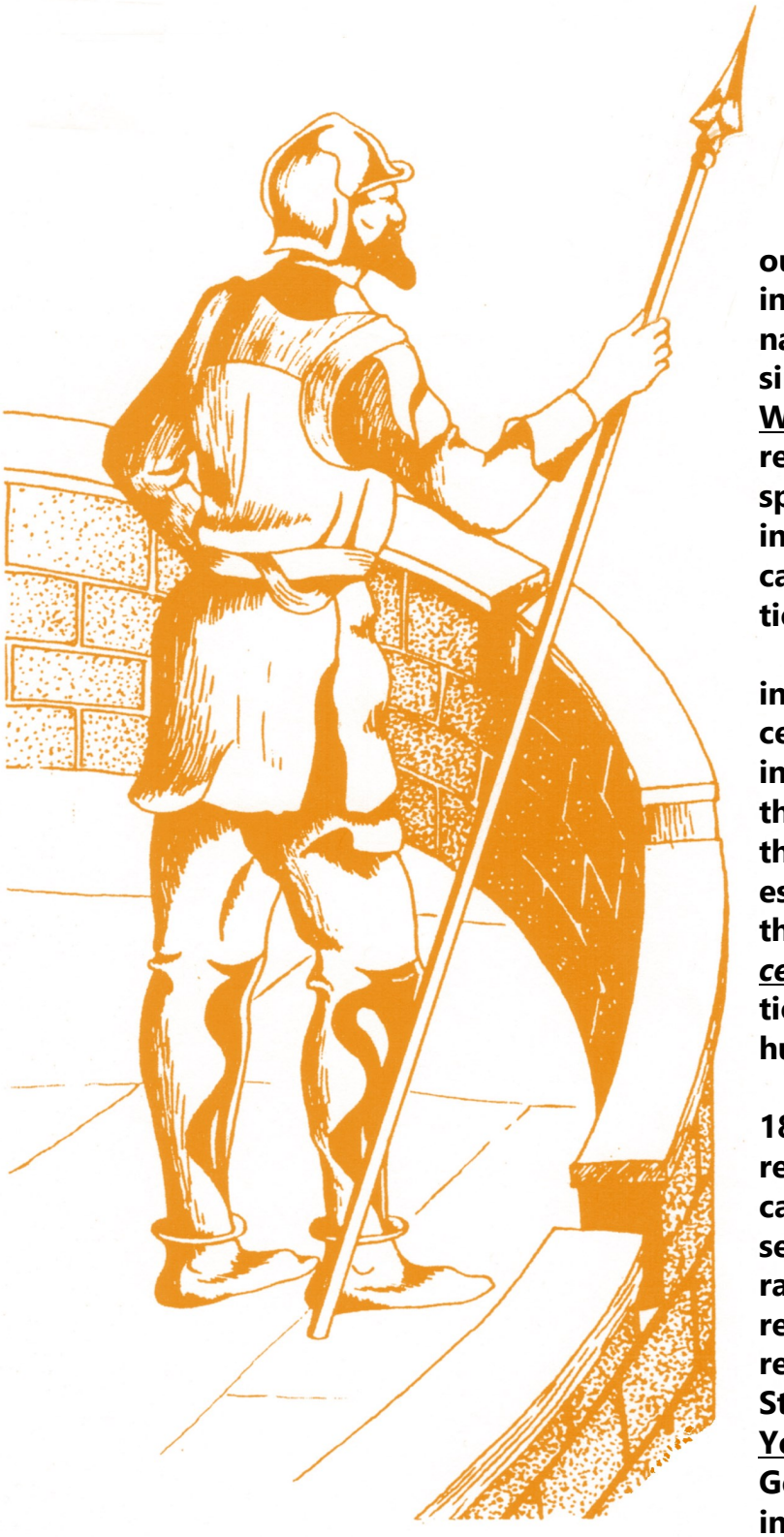
Issue # 67 ◆ Oct. / Nov. 2024

"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)



▶ THIS ISSUE'S READING

"THE TRUE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE INCARNATION OF JESUS – REVISITED # 3"

Editor's Preface

With this third installment of the thought paper, our continuing focus on the biblical truth regarding the humanity that Christ assumed in the incarnation proceeds with events that have occurred since the year 1950. As noted in Issue # 66 of WWN, 1950 is "the year that chronicles the most recent 'of the great words which the (little) horn spake' since the beginning of the judgment hour in 1844 (Daniel 7: 9-11; Revelation 14: 6-7) – the canonization of the Dogma of the Bodily Assumption of the Virgin Mary into heaven." [1]

As previously outlined, even before 1950 certain incidents arose and were already underway concerning the Incarnation. These events and teachings tended to undermine the trust committed to the Seventh-day Adventist Movement / Church in the proclamation of the "Three Angels' Messages." Stealthily and deceptively, they were laying the groundwork to move the Church away from its *certain* biblically based teaching on the Incarnation pertaining to the postlapsarian (after the fall) humanity assumed by Christ.

In all the published statements of belief from 1872 through 1914, the statement on Jesus Christ read in regard to the nature He assumed in the Incarnation – "He took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race." [2] The Battle Creek Church statement of 1894 read – "He took on him the nature of man, for the redemption of our fallen race." [3] Even the 1931 Statement, appearing for the first time in the Yearbook for that year, and ratified at the 1946 General Conference session read – "While retaining His divine nature He took upon Himself the

nature of the human family." [4]

Today, the sentiment that is often voiced states that all we have to do is 'preach Jesus' – but ***what*** 'Jesus?' If we do not accept the fact that Jesus, as the Son of man, began at the Incarnation, how can we understand His death, and His victory, for both stemmed from that event at Bethlehem. If He had not laid aside aspects of the "form of God" He could not have died, thus providing the sacrificial atonement. If He had not "condemned sin in the flesh," then His life was but a pretense, and the victory cry that rang through Heaven – "Now is come salvation, and strength" – would have had a hollow sound. (see Revelation 12: 10).

How is it that after 1950, we can no longer define with certainty the nature which Christ assumed in entering the realm of humanity?

" The Incarnation In The Final Conflict And The Restitution Of All Things "

The Conflict Within The Seventh-day Adventist Movement, From 1950 And On (resumed and continued) [1]

Also in 1967, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) placed a Seventh-day Adventist theologian on its Faith and Order Commission with the consent and approval of the S.D.A. General Conference.

Thirteen years later, in 1980, Israel completed a second phase of its control of ancient Jerusalem. By the action of the Knesset, old Jerusalem was combined with its modern counterpart making one city – the "complete and united" capital of Israel. Jesus' prophecy reached its final fulfillment.

The year 1980 also marked the adoption of a new Statement of Fundamental Beliefs in which the original teaching of the Church on the Incarnation was muted and reduced to the single observation – "He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ" (# 4). In an expanded explanation of what the voted beliefs mean, the book, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe ...*, adopted what is called "the orthodox" position (pg. 57, # 13), [5] and quotes the position of the Anglican clergyman, Henry Melvill, as a summary of the Adventist belief on the Incarnation. Melvill had written:

"Christ's humanity was not the Adamic humanity, that is, the humanity of Adam before the fall; nor fallen humanity, that is, in every respect the humanity of Adam after the fall. It was not the Adamic, because it had the innocent infirmities of the fallen. It was not fallen, because it never descended into moral impurity. It was, therefore, most literally our humanity, but without sin." (pg. 47). [5]

This position varies little, if any, from the position stated by Nichol in his book written in 1952 (See WWN, Issue # 66, pg. 4). [1] The one voice which God raised up to proclaim the "everlasting gospel" (Revelation 14: 6) was derailed, and that by the official "voice" of the Church in session at the 1980 General Conference. The "gospel of God, ... Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1: 1, 3), was no longer affirmed by the Church, regardless of how many individual members might still so believe. The prophecy of Jesus concerned corporate bodies. Its final fulfillment was reached in 1980.

Now we return to the key event by which prophecy marked the year 1950 – the Dogma of the Bodily Assumption of Mary into heaven. It does not mean that Mary ascended into heaven in 1950, that had been taught and believed by the Roman Church from prior times. The teaching was validated in 1950 by the infallible power bestowed by the Roman Church on the Pope when speaking *ex cathedra*. This in turn gave official credence to the apparitions of Mary.

It is reported that Leo XIII (1878-1903) had a vision in which he was informed "that Satan would be allowed one hundred years" to

vent his wrath, and that "Satan chose for his one hundred years the Twentieth Century" (*The Thunder of Justice*, pp. 4-5). [6] To counteract this supposed working of Satan, the Roman Church looked upon the Twentieth Century as "the Age of Mary." The writings of Saint Louis de Monfort (1673-1716) are cited as indicating that just as Mary preceded the first coming of Jesus so "the Reign of the Blessed Virgin would precede a Reign of the Lord Jesus." The authors of *The Thunder of Justice* state:

"Never before in history have we experienced the number of apparitions and supernatural phenomena as we have experienced in this century, particularly the latter half. On December 8, 1990, Mary stated to Father Gobbi: 'I was driven by the Most Holy Trinity to become the Mother of the Second Advent, and thus my motherly task of preparing the Church and all humanity to receive Jesus, who is returning to you in glory.'" (pg. 20). [6]

Herein is the great deception, the coming of Satan as Christ in "the last remnant of time." All who are not kept by "the power of God, through faith in His word, ... will be swept into the ranks of this delusion." (See 3SM, pg. 389; [7] and GC, pg. 562). [8]

The authors of *The Thunder of Justice* have chronicled various apparitions of Mary since 1531. For the first four hundred plus years till 1950, nineteen occurred. In the next three decades from 1950 to 1980; there were twenty-two. And since 1980, to the time of the writing of the book in the early 1990s, thirty-six.

This data and the stated objectives behind the Marian apparitions should tell us something. The world is in for an overwhelming surprise. But not only the world but many of those professing to believe the truth for this hour are not "home free" from this great deception.

"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, *and His teaching in our past history*." (LS, pg. 196, emphasis added). [9] The issue transcends a denominational designation. Before there was a Seventh-day Adventist, or the name even thought of, God made provision that the truth relative to the Incarnation be set forth in contradistinction to the dogma that Rome proclaimed. The issue is the gospel of God "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1: 3-4). It is that victory which proclaims the "power of his Christ" (Revelation 12: 10).

In the flesh, in the nature of fallen Adam, Jesus lived a life that no other son of Adam had ever lived, or can live. He did no sin. It is by faith in this righteousness alone, that we can have the hope of victory. It is these two basic elements of the "good news" of God that has come down through our church history, and at each point of the way has been contested by the enemy – 1888, 1901, 1950, 1967. But with this final date, God connected a prophecy of Jesus Himself (Luke 21: 24) which was to serve for His professed people as a warning signal, even as the surrounding of Jerusalem in AD 66, by alien armies, served as a warning signal to His people then. There was a brief interlude in time till AD 70, and there has been an interlude in time since 1967 to 1980, when the compromises of the original trust were crystallized in an action by the Church in session. And even now as we have entered the first quarter of the 21st Century, the Church has not officially repudiated this action of its leaders.

Effectively, this amounts to a denial of the all-sufficient victory that Jesus gained in humanity's behalf – living a completely sinless life in the flesh of sin. In this late hour, we have again turned our back on "the gospel of God" by accepting, embracing, and promoting theological pluralism respecting the doctrine of the Incarnation. This pluralism

has resulted in dividing the Seventh-day Adventist Church into three general camps concerning the flesh the incarnate Christ assumed: (1) the pre-fall humanity, (2) the partial pre-fall / partial post-fall humanity, (3) the post-fall humanity. To teach that an adherence to ***any*** of these views is an acceptable Adventist position, as the Church now promotes, not only denigrates the vital importance of holding a biblically sound understanding of this doctrine, but it is also confusingly untenable! Has not the Lord Jesus Himself warned His wayward people in past times of such a dire folly:

"And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matthew 12: 25).

Biblical Teaching – Old Testament

In the dream given to Jacob as he was enroute to the home of his mother's people, God not only revealed the nature of the promised Incarnation, but also the results which it would provide. Jacob "dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it." (Genesis 28: 12). This ladder represented "the Son of man." (John 1: 51). Through the Incarnation – "set up on the earth" – communication between God and man is restored. The Lord "stood above" the visionary ladder, and spoke to Jacob in blessing and promise. When he awakened, Jacob was afraid, and said, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Genesis 28: 17). Truly in the Incarnation, we find the house of God, for "the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us." (John 1: 14, Greek). [10] Further, as Jesus stated, "no man cometh unto the Father" except by Him. (John 14: 6). He is the Gate to heaven.

To remove that ladder by so much as a rung from the earth is to deny to the children of dust access to the Father and shut to fallen, sinful and sorrowing humanity the gate of Heaven. This is exactly what the leadership of the Church has done in the compromises of the Seventh-day Adventist – Evangelical Conferences while still professing to be the voice of God to the people. A false christ has been created, no longer "set up on the earth" but one "exempt" from the soil of earth contaminated by sin. The connecting point between God and man in a restored relationship was to be through "the seed of the woman." The Church of Rome "exempts" the woman, removing the ladder from the earth; the Adventist Church now "exempts" the "Seed" removing the ladder from the earth.

Moses, in reviewing for the children of Israel God's leading and instruction, reminded them that God would "raise up unto [them] a Prophet from the midst of [them], of [their] brethren, like unto [him]. (Deuteronomy 18: 15). He re-emphasized it quoting the words of God directly – "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee" (v. 18). The coming prophet was to be their flesh and blood, their brother. He was to be like Moses, sharing a common humanity with him.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God revealed that the nature of the Coming One was to be so identified with humanity that those proclaiming the good news would ask – "Who hath believed our doctrine?" (53: 1, marginal reading). "For he shall grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." (v. 2). A "root out of a dry ground," yet "a tender plant" – the mystic ladder was set up on the earth. "Think of Christ's humiliation. He took upon himself

fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin." (YI, Dec. 20, 1900). [11]

Biblical Teaching – New Testament

When Gabriel announced to Mary that she was to be the mother of the promised Seed, Prophet, and Messiah, she asked, "How shall this be?" (Luke 1: 34). The answer given by Gabriel has been the source of much discussion and used to give a wrong perception of the Incarnation. The Greek text reads literally – "And answering, the angel said unto her, a Spirit holy shall come over thee, a power most high shall cover thee: wherefore also the holy [spirit] being born [of thee] shall be called, Son of God." The problem arises as to what word is to be supplied where we have inserted, "spirit." Since the word, "holy" in the Greek is a neuter adjective, the KJV supplied the word, "thing" to be the noun which "holy" modified. But the adjective, ***hagion***, is the same adjective as used to modify the noun, "Spirit," which would "come over" Mary, being likewise in the neuter, because in the Greek, "spirit" is a neuter noun. If a different identity had been desired, the word, "holy," when used to describe the one born could have been, ***hagios***, the masculine form inasmuch as "son" (***huios***) is masculine. No, the promised Messiah "united humanity with divinity: a divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh. He united himself with the temple." (YI, op.cit., emph. added). [11]

Further, the definite Greek article is omitted before "Son of God." Yes, Jesus was the Son of God, but in the same way that He became the Son of man, so also we as sons of men may become sons of God. We receive "the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba (that is), Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8: 15-16). God acted "in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Hebrews 2: 10). And when was that suffering? "In the days of his flesh ... he suffered." (Ibid. 5: 7-8). As stated at the 1952 Bible Conference by H.L. Rudy, "Every day of His humiliation in sinful flesh was a day of suffering." [12] The identification of Jesus with human flesh was so close and complete that He, though called the Son of God, was a Son of man.

The Incarnation cannot be dismissed lightly and the nature that Christ assumed in that Incarnation brushed aside as unnecessary controversy because Paul declared the very nature Christ took to be a part of the gospel of God. He wrote:

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, ... Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1: 1, 3).

This cannot be dismissed with the suggestion that Paul in this text was merely writing about Christ's royal descent, because the contrast is made with His character as "the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness." The "spirit of holiness" is the thought in opposition to "the flesh." There is no one who has the audacity to assert that David had the nature of Adam before the fall! That only which David was able to transmit was a part of the "temple of flesh" to which Christ united Himself in becoming Jesus. This is declared to be a part of "the gospel of God." Paul wrote to the Galatians – "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Ibid. 1: 8). Today, a fallen angel from heaven is verily through leading instrumentalities of the Adventist Church and on the periphery of Adventism preaching a perverted gospel concerning the Incarnation.

Paul as he continued his exposition of the gospel of God to the Church at Rome de-

clared that God sent "his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8: 3). Jesus Christ came not only in the flesh, but in, the likeness of sinful flesh. If Paul had intended to convey that Jesus took the nature of Adam before the fall, he would not have used the word, "sinful," for not until after the fall was there any such flesh or nature. Paul couples this coming of Christ in "the likeness of sinful flesh" with the fact that Jesus concerning sin "condemned sin in the flesh," the very flesh He took in becoming man. The "flesh" Christ took contained all the potential to sin, but while such a flesh in us breaks forth into acts of sin, in Him, there was no response. He maintained His eternal integrity.

There are some who would argue over the word, "likeness," having us believe that what Christ took only appeared as in the fallen state, having the innocent infirmities, but was not the fallen nature in reality. The word, "likeness" in the Greek is *homoiomati*. This same word is used by Paul in Philippians 2: 7 – "in the likeness (*homoiomati*) of men." Would we say that Jesus only appeared to be man, but was not really so? Even as He was in the "likeness" of men, so also was He in the "likeness" of a flesh of sin.

Consider next the complete text in Philippians 2: 5-7 – "Christ Jesus, who in (the) form of God subsisting, not robbery thought (it) to be equal with God, but Himself emptied, (the) form of a slave taking, in likeness of men becoming." (Literal English from the Greek text translation).[13] Here Paul in proclaiming "the gospel of God" declared that Christ Jesus changed from the "form of God" to the "form of a slave" when He came "in the likeness of men." God did not create Adam a "slave form" but one after His own image. Adam perverted his created form into a slave form when he sinned. This form, Adam passed on to his descendants; and after four thousand years, Christ entered humanity accepting the working of the great law of heredity. Emptying Himself, He accepted the only form of man that existed when born of Mary – a slave form.

With this metamorphosis from "the form (*morpe*) of God" to "the form (*morphe*) of a slave," called "the mystery of godliness" (1 Timothy 3: 16), Paul invites us to consider another "mystery." He wrote, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Corinthians 15: 51). The "slave body" of our present existence will not be the body of the resurrection or translation. Our "vile body" will "be fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Philippians 3: 21). However, our identity will not be destroyed, we will merely change the form in which we will function and subsist. Likewise, Christ whose preexistence was in "the form of God" stepped out of that form, and accepted "the slave form" of man, ever retaining and preserving in that slave form His holy and undefiled Identity.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1: 14).

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." (1 Timothy 3: 16; 4: 1).

"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Hebrews 2: 16-17).

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist" (1 John 4: 2-3).

» To be Continued.

1. Gary L. Patrick, *"Watchman, what of the night?"* (Nora Springs, IA: Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Iowa, Inc., Issue # 66 – Aug. / Sept. 2024, "Editor's Preface" / "The Conflict Within The Seventh-day Adventist Movement, From 1950 And On, resumed"), 1, 2-6, 4. https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN_Issue_66.pdf

2. *"A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists"* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1872 - # 2), 4. https://archive.org/details/ADeclarationOfTheFundamentalPrinciplesTaughtAndPracticedByThe/page/n1/mode/2up

3. *"Some Things Which Seventh-Day Adventists Believe"* (Battle Creek, MI: Membership of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church of Battle Creek, Mich., 1894 - par. 3). https://text.beta.egwwritings.org/read/938.130

4. Year Book of the Seventh-day Denomination, 1931, *Fundamental Beliefs Of Seventh-Day Adventists* (Takoma Park, Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1931 – pg. 377), 379. https://adventistdigitallibrary.org/adl-426296/seventh-day-adventist-yearbook-january-1-1931#

5. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* (Washington, DC: Ministerial Association, A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines), 57, 47.

6. Ted and Maureen Flynn, *The Thunder Of Justice / The Warning, The Miracle, The Chastisement, The Era Of Peace / God's Ultimate Acts Of Mercy* (Sterling, VA: MaxKol Communications, Inc., December 1993), 4-5, 20.

7. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages, Book Three* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 389.

8. White, *The Great Controversy, Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), 562.

9. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1915), 196.

10. Robert Young, *Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, March 1, 1989), 1089.

11. Ellen G. White, *The Youth's Instructor Articles, 1852-1914* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, December 20, 1900), 492, col. 2.

12. Report of the 1952 Seventh-day Adventist Bible Conference, *Our Firm Foundation, Vol. 2* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953), 17.

13. Jay P. Green, Sr., The Interlinear Hebrew – Greek - English Bible, Vol. 4 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1885), 534-535.

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

"Watchman, what of the night?" is published by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Iowa, Inc., P.O. Box 665, Nora Springs, IA 50458-0665, USA.

Founder Elder William H. Grotheer
Editor, Publications & Research Gary L. Patrick
Associate Editor Dennis J. Tevis
Proofreader Bill Caloudes

WEBSITES
www.alfiowa.com
www.adventistlaymen.com

E-MAIL
Editor - alfia@myomnitel.com
Webmaster - webmaster@adventistlaymen.com

This Thought Paper may be duplicated in its entirety without permission. Any portion(s) can be reproduced by adding the credit line - "Reprinted from WWN, ALF of Iowa, Nora Springs, IA, USA."
Current copy free upon request; previous and duplicate copies - $0.75 ea. (USA) ; $1.50 ea. USD (outside of USA).
Office phone # (641) 749-2684.