



Reflections

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PURPOSE

Reflections is the official newsletter of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference. It seeks to share information concerning doctrinal and theological developments among Adventists and to foster doctrinal and theological unity in the world church. Its intended audience is church administrators, church leaders, pastors, and teachers.

NEWS AND COMMENTS

EARLIEST MENTION OF JESUS FOUND

In a matter of only two weeks last October the news of a major archaeological artifact hit the major newspapers of the world. A bone box known as an ossuary, used for burials during the first century A.D., had the intriguing inscription "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus." New Testament connections immediately came to mind. Several references indicate that Jesus had a brother named James (Matt 13:55) and that he later became a leader in the early Christian church (Gal 1:19; Acts 15:13). But the find also raised important questions. Is it authentic? Where was it found? Could this indeed be the ossuary belonging to the brother of Jesus? These questions are not always readily answered and the circumstances surrounding this discovery also complicate matters.

The ossuary was in a private collection. According to the owner, Oded Golan, an engineer living in Tel Aviv, it was purchased from an antiquities dealer in Jerusalem in the early 1970s. That means that the place where it was found is unknown, a matter that would help in establishing its authenticity as well as its date. The ossuary's important link to Jesus was not discovered until the prominent French epigrapher, Andre Lemaire, was invited to look at some of the materials in Golan's private collection. He read

the inscription and recognized its possible link to the New Testament and Jesus. According to the style of writing he dated the inscription and ossuary to about A.D. 66 and believes that the inscription is authentic. Further investigation by the Israel Geological Survey indicated that there was no evidence that the inscription was forged in modern times. The ossuary is now on display at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. If it is authentic, as it appears to be, it would be one of the most significant archaeological discoveries relating to the New Testament to date. Not only would it contain the earliest extra-biblical reference to Jesus, but it is also the first found on an ancient artifact that can be dated to the first century.

Michael Hasel,
Southern Adventist University

THE ADVENTIST-JEWISH RELATIONSHIP

During the year 2001 BRI was asked by Elder Cyril Miller, then in charge of the NAD Global Mission program, to study the question of the relationship between the church and the Jews. This was motivated by the desire to contribute to a more effective mission to the Jewish people. As a result BRI asked a number of scholars to write papers on the subject for discussion at BRICOM (the papers are not available for distribution). We invited several influential Adventists of Jewish heritage to participate in the discussion. The following consensus statement was approved by BRICOM as

reflecting the areas in which the members of the committee felt there was agreement. It was circulated among a good number of Adventist Jews for reactions and the responses were supportive. The replacement theory (supercessionism) was not fully discussed and consequently it is not addressed in this document. We share with you this consensus statement for your information, to stimulate further study, hoping that it could be useful in our mission to the Jewish people.

Statement:

Motivated by a sincere concern for the mission to the Jewish people we [members of BRICOM] have, during the last two years (2001-2002), studied and analyzed some aspects of the complex topic of the proper relation between Jews and Christians. The anti-Semitism that has characterized the history of Christianity and that resulted in the replacement of the Sabbath by Sunday, the law by grace, and that contributed in a direct way to the holocaust has challenged us as Seventh-day Adventists to examine the Jewish roots of our faith. We affirm that,

1. In contradistinction to most Christian communities the SDA Church brings together in its theology and mission the law and the gospel and becomes the proper place for the reconciliation of Jews and Christians. The SDA Church, having been called by the Lord to restore the truths that were “cast to the ground,” sees this as part of its mission.

2. The mission entrusted by Jesus to the apostles consisted in the fulfillment of the promise God made to Abram—“In you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Gen 12:3). Through their ministry the faith of Israel, fulfilled in the person and ministry of Christ/the Messiah, was universalized.

3. Although the Jewish socio-political theocratic system came to an end, God did not reject the Jews (Rom 11:1; AA 375). This is evidenced by several biblical and historical facts:

First, Jesus selected as his disciples a group of Jews who recognized him as the promised Messiah;

Second, God has seen the suffering the Jews have experienced throughout their history and has comforted their hearts in their affliction and beheld with pity their terrible situation (AA 380);

Third, God has continued to work with the Jews in an attempt to lead them to a right understanding of His word and to see in Jesus the true Messiah of Israel;

Fourth, God has used the Jews throughout Christian history in the preservation of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and as witnesses to the perpetuity of God’s unaltered law;

Fifth, God has called the SDA Church to work in a very special way for the Jewish people as we approach the end of the cosmic conflict. He has promised that “as His servants labor in faith for those who have long been neglected and despised, His salvation will be revealed” (AA 381).

4. The dispensational interpretation of the role of Israel in prophecy is a distortion of the biblical message and demeaning to the identity of the Jewish people.

5. The church’s concern for the mission to the Jews requires that further study be made on the biblical theology of Israel in an effort to eliminate barriers that could hinder the effectiveness of our mission.

May 2002

Angel M. Rodríguez, BRI

NEW BOOK ON SANCTUARY THEMES IN HEBREWS

Come Boldly to the Throne: Sanctuary Themes in Hebrews, written by Ekkehardt Mueller, has been published recently by the Pacific Press. The author takes a fresh look at the Letter to the Hebrews and deals predominantly with Jesus in the context of the sanctuary. On a thematic basis he walks his audience through the Book of Hebrews, covering most of its contents and addressing also the difficult issues of this biblical book, which contains not only “milk” but most of the time “solid food.” What about Christ’s sacrifice and his subsequent high priestly ministry? What about a real heavenly sanctuary? What about the Day of Atonement in Hebrews and its implications? How does the data provided by Hebrews fit the Adventist sanctuary doctrine? What is the book’s main theme? *Come Boldly to the Throne* has thirteen chapters, 128 pages and contains a number of tables for easy reference.

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST REFORM MOVEMENT

In some areas of the world field the Seventh-day Adventist Church is challenged by the so-called Reform Movement. Some pastors and church members may not yet have encountered that movement and may know little about it. Some time ago BRI published the book *The Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement*, by Helmut H. Kramer. It is an informed, accurate, and compassionate tracing of the origins, teachings, and reasons why this schismatic group developed. The author was at one time President of the North American branch of this group. The book is available from the BRI for the special discounted price of US \$3.50 (<http://biblicalresearch.gc.adventist.org/bookshop.htm>). Gerhard Pfandl has provided us with a brief summary of the history and

teachings of that movement. In addition, we have asked Elder Kramer to prepare a statement for our newsletter. We are happy to publish his appeal.

Ekkehardt Mueller, BRI

INFORMATION ON THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST REFORM MOVEMENT

I. Origin

In many parts of the world field today Adventists are confronted by an organization calling itself the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement. Sometimes this group is designated as the “German Reform Movement” because it originated in Germany. Frequently, this organization is quite hostile, although some of its members have not severed all their emotional ties with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

From the beginning, Seventh-day Adventists in Europe experienced a number of difficulties, especially in the realm of Sabbath observance and military service. Children were required by law to attend school on Sabbath, and the work-week ended on Saturday afternoon. Adventist young men who complied with the required military service frequently went to prison for their refusal to work and fulfill their duty on Sabbath.

At the beginning of World War I, when the government placed additional pressure on our leaders, church leaders in Germany buckled and instructed church members to fulfill their military duties on Sabbath as other soldiers do on Sunday.

This position on combatant service, as well as doing duty on Sabbath, stood clearly in opposition to the traditional position taken by Adventists in the past. When the German members were confronted with this new position, many began to protest vigorously. Particularly in the city of Bremen the opposition became very vocal against the church’s leadership. This situation caused the leadership to react with further actions and they disfellowshipped the protesters.

The disfellowshipped members then began an open war against the Adventist Church, a war which became very bitter at times. In 1919, before the disfellowshipped members had determined what stand the General Conference had officially taken on the matter of military service, they published 10,000 copies of a pamphlet describing the Adventist Church as the great apostate woman. In the document they attempted to prove from the writings of Ellen White that the words “Babylon is fallen” applied to Seventh-day Adventists, in spite of her clear statements to the contrary. “When anyone arises, either among us or outside of us, who is burdened with a message which declares that the people of God are numbered with Babylon, and claims that the loud cry is

a call to come out of her, you may know that he is not bearing the message of truth. Receive him not, nor bid him Godspeed; for God has not spoken by him, neither has He given a message to him, but he has run before he was sent” (TM 41).

Apparently the early Reformers were ignorant of this statement. In 1919 the disfellowshipped members organized themselves into a church body under the name “International Missionary Society of Seventh-day Adventists.” Later when they found statements in the Spirit of Prophecy referring to a reform movement, they saw themselves as a fulfillment of these prophecies and changed their name to “Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement.”

In 1920, Elder Daniells, the General Conference President, traveled to Germany for talks with the German leadership and the leaders of the Reform Movement. Although Elder Daniells made it clear that the German leadership had made a mistake, his attempts to heal the breach between the two sides failed. Because the General Conference did not immediately disband the division and disfellowship the leaders as a punishment for their sins, the Reformers asserted that the General Conference became responsible for their mistakes.

Since the 1920 meeting, several attempts at reunion have been made, but they all have failed due to the unbending spirit of the Reform leaders who believe that Adventists must accept their views in order to be right with God.

II. Divergent Doctrines

Reformers believe that God called their movement into existence and that it was prophesied to come. Two events are cited as proof:

- (1) In 1888, at the General Conference in Minneapolis, the church, they claim, rejected the message of Righteousness by Faith as proclaimed by Waggoner and Jones. God, therefore, raised up the Reform Movement to proclaim this message in clarity.
- (2) The leadership, they say, overthrew the commandments of God in 1914 when it encouraged members to serve in the army and fulfill their duty on Sabbath. The Reformers opposed this move, hence they have the right to exist as a separate movement.

Several of their teachings cannot be supported by either Scripture or the Ellen G. White’s writings:

Liberty of Conscience – The Reform Movement insists that the church must spell out and hold up strict and specific standards for the people to follow. In many cases the members themselves expect the church to

specify every detail of how they are to act in any given situation, e.g., military service. Little room is given to an individual's conscience.

Military Service – Reform Adventists believe that no true believer could ever join the military, even in medical work. Seventh-day Adventists hold that church members may serve as noncombatants in the military.

Vegetarianism – They have made the question of vegetarianism a test of fellowship, despite the clear statement from Ellen White, “We are not to make the use of flesh food a test of fellowship” (9T 159).

144,000 – They accept this figure as a literal number. Hence only 144,000 will be redeemed through the preaching of the three angel's messages in the period extending from 1844 to the end of time. This provides a reason for their small number.

Closed Communion – Reform Adventists hold that since Christ held the Last Supper alone with his disciples, the Communion service is reserved only for members in good and regular standing.

Divorce and Remarriage – The stand taken by the Reform Movement on this subject is that no matter what has taken place in a marital breakup, there is no possibility even for the innocent party to be restored to church membership if he or she remarries.

The Remnant – It is taught that there are three entities in Revelation 12:17, the woman, the seed, and the remnant. The woman is seen as a symbol for the Protestant churches, the seed is the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the remnant refers to the Reform Movement.

The Laodicean Message – The warning addressed to Laodicea is believed to apply to the SDA General Conference leadership and indicates the rejection of the Adventist Church. In an attempt to find a biblical foundation for this view, they note that the message is addressed to “the angel of the church,” which they assume is the church's leadership.

Gerhard Pfandl, BRI

APPEAL TO THOSE IN THE REFORM MOVEMENT OR THOSE CONSIDERING SUCH MEMBERSHIP

Some 15 years have passed since the Biblical Research Institute first published the book I authored, *The Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement*. When the manuscript was first written, I was relatively new in my experience within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. If you read the book today, it is natural to ask if anything has changed between the time it was first published until today. The answer is—not really.

My leaving the Reform Movement was based on doctrinal issues, not on personal grievances. First of all, I want to say that there are many wonderful people

who are members of the Reform Movement, including many of my own relatives. These people sincerely believe what they have been taught. But sadly they have developed a mind set which tends toward being critical of others who may not see matters the same way they do. They believe that they are doing God's will when they look for faults, reasoning that they are fulfilling the commission of Ezekiel 9:4 to “sigh and cry for the abominations that are done in the midst thereof.”

They seem to be convinced that in order to remain pure they must remain separate from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which they see as fallen and rejected by God. This concept of rejection is based on the mistakes made by some leading brethren at the beginning of World War I. They fail to consider the extreme mercy of God toward his imperfect people. Elijah thought that he was alone in upholding the true worship of God within his nation, but he did not begin a new organization or a new nation. In his hour of greatest discouragement, God reminded him that there were still 7,000 in Israel who had not bowed their knees to Baal.

Having now served as a pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for nearly 20 years, I would be the first to acknowledge that, as a people, we have many problems. There are many who claim to be Seventh-day Adventists who are not living out the truth they know. We are not all that the Lord desires His Remnant Church to be. We are desperately in need of a revival and reformation! Individually we need to heed the counsel of the True Witness in Revelation 3:18-20.

Despite this realization, I am so very thankful to realize that, as it was in ancient Israel, within the Seventh-day Adventist Church many of God's faithful servants are standing in the forefront, holding up the standard of truth. I have witnessed a vast number of faithful witnesses to the power of the gospel who are being marvelously used by God in spreading the message of truth to the ends of the earth by every means possible, ranging from personal witnessing to radio, television, public evangelism, health outreach, etc.

While groups such as the Reform Movement spend a great deal of time and effort pointing out the faults of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the question is whether they are examining themselves and actually doing better. What are the fruits of their ministry? You see, in the days of Jesus, there was a group of people who, seeing the apostasy among God's people, made the decision to separate themselves from even their fellow countrymen in order to avoid ritual and spiritual pollution. They called themselves, “Pharisees,” or “the separate ones.” It is interesting to note that this is the very class that was the most antagonistic to the work of Jesus Himself. I am convinced that this should serve as a warning today to

those who feel that they must separate themselves from the Adventist Church in order to remain pure.

According to Revelation 18, the final message will lighten the whole earth with the glory of the Lord. Sadly, when one looks at the impact of groups like the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement, it is obvious that they are making almost no impact on the communities where they live. Their major mission is to draw people from the Adventist Church rather than to evangelize the lost. The gospel commission calls us to go to every nation, tongue and people, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I am thankful to be a part of a movement that is making an impact for Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. I think of the wonderful reports of how the Lord is at work in Africa, India, Inter-America, South America, and other places on earth. I praise the Lord that truly the Holy Spirit is working through humble servants to reach the lost on planet earth with the message of salvation. My mind goes to the innovative approaches being used in an attempt to share the good news with people in one of the most difficult mission fields, North America.

On the other hand, groups like the Reform Movement are content to mostly address their message inward toward Seventh-day Adventists instead of to the millions of lost souls about to perish in their sins. Their appeal is that they have a “purer” message to prepare a people for the coming of Jesus. This work could be done even more effectively within the organized Adventist Church.

I want to appeal to all those in the Reform Movement and those who may be considering becoming members of that or of similar movements: Instead of preaching the message of separation, which is what Satan would like to accomplish, heed the appeal from Jesus himself. When he prayed to his Father about his disciples, he implored: “that they may be one, even as we are one.” (John 17:22.) Or, as the messenger of the Lord appeals, let God’s people “draw together.” It is Satan’s desire to break up the work. The Lord calls for unity.

“When the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd’s voice. Self-denying efforts will be put forth to save the lost, and many who have strayed from the fold will come back to follow the great Shepherd. The people of God will draw together, and present to the enemy a united front. . . . The love of Christ, the love of our brethren, will testify to the world that we have been with Jesus and learned of him. Then will the message of the third angel swell to a loud cry, and the whole earth will be lightened with the glory of the Lord.”—6T 401.

Let us all join together in proclaiming the Three Angels’ Messages to the ends of the earth so that Jesus

can soon return, and we can go home.

Helmut Kramer, Upper Columbia Conference

FOCUS ON SCRIPTURE

THE IMAGE OF GOD IN GEN 1:26-27

The phrase “image of God” is found four times in the OT—Genesis 1:26, 27 and 9:6. In the Pentateuch the Hebrew term “image” occurs also in Genesis 5:3 and in Numbers 33:22. Whereas Seth is son of Adam according to his image (Gen 5:3), the text in Numbers talks about idolatrous images, in which we are not interested right now.

In addition the term “likeness” is employed in Genesis 1:26; 5:1, 3, which may be a synonym. The LXX terms are *eikon* (Gen 1:26, 27; 5:1, 3; 9:6) and *homoiosis* (Gen 1:26).

The question is, what does the image of God stand for? Some have suggested that the image refers to mental and spiritual capacities. Others stress a physical resemblance. Still others connect the image of God to the idea of being God’s representative on earth. Yet others talk about the capacity to have a relationship with God.¹ Since no definition is given of what the image of God means, the context should be consulted.

The immediate context contains two blessings, namely Genesis 1:28 and 2:2-3. The first blessing seems to present the idea that humans become God’s representatives to rule over creation. However, they become involved in sin. By mentioning nakedness Genesis 2:25 prepares for the fall. After their transgression of God’s command, Adam and Eve realize that they are naked (Gen 3:11). The term “sin” is used for the first time in Genesis 4. Genesis 3 and 4 are similar in structure insofar that a transgression occurs, God begins an investigative process and a dialogue with the sinners, and then utters a verdict. At the end of Genesis 4 those who live in sin have become quite perverted and are hostile to God. But there is another line. Interestingly enough, the divine blessing given to Adam and Eve in Gen 1:28 (and mentioned again in 5:2) is to a certain extent repeated to Noah and his family (9:1, 7), Abraham and Sarah (Gen 12:2-3; 17, 7, 15-16), Jacob (Gen 35:9-12), and Israel (Ex 1:7).² Thus, it seems likely that the image of God primarily has to do with being God’s representative as well as with standing in an intimate relationship with God.³ Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and Israel are therefore—in a limited way—images of God, but the ideal is not reached in them because they are affected by sin, and obviously it was sin that damaged the image of God in humanity.

The image of God may also be explained somewhat by Genesis 5:1-3. In verse 1 Adam is described as in

the image of God. This image of God is found in both genders who are blessed (verse 2). According to verse 3 Seth is the image and likeness of Adam. Both words found in Genesis 1:26 occur here again and remind us of that text. The two preceding verses (Gen 5:1-2) connect the image of God with the fact that Seth is born in Adam's image. Genesis 5:1-3 may therefore suggest that the image of God also includes a resemblance of all human faculties and the entire human being with the Lord of the universe.

In the NT Jesus is presented as the ideal Israel—Matthew 2:15, 17. He is called the “image of God” (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15). He is the ideal image and at the same time “the radiance of his [the Father’s] glory and the exact representation of his nature” (Heb 1:3). Believers are becoming conformed to the image of Jesus (Rom 8:29) and transformed into the image of the Lord (2 Cor 3:18).

Ekkehardt Mueller, BRI

¹See, Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary 1 (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 29-31.

²See, Miguel Gutierrez, “‘L’homme créé à l’image de Dieu’ dans l’ensemble littéraire et canonique Genèse, chapitres 1-11,” Th.D. dissertation, Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg, 1993.

³The Sabbath blessing (Gen 2:2-3) is elaborated in various passages in Exodus. The Sabbath clearly is linked to the relationship that God and his human children enjoy. Furthermore, Gen 1-3 as well as the first Sabbath passage seem to have a connection to the sanctuary (Gen 2:2 and Ex 39:43) which also points to the divine-human relationship and may have a connection with the issue of the image of God. See, Angel M. Rodríguez, “Genesis 1 and the Building of the Israelite Sanctuary,” *Ministry*, February 2002, 9-11; Angel M. Rodríguez, “Eden and the Israelite Sanctuary: A Study in God’s Abiding Interest in Harmony and Restoration,” *Ministry*, April 2002, 11-13, 30.

SCRIPTURE APPLIED

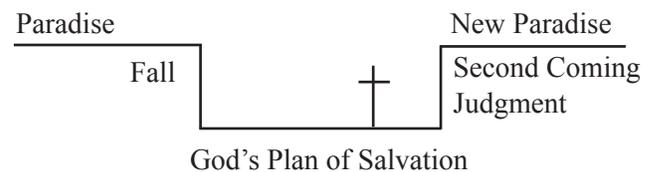
GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION

The Bible is not only a fascinating book, it also informs us about God’s plan of salvation. Therefore, it is very practical and addresses our questions and concerns: How do we explain the evil that is present in our world? Where do we come from? To where are we heading? What about the future of humanity and planet earth? Our study will give us a bird’s eye view of God’s plan of salvation. The details will be studied later.

I. The Content of Scripture

The Bible has an interesting structure. Its first two chapters deal with creation (Gen 1-2). The last two chapters focus on the new creation (Rev 21-22). The third chapter from the beginning describes the fall (Gen 3) and the third chapter from the end (Rev 20) the final

judgment. Between these chapters of Scripture the great controversy between good and evil takes place. The following chart is a simplified model of the plan of salvation.



However, much more is involved. There is also a cosmic perspective.

II. Unfolding the Plan of Salvation

1. Eternity and the Heavenly Realm

(1) God is eternal, absolute, almighty, omniscient, love, and triune (Ps 90:2; 139:1-12; Isa 40:28; 45:5 Mt 28:19-20; 1 Tim 6:16; Rev 1:8).

(2) God knew the future and designed his plan of salvation (1 Pet 1:20).

(3) God created angels (Col 1:16).

(4) His goal was harmony, happiness, and eternal life for all his created beings (Gen 1-2 and Rev 21-22, see, 2 Pet 3:9).

2. The Beginning of the Sin Problem

(1) The angel Lucifer, Satan, who questioned God’s love and justice, wanted to be like God. He spread his ideas among the angelic beings (Eze 28:11-19; Isa 14:13-14; Satan is portrayed behind the kings of Tyre and Babylon.)

(2) Satan, who still had access to heaven (Job 1:6) together with the angels who followed his rebellion, is found on earth (Rev 12:3-4). God did not destroy him immediately. Had he done so, Satan’s accusations would have lived on, and the sin problem would not have been solved once and for all. God allowed Satan’s principles to flourish while at the same time revealing his own character and the principles of his own government. Since then the great controversy between good and evil rages. God is accused. In justifying himself God through his plan of salvation tries to win the undivided allegiance and love of the created beings not only on earth, but also in the universe, while granting them free will to choose.

(3) God created this earth (Gen 1-2).

(4) The fall of humanity happened (Gen 2:13; 3). Since then all human beings are affected by sin and therefore also by death.

(5) God announced His plan of salvation (Gen 3:15), which included the birth of the Messiah, who

would rescue humans from eternal death by dying in their place. Satan tried to counteract God's initiative.

3. The Time of the Patriarchs

(1) Cain murdered his godly brother Abel, who chose to worship God the way the Lord wanted it and offered the sacrifice demanded by him, thus indicating his dependence on God's grace. Seth replaced Abel. His offspring represents the line of the believers (Gen 4:1-16, 25-26; 5:1-32).

(2) After several centuries humanity was totally depraved with the exception of Noah and his family. God brought the flood upon earth but saved Noah and his family (Gen 6-8).

(3) Some time after the flood, humanity again fell away from God. The tower of Babel was built. God confused the common language. Then Abraham was called by God (Gen 11; 12:1-7).

(4) Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son Isaac, which is a pointer to what would happen to God and his Son. Whereas the life of Isaac was spared, centuries later Jesus had to die for humanity (Gen 22:1-19).

4. The Time of Israel

(1) Jacob, Abraham's grandson, was renamed as Israel. His twelve sons became the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen 32:29; 49:1-28).

(2) God's elected people were liberated from Egyptian slavery (Exod 12:29-51).

(3) God's law was put into writing. The earthly sanctuary was erected. The sanctuary was the place where God wanted to meet his people. In a symbolic way the services depicted part of God's plan of salvation. The sacrificial system pointed to the sacrifice of the Messiah, who would die for humanity. The priesthood pointed to the heavenly priesthood of the Messiah (Exod 20-23; 25-31).

(4) In spite of apostasy, Israel entered the promised land. The period of the judges, and afterwards the period of the kings followed (Jos 3, Judges 1-21; 1 Sam 9:15-10:16; 2 Sam 5:1-5; 1 Kings 1).

(5) The kingdom was divided into two: Israel with ten tribes in the north and Judah with two tribes in the South (1 Kings 12)

(6) The time of the kings is also the time of major prophets. God tried to correct idolatry and other problems. But finally the northern kingdom went into Assyrian exile (2 Kings 17). About a century and a half later Judah was exiled to Babylon (2 Kings 24-25).

(7) After the return from the Babylon exile Judah lived under the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans (Ezra, Nehemiah, several Minor Prophets).

5. New Testament Times

(1) God's love became very tangible when his Son was born as a human being (Luke 2:1-21). Jesus is the Messiah. He lived and labored mainly among his people (Acts 10:38; Matt 4:17). He died in our place (Isa 53; Matt 27:31-56; Rom 5:6-8; 2 Cor 5:21). He was raised from the dead (Matt 28:1-4). First, Satan attempted to kill Jesus when he still was little (Matt 2:13-23). Later he tempted him (Matt 4:1-13). Then, he tried to hinder him from taking our sins upon himself and dying in our place (Matt 26:39, 42, 44). In the end Satan became the murderer of the Son of God. God is being justified and Satan's accusations were proven false. He was cast out of heaven permanently (John 12:31; Rev 12:7-11). What happens on this earth has become a spectacle to the heavenly world (1 Cor 4:9).

(2) Jesus created his church (Matt 16:18; 18:17), which was built on him as the cornerstone and on the foundation of the apostles (Eph 2:19-21) and would consist of Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:11-22). This church received the task to preach the gospel to the entire world (Mark 16:15-16).

6. Present and Future

(1) Since his ascension Jesus serves as our mediator and High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Through him we have access to God the Father (Heb 1:17-18; 4:14-16).

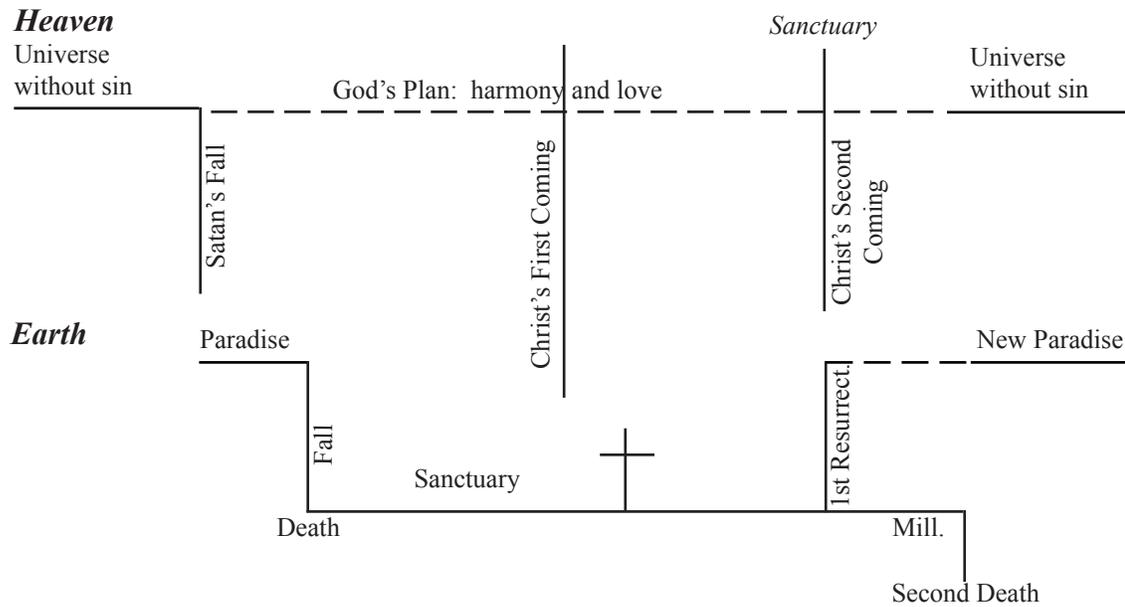
(2) Before his second coming a judgment for the believers in Christ takes place in heaven. While God's actions and decisions are being justified, also the cases of those are determined who profess to follow Christ. At the Second Coming a separation of humanity takes place, which must be determined before that particular event (Dan 7; 1 Pet 4:17).

(3) At Christ's Second Coming the true believers will be raised and together with the living saints transformed. They will be taken where Jesus is (Matt 24:27-31; 1Thess 4:13,16).

(4) During a time period of one thousand years judgment will be held in heaven and the cases of the lost will be studied. At the end of the Millennium the second resurrection will take place. Those who are opposed to God will hear their verdict. The sentences will be executed. Those who are not saved will be put to death (Rev 20).

(5) God will create a wonderful new heaven and a new earth without any signs of sin and death (Rev 21-22).

(6) God's plan of salvation will be completed. The sin problem will be solved forever. There will be no evil, but harmony and love toward God and each other voluntarily and forever.



We are invited to accept God's gracious gift of salvation and experience fellowship with God and eternal life on a new earth.

BOOK NOTES

Whidden, Woodrow; Jerry Moon; and John W. Reeve. *Trinity: Understanding God's Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002. 288 pp. \$19.99.

The authors of this book, three professors from Andrews University, have provided for us a timely volume. There is a resurgence of anti-Trinitarianism in some sectors of the Adventist Church that is having a small impact in several places in the world. This book attempts to provide the biblical and historical information needed to reaffirm our church members on the biblical doctrine of the Trinity. The subject has been addressed earlier by Adventist theologians (e.g. Fernando Canale, "Doctrine of God," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, edited by Raoul Dederen [Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald], pp. 105-159), but this is the first Adventist book-length treatment of the doctrine. Although the book is written in the context of recent discussion among Adventists, that debate does not dominate the presentation and discussion of the biblical and historical evidence.

The writers avoided technical terminology as much as possible in order to make the content of the volume accessible to interested church members. But since some use of theological terms in a subject like this is almost unavoidable, they have provided suitable glossaries. The book will certainly be very useful to the church in

general. The volume is divided into four main sections. The first discusses the biblical evidence in support of the doctrine and passages used to oppose it. The texts are carefully analyzed without entering into technical exegetical discussions, facilitating the comprehension of the arguments presented. The second part traces the history of the doctrine of the Trinity from A.D. 100 -A.D. 1500; a lucid, useful and illuminating discussion of the evidence and conflicts. The third examines the history of the doctrine from the Reformation to the Advent movement. This is a section of particular interest for Adventists since it shows how the church was guided by the Lord through the study of the Bible and the ministry of E. G. White, to develop a proper understanding of the biblical doctrine of God. The fourth section explores the theological and practical significance of the doctrine of the Trinity for believers.

Pastors who in their churches have to face anti-Trinitarian views will find in this book what they need to confront the issues being raised. Those interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the biblical doctrine of the Trinity will discover a mine of useful information. It may be good for some Divisions to explore the possibility of translating this book into other languages.

Angel Manuel Rodríguez, BRI

Patzer, Jere D. *The Road Ahead: A Vision for Spiritual Leadership in the 21st Century*. Nampa, Idaho: Pacific

Press Publishing Association, 2003. 128 pp. \$10.99.

Jere Patzer writes as the president of the North Pacific Union. His book is addressed to the leaders of the Adventist Church, particularly—as it seems—to leaders at the administrative levels. Nevertheless, it also speaks to pastors and church members in any leadership position within their local congregations. The author shares with us his passion for this church, its message, and its mission, a passion which is contagious. In ten chapters he deals with topics such as the qualities of leaders, basic principles of leadership, time management, and handling criticism.

The first chapter is the longest and perhaps the most crucial one. From the beginning he states his thesis: “I believe God raised up our prophetic church by inspiring its theology, which drives its mission, made possible by its organization” (p. 14). Presenting theology, mission, and organization as a triangle, whose “elements are intrinsically linked” (p. 14) he goes on to elaborate briefly on all three, however, spending ten pages on theology alone. “God gave us a unique, unified, and precious theology” (p. 24). It is built on the solid foundation of the inspired Word of God and affirmed by the writings of Ellen White. Our doctrines are not only defensible but form an integrated message. The author addresses some of the currently debated issues such as the creation account, the universal flood, our eschatology, and our ecclesiology before going on to the organization and mission of the church. He is not blind to the church’s shortcomings but challenges us to proceed from the unchanged message and to reach out to the people of the world in creative ways, thereby becoming the leaders that God wants us to be.

Ekkehardt Mueller, BRI

Roberts, Randall L. *The End Is Near Again: Being Ready for the Return of Jesus Whenever It Happens*. Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2003. 126 pp. \$10.99.

R. Roberts is the senior pastor of the Loma Linda University Church. He has written an excellent book about the delay of the Christ’s Second Coming and the problems of time setting or giving up the hope. Neither is an option for sincere believers. Although the book

is not a scholarly study of major biblical passages, but rather a popular approach to the problem, containing many illustrations and valuable practical applications, the author may surprise the reader with intriguing theological insights.

After having stated and somewhat developed the problem of the delay and the pitfalls associated with it, he starts out to take a fresh look at Matthew 24 and the so-called signs of the times. Then he proceeds to study especially the four major parables following Christ’s speech on the signs of the times and his Second coming. He devotes a chapter to each, the parable of the faithful and unfaithful servants (Mt 24:45-51), the parable of the ten virgins (Mt 25:1-13), the parable of the talents (Mt 25:14-30), and the parable of the judgment on the sheep and the goats (Mt 25:31-46). The last chapter summarizes the results of the study.

The author’s main thesis seems to be: Instead of focusing on the questions “when?” and “what?” we should ask the questions “who?” and “how?”. Consequently, we must understand what it means to be watching. Some readers may be puzzled by some of his statements such as that it is possible to be asleep and ready and that using one’s talents and doing one’s job means watching. In the latter case his qualifier should not be overlooked “putting to use their talents to increase the kingdom.” Without this qualifier it could be argued that many non-Christians, who deny the Second Coming of Jesus, would also be watching. But this is not what he is saying.

So what are his definitions of watching? “Watching means doing, doing the Master’s bidding. Watching means knowing, knowing Jesus on a personal, enduring basis. Watching means using, using our talents to increase His kingdom. And watching means caring, caring for the simple and basic needs of others” (pp. 103-105). Five lessons for our everyday life follow, the last one stating that “we must maintain a view toward the big picture. . . . So, lift up the trumpet and let it ring! Jesus is coming again” (pp. 113-114). This stimulating and thought-provoking book ends with a number of thought and discussion questions.

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