

## **A Response to Reinder Bruinsma's article: Conspiracies – so often believed, so rarely based in fact Published in the Adventist Review** (<http://www.adventistreview.org/issue.php?issue=2009-1525&page=27>)

**By Walter J. Veith**

Recently, Reinder Bruinsma published an article in the *Adventist Review* where he castigated an Adventist lecturer who had recently visited his native Holland with regard to his emphasis on “conspiracy theories.” He states in his article:

My country not long ago had the misfortune to have been visited by an Adventist lecturer who travels the world and gets himself invited to all continents to preach about the events that lead to the end of time. His approach resembles that of best-selling author Dan Brown. The recipe seems to be: You take a few undisputed facts; you then add a large number of unknown facts that are extracted from obscure sources no one can check, and which are at most only partly true; and you mix all this until you have a powerful concoction for the sensation-hungry consumer. It seems to enhance the attractiveness of the resulting product when the speaker assures his audience that the official church, with its ecumenical tendencies, neglects to proclaim these precious truths. And no wonder, for the church has been infiltrated by the very same forces of darkness that he has come to expose!

The recipe is as successful as it is dangerous. It results in fear. It polarizes churches. It cultivates suspicion to church leadership. It fuels that prejudice in the mind of many around us that Adventism, after all, is a sub-Christian sect. But, most serious of all, it eclipses the good news of the message of the Gospel by irresponsible innuendos and speculation and by an unhealthy sensationalism. It was good to see how the Week of Prayer readings of 2008 sounded a clear warning against this approach and highlighted the signs of Christ's coming as signs of hope! The message of the Advent hope is not to be correlated with theories about secret religious societies and the apparently omnipresent Freemasons. The greatest sign of the end is not the spread of New Age thinking or the alleged development of some form of world government but is instead the powerful preaching of the message of Christ's soon coming to every nation and people group, and in every language spoken on earth.<sup>1</sup>

Since this article appeared in the *Review* I have received a flood of letters from concerned people who are convinced that Bruinsma was apparently referring to me in this article and as a consequence a flood of “conspiracy theories” regarding the Church, were spawned. Now it is true that I recently visited the Netherlands as an invited speaker, but unless there is some unfortunate misinformation he could not possibly have been referring to me (or could he have?) for the following reasons.

1. I never solicit invitations, so the speaker in question cannot be me because he states that the speaker in question “gets himself invited.”
2. I do not deal in sensationalism but rather in facts and history which are well grounded in the literature and media of the day as well as being substantiated by the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.
3. My sources are not “obscure” but very prominent and anyone can check them.
4. I have shown in my lectures that the ecumenical movement is not from God and have consistently warned against involvement in this movement but I have never spoken about SDA involvement in this movement. Moreover, I have never turned my weapons against the Church militant in any public lecture or forum and have consistently warned against such actions. Nor have I ever suggested a Jesuit or “secret society membership” hunt amongst the Church leaders. His statement, “the speaker assures his audience that the official church, with its ecumenical tendencies, neglects to proclaim these precious truths. And no wonder, for the church has been infiltrated by the very same forces of darkness that he has come to expose!” can therefore not refer to me, as I have never made such suggestions in any of my series. Also, I certainly do not neglect the precious truths of salvation but on the contrary contrast truth and error, thus bringing people to a decision to follow truth rather than error.
5. In my recent visit to Holland I spoke on the necessity of [Rekindling the Reformation](#). There were no lectures on secret societies, Freemasons or the New Age movement, so unless he got his lines crossed he could not possibly have been referring to me.

Some of the responses I received showed genuine concern for the state of the Church and the apparent divide between those who wish to stick to the traditional values of Adventism and those who wish to introduce a new Gospel of social responsibility and religious détente rather than the preaching of the Three Angels’ Messages. Some responses and information received were extremely critical of the author of the *Review* article himself, even to the point of suggesting infiltration of the Church.

Sadly, it is true that Bruinsma is known for his anti—traditionalist views and has published articles which are extremely disturbing to those who hold to the pillars of Adventism. Some have spawned documents against him accusing him of outside affiliations, but I would wish to warn against such hasty conclusions that could start a witch hunt within the Church. It is not our task to label anyone a Jesuit or an infiltrator within the Church. Our task is to preach the Three Angels’ Messages and we are to allow “nothing else to occupy our attention.” Sometimes it is necessary to address issues placed in the public realm, as in this instance, but we should not allow ourselves the luxury of wallowing in the controversy raging within the Church.

This Church belongs to Christ and it is He who reads the heart, not us. It is He who will spew out those who are not His; we are not to do the spewing. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the

apple of His eye and we are not to equate it with Babylon no matter how many apostate or deceived members there may be in it. We cannot discern the heart; how are we to judge who is Aaron and who is Caiaphas? We can rebuke the deeds but we may not rebuke the person, let us leave that to the Lord.

Often those with phobias with regard to the “separate” nature of Adventism are born and bred Adventists who feel isolated in this cocoon of safety. In this regard there is something which I tend to call the “blessed curse” of being born an Adventist. What a privilege to be born into the Adventist Church, to grow up with Adventist values and doctrines, to have Adventist families and friends to nurture and sustain you, and to be privileged from childhood to benefit from the Adventist lifestyle. But sometimes it can be such a curse as well. You were born with it, it cost you nothing. No wrenching of family ties, no rejection by lifelong friends, no alienation from the religious environment in which you were raised, no drastic change of mindset and lifestyle—you were spared this pain. The price is high, it costs all you have and it is precious to find Christ and His truth. Even born Adventists have to find this treasure for themselves. It is not inherited; only the nurturing environment is inherited.

Moreover, you want to shout it from the rooftop and warn those still steeped in Babylon to step over from the other side. We are driven, called to make the differences between Babylon and the Truth prominent so as to compel people to come in. Babylon must be exposed and the doctrinal errors of the Babylonian wine must be illuminated so as to wrench the people from its intoxicating power. In doing this, however, we should not confuse the people with the structures. There are beautiful children of God in every church and religion but God is calling them out and those that hear His voice will respond.

Many born Adventists feel uncomfortable when the doctrinal issues that separate Babylon from the truth are made prominent. Why not just preach Jesus? Why not by example draw people to Jesus? Don't all Christian churches preach Jesus? Why should I change my denomination when someone preaches Jesus? If following exemplary individuals is the criterion, then we can emulate any philanthropist and it would not make any difference whether we became Catholics (the faith into which I was born) or not. I became a Seventh-day Adventist because of doctrine. Doctrine did not save me, Jesus did that, but without doctrine I would not have known which Jesus I was following for “there are many false Christs” out there. Dear born Adventists, “take heed to the doctrine” and don't be ashamed of who you are. Don't feel uncomfortable when doctrine is being preached—it's not for you; you already know it, it's for them. They need it, not you, for you already have it. Doctrine is the cleaver to cleave them out of the world and bring them into His wonderful light.

What about the poor atheists out there (of which I was one) who publicly disown God and despise Jesus Christ and Christians as weak, snivelling crutch—seekers? These atheists will say the Bible is a myth, a fairy tale written by ignorant primitives of Stone Age ilk. What answer will you give them; will you preach the love of Jesus when they despise Him? No, you will preach prophecy—good solid prophecy from Daniel and Revelation—and pull the rug of their confidence out from underneath them. Make them wonder if there is a God after all, then

preach Jesus. Dear born Adventist, don't be ashamed of prophecy that sets you apart from the world. It is the only tool in your toolbox left to you to reach the atheists who often became atheists (as in my case) because of being fed Babylonian wine which destroyed faith in God in the first place. There are different methods for different people. Some accept the Gospel readily and others are of a sceptical nature and need more proof. We read this in the Spirit of Prophecy:

In the cities of today, where there is so much to attract and please, the people can be interested by no ordinary efforts. Ministers of God's appointment will find it necessary to put forth extraordinary efforts in order to arrest the attention of the multitudes. And when they succeed in bringing together a large number of people, they must bear messages of a character so out of the usual order that the people will be aroused and warned. They must make use of every means that can possibly be devised for causing the truth to stand out clearly and distinctly.—“ Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 109. (1909) {Ev 122.3}

As an evangelist, it is my duty to call people out of Babylon into the ranks of Christ's bride. In this time in which we are living this question is being asked more and more: Why should I come out of Babylon and join the Adventist Church when there are members and leaders within the Adventist Church (Reinder Bruinsma being a case in point), who subscribe to the principles of the ecumenical movement and encourage liaison with Rome?

Am I being judgmental here or vindictive? No, I am merely basing my judgment on his actions and from what has proceeded out of his pen. I am not judging his heart, his motives or his affiliations—that is not my prerogative—but I do have to defend my Church and explain to those that have entered the fold, or are considering entering the fold, why it is essential that they enter and stay put and “be separate” in spite of those who would seem to preach the opposite. If issues such as these are placed in the public domain then they must receive a public response lest it be conceived that we condone them.

Reinder Bruinsma was executive secretary of the Trans-European Division from 1995—2001 and succeeded Henk Koning as Union President of the Netherlands Union. Henk Koning was president of the Netherlands Union Conference when he signed the *Charta Oecumenica* on the 18th of January 2002. Such signing can not be done in a personal capacity, as churches and not individuals are party to the ecumenical movement. Whether Bruinsma was party to the signing or not is not known by me, but by his silence he condoned it and he certainly did not rescind it on becoming Union president himself. Reinder Bruinsma has made his views on relations with the Roman Catholic Church and the traditional view of the Adventist Church, inclusive of the Spirit of Prophecy, very clear even in his doctoral thesis *A Historical Analysis of Seventh-day Adventist Attitudes toward Roman Catholicism* (University of London, 1993), which was also published by Andrews University Press in 1995 as *Adventist Attitudes toward Roman Catholicism 1844—1865*.

He also attacked the SDA position on the Papacy being Antichrist in his *Spectrum* article of summer 1999. This position is by no means unique amongst Adventist leaders, as many have

told me personally that that position is archaic and in need of revision irrespective of the clear Spirit of Prophecy statements in this regard. In fact, some argue that it is not part of our fundamental beliefs and therefore should not be preached. However, the Spirit of Prophecy is part of our fundamental beliefs and because it is clearly stated there, it *ipso facto* becomes part of our fundamental beliefs whether we like it or not.

Bruinsma summarizes the anti-papal eschatological views of the Protestant world in the time of the rise of Adventism in his thesis in the chapter titled “Adventists and Catholics—Prophetic Insight or Prejudice.” He correctly emphasizes that the Protestant view included the eschatological view that Rome would somehow dominate the world stage again and seek to dominate the New World. Adventism arose in this climate and the pioneers had the same basic prophetic view as prevalent in the general Protestant denominations of that time. He then proceeds to place the writings of Ellen White into this historic time frame lamenting that this placed these anti papal views into the prophetic framework of the Spirit of Prophecy. This would make it harder for Adventists who believe in the prophetic writings of Ellen White to rid themselves of this bias.

Such marginalization of the writings of Ellen White is typical of some of our modern theologians. The dilemma is that we cannot get rid of the Spirit Prophecy as it is entrenched in our fundamental beliefs. So, the next best thing is to make it of non-effect. We hear more and more that her writings cannot be placed on an equal footing with that of the canonical prophets, that her writings have a homiletic flavor but cannot be used for exegesis, that her writings must be interpreted in the framework of her time, and her personal views and prophetic utterances are so intermingled that her writings should perhaps best be used as devotionals rather than a basis for prophetic interpretation. As one of our German theologians and leaders stated it: “We cannot be dictated to by a woman with only three years of education.”

Bruinsma concludes his chapter with the following statements:

Although there are many aspects in Roman-Catholic teaching and practice with which Adventists must strongly disagree, honesty demands that they acknowledge that in recent decades, in most places of the world Roman—Catholicism has changed in ways that they must regard as positive. Catholics are now not only allowed to read their Bible but are urged to do so. There is much spirituality in the Roman-Catholic Church of which Protestants can be envious. The Catholic Church has formally accepted the principle of religious freedom. It is not fair to suggest that these and other positive developments in the Roman-Catholic Church are just window dressing and must in fact be watched with suspicion, and be seen as clever tactics to lull other Christians into sleep, while all the time they are just waiting for the fortuitous moment when they will be able to wipe out other Christians, Adventists first and foremost! In their criticism of the Catholic history, Adventists should try to be more balanced than they have often been and should do better than simply offering an extension of the often rather biased and inaccurate picture that many Protestants in past centuries have held of the medieval church. Medieval Christianity also had its positive and beautiful sides! Moreover, Adventists must be willing to acknowledge that modern Catholicism has changed in many ways. It bothers

me, in particular, to see how Adventist publications today still refer mainly to nineteenth century sources in their description of Catholic views and intentions. How would Adventists feel if people around them were to base their opinions of Adventism exclusively on sources of more than century ago? Dealing with this issue will, no doubt, be difficult and will take time. Anti-Catholicism is so ingrained in the Adventist world view that change will not come easy, even if the church's administrators and other thought leaders were to agree that a re-orientation would be desirable. But in the meantime, the church could at the very least decide to be less biased in its descriptions of present-day Catholicism.



I wonder what these positive and beautiful sides of Medieval Christianity were that even history labeled The Dark Ages. If God had not cut this time short for the sake of the elect, nothing would have remained of the cause of Christ that could have been salvaged. Should Adventists acknowledge that modern Catholicism has changed; and what are these nineteenth century sources that contradict his statement? None other than the Spirit of Prophecy which stand as a monumental rebuke to the sentiments expressed. The following statements from the pen of inspiration will illustrate this point:

Popery is just what prophecy declared that she would be, the apostasy of the latter times. [2 THESS. 2:3, 4.] It is a part of her policy to assume the character which will best accomplish her purpose; but beneath the variable appearance of the chameleon, she conceals the invariable venom of the serpent. "We are not bound to keep faith and promises to heretics," She declares. Shall this power, whose record for a thousand years is written in the blood of the saints, be now acknowledged as a part of the church of Christ? (GC88, 571.1)



The church that holds to the word of God is irreconcilably separated from Rome. Protestants were once thus apart from this great church of apostasy, but they have approached more nearly to her, and are still in the path of reconciliation to the Church of Rome. Rome never changes. Her principles have not altered in the least. She has not lessened the breach between herself and Protestants; they have done all the advancing. But what does this argue for the Protestantism of this day? It is the rejection of Bible truth which makes men approach to infidelity. It is a backsliding church that lessens the distance between itself and the Papacy. {ST, February 19, 1894 par. 4} And this is the religion which Protestants are beginning to look upon with so much favor, and which will eventually be united with Protestantism.

This union will not, however, be effected by a change in Catholicism; for Rome never changes. She claims infallibility. It is Protestantism that will change. The adoption of liberal ideas on its part will bring it where it can clasp the hand of Catholicism (RH, June 1, 1886 par. 13).

On Wednesday, October 21, 2009 a member of the Seventh—day Adventist Church in the Netherlands published an article in the Dutch newspaper the *Nederlands Dagblad* in which he exposed the Pope as the Antichrist of Revelation 13. In this article he quoted from an old book by Edmund Dörschler which was published by Seventh-day Adventists in 1931.

On Thursday, October 22, 2009, Dr. Reinder Bruinsma responded to the article in the *Nederlands Dagblad* of October 21, 2009, apologizing for that article and, after pointing out that the source material originated from the previous century he assured the public that Adventists no longer believe this. His exact words in Dutch were as follows:

"Ik vrees dat nogal wat lezers gemakkelijk kunnen denken dat de sfeer van dit artikel ook nu nog op deze kerk van toepassing zal zijn. In Nederland onderhoudt deze protestantse kerk echter goede contacten met andere christelijke kerken." -Dr. Reinder Bruinsma.

The English translation reads like this:

"I fear that a large number of readers comfortably may think that the sphere of the article is even now still applicable upon this church [modern Dutch SDA Church]. In the Netherlands this Protestant Church, however, keeps good contacts with other Christian churches" -Dr. Reinder Bruinsma

Now if Bruinsma had apologized for the way in which the message was transmitted, that would have been one thing. But to apologize for the veracity of the message is tantamount to treason. It violates not only sound Biblical exegesis and the Spirit of Prophecy, but also goes against the consistent beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, let alone the blood of saints and martyrs who died upholding this truth.

Called to Expose Man of Sin.--In the very time in which we live the Lord has called His people and has given them a message to bear. He has called them to expose the wickedness of the man of sin who has made the Sunday law a distinctive power, who has thought to change times and laws, and to oppress the people of God who stand firmly to honor Him by keeping the only true Sabbath, the Sabbath of creation, as holy unto the Lord. --Testimonies to Ministers, p. 118. (1903) (Ev 233.2).

We are to give to the people the warnings contained in Revelation. But many workers are engaged in a line of work that is disqualifying them to preach the word and do the very work God has appointed them to do. The truth in regard to the Sabbath of the Lord is to be proclaimed. The seventh-day is to be shown to be the seal of the living God. People are to be shown what they may expect from the papal power. The time has come when the Protestant churches are reaching out to grasp the hand of the power that has made void the law of God...[Here follows lengthy quotations from Revelation 18 and brief comments.] This is the message Satan would have silenced (4MR 426.1).

Her writings on secret societies and their involvement in final events are equally clear:

This terrible picture, drawn by John to show how completely the powers of earth will give themselves over to evil, should show those who have received the truth how dangerous it is to link up with secret societies or to join themselves in any way with those who do not keep God's commandments (14MR, 152.2).

There are those who question whether it is right for Christians to belong to the Free Masons and other secret societies. Let all such consider the scriptures just quoted. If we are Christians at all, we must be Christians everywhere, and must consider and heed the counsel given to make us Christians according to the standard of God's Word (Ev 618.1).

The picture drawn by John must refer to the book of Revelation and according to this statement, secret societies will play an integral role in end-time events. Particularly the Freemasons are deemed worthy of special mention. It seems devious to me to put anyone who fits modern events into the framework of Adventist eschatology into the convenient drawer of "conspiracy theorist," comparing them with Dan Brown or others of similar sentiment. There is a vast difference between a conspiracy theorist and the Protestant heritage of sound Biblical interpretation—and in the case of Adventists the added inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy. What a blatant disregard for not only Biblical prophecy, but the Spirit of Prophecy as well, let alone our Protestant heritage. I remember well my baptismal vows which included the belief in the Spirit of Prophecy, which these modern exegetes will sacrifice for a brief moment of papal recognition. It is hard for me to understand how anyone can be so steeped in ostrich theology that they can even assume that the modern Papacy has changed. Don't her present writings condemn her even more than her pompous medieval utterances?

*Zenit News* published an article on March 8, 2007 on Pope Benedict's speech on papal primacy, entitled "The World Seen From Rome—Benedict XVI Highlights 1st Century Papal Primacy Begins Audience Series on Apostolic Fathers":

Already in the first century, popes exercised their primacy over the other Churches, Benedict XVI says. The Holy Father explained this on Wednesday at the general audience, which he dedicated to Pope St. Clement of Rome, the third successor of Peter. St. Clement's letter clarifies the distinction between hierarchy and laity.

The clear distinction between the 'lay people' and the hierarchy does not mean, in any way, a contraposition but only the organic connection of a body, of an organism with different functions," Benedict XVI explained. "In fact, the Church is not a place for confusion and anarchy, where someone can do whatever he wants at any time; each one in this organism with an articulated structure practices his ministry according to the vocation received. "As pertains to the heads of the communities, Clement specifies clearly the doctrine of apostolic succession.

Benedict XVI added: "The laws that regulate this derive from God himself in an ultimate analysis. The Father sent Jesus Christ, who in turn sent the apostles. These then sent out the first heads of the communities, and established that they would be followed by worthy men."



"The Church is above all a gift of God and not a creature of ours," the Pope contended, "and therefore this sacramental structure not only guarantees the common order but also the precedence of the gift of God that we all need."<sup>ii</sup>

The acceptance of papal primacy is thus according to the present Pope a "sacramental structure," which in Catholic thinking makes it a salvation issue. This is not a nineteenth century obscure quote, but demonstrates clearly that Rome has not changed. Accepting Jesus is a salvation issue—not accepting an earthly imposter who takes upon himself the prerogatives of Christ. Benedict also elevates the clergy and assigns it a mediatorial role just as the medieval Church did. The Vatican web page (I hope this is not considered an obscure source) says this:

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO MEMBERS OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF PORTUGAL ON THEIR "AD LIMINA" VISIT. Consistory Hall Saturday, 10 November 2007

It is a great joy for me to receive you today in the House of Peter, who by the grace of God are solid pillars of that bridge which you are called to be and to create between humanity and its supreme destiny, the Most Holy Trinity. "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2: 20). A concrete sign of this incarnation is the pouring out of Christ's life which flows forth from me into the lives of others. This is because, "I cannot possess Christ just for myself; I can belong to him only in union with all those who have become, or who will become, his own.... We become 'one body', completely joined in a single existence" (Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, n. 14). This "body" of Christ that embraces the humanity of all times and places is the Church.<sup>iii</sup>

Such ecclesiastical superiority assigned to the clergy and to the Pope himself is contrary to the plainest Bible utterances and deserves the same rebuke that Christ uttered regarding the Pharisees.

Malachi Martin also maintains that the pontiff "is the sole living representative of God among men; is endowed with absolute authority to teach God's salvation as revealed through his son, Jesus Christ, who was and is God himself made man... Catholic teaching holds that any Roman Catholic, any non-Catholic Christian, or any non-Christian of whatever other religion who receives God's salvation receives it through the spiritual office of that one man in Rome and the merits of his Church of believers." On 5 September 2000, the Vatican restated this doctrine under the title *Dominus Jesus* ( Malachi Martin, *Rich Church, Poor Church* (New York: Putnam's, 1984)

...McGuire's Catechism puts it: "Bishops and priests of the Church are called 'other Christs.' They alone have the power to represent or to take the place of Christ, in preaching His Gospel and in offering His sacrifice for the glory of God and the salvation of men."<sup>iv</sup>

Through his ordination, a priest is supposed to receive “special supernatural powers,” particularly “to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and to forgive sins in the sacrament of Penance”<sup>v</sup>

The present Pope has stated categorically that the ecumenical process is to be regarded as irreversible and the signing of the *Charta Oecumenica* by most protestant churches is indicative of the decay which has set in amidst Protestantism. The Charta is an agreement entered into by the Catholic Council of European Bishops’ Conference (CCEE) and the Conference of European Churches (CEC), the Protestant alliance of Europe. This document acknowledges apostolic succession, guarantees that there will be no proselytising, and changes the Gospel message from salvation in Christ to a social Gospel of securing human rights for all. Moreover, it advocates a common Eucharist and recognition of all baptismal rites as practiced in the various churches. John Rogers, who had been an associate of Tyndale and Coverdale in the translation of the Scriptures into English, was led to the stake at Smithfield on February 4th, 1555. His crime was the denial of transubstantiation. It is unthinkable that an Adventist could have signed this document. Moreover the very CEC that went into agreement with the Papacy is now campaigning for Sunday legislation in Europe; this comes directly from their own web page, not some obscure source.

They are campaigning for Sunday legislation and motivating their stand with the European parliament as to “Why Sunday should be included as a weekly rest day in the revised Working Time Directive.” They argue this:

1. More than any other day of the week a free Sunday offers the opportunity to meet one’s family.
2. More than any other day of the week a free Sunday offers the opportunity to meet friends, to establish and maintain social ties.
3. More than any other day of the week a free Sunday offers workers the opportunity to pursue their spiritual needs.
4. According to a EUROFOUND survey, the likelihood of sickness and absenteeism problems in establishments that work on Saturdays and Sundays is 1.3 times greater compared to establishments that do not require staff to work on the weekend. Moreover, the inclusion of Sunday, as a weekly rest day, in the revised Working Time Directive would, finally, strengthen the idea of a Europe of citizens, since a large majority of Europeans back the idea of a free Sunday. It would therefore be a concrete example of how the EU can make a tangible contribution to the quality of life of citizens.<sup>vi</sup>

This is precisely what the Spirit of Prophecy predicted (conspiracy or no conspiracy), and demonstrates precisely why we should not be involved with those that war against the law of God. If that means exclusivity then so be it, because the directive is not of human devising. Even among the other Protestant churches there are still powerful voices of leaders who stand like the needle to the pole. These bright lights amongst these churches will yet take their stand

under the blood stained banner of Prince Emmanuel. In 1988, the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland's Clerk to the Synod, Reverend Donald MacLean's comment in his letter to The Times stated this:

The Ecumenical movement which you praise is the greatest disaster to affect the Christian church this century. It has reduced the professing churches of this country to a collection of bloodless, spineless and boneless organizations, which can hardly raise a whimper on the side of Christ and His Truth. Small wonder that evil progresses as it does, and spiritual darkness becomes more intense as the years go by. You appear to regard a body of professing Christians, of sober conduct, and deep spirituality of mind, as fanatical and bigoted. If this be so then the eminent men of God, such as John Knox in Scotland, John Calvin and Martin Luther on the Continent, and Archbishop Cranmer in England were bigots in their contests with the errors of Popery. We are glad to be in such company.<sup>vii</sup>

What an indictment to Adventists who wish to tow the ecumenical line. I have never before discussed our Church's ecumenical relations, but in view of the nature of current circumstances and my duty as evangelist toward those who are contemplating membership in the SDA family, the time has, it seems, come to clarify a few issues. Are we as a Church involved in ecumenical relations? The answer is obviously yes. In Germany the Seventh—day Adventist Church is affiliated with the ACK and there is ample evidence elsewhere that our church is more involved than we might wish to think. Let there be Light Ministries has distributed a booklet entitled *The World Council of Churches and the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, which saw its first printing in 1996. I certainly do not support organizations that have nothing better to do than criticize the Church, but sometimes they do have a point, it's what they do with it that's problematic. The evidence presented is compelling, but sadly they then reach the conclusion that the SDA Church is fallen and has thus become part of Babylon. They quote the following Spirit of Prophecy statement where Ellen White warns that we could become a sister to Babylon:

We must as a people arouse and cleanse the camp of Israel. Licentiousness, unlawful intimacy, and unholy practices are coming in among us in a large degree; and ministers who are handling sacred things are guilty of sin in this respect. They are coveting their neighbors' wives, and the seventh commandment is broken. We are in danger of becoming a sister to fallen Babylon, of allowing our churches to become corrupted, and filled with every foul spirit, a cage for every unclean and hateful bird; and will we be clear unless we make decided movements to cure the existing evil (21MR, 380.1).

However, Ellen White also states this:

I do not doubt your sincerity or honesty. I have written long letters at different times to those who were accusing the church of Seventh-day Adventists of being Babylon, that they were not handling the truth. You think individuals have prejudiced my mind. If I am in this state, I am not fitted to be entrusted with the work of God. But this matter has been brought before my mind in other cases where individuals have claimed to have messages for the Seventh-day Adventist

Church, of a similar character, and the word has been given me, "Believe them not." "I have not sent them, and yet they ran (2SM, 63.3).

Our Church is unique amongst all the churches in the world and God has seen to it that our structures would be thus organized that we would not become part of Babylon, even if a whole host of leaders were to apostatize and join the ranks of the enemy in trampling upon the precepts of God. Our Church is not run by a synod or a college of cardinals, but we have a bottom—up structure which means that doctrinal changes have to be voted by the worldwide Church delegates at General Conference sessions. If individuals sign the *Charta Oecumenica*, or even whole divisions for that matter, that does not make the SDA Church apostate, it makes those individuals apostate. The same applies to any other Church doctrine. God has blessed this Church with wonderful leaders and there are still seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal. Amidst the greatest apostasy the light of these representatives of God will shine ever more brightly. A few illustrations might be in order here.

I was privileged to be part of the General Conference faith and science meetings to discuss the relevance of the six-day Creation in our modern world with its evolutionary bias. I was shocked and others were literally moved to tears to witness the level of unbelief that was often displayed by many of our leading lights. The representatives from some of our divisions produced reports that would have made our pioneers spin in their graves if they were not sleeping. Others, however, more than eclipsed these negative sentiments and I was so proud to read the report of my division to the full house of delegates confirming every pillar of our faith. I realized then that God is still ultimately in charge of His Church.

In another instance I was a camp meeting speaker at a major European camp meeting where the youth meeting resembled a heavy metal rock concert more than a religious meeting. One day I was standing outside the hall where the youth was gathering and a young West Indian man was standing outside the door. I asked him why he was standing there and he answered that his friends were inside. I asked him above the din why he was not also with his friends, and he answered that his Jesus was not in there and so he did not feel free to join them. I was amazed and a flood of pride for this young man filled my heart. We sat down and talked and as we talked, more and more young people joined us. What a wonderful experience. There is hope for our Church and the youth is going to play a great part in finishing the work. The pressure to conform to worldly standards is great and even Union Presidents have to take the brunt when they stand for principle. I have met and spoken with many of them and am proud to be a Seventh-day Adventist minister even in these terrible times in which we are living. We need not despair, God is in control and He will take His Church to the finish line. In the meantime the pen of inspiration will sustain us.

When the religion of Christ is most held in contempt, when His law is most despised, then should our zeal be the warmest and our courage and firmness the most unflinching. To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from

the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason —5T 136 (1882). (LDE 180.4).

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- i. <http://www.adventistreview.org/issue.php?issue=2009-1525&page=27>
- ii. ZE07030826 - 2007-03-08 Permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-19100?l=english>
- iii. Vatican.va
- iv. Michael A. McGuire, (Father McGuire's) *The New Baltimore Catechism and Mass Official Revised Edition* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1949), 159.
- v. Michael A. McGuire, (Father McGuire's) *The New Baltimore Catechism and Mass Official Revised Edition* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1949), 194.
- vi. [http://www.cec-kek.org/pdf/CSCProtectionofSunday\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cec-kek.org/pdf/CSCProtectionofSunday_EN.pdf)
- vii. The Times: 9th November 1988

[Editor's Note]

Bruinsma implied that there may be “facts that are extracted from obscure sources no one can check.”

Our [website](#) contains the [entire set of references for](#) Walter's [Total Onslaught](#) and [Rekindling the Reformation](#) series in our [new research library](#), as well as [ebooks](#) also available for more research.