

THE BITTER FRUIT OF APOSTASY —

Keeping Adulterous Pastors

— ANOTHER STEP IN DESTROYING THE STANDARDS

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

THE ONLY QUESTION ASKED

“The only question asked in the judgment will be, ‘Have they been obedient to My commandments?’—*Gospel Workers*, 315.

“There are only two classes in the world today, and only two classes will be recognized in the judgment—those who violate God’s law and those who obey it. Christ gives the test by which to prove our loyalty or disloyalty. ‘If ye love Me,’ He says, ‘keep My commandments.’”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, 283.

“Then, let this, God’s institution of marriage, stand before you as firm as the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment.”—*Letter 8*, 1888.

PART OF THE LAST-DAY ELIJAH MESSAGE

“In his mission the Baptist had stood as a fearless reprover of iniquity, both in high places and in low. He had dared to face King Herod with the plain rebuke of sin.”—*Desire of Ages*, 215.

“John was acquainted with the fact that he [Herod] was about to

marry his brother’s wife, while her husband was yet living, and faithfully told Herod that this was not lawful. Herod was unwilling to make any sacrifice.”—*Early Writings*, 154.

“I was pointed down to the last days and saw that John represented those who should go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to herald the day of wrath and the second advent of Jesus.”—*Early Writings*, 155.

“Why need he [John] have provoked the anger of Herodias by telling Herod that it was unlawful for him to live with his brother’s wife? The forerunner of Christ lost his life by his plain speaking. Why could he not have moved along without incurring the displeasure of those who were living in sin?”—*Prophets and Kings*, 141.

“So men have argued, till policy has taken the place of faithfulness. Sin is allowed to go unrebuked. When will be heard once more in the church the voice of faithful rebuke, ‘Thou art the man’? If these words were not so rare, we should

see more of the power of God.

“The Lord’s messengers should not complain of their efforts being fruitless until they repent of their love of approbation, their desire to please men, which leads them to suppress the truth, and cry, Peace, when God has not spoken peace . . .

“God calls for men who, like Nathan, Elijah, and John, will bear His message with fearlessness, regardless of the consequences; who will speak the truth, though to do this calls for the sacrifice of all they have.”—*Gospel Workers*, 150.

THE ONLY CAUSE FOR ANNULMENT OR REMARRIAGE

“Your ideas in regard to the marriage relation have been erroneous. Nothing but the violation of the marriage bed can either break or annul the marriage vow.”—*Adventist Home*, 341.

“There is only one sin, which is adultery, which can place the husband or wife in a position where they can be free from the marriage vow in the sight of God. Although the laws of the land may grant a divorce, yet they are husband and wife still in the Bible light, according to the laws of God.”—*Adventist Home*, 344.

“This woman had broken God’s commandments, and Christ showed her . . . that if she was willing to forsake her sins, God would receive her as His child.”—*Story of Jesus*, 55.

“That a church member who is the guilty party to a divorce forfeits the right to marry another, and . . . that should such a person marry another, he be not admitted to church membership so long as the unscriptural relationship continues.”—*Church Manual*, 1942 edition.

From 1950, onward, it reads quite differently.

WHICH SHEPHERDS ARE FEEDING YOU?

“I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, no be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord . . .

“For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right.

“For both prophet and priest are

profane; yea, in My house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord . . .

“I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto Me as Gomorrah . . .

“In the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.”—*Jeremiah* 23:4, 10-11, 14, 20.

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PART ONE OF TWO

PART TWO OF TWO

The bitter fruit of apostasy. Another step in destroying the standards. Yes, that is what it is.

We have just learned that proposed changes in the church policies of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination have been made, and that they will be presented to the delegates attending the fifty-sixth General Conference Session, which will convene in Utrecht, Holland from June 29 to July 8, 1995.

We have been able to obtain a copy of the proposed changes, and are reprinting them in this present report.

You should know about this, and woe be to you, if you do not do all in your power to protest this forthcoming action! The great majority of the delegates attending any General Conference Session are

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denominational workers, and they will be likely to rubberstamp the proposal—unless strong opposition is generated before and during the Session.

The plan is to reinstate the apostate ministers in our ranks, who have been the boldest in committing adulteries and fornication—so bold that they were finally caught—will be officially reinstated after a two-year wait, “because they show repentance.”

Is this what you want? Do you want such men to instruct and baptize your children? Do you want them giving Bible studies to your relatives and friends? Do you want them blessing the bread and juice at ordinances?

There are church leaders in our denomination who want to be able to shift adulterous ministers to distant congregations—away from the

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tearful wives they have cheated and abandoned, their weeping children, and shocked witnesses.

The plan is to change church rules so this can more easily be done. Actually, it is already being done, but in violation of existing rules. Changing the rules will give an air of sanctity to the practice.

The Vatican regularly moves their homosexual and pedophilic priests, and they get away with it as long as the public press does not tell everyone what is going on.

The following proposed policy changes were presented to, and accepted by, the President's Council on November 30, 1993. From there it went to the various union conference committees. It is now on the docket to be quickly presented for passage at the upcoming 1995 General Conference Session.

— Please turn the page!

“A woman may be legally divorced from her husband by the laws of the land and yet not divorced in the sight of God and according to the higher law. **There is only one sin, which is adultery, which can place the husband or wife in a position where they can be free from the marriage vow in the sight of God.** Although the laws of the land may grant divorce, yet they are husband and wife still in the Bible light, according to the laws of God.”—*Adventist Home*, 344.

“Your ideas in regard to the marriage relation have been erroneous. **Nothing but the violation of the marriage bed can either break or annul the marriage vow** . . . God gave only one cause why a wife should leave her husband, or the husband leave his wife, which was adultery.”—*Adventist Home*, 341-342.

“I saw that the seventh command-

ment has been violated by some who are now held in fellowship by the church. **This has brought God's frown upon them. This sin is awful in these last days,** but the church has brought God's frown and curse upon them by regarding the sin so lightly. **I saw it was an enormous sin** and there have not been as vigilant efforts made as there should have been to satisfy the displeasure of God and remove His frown by taking a strict, thorough course with the offender.

“It is an awful corrupting influence upon the young. They see how lightly the sin of breaking the seventh commandment is regarded, and **the one who commits this horrible sin thinks that all he has to do is to confess that he was wrong and is sorry,** and he is then to have all the privileges of the house of God and held in embrace of fellowship of the church.

“They have thought it was not so

great a sin, but have lightly esteemed the breaking of the seventh commandment. **This has been sufficient to remove the ark of God from the camp,** if there were no other sins to cause the ark to be taken away and weaken Israel.

“Those who break the seventh commandment should be suspended from the church and not have its fellowship or the privileges of the house of God.”—*Manuscript 3, 1854, quoted in Review, February 17, 1977.*

“She [EGW] left these people [those who had committed adultery and remarried] with the Lord. She gave them hope when they had done their best under the circumstances. In this she has set us an example to follow. **We find, however, no record of a single instance where she suggested that one living in an adulterous marriage who had had their membership withdrawn, should have it restored.** This point is often overlooked.”—*R.O. and M.S. Williams, God's Seventh Commandment,*

PAGE 1—This is first page in this seventeen-page document. We will here reprint the crucial pages (1-3, 12-15), in which the proposed changes are excused or made. We begin with the excuses.

Comment on this page: There already is provision for the minister, caught in adultery, to retain his church membership. It is not necessary for us to again be subjected to him as a shepherd over us. "Redemption" does not require putting him back into the ministry. "Love and goodwill" does not require it either.

PAGE 2—The temptations and falls do not necessarily stop after the man is caught. That is part of the reason the Spirit of Prophecy is so adamant against ever reinstating a fallen pastor. It is bad enough to have a U.S. president who loves homosexuals; now we must be plagued with Adventist pastors who lead women into sin. When this passes, will you ever again be able to trust an incoming pastor from a distant field? Comment on this page: Every adultery involves exploitation. It is always taking advantage of another.

PAGE 3—This is all there is on page 3.

PAGES 4 to 8—is entitled a "*Theological Preamble to Proposed Changes in Adventist Policies Regarding 'Fallen' Ministers*," and mainly consists of a lengthy excuse for why we need to place adulterous ministers back in the pastorate. The primary reasons given is (1) the woman at the well was forgiven by Jesus and immediately became an evangelist (John 4:39), and (2) King David was permitted to remain on the throne after his adultery. We will not reprint pages 4 to 8 here.

PAGE 9—You are now going to view proposed changes in the *Church Manual*, which leaders have several times refused to release to laymen, in advance of the 1995 General Conference Session.

Beginning on page 9, we are shown the text of the "fall minister" section of the *Church Manual*, the *NAD Working Policy*, and the *Manual for Ministers*. We only planned to reprint pages 12-17, which have the significant changes.

But then we discovered something quite interesting: The rule book which laymen will have access to (*the Church Manual*) will provide a false impression. The rule book for pastors (*the Manual for Ministers*) will henceforth provide a lying report. Neither will make any mention of the fact that adulterous ministers are being reinstated to pastor churches and become church administrators! (And, we will find, on page 17, the *Manual for Ministers* will falsely declare that they can never be reinstated!)

Just now, look at page 9, below, closely. First, we have the proposed "revision" for the *Church Manual*—and find no revisions are included. The *Church Manual* will continue to state that the pastor caught in adultery can only be restored (through rebaptism) to church membership alone. (But even the wording here is subtle: It does not say the fallen minister cannot be taken back into the ministry.)

Then, below that, on this same page, the *North American Division Working Policy* begins, and it is in there, alone, that the clear-cut changes are made! But only church leaders are likely to ever see the *NAD Working Policy* book.

PAGE 10—No changes.

PAGE 11—All through this document, the phrase "*made void*" is changed to the weaker "*invalidated*." "*Made void*" means "final, forever." "*Invalidated*" means "not valid at this time."

PAGE 12—The significant changes begin and continue on through page 15. These changes are self-explanatory—and they spell real trouble. The apostasy in our denomination is rapidly deepening. It is all the fruit of new theology thinking. If it is all right to sin, then sinful pastors should be kept in the ministry.

Remember: Wording with a line through it = henceforth to be omitted.

Wording which is underlined = henceforth to be added.

PAGE 13—The first "clearly" on this page was crossed out, before being given to a layperson. The second "clearly" was left intact.

PAGE 14—All of this will be done secretly. The pastor who has shocked and devastated a local congregation will be required to move to a distant place for two years. Then he will be quietly reordained and placed over a church in a location distant to where he led others into sin.—But this is the way the Catholic Church does it!

What is being done right now? For years, conference presidents have quietly transferred adulterous ministers to distant area churches, without kicking them out for two years. So, with slight variation, the pattern will continue.

PAGE 15—This is the last of the changed pages. The *Manual for Ministers* section on fallen ministers begins on the bottom of this page.—But, because laymen might read it, you will find that it, like the *Church Manual*, contains not one word or hint that adulterous pastors will be reassigned to distant churches after a two-year furlough.

PAGE 16—No changes on this page.

PAGE 17—This is the last page of the document sent to us. Read the first full paragraph on this page carefully! (“Although one . . . than the ministry.”) It says the opposite of the NAD policy changes! According to this double talk, the adulterous minister must never again be permitted to enter the ministry.

That concludes the 17-page document.

Now, let us look more closely at certain aspects of it. As we do so, you will want to look back and reread the pages specified:

PAGE 9—THE CHURCH MANUAL: The wording here will remain unchanged from what it was in earlier years. But there are three improprieties here:

First, the wording should be changed to be consistent with the changes in the *NAD Working Policy*. Not to do is to practice a deception. Why are the leaders afraid to have the church members know that adulterous ministers will henceforth be restored to pastoral, teaching, and leadership positions? There are two reasons: 1 - They are ashamed of the fact, knowing it is morally wrong to do that. 2 - They recognize that the church members would be very irate if they knew that adulterous pastors were only being shipped elsewhere for two years, and then given a church in a distant location; from there to gradually work their way up into positions of denominational leadership.

Second, the wording, as it has been for years in the *Church Manual*, is already deceptive. The two paragraphs are subtly worded so as to give the impression that the minister cannot reenter the ministry, but without saying whether or not he actually can or will. It only says that restoring him to church membership does not automatically restore him to the ministry. “Thereby” is a key word. He “reenters the church,” but it does not say whether he can thereafter reenter the ministry.

Third, the Spirit of Prophecy statements (quoted on page one of this report) are clear that he is not to be readmitted to membership, much less the ministry! Yet, in violation of those statements, the *Church Manual*, *NAD Working Policy*, and *Manual for Ministers* all require that he can be taken back into church membership.

PAGE 14—THE NORTH AMERICAN WORKING POLICY: This is what is

crossed out:

“However, for the sake of the good name of the Church and the maintaining of moral standards, he must plan to devote his life to employment other than that of the gospel ministry, the teaching ministry, or denominational leadership.”

That says it well, does it not? For the sake of the moral standards of the leaders, the people, and the children, he should not again be a minister, teacher, or leader in the church. All will agree. —*But that is to be crossed out!*

Now, let us compare this with

PAGE 17—MANUAL FOR MINISTERS: *This is what is not crossed out:*

“It is clearly indicated that for the sake of the church and the maintenance of moral standards, the man must plan to devote his life to some other calling or business than the ministry.”

That which is crossed out of the *NAD Working Policy* (page 14) is retained in the *Manual for Ministers* (page 17)!

You have just read the complete text in three church rule books, regarding what should be done regarding adulterous ministers. Yet they clearly conflict.

If a layman wishes to know what is to be done with a certain adulterous minister, he need only turn to the *Church Manual*—and it will seem to say that the man will never again enter the ministry. Or, he can ask a minister or church leader, who will show him what it says in the *Manual for Ministers*. According to that, the sensuous pastor will never again be permitted to reenter the Adventist ministry. What the church member does not know, is that they have been secretly brought back in for decades! The conference president does it all by himself, and no one in the conference office dares to oppose him. But, henceforth, the *Working Policy*, which governs what church leaders can and cannot do, will expressly rule that it can be done. All the adulterer need do is show repentance and wait for two years.

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PROTECTING ONE ANOTHER

In our denomination, we have a strange willingness by leaders to protect men who do things they should not do. Blackmail complicates the situation. By the time workers in the church arise to influential pastoral or administrative positions, they have learned many things. Later, when they need help to extricate themselves from wrong actions, they can threaten to tell some of those things.

For example, there is the minister on the West Coast who was accused of inappropriate sexual misconduct. Although the evidence revealed his complicity in what occurred, the conference settled the case out of court—and then relocated the pastor.

Then there was the conference president worker who, when he was working in the central states, was caught doing something wrong. He was moved out of state, and later made president of another conference.

Another well-known pastor stopped efforts to discharge him, after his activities came to light, by threatening to talk about what others had done.

When a worker's activities come to light, his accumulated knowledge of many cover-ups of others is the reason why his own actions will now be quietly covered over.

Such problems include not only adultery, but also the theft of local church funds. We know of one man who looted church funds in three successive local churches. But each time he was only transferred to another church, two or three states away.

This is why you will find that, aside from those who speak up and plead for reform in the denomination, only two classes of people are ever ejected from denominational employment: (1) those who are caught by civil authorities, and (2) those who have

not been in the work very long. All the rest are transferred, either to another church assignment, or to a good paying AHS chaplaincy or administrative position.

There are men in our denomination who are fearful lest honest men—determined to stand for principle no matter what the outcome—be placed in positions of leadership. Such men could be dangerous.

The most useful men are those who can be blackmailed. Certain leaders, who want to closely control unions, conferences, or institutions on lower levels, have found it useful to place such men in leadership positions, because in committee they will always do as they were instructed beforehand during a long-distance phone call.

Another means of determining future leaders, is to note those who violate dietary standards, such as meat eating. It is recognized that such men will be willing to disregard principle on committees or elsewhere, when it is asked of them. That is why the “meat test” is applied to potential nominees of entry-level positions of leadership. The young man is invited to lunch with a couple leaders and, if he orders meat when the others do, it is clear that he will fit in nicely. He is offered the position. But, in contrast, if, in the face of such a situation, he does not order a meat dish also, he will remain a low-level worker and will bear watching in the future. He obviously cannot be trusted. In times of future crisis, when compromise was necessary, such a man might very well stand for principle. And that could be disastrous.