

Current Trends and Purposes of Wildwood 1 of 2

#0611A

Study given by W. D. Frazee—November 25, 1975

Our text is Numbers 23:9. You remember that Balaam had been hired by Balak, the king of Moab, to come and do what? Curse Israel. He never got to the curse did he? At least not on that trip. God's Spirit took possession of him in spite of his covetous longings and blessings came from his lips instead of cursing.

Concerning Israel he says in Numbers 23:9:

"For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills
I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall
not be reckoned among the nations" Numbers 23:9.

God never intended that Israel should just be one more government, one more nation, one more people. His plan was that they should stand out different, distinct, separate, peculiar. A peculiar treasure He called them as He took them to Himself in special covenant at Mount Sinai. Isn't a shame when the God of the universe wished to take a people as His own peculiar treasure that they should insist again and again on being like the nations around them? Isn't that a strange thing?

And yet the angel told the Prophet concerning the remnant:

"Ye have done worse then they"
Testimonies for the Church vol. 1, page 29.

They took 40 years wandering around in the wilderness. We've had three times 40 years and we are not over Jordan yet. So we still have to learn the lessons that they had to learn.

"The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned
among the nations" Numbers 23:9.

In *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 534 I read:

"There is constant danger among our people that those
who engage in labor in our schools and sanitariums will
entertain the idea that they must get in line with the world,
study the things which the world studies, and become
familiar with the things that the world becomes familiar

with. This is one of the greatest mistakes that could be made" *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 534.

Coming down this evening, I was thinking what a strange and foolish thing it is for Christians of any denomination to pay their taxes or, having paid their taxes to the government, to conduct public schools at all levels. Having done that, to turn around and spend their own money to establish religious schools and then, by going after government money and accepting government regulations and interference, eventually destroy the reason for having the religious schools in the first place.

You say, "Well how could that be done?"

Well, it's being done dear friends. In this editorial, and this is the *Review* of November 27, 1975, so we are right up to date, aren't we? That date happens to be two days in the future from today, but that's the date of this *Review*, for your notes. A classic example of how this happens is given in this editorial. The name of the editorial is *The Peril of Aid*.

We usually think of aid—help—as always a wonderful thing to get, but it isn't always. A fisherman aids the fish every time he puts a hook over with bait on it.

This classic example of how this works is Western Maryland College. This school for many years has been affiliated with the United Methodist Church. But in 1966, that's nine years ago, the supreme court of Maryland declared the school to be sectarian, denominational, hence ineligible for state funds.

Well you say, "What's wrong about that?"

Nothing wrong about it. But now, in order to get the government funds, this school has severed its denominational connection. And the school has agreed, and what I am going to read now is all within quotes. Think of it friends, a church college agreeing to all that I am going to read. Listen, if you think it could happen anywhere beside in the Methodist church.

"The school has agreed to 'promptly and permanently remove all religious symbols and indicia of church relatedness' from its buildings; 'remain totally neutral as to the spiritual development (in a religious sense) of its students'; 'neither sponsor nor conduct any religious services'; 'shall require that the baccalaureate services, if any, shall be totally secular in form and substance and shall not include any prayer, religious hymns, or religious sermon'... 'half of the religion and philosophy classes shall be taught by non-Methodists'; and that its board of trustees shall be made up of persons of diverse religious backgrounds, not more than 10 percent of whom may be Methodist ministers" *Review and Herald*, November 27, 1975.

This is what's happened to an institution that for a long, long time has been a Methodist educational training center.

And how did it happen? Well, it happened the same way the fish got the “aid” from the fisherman. It got the worm. Of course, there was something in the worm.

In this same editorial, the editor quotes the president of Yale University, President Booster, as saying:

“The leverage of the Federal spending power is used indirectly to control private colleges in ways the government could not use directly.”

An editorial in the religious magazine *Christianity Today*, this year, says:

“When Christian institutions of higher learning get government funds, they often must yield their Christian distinctives.”

The president of Rockford College, President John A. Howard, says,

“If academic freedom once existed in this country, it is now a thing of the past, and federal subsidy has been the bludgeon employed to destroy it, to demolish it.”

Now, another quotation from the *U.S. News and World Report* of September 1 of this year. This is still in the *Review* of this week.

“Big brother [that is the government in Washington] is pouring billions of dollars into education at all levels, but strings are attached to almost every penny.”

What’s attached to the worm? The hook. And what’s attached to the hook? The string. And what’s attached to the string? The fishermen.

“Federal intrusion into education is accompanied by what one schoolman described as ‘sheaves of fine print, bales of report forms, and panoplies of inspectors’.”

A chart that accompanied this article in the U.S. News is entitled “Money: the growing federal club over education.” They didn’t mean an athletic club or a social club. They meant a disciplinary club.

“In 1965, only 3.8 billion was earmarked for education. Today the total is 11.5 billion. In ten years federal outlays for education has tripled.”

Now, this would be interesting even if we were just sitting in the gallery observing something going on in some other denomination. But, as members of the Seventh-day Adventist church, you and I are interested and are involved, whether we realize it or not, in a change—a shift—that is going on, and has been for a number of years, in our denominational feeling, our denominational thinking, and our denominational acting on this point.

Perhaps the quickest way to bring it your attention is the sentence that, perhaps, made the greatest impact on my mind as I looked at the article. Last year, this was reported at the fall council just last month, last year our Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions received practically the same amount of money from government as they did from the church.

Now, let me read it exactly as the editor of the *Review* gives it here.

“The amount of support received from the government and from the church was almost equal last year—\$14,979,000 from government. \$15,161,000 from the church.”

Loma Linda University received \$13 million last year—\$8 million came from the government, and \$5 million from the church.

The editor comments a little further along in his article:

“We feel as we did two years ago, namely, that the enormous amount of money that Government is providing to our schools ‘is not an unqualified blessing. It can pose a serious threat to our institutions. In the first place, it can provide a subliminal influence that, in spite of the best efforts of conscientious Adventist educators, may well provide a stimulus to pattern our schools after the world, to encourage them to meet secular standards rather than divine standards’.”

Now, may I read again what I read? First the Bible text.

“Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations” Numbers 23:9.

Spirit of Prophecy, *Fundamentals* 534:

“There is constant danger among our people that those who engage in labor in our schools and sanitariums will entertain the idea that they must get in line with the world, study the things which the world studies, and become familiar with the things that the world becomes familiar with. This is one of the greatest mistakes that could be made” *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 534.

In the closing of his editorial, our excellent editor of the *Review* quotes from *Great Controversy* page 297. Speaking of the apostasy of the Christian Church in the early centuries, the prophet writes:

“The union of the church with the state, be the degree never so slight, while it may appear to bring the world

nearer to the church, does in reality but bring the church nearer to the world" *The Great Controversy*, page 297.

Now, the question may be in some minds, "Why should we study that in this assembly?" We study it first because, as I've indicated, as members of the Seventh-day Adventist church we are involved, and our leaders have seen fit to put this in plain English in the *Review and Herald*. So it isn't something that is whispered or dependent upon rumor, certainly not dependent upon mimeographed sheets from the offshoots to inform us. This is information for everybody, in the editorial of the *Review*.

It is plain that the editor of the *Review* thinks it's perilous. In fact, his name of his article is *The Peril of Aid*. It's plain that he thought so two years ago. It's plain that there are many men at various levels in our denomination that have opposed it, and that deplore it and oppose it today.

In fact, the editor says rather a brave thing, but certainly a logical thing:

"If the church today is to stand free and unfettered, it must study carefully its present stance toward government aid and perhaps make the hard decision to begin the slow process of disentanglement. \$15 million flowing into church educational institutions seems to go far beyond any reasonable definition of the expression 'be the degree never so slight'."

Now, I'll have to confess something folks. I have been aware, of course, of this dialog, and in some cases debate, for several years. And I've been somewhat aware of the trend. But I had no idea, 'til I read this editorial today, that we were just about fifty-fifty, as of the present, on the support of our educational institutions. Fifty by the government, and fifty by the church. Some people might say, "at least that's balanced." But it's a precarious balance, isn't it friends? A precarious balance.

I sat in a meeting not too long ago, and I heard it plainly advocated and recommended that non-Seventh-day Adventists be put on the board of some of our denominational institutions to represent the community. The school in Maryland—the Methodist school—has come to the place where they can only have ten percent of their board with Methodist ministers.

You will perhaps remember this statement in Vol. 5, page 81. It's interesting how these things happen. They don't happen by 180 degree turns. This would be too earthshaking, too breathtaking. People's minds don't work that way. As someone has aptly remarked, "Apostasy is not bad, provided it goes slow enough, gradually enough."

So it was with the early church. So it was with Israel before. So it is with this people. Vol. 5, page 81—this is the sequel to it all:

“The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us”
Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, page 81.

What is the mark of the beast? The National Sunday Law.
Now what will happen then? Next sentence.

“Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death” *Ibid*.

So, the people who leave this denomination in the crisis over the mark of the beast—the Sunday law—will be those, whether ministers or laymen, “who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs.”

Is there something about the geography of Wildwood that renders it immune to these influences? Is there something about the reputation of Wildwood that makes it certain that we will not go this road? Is there something about the past of Wildwood that ensures its future? No.

There are literally hundreds of educational institutions in this nation today, that started as decidedly religious, deeply religious, institutions, yet have at last become, to all intents and purposes and many of them avowedly, secular. How did they get that way? Step by step. And some of them even go down the chromatic scale—half steps.

But you can get from the high treble to the low bass with just half steps, can't you? Yes.

All it takes is a certain direction, [223.33], and tell me friends, in what we're talking about, at least as true as in the physical world, which way is gravity helping, the downward step by step, or the upward step by step? Downward. Much easier to go down. And more popular.

Particularly, don't miss it if it's done gradually. The man who dares advocate going down three steps is looked upon as a dangerous liberal. The men who respond by suggesting a middle-of-the-road attitude that involves only a step, or better, a half step, is looked upon as a wise administrator, one who is holding things together.

Do you see what I mean? And this, my friends, is our peril.

Now, God is looking after His church.

“He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep” Psalm 121:4.

But one of the ways He looks after His church is by having somebody up there in the *Review* office to write editorials like this. I don't know what they are

written for, except to be read. And I don't know any reason for reading them, except to pray and seek the Lord, and, to the extent of our influence, seek to help do what He suggests needs to be thought through, and that is reversing this trend.

Now, I gave my class in survival yesterday this quote in Matthew 24:12-13:

“Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” Matthew 24:12-13.

These are the survivors. And the kind of things we are studying tonight, friend, is part of the chilling influence of the world. But it doesn't come with an icy blast from the North Pole. It comes from a gradual lowering, a steady decline almost imperceptible, except to those who keep awake. God help us to be awake. What do you say?

Now, if you were the Devil, what would you do about it as far as this work is concerned? While you're thinking of that, let me ask you a question. Is the only way the Devil has of influencing this whole matter of worldly trends, is the only way he has of influencing it the matter of government funds pouring into institutions? Why no. That is certainly not the greatest one. Surely not the only one.

Each one of us every day, this is the main thought I want to bring you tonight, what I'm about to say. Each member of this staff at Wildwood, each student, is everyday contributing to either an upward climb or a downward slide in this institution. That's right.

God has 1,000 ways to provide for us, and Satan has as 1,000 ways to tempt us. Whenever we meet in committee, whenever we discuss things at the breakfast table or at the dinner table, when we teach in our classes, when we ask questions as students in our classes, when we talk by the way, every day, every hour, you and I, each one of us individually, is either helping this institution climb out of conformity with the world into revival and reformation 100 percent, or else we are helping to influence this institution to go the way of other institutions.

You all see that when I say it to you, don't you? You all recognize it. Did you know there is something about this, that the Devil will tempt even well-meaning, conscientious people with the thought that the Seventh-day Adventist church can't be in so very much danger, because we are so far away from what the Methodists and the Baptists and the Presbyterians and the others are doing. And by the same token, they can tempt you and me, here on this campus, with the thought that we are so much more strict than some institutions that we must be in pretty good shape.

But friends, if the world is going step by step downward, and vol. 5, page 81 says those that at last receive the mark of the beast are those who step by step have yielded to worldly demands and worldly customs, what difference does it make whether we are one step behind them, ten steps behind them or a hundred steps behind them, if we are going in that same direction?

What difference does it make?

Do you see what I mean?

Now friends, the next thing I want to say I wish I didn't have to say, but I must say it. The sad thing is, that somebody will be tempted to take what I've studied tonight and use it in a way that neither I, nor the Lord, ever intended. There was never anything in the way of strictness and reform, that God ever said through the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, but what it could be taken and used as a club or carried to an extreme that disgusts reasonable people. And, on this campus, we have not been immune to that. Satan brings on this campus, from time to time, those who are tempted to go to extreme. God brings on this campus, from time to time, those who are tempted to go to extreme.

You can see why the Devil would do it. Do you know why God brings people like that on this campus? In the hope that they'll find the true middle of the true road. Some of you came and have found that kind of help. Am I correct? Thank God.

Brothers and sisters, we need not join the troublemakers and the faultfinders, who nip at the heels of the church. We can learn how to be among those pictured in Ezekiel 9, who sigh and cry for the abominations that are done in Jerusalem, and who unite with God in a steady, earnest, reasonable, sensible effort to bring true reform with no fanaticism, no extreme.

Will you join me in that brothers and sisters?

"God has revealed to me that we are in positive danger of bringing into our educational work the customs and fashions that prevail in the schools of the world. If teachers are not guarded, they will place on the necks of their students worldly yokes instead of the yoke of Christ. The plan of the schools we shall establish in these closing years of the message is to be of an entirely different order from those we have instituted"
Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, page 532.

That statement was written when I was one year old. It's still present truth. And it's still to be fulfilled on the scale that the Lord intended. And oh, what glorious opportunities are opening all around. Some of you know, some of you have read the letter that came out from our office, signed by Brother Wilson and me, about this very interesting opportunity that has come to our attention up in the northeast, where a property that belonged to a college has been given up because of consolidation. It's too small, you understand. They want big institutions.

It is just a good size for a good self-supporting institution, and the place is available for one-third the price of the value of just one of the buildings on the place. Sister White said that we should look for properties with buildings already erected at prices below what it had cost their owners to erect them. And this is the condition of this institution. It's a white elephant on the hands of the owners.

But maybe we can ride that elephant. I'm happy to tell you that we have had an encouraging number of responses to that letter. However, up to date most of them have been relatively small donations. \$100. \$50. \$5 and \$10. Some people send even \$1 and \$2. We appreciate it. I'd rather get \$1,000 from 20 people giving 50 than just \$1,000 from one person. But it's going to take a lot of them to swing a 150 or \$200,000 isn't it?

But you're praying about it, I trust. I have mentioned this as merely one example of the doors God is opening. In Africa, the work is going strong. Our two places in Canada, now three of them, encouraging. And other places both in home and foreign fields. Brother Wilson tonight will be winging his way down over the Caribbean to visit our work developing in Honduras. And many other things that cheer us and encourage us.

But my burden tonight, as I have expressed it, is that God will help you and me to come into line with His desire, that in this time of lowered standards, we shall lift the standards. Elder Pierson has expressed more than once, and I could read you one of his letters where he says it in plain language, that he appreciates the effort that we make here at Wildwood to lift the standard, and he hopes that we will be successful in continuing to do it. Let's not disappoint him, what do you say? And let's not disappoint our Friend in heaven.

Our precious Lord, we thank thee with all our hearts for speaking to us through the Bible, through the Spirit of Prophecy, through our leaders in the *Review and Herald* and the General Conference. And we pray that Thou wilt help us to discern the voice of our Lord, as He seeks to lead us up the road, away from the world and every worldward trend.

Teach us individually, and as a group, how to make Thee happy every day, by getting nearer heaven and farther from Babylon. Prepare us, Lord, to enter the heavenly land and feel at home there. Bless our leaders in Washington and around the world. Be with Elder Pierson, Elder Ward, and all who are seeking to lead us away from the world and up to heaven.

Teach us how to hold up their hands by lifting the standard ourselves, not in some narrow, extreme, or fanatical way, but in a reasonable, sensible, encouraging way. Keep us from unwise and unhelpful criticism. Help us to be busy weeding our own gardens and bringing our own institution up to the high and holy standard that Thou hast set. And then, Lord, we pray that Thou pour upon us, and upon this denomination, the latter rain from heaven, without which we shall fail and fall.

Oh, we thank Thee that Thou hast promised that when the enemy comes in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. It is time for Thee, Lord, to work. We believe You will. And we believe that tonight men and women here are making decisions to move farther from sin and worldliness and pitch their tents toward Zion instead of toward Sodom. We thank Thee in Jesus' wonderful name, Amen.

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