Christ, to cast off the works of the flesh—and not to stand aloof in prideful isolation from other men. The world (sin) is in every believer. The world (sin) is in the church. And that is the point of the constant warnings. The church has to fight its own sin!

The danger, then as well as now, is that of making a too-simple distinction between church and world. It is a danger because it leads us astray in two ways: first, to a wrong assessment of where the threat to the church is coming from, and second, to a wrong assessment of how the church is to engage itself in the world in order to make its witness effective.

The question is not whether the church should be in the world or not. The question rather is *how* we are to be there. Once we have overcome the temptation to isolationism, the temptation always to think how we can avoid contact, how we can shape our community so that it never knows how to be among men in a creative and intelligent manner, then we can focus our energies on genuinely creative encounter and participation.

The Limits to Religious Freedom In America

by Kenneth Walters

Last fall the Supreme Court of the United States was asked to decide whether a company must give an employee Saturdays off because of the employee's religious convictions. Paul Cummins, a production scheduler with the Parker Seal Company in Berea, Kentucky, is a member of the Worldwide Church of God. His church forbids work from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown and on seven holy days which correspond to Jewish observances. When complaints arose from fellow workers who were forced to substitute for him on Saturdays, he was discharged.

Mr. Cummins sued in federal court, but the court dismissed his complaint. A federal appeals court reversed the lower court, ruling that the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in employment on grounds of religion (as well as race, color, sex, age and national origin), requires that Parker Seal Company make reasonable efforts to accommodate its business to Mr. Cummins' religious practices. The company had not shown that it had suffered "undue hardship" by accommodating Mr. Cummins' beliefs, the appeals court said.

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Parker Seal Company appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States, making what some felt was a surprising argument: If the federal government forces it to give some employees Saturdays off, it is, in effect, giving official recognition to a particular religion in conflict with the First Amendment, which bars the "establishment of religion" by government. Must an employer excuse an employee from Saturday work to attend church, while an atheistic employee who wants to go fishing on Saturday enjoys no similar right, the company asked. This is a preference for religious over secular reasons for not working, hence a violation of the "establishment of religion" clause of the constitution, it urged.

Mr. Cummins countered that the First Amendment also guarantees "the free exercise of religion" and that the purpose of the Civil Rights Act was to prevent discrimination in employment on grounds of religious belief and practice. He urged that he not be punished for his religious convictions. The Civil Rights Act is not an "establishment of religion" in violation of the constitution merely because it increases his religious freedom, he argued.

The Supreme Court had a difficult case on its hands. The two principles in the First Amendment guaranteeing freedom of religion, known to lawyers as the "establishment clause" and the "free exercise clause," have admirably protected

individuals from a wide variety of attempted encroachments on the rights of conscience and religious practice for decades. But the conflict between the two clauses posed a problem for the Supreme Court in *Cummins v. Parker Seal Co.* The precise issue was: Does a rule designed to protect individuals' religious freedom by requiring employers to accommodate employees' religious practices constitute an establishment of religion in violation of the First Amendment? On November 2, 1976, the Supreme Court held in a 4-4 vote that *Parker Seal Co.* had indeed violated federal civil rights laws. The tie vote meant that the lower appeals court decision was upheld, but left unresolved the question of whether the Supreme Court believes employers must honor scheduling requests of employees who refuse to work on certain days for religious reasons. The two-sentence opinion of the Supreme Court in the *Cummins* case did not give any clues as to which way the individual justices voted or why. It reported only that the lower-court judgment was "affirmed by an equally divided court" and that Justice John Paul Stevens disqualified himself in the case.

Other cases are being appealed to the Supreme Court, brought by other employees who have been fired for refusing to work on either Saturdays or Sundays for religious reasons. The justices have not said whether they will hear them. Sooner or later, the Supreme Court will decide one of these cases and only then will we know how this complex problem is resolved. But the matter of refusal to work on certain days for religious reasons demonstrates again that cases involving religious freedom do not always pose trivial or simple choices. However much one reveres religious freedom, it is naive and misleading to characterize it in absolute terms. Other factors must always be balanced against even an important constitutional principle like religious freedom.

How far should society go in granting individuals free exercise of religion? Are there limits? Most agree that some limits must exist. For example, in a 1975 case the Tennessee Supreme Court held that the First Amendment did not give a religious group the right to ask members

to drink strychnine and handle poisonous snakes to prove their "faith," despite the members' insistent claims of religious freedom. Some members of the sect had died from these activities. The court felt that freedom of religion does not include the right to take certain risks affecting one's survival. "Tennessee has the right to guard against the unnecessary creation of widows and orphans," the court remarked.

Throughout American history the courts have faced a wide variety of claims that individuals' rights to the free exercise of religion have been

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infringed. The first case arose in 1878. The followers of the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith had organized a community in Utah under the leadership of Brigham Young. In 1853, Young had announced the doctrine of plural marriage. Enough people were sufficiently upset by what was happening in Utah that Congress made bigamy a federal crime. One George Reynolds was convicted of violating the law, and in appealing his case to the Supreme Court, argued that the First Amendment guaranteed him the right to free exercise of religion. The court concluded that "Congress was deprived of all legislative power over mere *opinion*, but was left free to reach *actions* which were in violation of social duties or subversive of good order." The free exercise clause protected only belief, not behavior, so long as Congress acted in pursuit of a valid secular objective.

This (together with a later Mormon polygamy case) established what became known as the "secular regulation rule," an interpretation of the free exercise clause which predominated for several decades. This rule said that religious beliefs were protected absolutely, but conduct or behavior could be regulated if the regulation

had a “legitimate secular purpose.” The only case of record during this period where an individual’s claim was upheld against a secular regulation was in the 1920s when a California public school made dancing a required part of the physical education curriculum. The Hardwicke family’s fundamentalist beliefs prohibited dancing, and the California court of appeals said the requirement infringed on their freedom of religion.

The next significant case raising the free exercise issue to reach the Supreme Court came in 1934. A small group of students at the University of California at Berkeley refused, on religious grounds, to enroll in the required ROTC program. When they were expelled, they sued for reinstatement, arguing that the requirement was in violation of the free exercise clause. The Supreme Court unanimously upheld the mandatory ROTC requirement, restating the rule that the free exercise clause protects religious *beliefs*, not *behavior* such as the students’ refusal to conform to a regulation which had a valid secular purpose.

Of all the religious groups to raise free exercise claims before the Supreme Court, the most impressive record of legal achievement belongs to the Jehovah’s Witnesses. The most significant of the many Jehovah’s Witnesses cases to reach the Supreme Court is *Cantwell v. Connecticut*, decided in 1940. Newton Cantwell and his two sons sold Jehovah’s Witness literature in New Haven, a heavily Catholic city. They would approach people on the street and ask permission to play a phonograph record which described the Catholic church as the “Scarlet Woman” and the “Whore of Babylon.” Predictably, this upset some people. A Connecticut statute made it unlawful to publicly solicit for a religious or charitable cause without being certified by the state and, eventually, the Cantwells were convicted.

In reviewing the case, the Supreme Court again spoke of a distinction between belief and action, as in the Mormon polygamy case. Justice Owen Roberts wrote: “The (First) Amendment embraces two concepts—freedom to believe and freedom to act. The first is absolute but, in the nature of things, the second cannot be. Conduct remains subject to regulation for the protection

of society.” He cited the Mormon polygamy case as authority for the latter principle.

Still, the court overturned the Cantwells’ conviction for soliciting funds without a permit, since the licensing statute required an administrator to “determine whether such cause is a religious one or is a bona fide object of charity.” The court explained: “To condition the solicitation of aid for the perpetuation of religious views or systems upon a license, the grant of which rests in the exercise of a determination by state authority as to what is a religious cause, is to lay a forbidden burden upon the exercise of liberty protected by the constitution.”

The significance of the Cantwell case was that religious conduct or action was no longer wholly unprotected. The circumstances under which conduct should be protected were not spelled out by Justice Roberts, but the free exercise clause no longer protected only belief. The Cantwell case thus marked the beginning of the demise of the belief-action distinction of the “secular regulation rule.”

Just two weeks after the Cantwell case was decided, the Supreme Court also decided *Minersville School District v. Gobitis*. The Gobitis children, Jehovah’s Witnesses, had refused to salute the flag at school and were expelled. Even before the case reached the Supreme Court, it had attracted national attention and debate. The court’s decision hardly quelled the controversy. Justice Felix Frankfurter’s opinion for the majority of the Supreme Court reasoned that requiring the Gobitis children to salute the flag was not to coerce them in their religious beliefs. Saluting the flag was a secular exercise, with no religious connotations.

Justice Frankfurter said: “The religious liberty which the constitution protects has never excluded legislation of general scope not directed against doctrinal loyalties of particular sects . . . Constitutional scruples have not, in the course of the long struggle for religious toleration, relieved the individual from obedience to a general law not aimed at the promotion or restriction of religious beliefs. The mere possession of religious convictions which contradict the relevant concerns of a political society does not relieve the citizen from the discharge of political responsibilities.”

The reaction of the academic legal profession was swift and highly critical of the Gobitis deci-

sion. Three years later, the Supreme Court overruled the *Gobitis* case in *West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette*, another Jehovah's Witnesses flag-salute case.

In an important sense, "modern" free exercise rights began in 1961 when the Supreme Court decided several cases known as the Sunday Closing Law cases. The free exercise of religion issue raised was whether Sabbatarians (in these cases, orthodox Jews) could be punished under criminal law if their religious convictions required them to close their shops on Saturday and they opened them on the forbidden Sunday instead. The court held that the Sunday laws were not a violation of the free exercise clause. The Sunday law, Chief Justice Earl Warren noted, only posed an *indirect* burden on the Sabbatarians. No one was forcing them to work on their Sabbath. They were only losing money because they chose not to open their stores on Saturday. "It cannot be expected, much less required, that legislators enact no law regulating conduct that may in some way result in an economic disadvantage to some religious sect and not to others," the court concluded.

Chief Justice Warren's distinction between direct and indirect burdens was an attempt to clarify further Justice Roberts' opinion in the *Cantwell* case that actions as well as beliefs could be protected by the free exercise clause. But only those secular regulations which bear *directly* on the free exercise of religion were invalid. *Indirect* burdens were permissible, presuming as always the legislation had a valid secular purpose.

Three justices dissented in the Sunday law cases. Justice William Brennan said that government had no right to force an individual to choose "between his business and his religion."

The majority holding in the Sunday Closing Law cases was seriously undermined (some legal scholars say overruled) two years later in *Sherbert v. Verner*. Mrs. Sherbert, a Seventh-day Adventist, worked at a textile mill in South Carolina. She was discharged for refusing to work on Saturdays. The state unemployment compensation authorities denied her unemployment benefits since a person who "refuses suit-

able work when offered . . . by the employment office or by the employer" was not qualified to receive benefits under South Carolina law.

The Supreme Court held 7-to-2 that depriving Mrs. Sherbert of unemployment benefits was a breach of her free exercise of religion. Justice Brennan, who had dissented in the Sunday Closing Law cases two years earlier, wrote the court's majority opinion. He set a tone in the Sherbert opinion which differed significantly from that which had been set by Chief Justice Warren in the Sunday Closing Law cases. The state's denial of unemployment benefits to Mrs. Sherbert could stand only if the "incidental burden on the free exercise of (her) religion may be justified by a compelling state interest in the regulation of a subject." The only state interest that was presented in the Sherbert case was a possibility of "the filing of fraudulent claims by unscrupulous claimants feigning religious objections to Saturday work." Justice Brennan brushed this contention aside on the ground that "there was no proof whatever to warrant such fears" of deceit on Mrs. Sherbert's part. The court concluded that no "compelling state interest" in the regulation had been shown.

In the opinion of legal scholars, the Supreme Court's decision in the Sherbert case greatly extended the reach of the free exercise clause by protecting one's conscience against the unintended burden of a law which had an unquestionably valid secular purpose. There was no longer any question that free exercise of religion clearly extended beyond convictions, and that rights of conscience could be restricted as much by an unintended as by an intended effect of legislation. Furthermore, the Supreme Court ruled in the Sherbert case that the government must assume the burden of proof in showing the overriding importance of its legislative interests if the individual's free exercise claim is to be denied.

Justice John Harlan dissented in the Sherbert case, lamenting that the ruling required the government to have a special sensitivity for religious motives, as opposed to "personal reasons" for not working. The majority decision in the Sherbert case, he said, makes the government "constitutionally *compelled to carve out an exemption*—and to provide benefits—for those whose unavailability is due to their religious convictions."

The basic rationale of the Sherbert case was upheld by the Supreme Court in the most recent major free exercise case, *Wisconsin v. Yoder*. Jonas Yoder, a member of the Amish Mennonite Church, was convicted under the Wisconsin law requiring children to attend public or private school until reaching age 16. The Amish reject formal schooling for their children beyond the eighth grade because of the biblical requirement to be “separate from the world.”

Chief Justice Warren Burger’s opinion for the court was untroubled by the fact that religious motives were being given special treatment. The Chief Justice noted that “if the Amish asserted their claims because of their subjective evaluation and rejection of the contemporary secular values accepted by the majority, much as Thoreau rejected the social values of his time and isolated himself at Walden Pond, their claim would not rest on a religious basis” and would,

“Since the free exercise of religion is guaranteed by the First Amendment, what is ‘religion’? Should it essentially mean conscience, or is belief in God and membership in a formal religious group required?”

therefore, not be protected by the First Amendment. Thoreau’s choice, he concluded, “was philosophical and personal rather than religious, and such belief does not rise to the demands of the (free exercise) clause.”

In the wake of the Sherbert case and the Yoder case, it is now clear that religiously based conduct may sometimes make an individual constitutionally exempt from regulatory statutes of the government. The belief-action distinction has been thoroughly rejected. In retrospect, it is somewhat surprising that the distinction was ever made at all since the First Amendment speaks of protecting the *exercise* of religion. If the framers of the constitution had in mind only to protect personal religious beliefs, they could have chosen words suitable for that purpose.

They chose instead to protect the free exercise of religion.

Yet, the question of limits on one’s free exercise of religion remains. The criterion set forth in the Sherbert and Yoder cases, that the government show a compelling interest in regulation in order to override the individual’s claim to free exercise of religion, is the general test. Applying this test is easy in some cases. For example, in a 1970 case, an orthodox Jew was held in contempt of court for not removing his skullcap in court. The contempt citation was dismissed by the appeals court on the grounds that there was no compelling governmental interest in applying the regulation to those who wear hats or caps for religious reasons.

Sometimes the individual’s free exercise claim is weak or even nonsensical. A taxpayer who claimed substantial charitable contributions as deductions on his income tax also claimed (unsuccessfully) that his religious convictions required that he not reveal the recipients to the Internal Revenue Service. A number of cases have ruled that citizens opposed to fluoridated water on religious grounds may not prevent municipal water systems from installing or operating fluoridation devices.

Some cases have proved to be more difficult. One of the most controversial decisions is the California Supreme Court’s holding in 1963 that Navajo Indians belonging to the Native American Church may use the drug peyote in their religious services. The court stressed that the drug had been used in this way for generations by the Navajos. All other subsequent claims that drug usage is protected by the free exercise clause have been rejected by the courts, including Timothy Leary’s defense to criminal charges that his usage of marijuana was “religiously” inspired.

Another problem area is the state’s right to order blood transfusions to be given to Jehovah’s Witnesses who need transfusions and reject them on religious grounds. Some courts have said that the state has no interest which outweighs the religious dictates of the individual. Others have suggested that especially where the individual has a family with small children who are dependent on the parent for support, the state has an interest in the parent’s survival. When Federal Judge J. Skelly Wright ordered an emergency blood transfusion given to a

Jehovah's Witness, he said: "I am determined to act on the side of life." Others strongly urge that judges should not so interfere with the rights of conscience, even if life is at stake. Presumably, those who take this position would also disagree with the Tennessee Supreme Court's ruling that the government has the right "to guard against the unnecessary creation of widows and orphans."

One can only conclude that within the past 15 years the Supreme Court has greatly expanded the scope of the free exercise clause. Only under rare circumstances now can the government apply policies to individuals which may harm, burden, or operate in such a way as to discriminate against religious beliefs or practice.

Have these expansions of the free exercise clause been wise? Some constitutional scholars say that it is unwise to require exceptions and exemptions on religious grounds from otherwise proper health and public welfare regulations. The free exercise clause could become, they argue, a general protection of unorthodox behavior under the guise of religion. They see the new liberal interpretations of the free exercise clause in the *Sherbert* and *Yoder* cases inviting a "conscience" explosion in which more and more people will attempt to escape from civil regulations on grounds of free exercise of religion. The courts must make some fine distinctions. Since the free exercise of religion is guaranteed by the First Amendment, what is "religion"? Should "religion" essentially mean conscience, or is belief in God or membership in a formal group and adherence to its teaching required? If an individual's religious conviction does not come from formal church teaching (in some cases, the individual's belief is even contrary to "official" church teaching), is the person still entitled to an exemption?

The *Yoder* case suggests that the current Supreme Court is not inclined to interpret the First Amendment so as to make protection of conscience of "lifestyle" tantamount to free exercise of religion. Chief Justice Burger noted in that case that "the very concept of ordered liberty precludes allowing every person to make

his own standards of conduct in which society as a whole has important interests." He noted further that Amish scruples against compulsory education past the eighth grade had been "long-established."

Another argument advanced against the liberalized interpretation of the free exercise clause is that courts are now required to pass on the sincerity of religious claims, which some feel courts are unsuited to determine. The courts, however, have not found sincerity to be a particularly difficult factual issue. In one case, an employee was fired when he refused on religious grounds to work on Sundays. When the court learned that he often had worked Sundays, the judge easily concluded that the employee "did not demonstrate the requisite sincerity of religious convictions." In another recent case, a group of workers who did not want to join a union claimed to be Seventh-day Adventists. When asked about certain Adventist doctrines and teachings, the workers were unable to recall much, if any, Adventist theology. It turned out that they were not Adventists.

A final objection to the liberalized interpretations of the free exercise clause is that the exemptions for religious reasons should be considered an unconstitutional "establishment of religion." Justice Harlan's dissenting opinion in the *Sherbert* case argued against "singling out religious conduct for special treatment." Those situations in which the free exercise clause requires special treatment for individuals on account of their religion should be "few and far between," said Justice Harlan. Whatever the merits of this view, the majority of the Supreme Court rejected this position in the *Sherbert* and *Yoder* cases.

As I noted at the outset, the argument was raised again in *Cummins v. Parker Seal Co.*, where the employer asserted that to favor Mr. Cummins' religious reasons for not working Saturdays over other employees' secular reasons for not wanting to work Saturdays is an establishment of religion, violating the constitution. Since the Supreme Court did not hear the case, we have no idea how this sticky constitutional dilemma will eventually be resolved.

Apocalypse

The end must come when blood-stained
 daggers reign
 And seas shall froth and rot beneath
 the sun.
 While men scream “War!” on Armageddon’s
 plain,
 The tombs erupt with life to greet the Son—

At least, that’s what I’m told. I doubt at times.
 I fear to trust those things I cannot see.
 Could John have inked, in hope, those
 final lines,
 Alone, afraid, beside the Patmos sea?

I hate this doubt that twists my mind in two;
 At times I break, at times I stand so sure.
 But truth is truth, and ever shall be true,
 Despite the hellish logic I conjure.

But will I cross that unmarked line to stand
 And bow to him who crawls upon the land?

Kenn Field

Doppelgänger

Conform, or be replaced,
 demands the man behind the desk,
 By carbon copies, compliments
 Of industry. They talk and touch,
 They walk and hear, controlled, of course:
 The answer to all anarchy.

They touch, but do they feel?
 They hear, but do they listen?
 Can they possess the music of a mind
 Behind their painted smiles?

mechanically recording stimuli,
 the man who wields the nine-cent pen
 unleashes hulking logic (profits versus?), then
 slurs on

Intangibles, and nothing more.
 Besides, no one will ever know.

(But if I am replaced
 By a Xerox renegade,
 How many friends will know
 That I am gone?)

Kenn Field

Edward Vick's Passion for Theology

by Ron Walden

The following is the first in a projected series of articles on Seventh-day Adventist theologians which will appear at irregular intervals in the pages of SPECTRUM. The series marks an attempt to encourage theological reflection by taking the work of theologians seriously.

The Editors

Edward W. H. Vick is an unusual figure among Seventh-day Adventist theologians because he has worked out his theological interests in a more exacting and consistent fashion than his teachers or contemporaries within the denomination. This article is devoted to an exposition and analysis of Vick's published works. It will try to report what his interests are, to trace certain themes that bind them together, to situate Vick's work within the development of Adventist theology, and to isolate those features of his work which seem most promising.

For Adventists, at least, the main novelty of Vick's writings is methodological. The positions he takes on the issues, though often refreshing, are less interesting than the reasons he takes them. His innovations may be considered by

reference to the concepts "theology," "system," and "context."

First, theology. Seventh-day Adventism has come late to this discipline, at least in its restricted sense. Most doctorates held by Adventists in the broad field of religion have been earned since World War II. Adventist doctorates in theology are more recent still; Vick's own, which was one of the first, was finished in 1965. When Bible teachers from Adventist colleges first began earning doctorates in the 1940s, occasionally in spite of the objections of their administrators, they did not usually pick a directly theological field. A more typical choice was speech. When they did turn to the general area of religious studies, it was more likely an historical field (such as Church History, or Ancient Near Eastern History, or New Testament and Christian Origins) which attracted them rather than doctrinal or systematic theology. That is why it is only now, in the late 1970s, that Adventist theology has developed enough to permit a series such as the one in which this article appears.

This is not to suggest that the church had no doctrines, or no clear thinking about them, before the arrival of academically trained theologians. Nor does it mean that there was no vitality to Adventist religion before Adventists got doctorates in "religion." The point here is simply that theology is an intellectual (and reli-

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gious) discipline with an academic tradition of its own; that it has developed certain standards which teaching or writing must meet before it can be called theology; and that Seventh-day Adventists have more or less ignored theology in this restricted sense until about 20 years ago.

Some Adventist scholars in religion were trained and active in fields other than theology, however. An early favorite was biblical studies. The distinction between biblical studies and theology is easier to use than to state, and is always clearer in theory than in practice. Briefly, when scholars in Christian studies speak of theology, whether systematic, doctrinal, or dog-

matic, they mean the constructive and synthetic discipline which makes proposals about Christian faith today, as opposed to the descriptive and analytical activity which investigates the Christian past. The first is "theology"; the second, depending on the period or collection of documents studied, is "church history" or "New Testament" or "history of Christian doctrine."

Both theologians and biblical scholars are concerned with the text of the Bible; but biblical scholars ask what it meant, while theologians ask what it means. Both theologians and historians of doctrine consider the Christian tradition; but historians describe it while theologians

About Edward Vick

Edward W. H. Vick grew up in England, where he worked as a minister from 1950-1954. In 1955, he earned a B.A. in theology from Southern Missionary College in Tennessee; in 1956, he received an M.A. in New Testament Greek from Andrews University.

He taught at Canadian Union College from 1956-1964, during which time he earned a B.D. with honors from the University of London. In 1965, after taking an appointment at the Seminary at Andrews University, he received the doctorate in theology from Vanderbilt University. Since 1969, he has taught in England at Wymondham College and at Forest Fields College. In 1970, he received the B. Litt. degree from Oxford University in contemporary philosophical theology.

Between 1951 and 1960, Dr. Vick published numerous articles in *The Bible and Our Times*, an evangelistic publication of Seventh-day Adventists in Great Britain. He also published many articles in *Insight*, a Seventh-day Adventist youth magazine, between 1970 and 1973. Among his scholarly publications are the following:

Articles:

"A Plea for Theological Seriousness, I," *The Ministry*, September, 1962, pp. 21-23.

"A Plea for Theological Seriousness, II," *The Ministry*, October, 1962, pp. 16-20.

"Resurrection or Immortality?" *The Ministry*, June, 1962, pp. 13, 14.

"A Definition of the Concept of Systematic Theology," *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters*, Vol. XI, 1966, pp. 471-483.

"John Wesley's Teaching Concerning Perfection," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 201-217.

"Faith and Evidence," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Vol. V, No. 2, pp. 181-199.

"Observations on the Adventism of Seventh-day Adventists," *The Stature of Christ*, book privately published by Gary Stanhiser and Vern Carner, Loma Linda, California, 1970, pp. 196-204.

"A Recent System of Theology," *The Modern Churchman*, June, 1971, pp. 244-258.

"Liberal and Radical Attitudes to Christianity," *The Modern Churchman*, July, 1972, pp. 224-235.

Books:

Theological Essays (duplicated), Michigan: Andrews University, 1965.

Let Me Assure You, Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1968.

Quest: An Exploration of Some Problems in Science and Religion, London: Epworth Press, 1975.

advance it. Of course, in real life there is almost no scholar who is exclusively one or the other. Historians do effectively advance the tradition, and biblical scholars do wonder what the text means now, while theologians do make historical judgments as well. The distinctions are conceptual, not personal.

Considered in the light of these distinctions, though, Edward Vick is a theologian, one of Adventism's first. It is intriguing to compare his development with that of the church's scholarship as a whole. His M.A. thesis,¹ written at the old Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Washington, was presented not to the department of theology, but to the department of biblical Greek. With the exception of one chapter, it is devoted to a word study of the biblical words for "power," especially in the expression "the power of God." It shows that when Vick turned to scholarship as a young man, he, like the church as a whole, began with an historical field, and with biblical studies in particular. But the motives that drove him were profoundly theological, as were the church's own.

A word study is an effort to trace the changing nuances of a word through the variety of its

"The *Essays* were a salvo fired in a deadly serious war. Vick saw theology and the theological seminary as beleaguered institutions in the Adventist church, in need of the most vigorous possible defense."

contexts. In biblical studies, this effort may lead one at a gallop through many centuries and many styles of literature, for the biblical documents exhibit no unity of period or genre, whatever one may say about their unity of doctrine. And if for comparative purposes one adds ancient, classical and Hellenistic usages of the biblical word, the situation becomes even more complex. In recent decades, doubts have arisen about the usefulness of the whole word-study technique, but we cannot hold Vick responsible for ignoring them. Understandably, word studies

seemed very promising to the Adventist biblical scholars who taught Vick (e.g., Lohsbe). The curriculum in "Bible" which Adventist schools had offered was rich in the approaches typified by Smith's *Daniel and the Revelation*,² in which biblical apocalyptic is laid alongside secular history, or by *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*,³ in which a fragment of the Bible is laid alongside another fragment on the same topic. In both cases, one ranges far and wide through the varied parts of Scripture, in a curious application of the maxim "Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little" (Isaiah 28:10, 13).

With this evangelistic background, Adventist seminary teachers came to the non-Adventist biblical scholarship of the period 1920-1960 and found a natural affinity with such works as Kittel's monumental *Theological Word Book of the New Testament*.⁴ These works, like the sermons of Adventist evangelists, moved freely among the different parts of the Bible in an effort to find *the* meaning of a word, or at least to catalogue the variety of its meanings. The use of the technique on the Greek or Hebrew word for "spirit," for example, might help to establish the Adventist position on the state of the dead. Or close attention to the expression "forever and ever" might demonstrate that the fires of hell will one day be quenched after all. So the word-study technique seemed to lend scholarly respectability to the concerns that already agitated Adventist scholars.

Adventist scholarship, then, was driven to biblical studies in the 1950s by motives that were at least doctrinal, even if they were not "theological" in the strict sense. Vick came to biblical studies for much the same reasons, but even his choice of a word to study set him apart from his teachers. In his master's thesis, he settled on the expression "the power of God," which in Hellenistic Greek serves as a technical term for a miracle, and he thereby took on one of the knottiest problems in the philosophy of religion since the rise of the modern natural sciences in the seventeenth century. Already, as a seminarian, he was concerned with modern problems that exceeded the boundaries of Adventism, problems shared by all Christians, which could not be solved by the normal Adventist

“Bible doctrines” approach. He was on his way to becoming a theologian.

Two-thirds of the thesis is devoted to a catalogue, in word-study fashion, of the uses of the expression “power” in the Old Testament, classical Greek and the Septuagint, and an analysis of its New Testament uses, with a passing glance at the terms for “sign” in the fourth Gospel. Yet Vick’s real aims are stated in the first paragraphs of the introduction. There he says that one of the purposes of the thesis is “. . .to demonstrate that a belief in miracles is not inconsistent with the demands of reason, but rather that it illuminates the meaning of the universe” (p. 1). The final chapter of the thesis, on “The Laws of Nature,” seeks to fulfill the philosophical promise stated here, that “the demands of reason” will be satisfied. It is perhaps too ambitious, but it is much the most interesting passage in the work. And it is theology.

By the time that Vick began teaching in the seminary, his interest in theology was mature. In a short book of *Theological Essays*,⁵ published in mimeographed form in 1965, he wrote the most passionately argued and best articulated apology for theological education ever offered by an Adventist. By “theological education” Vick meant ministerial training centered around systematic theology. The collection of *Essays* has two main goals, defending the seminary and defining systematic theology.⁶

As the next section will suggest, three of the articles in the book, taken together, are a good starting place for the general reader curious about theology. Though I suspect Vick has modified his views since he wrote them, the *Theological Essays* are still the best description by an Adventist of the craft of systematic theology.

For Vick, however, they were not simply an introduction to theology for the idly curious, but a salvo fired in a deadly serious war. He saw theology and the theological seminary as beleaguered institutions in the Adventist church (as indeed they still are), in need of the most vigorous possible defense. In the first of the *Essays*, “A Plea for Theological Seriousness” (reprinted from *Ministry*), and in the second, “Is the Theological Seminary Necessary?” (originally a sermon in seminary chapel), Vick reminds his readers that ignorance is not piety, that hard thinking is indispensable, that especially in the

pulpit the alternative to good theology is not no theology but bad theology, and that the world is changing. All obvious points, but unfortunately ones that needed to be made.

Vick evidently saw these papers and the rest of his work as an Adventist scholar and teacher as part of an important job in the church. He had great hopes for theology. Apart from taming the anti-intellectual excesses of his students, he hoped it would produce a greater coherence and power in Adventist preaching, provide a reasonable, integrated, satisfying set of motives for Adventist life, and generally result in better ministers, better Christians and better people.

Vick’s sustained interest in the coherence and integration of theology make him the most “systematic” theologian in the church. In the *Essays*, he not only defends the seminary but also defines what he thinks should be the center of its curriculum, namely, systematic theology. His view of the discipline owes a great deal to the speculative tradition in occidental philosophy.

From the time Aristotle discovered logic until the twentieth century, western philosophy has purported to offer descriptions of the world: value-neutral, general, true, interconnected propositions in the indicative. That is why, at the beginning of the modern period, philosophy could give birth to the various natural sciences, which are themselves systematic descriptions of aspects of the world. Philosophy might have come to resemble contrasting kinds of human discourse—poetry, laws, rituals, stories, grammar, prayers, riddles, or epigrams. Instead, it sets out to offer information.

The remarkable thing is that theology has also tried to offer a set of descriptions, but of a different range of objects, such as God, the universe as creation, human nature, angels, and the like, and from a different “source of knowledge,” revelation. In this context, the Bible is sometimes seen as a long but somewhat unsystematic string of true sentences, and inspiration as the divine guarantee that they are true. Then it is the business of theology to reorganize the information in Scripture, highlighting those features to which the age must attend. This is the vision of systematic theology which dominates in the systematics department at the seminary

today. While Vick's view is more subtle, even in his earlier works, and while his ideas on this point have changed dramatically judging by the most recent evidence, some such notion is present in the *Essays* as well.

The picture of theology which emerges from the articles on "Theological Methodology" and "A Definition of the Concept of Systematic Theology" has many of the systematic, indicative features of western philosophy. Here Vick defines systematic theology as "that genre of theological production which relates the data of the Christian theological tradition organically on a comprehensive scale, by means of isolable principles of unity" (p. 36). Among the criteria mentioned here or expanded elsewhere in the *Essays*, three in particular recall the speculative tradition in philosophy. The first criterion is completeness: "System is the comprehensiveness of organic unity" (p. 40). It is essential "to see the thing whole"; no Christian affirmation can be omitted from the system. Systematic theology is not a mere listing of the propositions, however, but a coordinated and interrelated set of propositions. So another criterion is unity, which is brought about by some principle which above all other features distinguishes theological systems from one another. The next is relevance (pp. 27-28); systematic theology relates the different aspects of the faith not only among themselves but also to the "whole of life," in a given historical situation. Thus far, the criteria resemble the familiar standards of speculative philosophy, such as clarity, adequacy and coherence.

A remaining criterion, orthodoxy, introduces the specifically Christian element in the enterprise. Vick's definition deals with "the data of the Christian theological tradition" and requires that they be related "organically," without heretical distortion. The norms which insure orthodoxy are the usual ones of Scripture, the Christian past and the judgment of the contemporary church (p. 27).

To date, Vick has written no systematic theology, so we cannot tell exactly how he would fulfill the programmatic prescriptions given in the *Essays*. His longest book, however, shows another side of his interest in systematic theology. It is not designed for an academic readership, but for ministers and educated laymen who want an

introduction to academic theology. The title, *Let Me Assure You*, with the subtitle, *Of Grace, of Forgiveness, of Freedom, of Fellowship, of Hope*,⁷ hints at some of the pastoral warmth of the book. Here is a man who believes that doctrinal theology has something comforting to say to ordinary people, and that high intellectual standards make it more comforting, not less. To my knowledge, it is the best book specifically designed to explain some of the classical categories and distinctions of systematic theology ever published by an Adventist press.

Vick does not try to cover all the divisions of the theological system, but limits his attention to "some of the essential themes of the church" (Introduction). In a gentle, plain-spoken way, he takes up the doctrines of grace, the atonement, the experience of salvation, the covenants and the law, the church, and last things, showing what differences alternative positions make in Christian life. The result is a pattern of exposition that falls strangely on ears unfamiliar with Christian instruction. This is writing situated within a coherent and almost clannish tradition. It is like a talmudic disputation; to an outsider, the style of argument and the choice of topics are curious, almost folkloric, while to an insider they are what matters most. Here, the distinctions invoked by medieval monks (pp. 42-43), the disputations of ancient councils (p. 40n), and the pamphlet wars of the sixteenth century (pp. 98-100) still rouse passions. Here, people struggle with guilt and grace and God, as they do everywhere, but here they call them "guilt" and "grace" and "God." And the search for an understanding of these things follows well-blazed trails; the author of *Let Me Assure You* is an independent thinker, but he is not an original one. The modern world need not be a partner in every conversation, however, and in other works Vick shows his ability to move in other than Christian circles.

Here his concerns are those of a Christian in Christendom. They are, first of all, the concerns of the Bible, which Vick approaches not in the familiar proof-text fashion but in a more agile and nuanced way. In this book, his treatment of Scripture still bears the marks of his old interest in biblical languages and word studies. He moves in circles around a topic: he approaches the experience of salvation, for example (ch. 3), by discussing a group of biblical words that cluster

about it—justification, faith (as assent and as trust), forgiveness, confession, restitution, conversion, regeneration—and by entering discussions and using contrasts first found in the Bible—faith and works, Paul and James, election and free will, divine grace and human effort.

Then there are the concerns of the Christian theological tradition, in which Vick is also conversant. The classical distinctions are drawn simply, and are sometimes footnoted (Arminianism and the later Calvinism, p. 58n), and sometimes invoked without attribution (the *assensus/fiducia* contrast, pp. 48-50). The author is obviously most at home in the Reformation traditions and, while he never flaunts his learning, he employs the categories and characteristic terms of Protestant and Anglican Christianity with skill, adroitly juxtaposing the various strands of Reformed theology. The chapter on the church, in particular, has a typically

“Vick is convinced that Christianity is worth taking seriously, and that unrelenting, patient thinking about it is richly repaid. This twin commitment to religion and rationality is a constant motif in his books.”

Protestant cast; and the very choice of the book’s topics recalls the lives of the Reformers.⁸

If there is any movement within Protestantism favored in *Let Me Assure You*, it is perhaps Methodism, with its warm concern for the subjective appropriation of grace. The lovely chapter on “The Experience of Salvation” is the longest in the book. This is one way in which Vick shows his sensitivity to his Adventist readership, for its piety and worship are very Wesleyan. There are also whole chapters (such as ch. 4, “The Covenants and the Law”) as well as occasional paragraphs (see p. 24, where the disagreement between Andreasson and the authors of *Questions on Doctrine* arises) in which Vick explicitly treats topics that have agitated Seventh-day Adventists.

On the whole, though, he pays little attention

in this book to modern intellectual currents or even to modern theology. With the exception of a few passages (pp. 20, 161n) and a short appendix (pp. 170-176) on the “historicity” of the Christian faith—a problem that did not arise in that form before the nineteenth century—most of the book uses categories that were well developed 200 years ago, by the time the revivalist and pietist movements were mature. A glance at the references (pp. 177-178) is instructive. In some ways, the positions which Vick stakes out within this circle are less interesting than the fact that he never leaves the circle.⁹

In a later article, however, Vick’s exacting attention to methodological questions results in some substantive positions that are extraordinary, though they are formulated with tantalizing brevity. The piece is entitled “Observations on the Adventism of Seventh-day Adventists.”¹⁰ The intention of the Seventh-day Adventist church, Vick writes at the end of the article, is “to represent adequately the apocalyptic interests of the biblical canon”; this constitutes “the distinctive contribution of Adventism to the Christian Church” (p. 204). Even in these short quotations, something striking has appeared. Vick sees Adventism within the context of the Christian Church. It is not identical with the Christian Church. While other Adventist teachers and preachers have felt that their primary loyalty was to the wider church and that their Adventist loyalties were intelligible only in the setting of the church as a whole, few have stated their position as directly as Vick does here; fewer still have worked out as consistently the implications of their larger loyalty. Because Adventism must be set in the context of Christian theology as a whole, biblical interpretation must be placed in the context of systematization of doctrine. Adventist preaching, especially evangelism, must proceed from its wider context in the life of a working and witnessing church.

Most striking of all, the predictive oracle heard in apocalyptic prophecy must be heard in the context of the history of the community, both the community which the prophet originally addressed and the community which interprets the prophecy now. And the history of the

community, finally, can be understood only by reference to its context, which is the salvation history of the whole world, a history centered in the story of Jesus Christ.

Vick knows that the results of such a theological program would be a radical recasting of traditional Adventism. In a new and wider context, familiar Adventist doctrines might take on a strange appearance. Many Adventist habits might need modification. All of Adventist life would be subjected to profound and renewing criticism. But the implication of Vick's suggestions is that the Gospel requires just such a critical renewal—the Gospel, not some other, “modern” message. It is not because Vick is embarrassed by an Adventism that is out of date that he suggests a revolution in its thinking, but because he fears for an Adventism that betrays its Lord by its cowardly and unreflective conservatism. His critique of Adventism is that it is not faithful enough to its own inner meaning, which is found not in its narrow little life and work, but in the richness of the larger church and, finally, in the richness of Jesus's life and death. By insisting on the larger context, he criticizes traditional Adventism on the basis of the truer Adventist tradition.

It would be fascinating to read some of Vick's specific proposals for the recasting of Adventist life and doctrine. In this article, he makes very few. One can imagine what some of his suggestions would be, but a book on the topic, by a thinker as orderly and meticulous as he is, would be welcome indeed.

Vick's latest book, *Quest*,¹¹ is on a quite different topic, but it too provides evidence of Vick's concern for the context of religious thought. *Quest* does not have the external form of a theological treatise, and its style is intentionally simple and “popular.” The book is an introductory textbook in the philosophy of religion. Its chapters are short, with discussion questions at the end of each. It is designed for a readership different from that of Vick's earlier books. Unlike *Let Me Assure You*, which moved in Christian circles and used classical Christian categories, *Quest* is a very modern book, written for nonspecialists who are largely ignorant of religious matters and who use popular misconceptions of science to justify their scorn for, or

indifference to, religion. The book is also helpful for religious people who feel threatened by modern science.

In the first half, Vick sets the stage for a “nonpartisan” discussion of religious questions by unraveling some misconceptions about science and religion, such as: “Science is based on facts, while religion is a matter of feeling,” and “Science proves things but religion doesn't,” and “Miracles are scientifically impossible.” He

“He suggests a revolution in the church's thinking because he fears for an Adventism that betrays its Lord by its cowardly and unreflective conservatism.”

does so by suggesting some distinctions among different ways of proving, by pointing out contrasts among kinds of explanation, by discussing the scientist's need for a theory at every stage of confrontation with the facts, and so on. Such considerations clear the air for Vick's treatment, in the last half of the book, of a series of concerns that characterize religion—creation, eschatology, revelation and faith.

In dealing with these topics, he never fails to insist on the differences between the concerns of a scientist and those of a religious believer. The contrast between the scientific context (the aims, interests and procedures of science) and the religious context results in different sets of contentions about the beginning of the universe, the possibility of miracles, the destiny of living things and the reasonableness of faith. In developing this contrast, Vick is trying to teach his readers a new idiom. His goal is not to persuade them of any particular religious assertion, but to help them see the force of all religious assertions. This understanding is blocked as long as the context of language is ignored, and as long as terms shared by religion and science (“the beginning of the world,” “death,” “laws,” “reasonable”) are assumed to be interchangeable. Vick is saying the two kinds of discourse are not

coordinate and, therefore, certain contradictions between them are impossible.

The technique Vick adopts here recalls the style of the analytic philosophers, especially the students of Ryle and Wittgenstein, who now dominate philosophy in British universities. It thus represents a break from the speculative, synthetic tradition which held sway over western philosophy before the twentieth century and over Vick's own earlier work. Instead of stating positions and interrelating assertions in the style of systematic philosophy, Vick now offers a series of *ad hoc* remarks designed to clear up a particular confusion, or to loosen the grip of a specific misunderstanding. Instead of seeking to answer all possible questions, he limits himself to the few questions that people actually raise. If religious discourse still remains coherent, he now seems to believe, it does so because of its connection with its own context, that is, with the coherent activity of religious people, not because its propositions are interconnected as premises and conclusions independently of religious life.

In adopting the approach of a group of philosophers who see philosophy as an activity rather than a set of conclusions or a body of metaphysical doctrine,¹² Vick shows his awareness of the central problem theology faces today. The problem is not that particular religious assertions are opposed as false, but that all religious language is dismissed as meaningless. Many moderns do not see the point of talking about God; such language has no sense to them; they do not see what use it has. To employ Langdon Gilkey's formula, the problem Chris-

tians and other religious people face today is not the problem of truth, but the problem of meaning.¹³ Vick's careful attempts in *Quest* to show what the force of religious language is and to train his readers in its use demonstrate his awareness of this problem.

In spite of this dramatic shift in approach, however, there are continuities between *Quest* and the earlier books. All of Vick's work illustrates his conviction that religion, and Christianity in particular, is worth taking seriously; and that unrelenting, patient thinking about it is richly repaid. This twin commitment to religion and to rationality is a constant motif in his books. The preoccupation with the relations between science and religion, evident in the last of the *Essays* and in the thesis on miracles, is present in *Quest* as well.¹⁴

If Edward Vick, who is not now teaching at an Adventist college, had received more sustained encouragement, he might have developed more fully some of the intriguing hints dropped in his published work and the Advent movement would undoubtedly have benefitted. As it is, perhaps, we may hope for more from his pen, and especially for works in which his extraordinary methodological suggestions are worked out to their substantive conclusions. If Adventist ministers, leaders and scholars were seriously to confront such a body of theological literature, agreeing where appropriate and disagreeing where necessary, but never relaxing the effort to understand these matters, the church could only be better for it.

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4. Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, tr. and ed. (9 vols.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964-1974). German original, 1933-1938.

5. *Theological Essays* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Theological Seminary, 1965).

6. Although the last essay aims at something else, namely, to trace part of the boundary between theology and the natural sciences.

7. (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1968).

8. Roman Catholic theology fares less well. On pp. 145-146 and especially pp. 98-100, Vick adopts without much examination a caricature of Catholic doctrines of grace. It was not the teaching of Thomas Aquinas that the natural virtues were for laymen and the theological virtues only for the clergy, nor that "one can never finally be sure of his salvation" (p. 98). It is also questionable whether "for the Catholic, justification is the goal, the end of a long process, impossible without the church," or whether the "treasury of merits" theory is

part of the authentic Catholic tradition (p. 99). Such descriptions of Catholicism pass along the partisan perceptions of the Reformers and their lesser followers, formed during the Renaissance, when (as even Catholic scholars now agree) the Catholic church was extremely corrupt and most church practices and much theory were neo-Pelagian. In those days, Thomas Aquinas was a revered but forgotten figure; Luther never read him much and misunderstood what he did read; it was not until the twentieth century that Aquinas was rescued from the Thomists. So to draw the picture of Catholicism that Vick draws and then to attribute it to Aquinas is to ignore the undeniable changes the church has undergone since the Renaissance, especially in our century, and to neglect the riches of the Catholic centuries before the Reformation, including the works of Aquinas himself. Even one's enemies deserve better.

On the virtues, see the *Summa theologiae*, 1a2ae.62; 2a2a3.1-46 and 55-70. On assurance of salvation, see 2a2ae.18.4, especially ad2. On justification and merit, see Otto Hermann Pesch, *Theologie der Rechtfertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas von Aquin: Versuch eines systematisch-theologischen Dialogs* (Mainz: Matthias-Grunewald-Verlag, 1967).

9. The discussion on p. 35 of the death of Jesus does seem to bear in mind the "Quest for the Historical Jesus," Schweitzer, Bultmann, and the New Quest; and

Vick is clearly well acquainted with twentieth-century theologians, especially Reformed and Anglican ones; but generally his categories are not modern.

10. In *The Stature of Christ: Essays in Honor of Edward Heppenstall*, Vern Carner and Gary Stanhiser, eds. (Loma Linda, 1970), pp. 196-204.

11. *Quest: An Exploration of Some Problems in Science and Religion* (London: Epworth Press, 1975).

12. Ludwig Wittgenstein would contrast "empirical" and "grammatical" remarks and claim that his philosophy consisted of the latter. This distinction, now common in British philosophy, is the one we wish to invoke. See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, G. E. M. Anscombe, tr. (3rd ed.; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), secs. 90, 251, and passim.

13. *Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), pp. 13-21 especially.

14. Here there is even (chs. 12 and 13, especially pp. 101, 105) a dependence on one of the great systematicians of our century, Paul Tillich, although Vick uses Tillich's analysis of religious symbols in an unsystematic (and to that extent, un-Tillichian) way. It serves to point out still another difference between scientific and religious language, rather than providing the beginnings of a general systematic theory of being.

A Bibliography of Recent Adventist Scholarship

by Betty Stirling

Faculty members in Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities often have large teaching loads, as well as heavy counseling and committee assignments. But many do conduct research and write reports, produce scholarly articles and books, or compose music. Usually, their respective institutions each year compile a report of such activities. But knowledge of what has been produced frequently stops with the academic dean's office. In an attempt to remedy this lack, we have prepared a list of various kinds of publications as they have been reported to the deans.

All of the Adventist colleges and universities in the North American Division were given an opportunity to contribute to this list, but some have not yet told us what their faculty members have accomplished. We hope to be able to include their work in a later list. We would also be happy to include items published by Seventh-day Adventist scholars who are employed in secular institutions, if any would care to tell us of their work. (Send information to Betty Stirling, General Conference Board of Higher Education, Takoma Park, Washington, D.C. 20012.)

Betty Stirling is director of research for the General Conference Board of Higher Education.

Theses and dissertations have not been included unless they have been published, nor have presentations at conventions unless they were included in a printed report.

Multiple authors have been a problem. We have tried to list the publication by the name of each author connected with the institution. Because of the nature of documentation on some of the institutional reports, it has been difficult to make sure that everyone has been included in our list, or that all documentation is complete. Listing under the name of each author makes our list rather long; we may decide on another way to handle the multiple-author publications in the future.

We have categorized the items by broad subject areas. However, we have not had access to the publications, so if anyone finds his publication in the wrong area, we are sorry.

This is a new kind of venture. To get the list before a wider audience, versions appear in both the *Journal of Adventist Education* and *SPECTRUM*. The *SPECTRUM* list is more selective, limiting entries to publications appearing after January 1, 1974, and to articles printed in academic and professional journals. Most of these are not Adventist journals, but some are, such as *Adventist Heritage*, *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, *Journal of Adventist Educa-*

tion, *Medical Arts and Sciences, The Ministry, Origins* and SPECTRUM.

We would be glad to have your comments on the list's value. We hope that annual publication of it will contribute to greater interaction within

the community of Adventist scholars and writers. If you are interested in a particular item but cannot locate it, or if you want further information or dialog, please contact the author of the item directly. The list includes his employing institution.

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Letters From Readers

To the editors: I don't know when I have appreciated reading anything more than "The Case for Renewal in Adventist Theology," by Charles Scriven, and "Can Intellectuals Be at Home in the Church?" by Alvin Kwiram (SPECTRUM, Vol. 8, No. 1). The subjects dealt with in these two articles, in my opinion, deserve careful consideration by Seventh-day Adventist leaders. Much concern has been expressed about revival and reformation. Surely a maturing theology, intellectual honesty and appreciation of fellow believers are essential to any anticipated renewal in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A. E. Randall
Columbia, Maryland

To the editors: I appreciate Alvin Kwiram's article "Can Intellectuals Be at Home in the Church?" (Vol. 8, No. 1), and especially so since I have been appointed chairman of a General Conference committee studying how to reach the educated. Obviously, in addition to trying to reach the educated, we must try to help educated persons already in the church to feel at home in it.

Dr. Kwiram's point about the necessity of developing ministers who understand and appreciate intellectuals is well taken. I believe the church is making progress in this area. As younger ministers who have received seminary training gain more experience and maturity, they will be pastors in major churches, which will help to meet this need.

I don't agree that ministers of an intellectual bent of mind are edged out of the church. I've known a number of ministers of this type who

are very much at home in and appreciated by the church. Ministers must realize, however, that many in their congregations do not have highly developed intellectual interests. As long as ministers carry a balanced program, providing for the needs of all the members of their congregations, those of them who have intellectual interests do not generally encounter problems from administrators. Dr. Kwiram's suggestion that we should publish more articles dealing with intellectual problems is a good one, but I do believe that such articles should not be published in our general church papers. Rather, they should be confined to those journals aimed directly toward the ministry or, as with SPECTRUM, to those persons with these types of concern.

Elsewhere in the same issue of SPECTRUM, Charles Scriven suggests that a wide discussion of various ideological and theological viewpoints among all the "priesthood of believers" would be helpful, and that bad ideas would "die a natural death and good ones be joyously embraced." This cannot be faulted ideologically, but in actual practice it has been proven that a great many people within the church are not able to handle a hodgepodge of conflicting ideas about religious matters without losing their faith. The church leadership has never stood in the way of this type of discussion in specialized publications. But the church has been counseled by Ellen White that our general church papers are not to be of this nature. (See *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 76.)

Our church leaders have tried to follow Ellen White's counsel; experience has shown that bad ideas do not always die a natural death, nor are good ones always "joyously embraced." This is due to the fact that not everyone has the train-

ing, the analytical judgment and the discretion to be able to differentiate between sound ideas and those that are not.

I believe that some special conferences of the type Dr. Kwiram suggested could be held with much profit. I suggest that such conferences be jointly sponsored by our church leaders and the Association of Adventist Forums.

Having expressed general agreement with Dr. Kwiram's article, I now mention an area of disagreement. I think it is simplistic to attribute the defection of intellectually minded Adventists to inhospitable church members or church leaders. While agreeing that the church has not provided adequate spiritual assistance to intellectually minded persons through specialized publications or its church services, yet other even more vital factors cause these people to drop out of the church.

An important one is that many of them do not understand the true nature of Christian religion, namely, that it is an experience of faith in God, an infinite being which the finite mind of man cannot fully understand. It is vital that teachers, ministers and persons of an intellectual frame of mind keep emphasizing this primary aspect of the Seventh-day Adventist faith, and thus help intellectuals to keep a balanced perspective—not turning away from seeking solutions to intellectual problems, but not attaching supreme importance to this, either.

It always concerns me to see so many of our intellectually minded youth in our institutions of higher education grow spiritually cold and eventually leave the church. In some way, we have not gotten across to them the idea of the primacy of faith, nor the fact that the Holy Spirit, who is the teacher of all truth, continues His process of enlightening our minds all through our lives. We haven't helped these young people to learn to live with ambiguity until further maturity will help them to solve some of their problems, or until they accept that there are issues so complex that the greatest human intellects are not able to solve them.

Let me say one last thing: it would also be helpful if intellectuals would accept that there are always reasons why the church takes certain positions. At times these reasons may be inadequate, but at least leaders who wrestle with problems and must make decisions do the best they can on the basis of the data that they can

obtain. Our intellectuals ought to follow the procedure of asking our leaders more frequently to clarify the bases on which decisions are made or policies formulated before they criticize them. Our leaders are much aware of their fallibility, and most of them are pleased to explain the basis upon which they work.

Richard Hammill
Washington, D.C.

Before his recent move to the General Conference, the author was president of Andrews University.

The Editors

To the editors: I wish to thank you for the article, "Can Intellectuals Be at Home in the Church?" by Alvin Kwiram. . . .

Ella M. Rydzewski
Mifflintown, Pennsylvania

To the editors: I am a new reader of SPECTRUM and want you to know that your magazine has been, to me, a breath of fresh air. I have had many frustrations as of late concerning my membership in the Seventh-day Adventist church. The approach that SPECTRUM is taking in dealing so openly with the issues that really matter is very helpful to me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I would also like to take this opportunity to respond to the article (Vol. 8, No. 1) by Alvin Kwiram concerning intellectuals and the church. Specifically, I have some suggestions for consideration in a program for reaching out to the secular intellectual.

I agree that the most responsive intellectual audience will most likely be the university student. It has been about three years since I was a student on a state campus and about six years since I was such a student as a non-Christian. I would encourage an outreach using such programs as vegetarianism, Christian meditation, etc., as mentioned by Dr. Kwiram, but be sure to keep in mind that these "veiled" programs appeal to only a portion of the university audience. For many thinking students, the integrity of the direct Christian approach will do much more than any round-about method we may contrive. However, when I say "direct," I mean

something much different from our usual evangelical tactics. These students don't want more theoretical information. They want a challenge. They want something that will make a fundamental difference in their outlook on reality. For this reason, I suggest also a well-understood philosophical discussion of the basic tenets of Christianity. This kind of openness will appeal to many that the more "trendy" programs will not, and vice versa.

Jon Jackson
Grand Terrace, California

To the editors: This is to express my appreciation for Charles Scriven's article in the current issue of SPECTRUM (Vol. 8, No. 1), "The Case for Renewal in Adventist Theology." To one who believes in "*ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*"—the church reformed and always reforming—the article comes as a refreshing drink of cool water.

I sincerely hope we will take seriously Abraham Joshua Heschel's words to "learn to communicate it (our message) with greater sophistication so that it will be taken seriously." We have had much experience in the "traditional evangelistic" line. Perhaps the time is ripe to experiment with others to appeal to and attract with a "sophisticated message" both the intellectual and the wealthy. Hopefully, we are mature enough in the church to allow things heretofore termed "radical" to be tried, carefully bearing in mind that yesterday's radicals are tomorrow's heroes.

I thoroughly enjoy and read each issue of SPECTRUM. I cannot agree with all, yet appreciate the role you play in our church.

Wesley E. Amundson
Southeast Asia Adventist Seminary
Singapore

To the editors: The clarity and thoroughness with which the author addressed himself to some current issues in Adventist theology in "The Case for Renewal in Adventist Theology" has been gratifying.

One question regarding the first of the Notes and References: Is the reference to an article-editorial by Kenneth Wood in the July 1, 1971 *Review*, instead of 1972?

Lanny L. Collins
Home Study Institute
Washington, D.C.

The writer has correctly noted a misprint. The article did appear in 1971.

The Editors

To the editors: I would like to express my agreement with the views set forth by William G. Johnson in his article "The Mythos of the Mission Story" (Vol. 8, No. 1). Too often the mission stories are written for the primary purpose of entertainment, emphasizing the exotic, the shocking and the miraculous. While such stories may hold the attention of audiences, they do little to acquaint the local members with the genuine need for mission funds or the use of such funds.

I would especially like to emphasize Mr. Johnson's point about the role of the missionary. More attention should be focused on the nationals and their activities. Our church needs to dispel the stereotype of foreign missionaries as being synonymous with missions and mission work. Certainly, true success in mission work is measured by the phasing out of missionaries and the increased use of national or native workers.

Rudy A. Bata, Jr.
Rocky Mount, North Carolina

