

**AMAZING
DISCOVERIES**

Faith
on the line
A Journal for Those Who Dare

Spring 2005
Volume 10
Issue 2

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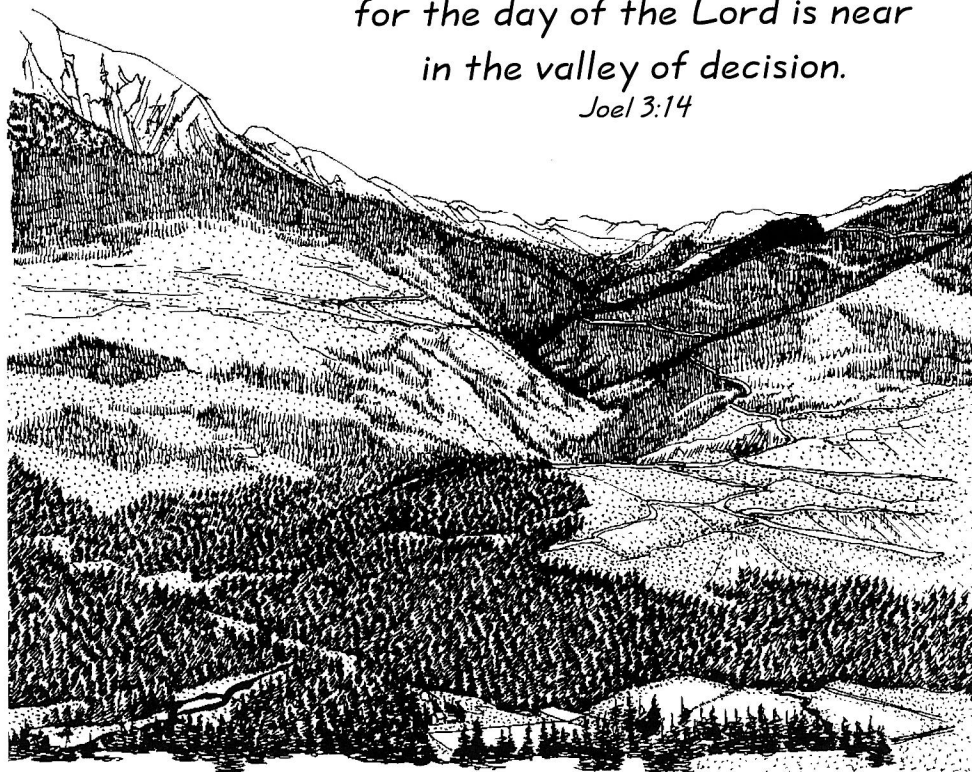
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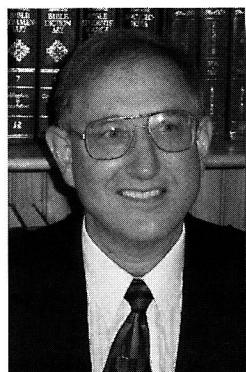
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*Multitudes,
multitudes
in the valley of decision:
for the day of the Lord is near
in the valley of decision.
Joel 3:14*



UKRAINE



Professor Walter J. Veith

WALTER VEITH and VICTOR GILL JOINING FORCES IN UKRAINE EVANGELISM In May 2005



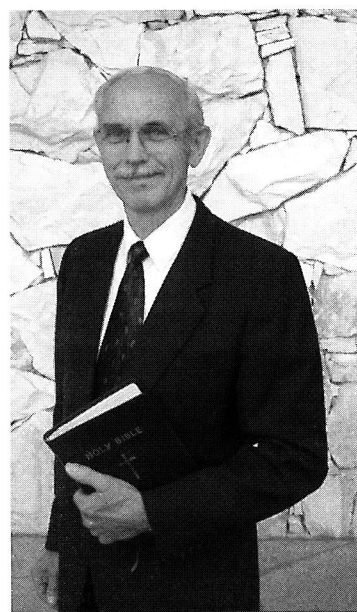
Amazing Discoveries is planning a large evangelistic meeting in L'viv, in May 2005. It will be an exciting series as Walter Veith presents lectures on science and creation in a country where for over 70 years evolution was the only alternative offered to the populace. Following the evolution/creation series, Victor Gill will hold lectures on Biblical prophecy in light of our present day with his unique presentations on the great controversy between Christ and Satan. A hall holding 2000 people has been rented, and the SDA Conference of Ukraine is planning TV & Radio exposure throughout.

This lecture will be sponsored solely by AD and we would like to invite you to help in this extraordinary series.

Your generous donations are needed at this time. Please prayerfully consider giving to help finance the expenditures of this powerful seminar coming to the Ukraine this spring!

For more information
call 1-866-572-9457.

**AMAZING
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Pastor Victor Gill

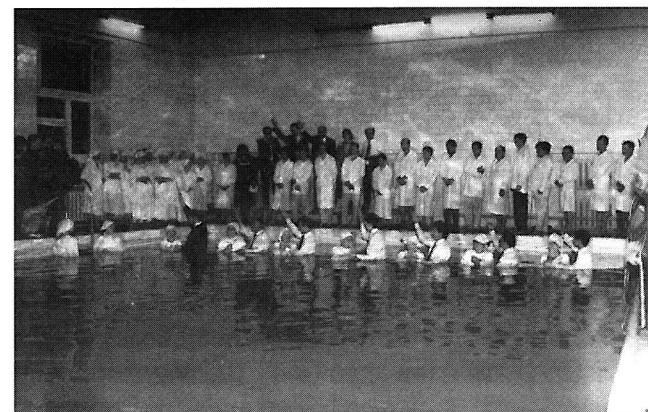
In May 25th, 2005, Pastor Victor Gill leaves again for the Ukraine to do his 20th series in that country of the former Soviet Union where the hearts of people have been so hungry for the Truth. On this trip, he will be going to the city of L'viv a large city of several million people with a strong Catholic influence.

Most of Pastor Gill's ministry in the Ukraine has been in the Western part, where evangelism has been very tough because the Orthodox and Roman Catholic influence is so strong.

According to the Union and local conference brethren, Pastor Gill is considered their #1 evangelist. They have told him personally, "You have done more evangelism in Ukraine than any other foreign evangelist." They also said that it is very difficult to get an evangelist to come to the western part of Ukraine because baptisms are very hard to get there. After one particular series in Zatomir, the Union President suggested that where there had been 147 baptisms in Zatomir, one could add another 0 to the number of those to have been baptized if the series had taken place in the East.

In total time spent in the Ukraine over the years he has spent between 3-4 years there altogether. He just loves the Ukrainian people. He has lived with them, traveled with them, married a number of them and buried some of them.

He has been there in all times of the year and preached in halls in the winter time when it was unbearably cold with no heat and yet people would still pack the hall twice a night. Many of those who came for the first meeting would come again for the second. He says, "That's what kept me going. There was



hunger in peoples' hearts."

He has preached in the early mornings in schools, in maintenance shops, in the cream and butter factories, in banks, and in other places before people would go to work. Everywhere he has found receptive hearts and people hungry to hear about God and His Word. He has had great opposition at times from other religious leaders determined to stop his meetings and drive him out of town. Sometimes individuals have had to be physically removed from his meetings because of

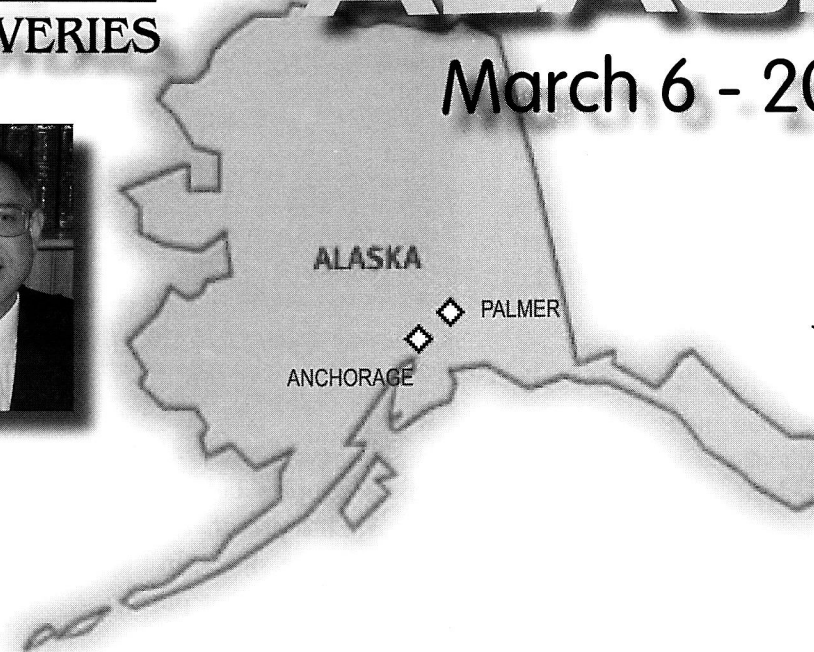
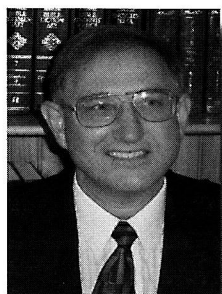
the disturbance they have caused. On several occasions, he has been called in to the highest government office to the Minister of Religion and warned about his preaching. People have complained. Many times there have been informants in his audience each night reporting to certain authorities. Yet God has been gracious and brought many to the Lord through Pastor Gill's efforts.

Now as we embark on this next mission, we appeal to you for your generous support of his ministry in Ukraine, and solicit your prayers for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for this series. The funds are coming in but still a number of dollars are needed. Your prayerful donations will go directly to this evangelistic effort in Ukraine. May God bless you as you give.

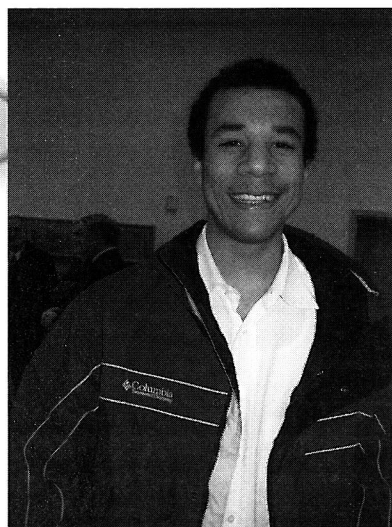
AMAZING DISCOVERIES

ALASKA

March 6 - 20, 2005



Jordan Sydorko - Bible Worker



The place I now call my second home — Alaska — has been an abundant blessing to me. When I was called to go and promote a series of creation seminars held at Palmer Seventh-Day Adventist church by Professor Walter J. Veith, I was initially expecting uncivilized territory — spear throwing, igloo living pockets of population. Then a friend told me there were going to be cities and skyscrapers. I was a bit disappointed because I was ready for some wild adventure. Little did I know what a blessing it would be.

It was such an encouragement to see the church members excited and ready to knock on doors and meet people in the community, inviting them to come to the series.

One of biggest highlights was seeing not only the wonderful hospitality from the Palmer and Wassilla districts in Alaska, but the great interest in spiritual things. Even the children of the church members were getting involved in the work of inviting people to the seminars. We found the people in Alaska to be hospitable and open to the invitation and the presentations on creation / evolution. It had been part of the news recently, and debated in the school system, so the topic was of interest to many.

Door knockers have a difficult job sometimes, but it is also a tremendous blessing to find those precious souls that are longing for something to answer their

questions, and quench their desire for peace and salvation. One of the many challenges a door knocker faces, is dogs. In Alaska, a lot of people own dogs. (Remember, they have dog sleds, and the Iditarod race there!). Many times we would walk up to a person's door, and they would open it and be surprised to know how we had made it past their dogs. This fact alone seemed to impress them to take our flyer.

I had the privilege of going out with a young 9-year-old boy who was always excited about going out and sharing his faith. Once when we approached a home, it was obvious that there was some unhealthy lifestyle being practiced there. My little door knocking partner was touched, and exclaimed, "These people need Jesus." and made his way to the door. The man that opened the door was a heavy smoker, but he listened to our invitation, and accepted the flyer saying, "Yes, I think I need a change." There were several people who willingly accepted Bible studies even before the series started, with whom I worked.

It was hard to leave the friends we made there, and to see the series come to an end.

By their faithfulness to God, the meetings were a success. Seeing their spirit filled with excitement as

they worked for the salvation of souls taught me that a church that is in evangelism is a church that thrives. With minds focused on the primary goals of a Seventh-Day Adventist church, the other troubles that often plague churches disappear. I pray that evangelism will be part of everyone's spiritual walk, both personally and corporately as a church. If you would like to do door to door work, do not be discouraged. There are souls just waiting for you to ask them if they would like to know more about our dear Friend Jesus. You may not know it, but for some people, this may be their very last invitation. What a sobering thought, and what a noble calling to be that one that delivers God's final plea to a sinner rejecting His mercy for the last time. And remember, that whenever a door slams in your face, it is not YOU they are rejecting, but the Lord. If it does nothing else, it will build your character.

Jordan Sydorko

Alaska may have been cold, windy and icy, but the Alaskan people are not. Their warmth and hospitality has been so evident and felt by us all.

Our evangelistic campaign actually began much earlier than March 4, 2005 as we spent a lot of time in preparation for this event. Early this year we met with the board of 3 churches to plan a successful campaign. About month later one of our directors Mark Kiefiuk spent a weekend with the church to encourage them and relate to them the results of his own city's campaign last year. His enthusiasm and love for missions impressed all church members, especially because he brought with him our young Bible worker Jordan Sydorko (age 20) who doorknocked in the surroundings areas of the church with many church people for 3 weeks prior to the evangelistic series.

We are grateful to the Pastors, the church boards, and the members for their wonderful support. The Palmer/Wassilla churches mailed out thousands of flyers to the town of Palmer and surrounding cities. A large group of church members dedicated themselves faithfully to a weekly distribution of handbills and accompanied with this multitude effort were many prayers and supplications for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

On the opening night of the lectures, it was a full house. The members of the church were overjoyed about the large non-Adventist crowd being the majority of the people. They came from all different walks of life, non Christians, Catholics, Evangelicals, Church of Nazarene, and no religious persuasion at all. They were riveted to their seats when Prof. Veith showed his evidence of the flood, the fossil record and archaeology.

The interest level was peaked. A few days later we started the lecture about Jesus — "Just Another Man" and continued with further Biblical presentations throughout the Total Onslaught series. I must say I have never seen an audience which was so silent and "glued" to their seats as in Alaska. One young couple which walked in from the street just following the signs so excellently displayed on a highway with attractive topics bought a Total Onslaught series in the first few days of the seminar. They said they have never been religious but feel overwhelmed by the evidence and truth they are listening to. Both of them just beamed with excitement and came every single night till the end.

When the lectures were finished, the Pastors of the churches continued weekly meetings through DVD and video. We still have many of the dear souls that attended this series calling us with reports of how much they enjoyed the series and how much they have learned. Some are continuing studies with their respective Pastors

of the churches, a few correspond with us still and soak in the new found truth. Like one newcomer said to me: "I have been through many churches over the years and gave up on ever finding the truth, but as soon as I came to hear Dr. Veith I knew in my heart, this was the message that I had been searching for many years."

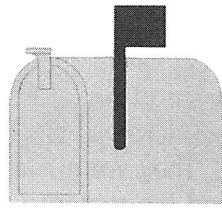
Praise God!
Praise Him for all He

has done, praise Him for His longsuffering and grace!

I know the people of Alaska have been touched by the messages presented. They are not only growing for themselves, but also want to share this message with others. What a privilege it has been to have had a small part in the Holy Spirit's work on the hearts and minds of those He is calling out of Babylon.

Dagmar Goubelj





From the Mailbox...

We welcome your comments and opinions. If something in our newsletter or material has impacted you, we'd like to hear from you. We can be contacted by fax, mail or email. Please see the last page for this information.

I have seen professor Veith's DVDs on freemasons and the Catholic Church. It was amazing! Four years ago when I started to look at his material I had been a born again Christian for only 2 months! and this information really got to me! I started to investigate the masons myself and at the moment I am also teaching people about masonry and helping them to get free from this Satanic order. I want to thank the Lord Jesus and Professor Veith for being an instrument in God's hands to set people and myself free from lies.

Dr. Veith's lectures are superb and now with the election of this particular pope, Dr. Veith's seminars are even more important for us. Thank you again. God bless you all.

It is a blessing from God to send us people whom he uses to clarify His hidden laws of nature. The Bible tells us about the delusions and philosophies which would come up in the last days to mislead people, including the people of God. I've come to realize, after having watched the lecture concerning the origin of life, that my Biology book tells me lies! The lectures of brother Walter Veith have caused me to see things in

different glass. Praise God!

Dear Dr Veith

Just wanted to drop you a line to let you know that we are enjoying your 'Total Onslaught' videos. We appreciate the research and work that has been put into these presentations and pray that God will continue to bless and protect you as you continue to bring these truths to light. There has been some amazing facts revealed and wish more people would take note of this information, especially in our churches.
-S.D.O.

Hello: Just wanted you to know that I am so pleased with the quality of the DVDs I recently purchased from you...Thank you for all your hard work and efforts to get this message out. Please let Professor Veith know how much this series is appreciated. WOW! We are really going home and SOON. I realize the risk he is taking by being so forth right, but I know that God will protect him and lead him until his work has been done. It will be such a pleasure to look for him in the kingdom. I am just thanking the Lord for his steadfastness. May God continue to bless you all in your endeavors as you work for Jesus.

R.W.

Some Comments Received from those that attended the Alaska series March 2005:

- I am very excited about all the detail given in these lectures. I thank God that I have had the opportunity to attend these lectures and I thank Him for bringing Mr. Veith to this community.

- Thank you! This has been so very informative. I've been a christian for 32 years and considered myself fairly informed! There is SO much to learn so I can be a better soul-winning vessel for the Lord! I want to thank you for making this series of seminars free because otherwise I wouldn't have been able to attend.

- Thank you for opening my eyes to the obvious....!

- Things make more sense in Daniel and Revelation now. Hope I can remember it all. Thank you! Keep up the good work.

- This is indeed an eye-opening experience. These things should be taught in our secular schools instead of the falsehoods they do teach.

- Thank you for having these meetings. I really learned a lot of things I always wanted to know! To know about. Keep preaching! It's a great thing. (age 13)

- Terrific speaker! Very knowledgeable, good sense of humor, humble... I am very grateful to Prof Veith for dedicating his life to explaining and sharing the truth!

The Temple Restored

by Floyd Saylor

So many of you have called in to express appreciation for the articles that have appeared in this newsletter by this anonymous writer. In this issue, we'd like to reveal that it has been Mr. Floyd Saylor of Oliver, BC. He will continue to be a regular contributor in our newsletter, and we appreciate his willingness to contribute to our periodical.

For the remnant who are to be sealed with the seal of the living God, there is a special experience through which God will take them which will fully immunize them against ever choosing to go back into sin again. It will be a traumatic experience such as no previous generation has ever had. But God sees that it is absolutely necessary to secure them from the power of sin. This experience was typified in the day of atonement service, when the sanctuary was cleansed.

Speaking of the day of atonement, Paul tells us "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year" (Hebrews 10:3). In other words, the sins of the past year were once again brought to remembrance before they were fully atoned for and put on the head of the scapegoat.

In reality, this experience is a very traumatic experience brought on by the Holy Spirit. Inspiration is replete with passages that depict this experience. Ezekiel tells us, "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations" (Ezekiel 36:31) And the Spirit of Prophecy comments on this passage: "It is to those whom the Lord has forgiven, to those whom He acknowledges as His people, that He says, 'Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight'" (COL 160).

A PANORAMIC VIEW

When the record books are opened in the judgment, the record in the mind is also opened. Everyone being judged will have his personal library opened to his consciousness.

"Each one in the day of Investigative Judgment

will stand in character as he really is; he will render an individual account to God. Every word uttered, every departure from integrity, every action that sullies the soul, will be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. Memory will be true and vivid in condemnation of the guilty one, who in that day is found wanting. The mind will recall all the thoughts and acts of the past; the whole life will come in review like the scenes in a panorama. Thus every one will be condemned or acquitted out of his own mouth, and the righteousness of God will be vindicated" (RH Nov.4, 1884)

This vivid portrayal of all the thoughts and acts of the past life will create an agony of soul as described in EW 269-270. Like Isaiah, when he was permitted to look into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, they will cry out, "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips. . . for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5).

This experience is very similar to the final judgment of the wicked at the end of the 1000 years when the entire wicked host are arraigned before the judgment bar of God to answer for their rebellion against his government. In that final judgment, all the wicked host as well as Satan himself will be given a panoramic view of their life record and the sins that have unfit them for heaven. But none will be acquitted in that day. All will then confess that God is righteous and just in His doings. See GC 666

In another passage we read: "When the books are opened, the character will be revealed, and every mouth will be stopped. You will be convicted of guilt before the revelation of your own life. Everyone unsaved will see where he departed from right, and will realize the influence his life of disobedience exerted to turn others from the way of truth" (ST Dec.29, 1887).

The idea that we will be aware of the judgment examining our records in heaven is foreign to the thinking of most Christians. It has almost been a fundamental belief that no one will know when the judgment of the living has begun. This has been the expressed opinion of many well-meaning, sincere Bible scholars. But we are told that "When the time of trial shall come, there are men now preaching to others who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason." 5T 707

No one knows when or how soon the judgment will begin with the living, but that doesn't mean that the individual will be unaware when it happens. No one knows when or how soon the coming of Christ will be, but everyone will be aware of it when it happens. All the Inspired passages dealing with the judgment of the living describe it as a conscious event. For example, in GC 426 we are told that "The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25." GC 426

If, as stated above, the investigative judgment is represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, would the bride be unaware that she is being married when her groom comes to the marriage? In an earthly wedding, both bride and groom go to the marriage ceremony and actively participate in the wedding. But what would we think if the groom was standing before the church altar to be wedded to his bride whilst she was going about her usual routine, unaware that she was getting married? Yet the idea has prevailed that the heavenly wedding between Christ and His people will be performed without them being aware that it is happening. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In GC 427 we are told how Christ's bride on earth will participate in the wedding which takes place in the most holy place.

"For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people." Leviticus 23:29

"They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut." They were not to be present in person at the marriage; for it takes place in heaven, while they are upon the earth. The followers of Christ are to "wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding." Luke 12:36. But they are to understand

His work, and to follow Him by faith as He goes in before God. It is in this sense that they are said to go in to the marriage." GC 427

A perusal of the Inspired passages will show that the judgment of the living will be a conscious experience for all who are being judged. (See the Appendix at the end of this article)

Why does God flash before the mind such a humiliating, panoramic view of the life record? It is necessary to see the true nature of sin in all its vividness, and also the terrible damage it has done to us individually, as well as to others, and also to Christ who was wounded for our transgressions. Not one of Christ's true followers who pass through this ordeal will think of going back into sin again. The spectacle is so awful that they feel a repentance and agony of soul such as they have never experienced before. We are admonished to study and learn about these things in order to be prepared for this solemn event. See 5T 520

DAY OF ATONEMENT REPENTANCE

In the typical service, the day of atonement was a day of soul-searching, repentance and humiliation before God as they reviewed their experience of the past year. Any soul that was not in a state of repentance and affliction of soul would be cut off. The scriptures tell us that-

"For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people." Leviticus 23:29

The prophet Zechariah also describes the day of atonement experience in these words.

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one

mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10).

But we also read of the victorious experience of those who were acquitted in the judgment, because they had forsaken all their sins and sent them beforehand to judgment. *Early Writings* describes the deep gratitude and joy of those who had come through the soul-searching period called the shaking, and had obtained a final victory over the power of sin and Satan.

"I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying in agony of spirit. The company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were clothed with an armor from their head to their feet... their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of heaven. They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest gratitude and holy, sacred joy. (EW 271)

Perhaps the most graphic description of those who had passed the judgment and been accepted is found in the following passage.

"As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, 'Take away the filthy garments from them, and the encouraging words are spoken, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.' The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin" (5T 475).

We do not know how long God's people will be enduring this agony of soul because of the revelation of their life record before Christ stands up and commands that the filthy garment, the knowledge of evil, be removed. And as they have now become eternally secure from sin, so the entire universe will also be eternally secure. The

great battle has been fought, the great demonstration has been given. The redemption that Christ has provided will prove to be an eternal antidote to the recurrence of sin. Not only are their sins blotted out and the filthy garments removed, but there is a restoration and re-beautification of soul.

A GLORIOUS RESTORATION

Following the shaking and its soul-agonizing experience, Christ will comfort and revive His people by giving them the fullness of His Spirit in the latter rain. God has promised that "He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the marvelous result is indicated in these words: "And I will restore to you the years that the locust (sin) hath eaten. . ." (Joel 2:25).

The work of the latter rain has often been described in terms of its wonderful power for witnessing to the world as the loud cry is given and God's true people are called out of Babylon. But we often forget that before we can give such a mighty witness to the world, the latter rain is going to do a mighty work of transformation in us. In Acts 3:19 we see how the refreshing latter rain is connected with the blotting out of sins. We cannot experience one without the other. The transformation effected by the latter rain in our character is wonderfully depicted in Inspiration. *Isaiah 60:1, 62:1-3, Zechariah 9:12-17* are samples of Biblical passages that describe this experience. We also have many passages in the Spirit of Prophecy that speak of this climactic event. Note the following:

"The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain and prepares it for the sickle... The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God's grace in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ." TM 506 (Also see EW 279, 1T 353, TM 17-19, 5T 82)

Wonderful thought! All the damage that sin has caused is going to be undone and restored. The spiritual nature will be as though man had never sinned. The forgiveness of sin was a blessed experience for all who repented of their sins. But the blotting out of sins

and the shameful memory will be even a more blessed experience.

"Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and have been blotted out, and they cannot bring them to remembrance" (GC 620). "Their sins had gone beforehand to judgment, and pardon had been written. Their sins had been borne away into the land of forgetfulness, and they could not bring them to remembrance." (3SG 135)

The restoration to be accomplished for the remnant of God's people is a theme that is worthy of our deepest interest and study. The Christian world generally knows only about the forgiveness of sins, and some of the more enlightened also uphold the privilege of being delivered from our sinful habits. But only the believers in the Third Angels Message understand the work of Christ in the most holy place, and the utter blotting out of the knowledge of evil and the restoration that will be effected in their lives through the perfecting latter rain. Following are a few passages from Inspiration that are most encouraging.

"The forgiveness of sins is not the sole result of the death of Jesus. He made the infinite sacrifice, not only that sin might be removed, but that human nature might be restored, rebeautified, reconstructed from its ruins, and made fit for the presence of God." (5T 537).

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2)

"To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized - this was to be the work of redemption." *Education* p.15.

"It is the purpose of redemption, not only to blot out sin, but to give back to man those spiritual gifts lost because of sin's dwarfing power" (COL 266).

When the restoration of mind and soul is fully accomplished, when the memory of sin is gone from the mind and God's name is written in the foreheads of His faithful people, the great work of the atonement will be accomplished and the recording angel will declare, "It is finished".

"Thus will be realized the complete fulfillment of the new-covenant promise: 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' 'In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found' *Jeremiah 31:34; 50:20*. 'In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem.' *Isaiah 4:2-3*." (GC 485).

"And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." (*Revelation 14:5*)

Appendage:

"Let everyone who professes the name of Christ consider the fact that he must meet every act of injustice, give an account for every harsh word, at the judgment seat of Christ. It will not be pleasant to review the words that have been spoken that have wounded and bruised souls, to review the decisions that have worked against souls for whom Christ died. Every action will come into judgment, and the spirit that prompted it will be made manifest. The fruit of every selfish, arbitrary exaction will be made plain, and men will see the results of their doings even as God sees them." TM 224

"The time is at hand when every secret thing shall be brought into judgment, and then there will be many confessions made that will astonish the world. The secrets of all hearts will be revealed. The confession of sin will be most public. The sad part of it is that confession then made will be too late to benefit the wrongdoer or to save others from deception. It only testifies that his condemnation is just. . . . You may now close the book of your remembrance in order to escape confessing your sins, but when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, you cannot close them. The recording angel has testified that which is true. All that you have tried to conceal and forget is registered, and will be read to you when it is too late for wrongs to be righted. . . . Unless your sins are canceled, they will testify against you at that day." TKH 238

...Continued on Page 12

NEW SPEAKER JOINS AMAZING DISCOVERIES



John Triplett, once an aspiring Hip Hop artist and devout athiest, surrendered his life to Jesus Christ in 1997 through the study of the intricacies of secret societies. Since becoming a Christian he has taught the same

Bible truths that changed his life in North America and Europe. Because of his background, his passion is to expose current end-time deceptions, and to lead others into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. He and his wife are deeply committed to the work of saving souls.

John has just completed a series in the Michigan area - presenting the Total Onslaught series over the course of several weeks, and as a result, several were baptized.

John has now joined our team as a new evangelist, and we are grateful for his dedication and fervor in spreading the three angel's messages.

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The Charmer and the Enforcer:

John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and the Challenge to Seventh-day Adventists

by Kevin D. Paulson

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After a scant two days and four ballots, white smoke billowed from the chimney, and onto the portico of St. Peter's Basilica stepped Cardinal Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI.

Thus ended two weeks of nearly suffocating papal dominance of the news, beginning with the passing of the late Pope John Paul II. With Ratzinger's election, the scramble began at once in the media to analyze and speculate as to what his reign will mean for the papacy and for the world.

None could miss the powerful significance of Ratzinger having led for 24 years the so-called Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—the Vatican's infamous "Holy Office" known in previous centuries as the Inquisition.

Throughout the media's coverage of the election, specific reference was made to this most recent item on Ratzinger's resumé. In her broadcast the night of April 19, 2005, CNN reporter Paula Zahn labeled Ratzinger "the Grand Inquisitor." Speaking of Ratzinger's work in this regard, biographer John Allen observes: "You have to look back to the 16th century to find someone who had the same impact in that office." (John Allen, quoted by Dan Gilgoff, "Watchdog or Attack Dog?" U.S. News & World Report, May 2, 2005, p. 36.)

Few who have followed this man's career need to guess at his convictions or policies. It was he who issued the document "Dominus Jesus" in 2000, in which the Sacred Congregation declared Catholicism to be the "sole path to salvation." (Laurie Goodstein, "An Evangelizer on the Right With His Eye on the Future," New York Times Online, April 20, 2005; see also "Vatican Declares Catholicism Sole Path to Salvation," Los Angeles Times, Sept. 6, 2000, p. A1.)



Upon being elected pope, Ratzinger declared his intention to "reunify all Christians" (Nicole Winfield, "New Pope Vows to Work to Unify Christians," Associated Press Online, April 20, 2005.)—obviously on Catholic terms only, if indeed that Church is the exclusive path to heaven!

As telling as anything, perhaps, are Benedict's two leading spiritual mentors. One is St. Benedict, born around A.D. 480 and credited by many with founding the monastic movement in the Western church. (Katty Kelly, "What's in a Namesake?" U.S. News & World Report, May 2, 2005, p. 33.) The other is St. Augustine, for whom the new pope seems to have an even deeper veneration. "Augustine has kept me company for more than 20 years," he once wrote. (Quoted by Andrew Sullivan, "The Vicar of Orthodoxy," Time, May 2, 2005, p. 49.) Asked once to pick two books he would take to a desert island, Ratzinger chose the Bible and Augustine's Confessions. (David Van Biema, "The Turning Point," Time, May 2, 2005, pp. 43, 45.) (Evidence suggests, as we will see, that he clearly prefers the latter to the former.)

Augustine's *The City of God* is reportedly also a favorite of Benedict's. (Ibid., p. 43.) The logical brainchild of the Augustinian doctrine of original sin—also mentioned in an article on the new pope's philosophy (Sullivan, "The Vicar of Orthodoxy," Time, May 2, 2005, p. 49.)—*The City of God* up-

holds the necessary supremacy of the church to the state, a concept which became the basis of the "divine right of kings" in medieval Europe. If indeed, as Augustine held, man is incurably depraved, even when sanctified by the Spirit of God, civil and physical force become appropriate tools whereby acceptable behavior is achieved. The racks and torture chambers of the Inquisition dovetailed neatly in this regard.

Like other Augustinians, whether Catholic or Protestant, Ratzinger advocates close ties between the church and the government, with the church the stronger partner. It was he who wrote the letter from the Vatican during the 2004 election, declaring that Catholic politicians such as Senator Kerry—who oppose the civil enactment of church teachings on issues like abortion—were to be barred from receiving communion. (Gilgoff, "Watchdog or Attack Dog?" U.S. News & World Report, May 2, 2005, p. 36.) (Let it be remembered that the issue here is not disagreement with Catholic doctrine on the part of such politicians, but rather, their unwillingness to enforce Catholic doctrine through civil law. It is this unwillingness which, in Ratzinger's view, disqualifies a Catholic

politician from taking communion.)

In his inaugural mass Sunday morning, April 24, the new pope further displayed his hard-line credentials, flashed earlier in the week in his homily against what he called the "dictatorship of relativism." At the inaugural mass he declared, "This is the end of cafeteria Catholicism," referring to those Catholics who pick and choose which of their church's teachings they accept and which they reject. Interviewed that same morning on NBC's "Meet the Press," Jesuit priest and Ignatius Press founder Joseph Fessio expressed similar thoughts, stating: "Those who rebel against the Church's authentic teachings are rebelling against God." Sandro Magister, a Vatican expert at the Italian magazine *L'Espresso*, believes the reign of Benedict XVI could likely parallel that of the medieval Pope Gregory VII, who barred the clergy from marriage and forced his will on Europe's monarchs. (Goodstein, "An Evangelizer on the Right With His Eye on the Future," New York Times online, April 20, 2005.) Many will remember Pope Gregory as the one who compelled German emperor Henry IV to stand barefoot in the snow for two days, while he awaited an audience of reconciliation with the pontiff. (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 57, 58.)

With John Paul II, the world witnessed a consummate charmer—a pious, charismatic gentleman of whom billions of all faiths were enamored. Perhaps now, in the words of John Allen, it is time for the enforcer. (John L. Allen, *Cardinal Ratzinger: The Vatican's Enforcer of the Faith* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000).)

Affirmation of Medieval Catholicism

In view of the papal transition now complete, it behooves Seventh-day Adventists to assess exactly where the papacy stands in relation to teachings against which the Protestant Reformers and the Advent movement have offered such vigorous objection. This is especially important because, in recent years, certain voices within Adventism have declared our historic views on this subject to be seriously outdated. (Jonathan Butler, "The World of E.G. White and the End of the World," *Spectrum*, August 1979, pp. 2-13; Frank A. Knittel, "The Great Billboard Controversy," *Spectrum*, May 1993, pp. 55, 56; "Adventists and Catholicism," *Spectrum*, Summer 1999, pp. 31-52.)

One such individual recently declared that since the Second Vatican Council in 1962, "everything written about Catholic thought and life 'from the outside' before then has become obsolete." (Ibid., p. 31.)

But despite this claim, and despite his loving and Christlike image in billions of hearts, the late John Paul II—throughout the years of his long reign—consistently upheld those medieval Catholic teachings which place papal dogma and

tradition above Holy Scripture.

On December 12, 1984, the *Los Angeles Times* ran the headline, "No Forgiveness 'Directly From God,' Pope Says." (Don A. Schanche, "No Forgiveness 'Directly From God,' Pope Says," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 12, 1984, p. A11.) The article reported:

Rebutting a belief widely shared by Protestants and a growing number of Roman Catholics, Pope John Paul II dismissed Tuesday the "widespread idea that one can obtain forgiveness directly from God," and exhorted Catholics to confess more often to their priests. (Ibid.)

In his proclamation of the "Great Jubilee of 2000," Pope John Paul reaffirmed the medieval practice of offering indulgences for sin. Those performing certain charitable deeds, such as visiting the sick, giving to the poor, or abstaining from alcohol or tobacco for a day, can earn an indulgence just as surely now as in the days of Tetzel. (Alessandra Stanley, "Pope invites Catholics in 2000 to earn indulgences," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Nov. 28, 1998, pp. A1, A12.) On September 17, 1999, a new manual was issued by the Vatican instructing Catholics as to how such indulgences can be obtained. (Frances D'Emilio, "Vatican releases new manual on how to gain indulgences," Associated Press online, Sept. 17, 1999.) Most recently, the January 30, 2005 edition of *Our Sunday Visitor* contained the following Vatican announcement:

"During the Year of the Eucharist, which runs through October, Catholics can receive special indulgences for Eucharistic Adoration and prayer before the Eucharist." ("Pope authorizes special indulgences," *Our Sunday Visitor*, Jan. 30, 2005.)

The Bible is clear that "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). It is equally clear that confession and the forsaking of sin are essential in order for God's forgiveness to be obtained (2 Chronicles 7:14; Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7; 1 John 1:9). Quite obviously, if sin must be forsaken in order to be forgiven, only God is capable of forgiving sin, since only He knows the heart (1 Kings 8:39).

But the papacy of John Paul II, in contrast to these plain statements of Scripture, maintains vigorously the Church's supposed right to forgive sins, and to create its own conditions for sinners to receive pardon.

In another statement, the late pope presumed to disagree with Christ Himself, whom he claimed to represent:

Have no fear when people call me the "Vicar of Christ," when they say to me "Holy Father" or "Your Holiness," or use titles similar to these, which seem even inimical to the

Gospel. Christ Himself declared, "Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called Master; you have but one Master, the Messiah" (Matthew 23:9, 10). These expressions, nevertheless, have evolved out of a long tradition, becoming part of common usage. One must not be afraid of these words either. (Pope John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), p. 6)

What did Jesus say? "Thus have ye made the commandments of God of none effect by your tradition.... But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:6, 9).

This supreme devotion to tradition, as strong under the late pope as under his predecessors, has handicapped the Roman Church even when its moral stance is Biblically correct. As the late pope's legacy is being reviewed, his rigid opposition to the homosexual lifestyle and women's ordination is being commented upon. But as the church's spokesmen have defended his views, reference is repeatedly made to the Church's teachings, not those of the Bible. Some years ago, at a forum featuring Church officials and gay Catholics in San Francisco, this same pattern was witnessed. Over and over again, "thus saith the Church" was the basis of authority. No reference was offered to the transcendent authority of Holy Scripture, to which all—including the Church's hierarchs—are accountable.

Little wonder that such appeals to temporal authority are resisted by many who can't figure out how fellow humans—whose fallibility gives every evidence of equaling if not surpassing their own—should have their commands obeyed without question.

When considering the words of both the new pope and his late predecessor regarding secularism, immorality, relativism, and other curses of the modern world, Bible-believing Seventh-day Adventists can only listen with mixed feelings. A part of us is inclined to say Amen, since we too lament the spread and hurtfulness of such tendencies. (Not to mention that the new pope's denunciation of "cafeteria Catholicism" reminds the faithful in our own church of the very real problem of "cafeteria Adventism.") But the papal practice of exalting tradition over the Word of God seriously compromises any value in these papal exhortations. Moral absolutism is right only if it is God's objective Word that is seen as absolute! Otherwise, any conflict between

the church and the world becomes a mere contest of human opinions.

Ellen White warns us of what happens when Scripture is accepted as selectively authoritative:

"Many professed ministers of the gospel do not accept the whole Bible as the inspired word. One wise man rejects one portion; another questions another part. They set up their judgment as superior to the word; and the Scripture which they do teach rests upon their own authority. Its divine authenticity is destroyed. Thus the seeds of infidelity are sown broadcast; for the people become confused and know not what to believe. (White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 39).

The late pope's adherence to tradition over the Bible has also been demonstrated by his steadfast defense of the unscriptural doctrine of clerical celibacy. On one occasion he even stated that "a man might commit adultery in his heart with his own wife." (Quoted by Stephen D. Mumford, *American Democracy and the Vatican: Population Growth and National Security* (Amherst, NY: The Humanist Press, 1984), p. 216.) The new pope's fondness for the teachings of St. Benedict, who with Augustine was largely responsible for bringing this doctrine into the Church, gives evidence of similar if not identical thinking on Ratzinger's part. (The un-Biblical notion that the absence of sexual intimacy somehow produces greater intimacy with God also, sadly, has its adherents in Protestant circles. (See Elisabeth Elliot, *Passion and Purity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 2003), pp. 38-44, 111, etc.)) Opposing sex outside of marriage is

one thing, but such statements and concepts as the above show more respect for the sexuality-despising extremism of the monastic movement than for the balanced, reasonable teachings found in God's Word.

The new pope seems to be quite clear in his preference for tradition over the Word of God. According to U.S. News & World Report, in 1997 "he warned that the use of Scripture to evaluate Church teaching 'was one of the most dangerous currents to flow out of Vatican II.'" (Quoted by Jay Tolson, "Defender of the Faith," U.S. News & World Report, May 2, 2005, p. 38.) When asked what he hopes will occur under Benedict's pontificate, former New York Governor Mario Cuomo answered: "An admission by the Pope that the man-made rules are alterable by the church that made them". (Mario Cuomo, quoted in *Time*, May 2, 2005, p. 36.)

I fear the Governor will wait a long time for that.

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Papal Deification

As the late pope's body lay in state in the Apostolic Palace within Vatican City, one reporter described it as "the body of God." On CNN's "American Morning," broadcast on April 4, another reporter stated that while the pope's body will be buried in St. Peter's Basilica, different parts of his body will be sent around the world "so people can worship them." It should be clarified that this was not stated in humor or in jest, but with profound seriousness.

Later on that same day, a Catholic devotee interviewed on television spoke of how "there should be joy" at the pope's death, "because he has gone to sit at the right hand of the Father."

Such statements certainly give new meaning to the word Antichrist! Strictly speaking, the word Antichrist means to take the place of Christ. Earlier we considered the Biblical declaration that "there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). It is He, and no one else, who is described as sitting at the Father's right hand (Hebrews 8:1). Without question, the sacrilegious words quoted above call to mind Daniel's prophecy of how the little horn "shall speak great words against the Most High" (Daniel 7:25). The book of Revelation likewise speaks of this power: "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven" (Revelation 13:6).

This blasphemy against "them that dwell in heaven" was perhaps most blatant in the comments of John Paul II on the role of the Virgin Mary in man's salvation. The August 25, 1997 issue of *Newsweek* magazine featured a large picture of the late pope, with the following words—spoken in April 1997—printed beside his face:

"Having created man 'male and female,' the Lord also wants to place the New Eve beside the New Adam in the Redemption.... Mary, the New Eve, thus becomes the perfect icon of the Church.... We can therefore turn to the Blessed Virgin, truthfully imploring her aid in the awareness of the singular role entrusted to her by God, the role of co-operator in the Redemption." (Quoted by Kenneth L. Woodward, "Hail, Mary," *Newsweek*, Aug. 25, 1997, p. 51.)

Even the secular-minded religion editor of *Newsweek* couldn't help contrasting this exaltation of Mary with the

Later on that same day, a Catholic devotee interviewed on television spoke of how "there should be joy" at the pope's death, "because he has gone to sit at the right hand of the Father."

New Testament declaration that "there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). (Ibid., p. 49)

Even with the adulation showered on the late pope, media comment has focused on the sexual abuse scandal that has lately tarred the reputation of the Catholic Church. In his provocative book on the scandal, *A Gospel of Shame*, New York Times reporter Frank Bruni observed, regarding the scandal:

"It was endemic to a Catholic culture that had deified its priests in the eyes of their parishioners and thus rendered their children particularly vulnerable to exploitation by these men. (Frank Bruni & Elinor Burkett, *A Gospel of Shame: Children, Sexual Abuse, and the Catholic Church* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002), p. 6.)

In Latin, the phrase by which priests are known is *Alter Christi—other Christ*.... One victim told [her counselor] she was taught that if she encountered both a priest and an angel on the street, she should walk toward the priest, because he is closer to God. (Ibid., p. 58.)

One girl who suffered abuse by a priest, who waited thirty years before breaking her silence, asked, "How could you tell your parents that God did this to you?" (Ibid., p. 10.)

Here we see how the recent scandals are less a product of human frailty than of bad theology. The pope and his priests are exalted by the Church and its members as infallible. While it is true such scandals have occurred in other religious communities, including our own, the undue reverence accorded Catholic priests makes abuse of this kind far more likely and difficult to address. How can an infallible person be held accountable for his actions? One child psychologist, after meeting with Boston's Cardinal Law regarding the priestly abuse of children, made these observations:

"The cardinal said canon law had to be considered. We just looked at one another. Whatever we had just told him didn't seem to be registering.... Canon law was irrelevant to us. Children were being abused. Sexual predators were being protected. Canon law should have nothing to do with it. But they were determined to keep this problem, and their response to it, within their culture." (The Investigative Staff of the Boston Globe, *Betrayal: The Crisis in the Catholic Church* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co, 2002), p. 153.)

It is a fact both painful and grotesque that while the late

pope expressed shame and sorrow over the recent scandals, he nevertheless elevated Cardinal Law to a high post at the Vatican following his resignation from the Boston archdiocese. For a man who, under his jurisdiction, repeatedly placed children at the mercy of known pedophiles, to receive such a promotion—rather than the defrocking (not to mention criminal prosecution) he richly deserves—speaks vastly louder than any belated “apology” from one whose power within his Church is absolute.

The new pope, to his credit, has denounced what he calls the “filth in the church, even among those who, in the priesthood, should belong entirely” to God. (Cardinal Ratzinger, quoted by Laurie Goodstein, “An Evangelizer on the Right With His Eye on the Future,” *New York Times* online, April 20, 2005.) If Benedict XVI decides to start cleaning house, he won’t need to look far! Cardinal Law is not only ensconced at the height of Vatican power; he also participated in the recent election. Unless the new pope removes him—the very least he could do, considering his concealment of the darkest crimes—no volume of fine words will mean anything.

“Apologies”

Much has been made of the late pope’s apparent apologies for past wrongs committed by the Catholic Church, involving such historical atrocities as the Inquisition, the Crusades, and the Holocaust. But the most basic problem with these apologies is that they failed to address the fact that all these crimes in question bear the endorsement of past popes. Such medieval pontiffs as Urban II, Innocent III, and Gregory XIII were directly involved in sponsoring, organizing, and offering official Church praise to such vile deeds as the First Crusade, the slaughter of the Albigenses in southern France, and the St. Bartholomew Massacre.

Recent research has also thoroughly documented the complicity of Pope Pius XII in sustaining the Nazi regime and turning a blind eye while millions of Jews went to their death. (John Cornwell, *Hitler’s Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999). When the German army invaded Russia on June 22, 1941—an act which brought about the death of over 20 million people, mostly civilians—Pius XII praised the invasion as “high-minded gallantry in defense of the foundations of Christian culture.” (John Toland, *Adolf Hitler* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co, Inc, 1976), pp. 674, 675.)

Over a century ago, Ellen White warned that such a veneer would be attempted by the papacy:

The Roman Church now presents a fair front to the world,

covering with apologies her record of horrible cruelties. She has clothed herself in Christlike garments; but she is unchanged. Every principle of the papacy that existed in past ages exists today. The doctrines devised in the darkest ages are still held. Let none deceive themselves. The papacy that Protestants are now so ready to honor is the same that ruled the world in the days of the Reformation, when men of God stood up, at the peril of their lives, to expose her iniquity. She possesses the same pride and arrogant assumption that lorded it over kings and princes, and claimed the prerogatives of God. Her spirit is no less cruel and despotic now than when she crushed out human liberty and slew the saints of the Most High. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 571.)

One finds it fascinating that the recent “apology” by the late pope was in fact the first of its kind in papal history. When it was issued, the *New York Times* observed that Pope John Paul had done “what none of his 262 predecessors felt called to do—apologize for historical transgressions committed by Roman Catholics in the name of the Church.” (“The Pope Apologizes for His Church,” *New York Times*, March 12, 2000.)

Reuters News Service likewise declared, “It was the first time in the history of the Catholic Church that one of its leaders has sought such a sweeping pardon.” (“Pope in Historic Plea to Pardon Church Sins,” Reuters News Service, March 12, 2000.)

Quite clearly, the above Ellen White statement anticipated these apologies, over a century before they were delivered. This offers further proof that in the gift of Ellen White’s prophetic ministry, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been blessed with the “sure word of prophecy” (2 Peter 1:19).

Sunday Laws and Religious Liberty

Much has been made in the accolades offered the late John Paul II of his presumed support for religious liberty throughout the world. But the late pope’s Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, (“The Day of the Lord”), issued on May 31, 1998, called not only for more faithful Sunday observance, but also applauded the Roman emperor Constantine for his “legislation of the rhythm of the week.” (Pope John Paul II, “*Dies Domini: To the bishops, clergy, and faithful of the Catholic Church on keeping the Lord’s Day holy*,” p. 21.) Elsewhere in the letter the late pope called for the state to enforce Sunday-keeping by law. (Ibid., p. 22.)

Most dangerously of all, an article on the front page of the *Detroit News*, July 7, 1998, reported the late pope’s statement that a person who violates the sanctity of Sunday is to be “punished as a heretic.” (*Detroit News*, July 7, 1998, p. A1.) One was amazed that no one except Seventh-day Adventists appeared to express outrage at this dark hint of a return to medieval intolerance.

In the current Catechism of the Catholic Church, published in 1994 under the late pope’s auspices, it is stated that “the right to religious liberty is neither a moral license to adhere to error, nor a supposed right to error.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Citta del Vaticano, 1994), p. 511.) And who, in the Catholic system, defines what error is? Obviously the pope.

The late pope’s contempt for religious freedom is also affirmed in the best-selling book *The Keys of This Blood*, by Malachi Martin, a leading Catholic author and defender of Vatican policies. Martin specifically mentions Seventh-day Adventists and others who oppose the papal agenda, (Malachi Martin, *The Keys of This Blood: The Struggle for World Dominion Between Pope John Paul II, Mikhail Gorbachev, and the Capitalist West* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), p. 286.) then states the following regarding the support of such groups for religious freedom, in contrast with the late pope’s attitude:

“Every person (according to Adventists and others) must literally be assured the right to choose Hell over Heaven. That obligation carried to that extreme not only sets the Minimalists (Adventists, etc.) apart from John Paul; it sets them against him, as well.

It sets them apart from the Holy Father, because democratic principles cannot take precedence over divine revelation.... It is axiomatic for John Paul that no one has the right—democratic or otherwise—to a moral wrong.” (Ibid., p. 287.)

Many will remember how, some years ago, former New York Governor Mario Cuomo was threatened with excommunication by the late Cardinal John O’Connor, due to Cuomo’s belief that Catholic opposition to abortion shouldn’t be enforced through civil law. (Richard Ostling, “To Hell With Choice,” *Time*, June 24, 1990, p. 52.) As we noted earlier, we need to be clear what the issue is in such disputes, and what it is not. Every church, including our own, has the right to expect its members to uphold and adhere to its doctrinal and moral teachings. But the Cardinal was threatening the Governor with excommunication because the latter, while he supports the Church’s stand on abortion, doesn’t believe Church dogma should be forced by law on those who don’t accept it.

We noted at the beginning how the letter regarding Catholic politicians and Communion originated with Ratzinger. (Gilgoff, “Watchdog or Attack Dog?” *U.S. News & World Report*, May 2, 2005, p. 36.) In the light of this, one cannot but think of the following statement of Ellen White:

“Let the restraints now imposed by secular governments be removed and Rome be reinstated in her former power, and there would speedily be a revival of her tyranny and persecution.” (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 564.)

The Ecumenical Papacy

On Sunday, April 3, the day after the late pope’s death, George Stephanopoulos of ABC’s “This Week” reported that among Protestant evangelicals, Pope John Paul II was more popular than either Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson. The previous evening, on CNN’s “Larry King Live,” Billy Graham had declared John Paul II “the moral leader of the world.” Let us remember, of course, that this is the same pope who declared Catholicism the “sole path to salvation.” (“Vatican Declares Catholicism Sole Path to Salvation,” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 6, 2000, p. A1.) What indeed has become of Protestantism when its leading spokesman pays such homage to the papacy, thereby casting shame over the graves of those whose very blood sealed their conviction that salvation comes through Christ alone?

President George W. Bush, though himself not a Catholic, has the distinction of being the first American President to attend a papal funeral. (Not even President Kennedy, who was in fact a Catholic, attended the funeral of Pope John XXIII in 1963.) And when Cardinal Ratzinger was elected Pope Benedict XVI, this stalwart defender of papal orthodoxy and foe of civil liberty was hailed by Bush as “a man who serves the Lord.” (George W. Bush, quoted in *Time*, May 2, 2005, p. 44.)

Some years ago, population scholar Stephen Mumford, in his provocative book *American Democracy and the Vatican*, wrote of the papacy’s role in the ecumenical movement:

“The ecumenical movement was critical in setting the stage for advancement of the Vatican’s agenda. For the Vatican, this movement has been a great success and, for everyone else, a colossal failure. Not only did the Vatican step up its abuse of American freedom with the coming of the ecumenical movement; Protestants were standing by to apologize for the Vatican in the name of religion.” (Mumford, *American Democracy and the Vatican*, p. 222.)

The late pope’s reign witnessed an acceleration of Catholic-Protestant unity for political purposes. (David Briggs, “Catholics, evangelicals join hands,” *San Bernardino Sun*, March 30, 1994, p. A2.) Lutherans and Catholics have agreed on a “joint declaration” regarding justification by faith, the former—like Billy Graham’s accolades—making a mockery of the sacrifices made by those who gave their lives rather than to accept the false teachings of the papacy. (“A Half-Millennium Rift,” *Time*, July 6, 1998, p. 80.) Pentecostals have likewise apologized for “visions of the end of time that condemn the Catholic Church for spiritual harlotry and idolatry,” and for stating

grace and truth of the Gospel." (Religion Today, April 3, 2000.)

In none of these gestures of unity has the Catholic Church moved one inch. All the movement has come from Protestants. The words of the modern prophet have again been fulfilled:

"And let it be remembered, it is the boast of Rome that she never changes. The principles of Gregory VII and Innocent III are still the principles of the Roman Catholic Church. And had she but the power, she would put them in practice with as much vigor as in past centuries." (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 581.)

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. (Review and Herald, June 1, 1886.)

And it is happening. And under Benedict XVI, all signs point to the likelihood that it will continue to happen.

Conclusion: The Challenge to Seventh-day Adventists

The most powerful pope since Innocent III now lies buried under the Vatican rotunda. Because of his efforts, the papacy bestrides the earth with more power than at any time since the Middle Ages. Because of him, a global power structure whose ideas and weaponry caused free nations to tremble now lies in ruins,

(See Carl Bernstein, "The Holy Alliance," *Time*, Feb. 24, 1992, pp. 28-35.) its memory symbolized by the million-plus pieces of the Berlin Wall now held as souvenirs throughout the world. His pontificate witnessed the reaffirmation of the darkest and most sacrilegious dogmas held by the Catholic Church. And his blatant appeal to political power as a means of achieving his goals has set in motion the very forces predicted by Inspiration to precede the second coming of Christ.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, thus occupies a position of awesome power, perhaps unparalleled in papal history. The charmer has passed from the scene; the enforcer is now on stage. He is elderly—78 years of age, and may not have much time. But then, neither may we!

In the present writer's view, three challenges to Seventh-day Adventists arise from the now-completed papal transition:

1. The stage of history is being set for the final crisis. All the evidence we have reviewed offers proof that the papacy has not changed, that its unscriptural dogmas are held with as much fervency as in times past, and that the

Church's efforts to regain power over civil governments continue at a brisk pace. The credibility of those liberal Adventist claims that the papacy has "changed," that Ellen White's predictions of the last days have been rendered "obsolete," is as dead as the late pope himself. Sincere truth-seekers, especially among the church's youth, will increasingly find such claims absurd and oblivious to reality. As indeed they should!

Columnist Michael Barone, in the latest *U.S. News & World Report*, comments on the growing power of religion in American politics, declaring, "If you read the headlines, you run the risk of thinking we are headed toward a theocracy." (Michael Barone, "Faith in Our Future?" *U.S. News & World Report*, May 2, 2005, p. 40.) He goes on—foolishly, he may soon learn—to assure his readers this could never happen: "No religion," he writes, "is going to impose laws on an unwilling Congress or the people of this country.... America is too diverse and freedom-loving for that." (57. *Ibid.*) Barone better read Revelation 13—not to mention the writings of Ellen White! In her words:

"Political corruption is destroying love of justice and regard for truth, and even in free America, rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance." (58. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 592.)

"To secure popularity and patronage, legislators will yield to the demand for a Sunday law." (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 451.)

Barone's naivete notwithstanding, his words—and the constant media coverage not only of recent papal developments but also of the growing power of the Religious Right in American politics—indicate thoughtful men of the world are pondering these issues, and doing so in public. Any lingering notion that Adventist eschatology is somehow irrelevant to the contemporary world cannot possibly be taken seriously, by anyone.

As events quicken on the global stage, emphasis on the soonness of Jesus' coming and preparation for the final crisis will become increasingly imperative within the church. The prophet's admonition will ring ever truer:

"Prophecy is fast fulfilling. More, much more, should be said about these tremendously important subjects.... Great pains should be taken to keep this subject before the people. The solemn fact is to be kept not only before

the people of the world, but before our own churches also, that the day of the Lord will come suddenly, unexpectedly. Let no one feel that he is secure from the danger of being surprised. Let no one's interpretation of prophecy rob you of the conviction of the knowledge of events which show that this great event is near at hand." (*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 335, 336.)

2. The final conflict will be a battle of dueling fundamentalists. The word fundamentalist, used in this context, refers to those who believe in a set of transcendent absolutes, whether true or false, as opposed to relativists, who hold such beliefs to be impossible for finite mortals.

The secular mind, such as we know it, will effectively cease to exist.

The growth of Catholic strength in the Third World has been paralleled by a similar change in the balance of power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In both cases, this has meant the ascendancy of conservative theological elements over liberal ones. Philip Jenkins, in his recent book *The Next Christendom*, demonstrates the rapid growth of the Christian community in Third World nations, and the corresponding rise of conservative morals and theology. (Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).)

Recent global decisions by the Seventh-day Adventist Church on issues such as women's ordination give evidence of this. Intense and divisive though it continues to be, most of the current struggle between liberal and conservative theology in the Adventist Church is found in First World countries, which altogether make up barely fifteen percent of the worldwide Adventist body.

Liberal theology has been in similar decline in Protestant churches for the past several decades. (See Dean M. Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982); John Dart, "Mainline Church Strength Shrinks," *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 1985, Part 1-A, pp. 1-8; Kenneth L. Woodward, "From Mainline to Sideline," *Newsweek*, Dec. 22, 1986, pp. 54-56; "Dead End for the Mainline," Aug. 9, 1993, pp. 46-48.) Ambiguity empties the pews; clarity fills them. Not many of any age or generation care to spend three choice weekend hours in pursuit of a religion as uncertain as their Wall Street portfolios! Barone's editorial, quoted earlier, likewise notes that "religions and sects that have grown" in recent decades "are those that make serious demands on members; those that accommodate to secular critics and make few demands decline in numbers." (Barone, "Faith in Our Future?" *U.S. News & World Report*, May 2, 2005, p. 40.)

The claim of some in the media, covering the recent papal election, that a hard-line approach by the Vatican may drive millions from the Church, may well be unfounded if recent history is a clue. Evidence from throughout the Christian community for the past few decades has been clear that the harder the line taken by a religious body on moral and theological issues, the more likely it is to grow, not shrink.

The impact of the late pope on young people has especially been noteworthy in the media. One CNN reporter said he couldn't fathom how "an old man who tells people not to do things" could be so popular with youth. Whatever we say about the falsity of Catholic doctrine, the response of Catholic young people to the moral clarity of John Paul II goes far in putting the lie to the popular notion of Adventist liberals that doctrinal and moral rigidity chases the youth from the church.

The fact is that fundamentalism is on the rise throughout the world, and liberal ambiguity is on the wane. This, too, is a sign of the end. The Sabbath/Sunday issue would likely be so much foolishness to liberal denominations, as it is to liberals within Adventism. This is something only fundamentalists are likely to care about, on either side of the debate. Moreover, the prevalence of obviously supernatural developments in the last days will leave no room for the skepticism and higher-critical doubts of the theological left. The secular mind, such as we know it, will effectively cease to exist.

In short, the struggle of the end-times will be a struggle of fundamentalists. A contrast of fundamental error with fundamental truth. Efforts by the church to "reach the secular mind" will soon confront the reality that such a mindset is rapidly losing its appeal to a world stalked by uncertainty, ceaseless disasters, and a constant state of crisis. As the final events draw closer, with increasing supernatural occurrences and the appearance of supernatural beings, relativism and higher-critical skepticism will become as anachronistic as the Flat Earth Society. The question will no longer be, Does supernatural power exist? No one will then be asking, Are there absolute truths? Supernatural events will occur all around; no one will be able to doubt them. The absolutes of God's Word will be clearly placed alongside the absolutes imposed by the global powers of Antichrist. The questions at that time will be, Which supernatural power commands my allegiance? Which set of absolutes will I obey?

The Temple Restored ... cont'd

"You are to continue to be instructed in the school of Christ, having the heart open to receive the heavenly knowledge that will be imparted unto you; and thus you will grow in grace and the knowledge of the truth. There is a final examination that is to take place in reference to your probationary time in this world which is of vital interest to every one of us. There will in that day be no indifferent spectators. Every one will have a part to act, and will have intense interest to pass that ordeal with heavenly honors. All will have an opportunity to educate themselves while in this world, that they may be fitted to stand the grand review which must shortly take place" ST 02-14-78 (An address given by EGW to the graduating class of Battle Creek College)

Benedict XVI & the Challenge ... cont'd

3. God is waiting on us. Finally, we cannot forget who is really responsible for holding up the return of Jesus.

The increasing signs of the last days are important to arouse our awareness and inspire our consecration. But ultimately, God is not waiting on global events. God is waiting on His unprepared church. It is their "holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God" (2 Peter 3:12), that will finally determine when Jesus will come. It is their need to be sealed in their foreheads, which requires the Spirit's transforming them into "all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:19), that restrains the winds of strife (Revelation 7:1-3). It is at the time of the seventh angel, when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord (Revelation 11:15), that the mystery of God shall be finished (Revelation 10:7), "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

Ellen White is in complete harmony with these Bible verses when she declares: "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." (White, Christ's Object Lessons, p. 69. GCO) Momentous as the events around us surely are, God is not waiting on the pope, the world economy, natural disasters, or the U.S. government. God is waiting on Seventh-day Adventists.

May He not wait much longer!

Pastor Kevin D. Paulson serves on the pastoral staff of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Through the years he has published articles in many publications. He is also editor of Quo Vadis, a truth-filled magazine predominantly featuring the work of SDA young people. Kevin is also the speaker for "Know Your Bible," a radio program broadcast each Sunday at 5:30 p.m. on WMCA 570 AM, in Hasbrouk Heights, New Jersey. Pastor Paulson received his BA in Theology from Pacific Union College in 1982 and an MA in Systematic Theology from Loma Linda University in 1987.



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Amazing Discoveries

PO Box 4480
Blaine, WA
98231-4480
USA

or

PO Box 189
7101C - 120th Street
Delta, BC V4E 2A9
Canada

Tel: 604-572-9457
Fax: 604-599-9949

editor@amazingdiscoveries.org
www.amazingdiscoveries.org