

# “Watchman, what of the night ?”



“The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you, the hour and the end!” Ezekiel 7:6 (Moffatt)

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### *Editor's Preface*

With this Issue of WVN, we had originally intended to focus attention primarily on our analysis of Pope Francis's latest encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* began in our last bimonthly presentation (Issue # 47). However, during the interim between the issuance of the previous and present thought papers, the Iowa Foundation received a number of pointed e-mails that were quite critical of the way we were presenting certain aspects of *The Sanctuary Truth*. The critique was from a respected, dedicated believer and long time supporter of Adventist Laymen's Foundation theology pioneered by Elder William H. Grotheer. The contention initially centered in the manner that Issue # 47 concluded that installment of the ongoing coverage of "The Yearly Hebrew Tabernacle Service ... The Day Of Atonement." This editor promptly responded to the concerns expressed, but shortly thereafter received another e-mail message that concluded with the following statement / warning:

"I applaud your intention to clarify the point at issue here. I just hope that not too much damage has been done by what appears to have been an underestimation on your part of the impact of the final sentence."

Normally I would have kept the correspondence between the both of us. But the raising of this question only deepened the conviction that other



readers of WWN *may* have had similar conceptions thereby necessitating a broader, more inclusive response in an upcoming issue of the thought paper - though the Iowa Foundation had received no communication from anyone else indicating so. Upon further prayer and contemplation on how best to handle this, a third e-mail message arrived a few days later outlining additional misgivings regarding A.L.F. of Iowa's way of representing Elder Grotheer's theology. Accordingly, our dedication to the theological positions advanced by the Foundation was also called into question by implying that:

"It is possible that you do not agree with all of the exegeted doctrines of Adventist Laymen's Foundation. I cannot know except to the extent that you reveal it, which would be a disaster under present circumstances given the mission of the Foundation ...

"I trust that the only officially authorized publication of 'Watchman, What of the Night?' will continue to preserve and promote the Adventist Laymen's Foundation theology."

This last message re-enforced and confirmed the necessity to further clarify the issues raised in a more inclusive, forthright fashion. This is particularly true presently of any apprehensions regarding the identity of "the altar before the Lord" which, admittedly, is of crucial importance in the present truth understanding of the final atonement. Therefore, this Issue of WWN is devoted to the setting forth of this purpose.

Consequently, the continuation of our present main article topic "The Papal Social Agenda - Pope Francis's Vision of a Global Universal Brotherhood" will be resumed with "Part 2" in the next thought paper (Oct. / Nov. 2021).

## **Some Preliminary Observations Regarding A.L.F. of Iowa and The Iowa Edition of WWN.**

Under the *About Us* tab <sup>1</sup> on the Iowa Foundation's website, the following declaration is introduced:

"It is the purpose of the Iowa Foundation to resume and continue the work of the Mississippi/Arkansas Foundation which was dissolved after the death of Elder William H. Grotheer, primary founder and original Executive Secretary. ... The thought paper, 'Watchman, what of the night?,' ... was revived in 2013. ... The objective of each Iowa issue of 'Watchman, what of the night?,' is to continue stimulation of in-depth thought on biblical topics and doctrines. ...

"Therefore, the work of the Foundation continues to faithfully adhere to the basic theological views proposed by Elder Grotheer in accordance with the progressive light of present biblical truth." (emphasis added).

The very first issue of the "revived" WWN, published by the Iowa Foundation (# 1, Nov. 2013), <sup>2</sup> also stated similar comments - (*Editor's Preface*): "The Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Iowa, Inc. deeply respects the work pioneered by Elder Grotheer and is organized for the continuance and promotion of the biblical truths proclaimed by the Foundation." (emph. added) ...

("What and Why?" - *Revisited*): "Surely, 47 years ago, Elder Grotheer understood the need not just to inform his readers about the disturbing events that were taking place within the Seventh-day Adventist Church but also to get them to think for themselves concerning those events. It was his original hope to make them 'aware of these important matters and contribute their influence intelli-

gently to a positive program of revival and reformation.' ... The Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Iowa, Inc., in its republishing of 'Watchman, what of the night?' anew, is committed to the continuance of this fine and admirable effort. If Elder Grotheer perceived a need to motivate the Adventist Movement to do their own thinking many years ago when he began this publication, how much greater is the need today?" (emph. added) ...

*(In Memory of Elder William Henry Grotheer):* "The first time I came into contact with Elder Grotheer ... led to ... a trip to Iowa by Elder Grotheer to conduct a series of meetings on July 19 - 20, 1991 ... Elder Grotheer's presentations convinced us that his understanding of the overall view of true Seventh-day Adventism was more knowledgeable, progressive, broader, and biblical-ly based than our own or any other Adventists that we had come into contact with. ...

"Elder Grotheer was a man mightily used by God to re-establish and move onward our spiritual heritage in the face of ever increasing heresy, apostasy, and confusion. He has left a rich legacy of theological writings and sermons which will be a blessing to many until the end of time." (emph. added).

This commitment to the theology of Adventist Laymen's Foundation (A.L.F.) by its present officers and Board members is interspersed throughout various subsequent Issues of WWN as the following examples demonstrate:

*(From Issue # 3, Feb./March 2014):* <sup>3</sup> "Beginning with this issue of 'Watchman, what of the night?', we will examine ... a series of articles on the sanctuary and its relationship to the Seventh-day Adventist Movement. Elder William H. Grotheer, founder and former editor of this thought paper, wrote a verita-

ble wealth of information on this subject in past years. Given the state of affairs in Adventism today, it is obvious that his work has been greatly overlooked and ignored. The Lord willing, as this series progresses, we plan on reprinting portions of his expositions on this topic from past issues of WWN ... " (emph. added).

*(From Issue # 5, June/July 2014):* <sup>4</sup> "Beginning with this issue of ... 'The Sanctuary Truth', we will start reprinting and re-examining some of the pertinent material on the subject written by Elder William H. Grotheer. For many years, Elder Grotheer's extensive study and research produced a voluminous amount of information about the biblical teaching on the sanctuary." (emph. added).

*(From Issue # 7, Oct./Nov. 2014):* <sup>5</sup> [ " ... *The final atonement involved a cleansing of God's people from both the record of sin: 'their transgressions,' and the reason for the committal of the sins recorded: 'the uncleanness (impurity, defilement) of the children of Israel.'* This two-fold aspect of the final cleansing concerned more than just the blotting out (removal) of the record of sin ... It also included the cleansing (purification) of the people of God from their defilement - 'the cause for the record of the sins' - which 'is not noted as cleansed until the third phase, the cleansing at the brazen altar (Leviticus 16: 19)'. ... the typical Day of Atonement ceremony for the children of Israel consisted of the following three-phased progression of the Levitical High Priest: 1) a consecutive three-fold movement from the Court to the Most Holy Place before the Ark of the Covenant in which the ministration of (first) incense, (second) the blood of the bullock, and (third) the blood of the Lord's goat provided an atonement of cleansing for the removal of

*the record of their sin; 2) a movement from the Most Holy Place to the Holy Place before the Altar of Incense in which the ministration of the blood of the Lord's goat provided an atonement of cleansing for the removal of the record of their corporate guilt and confession; and 3) a movement from the Holy Place to the Altar in the Court in which the ministration of the mingled blood of both the bullock and the Lord's goat provided an atonement of cleansing for the removal of the record of their individual guilt and confession along with an atonement of cleansing for the purification of the children of Israel from their defilement." ] (emph. in original).*

(From Issue # 19, Oct. / Nov. 2016): <sup>6</sup>  
 "Clearly, Elder Grotheer believed that the writing ministry which the Lord 'bore heavily' upon him to begin in 1967 was rooted in the conviction that it came about as the result of the fulfillment of Luke 21: 24. For 37 years (from 1973 to his death in 2009), Elder Grotheer wrote and taught extensively on the significance and meaning of this prophecy of Jesus and its relationship to many of the present truths of our day. To the honest seeker of truth, his expositions on this subject are something that we dare not continue to disregard." (emph. added).

This sampling is literally on record showing the adherence of the present officers / Board members of the Iowa Foundation to the theology of Adventist Laymen's Foundation as developed and advanced by Elder Grotheer. The biblical directive found in Amos 3: 3 – "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" – is the applicable principle followed in this respect.

Next, we will provide further clarification concerning the "minor corrections and revisions" made by us in the re-presentation of

Elder Grotheer's writings. The objection on this point by our esteemed colleague in the faith asserted:

"Doctrinally, I have come across no minor errors, and certainly no major errors, warranting mention by representatives of the Foundation. On every doctrinal point there is abundant proof of validity"

The "minor corrections and revisions" (occasionally also "embellishments," "arrangements") mentioned have nothing to do whatsoever with doctrinal error. To be perfectly clear, the corrections, revisions, embellishments, and arrangements made by us in the re-presentation of Elder Grotheer's writings are all textual in content. This in our case is primarily typographical in nature and refers to misspelling of words, improper punctuation, quotation inaccuracies, etc. At times we have rearranged some of the material sequentially by linking texts that deal with the same subject or point together with each other - but never in a manner that changes or compromises the doctrinal content; and have also made revisions (the main controverted presentation under examination from WWN # 47 is an example - what was formally a footnote in the original text we incorporated into the main text) but, again, nothing that changes or compromises the doctrinal content. This is the reason why we have designated all of this as "minor." Generally, in literary circles, these type of modifications in times past were deemed acceptable and did not warrant any need for notification that such changes had been made. However, as time continues to advance forward, this laxness and corresponding permissiveness on these practices are rapidly becoming more unfavorable. Civil involvement respecting tort legislation and enforcement in matters of this sort are increas-

ingly testifying to this fact. In light of all of this, it is not hyperbole for us to say that one should strive to present written material, such as that which is under discussion here, in as accurate, forthright, and openly disclosing and honest manner as possible. Regarding this, a corollary criticism commented:

" ... to suggest that corrections and revisions of Grotheer's biblical expositions might be appropriate in any degree plays into the hands of the opponents of the Foundation's theology ...

"Just a single suggestion by a representative of the Foundation that there are 'minor' errors sufficiently significant to warrant correction or revision gives them a peg to hang their opposition on. If the perceived errors are 'minor,' why correct them? I am sure that there is no intention to undermine the authority of Grotheer's systematic theology; but 'corrections' and 'revisions' can have this unintentional effect." (emph. in original).

While there is much in this admonishment to be cognizant of, we are convinced that the likelihood of the Foundation's opponents undermining Grotheer's/A.L.F.'s systematic theology is more probable by not making the modifications/disclosures in the re-presentations as just outlined. First, there are no theological "errors" corrected, revised, embellished, or rearranged by us – minor, major, or whatever else – that any opponent (or anyone for that matter) can objectively, truthfully use as "a peg to hang their opposition on." Any attempt to do so will simply be a wresting/twisting of what has always been our *stated* intent – especially now so after this further clarification,. And lastly, we want to acknowledge the need to be ever careful and vigilant in doing the Lord's work. "We are (truly) in a doctrinal battle." The growing urgency of the 'hour' dictates that we by

God's grace and continual prayer be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." (Matthew 10: 16b). And while we are certainly not claiming to be mistake free in our efforts to serve the Lord, it has been our experience that those efforts can at times, even with diligent execution and the best of intentions, produce an "unintentional effect." With those occurrences, we have learned to seek instruction from God's word and respond accordingly as He, through the Spirit, directs.

### **THE YEARLY HEBREW TABERNACLE SERVICE:**

#### **The Most Holy Place Ministrations: In the Second Apartment**

#### **The Day Of Atonement**

**(Resumed From WWN, Issue # 47) <sup>7</sup>—**

*[ Note: All comments by the present Editor are italicized within brackets. In order to establish context, we will begin by reproducing the last two paragraphs at the end of Issue # 47 ]*

After completing the three-fold entry into the most holy place, the high priest brought of the goat's blood to the altar of incense in the "tabernacle of the congregation" (Leviticus 16: 16b) ...

This ministration for the cleansing of corporate guilt was the second step or phase of the Day of Atonement ritual.

Next, the final step or phase involved the high priest going "out unto the altar that is before the Lord, [to] make an atonement for it" (Ibid. 16: 18). *[ At this point, we made some "minor" modifications to the original text in order to seamlessly incorporate footnote # 4 into the main body of the essay. The original text read: "The final step or phase involved the altar in the court. <sup>4</sup> " Notice that we added the word "Next" to indicate the sequential order (one after the prior) of the*

*successive steps or phases. Since the ministration "of the goat's blood [on] the altar of incense in the 'tabernacle of the congregation' (the first apartment or holy place) ... was the second step or phase of the Day of Atonement ritual ... the final step or phase (that which follows or is after said completed second step / phase) ... out [at] the altar that is before the Lord," could not possibly be the altar of incense because atonement for it, at this stage of the ritual, had already been accomplished / completed ]*

A question arises as to whether this is referring to the altar of incense, or the brazen altar out in the court. [ *This first sentence from footnote # 4 was also modified, meaning abridged. The original text read: "Was 'the altar that is before the Lord' upon which the mingled blood was placed (Lev. 16:18), the altar of incense, or the brazen altar in the court?" While the mention of "(Lev. 16:18)" in the footnote is appropriate, the introduction of it again into the main body of the text at this point, having already done so in the sentence immediately preceding this one, would have seemed somewhat redundant. Moreover, the subject of "the mingled blood" placed upon "the altar that is before the Lord" will be discussed subsequently in the main body of the essay below ] It is argued that "before the Lord" must be understood as before the veil which separated the most holy from the holy.*

[ *This last sentence closing out Issue # 47, along with the ending notation that the essay was "To be Continued," is presented verbatim from the original text of Elder Grotheer's footnote # 4. There can be little doubt but that he framed this statement in this manner because many commentators, in accordance with traditional ancient Jewish rabbins (scholars or teachers of Jewish law),*

*taught mistakenly that this was referring to the altar of incense.<sup>8</sup> We will now "continue" his essay in which "the altar that is before the Lord" is "argued" correctly to be "the (brazen) altar in the court." ]*

Within the context of the ritual to be performed on the Day of Atonement, Aaron was instructed to "take the two goats and present them before the Lord." This is defined as being "at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." (Leviticus 16: 7). In the rules governing the burnt offering, "the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" is defined as "before the Lord." (Ibid. 1: 3). To omit the altar in the court from cleansing on the Day of Atonement, would be to exclude from the services of that day the very place where most of the activity had transpired during the year. (emph. added) [ *This is where footnote # 4 in the original text ends. The following is the continuation of the original text within the main body of the essay ]*

Here during the year, the individual sinner came and offered his sin offering. Here the blood was placed by the common priest on the horns of this altar as a record of his confession of guilt. An atonement was then effected which brought to the penitent forgiveness. Now he is to be cleansed. In the type, the blood of the bullock and the blood of the Lord's goat were mingled before being placed on the horns of the altar. (Ibid. 16: 18-19). This becomes the last act of the final atonement. Once cleansed, there would be no further acts of transgressions to record. The final judgment on sin could be executed. He with whom sin originated, symbolized by the scapegoat, could be brought into the picture. The directions of the ritual read:

"And when [the high priest] hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the al-

tar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both of his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness." (Ibid. 16: 20-21; **emph. added**).

» *To be Continued.*

1. *Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Iowa, Inc.* (Nora Springs, IA: About Us, "The Iowa Foundation"), [paragraph] 1. <https://alfiowa.com/about/>

2. Gary L. Patrick, "*Watchman, what of the night?*" (Nora Springs, IA: Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Iowa, Inc., Issue # 1 - November 2013, "Editor's Preface" / "'What and Why?' - Revisited" / "In Memory of William Henry Grotheer"), 2, 6, 6-7. [https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN\\_IOWA\\_11\(13\).pdf](https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN_IOWA_11(13).pdf)

3. Patrick, "*Watchman, what of the night?*" (Nora Springs, IA: Issue # 3 - Feb. / March 2014, "Editor's Preface"), 2. [https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN\\_IOWA\\_2\(14\)\\_3\(14\).pdf](https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN_IOWA_2(14)_3(14).pdf)

4. Patrick, "*Watchman, what of the night?*" (Nora Springs, IA: Issue # 5 - June / July 2014, "Editor's Preface"), 1. [https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN\\_IOWA\\_Issue\\_5.pdf](https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN_IOWA_Issue_5.pdf)

5. Patrick, "*Watchman, what of the night?*" (Nora Springs, IA: Issue # 7 - Oct. / Nov. 2014, "Editor's Preface"), 1-2. [https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN\\_IOWA\\_10\(14\)\\_11\(14\).pdf](https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN_IOWA_10(14)_11(14).pdf)

6. Patrick, "*Watchman, what of the night?*" (Nora Springs, IA: Issue # 19 - Oct. / Nov. 2016, "Testimonial Articles on Luke 21: 24 / Article 1: Elder William H. Grotheer's Calling and Testimony"), 2. [https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN%20IOWA\\_10\(16\)\\_11\(16\).pdf](https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN%20IOWA_10(16)_11(16).pdf)

7. (Note: This entire study, beginning in WWN, Issue # 44, is simply a re-publication of): William H. Grotheer, "*Watchman, what of the night?*" (Ozone, AR: Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., XXVII - May 1994, "Theology of the Sanctuary - 4 - , The Day of Atonement"), 1-5. [http://www.adventistlaymen.com/WWN%20Text%20Versions/wwwn\(94\)05/wwwn05\(94\).html](http://www.adventistlaymen.com/WWN%20Text%20Versions/wwwn(94)05/wwwn05(94).html)

8. M.L. Andreasen, *The Sanctuary Service* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1947 - Appendix: The Altar Before the Lord), 337-339. [ *Pg. 121, PDF link* ]: [https://maranathamedia.com/downloads/library/books/Bible%20Doctrines/Sanctuary/The%20Sanctuary%20Service%20-%20M.L.%20Andreasen%20\(1947\).pdf](https://maranathamedia.com/downloads/library/books/Bible%20Doctrines/Sanctuary/The%20Sanctuary%20Service%20-%20M.L.%20Andreasen%20(1947).pdf)

\*All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

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