

Should Adventists Join the Ecumenical Movement to Preserve Christianity in America?

If anyone is paying attention to what is currently transpiring in politics, they would know that issues such as gay marriage, abortion, and stem cell research are the themes that form the base of the extremely powerful, far-right political group the Christian Right.

At the same time, other groups such as gay and lesbian organizations, pro-choice groups, and liberal progressives are clamoring for more visibility and/or rights in American society. This has created a clash of epic proportions that seemingly won't soon be resolved.

Traditionally, the Democratic Party has supported the objectives of these groups while the Republican Party has supported the aforementioned objectives of the Christian Right.

So Why Is this Important?

Adventists have a long history of supporting and advocating separation of church and state, yet surprisingly when it comes to these issues, many Adventists are recoiling from their position.

It is understandable that many Christians, not just Adventists, have a visceral, emotional response when faced with the possibility that sex education in schools could include information on gay, lesbian, and transgender lifestyles or abortion rights. Opponents of gay marriage and abortion have strong arguments that fall in line with the beliefs and values of Christians everywhere, --the sacredness of marriage and the

right of innocents to life. The question is; where is all this leading?

The Spirit of Prophecy Foretells Ecumenical Movement

In the late 1800s, Ellen G. White wrote:

"The wide diversity of belief in the Protestant churches is regarded by many as decisive proof that no effort to secure a forced uniformity can ever be made. But there has been for years, in churches of the Protestant faith, a strong and growing sentiment in favor of a union based upon common points of doctrine. To secure such a union, the discussion of subjects upon which all were

not agreed—however important they might be from a Bible standpoint—must necessarily be waived." —The Great Controversy 1888 p. 444

Brothers and Sisters, isn't this the state of things as we now see it, or, are we not paying attention to that which has already been revealed?

If we view the activity of the Protestant churches, we see that for years they have been unifying and are now organized under the term evangelical Christians.

But back to the conflict between Liberals and Conservatives

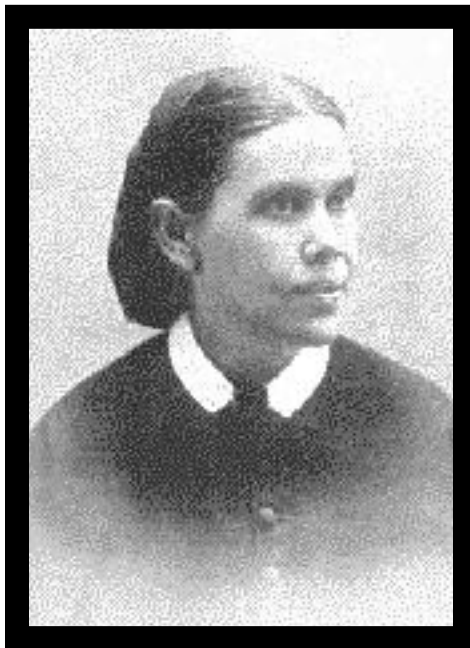
The arguments on both sides will continue, and the



conflict will grow hotter and more divisive until, in the interest of preserving the principles of Christianity, a call will be made to enforce those principles with strong arm of the civil law. This will give birth to a church-state confederacy (Isaiah 8), or, the image of the beast spoken of in Revelation 13. The image of the beast is created by the two-horned beast (the United States) and is a precursor the much anticipated mark of the beast, the acceptance by individuals (either secularly [the mark in the hand] or religiously [the mark in the forehead]) of the Sunday Law decree and enforcement.

Of this event EGW writes:

"The beast with two horns "causeth [commands] all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." [Revelation 13:16, 17] The third angel's warning is, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." – *The Great Controversy 1888 p. 445*



Sister White continues:

"When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the State to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result." -- *The Great Controversy 1888 p. 445*

Many Adventists are expecting the revival of Rome or a rise in power by the Catholic Church, as a signal that the crisis is here; however, the Spirit of Prophecy is clear that it is the two-horned beast of Revelation 13: 11-18 that will bear the number 666 and oppress the true church of God. The divinely inspired words of the prophet of the Lord also reveal that the Protestants will be the main actors in propelling the United States into the church-state government.

"This power is the last that treads down the true church of God: and as the true church is still trodden down, and cast out by all Christendom, it follows that the last oppressive power has not 'come to his end'; and Michael has not stood up. This last power that treads down the saints is brought to view in Rev. 13:11-18. His number is 666." -- *"A Word to the Little Flock," pp. 8, 9.*

"I saw that the two-horned beast had a dragon's mouth, and that his power was in his head, and that the decree would go out of his mouth. Then I saw the Mother of Harlots; that the mother was not the daughters, but separate and distinct from them. She has had her day, and it is past, and her daughters, the Protestant sects, were the next to come on the stage and act out the same mind that the mother had when she persecuted the saints. I saw that as the mother has been declining in power, the daughters had been growing, and soon they will exercise the power once exercised by the mother." --*Spalding & Magan Collection, p. 1*

How can Adventists Avoid the Deadly Trap?

Many Adventists are getting involved in the political drama currently taking place by taking positions publicly and making liaisons, both politically and in their secular and religious work. But, according to word of God and Spirit of Prophecy, the only safe position will be to stand in a "Thus saith the Lord" and remain a "separate and peculiar" people.

Isaiah 8:11-13:

11 For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, 12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. 13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

“We are to enter into no confederacy with the world, supposing that by so doing we could accomplish more.

If any stand in the way, to hinder the advancement of the work in the lines that God has appointed, they will displease God. No line of truth that has made the Seventh-day Adventist people what they are is to be weakened. We have the old landmarks of truth, experience, and duty, and we are to stand firmly in defense of our principles, in full view of the world. — *Testimonies Volume 6 p. 17*

“Those who are yielding to the passion for confederation are working out the plans of the enemy. The cause will be followed by the effect.—*Testimonies for the Church 8:27, 28.*

“A message of eternal importance is to be borne to those nigh and to those afar off. Let God’s messengers form no confederacy with those who, after hearing the message, refuse to search the Scriptures to see whether or not these things are so. God’s servants are to deal with evil as He has directed. They are to make no covenant with the world. The instruction which God gave to Moses for Israel is for us today: “Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee.” — *Review & Herald June 25, 1901*

“What Is a Confederacy?—The question has been asked, What do you mean by a confederacy? Who have formed confederacies? You know what a confederacy is,—a union of men in a work that does not bear the stamp of pure, straightforward, unswerving integrity. . —*Bible Commentary Volume 4 p. 1142*

“(2 Corinthians 6:17.) The wicked are being bound up in bundles, bound up in trusts, in unions, in confederacies. Let us have nothing to do with these organizations. God is our Ruler, our Governor, and He calls us to come out from the world and be separate. ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.’ If we refuse to do this, if we continue to link up with the world, and to look at every matter from a worldly standpoint, we shall become like the world. When worldly policy and worldly ideas govern our transactions, we cannot stand on the high and holy platform of eternal truth. —*Bible Commentary Volume 4 p. 1142*

Ties that Bind

Before Ellen White died, she issued the above warnings about the dangers of joining hands with the world (which includes those who have rejected the truth, --the fallen churches) and agreeing and working together with them towards some common objective. Why? It is this liaison that will eventually pit them squarely against the will of God.

But many Adventists are in doubt that could this happen. “The church is flourishing”, they say, “and God’s blessing is on us no matter what we do”. However, it is because the Spirit of Prophecy is neither read nor appreciated that our eyes are not opened to our true condition and the peril ahead. See *Testimonies Volume 5 p. 217*. Additionally, it is not enough that we understand the truth intellectually, for that will not save us in the day of God. We must act on the truth to make a change in our lives, overcoming our bad habits and fleshly desires in Christ Jesus on a daily basis.

Two Classes of Brethren

The brethren that do not heed the warnings contained in the *Testimonies* will inadvertently yet gradually become advocates for the church-state union, trading their faith for power and position and fear of derision. In many cases, these brethren will convince themselves that they are doing a good thing.

Meanwhile, another class of brethren realizing the danger of uniting with the world, (and who heed the warnings contained in the Spirit of Prophecy) will be against the church-state confederacy, protesting the adoption of it by prominent members and leaders in the church. They are eventually treated with contempt by their former brethren and the rest of the world as religious dissidents.

“As the storm [the Sunday Law] approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel’s message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position, and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in

the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbath-keepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them.”
--The Great Controversy 1888 p. 608 (parenthesis added)

“One thing is certain: Those Seventh-day Adventists who take their stand under Satan’s banner will first give up their faith in the warnings and reproofs contained in the Testimonies of God’s Spirit.—*Selected Messages 3:84 (1903)*.

“The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’ (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God’s remnant people in the true testimony.—*Selected Messages 1:48 (1890)*.

“Men whom He has greatly honored will, in the closing scenes of this earth’s history, pattern after ancient Israel.... A departure from the great principles Christ has laid down in His teachings, a working out of human projects...”

“The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place.—*Selected Messages 2:380 (1886)*.

“Divisions will come in the church. Two parties will be developed. The wheat and tares grow up together for the harvest.—*Selected Messages 2:114 (1896)*.

We can surmise from these texts the following things:

1. The storm is persecution; the letting go of the

four winds in Revelation 7:1-4. See Testimonies Volume 5 page 152; Volume 3 p. 414. Ellen White writes that the letting go of the four winds is the Sunday Law.

2. A “large class”, a group of unsanctified, worldly brethren, will begin to make movements against their brethren in the church, bringing pressure upon them to accept with the church-state union which will eventually lead to the Sunday Law.

3. This disaffection comes at a time when the winds are about to be let go, before the Sunday Law.

4. The falling away of these brethren is due to the fact that they have eschewed the warnings contained in the testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of Prophecy. Rev. 19:10

5. The wheat and tares are separated. The call to unite with the fallen churches is the event that finally reveals the characters of all in the church; the wheat will be seen to be wheat, and the tare will be seen as a tare. The righteous remain while the wicked are “bound into bundles to be burned”.



The Wheat & the Tares: A Symbolical Harvest in the Church

Matt. 13:30:

“Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

It is important to realize that a separation of wheat and tares, righteous and wicked is to take place *before* the Loud Cry and *before* God’s children in Babylon come out to join us. (Rev 18:4) The symbols cannot be mistaken, for it not only defies all human reasoning but contradicts all that has been revealed through types, parables, the scriptures, and the Spirit of Prophecy to bring a righteous people from the fallen churches into

a church co-mingled with the good and the bad. See Testimonies Volume 5 p. 157

Every parable which represents a spiritual harvest of souls illustrates the wicked being taken from the righteous, and the righteous being gathered into God's kingdom (the barn). See Luke 17:33-37, Matthew 13:24-30.

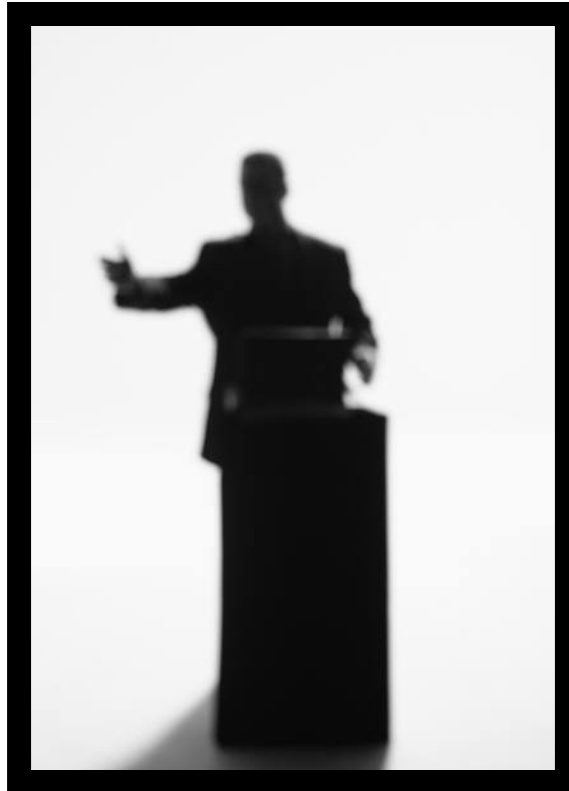
We must remember what is written about the state of the church at this time:

"As trials thicken around us, both separation and unity will be seen in our ranks. Some who are now ready to take up weapons of warfare will in times of real peril make it manifest that they have not built upon the solid rock; they will yield to temptation. Those who have had great light and precious privileges but have not improved them will, under one pretext or another, go out from us.—Testimonies for the Church 6:400 (1900).

"The third angel's message is to lighten the earth with its glory; but only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the Mighty One will be permitted to act a part in proclaiming it when it shall have swelled into the loud cry.--*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists, p. 155*

"The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God... Here we see that the church—the Lord's sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God's power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief,

and they say: The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. Thus "Peace and safety" is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children all perish together. --*Testimonies to the Church Volume 5 p. 211*



In the last solemn work, few great men will be engaged.

"The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. Those who have rendered supreme homage to 'science falsely so called' will not be the leaders then. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light.

"Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged.

They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the

shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal. They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you. But it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior the pure brightness of a genuine Christian character will be revealed. In the day time we look toward heaven but do not see the stars. They are there, fixed in the firmament, but the eye cannot distinguish them. In the night we behold their genuine luster.

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to

every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it.

"Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.

"When trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground, when multitudes of false brethren are distinguished from the true, then the hidden ones will be revealed to view, and with hosannas range under the banner of Christ. Those who have been timid and self-distrustful will declare themselves openly for Christ and His truth. The most weak and hesitating in the church will be as David—willing to do and dare. —*Testimonies for the Church Volume 5 pp. 80, 81*

A Call to Awake

Brothers and Sisters, it is high time to "study to shew thyself approved, a faithful workman, rightly dividing the word of God". Remember to "despise not prophesyings", and "hold fast to that which is good". If in doubt, go directly "To the law (the Bible) and to testimony (The Spirit of Prophecy)" remembering if they "speak not according to this word, there is no light in them."

Perilous times are before us, the like of which most of us are wholly unprepared to stand. Are you ready

to endure hardship, strife, derision, imprisonment, or even death for the Savior? If not, now is the time to make your "calling and election sure".

"...our weapons are to be those found in a plain "Thus saith the Lord." Our work is to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God. We should not be turned aside to lines that will encourage controversy, or arouse antagonism in those not of our faith.

"In the name of the Lord we are to go forward, unfurling His banner, advocating His word. When the authorities command us not to do this work; when they forbid us to proclaim the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, then it will be necessary for us to say as did the apostles: 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' Acts 4:19, 20.

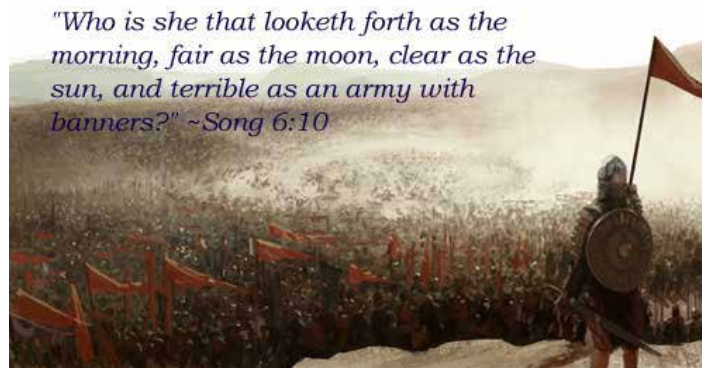
"The truth is to be set forth in the power of the Holy Spirit. This alone can make our words effective. Only through the Spirit's power will victory be gained and held.

"God's plan is first to get at the heart. Speak the truth, and let Him carry forward the reformatory power and principle. Make no reference to what opponents say; but let the truth alone be advanced. The truth can cut to the quick. Plainly unfold the word in all its impressiveness.—*Counsels to Writers & Editors pp. 68, 70-73*

The Final Conflict

"Clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict. 'Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners' (Song of Solomon 6:10), she is to go forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer."

"The darkest hour of the church's struggle with the powers of evil, is that which immediately precedes the day of her final deliverance. But none who trust in God need fear; for 'when the blast of the terrible ones is as



a storm against the wall,' God will be to his church 'a refuge from the storm.' Isaiah 25:4."--*Review & Herald*
June 1, 1915

Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come unto thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." Isaiah 52:1, 2.