

UPDATE ON — THE SECRET INTERCHURCH PLANNING MEETING

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We recently published *The Secret Interchurch Planning Meeting* [WM-906]. It told about a secret interchurch meeting, attended by representatives of the Roman Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist, and a number of major Protestant Churches.

At that time, I stated, "This may be one of the most important disclosures I have made during my twenty-year publishing ministry to you. The implications of this are far-reaching."

REVIEW OF EARLIER EVENTS

In brief summary, in April 1999, an Adventist layman attended an out-of-state Adventist denominational church. A departmental officer of the North American Division (NAD) gave the sermon; and, in the foyer afterward, the layman spoke with him.

During the conversation, the layman showed the church officer a sample of a missionary project his own church had undertaken. In response, the officer said the layman's local church should not be doing that; since, by doing so, they were publicizing the truth about the Bible Sabbath too openly.

The officer then told the layman that, at a secret meeting of Catholic, Adventist, and Protestant church leaders, it had been agreed that the Seventh-day Adventist Church would tone down its public presentations of the Bible Sabbath. The church officer made it clear that this was the one doctrine which was especially disturbing to other denominational leaders.

The officer's comments then turned toward the need of the churches to work together to prepare for the year 2000 and 2001. He said there would be a coming "test," there was a need for unity by the churches, and John Paul had given a call for the churches to come home.

Separating, the two went downstairs to the potluck. Afterward, deeply concerned to learn when and where the meeting had been held, the layman once again approached the church officer in the foyer upstairs.

But this time the officer was upset because he might have already said too much to an individual whose home congregation, in his thinking, might be working at cross purposes with those of the denomination. The officer therefore refused to speak with him anymore.

Placed in phone contact with me by his pastor, the

layman gave me the details of the conversation; amid careful questioning, I took notes.

But, when I called back a day or two later, the layman was disturbed that I was going to publish the story. He said that, doing so, might impede the opportunity to learn when and where the meeting was held. Also, he said, the disclosure might injure the work his local church was carrying on.

About a week later, from his pastor, I received permission to publish the story, as long as I omitted names and places.

So I printed the preceding tract study. I doubted very much that we would learn anymore about this matter.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

A little over a week ago, I received a telephone call from a friend who asked for the name of that church officer. I had turned down the other requests for it. But, this time, I was impressed that I should tell him. So I did. I also explained the type of ministry project the officer was engaged in.

Then my friend said, "I am going to call him."

"Well," I said, "if you are going to do that, you had better think everything through ahead of time and do a lot of praying."

My friend is a very mature individual, with a warm, friendly voice. He said he was going to earnestly pray with his wife, and then would phone the church officer.

At about 10:30 a.m., a week ago Sunday, my friend called me back. He told me he had been on the phone talking to the church officer for an hour. Hearing this, I was surprised, and inquired what he did.

My friend said that he asked the officer about the ministry he was conducting, and on and on they went for quite some time. The officer loved to talk about it.

Then my friend said to the officer, "You know, we need to prepare for the year 2000."

At this, the officer said, "Oh, have you heard about the secret meeting?" "Tell me about it," my friend said.

He then repeated all the same details, plus a few more.

A DIFFICULT SITUATION

A few months ago, when I received that phone call

from that deeply concerned layman, I knew we had received information that our people urgently needed to learn about.

After carefully writing it down, I phoned him back with the plan to sharing a copy with him to review prior to publication. But his fearful concern, that no one should be told, placed me in a most difficult situation. These were facts our people needed, yet the almost paranoid concerns of one person was going to keep the whole matter covered up.

So I shelved the sheets. But then, in God's providence a little over a week later, I received a phone call from that layman's pastor. He knew about the conversation with the church officer, for he had directed the layman to phone me. So, in the course of our conversation, I mentioned the concerns of the layman: concern for the welfare of his congregation and fear that, if the matter were exposed, he might never learn when and where the secret meeting took place.

The pastor assured me that the work of his congregation would not be damaged; yet, to placate the layman's concerns about obtaining further information about the secret meeting, I should not mention names or places.

At that juncture, I really had a problem on my hands: The news of the secret meeting urgently needed publication, yet to disclose it without giving the name of the church officer would make the entire matter suspect.

Frankly, the story seemed just too astounding to be true—if I could not back it up with some names and places.

So I did the best I knew and published the preceding tract study, in which I discussed the problem and omitted the names.

However, the situation is now greatly changed. Here is why:

1 - We now have corroboration from a second individual who was told all the essential details, plus a few more. This is extremely important!

2 - The added details help fill in the "where and when" which the layman wanted to obtain with continued secrecy.

3 - Just as I expected, many are expressing a concern for more data on this.

4 - We have reached the point where I doubt if we will obtain more information.

With all this in mind, I believe the time has come to fill in the blanks which were in the previous tract study. The only exceptions will be names of the layman, his pastor, and his congregation. That, of course, is not significant information.

FILLING IN THE BLANKS

NAME OF THE OFFICIAL AND LOCATION OF THE CONTACT—Here is the original part of the preceding report:

At about 4 p.m. on Wednesday, April 7, 1999, I, Pastor Vance Ferrell, received a phone call from the pastor of an independent Adventist church, located somewhere in the United States . . . [The pastor referred

me to the layman who told me this:]

I was visiting in upstate New York for several days last week. On Sabbath, April 3, I attended the Canton Seventh-day Adventist Church, in Canton, New York.

Robert Burnette was present and gave the 11 o'clock sermon. I had the understanding that he was visiting someone he knew in the area and that this was why he was at the Canton church that day.

After the sermon, I spoke with him in the foyer near the door. He apparently was handing his business card to each family as they left; at least he did so to the ones before me.

As I shook his hand, he also handed me his card. As I look at it right now, this is what is on it:

Off to one side is a denominational logo of an open Bible with a cross above it, and two little flames coming up out of the Bible. Here is the wording on the business card:

Robert Burnette
Director

North American Division Multilingual Ministries
Native Evangelism Initiative
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600
410-740-5415 Voice
410-730-6988 Fax
74532.3241@Compuserve.com

He said he was in charge of Adventist work to American Indians in the United States and Canada.

I appreciated the fact that he was overseeing some Adventist missionary work, and I wanted to tell him about the missionary work our little church was doing; for I thought he might appreciate it.

That brief excerpt, from my original write-up, fills the blanks in the previous tract study.

You will find Burnette's name on page 168 of the *1999 Yearbook*. Manuel Vasquez is director of the North American Multilingual Ministries, and Robert D. Burnette works under him as director of the Native Evangelism Initiative—and the "2000 Nations Project" (whatever that means).

With this information in hand, let us proceed.

THE LATEST DISCLOSURES

When, a little over a week ago I told my friend the name of Mr. Burnette, I also told him that he had oversight of the denomination's Native American [American Indian] work in the U.S. and Canada. I mentioned that he might use this as a means of making friends with the NAD officer.

The following Sunday, my friend called back and told me what happened.

My friend had opened the conversation by warmly talking about the Native American work. Burnette explained that he, himself, was a Native American. As an Adventist with an advanced university degree, he had been placed in charge of this work.

Update on the Secret Meeting

Burnette was visiting in Canton, New York, because he has relatives living there.

During the course of the conversation about the Indian work, Burnette said he was making good contacts with the Indians. But a special interest was the fact that—just as he was—the Indians were becoming excited that something great, something important was going to happen at about the turn of the century.

They had a special reason for this excitement. An ancient Indian legend had it that, someday, several white buffalo would be born at about the same time. When that happened, some great event would occur within a year or two!

Burnette excitedly told my friend that four white buffalo had recently been born. To the knowledge of the Indians, this had never before happened.

—At this juncture, let me mention that Satan is arousing people, from various walks of life, to expect some great event to occur within a year or two. My book, the *Marian Messages*, chronologically goes through a century of so-called “apparitions of the Blessed Virgin” which, like a crescendo, are building up and pointing directly to a world-changing set of events to occur in 2000 or 20001. (For many, many details, see my book: *Marian Messages: Final Events as Predicted by the Spirits to Faithful Roman Catholics*, 112 pp. \$5.50 + \$1.50, 8½ x 11.) That is what Satan is telling the Catholics. He is giving similar messages to the New Agers, the channelers, other world religionists, and various Protestant groups. He is working to get everyone on board the train (*Early Writings*, 88-89).

In the course of the conversation, after warmly discussing the Indian work for some time, my friend mentioned, “We must prepare for the year 2000.”

At this, Burnette replied, “Yes, did you hear about the secret meeting?”

—The reason why Burnette is so open about this matter is obvious: He may be a very sincere individual; but, by his attitudes and comments, he thoroughly believes that Adventists should get together with the other churches in unity meetings. He believes they are right in agreeing to curtail their proclamation of the Sabbath message, so that multi-denominational unity can be achieved. He believes that something is going to happen in a year or two, and we should all work together toward achieving it.

My friend replied, “Tell me about it.”

Robert Burnette then proceeded to tell my friend exactly what he earlier told the layman, plus some more.

NUMBER OF MEETINGS—A meeting was held. Burnette speaks of it in the singular (“a meeting”), apparently indicating the meeting at which the joint agreement about the Sabbath was entered into. That one meeting was the focus of Burnette’s comments to the layman and to my friend.

Yet it was the culmination of a series of meetings. Burnette told my friend that a number of meetings was held over a period of five years. Burnette stuck to this point: The meetings extended over a period of five years, culminating in that meeting when the agreement was

reached.

TIMING OF THE MEETINGS—Apparently the five years preceded the agreement meeting. (It is likely that more meetings have occurred since then.)

The agreement meeting occurred about a year ago. This would appear to be at some time in late 1997 to mid-1998.

You will recall that, in his comments to the layman, Burnette said that the agreement would help John Paul’s call for the churches to come home in the year 2000. (John Paul’s Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini* [The Lord’s Day], was issued from St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome on May 31, 1998. In that decree, he called on the nations to issue national Sunday laws.)

LOCATION OF THE MEETINGS—Burnette told my friend that the meetings were held in Switzerland. In view of the great mass of data in my two books on our Adventist connections with the Ecumenicals, those meetings had to have been held in Geneva at the headquarters of the World Council of Churches. That is what I predicted as the locus of those meetings. We regularly send special representatives there. (For more, see my *Seventh-day Adventist/Vatican Ecumenical Involvement: Book 1, History*. 80 pp., \$6.00 + \$1.50; and *Book 2, Documents*. 146 pp., \$11.00 + 2.00. Both 8½ x 11 in size.)

THOSE ATTENDING THE MEETINGS—Burnette told my friend, just as he earlier told the layman, that “all the churches” were in attendance at the meetings; and he specifically mentioned “the Adventists, the Catholics, and the Protestants.”

Actually, he would not need to be more specific than that. We can know exactly who was present! It would be all the members and associates of the World Council of Churches. See my two books for a sample of such lists.

In addition to most of the major Protestant and Orthodox churches, two other denominations have held associate status with the WCC since 1965: the Roman Catholic Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, both of which joined the WCC at about the same time,—immediately following the end of Vatican II, and in direct response to it. See my books. From 1965 to the present time, Bert B. Beach, has been in charge of that project. He is quite amenable to the Ecumenical movement, knows most of the other world church leaders and their key subordinates, and is in command of about six or seven languages. Beach is currently in charge of the General Conference Religious Liberty Department, and carries on his NCC and WCC activities through the GCRLD’s Public Affairs Department.

THE NATURE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE AGREEMENT—As explained by Burnette, the agreement our leaders entered into was this: Our denomination was to tone down its public emphasis on the truth about the keeping of the Bible Sabbath.

We entered into this agreement for two reasons which are equally significant: (1) The Adventist Church was to do this in order to help the Ecumenicals (by “Ecumenicals,” I mean the WCC and its member denominations) prepare for events in 2000 and immediately afterward.

(2) The key objective was, by toning down the Sabbath and preparing for the next year or two,—to “bring us together,” “to bring us into unity.” Burnette also stated the objective a third way: “The pope wants to bring us home.”

Burnette did not appear one bit averse to these objectives. This is why he could so enthusiastically and openly discuss them. He believes it was a good agreement and will help us better reach the world.

THE TARGET DATE—It is well-known that John Paul II is an avid follower of the apparitionist messages. On May 13, 1981, when Mehmet Ali Agca was preparing to shoot him, John Paul saw in the crowd a young girl holding up a photo. He stooped down to see it more clearly and noticed that it was a picture of the Virgin of Lourdes. At that instant, Ali Agca fired, and John’s bending down somewhat kept the bullet from killing him. Thereafter, John Paul became a fervent believer in the “Marian messages.” And those messages call for Catholics everywhere to prepare for a great event to occur in 2000 and 20001. (All this you will find in my book, *The Marian Messages*.)

With this information in mind, we can now see why papal emissaries would be sent to Geneva to urge the member and associate churches to work with them on this great opportunity to bring the churches into closer unity.

Bind them with the cords and pull them tight; this is the goal (read *Early Writings*, 240-243).

Looking back over it all, we see the hand of God guiding in this revelation. The layman who initially spoke to Burnette had a somewhat caustic manner of speaking, which worried the official. In contrast, my friend has an unusually warm, relaxed voice. He was able to reach Burnette as the layman could not do.

If I had earlier disclosed Burnette’s name, others might have called excitedly and burned the contact. As it turned out, we have learned all we are likely to learn.

FOLLOW UP

We are running out of space. Very briefly, here is what happened next: Burnette told my friend to contact a certain person at the GC Communications Department (GCCD) for something printed about the agreement, which may not have been distributed to the church at large.

This was so important that, during the delay, I, in addition to my friend, asked a second individual to try and obtain a copy of this printed material.

In brief: The person at GCCD said she would have to check on the matter. She reported back that she spoke with a General Conference vice president who told her “interesting things”: It was a four (not five) year series of meetings, was held with the Lutherans (not all the churches), and that a summary was printed in the *Review*. In that conversation, the distinct impression was

received that she was holding back on information which she was not revealing. Yesterday, I received a copy of that June 25, 1998, 16-page *Review Supplement* (16 pages, entitled *Adventists and Lutherans in Conversation, Report of Bilateral Conversations between the Lutheran World Federation and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1994-1998*). It concluded with two pages of “Recommendations.” Nowhere in the paper or in the recommendations is there any hint of such a Sabbath agreement.

We have carried this search as far as we can. We are now turning the details over to you. It is unlikely you will learn much more about the matter, but perhaps you may.

Burnette was adamant that such a five-year series did occur. It would have been held at WCC headquarters. Our leaders agreed to tone down our presentations of the Bible Sabbath and try to restrict most of them to within-church-building gatherings (such as Net-98, etc.).

The four-year series with the Lutherans is totally different, and did not arrive at the same objectives.

All concerned may be honest in their positions, and sincerely believing they are forwarding the best interests of the church, just as our leaders did in 1954-1956 during the Ecumenical Conferences (see our *Evangelical Conferences and Their Aftermath*, 146 pp., now in our 232 pp. *Doctrinal History Tractbook*, \$17.50 + \$2.00, 8½ x 11.)

But a little reading in Great Controversy (note p. 445) would have revealed to our leaders the chasm they are leading our people toward.

How can our kind Father in heaven solve our problems, when we refuse to read and obey the books He sent us through the Spirit of Prophecy.

— *vf*

This afternoon I spoke once again, with my friend, about his lengthy conversation with Burnette. He said:

“Burnette, a native Indian, temporarily headquarters his work in Louisville, KY. He said the major reason for the agreement was the Roman Catholic concern for all Protestants to come home in the year 2000. The major obstacle was the Adventist Sabbath. The GC agreed to be quiet and not make an issue of it, so they could have more influence with the churches.

“Several times he said ‘five years,’ ‘all the churches were there,’ ‘Roman Catholic and ours were there.’ He did not say ‘four years.’ The Lutherans were never mentioned at all. The objective was to see all the Protestants come home in the year 2000. Those not coming home by 2002 would be in trouble. He said John Paul II was dead serious about his commitment to bring the churches home. The Protestants feel all Christians need to be united, so Christ can return. They are expecting Him soon.”

“This house is proscribed. The goods must be confiscated. They have spoken against our holy order.” 1T 578.