

From Folkenberg to Paulsen

- How the Transition Was Made

PART ONE OF TWO

There has, understandably, been a deep concern to better understand the Folkenberg crisis and the transition by which the new General Conference president, Jan Paulsen, was selected.

In our previous studies (over 60 pages by now), we have primarily dealt with the crisis and what led up to it. In this present report, we shall learn more about events which led to the election of the new president.

On December 28, 1998, leaders in the General Conference were taken totally by surprise when they received certified copies of James E. Moore's lawsuit against Robert Folkenberg, several of his associates, the General Conference Corporation, and the Inter-American Division.

Two days later, on the 30th, all parties in the lawsuit received a Show Cause notice from the Sacramento Municipal Court. This required them to appear in court within 30 days, to provide introductory statements. (That initial hearing was postponed and, due to later events, never occurred.)

DECISIONS BY ADCOM MEETINGS

From December 28, onward, ADCOM met frequently. ADCOM is an *Administrative Committee*, a working committee of officers within the General Conference which carries on business when neither a Spring or Annual Council, nor a General Conference Session, is in progress. (During N.C. Wilson's presidency, ADCOM was called PREXAD, the *President's Executive Advisory Committee*.)

After the 1995 governance changes which Folkenberg pushed through, the authority of ADCOM had been greatly weakened—since Folkenberg was given, apart from election processes, power to hire and fire nearly all staff in the General Conference.

But ADCOM now asserted itself. A crisis existed, the proportions of which were as yet unknown.

Rather quickly, the General Conference hired Phil Hiroshima (of Hiroshima, Jacobs, Roth & Lewis of Sacramento), to do exploratory work into the nature of the problem. Hiroshima immediately set to work. With a team of legal investigators, they carried out an extensive investigation, acquiring what William Johnsson later said to be "thousands of pages" of documents. Included among the discoveries was data on Folkenberg transactions which were totally unrelated to James

Moore. The cost of that legal investigation by a high-paid team must have been very large, probably more than you make in half your lifetime.

Meanwhile, Folkenberg hired James Prochnow, Patton & Boggs of Denver, and Joe Reeder as attorneys to represent him. According to a later statement by Folkenberg, he had to pay those attorneys from his own pocket for their services.

Within 10 days, it was becoming clear to the General Conference that they had a major problem on their hands. On January 12, 1999, a one-page fax was sent by the General Conference to major church leaders throughout the world field.

By that date, Folkenberg was being urged by friends to resign, to spare the church a major credibility crisis.

On January 13, ADCOM decided to appoint a 20-member committee (which was given the name, *Ad Hoc Group*), to examine the evidence that Phil Hiroshima was gathering and to report its conclusion back to ADCOM.

("Ad hoc" means "appointed for a special purpose." If a committee is, indeed, appointed for a special purpose, the purpose is generally included in the committee name. But if it is thought best to not name the purpose, it is called an "ad hoc committee.")

On the same date, a brief fax, entitled "GC ADCOM Votes Special Ad Hoc Group," was sent to a selected list of workers. A few things were mentioned, and they were asked to not discuss the matter.

A week passed; but, since news leaks were already occurring, Folkenberg assembled the 700 employees at world headquarters, acknowledged that he had been accused of breaching fiduciary responsibilities, and asked them to be quiet about the matter.

Two days later, the first of a string of major newspaper articles appeared, nearly all of them originating in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, or Sacramento newspapers.

The next day, the news had hit the Associated Press wire service.

THE AD HOC GROUP CONVENES

On Monday, January 25 and Tuesday, the 26th, the Ad Hoc Group met. Its decisions were crucial and deserve special attention.

In order to maintain tight news security, they met outside of Washington, D.C. at the Marriott Hotel, close

to Dulles International Airport, in northern Virginia.

Of the 20 men who were supposed to attend, 19 were present. Four of them were women and all were members of the *Executive Committee* (in earlier years called the *General Conference Committee*; that is the large group of about 250 people who meet twice a year to transact major church business in the Spring and Annual Councils). In authority, the Executive Committee is second only to the General Conference Session.

Niels-Erik Andreasen was chairman of the Ad Hoc Group, and had earlier been appointed to that position. Robert Nixon, a General Conference in-house attorney was present as legal counsel.

The assignment given to the Ad Hoc Group was to look at issues and recommend on the seriousness of them. It was specifically told not to consider what action should be taken regarding the president or anyone else.

During that two-day period, the Ad Hoc Group was to examine the evidence which had been gathered and submit a report to ADCOM (the Administrative Committee within the General Conference).

In view of the fact that Phil Hiroshima had uncovered thousands of pages of documentary evidence, we can understand why this Ad Hoc Group was needed. Some group, somewhere, needed to wade through it and draw some conclusions which could be submitted to ADCOM. ADCOM, in turn, would report to the Executive Committee for consideration in the next Spring Council.

A secretary recorded the actions, but no tapes nor transcripts of the discussion were made.

It was decided that no reporters or audience would be present during the Ad Hoc deliberations, and that certain individuals should be asked to make presentations.

Robert Folkenberg and both legal teams knew they would probably be making a presentation, so they were on hand in another room.

THE MONDAY AD HOC MEETING

Following introductions and a brief devotional at the beginning of the Monday, January 25, meeting basic procedure had to be established. This took less than two hours.

Then the General Conference's legal team, headed by Phil Hiroshima, made their presentation for one hour. Hiroshima summarized, to them, what group chairman Niels-Erik Andreasen later described as "several big volumes of documents" and William Johnsson, also present, called "thousands of pages of documents."

When that legal team left, the group discussed issues for three or four hours. By the admission of one of the members, this was not an easy assignment. All of them knew Folkenberg well, and they recognized that their conclusions might end his career.

Following a lunch break, they gathered again; and Elder Folkenberg and his legal team (composed of two

of his three lawyers) presented their side. Included in their presentation was an overhead projector and some handout sheets. Then they left the room; and, about two hours of discussion, by the group, followed.

During these discussions, the group tried to determine issues, events, and relationships which were involved. Four basic aspects presented themselves: (1) conflict of interest, (2) misuse of office, (3) relationships with colleagues, and (4) potential damage to the denomination. Under each category, a number of specifics were listed.

THE TUESDAY AD HOC MEETING

On Monday, the group primarily focused on what had been presented by the two legal teams. Tuesday's work was much more difficult—for they had to examine all that documentation and distill it into basic issues which ADCOM and the Executive Committee would, on this basis, later consider and take action.

A decision had to be made whether the group would listen to James Moore's secretly made phone tapes. It was decided not to do so, since their legality had been called into question.

Issues were determined by asking such questions as "How should an officer conduct himself in such a situation?" and "Should he have discussed the problems with others?" Then there was the matter of the dignity required of such a high-placed officeholder and the confidence the church placed in him. A key problem was the fact that the president had gone it alone, without discussing the situation with others and refusing to take advice when given.

Partway through the second day, the time finally came to prepare a written report to be submitted to ADCOM. So the group separated into groups, each with a different assignment.

Finally, two votes were taken by the group. The first, taken by secret ballot, was this: "Are these issues of such importance that they need to be given to ADCOM for consideration?" The vote, although not unanimous, was strongly "yes."

The second vote was about recommending the report to ADCOM, and this was done by a voice vote which was unanimous.

Following adjournment of the Ad Hoc Group on Tuesday, Chairman Andreasen and Humberto Rasi met with Robert Folkenberg and told him what the result of the vote was.

MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC GROUP

These were the 20 members of the Ad Hoc Group:
Niels-Erik Andreasen, chairman

Robert W. Nixon, legal counsel

<i>Men:</i>	Humberto M. Rasi
Maurice T. Battle	Rick Remmers
Matthew A. Bediako	Calvin B. Rock
Lowell C. Cooper	Max Trevino

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William G. Johnsson	Bertil Wiklander
Harold J. Lance	Women:
Ruben Matiko	Selma Chaij
Roy Nagel	Laurie Evans
Jere Patzer	Ruth E. Parish
Juan R. Prestol	Virginia Smith

THE AD HOC REPORT

Earlier in our set of reports, we quoted the *Ad Hoc Report* in full. Fairly brief, it provided no factual details, but this conclusion: The “issues . . . seriously impact the good name of the church and diminish members’ confidence in the credibility and integrity of the office of the president, and . . . the magnitude of these issues calls into question Elder Folkenberg’s ability to provide continued effective leadership as General Conference president.”

THE AD HOC SUMMARY STATEMENT

A *Summary Statement of the Issues* was also prepared and given to ADCOM—which did list the basic problems. For lack of space in this present report, we will not reprint it here. Yet each of those issues was quoted in full near the end of our previous study, *The Strange Saga of James Moore*.

THE AD HOC PRESENTATION TO ADCOM

As previously scheduled, on Wednesday, January 27, the General Conference Administrative Committee (ADCOM) met in a special session at the Hyatt Hotel, in Herndon, Virginia. This was done to avoid reporters. Once again, guards were posted outside the committee room door.

Ten of the 12 division leaders were present, in a total of 40 senior church leaders. Most had flown in for the occasion.

After prayer, the first three hours were occupied with hearing from the Ad Hoc Group. This final report was given in four parts, the first two parts of which were not written:

- In the presentation to ADCOM, the group chairman (Andreasen) explained the process by which the group had carried on its work.

- Then, for about 45 minutes, Robert Nixon presented how the facts related to the historical background of the problem.

- After this, the issues that had been raised were presented. This consisted of a written report prepared by one of the subgroups.

- Then came the recommendations which had been prepared by another subgroup.

(These last two briefly written portions comprise the “*Ad Hoc Report*,” mentioned on the left side of this page.)

The Ad Hoc presentation filled three hours. The following seven hours were devoted to discussing the matter.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY ADCOM

It was clear that the General Conference was not involved in the James Moore matter, nor had there been any misuse of church funds.

A vote was then taken to present the Ad Hoc recommendations, exactly as written, to the Executive Committee, scheduled to meet at the end of April. Folkenberg had, indeed, misused his office and had transacted irregular business dealings. Therefore the matter needed to be referred to the full General Conference Executive Committee, when it met in Spring Council.

Because of the urgency of the situation, ADCOM next voted to advance the scheduling date of that important week-long gathering (Spring Council), so that it would begin on Monday, March 1.

THE JANUARY 28 MEETING

The following morning, at 10 a.m., many of the officers in attendance, at the previous day’s ADCOM meeting, met at world headquarters with Robert Folkenberg and asked him to resign. He refused. This, of course, meant that a major showdown might occur at the forthcoming Spring Council, with some siding this way and others that way. It would also mean that a trial of sorts would have to occur, and the whole sordid affair would have to be exposed.

ADCOM then voted to place Folkenberg on administrative leave of absence until the matter could be settled at Spring Council.

INTERIM EVENTS

On the following day, January 29, Folkenberg spoke by phone with William Johnsson (*Review* editor and one of the Ad Hoc members), maintaining that he did not personally profit from the Moore deals. When asked, Folkenberg stated that he was not sure whether he would attend Spring Council. (If he attends, he can defend himself; if he does not, he can avoid questioning.)

The word quickly spread by General Conference sources that, if a new president was elected, the leaders would be looking for someone who would retire at the next General Conference Session (Toronto, June 29-July 8, 2000).

On the 29th, the General Conference sent an e-mail to North American pastors, urging them to be careful about their comments to church members.

On the 31st, Johnsson wrote that, in the Ad Hoc meetings, he and the others had been presented with “thousands of pages of documents.”

On February 7, Robert Folkenberg submitted a letter of resignation to the General Conference.

On Friday, February 26, working with his legal team, Folkenberg persuaded Chubb Insurance Company to settle the Moore lawsuit, out of court, for an undis-

closed amount, with a proviso that details of the matter would not be discussed with anyone—even General Conference Risk Management, which pays Chubb to cover them! (The suit was dismissed in court on March 12.)

“The Adventist Risk Management had no role in the settlement. ARM officials said that they purchased a policy from Chubb Insurance covering directors’ and officers’ liability of the church.”—*March 18 statement by Ray Debrowski, on behalf of the General Conference.*

Because the church was paying Chubb Insurance Company for the policy, the bottom line is that church funds were spent to settle a lawsuit arising out of Folkenberg’s personal dealings with Moore.

This transaction ruined Folkenberg’s chances of being offered a major General Conference position in their world telecommunications’ office.

EVENTS AT THE SPRING COUNCIL

On March 1, 1999, the General Conference Executive Committee, composed of 244 registered members from over 90 countries, convened in the main auditorium at the new General Conference facility in Silver Spring, Maryland. The door was locked and bolted throughout the day. No one could enter except those with an identifying badge.

Dr. Niels-Erik Andreassen, president of Andrews University and chairman of the January 25-26 ad hoc committee, co-chaired (along with Calvin Rock) this first day’s session.

George Brown, retired former president of the Inter-American Division (and the one who had been offered the GC presidency in 1990, before Folkenberg was selected), presented the morning devotional.

The time had come for the special business of the day. Robert Folkenberg had decided that he would come, just long enough to give a speech, and then leave before he could be questioned.

In his 30-minute speech, mentioning that the suit had been settled Friday, he said that the General Conference had not paid his personal legal expenses which, he thought, should have been done. He said that he felt abandoned, because the church refused to cover the 20% of his defense costs which was not covered by insurance yet he was thankful the suit was over.

Noting several things which had occurred during his administration, he told how he had worked so hard for the church during his administration.

We were told by sources that, because of the Friday cancellation of the suit, Folkenberg had gone to the Monday morning meeting, hoping that he would be retained as General Conference president. But he quickly

learned that he no longer had the confidence of the brethren. They could only resolve the crisis by electing someone else.

After Folkenberg left the room, the large committee began discussing the matter. Immediately, some of the representatives from developing countries rose to inquire why Folkenberg was resigning. Included among them was a union president from Africa, who asked for disclosure of the facts necessitating the resignation. In reply, the chair stated that it was best to accept his resignation and not to discuss all the reasons behind it; for it would be best not to do so.

Outside the auditorium, nearly an hour later, one of the committee members approached Folkenberg and asked why he was resigning. At this, Folkenberg became angry. Walking back into the auditorium, he went to the podium; and, shaking at times with emotion, he said that he had gone through great agony at the hands of fellow church leaders. Then he strode off the platform and left.

Following this second speech, the committee quickly ceased further discussion about Folkenberg and voted to accept the resignation he had submitted on February 7. That vote occurred at about 11 a.m. It was now time to discuss the selection of a replacement.

Instead of appointing a nominating committee, the entire assembly voted to act as the nominating committee. The next vote involved the selection of the nominating committee chairman, Calvin Rock, who received the most votes. Runner-up Neils-Erik Andreassen, president of Andrews University and chairman of the Ad Hoc Group, was designated associate chairman.

At the beginning of the afternoon session, a committee member arose and asked for facts responding to Folkenberg’s complaint in his second speech. In reply, General Conference Secretary, G. Ralph Thompson, stated that the Ad Hoc Group had prepared a written *Summary Statement of the Issues*; that a copy had been given to each division leader, and that he could share a copy with anyone who wished to have one. (See page 3 of this present report for information about it.) After a little discussion, it seemed best to the committee not to go into a “trial mode” over this matter.

From 3 to 5 p.m., the committee spent time discussing the qualifications they expected in the next president. Four times someone asked that they stop and pray. Calvin Rock had asked the E.G. White Estate to prepare a brief Spirit of Prophecy compilation on desired qualifications, which he read to the committee.

At about 3 p.m., the committee began considering possible names. The auditorium was equipped with electronic voting devices; so, in less than an hour and

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a half, a new president had been elected.

In the order of nomination, these were the nominees (left column, then right column):

Calvin Rock	Jere Patzer
G. Ralph Thompson	Ben Maxson
Jan Paulsen	Lowell Cooper
Ted N.C. Wilson	Israel Leito
Bertil Wiklander	Delbert Baker
Mario Veloso	Gerry Karst
Robert Kloosterhuis	Neils-Erik
Ralph Watts	Andreasen

Four of the nominees (Wiklander, Leito, Baker, and Andreasen) quickly withdrew themselves from consideration. Each of the others left the auditorium as they were nominated.

Rock, the first to be nominated, turned the chair over to Andreasen. One of the 11 remaining nominees made a statement before leaving the room. Jan Paulsen said it might be better to select someone more remote, since some might conclude that he had acted from selfish reasons.

Neal C. Wilson, former General Conference president (whose son had been nominated), told the committee that it might be best to nominate one of the two non-Caucasian nominees (Rock and Thompson).

The chair was then asked for resumés of each of the candidates. So Athal Tolhurst, committee secretary, provided brief information on most of them; information about the others came from the floor.

(As we earlier reported, in the preceding weeks, rumors had been floating around world headquarters that the next president would be Jan Paulsen, Calvin Rock, or Ted Wilson. It turned out that these were among the first four nominated. The rumors agreed with the results of the first ballot.)

It was now time for the voting to begin.

On the first ballot, the results were as follows:

Paulsen	29%	Patzer	5%
Rock	26%	Karst	3%
Wilson	16%	Cooper	3%
Thompson	11%	Others	less than 3%

The results clearly ruled out all but the first three.

This was the second ballot:

Paulsen	38%	Wilson	26%
Rock	31%	Thompson	5%

Next came the third ballot:

Paulsen	45%	Wilson	22%
Rock	33%		

The fourth ballot was the decisive one:

Paulsen	53%	Rock	47%
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Jan Paulsen had received the most votes in every ballot, although he did not win the fourth by a large percentage. It is of interest that both Paulsen and Rock had, over the years, shown themselves able to work with others. This was in their favor, a quality which had been missing in Folkenberg. His had more of a command and control approach.

As soon as the fourth ballot was completed, Calvin Rock magnanimously asked the committee for a fifth ballot—to make Paulsen's election unanimous. That was then done.

JAN PAULSEN - THE NEW PRESIDENT

We are going to have Paulsen with us for some time to come. Although it had been stated in advance (and even appeared in a newspaper article) that the one elected should be willing to retire at the next General Conference Session, after his election, Paulsen said that, if asked, he would accept reelection at the summer 2000 Session. Unless, in the interim, he does something strange, you can know that he will be re-elected.

Jan Paulsen (Jan is Norwegian for "John," and is pronounced "Yahn") is the second European to become General Conference president. The first was Ole Olsen, president from 1888 to 1897 who, although born in Norway, had lived in the United States since childhood. In contrast, Paulsen had spent most of his life in Europe. Paulsen and Olsen were the only foreign-born presidents (A.G. Daniells was not Australian, but was born in Iowa.)

A native of Norway, Paulsen was born in Narvik, Norway in 1935, so he is now about 64. He married Kari Trykkerud in 1955 and has three children (Laila, 1961; Jan-Rune, 1963; and Rein Andre, 1970).

Paulsen took his ministerial training at a junior college in Vejle fjordskolen, Denmark, from 1952 to 1954. (The word is spelled right, believe me.)

In 1957, he graduated from Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University) with a bachelor's degree. The following year, he completed his Master's degree at the SDA Theological Seminary in Washing-

ton, D.C. (We both graduated together in June 1958 — he with his masters' and I with a degree two years beyond that, the Bachelor of Divinity degree which is essentially equivalent to the Master of Divinity now bestowed at Andrews.)

In 1962, Paulsen received his Bachelor of Divinity degree; and, in 1972, he completed work at the University of Töbingen in Germany, where he earned a doctorate in theology.

Ordained to the Adventist ministry in 1963, he was Ministerial Director of the West Norway Conference from 1959 to 1961. From 1962 to 1964, he was head of the Religion Department at Bekwai Teachers Training College, in Ghana, Africa.

Paulsen was then called to be president of the Adventist Seminary of West Africa, in Nigeria from 1967 to 1968, and president of Newbold College, in England, from 1976 to 1980.

He was secretary of the Trans-European Division, from 1980 to 1983, and president of that division from 1983 to 1995.

At the Utrecht Session, Paulsen was elected to the position of a General Conference vice-president, which he has held down to the present time.

Paulsen has been a pastor, departmental leader, teacher, college president, division president, and General Conference staff member.

What will Jan Paulsen be like as a General Conference president? As far as fellow workers are concerned, he will be a breath of fresh air. Paulsen does not try to dominate the situation. However, that quality can also permit the liberals to move more rapidly toward their gradual takeover of every branch of the work.

In his own brief remarks to the Executive Committee on the day following the election, Paulsen said: "Our talents differ, we have different temperaments, and we don't always agree on everything. I want you to know, I think that's just fine. And I want you to know, my colleagues, that you can talk to me and feel safe; it's okay to disagree with me."

This was a remarkable change from the atmosphere which had gripped the General Conference building for the preceding nine years.

Commenting on the election, Ulrich Frikart, president of the Euro-Africa Division, said, "The church has desperately needed a change at the highest level . . . There has been a tremendous change in atmosphere at church headquarters. People have the courage to speak for themselves."

Three friends of ours, who are either Europeans or having been there for a time, say Paulsen is a liberal, not strong on the Spirit of Prophecy, and something of a policy man. He climbed upward by getting along very well with his superiors.

On the good side, he will probably be a far more kindly man to work with than either Wilson or Folkenberg.

If you or I were in his position, we might not be as kindly. The problem is our church is in the midst of a doctrinal and standards crisis, and only the strong hand of someone like Moses could return us to the faith and practice of our forefathers. It is not likely that Paulsen will be of this character. But we would be thankful to be proved wrong.

Paulsen earned a Ph.D. at the University of Töbingen in Germany, with a doctorate in theology. It is likely that his professors were strong liberals, Catholics, or atheists. They probably influenced his thinking to some degree. As you may know, German theology has been extremely liberal—to the point of atheism—for a century. A doctorate from Töbingen is not really a worthwhile qualification.

On Friday evening, March 5, at the end of Spring Council—at a packed meeting in the General Conference auditorium—Jan Paulsen told the audience that "the Sabbath, the state of the dead, the millennium, healthful living, eschatology, the mark of the beast, and the sanctity of marriage" are still important; "however, there is a real sense in which the original gospel is the heart of the matter, and the rest is commentary."

I would hope he did not mean the gospel, as interpreted by the liberals in our church today. Is the Sabbath really a sideline? Obedience, by faith in Christ, to God's law is the great issue in our time, and the Sabbath will be the final test over which that issue will be fought.

There is another matter which should be discussed here. Just as efforts to sweep Robert Folkenberg's past under the rug only brought grief to God's people later on, Jan Paulsen's astounding opposition to the faithful Adventists in Hungary demands our consideration.

Over a period of several decades, several thousand faithful church members were kicked out of the Adventist Church in Hungary by the Hungarian Union. We do not have space here to recount the entire experience. Between 1984 and 1989, the present writer wrote 31 tracts on the Hungarian crisis (now compiled in *The Hungarian Apostasy*, which is Part 2 of our *Ecumenism/Hungary Tractbook*). Keep in mind that, until 1989, the communist government in Hungary considered it a crime for any group of separated Adventists to organize into worship groups, separate from the control of the Hungarian Union of SDA. So, when church leaders in the union, division, and General Conference approved the casting out of those believers—they did so, knowing that the believers might be jailed as a consequence.

The faithful believers were cast out because they disapproved of (1) the strong ecumenical links of the Hungarian Union with the other denominations, (2) the training of all Hungarian Adventist ministers in a central, ecumenical seminary, and (3) the erroneous doctrines and lowered standards.

Their principles were correct, yet their repeated appeals to the division and General Conference were

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rejected,—simply because it is an axiom of church leaders that, in any dispute over doctrines or standards, they must side with lower-level leaders—regardless of what their positions may be!

One of the only exceptions to this maxim is when leaders commit a crime against the State. Most any other activity seems to be accepted.

The Hungarian Union was in the Euro-Africa Division for many years until about 1985. Edwin Ludescher was division president in the early 1980s, and opposed the faithful believers. But, when the Hungarian Union was transferred to the Trans-European Division, it came under Jan Paulsen, who had been its president since 1983—and the faithful discovered that he was, if anything, even worse than Ludescher.

Here is a statement from a 1998 book, written by the faithful Hungarians. (I quote it as written; you will occasionally find translation oddities.)

“After moving the Hungarian Union from the Euro-Africa Division to the Trans-European Division, the Small Committee [the leaders of the faithful, separated Hungarians] established contact with the new division president, Dr. Jan Paulsen. But they had to experience that—comparing to E. Ludescher—he was not even indifferent toward the ecumenical problem, but he himself was in favour of ecumenism.

“Elder Ludescher had a special personality, he was strict and powerful to us, but infirm [weak, submissive] towards the State Office of Church Affairs and the Union Committee. However, he understood the ecumenical question; theoretically at least, he was Adventist in his thoughts.

“But the new division president [Paulsen] did not even agree with our protest against ecumenical theology and relations! All these [facts] became clear after some personal discussions and letters.”—*You Shall Follow What is Altogether Just, that You May Live*, p. 387.

In the same book is found a brief excerpt from a 1989 sermon by Jan Paulsen. It reveals the fact that Paulsen saw nothing wrong (1) in the locked-together ecumenical relationship of the Hungarian Union with the Council of Free Churches or (2) the Seminary which trained all Protestant and Adventist ministerial students in the nation:

“Another element that was very difficult for them (Egervári group [the faithful Adventists, under their leader Oszkár Egervári]) to accept is that, over a period of many years—three or four decades—our church has been a member of a so-called Council of Free Churches in Hungary. That is a small council, consisting of seven different church entities. Maybe the most prominent in this group were the Baptists and ourselves. They [the faithful believers] maintained that this involved the church in an ecumenical situation, which was in breach of the way we stand as a church on these issues, and that therefore they would not

come back as long as we maintained this particular relationship. There are many arguments one could make (to show the error in their thinking), but we won't take time to do that this morning . . .

“They also were unhappy with the ministerial training that we gave to our young workers in Hungary, because they were trained through the theological seminary of the Council of Free Churches.”—*Jan Paulsen, sermon quoted in Spectrum, December 1989, quoted in You Shall Follow . . .*, p. 389.

In that sermon, Paulsen excused the problem, saying that the ecumenical council was a “clearinghouse” which helped all the churches, and that many of the teachers in the ecumenical Seminary were Adventists. What he did not mention was that those “Adventists” were ecumenized half-communists.

On September 13, 1989, a “*Common Declaration*” was signed by leaders of the faithful, the union, and the division, which was a fairly nice statement and one which the faithful liked.

It stipulated that the union would change its ways on several points and the faithful would therefore return to the union.

But, afterward, union leadership did not publish the declaration, nor did it effect any of the required changes. So the faithful did not return to the union.

When the faithful protested to Jan Paulsen (who was one of the nine signers of that *Declaration*), he consistently sided with the union, giving no hint that they had done wrong by stubbornly not doing what they had agreed to,—while strongly blaming the faithful for criticizing and opposing “unity.”

“In addition, he [Paulsen] made statements like this: ‘I told you even in 1975, Do not rebel!’ ‘Why do you want to be God's street sweepers? Why don't you leave the matter with God? I saw the ecumenical problems in 1975, just as you did, but I said that the unity of the church was even more important than that.’ ”—*You Shall Follow . . .*, p. 394.

Paulsen may not have had this in mind, but we could paraphrase it this way: “Don't try to sweep up the garbage in the church; instead, for the sake of unity, make peace with the ones producing the garbage.” The Hungarian Union was intent on destroying Adventism in the churches under their control, and the division and General Conference were content to let them do it,—even after the fall of communism.

We learn several things from the above two statements by Paulsen: (1) As early as 1975, Jan Paulsen knew about their stand for the right. (At that time, eight years earlier, he was president of Newbold College in England.) (2) He was telling the faithful that, instead of pleading that the church should be cleaned up, they should just leave the matter with God. This is the “It is wrong to reprove wrongdoing and right to do nothing” attitude of dissolute leadership in every age of history. (3) Paulsen stated a key position of leadership

which, when adhered to, always lets the organization be ruined in order to maintain the structure: Unity is always more important than principle.

"We are very sad that the President of the Division [Paulsen] did not declare that the Union leadership had violated the points of the Declaration, though facts clearly proved it. On the contrary, he took them under his protection and assured them of his support for them. At the same time he called our spirit and attitude hard and critical."—*Written statement by leaders of the faithful, January 29, 1990, quoted in op. cit., p. 400.*

I said earlier that Paulsen would be kind to fellow workers, but the record shows he is far from kind to those pleading for a return to our historic truths. I would hope that he has changed in recent years.

We will close with this statement, written to Jan Paulsen as recently as January 21, 1992, by the leader of the faithful Hungarians, Oszkár Egervári:

Seventh-day Adventist Church
Trans-European Division

21st January, 1992

Dear Elder Paulsen,

We answer to your 13 December, 1991 letter briefly, because it is obvious that our standpoints are so different that they cannot be got closer to each other. According to our conviction our present cooperation with the Union is impossible because of the following:

1. You do not accept that the Union has not fulfilled the points of the September 1989 agreement. Even, they have done things opposing it. It is clear that the Union does not want unity because they have not even fulfilled the minimal demand that you too considered just. After this you did not condemn them for not fulfilling the agreement, but started to accuse us for obstructing the unity. In the September 1989 Common Declaration you accepted that the Union's behaviour had been gravely unjust and anti-biblical. On the contrary you request us to subject ourselves to the present leadership, which follows the same direction and consists of largely the same people. Besides, they do not give the faintest sign of remorse or willingness for change.

2. Unfortunately, it is not only the Union who has different mentality from ours, but it is also you. Finally, we had to accept this fact. We had to realise that we were naive when, because of honest ignorance, we turned to the Division and the General Conference for help—as the faithful protectors of the biblical truth and the Advent message—in the case of the Union's apostasy and anti-biblical measures. We had to realise that in the leadership of our world church the liberal direction is the domi-

nant, or the only one. Thus, you became the best supporter of the Union, which also have liberal tendencies. Earlier, it dared to do anything because of its links to the Communist dictatorship. Now, because of your support they have the same confidence. That is why, all the efforts, aiming the settlement, are totally hopeless presently.

3. We have to understand that we cannot expect any true Christian responsibility for the church members and the justice from you (the Division and the General Conference). It was very obvious that we could not understand each other during our negotiation with you, Elder Paulsen. It was clearly expressed in our letter written to Elder Folkenberg, as well. But he still asked you to answer our letter written to him; the second one, after leaving the first one undisputed. We can see that an unbreakable power alliance—which we had a chance to experience during the Communist era—, based on common interest, can be formed in any community, if the crowd of ideologically conditioned and obedient people maintain their leadership whatever it does. In our church the ideology is the unconditioned faith in the visible organisation and the external unity of the church—which is strongly inscribed into the church members' mind—, and this ideology, in this form, opposes the teachings of the Bible.

We are extremely sad when we have to say such things about our beloved church. Our only comfort is that God has already told all these in advance in his wisdom and loving care. We are certain that we are facing the omega-crisis, foretold by E. G. White. We can understand that she had good reason to say the following for this crisis: "I'm trembling for our people."

Nevertheless, we do not lose our hope and courage. We would not be discouraged even if the present doctrinal and spiritual division was not healed till the coming of the Lord, as the prophetic utterance of Jesus suggests (Mt. 24:45-51). We look at the Lord with hope, who knows his plans and thought . . .

Oszkár Egervári

For your information, the present writer received a phone call about a month ago from the elder of a large church company in the central part of the United States. He told me that the conference president had phoned and asked if they would take Robert Folkenberg as their pastor. I was asked if I had any counsel on the matter. I replied that Robert Folkenberg would make a dynamic leader, but he would demand that most everything be done his way and, on occasion, would lose his temper if opposed. I do not know what came of the conference president's request. But it reveals that some of the brethren are trying to find a job for Bob.

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