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the launching pad



With **C. MERVYN MAXWELL**
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Q. Is there any chance that the Vatican will join the United Nations? Since those West Indies islands joined a few months ago, I suppose the Catholics will want to get in next?

A. Technically speaking, Vatican City is as much a "nation" as Soviet Russia or the United States—even though it is merely one hundred and eight acres in size and has a population of only a thousand. Theoretically the Vatican could demand membership in the United Nations.

As a matter of fact, last November Msgr. Ernesto Gallina, a member of the Vatican Secretariat of State, said that the Vatican might someday apply for membership, and that in principle "nothing prevents the holy city from participating in the United Nations in the future as a member state." He made it clear, however, that he was expressing a personal opinion and not an official policy.

The Vatican has held observer status at the UN since 1954.

Q. It seems to me without question that if a Sabbathkeeper or Sundaykeeper staunchly refuses to work on his day of rest (by religious choice), then he has a very real obligation to use none of the facilities that require others to work on such a day. This means no telephoning, no use of electricity or gas, no shopping. Nor should he read the next morning's paper, because men surely labored on his rest day to get it assembled and published. [New York]

A. As scriptural basis for your position you could have cited the Sabbath commandment, which not only forbids the believer to work on Sabbath but also forbids "the stranger within thy gate"—that is, his employee—from doing so.

Seventh-day Adventists do not go shopping on the Sabbath except in emergencies, but they do commonly use electricity, gas, and the telephone. It is important to ask, however, what they use these utilities for. They attempt to use them only as they are required for the worship of God, human need, and the Christian joy of the special day. For these same purposes, if there were no one else manning the public utilities on Saturdays, Seventh-day Adventists themselves would be willing to run them. They do operate power plants and telephone switchboards at their own denominational

institutions on the Sabbath. But inappropriate use of the utilities is avoided in these institutions on the Sabbath, and any use that involves labor which could just as well be carried on on another day.

That the minimum work necessary to maintain ordinary life on Sabbath is within the meaning of Christian Sabbathkeeping, Jesus made clear when He defended His disciples' activity in gathering enough grain on Sabbath for a simple meal, and when He defended the rescuing of cattle from pits on Sabbath, and the feeding and watering of them. On Sabbath, Adventists do not ask the public utilities to do anything that they would not be willing to do themselves, nor that they believe is beyond the proper Christian observance of the day.

Q. As I see it, churches who want state funds are not asking them for their preachers and evangelists but for support of their schools and hospitals. Why don't they forget about running schools and hospitals, leaving these to the state to operate, and concentrate their energies and finances on the saving of souls?

A. Centuries ago, schools, hospitals, and charities generally were the responsibilities of the church, ministries in which the state had very little interest. Today the state seems to have taken over all these things, precipitating the questions, "Do we need the institutional church? Do we need Christianity?"

A Christian school is not a state school, neither is a Christian hospital a state hospital, nor a Christian charity a state dole. Christian schools exist not only to make good citizens but also to guide young minds into unselfish relationships with their fellow men based on a thoughtful and meaningful relationship with the Creator of all men. Christian hospitals do not merely cut and sew bodies; they attempt to bring disconsolate souls into a healing contact with the Saviour. Christian charities exist as vital witnesses to the love of God in a world that questions whether God cares enough to be worth caring about.

Man is a complex union of body, mind, and soul (1 Thessalonians 5:23). It follows that the most realistic schools, hospitals, and charities must serve the body and mind in the context of serving the soul.

Send your questions to **THE LAUNCHING PAD**
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