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C. Mervyn Maxwell  
*Andrews University*

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# The Church's Struggle

By C. MERVYN MAXWELL

ONE of the most hopeful developments of the Second Vatican Council was the stand it took on religious liberty. Though somewhat disappointing in its phraseology, the Declaration on Religious Freedom has opened a wide door in Catholic lands. A successful Adventist evangelistic series, the *first* such campaign ever allowed in Spain, gave dramatic proof last fall that there is a real—even if limited—"renewal" going on in the Catholic Church.

Last week's article ended with reference to Emperor Justinian's official observation in 533 that the pope was "the head of all the holy churches." His statement acknowledged the pope's primacy in the church. But during the Middle Ages popes were not content to be head of all the churches; they desired also—at times, no doubt from sincere motivation—to be the virtual head of all the states of Europe, as well. This ambition embroiled the church in a continual struggle with the state and often cost it much more than it could afford.

## Doctrine of "The Two Swords"

One of the most characteristic features of medieval Catholicism was the doctrine of "the two swords." When Peter reported to Jesus in the upper room that the disciples had two swords, Christ replied, "It is enough." Catholic authorities in the fifth century and later imagined these two swords to symbolize the secular power of the state government and the spiritual power of the Catholic Church. And the Catholic Church insisted that *both* of these two powers should be used to serve its own ends. Boniface VIII expressed it in *Unam sanctam* (1302): "By the words of the gospel we are taught that the two swords, namely the spiritual authority and the temporal, are in the power of the church. . . . The former is to be used by the church, the latter for the church."

Related to this doctrine of the two swords there existed during medieval times the ideal of a single universal empire united to a single universal church. Its roots went back to the

Roman Empire, where the universal pagan government supported and was supported by a patriotic pagan religion. The Holy Roman Empire, founded when Charlemagne was crowned by blind Pope Leo III in A.D. 800 or—historians differ—when Otto I was crowned by Pope John XII in A.D. 962, was *not* a holy Roman Empire at all, but an unholy conglomeration of European petty states; yet through much of the Middle Ages the Holy Roman Empire epitomized the social ideal, since it consisted of as much of Europe as any given emperor could weld together at a given time, and was headed by a so-called "Roman" Emperor who was crowned by the Roman Pope and was sworn to uphold him. The empire was called "Roman" because it was conceived to be a continuation of the old Roman Empire; and the pope bore the same title, Pontifex Maximus, that had previously been worn by the chief functionary of Roman paganism.

But the attempted unity between popes and princes was usually a cold war at best and was often characterized by bitter intrigue and outright hostility. A typical struggle was the Investiture Controversy, a running debate in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, over whether the church or the state had the right to choose and "invest" (ordain) bishops. It would seem that the church had a clear claim on this point, but the issue was not so clear cut in those days. In feudal times many of the bishops were politically oriented landowners, princes in their own right, controlling private armies strong enough to start a rebellion if they chose. What king would not insist on having a hand in the election of bishops under such circumstances? An agreement was signed at Worms in 1122 that stated that the church could *elect* the bishops and *invest* them with "the ring and staff," the signs of their spiritual authority, and that the emperor could be *present* at elections and receive from the new bishops the feudal oath of loyalty.

It is easy to condemn the bishops for being temporal princes, but it

must be remembered that much of their territorial holdings came to them originally as voluntary donations, offerings, wills, from loyal church members in the days when not much money was in circulation. Nevertheless, the church would have been better off if it had found a way to dispose of these offerings continually in worth-while enterprises such as poor relief and land reform, and for the establishment of hospitals and schools. By becoming the richest landowner in Europe the church became the target and source of endless wrangling over matters that had nothing to do with the salvation of souls.

## Attempts to Run Political Affairs

It would have been better for the church, too, if the popes had eschewed the dubious business of trying to run the political affairs of the states of Europe. For one thing, few of the popes were great enough to live up to their pretentious claims, and many of them made a laughingstock of the papacy. Innocent III (1198-1216) could place England under the interdict, excommunicate its king, order the French to begin an invasion, and get away with it. But when Gregory VII (1073-1085), a sincere and gifted administrator, forced the Emperor Henry IV to wait in the snow for three days at Canossa in 1077, Henry retaliated shortly after by hustling him off into exile. And when Boniface VIII (1294-1303) forbade the kings of England and France to interfere with the ruinous gold drain from their nations to Rome, the results to the papacy were disastrous. The French burned a papal bull, as Luther was to do years later, and the papacy shortly found itself in the embarrassment known as the Babylonian Captivity, when for 70 years the popes had to live in France. This led directly to the scandal called the Great Schism, when there were two popes, one in France and another in Rome, and, shortly afterward, a third pope somewhere else, all vigorously calling one another Antichrist. And this in its turn led inevitably to the painful notoriety of the Conciliar

Movement, when clergy and prominent laymen attempted to institute the reforms that the popes refused to touch.

When, on the heels of all of this, Pope Pius II (1458-1464) grandiloquently summoned the heads of state to gather under his leadership at Ancona to launch a mighty crusade against the Turks, scarcely a government complied with his request, and his life closed in defeat at the site of the rendezvous. Surely the popes would have done their church a service if they had not made preposterous political claims, for most of the popes were not great enough to measure up to them, and the result all too often was insult, ill will, and loss of prestige for the church.

### Crippling Effects of Political Entanglement

Political entanglement not only brought to the church needless hostility and contempt but also tied its hands in the management of its own churchly affairs. For example, Martin Luther's reformation *might* have been snuffed out without difficulty in the early months after he first posted his famous 95 theses if the church had not allowed itself to become involved in the election of a new emperor.

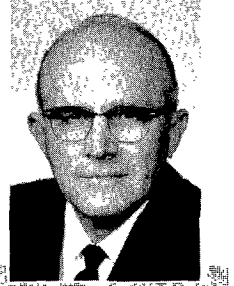
Shortly after Luther wrote his theses the aging Emperor Maximilian began trying to persuade the seven electors of Germany to appoint his grandson Charles as his successor. Wind of this development reached the pope, who considered it most alarming. Young Charles was already king of Spain, and if he were elected emperor of Germany as well, he would be in a position effectively to resist papal pretensions. And most of the electors were ready to comply with Maximilian's request!

However, Frederick the Wise, Luther's own prince in Saxony, refused to say in advance which way he would vote, and the pope exerted every effort to keep him from joining with the others. To achieve his goal, the pope sent Prince Frederick a glorious bribe, but the important point is that out of fear of offending Frederick, he also *suspended all disciplinary action* against Frederick's subject, Martin Luther. In due course Frederick finally voted for Charles V anyway, and the pope renewed his attack against Luther, but by the time this happened Luther was a great national figure and not even the pope could touch him. Protestants recognize in Luther's protection the working of the providence of God, but the frustration of a pope while trying to stifle a reformer and elect an emperor at the same time is a lesson for churchmen today.

Of course, the worst results of the

*A Personal Message From Your General Conference President*

# HEART to HEART



### Dear Fellow Burden Bearers:

It was such a little thing. Most anyone would have done it. In fact, I thought nothing of it at the time and it had not entered my mind since—that is, not until I received a letter last week and, even then, I scarcely remembered the incident.

Perhaps 12 or 13 years ago a couple who had newly moved into the community attended a function at one of our institutions. Being newcomers, they were not acquainted with the others in attendance, and, because of timidity, sat out on the periphery of things. According to the letter, when I entered the room, I spotted them off by themselves, came over and sat down with them and tried to make them feel welcome and at home. Just why such a small amount of civility should fix itself in their minds and occasion a letter of appreciation many years later I do not understand, but it did. And, I confess, their thoughtful letter reminding me of the incident warmed my heart.

### A Token of Welcome

Now that I am on this subject, another experience lingers in my memory. Every time I visited Helderberg College and stayed in the guest room I would find a huge bowl of South African fruit on my dressing table—luscious grapes, big sweet plums, peaches that melted in one's mouth, pears, or whatever fruit happened to be in season. It never failed. The fruit was always there. Usually there was a bouquet of beautiful flowers, and sometimes a little note of welcome as well.

The note of welcome, however, was unnecessary—the *thoughtfulness* in placing the lovely fruit on my dresser shouted WELCOME in capital letters. It said, "Elder, Helderberg is glad you are on the campus. We hope you will enjoy your stay with us. Welcome!" I enjoyed the fruit—it was some of the finest in the world—but the *thoughtfulness* behind it meant much more to me. The oranges, the peaches, the grapes, quickly disappeared, but the *thoughtfulness* lingered on. Even to this day I have a warm spot in my heart for Helderberg College and for kind friends who bade me welcome in such a gracious manner.

*Thoughtfulness*—you know what I am talking about, for I am speaking a lan-

guage every human heart well understands. No heart is so calloused or so evil that it will not glow just a little when someone is *thoughtful* and expresses it in some small act of kindness.

*Thoughtful*—it is an interesting word. Actually it means *thought-full*. A person who is thoughtful simply is full of thought—for others! He takes a little time to put himself in the other fellow's shoes and considers how he would feel if their places were exchanged. He has a thought for the burdened, the discouraged, the frustrated souls about him. His thoughts are full of kind words and acts of Christian love that will lift the burden, chase away the shadow, or bring a little extra sunshine into an already-radiant life.

*Thoughtfulness*, when all is said and done, is a bargain. It is an investment that pays rich returns. We may shy away from stocks or bonds that promise too lush an interest rate, but *thoughtfulness* repays manyfold the investment we make in the Bank of Good Will.

*Thoughtfulness* demands little in the way of financial outlay—in fact, usually it costs only a little time and effort. One does not have to spend hours searching for the right size or color in a department store, or fret and worry about whether or not the receiver will be pleased with the gift. Its joyful reception is assured.

Of course, it does take a little time and effort. Jotting down a few notes, a few dates, a few pertinent facts to have at hand is always helpful. But, by and large, with the follower of the Lord Jesus, *thoughtfulness* is merely Christ-fullness. The Master ever had a tender regard for those whom He met. When He lives and reigns in your heart and mine His *thoughtfulness* will shine forth through our words and deeds.

May the Lord help us to be thoughtful of others today—and every day. God bless you!

Yours for a Christ-full,  
thought-full experience,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert A. Hanson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

attempted control of the state by the church were materialism and persecution. Under the pressure of dealing with politics and business, many clergymen lost their proper sense of pastoral concern for individual sinners.

No one knows the number of souls that were lost through priestly neglect, or the number killed, especially after the Reformation began, at priestly command.

But let the Protestants learn a les-

son for today. The concept that the church should be a power in politics and that the state ought to obey it in the control of conscience—the source of so much trouble and *unspirituality* in the Middle Ages—was one of the hardest Catholic doctrines for Protestants themselves to give up. They clung to it for more than a century after the Reformation began, and in some places, for much longer. Even in the United States, Connecticut maintained an organic union with the Congregational Church for more than 40 years after 1776! And to this day some Protestant countries of Northern Europe allow less religious freedom than do many nominally Catholic lands.

If it is true that Catholics hanged Protestants in batches, burned others, and stamped some of them alive into coffins that were too small for them, it is also true that Luther approved the death penalty for Anabaptists, and that Calvin was involved in the burning of several other Christians besides Michael Servetus. Both Luther and Calvin, and the Reformers in Scandinavia and in England, as well, and the early Puritans in America, used the state to discipline and support the church.

The gruesome Thirty Years War (1618-1648), in which Protestant Christians fought against Catholic Christians until two thirds of the German population lay dead, taught both divisions of Christendom a lesson in the futility of force in matters of religion, while the experiments in religious liberty conducted in America, the members of the British Commonwealth, and other countries have provided positive evidence that religion flourishes best when the church leaves the state alone.

But prophecy foretells that the tide will turn back someday soon and that the entire apostate church will forget the lessons of history and revive the tear-stained Catholic concept of using the state to advance ecclesiastical interests.

"A decree will finally be issued against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death. Romanism in the Old World, and apostate Protestantism in the New will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 615, 616.

Let us pray earnestly that God will help us finish His work in the world and in our own hearts, so that we can be ready when this time of trouble comes.

(Continued next week)

## The art of living

By MIRIAM WOOD

*when you're Young*

TO "HAVE IT MADE" An expression used rather frequently is this: "He has it made!"

The inference is, of course, that the person being referred to has everything going for him—massive quantities of good luck, good fortune, combinations of circumstances that are unbelievably favorable. He can't miss—whatever he's aiming for. I've noticed that there's usually a high degree of envy in the voices of people who make these declarations. As a matter of fact, I shouldn't be surprised to detect just the slightest tinge of green on their countenances. (Isn't that the commonly accepted color of jealousy?)

I'm coming more and more to believe, however, that no one "has it made." No matter how things may appear, no matter how perfect the facade may look, life just doesn't tip its entire basket of lavish good things upside down into any human being's lap. *Some* of the apples are bound to be wormy; *some* of the glittery baubles are decidedly *not* tarnish-proof!

A conversation I had with a friend some time ago confirmed my already-established opinion on this matter. If ever there existed a person who appeared to "have it made" she would certainly receive the nomination. Beauty, wealth, and social position are an almost unbeatable combination, particularly when you add genuine niceness and concern for others. I'd had an inkling for some time, however, that reality might differ in a few respects from appearance. And I was right. After she'd explained to me, with both brevity and dignity, the scope of a continuing and apparently hopeless heartache, I realized that she *doesn't* "have it made"—no matter *what* other people think. She has enormous blessings, of which she's well aware—she's not a whiner—but she *doesn't* have everything.

It would be totally unrealistic not to state, however, that some people really have been given more of life's good things than others. There is no discounting the fact that from the very moment of birth certain individuals are cherished by devoted, informed parents, while others, as babies, are unloved and neglected. As for money—not just one silver spoon in the mouth but entire *sets* of sterling go along with membership in families of wealth. Then there's prestige, unearned by a per-

son himself but shared as the result of his parentage. As for good looks—well, nature is absolutely lavish with some people and positively penurious with others.

Nevertheless, to feel that someone "has it made" because he possesses an inordinate amount of these qualities is to deny an essential fact of the human condition. Happiness, you see, comes from *within*; it simply cannot be produced by a superimposed set of external conditions or qualities. For that matter, not even success can be assured by a superabundance of life's benisons.

It strikes me as a bit more than coincidental that a great many of the young people I've known who "had it made," according to the judgment of their friends, *haven't*—"had it made," I mean. Because there were other factors that simply negated the apparently perfect picture. Overconfidence—that's quite often the inevitable corollary of someone who "has it made." Or a desperate feeling of inner loneliness, which the much-envied "made" person is too proud to admit to himself, let alone to anyone else. Or—but the list could be endless.

Another aspect of this topic that is rather delicate is that sometimes people who "have it made" have engaged in decidedly complicated chicanery in order to arrive at their envied status. Methods they've employed—dishonesty, ruthlessness, lack of integrity—are evidence of such an obsessive self-interest that sooner or later the whole personal Tower of Babel will come tumbling down under its own weight. At that point, the situation becomes painfully clear. He/she didn't "have it made" at all; optical illusions and mirages can and do occur, as you are well aware!

Granted, though, that a few people really do have a great deal going for them, I'm still opposed to the flat assumption that they "have it made." Life has a way of leveling and equalizing and subjecting us all to pretty severe ordeals. It isn't either wise or productive to spend even a moment in envy or wishfulness, because you can never really have the facts.

When you come right down to essentials, the only people who *really* "have it made" are those who fully accept God, and permit Him to carry out His will in their lives.