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Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

NEW TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES AND
THEIR ELABORATION IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G.
WHITE WITH THEIR REFLECTION IN THE
ADVENTIST CHURCH IN ROMANIA

A Project

Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by

Mihail S. Popa

May 1980

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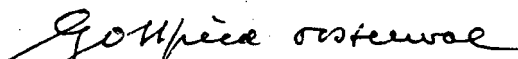
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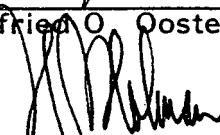
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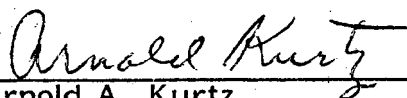
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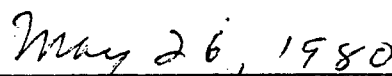
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NOTE

This Doctor of Ministry Project report falls under the category described in the Seminary Bulletin as Project II, a paper completed in fulfillment of requirements for an alternate curriculum plan under which the candidate prepares two related papers--a theological position paper addressing some issue or problem that exists in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in a theological setting and a professional paper addressing this same issue or problem from the standpoint of ministerial practice.

DEDICATION

This Project is dedicated to the ministers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania, who must deal with the issues described and analyzed in this study guide.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, it has been the constant prompting and guidance of my heavenly Father which has given me the opportunity to receive the benefits of graduate studies at Andrews University. I am profoundly grateful to Him who gives love, wisdom and strength, perseverance and patience. I am very thankful to Him for His inexhaustible supplies of health, vigor, joy, and means which He has abundantly given to me to complete this project.

My profound gratitude is extended to Dr. Arnold A. Kurtz, Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program, Dr. Roy E. Graham, the chairman of my Doctoral Project-Dissertation Committee, Dr. Gottfried Oosterwal, Committee Member, and Dr. Hans Jürgen Holman, Committee Member, for their generous guidance in developing this project. Their professional advice and personal friendship are greatly appreciated. I would like to mention particularly the contribution of Dr. H. J. Holman who spent many hours with me in the polishing of the project.

I also express thanks to Dr. Thomas H. Blincoe, the Dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, without whose financial sponsorship of my Doctor of Ministry studies this project would not have been undertaken.

I am especially grateful to my wife, Tereza, and my daughter, Madeline, for their constant and loving moral support.

May God bless all those who have contributed both directly and indirectly to this project-dissertation.

PART I

**A STUDY CONCERNING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
CHRISTIAN AND THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES REVEALED
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND ELABORATED UPON
IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE**

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

All through the Christian Era the Christian believer has been confronted with the challenge of relating his duty and allegiance to civil authority and government to his allegiance to God. In the first century A.D., Christ himself was confronted with the problem and both Peter and Paul addressed themselves to it in their writings to the Apostolic Church. More recently, within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ellen G. White has again taken up the issue and has expanded upon its implications for conduct in contemporary society in order to clarify the issue and to edify and enlighten her fellow believers. Her writings are often collectively referred to as "The Spirit of Prophecy."

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an international Christian church body with a membership of approximately 3.3 million and organized congregations in about 190 countries. The fundamental beliefs of the denomination are based upon New Testament and Old Testament concepts which, as its name implies, include belief in the imminent and personal second coming of Christ in glory, and observation of the seventh day of the week as the Old Testament and New Testament Sabbath.

Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ellen G. White holds a unique position. Her large number of books, articles, letters, and other communications have addressed themselves to a wide variety of subjects, issues, and concerns relative to Christian faith, personal and collective conduct, and the interrelationship between man and God. Mrs. White's

preeminent mission was to help build the dynamics of a biblical faith into a Christian movement. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is indebted to her as a spiritual leader and a pioneer builder and guide. In most activities of the church, from its very beginnings, the leaders of the denomination have received guidance from what they believe were the prophetic insights of this messenger of God.¹

In Part I of this paper, New Testament principles governing the relationship between the Christian believer and civil authority and government are studied in correlation with Mrs. White's elaborations and modern-day applications. Part II proceeds to make a practical analysis, on the basis of these principles, of the relationship between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the state in the Socialist Republic of Romania.

¹D. A. Delafield, Ellen G. White and the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1963), pp. 10-11.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this project to prepare a study guide on the topic of the relationship between the Christian and the civil authorities for use by Seventh-day Adventist ministers and their congregations. The study will seek to identify and apply principles pertinent to the topic as found in the New Testament and elaborated upon by Ellen White.

This study is justified because of (1) the presence of a trend, in the opinion of the writer, of a non-biblical attitude concerning the relationship between the Christian and the civil authorities; (2) the need for clear concepts and instruction on the topic in this field because ministers need a better understanding of the inspired guidance in order to avoid misunderstandings and mistakes in their behavior and teaching; (3) the need for written materials to help pastors in instructing their church members and particularly in guiding new members concerning the relationship between the Christian and civil authorities. The writer will try to limit this study within the realm of the Seventh-day Adventist Christian's relationship to government and to civil authorities, his role and responsibility, and the position God should be given.

Because of the nature of the project, the Old Testament view on the relationship between the Christian and civil authorities will not be discussed. Therefore, the study is limited to New Testament views and elaborations by Ellen G. White on this subject.

CHAPTER II

NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES

The attitude of Jesus to government and civil authority is most clearly expressed in Matt 22, Mark 12, and Luke 20. Other references are made in Matt 17 and 27. The counsels of Paul and Peter, the apostles, are found in Rom 13, in the letters to Timothy and Titus, and in the first letter of Peter, respectively. Therefore, this chapter is divided into three sections: (a) the teachings and example of Christ, (b) the teachings and counsels of Paul, and (c) the teachings and counsels of Peter.

The Teachings of Christ

To the Christian, Jesus Christ is the true model for behavior and attitude. His is the perfect model of faithfulness and obedience. When he was on earth his life was a life in complete harmony with God. He lived to please, honor, and glorify his heavenly Father in all things of life. Luke describes Christ, as a youth, by saying that "Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52 RSV). In his Messianic ministry "He went about doing good" (Acts 10:38 RSV). By his own life Christ has set forth the guidelines for his followers.

As a citizen, Christ observed civil laws and taught the people to be good, honorable citizens. His teaching as to the attitude of the Christian toward God and civil authority is emphasized in his short discussion

with the disciples of the Pharisees, who claimed that to pay taxes to Caesar was contrary to the law of God and who asked him the question if it was lawful to pay or not to pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus answered them:

Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. (Matt 22:21 RSV)

There are two significant phrases used in this short answer. By the phrase "things that are Caesar's" Jesus has established the basis for a proper relationship between the Christian and state authority. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary reads:

Jesus sets forth the fundamental principle that determines the Christian's relationship to the state. He [the Christian] is not to ignore the just claims of the state upon him because there are certain "things which are Caesar's."¹

The second part of the text, "things that are God's," shows that there are some areas that do not belong to Caesar; they belong exclusively to God:

God's authority is supreme; therefore the Christian's supreme loyalty belongs to God. The Christian cooperates with "the powers that be" because they are "ordained of God." Therefore, to pay tribute to Caesar cannot be contrary to the law of God. But there are certain "things" in which Caesar has no right to interfere. God's jurisdiction is absolute and universal. Caesar's subordinate and limited.²

According to this fundamental principle that determines the Christian's relationship to state authority, the Christian has to accept God's Word as Supreme Authority, but he must recognize and subordinate himself to civil authority within its legitimate sphere.³ Christ, in his statement,

¹Francis D. Nichol, ed., Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953-1957), 5:482 (hereafter abbreviated SDABC).

²Ibid.

³This concept and its application will be further discussed in this chapter, pp. 8-10.

recognizes the authority of the state in its legitimate sphere. And it is a well-known fact that a nation without organized government would soon be in chaos.

Jesus respected state authority even in difficult circumstances, when he was unjustly accused. In Matt 27, it is recorded that when Jesus was brought to Pontius Pilate, the governor, and the witnesses came forward, he showed full respect for the law and respected Pilate's authority by saying no word concerning the accusations addressed to him until he was directly questioned by the governor. The Bible says,

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer. (Matt 27:11, 12 RSV)

John Howard Yoder, in his book, The Politics of Jesus, begins his study with the question of "whether Jesus' teaching or example can have been of such character as to provide the substance of guidance in social ethics,"¹ and after a careful examination of the New Testament teachings he says:

We concluded, according to the Gospel accounts and counter to the prior assumptions of many modern interpreters, that his deeds show a coherent, conscious social-political [civil] character and direction, and that his words are inseparable therefrom.²

The teachings of Christ as to the Christian's relationship to the civil authorities are strongly emphasized by Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, as can be seen in the following section.

¹ John Howard Yoder, The Politics of Jesus (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), p. 115.

² Ibid.

The Teachings of Paul

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, deals with some of the fundamental principles of the Gospel, among which Christian conduct in relation to the state is strongly emphasized. Romans 13 contains the ethical teaching about how the Christian is to relate himself to the state. The principal ideas presented by Paul in Rom 13:1-7 are:

1. Subjection to civil authorities (Rom 13:1, 2)
2. Function and authority of rulers (Rom 13:3, 4)
3. A dual reason for obedience to civil law (v. 5)
4. Basis for paying taxes (Rom 13:6, 7).

Paul opens the chapter with the admonition:

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. (Rom 13:1, 2 RSV)

From the very beginning of Romans 13, Paul introduces his teaching by using the imperative mood, for it is a divine command: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities." However, the Christian is asked to give obedience to civil authority within its legitimate sphere. This means that there are some qualifications given by God for civil authority. The apostle's teaching argues that we are bound to render obedience on the grounds that the government is divinely set or "appointed" by God. It is on this assumption that, in his first letter to Timothy, Paul urges believers to pray for those in authority. He says:

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for . . . all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. (1Tim 2:1, 2 RSV)

In his letter to Titus, Paul again urges believers to obey civil authorities. He says:

Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for any honest work. (Titus 3:1 RSV)

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary on Rom 13 gives the following explanation:

Paul's point is that the ruling power of human governments is entrusted to men by God, according to His own purposes for man's welfare. . . . Therefore, the Christian will support the authority of the existing state.¹

Adam Clarke, in his Commentary, says on Romans 13:

Let every man be obedient to the civil government under which the providence of God has cast his lot:

As God is the origin of power, and the supreme Governor of the universe, he delegates authority to whomsoever he will; . . . civil government is of him; for without this there could be no society, no security . . . all would be confusion and anarchy, and the world would soon be depopulated. . . . As civil government is of God, who is the fountain of law, order, and regularity, the civil governor who administers the laws of a state according to its constitution, is the minister of God.²

In speaking of the function and authority of rulers, Paul qualifies his statement in Rom 13:1 ("Let every person be subject to the governing authorities") by pointing out four basic characteristics of rulers. He says, "Be subject" or "Submit yourselves," when

1. Rulers are not a terror [i.e., a threat] to good conduct, but to bad.
2. Civil authority approves of doing what is good.

¹Nichol, SDABC, 6:627.

²Adam Clark, ed., Clark's Commentary, 6 vols. (New York: Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1938), 6:144.

3. Authority functions as God's representative.

4. Authority serves to execute God's wrath on the wrongdoer

(Rom 13:3, 4 RSV).

By giving the above four noble characteristics of rulers, Paul teaches that the Christian's subjection to civil authority is to be manifested within these boundaries. According to the fundamental principles that determine the Christian's relationship to state authority, the Christian has to obey and be loyal to the state authority within its legitimate sphere--that is, within the above-mentioned characteristics. Therefore, anything that is outside these functions belongs to God.

As to civil authority, the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, on Romans 13, reads:

In general, rulers are not to be dreaded except when wrong is done. . . . It is generally true that those who are virtuous have nothing to fear from civil authorities. Governments as such are not a terror to good works. On the contrary, they exist for a beneficent purpose, and generally speaking it is to the Christian's advantage to submit to their requirements. . . . The Christian who wishes to have no dread of the civil government should practice doing what is right, and then he will be commended for his good conduct. (Cf. 1 Pet 2:14, 15)

Since the state exists as a servant of God for a good purpose, the Christian has no cause to fear its authority if he leads a peaceable life.¹

As the servant and representative of God, civil government, invested with its authority by God, is to promote good. This is the true reason for its existence--and the Christian ought to obey civil authority from a sense of duty and not because he is afraid of punishment. It is Christian duty to obey all lawful demands of the civil authorities. But when the demands of civil authority are not within the functions stressed

¹Nichol, SDABC, 6:627.

by the apostle Paul--in other words, when the demands are contrary to divine laws--then the Christian, whose supreme loyalty belongs to God, has to obey God's Word as his Supreme Authority.

In writing of a dual reason for obedience to civil law, Paul says:

Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath, but also for the sake of conscience. (Rom 13:5 RSV)

It is clear, therefore, that the Christian should obey civil law, lawfully administered, that is, within the legitimate sphere, for two reasons: (1) because of "wrath," that is, the justified penalty of the law that the magistrate is authorized to inflict through a legitimate sentence, and (2) out of respect to one's own conscience before God, being aware of the fact that civil authority is of God's establishing, determining by his providence to maintain an orderly society based on justice. But when civil laws conflict with the Word of God's Law, the Christian "must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29 RSV).

Continuing to explain the Christian's proper relationship to civil authority, Paul presents the broadness of the Christian's duty concerning the basis for paying taxes. He says:

For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.

Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due. (Rom 13:6, 7)

Paul's statement in Romans 13:7 carries a very strong emphasis in verses 3 and 4 in which he gives clear qualifications. The phrase "to whom . . . is due" is repeated as many times as the number of the noble characteristics of rulers. This very strong emphasis is pointing out the concept that revenue, respect, and honor must be due, taking into consideration that the ruler is characterized by the four noble characteristics

which have been found in verses 3 and 4 and explained on pages 8 and 9 .

In referring to the Christian's duties as citizen, William Nicoll, in the Expositor's Bible, says:

As a Christian, he does not cease to be a citizen, to be a subject. . . . The disciple of Christ, as such, while his whole being has received an emancipation unknown elsewhere, is to be the faithful subject, . . . the orderly inhabitant of his quarter in the City, the punctual taxpayer, the ready giver of not a servile yet a genuine deference to the representatives and ministers of human authority.¹

The same fundamental principle established by Christ concerning the Christian's attitude in his relationship to civil authority is pointed out by Peter, as can be seen in the following section.

The Teachings of Peter

Peter, the apostle of Jesus Christ, in his letter addressed to Church (1 Peter 2), deals with some aspects of the fundamental principle that determines the Christian's relationship to civil authority. Before analyzing the words of the apostle, consider the three verses as they are rendered in four different Bible versions: The Revised Standard Version, The King James Version, The New King James Bible, and The Living Bible:

Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in case they speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God. . . .

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. (1 Pet 2:12-14 RSV)

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that

¹William R. Nicoll, ed., The Expositor's Bible, 26 vols. (New York: A.C. Armstrong & Son, 1908), 19:348.

do well. (1 Pet 2:12-13 KJV)

Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God. . . .

Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. (1 Pet 2:12-13 NKJB)

Be careful how you behave. . . .

For the Lord's sake, obey every law of your government: those of the king as head of the state, and those of the king's officers, for he has sent them to punish all who do wrong, and honor those who do right. (1 Pet 2:12-14, Living Bible)

The main ideas presented by Peter in these Bible verses continue to encourage the Christian as follows:

1. Maintain good conduct in society (2 Pet 2:12).
2. To submit to civil authority (1 Pet 2:13)

Finally, Peter defines the function and authority of rulers (1 Pet 2:14).

From the very beginning of these verses, Peter, like Paul, introduces his teaching by using the imperative mood, "Maintain good conduct," or, "Be careful how you behave." It is a divine command, stressing the fact that the Christian has to continually keep good conduct. "Be careful" implies great concern and responsibility for the Christian's behavior in society; it implies a conscientious adherence to the divine commandment. The Christian's motive, as he seeks to be a good citizen, should be "For the Lord's sake." The true Christian, who never uses force against established authority, will obey civil authorities from a sense of duty because "Thus saith the Lord." And the true Christian always will respect authority within its legitimate sphere.

In speaking of the characteristic and the authority of rulers, Peter is qualifying his "Submit yourselves" statement by pointing out two

functions of rulers: (1) to punish those who do wrong, and (2) to encourage those who do right. Just as stressed by Paul, Peter states that government is not to be a threat to those with good, but rather to those with bad conduct, so that doing that which is good will receive the approval of the governing authority.

The ruler is God's servant for one's good and he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer, as Paul says in Rom 13:3, 4. But, when such noble characteristics are missing, the Christian "must obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29). Peter, like Paul and the other apostles, who preached obedience to authority, chose to obey God as his Supreme Authority when he was ordered to stop his activities that were making a good contribution to the welfare of society.

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary on 1 Pet 2:13, 14 gives the following explanation:

The Christian is to discharge his civic obligations not for fear of punishment, but because of the precept and example of his Lord while on earth. Jesus complied with civil regulations.

One of the principal functions of government is to suppress disorder (see on Rom 13:3, 4). Christians are not to earn the reputation of making the maintenance of law and order difficult for those charged with this responsibility.

Public officials have a duty not only to restrain the forces of evil but to encourage persons and activities that are making contribution to the welfare of society.¹

Matthew Henry, in his Exposition, comments on 1 Pet 2:13, 14, stressing the ideas of honesty and sincerity, and showing the Christian's motive for being a good citizen:

The general rule of a Christian conversation, is this, it must be honest. . . .

True religion is the best support of civil government;

¹Nichol, SDABC, 7:564.

it requires submission for the Lord's sake, and for conscience sake.¹

In commenting upon the phrases "Be subject," and "To every ordinance of man," and "Whether it be to a king," "or unto governors," Calvin's Commentaries on 1 Pet 2:13, 14, gives the following explanations:

Be subject. He [Peter] comes now to particular exhortation, and as obedience towards magistrates is a part of honest behaviour, he draws this inference, be subject therefore.

To every ordinance of man . . . I have no doubt but that Peter meant to point out the distinct manner in which God governs mankind. . . . It is called a human ordinance, not because it has been invented by man, but because it is a mode of living, well arranged and duly ordered, appropriate to men.

Whether it be to the king. . . . In my opinion he is naming Caesar. . . . Though "king" was a name extremely hated by the Romans, yet it was in use among the Greeks. He [Caesar] held the supreme power; but that eminence which Peter extols is common to all who exercise public authority. So Paul in Romans 13:1 extends public authority to all magistrates. The meaning is, that obedience is due to all who rule, because they have been raised to that honour not by chance, but by God's providence. . . . Thus Paul declares that there is no power but from God. . . . Peter, therefore, . . . shows that subjects ought to obey their rulers without hesitation, because they are only made eminent by being raised by God's hand.

Or unto governors. He describes every kind of magistrate as though he were saying that there is no kind of government to which we ought not to submit. He confirms this by saying that they are God's ministers; and those who refer the pronoun him to the king are greatly mistaken. There is a common reason, which extols the authority of all magistrates, to wit, that they rule by the command of God, and are sent by Him. . . . This, in short, is what Peter means, that since God keeps the world in order by the ministry of magistrates, all those who detract from their authority are the enemies of mankind.²

In referring to the function of the State, the theologian Karl Barth, in his book Against the Stream, emphasizes the protecting function of State and says that "Without this political order there would be no Christian

¹Matthew Henry, ed., Henry's Exposition, 6 vols. (Philadelphia: Ed. Barrington & Geo. D. Haswell, Market Street), 6:800.

²David W. Torrance, ed., Calvin's Commentaries, 12 vols. (London: 39 A Welbek Street, W. I., Oliver & Boyd Ltd.), 12:269-70.

order."¹ He seems to go beyond the idea of the State's protection of human life from chaos when he speaks of "the State's effort to achieve an external, relative and provisional humanizing of man's life and the political order instituted for all . . . under which the evil are punished and the good rewarded."² Then he goes on with his commentary about the function of the State by saying that the State is a product

. . . of the divine Providence . . . it is therefore an instrument of divine grace. . . . The activity of the State is, as the Apostle explicitly stated (Rom. 13:4, 6), a form of divine service. . . . The Church can in no case be indifferent or neutral towards this manifestation of an order so clearly related to its own mission. Such indifference would be equivalent to the opposition of which it is said in Rom. 13:2 that it is a rebellion against the ordinance of God--and rebels secure their own condemnation.³

In speaking about the submission to civil authorities, Barth emphasizes the fact that

. . . in Rom 13:5 Paul has expressly added that this "subordination" is not optional but necessary, and necessary not merely "for fear of punishment," . . . but "for conscience sake." . . . The "subordination" will be an expression of the obedience of a free heart which the Christian offers to God in the civil sphere as in the sphere of the Church . . . (he renders to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's--Matt 22:21).⁴

Another theologian, John C. Bennett, in his book Christians and the State, in referring to the same idea of the function of the State, says:

The state provides a protective order under which all of the non-political associations and institutions function together. It "makes order and freedom possible for them. . . ."⁵

¹Karl Barth, Against the Stream (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1954), p. 20.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., pp. 21-22.

⁴Ibid., pp. 24-25.

⁵John C. Bennett, Christians and the State (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 81.

According to the qualifications given by Peter (2:12-14), the true Christian has to be the best support of state authority within the legitimate sphere. The Christian's obedience is due to all who rule according to noble characteristics. The Christian has to obey his rulers without hesitation when they rule within their legitimate sphere, that is, when their claims are according to the Bible teaching. But when human demands come in conflict with God's demands and will, the Christian "must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29 RSV).

CHAPTER III

WRITINGS BY ELLEN G. WHITE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES

This chapter will explore the writings of Ellen G. White on the relationship between the Christian and civil authorities. There are two sections in this chapter, namely, (1) the relationship of the writings of Ellen G. White to the Bible, and (2) the teachings of Ellen G. White on the relationship between the Christian and civil authorities.

The Relationship of the Writings of Ellen G. White to the Bible

God has always had His messengers through whom He has revealed His will to His Church, sending instruction, admonition, and information. Amos the prophet says:

Surely the Lord does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7 RSV)

The Spirit of God has opened to the messengers' minds the great truths of His Word and important scenes of the past and the future. Positions and details of the Bible were confirmed by vision. The Bible says,

If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. (Num 12:6 RSV)

According to the Bible statements in 1 Cor 1:5-7; 12:1-28; Rev 12:17; and Hosea 12:10, 13, the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy is one of

the identifying marks of the remnant church.

God's Word, through the apostle, Peter, appeals to the believers to pay attention to the prophetic word and emphasizes the origin of prophecy. He says:

And we have the prophetic word made more sure. You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but man moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2 Pet 1:19-21, RSV)

John, who bore witness to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, tells what the testimony of Jesus is. He says, "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev 19:10, RSV).

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White. Throughout her prodigious writings, she fully recognizes and emphasizes the primacy of the Bible. In the introduction to her book, The Great Controversy, she shows her attitude toward the Bible. She states succinctly and clearly:

In His word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, RV.¹

She recognizes that her writings are to be tested by the Bible.

The Spirit was not given--nor can it ever be bestowed--to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state

¹Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), p. vii.

that the word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. Says the apostle John, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John 4:1. And Isaiah declares, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.¹

One of the clearest descriptions of the relationship existing between the Bible and the writings of Ellen White is found in Testimonies for the Church. She says:

I took the precious Bible and surrounded it with the several Testimonies for the Church, given for the people of God. Here, said I, the cases of nearly all are met. The sins they are to shun are pointed out. The counsel that they desire can be found here, given for other cases situated similarly to themselves. God has been pleased to give you line upon line and precept upon precept. But there are not many of you that really know what is contained in the Testimonies.²

Why were these special messages necessary to the Seventh-day Adventist Church if the Bible is the standard of truth and the guide to Christian living? A poor spiritual life, far from attaining the Christian perfection according to the Bible standard and caused by the neglect of Bible study and of the putting into practice of Bible truth, led to the need for having the written Testimonies. Ellen White says:

You are not familiar with the Scriptures. If you had made God's word your study, with a desire to reach the Bible standard and attain to Christian perfection, you would not have needed the Testimonies. It is because you have neglected to acquaint yourselves with God's inspired Book that He has sought to reach you by simple, direct testimonies. . . .³

In order to have a better understanding of why the Seventh-day

¹ Ibid.

² Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols. (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 5:664-65.

³ Ibid., 5:665.

Adventists needed the Testimonies, we must consider more of the reasons given for the messages. In her clear-cut statements, Ellen G. White, whom Adventists consider a spokeswoman for God, pointed out the following important functions of her writings:

To Exalt the Bible

The Testimonies are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it. . . .¹

I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged.²

It is a noteworthy fact that Ellen G. White begins her publishing activity by exalting and recommending the Bible as the rule of Adventist faith and practice, that she maintains this attitude throughout her writings, and that she ends her last personal message to the Church by recommending the Bible.

Housel T. Jemison, in A Prophet among You, stresses the fact that Ellen White exalted the Bible throughout her writings--books, articles, and letters--and backs up his opinion by quoting W. A. Spicer. Jemison writes:

In commenting on Mrs. White's attitude toward the Bible, W. A. Spicer told of this incident:

"This lifting up of Holy Scripture as supreme was the keynote sounded through this gift of prophecy to the very end. At the General Conference held in Washington, D.C., in 1909, with representatives attending from all continents and the islands of the sea, Mrs. White in her age met with the world representatives of the movement for the last time. At the close of the days of conference, she came to the platform to bid farewell to the workers with whom she had been associated with many years.

¹Ibid.

²Ellen G. White, A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views (Saragota Springs, N.Y.: Published by James White, 1851), p. 64.

She felt the conviction that it was doubtless the last time she would meet with the general body in conference. Even so it proved to be. After a few words of parting greeting, Mrs. White turned to the pulpit, and lifted from it the Bible lying there. Opening the book, she held it forth on hands that trembled with age, and said to the audience:

"Brethren and sisters, I commend unto you this Book."¹

Laying the Book of books upon the pulpit, she turned from the pavilion. Her last personal message to the world delegates sounded the keynote of all her life and testimony."--W. A. Spicer, Certainties of the Advent Movement, p. 202.¹

In her book Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, White presents the Bible for Christian education. She recommends God's Word by the introductory question, "What book can compare with the Bible?"² Then she strongly emphasizes the value of the Bible by the following words:

An understanding of its teachings is essential; for it is the word of God, given to guide the human family to heaven. . . .

The Word of God should stand as the highest educating book . . . and should be treated with reverential awe.³

Using the question-answer style, she concludes its evaluation by enumerating the great and vital themes of the Book of books:

What more important knowledge can be gained than that which outlines the fall of man, and the consequences of that sin which opened the floodgates of woe upon the world; which tells of Christ's first advent? The incarnation of Christ, His divinity, His atonement, His wonderful life in heaven as our advocate, the office of the Holy Spirit--all these vital themes of Christianity are revealed from Genesis to Revelation. Each is a golden link in the perfect chain of truth. Why, then, should not the Scriptures be exalted . . . ?⁴

¹Housel T. Jemison, A Prophet among You (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1955), pp. 367-68.

²Ellen G. White, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1943), p. 427.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

To Awaken Minds

God . . . in His chosen way brought them [the Testimonies] before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse.¹

The act of awakening of minds is closely connected with influencing the attitude of hearts. The heart has to yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit who enables men to grasp the Bible truths. In her book Testimony for the Church, White writes:

When you search the Scriptures with an earnest desire to learn the truth, God will breathe His Spirit into your heart and impress your mind with the light of His word. . . . There is no other book whose perusal strengthens and enlarges, elevates and ennobles the mind, as does the perusal of this Book of books. Its study imparts new vigor to the mind, which is thus brought in contact with subjects requiring earnest thought, and is drawn out in prayer to God for power to comprehend the truths revealed.²

The Holy Spirit . . . quickens and energizes the mind, directs the thoughts, and aids in the presentation of truth.³

Therefore, Adventists believe that through the Holy Spirit, minds are fully awakened to the importance of living the Bible doctrines correctly, as they have been presented by Ellen White, whom they recognize as God's messenger. For instance, she points out what Adventists accept as the correct observance of the Sabbath, and how it should be holy according to the commandment. She says: "We should jealously guard the edges of the Sabbath. Remember that every moment is consecrated, holy time."⁴

Adventists feel that they have been fully awakened to the importance of the principles of true sanctification when they read the following

¹White, Testimonies for the Church, 5:665.

²Ibid., 4:499.

³White, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 509.

⁴White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:356.

statement concerning sanctification:

It [the true sanctification] is not merely a theory, an emotion, or a form of words, but a living, active principle, entering into the everyday life. It requires that our habits of eating, drinking, and dressing be such as to secure the preservation of physical, mental, and moral health, that we may present to the Lord our bodies, not an offering corrupted by wrong habits, but "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."¹

Others see the need for preserving the body in the very best condition of health when they find the following written testimony:

God requires all men to render their bodies to Him a living sacrifice, not a dead or a dying sacrifice, a sacrifice which their own course of action is debilitating, filling with impurities and disease. God calls for a living sacrifice. . . . It is just as much sin to violate the laws of our being as to break one of the Ten Commandments, for we cannot do either without breaking God's law. We cannot love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength while we are loving our appetites, our tastes, a great deal better than we love the Lord.²

And still others have been fully awakened to the importance and meaning of being clothed with the garment of Christ's righteousness when they have read statements like:

Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. . . . By his perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought in to captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.³

The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the

¹Ellen G. White, The Sanctified Life (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1937), p. 28.

²White, Testimonies for the Church, 2:70.

³Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1952), p. 284.

character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.¹

To Attract Minds to the Bible

The Testimonies are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all.²

Throughout her writings, Ellen G. White not only asserts that she holds the Bible in high esteem, but she directs minds continually to the Bible by short sentences such as "The Bible is a perfect guide . . . ,"³ "Make the Bible the foundation of all study,"⁴ "The Bible contains all that is needful for the saving of the soul. . . ."⁵ She also impresses the importance of the Bible on her readers' minds by dealing with large portions of the Bible, as in the book entitled Christ's Object Lessons, and by using abundant Bible quotations. All her books are filled with Bible texts. For example, her book The Desire of Ages, in which all eighty-seven chapters are based on Bible texts, begins with the Bible quotation from Matt 1:23: "His name shall be called Immanuel, . . . God with us," and ends with Heb 7:25, "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." From the total 835 pages, there are only 86 pages in

¹Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), pp. 555, 556.

²White, Testimonies for the Church, 5:665.

³Ibid., 6:355.

⁴Ibid., 6:109.

⁵White, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 448.

which there is no Bible quotation, but the passages of these 86 pages refer to Bible teachings, too.

To Impress the Truths Already Revealed

The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed.¹

A Romanian proverb says that "Repetition is the mother of learning." It is so that the work of fixing the Bible truths in the memory and heart is fulfilled in the process of careful study and restudy of God's word. It is for this purpose that the Testimonies have been written.

It is noteworthy that the Bible truths have to be impressed "vividly upon the heart." Why upon the heart?

When Christ is in the heart it will be so softened and subdued by love for God and man that fretting, faultfinding, and contention will not exist there. The religion of Christ in the heart will gain for its possessor a complete victory over those passions that are seeking for the mastery.²

To Call Attention to Truths Neglected

It is because you have neglected to acquaint yourselves with God's inspired Book that He has sought to reach you by simple, direct testimonies, calling your attention to the words of inspiration which you had neglected to obey, and urging you to fashion your lives in accordance with its pure and elevated teachings.³

It is not enough simply to be impressed by the word of God, but humanity must surrender itself to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who enables all to obey the words of inspiration. Ellen G. White, in The Desire of Ages, writes:

Then He [Christ] added a warning to those who had been impressed by His words, who had heard Him gladly, but who had

¹White, Testimonies for the Church, 5:665.

²Ibid., 4:620.

³Ibid., 5:665.

not surrendered themselves for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is not only by resistance but by neglect that the soul is destroyed.¹

To Simplify the Truths

"Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the great truths already given."²

By the divine inspiration, Ellen White simplifies the statement of great truths and this is of real help for a better understanding of the Bible doctrines. She writes:

True conversion is a change of heart, of thoughts and purposes.³

Repentance is turning from self to Christ.⁴

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend.⁵

Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace and mercy.⁶

True sanctification means perfect love, perfect obedience, perfect conformity to the will of God.⁷

True religion . . . consists not in systems, creeds, or rites, but in the performance of loving deeds, in bringing the greatest good to others, in genuine goodness.⁸

¹White, The Desire of Ages, p. 323.

²White, Testimonies for the Church, 5:665.

³Ibid., 6:95.

⁴Ellen G. White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1955), p. 87.

⁵Ellen G. White, Steps to Christ (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1951), p. 89.

⁶Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Mountain View, Calif. Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1958), p. 431.

⁷Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), p. 565.

⁸White, The Desire of Ages, p. 497.

To Bring Out the Bible Principles
and Help Apply Them

"I was then directed to bring out general principles, in speaking and in writing."¹

The truths considered vitally important by Adventists such as the Sabbath truth and the sanctuary truth, were brought out by Ellen White in her writings. Arthur L. White, in Ellen G. White: Messenger to the Remnant, after underlining the fact that the doctrines held by the Seventh-day Adventist Church have come "by earnest individual and group Bible study,"² says:

The Spirit of prophecy had a vital place in bringing light when difficulties confronted the pioneers, and the conclusions reached by earnest study were sometimes later confirmed by revelation.³

A. L. White, in referring to the fact that the Lord gave a vision to Ellen White stressing the importance of the Sabbath, quotes Ellen G. White's writings concerning this Bible truth:

(1) In this vision Mrs. White seemed to be transported to heaven and conducted through the heavenly sanctuary.

(2) In the most holy place she saw the ark that contains the law, and was amazed to note that "the fourth, the Sabbath commandment, shone above them all; for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in honor of God's holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious-- a halo of glory was all around it."⁴

Then he quotes the following passages from Ellen G. White concerning the sanctuary truth to demonstrate that the Bible truth was confirmed by revelation:

¹White, Testimonies for the Church, 5:660.

²Arthur L. White, Ellen G. White, Messenger to the Remnant (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1969), p. 34.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the Holy of holies within the veil, and did sit. . . . I saw a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire. Angels were all about the chariot as it came where Jesus was; He stepped into it and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. Then I beheld Jesus, as He was before the Father a great high priest.¹

And before concluding his explanations, he quotes from a letter from Ellen White to Eli Curtis, April 24, 1847:

The Lord showed me in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light on the cleansing of the sanctuary, etc., and that it was His will that Brother C. should write out the view which he gave us in the Day-Star Extra, February 7, 1846. I feel fully authorized by the Lord to recommend that Extra to every saint.²

To Rebuke, Reprove, and Correct the Believers

"Your testimony . . . is to come down to the minutiae of life, keeping the feeble faith from dying and pressing home upon believers the necessity of shining as lights in the world."³

Ellen G. White gave the testimonies Adventists believe she had received from God to point out defects of character, to rebuke sins, and to correct the people. She states:

The Lord has seen fit to give me a view of the needs and errors of His people. . . . Thus has the Spirit of God pronounced warnings and judgments, notwithstanding, however, the sweet promise of mercy.⁴

The Lord reproves and corrects the people who profess to keep His law. He points out their sins and lays open their iniquity because He wishes to separate all sin and wickedness from them, that they may perfect holiness in His fear. . . . God rebukes, reproveth, and corrects them, that they may be refined, sanctified, elevated, and finally exalted to His own throne.⁵

¹Ibid., p. 37.

²Ibid.

³White, Testimonies for the Church, 5:667.

⁴Ibid., 5:661.

⁵Ibid., 5:662.

Also, she shows the relation of her writings to the Bible by stressing the role of the Testimonies as well as the consequence of losing confidence in them. She says:

The Testimonies of His Spirit call your attention to the Scriptures, point out your defects of character, and rebuke your sins; therefore you do not heed them. And to justify your carnal, ease-loving course you begin to doubt whether the Testimonies are from God. If you would obey their teachings you would be assured of their divine origin.

If you lose confidence in the Testimonies you will drift away from Bible truth.¹

In the first volume of her Testimonies for the Church, for instance, Ellen G. White used her writings to rebuke sins and to correct the people. She speaks, for example, about a dishonest steward. She says:

I was shown that the Spirit of God has had less and less influence upon F, until he has no strength from God to overcome. Self and self-interest have been prominent with him for some length of time. Pride of heart, a set, unsubdued will, and an unwillingness to confess and yield his wrongs, have brought him to the dreadful position he is in.

Had he received the instruction given of God, and been corrected, he would have obtained the victory over these strong habits and besetments. . . .

His deal has not been correct. Dishonesty has been gaining upon him, and he has taken from the treasury means that he had no right to, and has used it to his own advantage. He has considered that he had better judgment in disposing of means than his brethren. . . . What an example to the flock! . . . God's frown is upon him. A good tree is known by its fruits.²

In another illustration she refers to fanaticism. She writes:

I was shown companies in confusion, exercised by a wrong spirit, all making loud prayers together, some crying one thing and some another; and it was impossible to tell what was piped and what was harped. "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." Satan stepped in and controlled matters as he pleased. Reason and health were sacrificed to this delusion.

God does not require His people to imitate Baal's prophets, to afflict their bodies and cry out and shout, and throw themselves into almost every attitude, having no regard to order, until their strength fails through sheer exhaustion. Religion does not consist

¹Ibid., 5:674.

²Ibid., 1:227-28.

in making noise; yet when the soul is filled with the Spirit of the Lord, sweet, heartfelt praise to God glorifies Him. . . . Brother G. had sufficient light to take his stand against that fanatical work; but he would not decide from the weight of evidence. His stubborn spirit refuses to yield to the light brought him by the servants of God; for he had regarded them with suspicion, and watched them with a jealous eye. . . . A fearful responsibility is resting upon Brother G. While professing to be a shepherd he suffered the devourer to enter the flock, and looked on while the sheep were torn and devoured. God's frown is upon him. He has not watched for souls as one who must give account.¹

It can be seen from the above descriptions and analyses of the relationship existing between the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White, that Adventists believe the divine message has been and is of great importance and value, and that the Seventh-day Adventists did need the Testimonies. This study now continues by exploring the writings of Ellen White on the relationship between the Christian and civil authority.

Ellen G. White's Admonitions to the Adventist
Church Concerning the Relationship between
the Christian and Civil Authorities

As has been proposed in the second chapter of this study, Jesus Christ established the basis for a proper relationship between the Christian and civil authorities; and the apostles Paul and Peter, in their letters to the church, emphasized strongly the teaching of Christ.

Adventists have been convinced that the Lord, through E. G. White, has given His Church specific counsels touching on the Christian-civil authority relationship. The Spirit of Prophecy writings have given extensive attention to this important problem, as can be seen from a great many chapters in various books. In referring to Christ's words in Matt 22:21 Ellen G. White says:

¹ Ibid., 1:230-32.

Christ's reply was no evasion, but a candid answer to the question. Holding in His hand the Roman coin, upon which were stamped the name and image of Caesar, He declared that since they were living under the protection of the Roman power, they should render to that power the support it claimed, so long as this did not conflict with a higher duty. But while peaceably subject to the laws of the land, they should at all times give their allegiance to God.¹

When the Pharisees heard Christ's answer, "they marveled, and left Him, and went their way." He had rebuked their hypocrisy and presumption, and in doing this He had stated a great principle, a principle that clearly defines the limits of man's duty to the civil government and his duty to God. In many minds a vexed question had been settled. Ever after they held to the right principle. And although many went away dissatisfied, they saw that the principle underlying the question had been clearly set forth, and they marveled at Christ's far-seeing discernment.²

The True Christian Is the Best Citizen

When the Christian is faithful to God, that is, when his obedience follows as a result of his perfect trust in God, then he will gladly do his duty to the civil authority which rules within its legitimate sphere, since he is one of the best citizens of his country. In her book Messages to Young People, Ellen G. White writes:

Those who feel that they are God's servants will be men who can be trusted anywhere. Citizens of heaven will make the best citizens of earth. A correct view of our duty to God leads to clear perceptions of our duty to our fellow men.³

In referring to the activity of the two apostles, Paul and Barnabas, she underlines the results of the teachings of the two apostles. She states: "The teachings of Paul and Barnabas tended to make men virtuous, law-abiding citizens."⁴

¹White, The Desire of Ages, p. 602.

²Ibid., pp. 602-603.

³Ellen G. White, Messages to Young People (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 1970), p. 329.

⁴White, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 178.

Be Careful of What You Speak and Write

In writing about the Christian's attitude toward the civil authorities, Ellen G. White gives precious counsel asking all to manifest a correct attitude in speaking as well as in writing, so that loyalty to country and its laws will not be misinterpreted. In the Testimonies for the Church she says:

We should exercise great care lest we be understood as putting ourselves in opposition to the civil authorities.

We should not work in a manner that will mark us out as seeming to advocate treason. We should weed out from our writings and utterances every expression that, taken by itself, could be so misrepresented as to make it appear antagonistic to law and order. Everything should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as encouraging disloyalty to our country and its laws. We are not required to defy authorities. . . . Then let our workers be careful to speak guardedly at all times and under all circumstances.¹

Manifest a "Thus Saith the Lord" Attitude

Concerning the civil authorities and the power invested in them by God and the Christian's duty toward that authority, Ellen G. White points out the importance of the fundamental principle established by Christ. The true Christian will always live the faith of Jesus, obeying willingly His teachings, being faithful to the Bible principle of rendering "to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matt 22:21). She makes the following statement:

We are to recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment, and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God's word must be recognized as above all human legislation. A "Thus saith the Lord" is not to be set aside for a "Thus saith the church" or "Thus saith the state."²

¹White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:394, 395.

²White, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 69.

In giving further instructions about the Christian's attitude to the civil authorities, she writes in Evangelism, using the imperative mood:

Do not attack authorities. Our work is not to make a raid on the Government. . . .

Let Seventh-day Adventists do nothing that will make them as lawless and disobedient.

Do all in your power to reflect the light, but do not speak words that will irritate or provoke.¹

In presenting Jesus Christ as man's example, Ellen G. White shows that when Caiphas asked Christ to answer a question, He respected his authority. She writes: "He [Christ] had not spoken until directly questioned. . . . Christ would not fail to show proper respect for the law."² "Christ did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly government."³

Do More than the Law Demands

In referring to the law's demands, Jesus goes even farther, for Jesus bade His disciples that instead of resisting the demands of those in authority, they should do even more than the law demands. In Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, Ellen G. White says:

Jesus bade His disciples, instead of resisting the demands of those in authority, to do even more than was required of them. And, so far as possible, they should discharge every obligation, even if it were beyond what the law of the land required. . . . Jesus taught His disciples to submit to the decision of the court, even though this should demand more than the law of Moses authorized. . . . 'If any man would go to law with thee,' He said, 'and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also' (R.V.). 'And if the couriers require you to go a mile with them, go two miles.'⁴

¹Ellen G. White, Evangelism (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1970), p. 173.

²White, The Desire of Ages, p. 706.

³Ibid., p. 509.

⁴White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 72.

When God's Law and Man's
Laws Conflict

As noted in the above-mentioned excerpts. Mrs. White upheld the concept that civil authorities exist by divine appointment, and the Christian must obey them because it is right to obey. The only exception is when human law conflicts with the law of God. It is the Adventists' concept that Ellen G. White gave teachings she had received from God to point out this Bible truth and to give men a better understanding of the inspired Word. In her book Testimonies for the Church, she enlarges on what the Christian's right attitude should be when civil laws conflict with God's Ten Commandments. She writes:

We have men placed over us for rulers, and laws to govern the people. Were it not for these laws, the condition of the world would be worse than it is now. . . . When the laws of men conflict with the word and law of God, we are to obey the latter, whatever the consequences may be.¹

I saw that it is our duty in every case to obey the laws of our land, unless they conflict with the higher law which God spoke with an audible voice from Sinai, and afterward engraved on stone with His own finger. . . . The ten precepts of Jehovah are the foundation of all righteous and good laws. Those who love God's commandments will conform to every good law of the land. But if the requirements of the rulers are such as conflict with the laws of God, the only question to be settled is: Shall we obey God, or man?²

In referring to the situation in which human laws conflict with the word and law of God--stressing the fact that all are to obey God's law, "whatever the consequences may be"--Ellen G. White presents a real case when man's law should not be obeyed. In 1859 she wrote concerning slavery, classified by her as a degrading institution, that the Christian must not approve it and that he is authorized to disobey the laws which

¹White, Testimonies for the Church, 1:201, 202.

²Ibid., 1:361, 362.

maintain slavery. In Testimonies for the Church she states:

When the laws of men conflict with the word and law of God, we are to obey the latter, whatever the consequences may be. The law of our land requiring us to deliver a slave to his master, we are not to obey; and we must abide the consequences of violating this law. The slave is not the property of any man. God is his rightful master, and man has no right to take God's workmanship into his hands, and claim him as his own.¹

They [the slaveholders] rank these slaves as cattle and say that it is wronging the owner just as much to deprive him of his slaves as to take away his cattle. I was shown that it mattered not how much the master had paid for human flesh and the souls of men; God gives him no title to human souls, and he has no right to hold them as his property. Christ died for the whole human family, whether white or black. The institution of slavery does away with this and permits man to exercise over his fellow man a power which God has never granted him, and which belongs alone to God. . . . He [the slave master] will be called to an account for the power which he exercises over the slave. The colored race are God's property.²

Ellen G. White, in The Sanctified Life, presents a well-known Bible example clarifying the Christian's attitude when the claims of state authority conflict with those of God's law. She quotes from Dan 3 where the story is told of the compulsory state religion. The three youthful Hebrews refused to obey the king's decree of worshipping the golden image of the king of Babylon because it conflicted with the claims of God who says, "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, . . . you shall not bow down to them or serve them" (Exod 20:3, 4, RSV). To compel someone to become a Christian or to force someone to remain a Christian is contrary to the Bible truth. True obedience is founded on love. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments," says Jesus (John 14:15, RSV). White writes: "The three youthful Hebrews . . . had been obedient to the laws of Babylon so far as these did not conflict

¹Ibid., 1:201-202.

²Ibid., 1:358.

with the claims of God."¹ Her book Testimonies for the Church gives further counsel on the same problem of the right attitude: "Teach the people to conform in all things to the laws of their state when they can do so without conflicting with the law of God."²

Oath Taking and Human Laws

Another matter Ellen G. White deals with and gives the proper answer to concerns oath taking. In the same book, she shows that some Adventists have viewed oath taking in the wrong light. She states:

I saw that some of God's children have made a mistake in regard to oath taking. . . . I saw that the words of our Lord, "Swear not at all," do not touch the judicial oath. "Let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." This refers to common conversation.³

I saw that if there is anyone on earth who can consistently testify under oath, it is the Christian. . . . Jesus submitted to the oath in the hour of His trial. The high priest said to Him: "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said unto him: "Thou hast said." If Jesus in His teachings to His disciples referred to the judicial oath, He would have reproved the high priest, and there enforced His teachings, for the good of His followers present. Satan has been pleased that some have viewed oath taking in a wrong light. . . .⁴

The Christian's Attitude toward Politics

Should Seventh-day Adventists enter politics? In Fundamentals of Christian Education Ellen G. White makes statements regarding this question. In a letter addressed "To the Teachers and Managers of Our Schools," written June 16, 1899, she says:

¹White, The Sanctified Life, p. 38.

²White, Testimonies for the Church, 9:238.

³White, Testimonies for the Church, 1:201.

⁴Ibid., 1:202, 203.

The Lord would have His people bury political questions. On these themes silence is eloquence. . . .¹

Those who are Christians indeed will be branches of the true vine, and will bear the same fruit as the vine. They will act in harmony, in Christian fellowship. They will not wear political badges, but the badge of Christ.²

Those teachers in the church or in the school who distinguish themselves by their zeal in politics, should be relieved of their work and responsibilities without delay; for the Lord will not cooperate with them. The tithe should not be used to pay any one for speechifying or political questions. Every teacher, minister, or leader in our ranks who is stirred with a desire to ventilate his opinions on political questions, should be converted by a belief in the truth, or give up his work. His influence must tell as a laborer together with God in winning souls to Christ, or his credentials must be taken from him.³

Very definite instruction has come to the Adventist workers with respect to the spirit which they should manifest toward political questions.

Ellen White writes:

Those who stand as educators, as ministers, as laborers together with God in any line, have no battles to fight in the political world.⁴

They [Christians] are not to spend their time talking politics or acting politics. . . . Those in the ministry who desire to stand as politicians should have their credentials taken from them; for this work God has not given to high or low among His people.

God's children are to separate themselves from politics. . . .⁵

For further counsel concerning politics, Ellen G. White draws the Christian leaders' attention by urging them not to discuss or publish political questions in their papers. She says:

My brethren, will you not remember that none of you have any burden laid upon you by the Lord to publish your political preferences

¹Ellen G. White, Fundamentals of Christian Education (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 1923), p. 475.

²Ibid., p. 476.

³Ibid., p. 477.

⁴Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1948), p. 393.

⁵Ibid., p. 476.

in our papers, or to speak of them in the congregation, when the people assemble to hear the word of the Lord. . . .

We are not as a people to become mixed up with political questions.¹

Ellen White addresses a special warning word to ministers and other gospel workers. In Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers she urges ministers and Bible workers to leave politics alone, not to engage in political speeches. Politics in church is "a strange fire." The minister who engages in politics either in or out of the pulpit dishonors God. She states:

Would we know how we may best please the Savior? It is not engaging in political speeches, either in or out of the pulpit. It is in considering with fear and trembling every word we utter. Where the people assemble to worship God let not a word be spoken that shall divert the mind from the great central interest--Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. The third angel's message is to be our burden of warning. The side issues are not for us to meddle with. The burden of the work is, Preach the word.²

Ellen G. White states her position concerning those ministers who become involved in politics as follows: "Those in the ministry who desire to stand as politicians should have their credentials taken from them."³

Let us Follow Christ's Example

In giving further instruction concerning the Christian's attitude toward politics, Ellen White presents the example of Jesus Christ the Lord and shows clearly His attitude toward the political questions of His day:

¹Ellen G. White, Selected Messages (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), p. 336.

²Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers (Mountain view, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1962), p. 331.

³*Ibid.*, p. 337.

Again and again Christ had been asked to decide legal and political questions. But He refused to interfere in temporal matters. . . . His only exposure . . . was the proclamation of the Bible truth. To the great multitudes that thronged His steps He presented the pure, holy principles of law of God and spoke of the blessing found in obeying these principles. With authority from on high He enforced the importance of justice and mercy. But He refused to become entangled in personal disputes.¹

Mrs. White says that Christ refused to interfere in political matters. She writes, "He [Christ] did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments."² But while Jesus Christ stayed out of political matters, He performed all His duties. "Jesus . . . performed the duties of a son, a brother, a friend, and a citizen."³

Jesus Christ is the perfect pattern for all to imitate. Ellen White states: "I am instructed to say to our people: let us follow Christ. Do not forget that He is to be our pattern in all things."⁴

The Christian's Attitude toward Voting

Should the Seventh-day Adventists vote? In the Spirit of Prophecy writings Ellen G. White never denies the Seventh-day Adventists the privilege of casting their vote. But, as seen from the previous section concerning politics, she has again and again described the danger of church members becoming involved in politics or political controversy. Ellen G. White referred to the subject of voting for the first time in 1859. She attended a meeting where the Adventist leaders discussed voting. In

¹White, Testimonies for the Church, 9:218.

²White, The Desire of Ages, p. 509.

³Ibid., p. 82.

⁴White, Testimonies for the Church, 8:296.

Selected Messages the following words are written:

Attended meeting in the eve. Had quite a free, interesting meeting. After it was time to close, the subject of voting was considered and dwelt upon. James first talked, then Brother [J. N.] Andrews talked, and it was thought by them best to give their influence in favor of right and against wrong. They think it right to vote in favor of temperance men being in office in our city instead of by their silence running the risk of having intemperate men put in office. Brother [David] Hewitt tells his experience of a few days [since] and is settled that [it] is right to cast his vote. Brother [Josiah] Hart talks well. Brother [Henry] Lyon opposes. No others object to voting, but Brother [J. P.] Kellogg begins to feel that it is right. Pleasant feelings exist among all the brethren. O that they may all act in the fear of God.

Men of intemperance have been in the office today in a flattering manner expressing their approbation of the course of the Sabbath-keepers not voting and expressed hopes that they will stick to their course and, like the Quakers, not cast their vote. Satan and his evil angels are busy at this time, and he has workers upon the earth. May Satan be disappointed, is my prayer.--E. G. White diary, Sunday, March 6, 1859.¹

Six years later, the third annual session of the General Conference that convened at Battle Creek on May 17, 1865, was destined to be historic in regard to the question of voting. James and Ellen White, who were present along with other prominent Adventist leaders, actively participated in the work of the conference. The following resolution was given concerning the subject of voting:

Resolved, that in our judgment, the act of voting when exercised in behalf of justice, humanity and right, is in itself blameless, and may be at some times highly proper; but that the casting of any vote that shall strengthen the cause of such crimes as intemperance, . . . and slavery, we regard as highly criminal in the sight of Heaven. But we would deprecate any participation in the spirit of party strife.²

Although the Seventh-day Adventists were quite clear in their duty to cast their votes in favor of prohibition, a question on this point

¹White, Selected Messages, 2:337.

²[Uriah Smith], Report presented to the 3rd Annual Session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Review and Herald, May 23, 1865, p. 196.

was raised at a campmeeting held at Des Moines, Iowa, in the early summer of 1881. The resolution which was placed before the delegates read:

Resolved, that we express our deep interest in the temperance movement now going forward in this state; and that we instruct all our ministers to use their influence among our churches and with the people at large to induce them to put forth every constant effort, by personal labor, and at the ballot box, in favor of the prohibitory amendment of the Constitution, which the friends of temperance are seeking to secure.¹

Some of the brethren objected to the words "at the ballot box" and urged that they be deleted from the resolution. Ellen White, who was attending that campmeeting, had retired for rest but was summoned to give counsel concerning the question raised. The report of how she responded is quoted in a footnote in her book Temperance: "I dressed and found I was to speak to the point of whether our people should vote for prohibition. I told them 'Yes,' and spoke twenty minutes."²

As has been mentioned at the very beginning of this section, Ellen White never changed her position concerning the subject of voting. In an article written for the Review and Herald, the official paper of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, just a year before her death she re-emphasized the responsibility of every Christian citizen to exercise the right of franchise, to work for temperance and virtue. She states:

While we are in no wise to become involved in political questions, yet it is our privilege to take our stand decidedly on all questions relating to temperance reform. Concerning this I have often borne a plain testimony. In an article published in the Review of November 8, 1881, I wrote: . . .

Every Voter Has a Voice.--In our favored land, every voter has some voice in determining what laws shall control the nation. Should not that influence and that vote be cast on the side of temperance and virtue? . . .

. . . The advocates of temperance fail to do their whole duty

¹Ellen G. White, Temperance (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1949), p. 255.

²Ibid.

unless they exert their influence by precept and example--by voice and pen and vote--in favor of prohibition and total abstinence. . . .¹

In referring to secret voting E. G. White gives those who cast their votes the following counsels:

Whatever the opinions you may entertain in regard to casting your vote in political questions, you are not to proclaim it by pen or voice. Our people need to be silent upon questions which have no relation to the third angel's message.²

Keep your voting to yourself. Do not feel it your duty to urge everyone to do as you do.³

The Christian's Attitude toward Peace Policy

Should the Seventh-day Adventists advocate the peace policy? In commenting on the Bible text of Matt 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers," Ellen G. White, in Sons and Daughters of God, stresses the idea that true Christians are messengers of peace, that the spirit of peace is the evidence of their true Christian life. She writes:

Christ is "the Prince of peace," and it is His mission to restore to earth and heaven the peace that sin has broken.

Christ's followers are sent to the world with the message of peace. . . . The spirit of peace is evidence of their connection with heaven.⁴

According to the Bible teachings Christians are to be at peace among themselves (1 Thess 5:13, RSV), and to "follow peace with all men" (Heb 12:14), that is, to "live peaceably with all men" (Rom 12:18). As peacemakers, Christians are to pray for peace, to work for peace, and to take a constructive interest in activities that contribute to a

¹Ibid., pp. 253-54.

²White, Selected Messages, 2:336.

³Ibid., 2:337.

⁴Ellen G. White, Sons and Daughters of God (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1955), p. 306.

peaceful state of society. Thus, the true Christian will diligently "seek the peace" of the community and the nation in which it is his privilege to dwell. The true Christian always considers himself duty bound to God to take an active interest in the well-being of society, and he is willing to place the common good above his personal interests. Ellen G. White says: "Citizens of heaven will make the best citizens of earth."¹

The Christian's right attitude toward peace policy has the following features:

1. It displays a spirit of sacrifice--As citizens we ought to be "ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1). In every community there are many worthy and needy causes to which Adventists ought to contribute and participate. Ellen White stresses the idea that Adventist education must be in realistic contact with present-day life. She writes:

In preparation for a life of service the youth are sent to school to acquire knowledge by the study of books. . . . Upon their graduation, thousands find themselves out of touch with life. They have so long dealt with the abstract and theoretical that when the whole being must be roused to meet the sharp contests of real life, they are unprepared. . . . The world is robbed of the service it might have received; and God is robbed of the souls He longed to uplift, ennoble, and honor as representatives of Himself.²

The spirit of peace also has to be proved by a spirit of sacrifice for needy people. Ellen White also stresses the idea of helping underdeveloped countries. She writes: "To awaken in the children and youth sympathy and the spirit of sacrifice for the suffering millions in the "regions beyond," let them become acquainted with these lands and their peoples."³

¹White, Messages to Young People, p. 329.

²Ellen G. White, Education (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1952), p. 265.

³Ibid., p. 269.

2. It shows a self-sacrificing, patriotic spirit--The spirit of peace identifies itself with the self-sacrificing, patriotic spirit. E. G. White makes the following statement: "A self-sacrificing, patriotic spirit . . . must be blended with our daily experience and infused into the minds and hearts of our children, both by precept and example."¹

In order to take an active interest in the well-being of society and to place the common good above his personal interests the Christian has to love his country. She says:

When the Lord bids us do good for others outside our home, He does not mean that our affection for home shall become diminished, and that we shall love our kindred or our country less because He desires us to extend our sympathies.²

3. It backs up no enriching/impooverishing policy--The evidence that the Christian supports the peace policy is that he does not back up policies that lead to social inequality. Ellen White gives counsel that Adventists should not back up policies that enrich the few and suppress the poor:

When the voice [of the Lord] is obeyed, you will not give your voice or influence to any policy to enrich a few, to bring oppression and suffering to the poorer class of humanity.³

Concerning social injustice, Ellen White writes:

God's word sanctions no policy that will enrich one class by the oppression and suffering of another. . . . He who would take advantage of another's misfortunes in order to benefit himself, or who seeks to protect himself through another's weakness or

¹Ellen G. White, The Adventist Home (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 1952), p. 238.

²Ellen G. White, Welfare Ministry (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1952), p. 159.

³White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pp. 332-33.

incompetence, is a transgressor both of the principles and of the precepts of the word of God.¹

Social injustice threatens, imperils, and finally destroys peace. In making further statements concerning social problems, Ellen White says that the great evils are the result of the continued accumulation of wealth by one class and the poverty and degradation of another, and that social equality has always been God's purpose.

Great evils would result from the continued accumulation of wealth by one class, and the poverty and degradation of another. Without some restraint the power of the wealthy would become a monopoly, and the poor, though in every respect fully as worthy in God's sight, would be regarded and treated as inferior to their more prosperous brethren. . . . The regulations that God established were designed to promote social equality.²

4. It has a right attitude to social and economic injustice--To take an attitude against social and economic injustice is to advocate the peace policy. In referring to social injustice, Ellen White gives the counsel that Adventists who obtain wealth by social injustice should not be retained as church members. She states:

Even among those who profess to be walking in the fear of the Lord, there are some who are acting over again the course pursued by the nobles of Israel. Because it is in their power to do so, they exact more than is just, and thus become oppressors. And because avarice and treachery are seen in the lives of those who have named the name of Christ, because the church retains on her books the names of those who have gained their possessions by injustice, the religion of Christ is held in contempt. . . . The church is in a great degree responsible for the sins of her members. She gives countenance to evil if she fails to lift her voice against it.³

¹Ellen G. White, The Ministry of Healing (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1942), p. 167.

²White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 534.

³Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1943), p. 651.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A summary of the New Testament teachings and Ellen G. White's statements and counsels concerning the relationship between the Christian and the civil authorities which have been considered in this paper, points out the following:

1. In Matt 22:21, Christ gave a great principle that defines the norms and limits of the Christian's relationship to the civil authorities and his duty to God.

2. The Christian has to recognize and respect civil authority within its legitimate sphere as Christ did while on earth, rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.

3. The Christian is bound to render obedience to civil authority on the ground that the government is divinely set or appointed by God.

4. The Christian ought to obey civil authority from a sense of duty, out of respect to his own conscience before God, and not because he is afraid of punishment.

5. The true Christian has to be the best support of state authority within its legitimate sphere.

6. The writings of Ellen G. White as accepted by Adventists have important functions, such as: (a) to exalt the Bible, (b) to awaken minds, (c) to attract minds to the Bible, (d) to impress the truths already revealed, (e) to call attention to truths neglected, (f) to simplify truths,

(g) to bring out the Bible principles and help apply them, and (h) to rebuke, reprove, and correct the believers.

7. Concerning the relationship between the Christian and the civil authorities, the writings of Ellen G. White teach:

(a) That the true Christian is the best citizen; the Bible truths make men virtuous, law-abiding citizens.

(b) That the Christian has to be careful of what he speaks and writes in order not to put himself in opposition to the civil authorities; he should not work in a manner that would mark him as seeming to advocate treason; he should weed out from his writings and utterances every expression that could be so misinterpreted as to make it appear antagonistic to law and order; he should be careful to speak guardedly at all times and under all circumstances.

(c) That the Christian should manifest a "Thus saith the Lord" attitude; he should teach obedience to human government, within its legitimate sphere, as a sacred duty; he should not attack authorities, not do anything that would mark him as lawless and disobedient, not speak words that would irritate or provoke.

(d) That the Christian should do more than the law demands: "If the couriers require you to go a mile with them, go two miles" (Matt 5:41).

(e) That when human laws conflict with God's Ten Commandments, the Christian "must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29); that compulsory state religion is contrary to the Bible teachings.

(f) That the Christian has to have a right attitude concerning oath taking; "If there is anyone on earth who can consistently testify under oath, it is the Christian" (see p. 36).

(g) That the Christian's attitude toward politics has to be clear and unswerving. All Seventh-day Adventists should stay out of politics, separate themselves from it. In political questions silence is eloquence; politics in church is a "strange fire." Adventist workers, educators, or ministers who stand as laborers together with God have no battles to fight in the political world. The minister who engages in politics either in or out of the pulpit dishonors God. Teachers, ministers, or any other leaders in the church who desire to stand as politicians should have their credentials taken from them; the tithe should not be used to pay any one for speaking on political questions. Adventist Christians should not discuss or publish political questions in their papers. Jesus Christ refused to interfere in political matters, but He performed all His duties of a son, a brother, a friend, and a citizen. Jesus Christ is the perfect pattern for all to imitate.

(i) That the Seventh-day Adventists should use their right of casting votes. Every Christian citizen has the responsibility of exercising the right of franchise as the act of voting is a patriotic duty, but that there must be no participation in the spirit of party strife. The Christian has to keep his voting to himself, and should urge no one to do as he does.

(j) That the Seventh-day Adventist should advocate a peace policy. Evidence of advocating the peace policy is reflected in the following features: (1) being among the best citizens, (2) having a spirit of sacrifice, (3) having a self-sacrificing, patriotic spirit, (4) backing up no enriching/impoverishing policy, (5) manifesting a right attitude toward social and economic injustice, and (6) loving the country.

Conclusions

In exploring the norms and limits for the relationship between the Christian and civil authorities in the New Testament as well as in the writings of Ellen G. White, these essential conclusions can be drawn:

The Bible is the standard of truth and the basic guide for the Christian life. The religion of Christ is a religion which has to do with the practical daily life.

The statements and counsels of Ellen G. White, as accepted by Seventh-day Adventists have clarified the Bible truth concerning the topic of the Christian-civil authority relationship. White's writings have helped every sincere reader to better understand his responsibilities as a church member and as a citizen and to manifest a right biblical attitude toward social problems. Her clear-cut statements and counsels have helped in applying the Bible principles in the lives of the Adventist people. They have helped the true Adventist Christian avoid making mistakes and bringing discredit upon Christ's teaching and upon the Adventist Church.

The Adventist attitude toward the civil authorities is to be guarded by the precepts of the Bible. Adventists must receive the Word of God as the supreme authority and recognize the civil authority within its legitimate sphere. The civil government is ordained by God and, in view of its divinely ordained role for maintaining a good orderly society, it is entitled to the Christian's respectful and willing obedience to the human laws to the extent that the civil requirements do not conflict with those of God. In other words, the Christian is bound to "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" but to reserve for "God the things that are God's."

The Christian has to follow the example of Christ. He is the perfect pattern. It is for this reason that Ellen White has directed the Christian's attention to Him. Jesus, while He lived in this world, recognized the state authority, respected it, and fulfilled His duties as a citizen, but He stayed out of politics. The true Christians have to separate themselves from politics by following the steps of Christ. The Christian's heart should burn with the fire of the Holy Spirit; then there will be no place for the fire of politics in that heart.

In fulfilling the fundamental principle established by Christ as to the Christian's relationship to the state authority, Adventist citizens should willingly and happily surrender private aims to achieve the good of society by being exemplary citizens, doing conscientiously all duties and exerting a positive influence in their communities. It is, therefore, the responsibility of every Christian citizen to exercise the right of franchise, the act of voting being a patriotic duty.

The religion of Christ is a religion of peace. It is for this reason that Seventh-day Adventists must advocate the peace policy. The true followers of Christ must gladly follow the policies that encourage peace.

The Spirit of Prophecy writings as accepted by Adventists have helped them to attain a right understanding of the Bible and to develop a right relationship with it. These writings have helped Adventist believers better understand their responsibility of exerting a positive influence in society. They have helped them to reach a deeper understanding of the meaning of peace policy. A peacemaker never becomes an oppressor. As a peacemaker the Christian takes a constructive interest in activities that contribute to a peaceful state of society.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will help the Seventh-day Adventist ministers and teachers to better understand the inspired Word as well as to instruct their church members--particularly new members.

It is also hoped that the findings of this study will help Christians to attain a deeper and better understanding of the Bible principles which should govern their attitude toward God and civil authorities and to exercise a fruitful influence upon Christians in order for them to live the ongoing spiritual experience and faithfully and correctly put into practice these teachings, keeping in mind that citizens of heaven make the best citizens of earth.

PART II

**HOW THE BIBLE PRINCIPLES CONCERNING THE CHURCH-
STATE RELATIONSHIP HAVE BEEN REFLECTED IN THE
ROMANIAN UNION CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTISTS**

CHAPTER V

INTRODUCTION

As the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been established throughout the world, it has carried at the forefront of its message the belief that the Bible and its teachings provide an inspired guide for the Christian's daily life.

During its world-wide growth, the Adventist Church has also maintained its unique conviction that Ellen G. White received further instruction from God which she passed along to the Church to enrich its understanding of Bible truths. These two sources of Christian guidance give explicit counsel regarding the relationship of Christians to civil authority, as has been seen in Part I of this study. Such counsel came to be of fundamental importance to the Church as it grew in countries throughout the world, developing under a variety of governments. The Socialist Republic of Romania is one such country in which directions concerning the Christian-state authority relationship have been of great value to the Adventist believers.

Part II of this project discusses the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania, the current Seventh-day Adventist concept on church-state relationships, and the reflection of the Bible's and Ellen G. White's counsels regarding the role of the Christian citizen in society as seen in the Romanian Church.

Brief Church History of Seventh-day Adventists
in the Socialist Republic of Romania

The Adventist message, which Adventists believe has been driven onward by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit and which they have symbolized by three angels flying in midheaven and carrying an eternal Gospel, has reached the region of Romania, too.

The beginnings of the Adventist movement in Romania can be placed in the last decades of the nineteenth century. All references and historical data that can be found concerning that event point to the year 1870 as a year in which the teachings of the Adventist Church were presented in Romania.

When viewed from a practical viewpoint, the history of the Adventist Church in Romania can best be analyzed when divided into four important periods: (1) the period of adaptation, 1870-1908, (2) the period of consolidation, 1908-1936, (3) the period of growth, 1936-1955, and (4) the contemporary period, 1955-1980.

The Period of Adaptation, 1870-1908

In the period of adaptation, the Advent message was attached to the old religious predispositions, to the former endeavours to bringing together the creed and the teachings of the Holy Scripture teachings, and to a longing for the pure and holy Gospel. In an epoch full of social unrest, of enthusiasm, and of the fight for independence, and yet while illiteracy kept people fettered by the shackled of obscurantism, the simple teaching of the Gospel as preached by the Adventist Church was warmly accepted by people. Thus this social and spiritual readiness of Romania made it among the first countries of Europe where companies of believers

having religious convictions of the Adventist Church came into being.

The history of the Adventist Church in Romania is linked to the name, personality, and activities of Pastor M. B. Czechowski, during the last years of his life. G. I. Butler, then General Conference President, wrote in 1884,

I spent four days in Pitesti, a town in Romania. The truth had already been preached in this region twelve or fifteen years ago and some persons received it. As a result of this preaching, we found Brother Toma G. Aslan and other friends and keepers of God's commandments and of the faith of Christ.¹

Robert Gerber, former treasurer of the Southern European Division, in his work Die Geschichte der Adventbewegung in Europe, wrote: "After M. B. Czechowski had preached the Gospel in Italy and Switzerland, he went through Romania where he stayed especially in Pitesti. . . . This took place about 1870."²

Jules Robert, the well-known pioneer of the Adventist work in Switzerland, wrote in 1937, "A Pole, . . . M. B. Czechowski by name, went to Romania after 1868 where he engaged in preaching the Gospel."³

As a result of this proclamation of the Gospel, the first baptisms by immersion as taught by the Bible and practiced by Seventh-day Adventists were performed in Pitesti.

Czechowski joyfully and gratefully baptized Toma Aslan, the young engineer, becoming his friend, together with his wife Margareta Aslan as well as his brother Mitica Aslan with his wife Zoe, Tache Aslan with his wife; he baptized also the old Aslans and many others.

Thus 1870 is the year when the first group of Adventist believers came into being in Romania, in Pitesti, the year when the third angel's message is proclaimed and the simple, everlasting Gospel truths are

¹Rajmund L. Dabrowski and B. B. Beach, Michal Belina Czechowski 1818-1876 (Warsaw, Poland: "Znaki Czasu" Publishing House, 1979), p. 330.

²Ibid., p. 332.

³Ibid.

resurrected and offered to the souls who were longing for salvation.¹

In 1881, Toma Aslan, by then a leader of the Seventh-day Adventist group in Pitesti, stated in an article published in Les Signes des Temps:

We have heard about the proclamation of the third angel's message in Rev 14:6-12, through which the second coming in glory of the Lord Jesus is made known. Our church has 13 members. Besides these, we have some visitors who are interested in knowing the truth of salvation and who want to keep the Sabbath. . . . The members are strictly keeping the Lord's Day and I hope that very soon it will be kept also by the friends who gather with us.²

In 1891, a group of Adventists, German settlers from the Crimea, settled in the Sarighiol village of the Dobrudja, the region lying between the Danube and the Black Sea. They became an active community of Adventists who lived and preached the Advent message. The next year a company of about thirty members was organized at Sarighiol. At about the same time, Brother Babienco, the first Bible worker in Russia, escaped from the tsarist exile and took refuge in Romania where he actively preached the Adventist message. As a result two Adventist companies with a total of sixty-one members were organized. One of these companies was in Anadalchioi and the other in Viile Noi near Constantza. In 1899 these two companies were visited by Brother I. F. Hunergardt who had come from the United States of America a year earlier.

The year 1900 marked the beginning of Adventist evangelistic work in Bucharest. Four years later the first company of Adventist believers was organized in the capital city.

¹Ibid., p. 340.

²Ibid., pp. 344-45.

Once the Seventh-day Adventist believers were established as a denomination, they organized their adherents by geographical areas designated as divisions, unions, and conferences. These areas have been changed and reorganized from time to time as the number of adherents increased or as new countries emerged.

Until 1907 Europe had been organized as European General Conference. Subsequently, it was divided into Union Conferences called the British Union, the Scandinavian Union, the German Union, the Russian Union, the Latin Union, and the Levant Union. Romania, as a missionary field, belonged to the Levant Union.

The Period of Consolidation, 1908-1936

The Adventist believers felt that the Holy Spirit worked through the evangelistic appeal of the Adventist message. They witnessed the growth of their small companies as many accepted their religious beliefs. As the new message took root among the new believers, the Adventists felt they were witnessing the fulfillment of the text, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear" (Mark 4:26-29, RSV).

During the consolidation period, native Romanians who were convinced they were called and guided by the Holy Spirit were trained and accepted the responsibility of the work of consolidating and organizing the Adventist Church.

In 1909, when the Danubian Conference was organized, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania was included. By the end of 1909 there were 114 Adventist church members in Bucharest, 27 in Constantza, and 3 in Sinaia--a total of 144 in the whole country. By the

beginning of 1914 there were 523 members in Romania and they were organizing their own conference. Its leadership was entrusted to a Romanian, Petre P. Paulini. Thus the Adventist Church grew steadily and when Romania entered World War I there were 834 believers. Even under the unfavourable circumstances of war, the church continued its spiritual role.

The advancement of the Adventist Church can be noted in the statistics available from the conference session held in 1920. At that time church membership reached the figure of two thousand with more than fifty local churches and companies. A. G. Daniels, then Seventh-day Adventist General Conference president, and L. H. Christian, the SDA European Division president, took part in the meeting. At that conference session the Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists in Romania was organized. Petre P. Paulini was elected Union Conference president. Plans were laid for establishing a printing house, a theological seminary, and a dispensary.

From 1925-1931 the Adventist church in Romania made evident progress. Church membership increased in spite of political oppression. Many pastors, colporteurs, and laymen suffered physical torture and were put in jail. Some were even killed--as a result of stoning or corporal torture. Many meetings places were destroyed and/or closed. In 1927 Pastor I. Bauer, who at that time was the Bucharest Conference president, was sentenced to jail for one year.

As noted in the historical beginnings of the Romanian church, there have always been important contacts within church organization abroad. Thus, in spite of difficulties in Romania, the Romanian Church sent delegates to take part in the first Seventh-day Adventist Youth Congress in

Europe which took place in Chemitz, Germany, in June 1924. In August of the same year another important conference took place in Darmstadt, Germany. The president of the Romanian SDA Union Conference and the presidents of the four local conferences attended the Darmstadt meetings.

Statistics show that on January 1, 1931, the Romanian Union Conference had 405 Sabbath Schools--the Church-at-Study-meetings which usually precede the morning worship hour--with a membership of 17,433. The church employed forty-two pastors, twenty-six assistant pastors, and sixteen Bible workers to carry out the evangelistic work. In addition, thirty-five other persons were employed as editors, seminary faculty members, and other workers--a total of 119 persons.

One important event during the first century of the Romanian Adventist church history was the first Adventist Youth Congress held in Romania in Brasov, Stupini, on July 4-10, 1934. The meetings were held on the SDA Theological Seminary campus. The Adventist believers felt the congress had a very positive influence on all who attended as well as on the church at large.

In 1936, when the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference session took place in San Francisco, the SDA Union Conference of Romania was represented by Dumitru Florea. In September of the same year, the Romanian Union Conference session took place, at which time plans for church activities for the coming years were laid. However, many plans were not realized as the world rushed headlong into World War II.

The Period of Growth 1936-1955

The early part of the growth period marked the time when second generation native Romanian church workers took over the responsibilities of carrying on the Adventist message.

During the cataclysmal unrests of the second quarter of the twentieth century, the evangelical Adventist message continued to prosper. The plight of war did not cause the Adventist church to falter; on the contrary, it gave it animation. In fact, the stress of war caused many to appreciate even more the spiritual encouragement of the biblical messages. Then the Adventist church had to face "high winds and huge waves."

Seventh-day Adventists believe they must adhere to the tenets of their faith. This includes strict observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath as well as all ten commandments. Such adherence to their religious principles caused them to be categorized as undesirable. As a consequence, constant harassment resulted. A period of alternating annulment and permission to function as a church organization ensued. Finally, on December 29, 1942, with decree-law No. 927, the church organization was disbanded, all church properties were confiscated, and any manifestation of the Adventist church organization was forbidden. The consequences of the decree were felt immediately. Adventist believers were arrested, put on trial for their religious observances, and sentenced to many years of prison. They endured corporal tortures and some died in jail. Churches were confiscated and most of them were distributed to other religious denominations or to different public institutions. Some were transformed into playhouses or movie theaters, others into workshops and warehouses of every description. The printing press was confiscated and used for

church members longed for a stronger spiritual life. They believed that with steadfast trust and hope in God's promises they would keep the faith and preserve the Church organization.

As pointed out earlier in this study the universality of the Adventist Church--the spirit of brotherly fellowship--has engendered strong spiritual relations with similar church organizations abroad. The permanence of these brotherly relations has been demonstrated from the beginning of the Adventist Church organization in Romania until the outbreak of World War II. However, these spiritual relations with the Seventh-day Adventist Church world organization were interrupted in 1940 by the war; they were reestablished later.

Evidence of this reestablishment can be seen at the Polish Adventist Union Conference held in Warsaw in 1965, Tachiciu Ioan and Dumitru Popa of the Romanian Union Conference committee took part in that conference. It was a significant start of renewed relationships.

In November 1967 the same Romanian delegation attended the Seventh-day Adventist Southern European Division Congress held in Salzburg, Austria. The following year a larger delegation, I. Tachiciu, D. Popa, C. Alexe, and A. Constantinescu, participated at the Jubilee Congress of the SDA Southern European Division in Bern, Switzerland. Then in 1970 I. Tachiciu and C. Chiorascu attended the SDA General Conference Session held in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

These worldwide brotherly relations were enhanced in 1974 when Robert H. Pierson, then president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church world organization, and Edwin Ludescher, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Euro-Africa Division, came to Romania to visit the local conferences and churches and to take part in religious meetings.

in the name of the Seventh-day Adventist Church workers of the Church have been able to do their statutory work and its institutions have received their place within the legal framework.

The period of 1936-1955, therefore, can be characterized as that of the most unified church leadership ever. However, it was an era of afflictions; i.e., World War II, the "catacombs" experience, and persecution due to inhuman laws and a misunderstanding of the "purity of the forefathers' faith." It was bound by a decree intended to solve by force what had failed by word and example.

It was also a period which culminated with an outburst of gladness and liberties after August 23, 1944. Church activity unparalleled in the history of the Adventist Church in Romania evangelized every part of the land with both the spoken and the written word.

Freedom from oppression and the fear of destruction and war filled with grief and sufferings caused by the war, and rejoicing in liberties granted by the people's democratic government, the Adventist Church in a very short time distributed millions of religious books, magazines, and leaflets; preached God's Word in halls and outdoors, held public debates concerning the teachings of the Adventist Church, and constantly pursued personal work. All these invigorated the church and caused an increase in the church membership. The Adventist believers felt that the church was experiencing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and that the Lord was blessing His servants' labors.

The Contemporary Period, 1955-1980

The first part of the contemporary period, 1955-1966, was tumultuous and some events were not the happiest. Nevertheless, Adventist

other purposes. The theological seminary once used to train workers for the church was banned, and the building and all its facilities were turned over to an "historic" denomination for the training of "women missionaries." The future of the Adventist church seemed dismal indeed.

Then the history of Romania reached a great turning point. Romania burst the fetters of bondage and took her fate in her own hands. The date of August 23, 1944, marked a new era. The breeze of liberty began to blow, and with this gentle and refreshing breath decree-law No. 589 materialized on October 22, 1944. At that time the church properties were successively returned for the work of the church. The printing house began to print again, and the theological seminary was given back to the Adventists for the preparation of church workers. Once again full liberty was granted to pastors and other workers to fulfill their spiritual duties.

In 1948 the Law of Denominations was promulgated. The constitutional principles on which this law was based have been the legal framework for the activity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church too.

Based on the liberties guaranteed by law, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania has developed its own Statute of Organization and Functioning which constitutes the juridical framework of its internal religious life.

In 1950 the Adventist Church was officially recognized together with its confession of faith, and the Statute of Organization and Functioning was legally approved.

Based on this legal recognition, the work of the Adventist Church in Romania entered a new stage. Church properties have been registered

Since that time this Adventist interaction has become more frequent. Evidence of this is the frequency of visits by Romanian delegates to meetings held abroad; i.e., the delegates of the Union Conference Executive Committee of Seventh-day Adventists in the Socialist Republic of Romania have participated in the annual meetings of the SDA Euro-African Division Committee in Berne, Switzerland; Dumitru Popa, president of the Union Conference, attended the Congress for Religious Liberty held in Amsterdam, Netherlands, March 18-20, 1977; and later, Marin T. Pirvan, Union Conference secretary, and G. Indricau, director of the retired and assistance home, and C. Petcu, Union field secretary, attended the Bible Conference at Friedensau Missionary Seminary, Magdeburg, German Democratic Republic. In addition, D. Popa attended the General Conference Committee in Washington, D.C. in 1979; later in the summer of 1979, Popa, M. Pirvan, and N. Dumitrescu, Union Conference treasurer, took part in the Christian Leadership Seminar held at Collonges, France.

Finally, at the Fifty-third World Session of Seventh-day Adventists in Dallas, Texas, held April 17-26, 1980, the Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in the Socialist Republic of Romania was represented by the largest Romanian delegation ever to participate. The Romanian flag flew in Dallas along with flags of 189 other countries.

While Romanian delegates go abroad to participate in Adventist meetings, multi-national delegates arrive in Romania to take part in Romanian conferences; i.e., Pierre Lanares, SDA Euro-African Division director of the Religious Department visited in 1975; the following year Georges Steveny, president of the French Adventist Seminary at Collonges, France, visited local churches and the Romanian Theological Seminary; and in 1977,

Edward E. White, SDA Euro-African Division director of Education, also visited.

A second visit by Robert H. Pierson, his wife, and Edwin Ludescher was made in May 1977. Their three-week stay greatly strengthened the bond of Adventist relationship. D. A. Delafield and Paul A. Gordon, associate secretaries of the Ellen G. White Estate in Washington, D.C., and Oswald Bremer, Spirit of Prophecy director for the SDA Euro-African Division, visited the Union Conference headquarters in Bucharest. They conducted the first Spirit of Prophecy workshop for 150 pastors and visited churches in four local conferences.

These Adventist ties have strengthened the Romanian church--a fact reflected in the membership which now surpasses that of any other European country and in the Euro-Africa Division. This means that one-fourth of Euro-Africa Division membership is in the Socialist Republic of Romania!

The following statement from Ellen White concerning the Adventist Church history is significant:

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. 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.¹

¹Ellen G. White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1943), p. 196.

CHAPTER VI

THE CURRENT SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CONCEPT ON CHURCH-STATE RELATIONSHIP

The Seventh-day Adventist concept of Church-State relationship¹ has been grounded on the Bible teachings and the Spirit of Prophecy writings--those writings of Ellen G. White accepted by Adventists as God-given.

The relationship between man and his Creator, between man and man, and between church and state are closely connected, following Mrs. White's comment that "Citizens of heaven will make the best citizens of earth." Adventists believe that true Christians who have a right attitude toward God will prove to have the right attitude toward their neighbors and toward the civil authorities.

Ten Fundamental Principles of Church-State Relationship

Believing that the Bible is the inspired Word of God which comprises unchanging principles that should govern man-Creator, man-man, and Church-State relationships, Seventh-day Adventists believe the fundamental principles:

1. God as Creator of all things has established the relationship that should prevail between Himself and man, and between church and state.

3. God endowed man with intelligence, with means for obtaining a knowledge of his Creator's purpose and will for him, with moral perception and conscience, with the power of free choice to determine his

¹See appendix, pp. 98 and 99.

own destiny, and with responsibility to his Creator for the use he makes of these faculties; and that man's first and supreme duty is to know and to cooperate with his Creator's revealed will.

3. Man's relationship to his fellowman rests on the basic principles of unselfish love as illustrated in the words, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;" and that application of this principle involves recognition of the equal rights of others under God and a direct responsibility to God for our treatment of our fellowman.

4. The church is a divinely ordained institution, the role of which is to preserve and to proclaim God's message to man, to assist man in making His design effective in his heart and life, and to unite its members in fellowship, worship, and service.

5. Civil government is ordained by God; that its divinely appointed function is to protect men in the legitimate exercise of their rights, to provide a suitable environment in which they can pursue the objectives set for them by their Creator.

6. In view of its divinely ordained role, civil government is entitled to man's respectful and willing obedience in temporal matters to the extent that civil requirements do not conflict with those of God; in other words, man is bound to "render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" but to reserve for "God the things that are God's" to exercise an active, personal interest and concern in matters affecting the public welfare, and to be an exemplary citizen.

7. Man's twofold duty to Caesar and to God, each in his respective sphere, implies a clear distinction between their separate sphere of authority and jurisdiction; that God has delegated to civil government authority and jurisdiction in temporal matters, while reserving to Himself authority and jurisdiction over man's conscience that in the best interests of both church and state, civil government must observe strict neutrality in religious matters, neither promoting religion nor restricting individuals or the church in the legitimate exercise of their rights.

8. Religious freedom consists of the inalienable right to believe and to worship God according to conscience, without coercion, restraint, or civil disability, and to practice one's religion and promulgate it without interference or penalty; and of the obligation to grant the same right to others.¹

At this point, perhaps two more principles can be stated. They are that the Church should be separated from the State and the relations between the Church and State should be characterized by mutual regard,

¹General Conference Autumn Council 1965, Church-State Relationship (Washington, D.C.: Takoma Park, October 20-25, 1965), pp. 4-5.

noninterference by the State in the home religious affairs of the Church; and that the Adventist Church has the divine task to cooperate with the State Authority in preserving the peace.

The Christian As an Ideal Citizen

Chapter 2 of Part I of this project points out the Christian's dual responsibility to both divine and human authority. Also noted was Paul's explicit declaration in Rom 13 that civil government has legitimate authority to make certain demands upon the Christian. "For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." The Christian is, therefore, to "be subject to" them, rendering to "them their dues." It was further noted that under the authoritarian Rome one's duty to "Caesar" consisted essentially of simple compliance with the laws of the Land.

In a representative socialist democracy, such as the Socialist Republic of Romania, ultimate authority resides with the people. Christians, then, as good citizens, should participate in making the laws as well as observing them, not as a privilege or even a right, but as a duty. Who should be better able to discharge his duty as a citizen in a representative socialist democracy better than the Christian who considers himself duty bound by God to take an active interest in the well-being of society, who is willing to place the common good above his own personal interests?

In a representative socialist democracy, citizens exercise this right and fulfill this duty through the chosen representatives of the people. Is participation, for instance, in the process of government one of the "things" a Christian citizen may lawfully "render to Caesar?" Adventists believe that the authoritative voice expressed in the writings of Ellen White,

generally referred to as the Spirit of Prophecy, has positively strengthened this concept.

Cooperation

In what ways are the Christian citizens asked to cooperate with the civil authorities? Because the Spirit of Prophecy points out that those who confess to be Christ's followers should be the best citizens of earth, Adventists feel they should be the "light of the world" and the "salt of the earth" that God might be glorified.

In any job, the Christian should be honest and industrious. He should have a Christlike character. Ellen White writes:

. . . He [Jesus] was perfect as a workman, as He was perfect in character. By His own example He taught that it is our duty to be industrious that our work should be performed with exactness and thoroughness, and that such labor is honorable.¹

Adventist believers have often been called to work as managers, book-keepers, and cashiers because they are recognized as honest. This fact casts a beam of light upon their religious convictions and their spiritual level.

Adventists, then, should be the best citizens living in any community, heeding the admonition of Scripture to "seek the peace" (1 Pet 3:11, RSV) of the local community and the nation, and "ready for any honest work" (Titus 3:1, RSV).

Every community holds many worthy and needy causes to which Adventists should contribute and in which they should participate as time, means, and abilities permit. Many problems require group response—a collective answer. Adventists should endeavor to make God's love a

¹White, The Desire of Ages, p. 72.

reality in the social life of the community.

Some Adventists separate themselves from the community with three main excuses:

Political reasons. Some Adventists argue that social problems are political and that these actions have nothing to do with religion. But social problems are human problems and the concerned Christian Adventist should respond to the human need.

The separation-of-Church-and-State excuse. It is true that the church should be separated from the state. But this separation has to do with institutions and not with persons. Adventist Christians are called to have an active part in solving social problems. The Church should be interested in education and public morality, too.

The "spiritual" excuse. Some argue that the Christian's interest is with the eternal life and not with the material life. They have forgotten that it is the whole person whose influence should be used. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own" (1 Cor 6:19, RSV). The good laws have an educational role. It is unwise to object to such laws. Clearly, problems will not be solved by laws but neither can they be solved without laws. The Adventists as a true Christian community should set a good example. Christians, therefore, should ever remain in a position where they can cooperate with any state authority for the welfare of those in need, and for the well-being and happiness of their fatherland.

Adventists should be ready in emergencies such as disasters or calamities to make sacrifices of material values to provide immediate aid. A concrete example of such cooperation can be cited when a severe

earthquake struck Romania on March 4, 1977. An article published in the Adventist Review and Herald reads:

Seventh-day Adventist World service, in cooperation with the Romanian Government and the Euro-Africa Division, is providing humanitarian relief in the amount of \$50,000. The money, which will be used to purchase medical and surgical supplies, among other things, has been presented to the Romanian ambassador, Nicolae Nicolae.¹

Adventists believe that God has not settled them in the world to become isolated from the world. In His own prayer Jesus prayed, "I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15, RSV). Ellen G. White categorically stressed the fact that the Adventists' calling is to live among the people, and as Christians be willing to do their share along with others toward maintaining a stable state of society so long as the world exists. Jesus Christ, when on earth, mingled constantly with men in order to uplift and ennoble them. "I sanctify Myself," He declared, "that they also might be sanctified" (John 17:19).

The Christian then is morally obliged before God to fulfill his duties as a responsible citizen. He is called to prove the value and power of eternal truth. Adventists believe that the Bible truth enables people to be useful to the ideals of peace, that it enables them to be a blessing to their neighbors according to Christ's command: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Rom 13:9, RSV). For instance, John Byington (1798-1887), the first president of the General Conference, was actively anti-slavery in his conception, proving it by concrete action.

¹[H. D. Burbank], editorial, Review and Herald, March 24, 1977, p. 24.

He regularly entertained Indians and Negroes in his home, and is said to have maintained a station of the Underground Railroad at Buck's Bridge, New York, when he lived on a farm.¹

In the light of these truths and requests, the following fact is clearly pointed out, namely, that an Adventist Christian should be polished up and transformed into an honest person by the Bible truth. Such a Christian is made useful for society through his work, integrity, and honesty. All these are constituent elements of a Christian character, a character which is so much needed in the world of today or of any other time. It is clear, therefore, that the Gospel plays a positive role in the Christian's life. This means that the Christian is sanctified by Bible truth not only so that he would be able to live in a heavenly atmosphere but also so that he is rendered an honest and useful person to contemporary society. As Jesus Christ did, a true Christian should live to make others happy.

¹Don F. Neufeld, editor, Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), s.v. "Byington, John."

CHAPTER VII

AN EVALUATION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH-STATE RELATIONSHIP IN THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF ROMANIA

It was noted above that Seventh-day Adventists believe "That religious freedom consists of the inalienable right to believe and to worship God according to conscience, without coercion, restraint, or civil disability, and to practice one's religion and promulgate it without interference or penalty."

This fundamental principle of Church-State relationship gives rise to the question, Is the religious life of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania taking place in freedom in order to practice their religious faith? And if the answer is positive, then, How does the Socialist Republic of Romania ensure free practice of the Adventists' religious faith?

The Seventh-day Adventist Church benefits by full guarantees of having spiritual ties with similar Churches abroad and by attending the activities of international religious organizations. It is necessary to seek the answers of the above-mentioned questions.

The Romanian Constitution Guarantees the Freedom of Conscience and of Religious Worship

Practicing religious freedom, which is an element of freedom of conscience, became a living reality in Romania with the establishment of

the people's democratic system in the 1940s.

Basic rights and duties of the citizens are mirrored, first and foremost, in the country's fundamental charter, the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Romania.

On the basis of this Constitution there was promulgated in 1948 the Law of Denominations. The legal framework for the activity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is that stipulated in the Law. The way regulations have been established in Romania with regard to religious activity is all-pervaded by respect for civic rights, and conditions being provided to this end. Freedom of conscience of all citizens, expressed by all fundamental laws, beginning with 1948, is also guaranteed by the 1965 Romanian Constitution, which states in Article 30:

Freedom of conscience shall be guaranteed to all citizens of the Socialist Republic of Romania.

Anybody shall be free to share or not a religious faith. The freedom of exercising a religious body shall be guaranteed. The religious bodies shall organize and function freely. The mode of organization and functioning of the religious body shall be regulated by law.¹

Worthy of attention is the fact that the religion an individual practices or the nationality he belongs to benefits by provisions of the law and in no way may these elements influence the exercise of civic freedom and rights. Practicing a religion or not can do no harm to citizens' equality of rights. Article 17 of the Constitution says:

The citizens of the Socialist Republic of Romania, irrespective of their nationality, race, sex, or religion, shall have equal rights in all fields of economic, political, juridical, social and cultural life.

The State shall guarantee the equal rights of the citizens.

¹The Grand National Assembly, Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Romania (Bucharest: Meridiane Publishing House, 1975), p. 11.

No restriction of these rights and no difference in their exercise on the grounds of nationality, race, sex, or religion shall be permitted.

Any attempt at establishing such restrictions, at nationalist-chauvinist propaganda and a fomentation of racial or national hatred shall be punished by law.¹

Practicing religious freedom is not only guaranteed but also defended by law. Thus to defend religious freedom, the socialist State has formulated and issued these penal instruments: (1) Article 318, paragraph 2, Penal Code, considers it an offense to coerce an individual into attending the ritual of any denomination or into performing a religious activity of any denomination; (2) Article 319, Penal Code, considers it an offence to desecrate graves or memorials; (3) Article 247, Penal Code, prohibits any discrimination in civic rights on grounds of religious faith, any act of putting a lid on the exercise of such rights being punished with prison sentences; (4) Article 357, punishes genocide--including that perpetrated because of religious grounds.

Thus in conformity with the laws of the country the rapport between the State and the Church is ruled by mutual respect and noninterference by the State in religious affairs.

The principles of assuring the religious freedom were given a concrete form in the 1948 Law of Denominations. Article 1, paragraph 1, says: "The State guarantees the freedom of conscience and the religious freedom on the whole territory of the Socialist Republic of Romania."² Article 3, paragraph 2, says: "Religious faith cannot hinder anybody in obtaining and enjoying civil and political rights and it cannot absolve anyone of the

¹ Ibid., p. 8.

² The Grand National Assembly, The Law of Religious Denominations (Bucharest: The Official Bulletin of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Part I, No. 178 of 4 August 1948), p. 7.

obligations prescribed by the law.¹ Articles 6 and 7 of the same Law of Denominations read:

The Religious denominations are free to organize themselves and they can function freely provided their practices and rites do not conflict with the Constitution, security, or public order nor with the good morals.

The Religious Denominations can organize themselves according to their own standards, in accordance with their precepts, canons and traditions.²

Articles 23 and 26 say:

The activity of the recognized religious denominations should be done according to their religious teachings, their approved Statutes of organization and according to the laws of the country and to the good morals.

The religious denominations can use the mother tongue of their church members in their internal life and activities.³

Article 44 says:

The religious denominations are free to organize their education for training their clergy under the State supervision.⁴

On the basis of the above-quoted liberties guaranteed by law the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania has worked out its own Statute of Organization and Functioning which constitutes the juridical framework of its internal religious life. The Statute was approved by Decree #1203/1950. Article 1 of this decree says that the statute of organization and functioning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania was approved.

Thus, enjoying the advantages of the new social order, the Adventist church in Romania has been recognized as a religious denomination for the first time in its history.

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 8.

³Ibid., p. 11.

⁴Ibid., p. 14.

It is noteworthy that Romania has no dominant churches, no privileged or disadvantaged churches, no subordinated churches depending on the numbers of believers or on nationality.

The law gives each religious denomination the right to organize religious life according to the specific nationality of the believers, a provision which materialized from the fact that the believers are free to use their mother tongue in all circumstances.

The profound changes which took place in the social life of Romania did not modify in any respect the ongoing upward course of the Adventist believers' participation in the life and activities of their local churches. For the first time in the history of Romania and of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Adventists live their religious lives on the basis of laws which guarantee equal rights and religious freedom to all religious denominations.

It is now necessary to study the juridical framework of the internal religious life of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania.

The Statutory Organization of the Church

On the basis of the religious liberties guaranteed by the Romanian state laws which say that "the religious denominations are free to organize themselves and they can function freely . . . according to their own standards, in accordance with their precepts, canons and traditions,"¹ the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania has worked out its own statute of organization and functioning.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has adopted the representative

¹ Ibid., p. 8.

form of government. This representative form recognizes that authority in the church rests in the church membership; executive responsibility is delegated to representative bodies and officers for the governing of the church. This form of church government also recognizes the equality of the ordination of the entire ministry.

Every church member in good and regular standing has the right to vote for the election of church officers, church affairs, and for receiving and disfellowshipping of members.

Chapter III of the Statute of Organization and Functioning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania deals with the church organization. Articles 13, 14, and 15 say:

The component parts of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are: the local church, the local conference, and the union conference.

The local church is the first step in our church organization. The local churches of one or more districts form a local conference. All local conferences throughout the territory of the Socialist Republic of Romania form a union named the Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania.

The local churches, the local conferences, and the union conference organize themselves and are guided according to the provisions of the present Statute.

The local conferences and the union conference are juristic persons in accordance with the Law of the Religious Denominations.¹

The Local Church. Article 22 of the Statutes of Organization and Functioning defines the local church. It says:

The local church is a grouping with a religious character, a united organized body formed of a sufficient number of individual believers who entered the church after they had fulfilled the conditions mentioned in Article 7 of the present Statute.²

¹The Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, The Statute of Organization and Functioning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania (Bucharest: Centrul 3 Poligrafic, 1950), p. 11.

²Ibid., p. 12.

Article 30 refers to the leadership of the church.

The leading body of the church is a board formed of one to three local elders and also of two to six members; as far as possible these members are to be from among those who have responsibilities in the church.

The election of the church board and of all other church officers is made by the church members of the ordinary constituency meeting. They are elected for a period of two years.¹

The local church has no authority outside the territory of its members. All the divine services, which are public, are held in the house of prayer--a church or other designated place of worship.

There are 525 organized local churches within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania. Adventist membership is 55,000; more than 100,000 claim membership of the Sabbath Schools. The largest local church, located in Bucharest, has 1,000 church members.

The Local Conference. The Statute of Organization and Functioning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church defines the local conference as being

. . . an organization with spiritual and administrative character which is formed of more local churches in one or more regions.²

The leading body of the local conference is a committee formed of the conference president, the secretary, the treasurer, and two to six members who will be preferably from the permanent departmental directors.³

The responsibilities of the conference committee are described in Article 40 of the Statute. Ordinary constituency meetings of the local conferences take place once every four years.

The deliberative authority of the local conference is the constituency meeting of the conference. This authority, in

¹Ibid., pp. 13-14.

²Ibid., p. 16.

³Ibid.

session, elects the leading body, grants credentials and licenses, ratifies the organization and the disbanding of churches and makes decisions concerning problems that bear on the welfare of the Conference.¹

There are currently four local Conferences within the framework of the union conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, namely, (1) Bucharest Conference, organized in 1928 and reorganized in 1961, has 204 local churches in 12 regions; (2) Cluj Conference, organized in 1911 and reorganized in 1961, has 127 local churches in 8 regions; (3) Sibiu Conference, reorganized in 1961, has 99 local churches in 11 regions; and (4) Bacau Conference, organized in 1928 and reorganized in 1961, has 95 local churches in 8 regions. The organization of a conference is planned at the 1980 Union Conference Session.

The Union Conference. Article 50 of the Statute of Organization and Functioning makes the following provision:

The Union Conference, as a central organization, is formed of all local conferences throughout the territory of the Socialist Republic of Romania.

It is a representative, spiritual, and administrative authority.²

Article 52 refers to the leadership of the union conference.

The leading body of the union conference is a committee formed of the Union president, the secretary, the treasurer, and four members who will be preferably from the departmental directors.

The following are ex-officio members of the Union Conference Executive Committee: the presidents of the local conferences, the principal of the theological seminary, and the director of the publishing house.³

Article 53 of the Statute of Organization and Functioning makes provision for the responsibilities of the union conference committee.

¹ Ibid., p. 19.

² Ibid., p. 21.

³ Ibid.

The constituency meetings of the Union Conference normally take place once in five years.

Spiritual Worship and Pastoral Ministry

The total spiritual activity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church takes place within the framework of the local churches, among the believers who form these churches and companies, according to the Adventist beliefs, and who follow the supreme example of spiritual worship and pastoral ministry as set forth by Jesus Christ.

The ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is carried out by the Adventist believers according to the special gifts which God, in His mercy, has given to them (Eph 4:12-13; 1 Cor 12:28; Rom 12:6-8). One of these gifts is the pastoral ministry which is mainly performed by ordained ministers.

The ordained minister gives religious and spiritual assistance to the Adventist believers both in the churches and in their homes as he visits them to fulfill any activity necessary for their spiritual growth and the unity of the church.

The divine services, which consist of preaching and teaching of the Holy Scriptures, conducting the communion service once each quarter, marriage ceremonies, occasional baptismal ceremonies, special week of prayer meetings at the beginning and the end of the year, special religious meetings, inauguration or dedication services for the newly built houses of worship are all conducted in the churches and designated meeting places.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church does not prescribe a set form or order for public worship. A short order of service is preferred for Adventists feel it is better suited to the real spirit of worship. Hymns and songs sung by the congregation and choirs, a sermon, and prayers are all that are usually included in the service in the Adventist local churches. The religious music is an integral part of any divine service in all the Adventist local churches. Services are held publicly. They are held especially on Sabbath (Saturday), the seventh day of the week, which, according to the Adventist confession of faith, is the weekly day of rest for the believers. Special services may take place, occasionally, on the other days of the week, too.

Services which may be carried out outside the house of worship are prayers for the sick in their homes, communion service for the sick and elderly, funeral services, etc.

Houses of worship are purposely designed and set aside exclusively for practicing the religious services. According to the provisions made by Articles 25 to 28 of the Statute of Organization and Functioning, there are different auxiliary organizations of the local church; these are the Sabbath School, the Tabitha Welfare Society, and others needed to meet the spiritual needs of the whole church.

The Sabbath School, which usually precedes the Sabbath morning worship service, advocates the systematic study of God's Word, learning the Bible lessons (Studii Biblice) made up by the Union Conference and used in all the Seventh-day Adventist local churches.

Article 28 of the Statute of Organization and Functioning speaks about the objective of the Tabitha Welfare Society. It reads: "The 'Tabitha'

Welfare Society has for an object the organization, coordination, and supervision of helping the old people or the sick by the local church members."¹

This organization works in close cooperation with the deacons and deaconesses of the local church.

Publishing Activity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

"The publishing and distribution of the periodical or non-periodical publications of the Seventh-day Adventist Christian Denomination is free according to the provisions of the law."²

Enjoying the religious freedom guaranteed by the State laws ever since the first years of Romanian's liberation from fascist rule, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has published a series of books needed for the religious life. These include: the Church Hymnal for the divine services in the local churches; four books by Ellen White--the Desire of Ages, the Conflict of the Ages, Steps to Christ, and Christ's Object Lessons; as well as an impressive number of magazines and printed materials needed for the development of the Christian life.

A permanent concern of the editorial staff of the Church is that "Curierul Adventist," general organ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, shall be published regularly. This magazine presents the Adventist theological studies as well as articles recording the pastoral activities and articles concerning the Adventist Church history.

The value of this magazine is proved by many Romanian-speaking people abroad who subscribe. Other spiritual publications for the benefit of believers are the wall and pocket calendars with the Bible texts for the daily devotionals.

¹ibid., p. 13.

²ibid., p. 24.

In 1977 a book with different subjects prepared especially for pastors and another entitled The Son of God and the Son of Man were published. Different course books for the Theological Seminary were printed in 1979. These included Course of the Biblical Archaeology, and Course of the Old Testament. In the same year Steps to Christ was re-printed and the second volume of the Bible Lessons (Studii Biblice) for the Sabbath School in all our local churches was printed. Two editions of the pocket-size reference Bible, Cornilescu Version, were printed. Adventists also use Bibles printed by the Bible societies.

Between 1975 and 1978 two shipments of about 6,000 Bibles were made possible by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and of the Euro-Africa Division through the "United Bible Societies" in Belgium.

The Retired and Assistance Home

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania has its own properties where retired and active church workers and their families can go for vacations and medical treatment within a church system of social insurance.

On the basis of the provisions of the Decree No. 718/1956, Article 4, and point 2 or the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 435/1957, and by the Decision No. 16945 of 5 December 1957, the Department of the Religious Denominations approves the Statute of the Retired and Assistance Home of the Seventh-day Adventist Religious Denomination.¹

The purpose of this Retired and Assistance Home is to pay pensions and to grant financial assistance to the members of this institution and their families.

¹The Seventh-day Adventist Religious Denomination, the Statute of the Retired and Assistance Home (Bucharest: Intreprinderea Poligrafica No. 2, 1958), p. 4.

The funds of the Retired and Assistance Home are received from the shares for the social insurance that the institutions and organizations of the Seventh-day Adventist Religious Denomination, which have workers, are obliged to send monthly to the Retired and Assistance Home fund. Funds are also provided by the Union Conference from money so allocated in the budget. The Seventh-day Adventist Religious Denomination does not receive subsidies from anyone for the support of the Retired and Assistance Home. All the approximate 110 retired persons of the Adventist Religious Denomination receive their pensions from the funds of the Adventist Church.

It is for the members of the Retired and Assistance Home that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a vacation home in Sovata, a mountainous health resort. It operates at full capacity, especially during the summer months. The Church also has a building in Vatra Dornei, another mountainous health resort, which has been used for medical treatment. A piece of property in Eforie-Sud, a famous seashore health resort, is the site where another vacation home is planned for the benefit of the Adventist Church's workers.

When ministers and other workers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church reach retirement age as stipulated by the law, or when they apply for pension, they benefit from a pension calculated on the basis of their monthly average income and the number of years of service.

Theological Education

Close attention is given to the training of the requisite clerical staff for the Adventist Church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has always conducted theological education for the training of its prospective

ministers, teachers, and other requisite staff for carrying on the religious life in most favorable conditions.

The theological school was begun in 1924 when the Seventh-day Adventist denomination founded the Biblical Institute in Focsani. In 1926 that institution was moved to Diciosinmartin, and in 1931 it was moved to Brashov city where it functioned until the summer of 1949. In the fall of the same year, the Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists organized the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. Article 44 of the Law of Religious Denominations says: "The Religious Denominations are free to organize their education for training their clergy. . . ." ¹ And Article 66 of the Statute of Organization and Functioning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church reads: "The Seventh-day Adventist Christian Denomination may set up and run institutions and schools stipulated in the Law of Religious Denominations." ²

On the basis of these legal provisions, the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary has operated in Bucharest. To qualify for admission to this four-year theological study program, the student must have earned a baccalaureate degree. He must have a good recommendation from the church board and the minister where he has his membership. His desire to devote his life to the work of preaching the Gospel or in whatever capacity he feels he is called to serve the Seventh-day Adventist Church is stipulated.

During the four-year study program the seminarians participate

¹The Grand National Assembly, The Law of Religious Denominations, p. 14.

²The Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, The Statute of Organization and Functioning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, p. 25.

in field practicums every Sabbath in the local churches in Bucharest. These practicums are an integral part of their training program. In view of the need for a thorough training of the prospective ministers, the Seminary teachers must have earned a graduate degree in theology or religion as well as in other disciplines. The activity of theological education in the Adventist Seminary is based on the activity of the teaching staff and the Union Conference Committee members. It is assured by teaching the Bible theology according to the Adventist Church teachings.

Seventh-day Adventist Students Abroad. After World War II, when the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been officially recognized as a Religious Denomination enjoying equal rights with thirteen other state-recognized denominations, the Adventist Church resumed its spiritual ties with international religious organizations or with churches or other countries as well as with the Seventh-day Adventist university educational institutions in France, Great Britain, Germany, and the United States of America.

To meet the need of a university theological training for the clerical and teaching staff of the Adventist Church, the State authorities have given the approval for some seminary teachers to be educated at the Seventh-day Adventist schools and institutions abroad. So far the Church has been able to send three pastor-teachers to study abroad. One of these, Stefan Radu who graduated from Iash University, has received a stipend for one year to study theology at Marienhoehe Seminary in Darmstadt, Federal Republic of Germany. The second, Cazan Titu who graduated from Bucharest University, has studied for his degree at the French Adventist Seminary in Collonges, France.

The third pastor, Mihail Popa, who also graduated from Bucharest University, has studied at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. In June 1979 he earned his Master of Arts Degree and has nearly completed the Doctor of Ministry degree.

Seventh-day Adventist Students in Non-Adventist Theological Institutions. The Union Conference attention is directed not only toward those theological institutions abroad. In the new, brotherly spirit existing among the religious denominations in Romania, six Adventist pastors study at two theological institutions of other religious denominations. Two fourth-year students are studying at the Protestant Theological Institute of University Degree in Cluj-Napoca, and four others, now in the second year, are studying at the Orthodox Theological Institute of University Degree in Bucharest.

The Finances of the Church

The Seventh-day Adventists of the Socialist Republic of Romania believe the Bible teaches the principle of tithes and offerings for supporting church workers. This principle is in recognition of the stewardship God expects of men and His right of ownership upon men's lives (Lev 27:30; Mal 3:8-12; Matt 23:23; 1 Cor 9:9-14; 2 Cor 9:6-15).

This principle is also reflected in Article 21 of the Statute of Organization and Functioning of the Adventist Religious Denomination, which says: "Expenses for supporting the Church and her institutions will be covered by the voluntary contributions of the believers."¹

The Seventh-day Adventist Religious Denomination does not receive any subvention from the state or from any other part. The Church supports

¹Ibid., p. 12.

herself by the contributions of its believers.

The Church benefits by its own budget made out of the believers' voluntary contributions. The financial activity of the local churches, the local Conferences, and the Union Conferences is made on the basis of a budget approved by the statutory authorities of the Church.

Remuneration for the clergy, seminary teachers, and other Church workers equals that of the teachers in the State-run education system. The retributions of the Church staff are calculated according to their years of service, their professional qualifications, and their activities.

Adventist Church workers enjoy the right of medical consultations, treatment, and hospitalization in the State health-control institutions. The Church pays the State for the medical assistance given its workers. In case of hospitalization, Church workers, like any other State workers, enjoy the right of free medical treatment in the State hospitals.

A permanent concern of the Church authorities is maintaining the Church houses. This work is effected by the believers' contributions stipulated in the budget.

The number of churches built in the last three decades is too great to mention. A few of the most outstanding or recent structures are: Brasov (county Brasov), Bran (county Brasov), Pietroaani (county Hunedoara), Piatra Neamt (county Neamt), Progresu (county Ialomita), Cringeni (county Teleorman), Radovanu, Branistea (county Ilfov), and Caldarusanca (county Buzau).

Of the total number of 525 local congregations, more than three-fourths of these meet in structures belonging to the Church.

These achievements have been made possible by the religious freedom

the Church has enjoyed in the Socialist Republic of Romania and, Adventists believe, with the blessing of God.

The Problem of Nationalities within
the Framework of the Seventh-day
Adventist Church

The apostle Paul writes: "Love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor" (Rom 12:10, RSV). He also says: "There is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28, RSV).

Adventists believe the principle of the brotherly love, unity, and equality of all people before God has made those who have accepted the faith in the expiatory sacrifice of Christ to consider themselves brothers.

According to the principles laid down in the Constitution, the Adventist Church, like the other thirteen religious denominations, has the right to organize its religious life according to the specific nationality of the believers, a provision materialized in the fact that the believers are free to use their mother tongue in all circumstances.

Within the Adventist local churches in Romania, German- and Hungarian - speaking believers live together. In the local churches where speakers of foreign languages attend, the divine services are translated into the language of the respective nationality. Thus all the believers can hear the divine services in his or her mother tongue. Article 4 of the Statute of Organization and Functioning reads: "The Seventh-day Adventist Church may use the mother tongue of the believers within her internal manifestation and activity."¹ Also the Church prints publications in the Hungarian and German languages.

¹Ibid., p. 9.

Believers of all nationalities and of all languages worship God in the same meeting places. Thus, this principle of love and brotherhood knows no barrier in the way of unity and peace among Adventist Church members.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania, a Member of the Seventh-day Adventist World Church

The Seventh-day Adventist Church of the Socialist Republic of Romania benefits by the full guarantees of ties with the international Seventh-day Adventist religious organization.

By the essence of the Adventist Church doctrine, the ties with similar Church organizations in different countries are only spiritual relations and these have been in existence from the very beginning of the international Adventist religious organizations.

Article 3 of the Statute of Organization and Functioning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania reads: "The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania is independent from any other similar organizations abroad, with whom, according to the Law of Religious Denominations, she has only spiritual relations."¹

The author of the book Ellen G. White in Europe shows that in 1882 the first European Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was held in Basel, Switzerland. The second European Conference was held May 28 to June 1, 1884, and a Romanian delegation was present: "The representation from the fields was much larger this time, with delegates

¹Ibid.

present from Italy, and Romania, as well."¹ At that time a General Executive Committee was chosen. It was "composed of brethren selected from the three different missions."² The Romanian pastor and editor, Toma Aslan, from Pitesti, attended that meeting and was a member of that Executive Committee.

In 1885, the Adventist Romanian delegation attended the Adventist Swiss Conference in Bienne, where Ellen White also was present.

There ministers had gathered from France, Italy, Germany, and Romania, as well as Switzerland, and though the Conference was called "Swiss," it actually included the churches in all these countries.³

From that time on, Romanian Adventist Church workers have taken an active part in Adventist Church sessions in various parts of the world (see above). All these post-war spiritual ties with the similar church organizations abroad have demonstrated the full religious liberties the Adventist Church has enjoyed in Romania.

Presently the Adventist Church is represented in the Executive Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Euro-Africa Division, and in the Executive Committee of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist World Church Organization, by Dumitru Popa, the Union Conference president. Brotherly relations are maintained with all the Seventh-day Adventist Church organizations.

¹D. A. Delafield, Ellen G. White in Europe (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1975), p. 55.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 59.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the formal documents concerning the religious life and the evaluation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church-State relationship in the Socialist Republic of Romania can be summarized as follows:

1. After the World War II, the Adventist Church was officially recognized as a Religious Denomination for the first time in its history.

2. For the first time in the history of Romania and of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, church members live their religious lives on the basis of State laws which guarantee equality of rights and religious freedom to all religious denominations.

3. The Seventh-day Adventist Church benefits by full guarantees to having spiritual ties with similar churches abroad and to attend the activities of international religious organizations.

4. Freedom of conscience is guaranteed to all citizens of the Socialist Republic of Romania.

5. The freedom of exercising a Religious Denomination is guaranteed by the Constitution.

6. Practicing religious freedom is defended by law.

7. The rapport between the State and the Church is ruled by mutual respect and noninterference by the State in religious affairs.

8. On the basis of the liberties guaranteed by law, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Socialist Republic of Romania has worked

out its own Statute of Organization and Functioning, which constitutes the juridical framework of its internal religious life.

9. According to the statutory organization of the Church, there are 525 organized local churches and four organized local Conferences throughout the territory of Romania. The Union Conference is the central organization.

10. The believers of the Church follow the supreme example of spiritual worship and pastoral ministry set forth by Jesus Christ. The ordained minister gives his church members religious and spiritual assistance both in the churches and at their homes by visitation, and fulfills any activity necessary for the spiritual growth and for the unity of the Church.

a. The divine services are held publicly in the houses of worship and sometimes outside the chapel as well.

b. There are several auxiliary organizations of the local church such as the Sabbath School, the Tabitha Welfare Society, and others.

11. The publishing activities are not only guaranteed by the State laws, but the State printing houses print such Adventist religious literature as Curierul Adventist, the Bible Lessons, Steps to Christ, and others.

12. The Church maintains its own properties where retired and active Church workers and their families can go for vacations and medical treatment within a Church system of social insurance.

13. The Seventh-day Adventist Church runs a theological seminary for the training of its prospective ministers, teachers, and other requisite staff.

14. The theological seminary has a four-year study program, and the seminarians engage in field practicum, an integral part of the students' training program, every Sabbath.

a. The State authorities have given approval for some of the seminary teachers to be educated at the Seventh-day Adventist schools and institutions abroad.

b. In the new, brotherly spirit in which the religious denominations in Romania have carried out their religious lives, some Adventist pastors study at the theological institutions of the other religious denominations.

15. The Church benefits from its own budget made out of the believers' voluntary contributions. The financial activity of the local churches, the local Conferences, and the Union Conference is made on the basis of a budget approved by the statutory authorities of the Church.

16. The Adventist Church has the right to organize its religious life according to the specific nationality of the believers who are free to use their mother tongue in all circumstances.

17. The Romanian Adventist Church is a member of the Seventh-day Adventist World Church. Her representatives have participated in the European and World Adventist Church Congresses, Conferences, and in the Executive Committees of the Seventh-day Adventist World Church Organizations.

Conclusions

The first part of this study expounded the fundamental principles concerning the guide for Christian life as Adventists believe they have been taught in the Bible and through the writings of Ellen G. White, generally referred to by Adventists as the Spirit of Prophecy. The

second part mirrors the realities of these beliefs as they have been put into practice in the Adventist church life of Romania.

The Church history of the Seventh-day Adventists in Romania presents what Adventists consider a striking example of God's care for His Church. Those recorded past events help Adventist believers see more clearly what they believe is the fulfillment of prophecy concerning His remnant Church. This history helps them better understand the progress of events in the light of their beliefs in the Bible prophecies. Adventists believe their Romanian church development has proved that God has been at the head of His work, that God is to be with them daily that they may be true to principle, that in their own strength they can do nothing, and that in the grace of Jesus Christ they can receive strength and powers from above to bring the greatest blessings to others.

The findings of this study also help Adventist Christians to better understand the fundamental principles of Church-State relationship. The believers should be fully aware of their dual responsibility to both divine and human authority and must understand God's sphere of authority and jurisdiction and "Caesar's" sphere of authority and jurisdiction. They realize the necessity for a clear distinction between the two separate authorities and understand that a genuine relationship with God should be reflected in their relationship to the State authority and to their fellow-men.

The attitude of the Seventh-day Adventist Church toward cooperation with the State authority within its legitimate sphere should point out, to a high degree, the true value of the Christian's genuine character. It should point out the power and the reality of the Bible truths and the

APPENDIX

final fulfillment of the Messianic commission of preaching and representing Christ.

APPENDIX

The Distinction between the Christian-Civil Authority Relationship, and Church- State Relationship

In general, a distinction is made between the Church as an institution, an official body, in its relationship to the State, and the individual believers in their relationship to civil authorities.

The Christian does not have legal power. As a citizen, he is a subject, doing his best to discharge his civic obligations and duties.

The Church has a sphere of activity, legal power, that individuals do not have; therefore, the Church cannot do what the individual does.

Theologically speaking, the Church is divinely ordained with specific tasks to perform and with specific authority. For that reason the relationship between the Church and the State is different from that between the Christian believer and civil authorities.

Because of its divinely ordained character, the Church is separated from the world in a way that the individual Christian, as a citizen, is not, and should not be.

Christ has urged His Church to become part of the world, as a servant of the community. This is accomplished through the activities of individual believers rather than by the Church acting as an institution. The Christian is, therefore, an integral part of the land in which he lives.

The first part of this study guide deals with the relationship between the Christian and civil authorities while the second part deals with the Church-State relationship. It is obvious that these two relationships are intertwined. It is for this reason that in the second part of the paper the emphasis is given to the relationship between the Church, as a body, and the State.

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