



# Asia Adventist Seminary Studies

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 VOLUME 2
 

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1999

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## PREFACE

We are gratified at the overwhelmingly positive response to our first issue. It encourages us to continue to strive for excellence in each issue so that we will not disappoint those who have expressed confidence in us by subscribing or agreeing to exchanging journals with us.

This issue introduces a new feature. We decided to include this year and in future years a selection of papers read at our annual Theological Forum. This annual Forum has been so well received that we believe it is in order to share some of the best of it with our readers. There are two types of articles from the Forum: morning devotionals and scholarly papers. The style is different, but we believe both will be enriching to our readers, since our readers include both academics and professionals.

The authors of the Forum papers will not be introduced here, since their academic or professional titles and employing organizations are given at the beginning of each paper. A few words are in order, however, regarding the nature of the Forum and matters of content which may be unfamiliar to our readers.

The 1999 AIIAS Theological Forum, entitled "Millennium and Prophecy," focused on biblical, ecclesiological, and practical issues related to eschatology. Thus several papers dealt with matters of significance for the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church, which AIIAS serves. These matters could not be fully addressed without taking into account the writings of Ellen G. White, who was one of the founders of the SDA Church and is considered to have functioned prophetically in providing messages of counsel for the Church that still guide it today in areas in which the Bible is either silent or unclear. It was ever the work of Ellen White to direct attention to the truths of the Bible and to the eternal gospel of salvation only in Jesus. She wrote over 100,000 manuscript pages of counsel for the church during her lifetime, serving as one of the greatest and most prolific writers of all time, though little recognized for her achievements. Many of her works have become classics, translated into more than one hundred languages. It would be impossible to ignore the weight of her spiritual counsel, though the Bible always takes first place in establishing truth in doctrinal matters. This knowledge will hopefully place in the right context the many references to Ellen White in some of the papers.

Not all of the Forum papers could be published. For that we apologize to those whose papers are not included in this issue. The editors had to be selective in trying

to represent the cross section of topics covered and share those materials that would be of the greatest use to the most readers, thinking of both pastors and teachers.

The other articles in this issue include both AIIAS faculty and alumni this time. We briefly introduce here each of the authors.

Evelyn Almocera is both an alumna and faculty member of AIIAS. She is also a medical doctor who serves as the staff physician of AIIAS. A Filipina, she completed her M.P.H. at AIIAS and serves as an assistant professor in both the Theological Seminary and the School of Graduate Studies, Department of Health Education.

Aecio Cairus hails from Argentina. He came to AIIAS at the beginning of 1999. He holds a Ph.D. in Old Testament. A man of broad ability, he has been serving as a professor in both the Biblical Studies and the Theological/Historical Studies departments.

Francisco Gayoba is a Filipino who completed a D.Theol. in 1997 with the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology (of which AIIAS Theological Seminary is a member). He is an Assistant Professor in the Theological/Historical Studies department.

Carlos Martin, with a Ph.D. from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, is from Uruguay. He is a former assistant dean and Associate Professor of World Mission at AIIAS Theological Seminary. He left in March 1999 to become the Ministerial Director for the Northern Asia-Pacific Division of the General Conference of SDAs, located in Seoul, South Korea. He holds some other portfolios as well. We miss him.

Ferdinand Regalado is a 1996 graduate of our M.A. in Religion program. He is presently teaching religion at the nearby Adventist University of the Philippines. He has just recently been accepted into the Ph.D. in Religion program at AIIAS, majoring in Biblical Studies.

The editorial committee feels we should make a disclaimer regarding the content of the articles that are published in this journal. Although the editorial committee tries to exercise some limited discretion regarding the content of what we publish, we make no claim that the views expressed herein represent either the views of the AIIAS Theological Seminary or of the SDA Church. Nor do they necessarily represent the views of the editorial staff. We do welcome your thoughtful response to any of the content of our publication. We will listen; however, we do not promise to reply, due to the time involved in taking up correspondence with our readers.

There is an addition to our dissertation abstracts in this issue. The faculty voted to include thesis abstracts for M.A. in Religion graduates as well. Some go back to 1998, after the last issue was ready to go to press.

The book reviews in this issue are in short supply. We only received two books for review, and it was difficult to get reviews where no books were offered in exchange for review. We hope it will be different next year. Beginning in 2000, AIIAS is offering incentives for those publishing scholarly studies, including a small

incentive for critical book reviews that will assist with the cost of purchasing. Plus we hope that we will begin to receive books from publishers for review.

We hope you will enjoy this issue. And keep those letters and subscriptions coming!



## BURNOUT IN THE MINISTRY

EVELYN V. ALMOCERA

Some pastors have experienced, heard, and read about burnout, yet they do not realize they have it until they leave the ministry. Many think that burnout is a syndrome that affects only people who are in an environment or an organization where the style of leadership is compulsive, aggressive, relentless, and oppressive. However, burnout is common among professionals who are engaged in the helping professions, and that includes ministers.

In 1994 the Upper Columbia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists conducted a survey which revealed that 65 percent of the North American Division ministers were threatened with burnout, while another 67 percent expressed that they had experienced a certain degree of burnout.<sup>1</sup>

### What Is Burnout?

A large number of ministers go to physicians with varied chronic psychosomatic complaints, ranging from a simple headache to more debilitating chronic fatigue.

These complaints are often diagnosed as gastritis or weak immune responses and are sometimes mistaken as excuses in order to escape work assignments. In most cases, these people receive pills ranging from simple pain killers, antacids, minor tranquilizers, to antidepressants. The most common prescription is multivitamins. This is so because the physician is unable to find any pathology despite the presence of an array of symptoms. However, the problem may become chronic and lead to decline in and dissatisfaction with the quality of work.

Dr. Hans Selye, guru of stress and Director of the University of Montreal's Institute of Experimental Medicine, defines stress as "a nonspecific response of the body to any demand upon it."<sup>2</sup> Stress is not always bad; it is essential to life. Any work that is free of stress is work without achievement and motivation.

<sup>1</sup>James Kilmer, "Stop the Burnout, Enjoy the Ministry," *Ministry*, June 1996, 19.

<sup>2</sup>Hans Selye, *The Stress of Life* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 1.

In 1975 Herbert J. Freudenberger defined burnout and explained its mechanics. Burnout, he says is “to fail, wear out or become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength or resources.”<sup>1</sup> Hence, although stress is important, it should not be so intense and so extended as to result in burnout, which results in a loss of enthusiasm, energy, idealism, perspective and purpose in life and work.

For LeRoy Spaniol, an assistant professor at Boston University, burnout is “feeling locked into a job routine.”<sup>2</sup> Psychologist Christina Maslach states that burnout is a “syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do ‘people work’ of some kind.”<sup>3</sup>

Gospel ministers use tremendous amounts of energy to meet the demands of multiple roles in their unique position in the work environment. The sense of being “on call” demands a lot of energy. Oftentimes, ministers, still not able to recuperate from previous energy depletion, need to address another demand, thereby leading them to energy exhaustion. The rapid expenditure of, or even borrowing from, energy stores leads to burnout.

In William H. Willimon’s book, John Sanford expresses a different view on burnout. He believes that burnout “may arise from a lack of meaning in life rather than from lack of energy.”<sup>4</sup> When one experiences stress, the body responds by attempting to restore balance. This is called the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS). This syndrome has three phases: alarm, resistance, and exhaustion.

The *alarm phase* prepares the body for the fight or flight response. This response is regulated by the sympathetic nervous system, which results in an increase in rate of all body functions, thereby increasing the speed of release of energy by the body cells. This reaction is very important because it supplies physical strength to protect one’s self. Physical changes during this phase usually last for only a few seconds.

The *resistance phase* keeps the energy levels under control and returns the body to normal functioning. The parasympathetic nervous system regulates this activity by slowing down all the systems previously stimulated. This phase follows immediately after the alarm phase has started.

The *exhaustion phase* results when all the energy used to fight a stressor is depleted and there is inability to replenish the energy that was lost.

<sup>1</sup>Herbert J. Freudenberger, “The Staff Burn-out Syndrome in Alternative Institutions,” *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice* 12 (1975): 73.

<sup>2</sup>LeRoy Spaniol, “Teacher Burnout,” *Instructor* 88 (1979): 57.

<sup>3</sup>Christina Maslach, *Burnout—The Cost of Caring* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982), 3.

<sup>4</sup>William H. Willimon, *Clergy and Laity Burnout*, Creative Leadership Series (Nashville : Abingdon, 1989), 25.



## Why Burnout?

Burnout among ministers has many causes. These causes may be self-imposed, may come from external sources, or may even result from interaction with the environment. Because ministers are in constant interaction not only with their church members but also with other people not in their church, their susceptibility to burnout increases. The lifestyle and home life of the minister may influence the degree of acceleration in the burnout process or may slow it down.

The minister performs a number of roles in a single week. He<sup>1</sup> serves as a referee in church fights during board meetings, as a preacher during the midweek prayer service, as an educator, a comforter in times of suffering, a counselor, a theologian, a project promoter, and a financial adviser in church matters as well as in church-operated schools. These are only a few of the roles that a minister needs to fulfill. This is referred to as role overload. He encounters these roles day after day, week after week, because church work is unending. In addition to the routine, the minister works with almost the same people year after year.

David Congo,<sup>2</sup> in a survey conducted among ministers in thirty-two denominations in thirty-eight states, reported that 70 percent worked more than sixty hours a week; 85 percent spent two or less evenings a week at home; 75 percent spent less than one evening per month purely for social time with their wives and other couples; and 61 percent spent less than one hour a week talking with other pastors.

A minister also succumbs to ill-defined expectations from the church's world leaders, the local conference, and the local congregation. The church's world leaders may expect the minister to be mission oriented; the local conference's emphasis might be on the number of annual baptisms and the tithes and offerings collected; and the local congregation may hold many other expectations that he just cannot completely meet. By trying to satisfy all these expectations, a minister wears himself out.

At times, ministers need to put on two masks because of their high public visibility. They are expected to be spiritual, to behave differently from church members, not to have problems like those of other people, and not to need a day off. Their families are expected to be exemplary and perfect. They are supposed to have well disciplined children and wives who are very supportive in response to the demands of the ministry on top of their mother-wife responsibilities. All of these are subject to public observation. Thus, the minister and his family often have to put aside their true feelings and personal needs to accomplish the roles imposed upon them.

<sup>1</sup>"He" is understood herein to indicate both genders.

<sup>2</sup>David Congo, "What Causes Burnout?" *Theological News and Notes*, March 1984,

John Carter and Janelle Warner point out that loneliness is a contributing factor in burnout among ministers, based on a study where a selected group was chosen among Presbyterian ministers and their wives. The findings revealed that both ministers and their wives experienced loneliness and that burnout was related to lack of support. They also observed that couples spent less time together because of the demands of Christian service, which led to less marital satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

William Willimon quotes Gary Harbaugh as saying that

the two major frustrations in ministry may be related to two fundamental facts of life: time and space. Stress is produced when a person feels there is never enough time . . . , when there appears to be either a too restrictive environment in which to function freely or a too open-ended environment to manage effectively.<sup>2</sup>

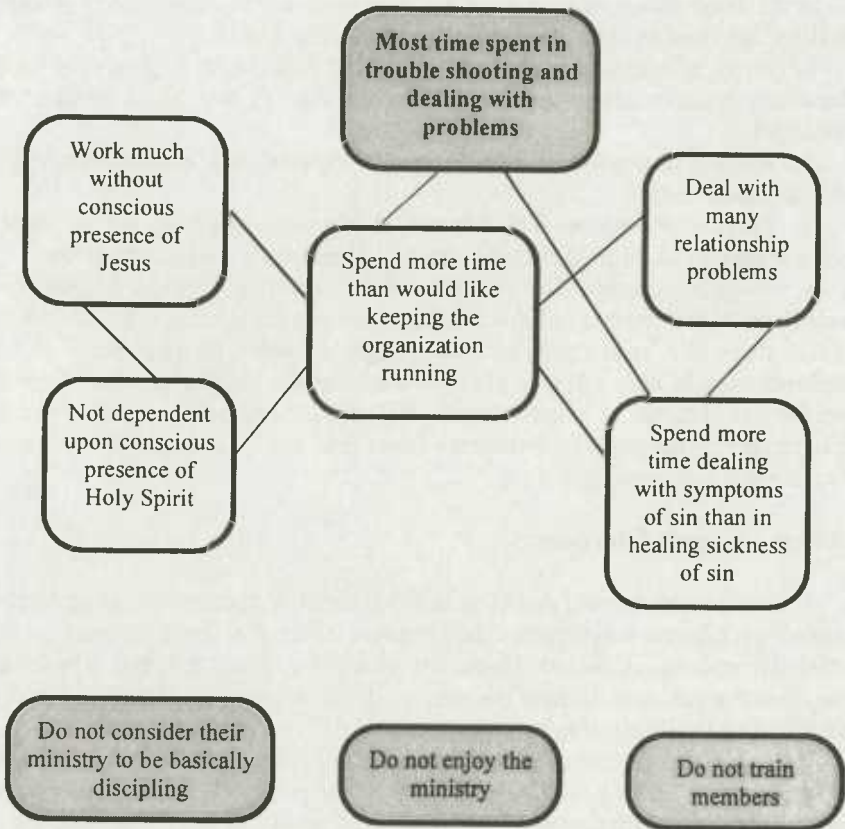
Because of these factors, most ministers feel they are always short of time, which leads to a neglect in the care and nurture of their bodies. With a very hectic schedule and multiplicity of roles, a minister needs to take charge not only of his spiritual needs but also of his physical, mental, and social needs. Because of the tendency of ministers to agree to all sorts of demands imposed by the church, they tend to neglect their own physical health and that of their families in the name of God. When the physical health is neglected, it is easy to experience burnout.

Some ministers are often so frantically busy that they end up in a tangled web, dealing with a style of ministry that is oriented to troubleshooting an overabundance of relational problems and their symptoms. These are ministers who keep their ministry always on the go, independent of the Holy Spirit's guidance. Graphically, James Kilmer illustrates that those who tend to experience burnout follow the patterns of ministry indicated in the following diagram:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>John D. Carter and Janelle Warner, "Loneliness, Marital Adjustment and Burnout in Pastoral and Lay Persons," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* (Summer 1984), quoted in Frank Minirth, Don Hawkins, Paul Meier, and Richard Flournoy, *How to Beat Burnout* (Chicago: Moody, 1986), 87.

<sup>2</sup>Gary Harbaugh, *The Pastor as Person*, quoted in William H. Willimon, *Clergy and Laity Burnout*, Creative Leadership Series (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), 45.

<sup>3</sup>Kilmer, 20.



He describes how to interpret the diagram:

Look at any circle. Follow lines from that circle to others to observe correlations. For example, those who spend most of their time troubleshooting and dealing with problems also tend to spend more time than they would like keeping the organization going and dealing with symptoms of sin rather than with healing. If you look at the circle representing those who spend more time than they would like keeping the organization running you can see that they also spend a lot of time dealing with relationship problems, deal primarily with the symptoms of sin, and work without the conscious presence of Christ in their daily life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

In the book *Stress Management for Ministers*, Jerry Edewich and Archie Brodsky<sup>1</sup> are cited as observing that burnout has four stages:

1. *Stage of enthusiasm*. This is a stage of high hope, high energy, and unrealistic expectations, when one is new on the job and has a number of challenges.

2. *Stage of stagnation*. The thrill begins to wane during this stage because the job becomes a routine.

3. *Stage of frustration*. The minister, at this stage, questions the job itself, with a feeling of unfulfilled expectations and diminishing accomplishments.

4. *Stage of apathy*. The minister develops strong feelings of personal inadequacy, which further reduces his accomplishments, leading to helplessness. At this stage, the local conference may begin to notice the problem, and the administrators, in their effort to alleviate the situation, more often than not will transfer this minister to a new church. However, it has been observed that a transferred minister tends to deteriorate faster than one who remains in the same church while recuperating.

### **Biblical Account of Burnout**

It is interesting to note that even in Bible times, in the absence of advanced technology, burnout was present. The Scripture is full of accounts of people who suffered from burnout. Included in the list are Moses, Elijah, and Peter. The Bible also reveals Jesus' secrets, how He, despite His multiple roles, remained healthy and effective in His ministry.

The account of Moses and the Israelites in the desert of Paran shows how Moses felt after leading God's people out of Egypt. As the Israelites began to murmur about the hardships they had experienced when they left Egypt, they began to compare their life in the desert to their life in Egypt. The conversation between Moses and the Lord in Num 11:10-15 indicates how desperate Moses was. He showed signs of burnout as he questioned God and pleaded for God to take away his life.

1 Kgs 19:1-18 relates the experience of Elijah as he was threatened by the wicked queen Jezebel. The conversation between Elijah and the Lord, Elijah's constant running away from difficult situations, his feeling of despair, his suspicion that somebody was trying to kill him, and his isolation are all signs of burnout. Elijah also mentioned that he had enough burdens and wanted God to take away his life.

A few hours before Jesus was arrested, He went to the Mount of Olives with His disciples to pray. When Jesus came back after praying, He found His disciples

<sup>1</sup>Jerry Edewich and Archie Brodsky, *Burn-Out: Stages of Disillusionment in the Helping Profession* (n.p.: Human Sciences Press, 1980), 14, quoted in Charles Rassieur, *Stress Management for Ministers* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 18-19.

sleeping because they were so exhausted from sorrow (v. 45). Because of this exhaustion, several things can be observed from Peter: signs of decreased tolerance to the situation (v. 49), loss of self control (v. 50), and denial of his Master and friend (vv. 57,58,60).

Of Jesus, on the other hand, Ellen G. White writes,

Jesus was an earnest, constant worker. Never lived there among men another so weighed with responsibilities. Never another carried so heavy a burden of the world's sorrow and sin. Never another toiled with such consuming zeal for the good of men. Yet His life was a life of health.<sup>1</sup>

Matt 9:35 states that "Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness."<sup>2</sup> Jesus, during His ministry on earth, was very vulnerable to burnout, but He remained in a state of health. Hence, His ministry is a model for all ministers of today.

### **Effects of Burnout on the Wholeness of Man**

It is important to recognize that not everyone will manifest burnout exactly the same way as others. Burnout is revealed in varied physical manifestations and, because of this, it is often forgotten that burnout affects the whole person—physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.

Physically, a burned-out minister may continue to pump adrenaline into his system, which will negatively affect some vulnerable system of the body. These systems include the cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, musculo-skeletal, and immune systems. Thus, burnout can lead to hypertension, strokes, and atherosclerosis. It can also result in loss of appetite, bouts of noninfectious diarrhea, acid stomach, and ulcers. A burned-out person may also complain of back and neck aches, migraine-like headaches, and even bone pains. An affected immune system brings frequent colds, allergies, and even the dreaded cancer.

Burnout involves the mental dimension, too. The presence of negative emotions leads to very low tolerance to discomfort, which will eventually end up in loss of control. A burned-out minister may suffer from feelings of helplessness, increased irritability, self-doubt, confusion, and difficulty in concentrating. He is also very vulnerable to temptations of sexual attraction and involvement which he may fail to recognize. He may even grow spiritually weak or stagnant. He may read the Bible and meditate, but he will still have feelings of emptiness. He will develop independence from God and the Holy Spirit. Ellen G. White stresses that

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942), 51.

<sup>2</sup>Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

the relationship between the mind and the body is very intimate. When one is affected the other sympathizes. The condition of the mind affects the health to a far greater degree than many realize. Many of the diseases from which men suffer are the result of mental depression. Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust, all tend to break down the life force and to invite decay and death.<sup>1</sup>

Burned-out ministers will begin to question friendships and even blame their families for their failures. They will have less time for themselves and less time to develop friendships. They will experience boredom and cynicism, often expressed by being late or absent from meetings, and they will engage in sidelines. Burned-out ministers may also have less confidence in the local conference or congregation and become suspicious towards the organization. All of these consequences will result in job dissatisfaction, in some cases ultimately ending with the individual leaving the ministry.

Burnout is one of the devil's tools to decrease the minister's chance of thinking correctly and serving the Lord efficiently. The devil will attempt to create guilt, worry, discontent, and feelings of failure and inadequacy, to the extent of prompting ministers to neglect the care of their physical bodies. This dulls the thinking process and leads to failure to discriminate right from wrong. During physical illness, the mind is able to cope with the illness, but when the mind, the center of all activities, including the control of the coping mechanism, becomes ill, the worst is next to come.

### **A Prescription**

Diseases produced by burnout have been considered postponable diseases because they can be postponed indefinitely by prevention and rehabilitation. Ministers cannot totally avoid burnout, as at times they may experience some degree of burnout in their lifetime, but it can be prevented and stress can be kept at a manageable level. The human machinery has an advantage over that of animals in its ability to do something about an uncomfortable condition. Human beings have the choice and the ability to manage their stress or burnout.

Dr. Peter G. Hanson proposes in case of stress, "Learn to ignore what you cannot control and learn to control what you can."<sup>2</sup> In this manner, a minister experiencing burnout will opt not to abandon the ministry but instead to develop strategies that will help him to function more efficiently in his calling.

Dr. Michael Murray states that "to deal effectively with stress, an individual must concentrate on four equally important components which are like four legs on

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 241.

<sup>2</sup>Peter Hanson, "The Joy of Stress," quoted in Winton H. Beaven, "The Crisis of Stress," *Ministry*, May 1996, 11.

a table.”<sup>1</sup> He emphasizes a holistic approach in the management of stress. A balance in these components is very important in the life of a minister, otherwise a minister will consume almost all of his time and energy in the fulfillment of his realistic and unrealistic functions, resulting in a risk of burnout. Professional help is very important in stress management, but the minister, as an active participant in the management process, plays a major role.

Some guidelines have been formulated by different authors on how to prevent burnout. These can be grouped in five categories.

### I. Role expectations

Donald P. Smith states, “For most clergymen today, role ambiguity and role conflict are the heart of the most difficult problem that the minister faces.”<sup>2</sup> To minimize the risk of these taking place, he suggests that, when considering a new call, ministers should give careful consideration to questions like

What is the mission of this particular congregation? What do people of this congregation expect in a minister? Are those expectations relevant to their goals? Does the minister share the understandings and goals of the congregation? Do their [the congregation’s] expectations fit reasonably well with the minister’s expectations, professional concerns, spiritual needs, predispositions and style of ministry?<sup>3</sup>

### II. Physical components

A. *Nutrition.* According to Murray, “The delivery of high quality nutrition to the cell is the critical factor in determining the strength of the human system in response to stress.”<sup>4</sup> The food that one eats can either create stress or add to the stress of daily life.

1. *Avoid coffee or tea.* These are sympatho-mimetics (mimic the effect of adrenaline). They cause a stress response when consumed.<sup>5</sup>

2. *Avoid alcohol.*<sup>6</sup> Once consumed, alcohol enters the system and is

<sup>1</sup>Michael Murray, *Stress, Anxiety and Insomnia: How You Can Benefit from Diet, Vitamins, Minerals, Herbs, Exercise and Other Natural Methods* (Rocklin, CA: Prima, 1995), 11.

<sup>2</sup>Donald P. Smith, *Clergy in the Cross Fire: Coping with Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 85.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Murray, 27.

<sup>5</sup>John A. Romas and Manoj Sharma, *Practical Stress Management* (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1995), 191.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 210.

transported to the brain—the center of all activities—to cause mental confusion and weaken self-control. Intake of alcohol also causes the blood cells to agglutinate, thus hindering the transport of oxygen to the brain and other tissues of the body.

3. *Eat a well balanced diet with fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables.*<sup>1</sup> A balanced diet will provide enough Vitamin B complex, which is very important in the ability to cope with stress.

4. *Eat only at regular times.*

5. *Eat a low-salt, low-fat diet.*<sup>2</sup>

6. *Drink at least eight to ten glasses of water.*<sup>3</sup> This will help eliminate toxic wastes produced by the body in response to stress.

B. *Exercise.* Hypotonic fatigue is commonly experienced by ministers, and many believe that increased rest is the solution, when, in fact, it worsens the situation. Physical exercise is the answer to this condition. Like good food, exercise increases the amount of oxygen in the brain.

C. *Rest.* Rest is not only acceptable but essential and sacred. Floyd Bresee says that “some thought that because work is a virtue then overwork is doubly virtuous. The purpose of recreation is not an escape from life but a help in coping with life.”<sup>4</sup>

### III. Mental components

A. *Attend professional conferences and seminars.*<sup>5</sup>

B. *Renew yourself by doing something different from the regular routine.*

C. *Do an inventory of your responsibilities compared with your resources.*<sup>6</sup>

D. *Don't “play God” over your congregation.* A minister can be a coordinator in building up, but should not necessarily be the sole activator. The minister can delegate tasks and responsibilities to capable church members. Ministers who spend time training and discipling members experience less burnout. Preparing church members for works of service and organizing them for action according to their spiritual gifts is a help to the pastor. According to Jack Ferner,

Delegation doesn't mean abdicating one's responsibility, or assigning detailed tasks, or parceling out work while retaining authority. In a more formal sense, to

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Armand Fabella, *You Can Cope with Stress* (Manila: Philippine Pub. House, 1988), 119.

<sup>3</sup>Romas and Sharma, 202.

<sup>4</sup>Floyd Bresee, “Our Lives for His Glory,” *Ministry*, July-August 1995, 63.

<sup>5</sup>Jose Fuentes, “Recognizing and Handling Burnout,” *Ministry*, July 1987, 15.

<sup>6</sup>Edward Dayton, *Tools for Time Management* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 23.



delegate is to achieve specified results by empowering and motivating others to accomplish some of the results for which you are ultimately accountable.<sup>1</sup>

Another study observed,

In most churches, 80 percent of the work is done by 20 percent of the people. And if the pastor feels that he himself is doing that 80 percent then he needs to spread out the work, not just to one or two members, who may then reach burnout themselves, but to many people.<sup>2</sup>

E. *Manage your time well.* Eccl 3:1 says, "There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven." The minister deserves the best in his ministry despite a very hectic schedule.

Few ministers are aware that the way they start the day determines how they will work for the rest of the day. The short ministry of Jesus on earth is a picture of unhurried and balanced priorities despite a very hectic round of activities. Jesus showed His disciples that even with a schedule like His, one can still be effective in the ministry without being burned out.

Everyone is a steward of his time, so God is interested in how the minister effectively utilizes his time. Some ministers are too busy and always short of time because they fail to organize their time effectively. Different authors have offered suggestions on time management:

1. Before sleeping, ask yourself, "What would Jesus want me to do tomorrow?" List the things you need to accomplish the next day.<sup>3</sup> Prioritize them, then follow through accordingly. Control of time begins with planning and setting of priorities.<sup>4</sup>
2. Try to get things done as quickly and efficiently as possible early in the day.<sup>5</sup>
3. Minimize interruptions.<sup>6</sup>
4. Start meetings on time and end them promptly.<sup>7</sup>
5. Prepare agendas for meetings and stick to them.<sup>8</sup> Go through paper work only once.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jack Ferner, *Successful Time Management: A Self-Teaching Guide* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), 155.

<sup>2</sup>Minirth et al., 95.

<sup>3</sup>Dayton, 218-19.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 149.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 212.

<sup>6</sup>Ferner, 141.

<sup>7</sup>Dayton, 107-8.

<sup>8</sup>C. Michele Haney and Edmond W. Boemisch, Jr., *Stress Map* (San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact, 1982), 134 .

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 133.

6. Learn to say “No,” and mean it. A pastor will not have enough time if he agrees to every request. Time management expert Alec Mackenzie offers this four-step plan on how to say no:

Listen—to show interest and understanding of the request. Say no immediately—to avoid building up false hopes. Give reasons—so the refusal will be understood. Offer alternatives (if possible)—to evidence good faith.<sup>1</sup>

7. Take one day off for relaxation and recreation.<sup>2</sup>

8. Have enough time with the family.<sup>3</sup> A pastor must recognize that quality time with his spouse and children is very important. An experienced pastor once observed that if a pastor cannot care for his family, then he cannot really be expected to meet the needs of other people.

9. Recognize your own limits.<sup>4</sup>

#### IV. Spiritual components

Spiritual fitness is very important in strengthening the pastor’s physical health. Some pastors have the notion that, because they are called by God and the work of the church is God’s work, they are spiritually healthy. Michael McBride contends,

The primary spiritual focus must be the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the role model for ministry, and thus He serves as the paragon upon which pastors pattern their personal and professional behavior.<sup>5</sup>

Barry C. Black has proposed five spiritual disciplines that can help to produce spiritual fitness:<sup>6</sup>

A. *Study*. The study that the apostle Paul engaged in “went beyond preparing sermons or doing research to write an epistle. Paul studied to nourish his soul, to prevent spiritual malnutrition.”<sup>7</sup> Kilmer observes that pastors who begin the day with significant quality devotional time show a pastoral profile that resists burnout. He says,

They focus attention on the presence of Christ in them and in their ministry. They spend time in prayer and the ministry of the Word. . . .

<sup>1</sup>Alec Mackenzie, quoted in Victor Parachin, “Twelve Ways to Slow Down and Take Care of Yourself,” *Signs of the Times*, July 1994, 17.

<sup>2</sup>Parachin, 17.

<sup>3</sup>Dayton, 77, 84.

<sup>4</sup>Fuentes, 15.

<sup>5</sup>Michael G. McBride, “Managing Ministerial Stress,” *Ministry*, March 1989, 10.

<sup>6</sup>Barry Black, “The Pastor: Maintaining Spiritual Fitness,” *Ministry*, January 1996, 17-18.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 17.

From personal devotion comes a conscious presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit that helps the pastor to meet every crisis with calm assurance. . . .

Pastors who depend on the real presence of the Holy Spirit also enjoy the ministry.<sup>1</sup>

B. *Self-examination.* Reflection on how well the pastor has mastered his spiritual gifts and virtues can make the difference between a productive or an unproductive ministry. Pastors who find themselves busier than Jesus should investigate their spirituality. Pastors must also reflect upon whether they are too busy doing good, to the extent of exhaustion, or less busy, to the point where they feel bored and frustrated.

C. *Prayer.* Concerning the importance of prayer for a pastor, Charles Spurgeon attests,

If there be any man under heaven, who is compelled to carry out the precept—“Pray without ceasing,” surely it is the Christian minister. He has peculiar temptations, special trials, singular difficulties, and remarkable duties; he has to deal with God in awful relationships, and with men in mysterious interests; he therefore needs much more grace than common men, and as he knows this, he is led constantly to cry to the strong for strength and say, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.”<sup>2</sup>

Søren Kierkegaard compares “prayer to breathing. It is an apt analogy for the choked feeling of stress.”<sup>3</sup> The benefits of prayer, he adds, “are for the self what oxygen is for breathing.”<sup>4</sup>

D. *Silence or meditation.* This helps the pastor find inward energy, which is a powerful force for growth. It helps the pastor get in touch with nature and the realities of life. Matt 14:22-23 reveals that Jesus Himself went into seclusion in the mountains away from His disciples to meditate and pray. This also helps the pastor to gain new perspectives in the ministry.

E. *Submission.* Pastors need to submit their lives to God. This involves more than just praying. It means giving up plans, hopes, and dreams to the will of God. Some pastors suffer from their own unrealistic ideals. The Lord declares in Jer 29:11, “For I know the plans I have for you, . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

<sup>1</sup>Kilmer, 21.

<sup>2</sup>C[harles] H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students, new ed.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 42.

<sup>3</sup>Søren Kierkegaard, *Sickness unto Death* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954), 173.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

## V. Administrative components

There are some approaches that cannot be implemented by the pastor himself but must be accomplished at the administrative level. Church administration can help lessen the stress of ministers to the extent of preventing burnout by

- A. Recognizing promptly the signs of stress and burnout among its pastors.
- B. "Taking time to let the burned-out pastor know that he is important."<sup>1</sup>

C. Involving the pastors in making decisions that affect them. T. Beehr advises,

Autonomy is the strongest and most consistent moderator of the relationship between role ambiguity and role strain. Organizations that wish to reduce the role strain associated with ambiguity should increase the autonomy in their employees' roles.<sup>2</sup>

## Summary

Stress is a part of life. Whether the pastor likes it or not, he will experience the pain of vocational stress in his ministry. Stress cannot be eliminated in the religious profession, because as a care giver and shepherd the pastor has extensive responsibilities. Pastors are priceless resources God has given to the church. However, either boredom or too much activity will lead the pastor to lose effectiveness as well as to become dissatisfied, which often prompts the pastor to leave the ministry. The pastor's family, a very vulnerable segment of the society, will also suffer.

The fall of the pastor will have a very strong impact on the church. The church with a burned-out pastor is exposed to a dangerous future. Burnout is one of Satan's devices to destroy the pastor and God's flock. A burned-out pastor can endanger the sheep.

Pastors need to be aware that burnout is predictable, and adopting the right lifestyle will prevent its occurrence. Pastors need to gain insights into the ministry of Jesus. They need to be awakened to the reality that unless they themselves are whole, they cannot be effective in bringing healing and wellness to His church. To develop a Christ-like life and a meaningful ministry, the pastor needs to deliberately balance family, church, and self.

<sup>1</sup>Fuentes, 16.

<sup>2</sup>T. Beehr, "Perceived Situational Moderators of the Relationship between Subjective Role Ambiguity and Role Strain," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 61 (1977): 35-40, quoted in McBride, 10.

## THE TREES WHICH ARE NOT PEOPLE (DEUT 20:19): AN ANCIENT MISTRANSLATION?

AECIO E. CAIRUS

When you lay siege to a city for a long time, fighting against it to capture it, do not destroy its trees by putting an ax to them, because you can eat their fruit. Do not cut them down. Are the trees of the field people, that you should besiege them? However, you may cut down trees that you know are not fruit trees, and use them to build siege works until the city at war with you falls." (Deut 20:19,20 NIV).

This early sample of ecological concern strikes, no doubt, sympathetic chords in our time. Even the argument that trees are not people, and therefore not a proper object for siege, is not lacking in a certain homely philosophical appeal, even if somewhat naive. People who are tempted to cut trees do not perceive them as enemies, but the humorous thought might be effective.

A closer examination of the text, however, may disturb our satisfaction with the usual renditions of the passage. One wonders why this kind of argument occurs in a context of sober legal injunctions. Such injunctions seldom give the reader any rationale, let alone a homely philosophy. But if motivation is to be given in selected cases, why would this commandment have been selected, when the usefulness of the prohibition is rather obvious?

When proceeding from the context to an examination of the passage itself, more disturbing facts appear. The translation "that you should besiege them" does not accord well with the Hebrew *lābō' mippāneykā bammāš ōr*, literally, "to go in front of you in the siege (works)." If the possibility is envisioned of Israelites besieging trees, then it is not clear who is doing the "going" in the Hebrew phrase, since (1) the Israelites can hardly be said to go in front of themselves when besieging trees, (2) the trees cannot go anywhere when besieged, and (3) besides the Israelites and the trees, the context offers no other possible subject for the infinitive *lābō'*, "to go."

The translation "Are the trees of the field people?" for *kā hā'ādām 'ēs haššādeh* is also highly questionable. Many versions, taking the lead from the Targum and the LXX, read a negative ("the trees of the field **are not** people") for which there is no manuscript evidence. Other translators (as the NIV above) managed to obtain

the same effect by employing a rhetorical question mark, which implies a repointing of *hā* in *hā'ādām*.<sup>1</sup> But one would expect the clause, if interrogative, to open with the interrogative *he*, not with *kī*, which was left untranslated in the NIV. Further, the subject *ʿēs* would in such a case take the article: *he ʿādām hā ʿēs haššādeh?* As it stands, the text does not sound like a question. Nor should the problem be solved by a conjectural insertion, as of “life” in the KJV (“for the tree of the field is man’s life”).

There may be no need for any emendation if we pay close attention to the syntax of the Deuteronomic commandments. The structure of v. 19 belongs to a very large class of prohibitions (constructed with *lōʾ* + imperfect) followed by a “but” (*kī*) and then a command (in the imperative) to do the opposite of what was forbidden in the first part. For instance, the previous commandment reads, “In the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing [*lōʾ* + imperfect] that breathes, but [*kī*] you shall utterly destroy [imperative] them” (Deut 19:16-17 RSV). In this example, the prohibition against “saving alive” is followed by a contrasting “but” which introduces the opposite course of action, a positive order to “utterly destroy.”

In 20:19, too, a *kī* opens the last clause after the prohibition (*lōʾ* + imperfect) against cutting down the trees. This clause appears to contrast with the first part of the verse by introducing a different category of trees. Instead of the “city trees” (*ʿēsāh*, with a *mappiq* in the *Hē*, referring to the city) mentioned in the first part of the verse, presumably trees planted by the inhabitants of the city in its vicinity, we read here in the last part, of “trees of the field” (*ʿēs haššādeh*). Just as “beasts of the field” refers in Hebrew to wild animals as opposed to domestic beasts, so the “trees of the field” could refer to the native flora as opposed to cultivated trees. In this way, both the syntactic structure and the vocabulary would lead us to expect in the latter part of 20:19 a contrast with the foregoing prohibition, a positive order to do the opposite of what was forbidden at the beginning of the verse. This would imply an imperative in the last clause, but it is hard to recognize in it any such verb.

However, one word in this clause, *hā'ādām*, though extremely common as a noun (“the man”), could also be taken as the imperative of a rare verb. One possibility is to parse it as a Hiphil imperative of *ʿādam*. This would require no changes in the Hebrew consonantal text and only a very slight one in the traditional vocalization (*hā'ādem*). Though *ʿādam* as a verb does occur at least eight times in the OT, it does so mostly in the presumably original sense of “being red,” which does not suit the context here. A denominative sense for the same root may be posited, however. Denominatives are especially frequent in the Hiphil stem.<sup>2</sup> On

<sup>1</sup>William Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, ed. and enlarged by E. Kautzsch, 2d English ed., rev. A. E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), 296 (§100m).

<sup>2</sup>Gesenius, 145 (§ 53 g).

the possibility of a verb having both a primitive and a denominative sense, William Gesenius observes,

Denominatives: verbs derived from nouns. . . . This does not exclude the possibility that for nouns from which denominative verbs are derived, the corresponding (original) verbal stem may still be found in Hebrew or in the dialects. The meaning, however, is sufficient to show that the denominatives have come from the noun, not from the verbal stem.<sup>1</sup>

With a denominative force, the verb *'ādam* may be inferred from the noun to mean “gather, mass” (cf. the collective sense “people” for the noun), “set people to work with” (cf. the sense of the English verb “to man” in “Man the guns!”), or other senses still to be determined. But there are other possibilities for a verbal identification of this word. It could be considered a variant spelling of the rare verb *'ājam*, a building term related to frames or windows (1 Kgs 6:4; Ezek 40:16; 41:16), which would suit the context of wooden siege works; possibly “to peg (together)” (cf. “stopper” in Prov 17:23; Isa 33:15). Even *'ādam* itself may have originally meant “to build,”<sup>2</sup> which would also fit the context.

Whatever the exact identification or sense, a verbal force for *hā'ādām* in this context would necessarily fall within the general semantic area of “making use of.” This, together with a literal translation of several Hebrew words, as indicated below in bold letters, would yield for Deut 20:19-20 the following sense:

When you lay siege to a city for a long time, fighting against it to capture it, you shall not destroy its trees by putting an ax to them, **since** you can eat their fruit, nor cut them down, **but instead** you shall **make use** of trees of the field **to go in front of you in the siege**. You may **only** cut down trees that you know are not fruit trees, and use them to build siege works until the city at war with you falls.

Read in this way, Deut 20:19-20 would recognize a basic distinction in warfare between cultivated and spontaneously growing trees. The former may not, as a general rule, be utilized to build siege works. An exception may be made in the case of trees cultivated for ornamental or other purposes not related to sustenance. The needs of warfare must be carefully balanced with the possible future use of the land once conquered. Fruit trees might be crucial to the economic welfare of the Israelites, who are to replace the original population of the besieged city, especially at the beginning of their occupation. The trees should therefore be spared. Ornamental trees in the vicinity of a city, on the other hand, would occur mainly in gardens kept for pleasure and would not be so important from an economic

<sup>1</sup>Gesenius, 114 (§ 38 c,d).

<sup>2</sup>Fritz Maass, “*ādām*,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974-80), 1:78.

viewpoint. The Israelite army may employ them and so save itself the trouble of obtaining native trees from more distant places.

In this understanding of the text there are no difficulties in translating “to go in front of you” literally. The trees of the field are cut and used as construction material for siege works, which literally “go in front” of the Israelites. The usual translations of this passage, in contrast, not only stumble upon this phrase (as shown above), but also force two different meanings on the relationship of trees to siege works, occurring in two consecutive verses. The trees of the field at the end of v. 19 are envisioned as liable to be besieged by the Israelites unless especially protected. However, in v. 20 the more reasonable relationship of trees with siege works (*māṣār*) as construction material is recognized by these same versions. The proposed translation maintains the same relationship between the trees and the siege works throughout these two verses, and it does so at the sober level of military engineering, not at the surrealistic level of people besieging trees.

To explain why these advantages were not realized by translators till the present time, it may be assumed that the verbal sense (or variant spelling of the verb) was rare and unknown to the translators in antiquity. Hence the desperate recourse to emendations: a conjectural negative before *hā'ādām* in the Targum and LXX, a non-existent interrogative in other versions which follow their lead (as the NIV), or a groundless insertion of “life” in the KJV. By recovering the verbal force of this word we lose a picturesque argument but gain clarity and consistency in translation, and refrain from unnecessary emendation of the Hebrew text.



## AN EXAMINATION OF THE MEANINGS OF RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FILIPINO CONTEXT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING GOD'S GRACE

FRANCISCO D. GAYOBA

Many contemporary writings on the concept of grace propose a return to the use of interpersonal relational imageries as offering the best insight into understanding God's posture and actions towards sinful humanity. In the Philippine context, using relational imageries is of great relevance, since Filipino culture focuses on relationships. The movement is from meanings in Filipino interpersonal relationships to teachings about God's grace.<sup>1</sup>

Meaning structures come from previous experiences in the family, from the broader social environment, and also from culture and language.<sup>2</sup> The patterns that emerge from these experiences become the cultural postulates or assumptions about the nature of things such as relationships. Of the sources of meanings, the family relational pattern is the most significant for the person. Not only is the family the foundational unit of society and the prime agent of socializing the person, but also family patterns often become the prototype of all interpersonal patterns for the individual.<sup>3</sup> As such, the meaning of relationships in other areas

<sup>1</sup>"As the theological interpreter proceeds from human experiences to a conceptualization of God, he gives attention to emerging patterns or meanings. We move from the known to the unknown. One becomes aware of new patterns through prior understanding of more familiar patterns. To observe similarities, relationships, and equivalences is a kind of analogical reasoning in which meanings emerge through the use of models or metaphors." Harold H. Ditmason, *Grace in Experience and Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1977), 30.

<sup>2</sup>Elizabeth Dreyer, *Manifestations of Grace* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1990), 16-17.

<sup>3</sup>George M. Guthrie and Pepita J. Jacobs, *Child Rearing and Personality Development in the Philippines* (Manila: Bookmark, 1967), 19-24.

of life will not be much different from the postulates about relationships arrived at from family relations.

The meanings of relationships that come from family socialization patterns may greatly shape people's initial understandings of God's grace. But the use of available meanings from experiences and culture is only one dimension toward a clearer explication of God's grace.

Another important dimension in teaching God's grace by using Filipino meanings is the critical examination of the meanings that go with the understanding of relationships in the Filipino setting. Often meanings remain unexamined, affecting the whole content of the doctrine without the communicator being aware of it. It is often true that

instead of the Christian message being understood and restated in cultural terms, the traditional culture has been, in the main, understood and restated in terms of the Christian message, leaving the religious context of the belief and value system largely unchanged.<sup>1</sup>

This article examines the meanings that come from the Filipino understanding of relationships in the family, meanings that may serve as a background to understanding God's grace in the Filipino context. To realize this purpose, two steps need to be taken:

(1) It is important to identify tentative postulates or assumptions about the nature of relationships that arise from the socialization of the child in Filipino families.

(2) One needs to relate these meanings about relationships to the biblical understanding of grace, identifying positive and negative elements.

An exercise such as this will hopefully provide preliminary considerations as one presents God's grace in the Filipino context.

### **Meanings of Relationships in Filipino Family Socialization Patterns**

The patterns of socialization in the Filipino family will be described first, then the meanings of relationships derived from it.

<sup>1</sup>Douglas J. Elwood, "A Theological Approach to Some Traditional Filipino Beliefs about Man," *Southeast Asia Journal of Theology* 11, no. 2 (1970): 37.

## Socialization Patterns

Filipino child-rearing practices have been characterized as “high nurturance, low independence training and low discipline.”<sup>1</sup> For Jaime Bulatao, however, *hiya* (shame) is the predominant pattern of socialization.<sup>2</sup> These two generalizations may not be contradictory but rather complementary. A brief study of Filipino child rearing practices will show the interrelationship between the three characteristics cited and Bulatao’s view.

*High nurturance.* The average Filipino grows up within a close-knit extended family. Fathers, mothers, aunts, uncles, and grandparents provide the child with enveloping affection. In such a nurturing context the child learns early the centrality of relationships. The child’s personality in its formation and structure is oriented to his relationship with others.<sup>3</sup>

*Low independence.* The Filipino family size also means that, with so many people willing to do things for him or her, the child gets low independence training.<sup>4</sup> Giving and receiving help are important elements in interpersonal relationships.

*Low discipline and “hiya.”* Shame (*hiya*) is the primary way of disciplining the child within the context of enveloping emotional ties and dependency in the close-knit and extended Filipino family. Having so many people to please means that there are as many standards as there are significant people around. The expectations, sanctions, and restraints of the significant others in the child’s world become the external norm of behavior rather than a set of internal rules.<sup>5</sup>

*Hiya* means conformity to the desires of the significant others in the world of the child in specific situations. The child is predominantly disciplined by threats of rejection or punishment from other persons. The child learns very early that acceptance by and dependence on his or her family is a most important thing. Therefore, the threat of exclusion or the promise of inclusion in the web of relationships in the family motivates the child to conform. Having explored basic root patterns of socialization in the Filipino family, we now look into the meanings derived.

<sup>1</sup>Leticia R. Shahani, *A Moral Recovery Program: Building a Nation, Inspiring Our People to Action*, Official Publication of the Senate of the Congress of the Philippines (Manila: Senate Publication and Editorial Division, 1988), 13.

<sup>2</sup>Jaime C. Bulatao, “The *Hiya* System in Filipino Culture,” in *Filipino Social Structure and Value Orientation*, Filipino Cultural Heritage, Lecture Series no. 2, ed. F. L. Jocano (Manila: Philippine Women’s University Press, 1966), 29-30.

<sup>3</sup>Guthrie and Jacobs, 201.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 24-25.

<sup>5</sup>Yvonne Marie M. Asprer, “The Self-Concept as a Filipino Self-Social Construct: Exploration, Analysis, and Implications,” *St. Louis University Research Journal* (March-June 1980): 67-68.

### Derived Meanings and Values

*The centrality of relationships.* Assumptions about the nature of relationships result from such patterns as described above. The first postulate is that a relationship with the significant others in one's life is the most important thing in life. "Emotional closeness and security in the family"<sup>1</sup> and "to be accepted by one's fellows for what one is, thinks oneself to be, or would like to be"<sup>2</sup> are the priorities in the Filipino hierarchy of values. Talk about the meaning of life to the Filipino, and acceptance in family relationships or by significant others will be the most probable association.

*Intense need for acceptance.* Secondly, though acceptance and love are freely given in relationships, there is the constant threat of rejection and exclusion. It is not that the child is actually expelled or rejected in the family, but the patterns of socialization accent the threat. Such is the situation that, after analyzing the major themes of Filipino values, Bulatao concludes that the unifying concept in Filipino behavior is an "ego highly in need of security and protection."<sup>3</sup> He elsewhere also defined *hiya* as a "kind of anxiety; a fear of being left exposed, unprotected, and unaccepted."<sup>4</sup> For George Guthrie and Pepita Jacobs, *hiya* is "a sanctioned pattern of insecurity."<sup>5</sup>

*Egocentric motivations.* Thirdly, because of the above factors, relationships are later contracted for egocentric and individualistic motivations. The *kanya-kanya* (literally, "mine-mine") syndrome, or the priority of individual or group interests over the common good, is often pointed out as a weakness in the Filipino personality.<sup>6</sup> Lourdes Lapuz explains the development of this tendency in the following way: "The need to be loved is synonymous with the fear of rejection. . . . The need to be loved by others then becomes fused with the love for oneself."<sup>7</sup> Despite the extended family and group-emphasis, the pattern of socialization makes the Filipino "narrowly construe the family and attach greater significance to the well-being of the individual."<sup>8</sup> Therefore, though the Filipino is group-oriented on the surface, the underlying motivations are really individualistic and egocentric.

<sup>1</sup>See Jaime Bulatao, "Philippine Values: The Manileños Mainsprings," in *Four Readings in Philippine Values*, ed. Frank Lynch and Alfonso de Guzman II, IPC Papers, no. 2 (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1973), 97-102.

<sup>2</sup>Frank Lynch, "Social Acceptance Reconsidered," in *Four Readings in Philippine Values*, ed. Frank Lynch and Alfonso de Guzman II, IPC Papers, no. 2 (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1973), 8.

<sup>3</sup>Bulatao, "Philippine Values," 116.

<sup>4</sup>Jaime C. Bulatao, "Hiya," *Philippine Studies* 12, no. 3 (1964): 428.

<sup>5</sup>Guthrie and Jacobs, 190.

<sup>6</sup>Shahani, 10.

<sup>7</sup>Lourdes V. Lapuz, *A Study of Psychopathology* (Quezon City: New Day, 1978), 244.

<sup>8</sup>Yashushi Kikuchi, *Uncrystallized Philippine Society: A Social Anthropological Analysis* (Quezon City: New Day, 1992), 21.

The major postulates about relationships derived from Filipino family socialization patterns have just been given. The question now is how these meanings shape, positively or negatively, a Filipino's understanding of God's dealings with humanity.

### How Meanings Derived from Relationships Shape One's Understanding of Grace

Grace, as God's dealings with man, means that a correct understanding involves two dimensions. One dimension is what God is like and does. The other dimension is the understanding of man's condition in the context of God's grace. We will now explore the pre-understandings of the two dimensions that arise from Filipino family socialization patterns. Since most writings on Filipino contextual theology concentrate on the positive elements, I will point out the difficulties and differences, rather than just the similarities.

#### Understanding What God Is Like

The attempt to communicate an understanding of grace must first of all assert the supernatural nature of the relationship. The supernatural dimension of grace means that, in a sense, there is no comparison with anything in the human realm. On the other hand, God compares His attitudes and actions with those of man in human relationships. So the human experience of intimate relationships can become a stepping stone leading to an understanding of grace. We now turn to specific nuances, or meanings, that come from Filipinos' experiences, pre-understandings that need to be considered in communicating the teaching about grace.

*God is loving.* That God is loving finds resonance in the Filipino. The family socialization patterns of strong emotional ties make it easy to believe and trust a loving, merciful God. This might be the background of why, according to Vitaliano Gorospe, *Amang Maawain* (Merciful Father) is the most popular Filipino Christian concept of God.<sup>1</sup> Yet some dimensions of God's love may be difficult for Filipinos to understand.

<sup>1</sup>Vitaliano Gorospe, "An Asian (Philippine) and Christian Concept of God (A Philosophical and Theological Perspective)," in *God: The Contemporary Discussion*, ed. Frederick Sontag and M. Darrol Bryant (New York: Rose of Sharon, 1982), 102. Distinction is made between the Christian and the pre-Christian view of God, for the latter has a contrary concept of God. God is remote and unapproachable to the pre-Christian Filipino. Lonardo Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy* (Tacloban City: Divine Word University Press, 1974), 41. To the animistic Filipino, the supernatural powers are hostile, or at least, unconcerned, about man. Jaime Bulatao, "Filipino Transpersonal World View," in *Philippine World Views*, ed. V. G. Enriquez (Manila: Philippine Psychology Research House, 1980), 265-68.

*Grace is free.* While picturing God as loving, God's grace as gratuitous may be difficult to grasp in view of the family socialization patterns. In the context of Filipino patterns, love, though offered freely, is not completely gratuitous. The price is conformity. It is an "I love you if . . ." sort of relationship. Therefore, the Filipino expects to reciprocate the love of God by obedience as a means of keeping the relationship intact. Of course there is some truth in this. Man must continually respond to God's free gift, or else there is no relationship. But to believe that God will not continue to love the person unless a person loves God in return is a misconception of the central truth in the doctrine of grace. God's love is absolutely free. Man does not need to earn God's love to deserve it or to continually be its recipient.

*Grace characterizes all the Godhead.* Socialization in an extended family in which all significant adults assume parental authority may bring a preunderstanding that is in tension with God's grace. The Triune God, God the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit, calls men and women into an intimate relationship with Him.

Yet, in the context of the Filipino family socialization patterns, God's plurality in unity may connote division rather than the unity of purpose and will of the three divine Persons. In the Filipino family, the will of the father may not be the will of the mother or the aunts, uncles, and grandparents. The child learns early in life to go to another parent figure if what one parent wants does not agree with what the child desires.

The Filipino then must be aided here in examining his views about God, for the triuneness of God may come to mean division rather than three Persons working for one purpose. The popular view is that Christ should be the One to be approached, for He sympathizes with people and can be moved, whereas the Father, though loving, has fixed, unchangeable rules. The Father is indeed considered loving and merciful, but if one wants to get what one asks for, he or she should go to Christ, the mediator, not to the Father, the lawgiver. In truth, however, grace characterizes God the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Manipulation in the Filipino socialization patterns also means that values and desires change, depending on to whom you are relating and contingent also on the situation. But God's purposes and character are unchangeable. God calls men and women into a life that is not based on whims and situations, but into a new life, a life growing in the image of Christ. There is a definite end and purpose for the relationship with God which is more than merely relating in a specific situation. God's dealings with humanity are based on His unchanging character. We now go on to reflect on the understanding of the human situation to which the message of God's grace speaks.

## God's Grace and the Human Situation

Teachings about God's grace are presented in the Bible to highlight God's attitude and actions against the backdrop of the human situation that resulted from sin. These teachings about God, of God loving and wanting to save all men despite their sinfulness, are usually presented in three biblically-rooted motifs or frameworks. These motifs are based on the human experiences that result from sin and the varied experiences of God's saving grace. The foci of presenting the human situation vis-a-vis God's grace are anxiety-punishment-security, shame-alienation-reconciliation/acceptance, and guilt-condemnation-forgiveness.<sup>1</sup> David Augsburger argues that all of the above motifs are found in the Bible.<sup>2</sup> However, theologians on God's grace have usually accented only one or two of the motifs.

*Grace answers the need for acceptance.* Based on the Filipino family socialization patterns, the shame-alienation-reconciliation/acceptance motif, and secondarily, the anxiety-punishment-security motif, will find deeper meaning in the Filipino context than the guilt-condemnation-forgiveness motif. The existential need of the Filipino is primarily acceptance, and then security. In dealing with patients, psychiatrist Lourdes Lapuz found a big difference between American and Filipino patients. The American would say, "I feel like a phony," whereas the Filipino laments, "I am not loved," or "They have rejected me; I am not in."<sup>3</sup> It is not that the Filipino does not experience guilt. It is rather that in the socialization patterns discussed, anxiety and guilt are absorbed into the dominant dynamics of shame.<sup>4</sup>

This is where I think the Protestant presentation of grace needs contextualization to fit the Philippine context. The traditional Protestant presentation of God's grace in the Philippines is primarily in the guilt-condemnation-forgiveness framework. Such a framework fits and responds to the predominant guilt orientation of Northern European cultures, but not to the Filipino context. Presenting grace as forgiveness in the context of the problem of guilt and condemnation is oftentimes abstract and irrelevant, since the guilt-condemnation-forgiveness framework does not find much resonance in the Filipino. Shame-alienation, and secondarily, anxiety-punishment, in view of sin, are the dominant Filipino experiences rather than guilt.

<sup>1</sup>I adapted these frameworks from David Augsburger's model of the human experiences that resulted from sin. See David Augsburger, *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 138, 122.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Lapuz, 263.

<sup>4</sup>"Where social controls of inclusion or exclusion provide the dominant inhibition and direction of behavior, the anxiety is absorbed into and utilized by the shame process as a primal source of energy. Guilt exists in internal self-judgment or moral choice, but as a secondary process, with shame being the effective coin of social transactions." Augsburger, 124.

I am not proposing that the guilt-condemnation-forgiveness motif be dropped. All three are equally scriptural and give different accents to the multifaceted need of sinful man. Forgiveness is integral to experiencing God's grace. However, in view of the patterns of relationships and interaction in Filipino culture, the deeper longing of the Filipino is for God's acceptance and for being secure in God's care. Making acceptance and reconciliation the primary theme in presenting God's grace will elicit a greater response in the Filipino experience.

*God's grace is unconditional.* I have argued for a greater emphasis on the themes of acceptance and security in presenting God's grace. However, there are also considerations that need to be made in using these themes. Though acceptance is a major theme in Filipino culture, there are dynamics in the culture that need to be modified to truly present God's grace.

While the desire to be accepted by God and to be reconciled to Him can become a powerful motivating force in the life of a Filipino Christian, the unconditional nature of God's grace must be stressed. God places a permanent worth on persons, whereas in many a Filipino relationship, worth is attributed at that specific time and situation when the relationship is doing well. For God, human worth is an ontological reality. For the Filipino, the acceptance of the person is dependent on how he or she reciprocates in a relationship. Grace is God's counting us of worth despite our sinfulness and even before we respond to Him in faith.

Thus the Filipino can easily accept the teaching of God as merciful and loving, and of God's desire to accept and reconcile sinners to Himself. However, if the difference is not pointed out between God's acceptance and that of the Filipino culture, the Filipino will naturally assume that one has to continually earn this acceptance. Filipinos can easily and naturally be legalistic in their understanding of salvation due to their cultural background.

### Summary

To summarize, Filipino socialization patterns have been characterized as high nurturance, low independence training, and low discipline. Underlying and utilizing all these elements is the use of *hiya* (shame) as the main socialization pattern. From the above patterns, the Filipino learns from childhood the centrality of relationships in life. The most important thing in life is to be loved and accepted. From the same home environment the Filipino develops both an intense need for acceptance and the constant fear or threat of alienation. The meaning of all this is that he or she must always strive to maintain relationships to avoid the greatest misery of all, that of being rejected.

In this context, divine grace—God loving all men, unconditionally accepting them, considering them of infinite worth, and calling them into an intimate relationship with Him—speaks to the basic need of the Filipino. Filipinos can understand grace better if it is contextualized in the shame-alienation-



reconciliation/acceptance motif, or secondarily, in an anxiety-punishment-security motif. The usual Protestant presentation of grace in the guilt-condemnation forgiveness framework may not find much resonance in Filipino culture.

On the other hand, critical contextualization is needed, for the same cultural elements that enable Filipinos to find meaning in God's grace also carry obstacles to fully understanding and experiencing that grace. Having to earn acceptance by conformity may block seeing God's free grace. In misunderstanding the Trinity, Filipinos may attempt to manipulate the Godhead in the way that they manipulate members of the family. The Filipino has the tendency to receive the basis of worth as coming from social acceptance, rather than to rejoice in God's unconditional acceptance. A Christian teacher or preacher, then, has to both utilize and criticize Filipino cultural elements in order to clearly present God's grace.



## NEWSTART: A PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

CARLOS G. MARTIN

Observation, experience, and the testimony of many pastors have led me to have some concerns that I will address in this paper. These concerns relate to the effectiveness of health evangelism. It is my assumption that the reader clearly distinguishes between “medical services” and “medical missionary work.” It is evident that Ellen White, who had a formative influence on the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) health work, expected more than just “medical services” from SDA health institutions. She always speaks of “medical missionary work.” For the purposes of this paper, “medical missionary work” and “health evangelism” will be considered as interchangeable expressions.

This paper aims to address two basic aspects related to NEWSTART<sup>1</sup> from the perspective of an evangelist. One is a set of underlying theological issues. The other is concerned with strategical approaches.

Church programs will unavoidably reflect a set of assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes which are known as a “philosophy of mission.” It is essential to develop an Adventist philosophy of mission based on biblical principles in the light of the inspired counsels of Ellen White. The policies, structures, and strategies of mission are related to at least three theological issues.

### The Health Message and the Theology of Mission

A major issue is the theology of mission. There are several understandings about the responsibility of the church in the world. Theologians have discussed different goals for the church. Some of these goals emphasize a horizontal relationship among humans; this is the option stressed by the Social Gospel, the ecumenical movement, and by many other sincere Christians who understand that their mission is to express God’s love to people. In some cases you may hear them

<sup>1</sup>NEWSTART is a program featuring health emphasis by using the eight natural remedies against disease advocated by Ellen G. White in *The Ministry of Healing* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1905), 127. The acronym comes from the eight remedies: nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, air, rest, and trust in divine power.

speaking of “a just society” and “social reforms.” They emphasize more “presence evangelism” than “persuasive evangelism.” Seventh-day Adventists who subscribe to this mission tend to limit their “evangelistic” activities to “medical work,” “educational activities,” or “community services.” Some Adventists “ridicule the concept that the purpose of our health ministry is evangelistic. They suggest that we should do health education without putting any ‘hooks’ in it.”<sup>1</sup>

Other Christians consider that the ultimate goal of the church is to participate with God in saving sinners, thus emphasizing a vertical understanding of salvation. They may speak of “accepting Jesus as Savior,” “planting new congregations,” and “finishing the work.” Ellen White says that “the church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.”<sup>2</sup> Since “the church of Christ on earth was organized for missionary purposes,”<sup>3</sup> SDAs established educational and health institutions as helpers in carrying out their great commission. A healthy Adventist theology of mission should lead pastors and administrators, colleges and hospitals, to develop programs and strategies which will lead the church in accomplishing God’s mission of saving sinners. Furthermore, this theology will guide the church so that everything it does will focus on the purpose of saving sinners and finishing the work.

Ellen White repeatedly insisted in the importance of integrating health evangelism in the pastoral ministry as well as not separating health ministry from gospel ministry. In no uncertain terms she spells out God’s purpose for health ministry:

Those who disparage the ministry and try to conduct the medical missionary work independently are trying to separate the arm from the body. What would be the result should they succeed? We should see hands and arms flying about, dispensing means without the direction of the head. The work would become disproportionate and unbalanced. That which God designed should be the hand and arm would take the place of the whole body, and the ministry would be belittled or altogether ignored. This would unsettle minds and bring in confusion, and many portions of the Lord’s vineyard would be left unworked.<sup>4</sup>

If health evangelism falls short of leading those who come to our programs to a knowledge of the “plan of salvation,” we are only producing healthy sinners. It can be said that when we do not find a connection between the “health message”

<sup>1</sup>DeWitt S. Williams, Kay Kuzma, and Leo R. Van Dolson, *Ministries of Health and Healing* (Lincoln, NE: Advent Source, 1997), 60.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles in the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 9.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 6:29.

<sup>4</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 6:288-89.

and the “plan of salvation” expressed in the form of explicit biblical teachings, we are just ensuring that people will go to perdition as healthy sinners.

Soul winning is the first and supreme mission of the church. We organize new churches, erect church buildings, and operate colleges, publishing houses, and sanitariums; we create and foster various departments, committees, and boards as helpers in carrying out the Great Commission. All of these are a true success only as they actually help win souls to Jesus Christ. Ellen White seemed to struggle to find superlatives to describe the importance of soul-saving activities: “The greatest work, the noblest work, in which men can engage, is to point sinners to the Lamb of God.”<sup>1</sup> “The highest of all sciences is the science of soul-saving. The greatest work to which human beings can aspire is the work of winning men from sin to holiness.”<sup>2</sup>

### The Health Message and the Priorities of Mission

Another theological issue which is unavoidably reflected in policies, structures, and strategies is the priorities of mission. There are two mandates upon which Christians have built missionary strategies. There is a tension between a vertical and a horizontal approach to missions, between the evangelical and cultural mandates.

Some consider the evangelical mandate as their priority and make Matt 28:19-20 the underlying principle of their strategies. They describe themselves as “Great Commission Christians.” They understand that the evangelical mandate requires that missionaries teach other men to observe all things that Christ commanded His disciples. They believe that the primary function of the church is to save sinners. They would agree with the following statement of Ellen White: “The church of Christ on earth was organized for missionary purposes, and the Lord desires to see the entire church devising ways and means whereby high and low, rich and poor, may hear the message of truth.”<sup>3</sup>

Others stress the importance of the cultural mandate: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:37-39). They understand that this mandate demands attention to material, social, and physical needs. They, too, would agree with Ellen White:

In sympathy and compassion we are to minister to those in need of help, seeking with unselfish earnestness to lighten the woe of suffering humanity. . . . The practical carrying out of the Saviour’s commission demonstrates the power of the gospel.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers: Instruction for the Minister and the Missionary* (Battle Creek, MI: Review & Herald, 1892), 18.

<sup>2</sup>White, *Ministry of Healing*, 398.

<sup>3</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 6:29.

<sup>4</sup>Ellen G. White, *Welfare Ministry: Instruction in Christian Neighborhood Service* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1952), 117.

It is not always easy to maintain a proper balance between these two mandates. An Adventist theology of mission will give priority to the evangelical mandate; however, we must not forget the cultural mandate. "There is nothing quite so crippling to both evangelism and social action as to confuse them in definition or to separate them in practice."<sup>1</sup> In describing the interaction between "gospel work" and "medical missionary work," Ellen White states, "The medical missionary work is part of the great whole, as the arm is part of the body. . . . The body is not to become the arm."<sup>2</sup> In other words, the cultural mandate is subordinated to the evangelical mandate. Ministries created under the cultural mandate serve as tools to fulfill the Great Commission.

Ellen White counsels, "First meet the temporal necessities of the needy and relieve their physical wants and sufferings, and you will then find an open avenue to the heart, where you may plant the good seed of virtue and religion."<sup>3</sup> Seventh-day Adventists should remember that all ministries which are focused on services, such as Community Services, language schools, and health evangelism, are not ends in themselves but means to accomplish a higher goal. Samuel Moffett asserts,

In the Christian mission our vertical relationship to God comes first. Our horizontal relationship to our neighbor is "like unto it," and is just as indispensable, but it is still second. The leading partner is evangelism.<sup>4</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists must learn to keep a proper balance. We should continually evaluate our own ministries, programs, and goals. We can explore different forms of ministry while keeping the Great Commission in focus. We will maintain the balance if we launch NEWSTART events in our churches with the specific goal of using the interests and sympathies generated by this program for soul winning activities.

Jesus' pattern of service exemplified this balance. In Matt 4:23 and 9:35 Jesus is described as participating in teaching, preaching, and healing. Following His example, the modern church aims to offer an integrated ministry by offering services oriented to take care of the needs of the mind, body, and spirit. Through an educational system, health ministries, and evangelistic activities the church attempts to reflect Jesus' pattern of service. A word of caution may be necessary at this point: health evangelism and pastoral evangelism must be integrated, not

<sup>1</sup>Samuel Moffett, "Evangelism: The Leading Partner," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 730.

<sup>2</sup>White, *Welfare Ministry*, 123.

<sup>3</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 4:226.

<sup>4</sup>Moffett, 730.

working as independent entities; in Ellen White's words, they "are never to be divorced."<sup>1</sup>

### The Health Message and Evangelism

Before proceeding to a definition of what Adventist evangelism is, it may be good to clarify what it is not. Evangelism is not limited to preaching Jesus as Savior; this may be close to a definition of a revival meeting. Evangelism is not something that takes place in one day, because evangelization is more of a process than an event. The following is a working definition of Adventist evangelism: "Evangelism is the presentation of biblical doctrines in the power of the Holy Spirit in such a way that people will be persuaded to accept Jesus as Savior and serve Him in the fellowship of the church."<sup>2</sup>

When the health message is taught to nonbelievers, we have health education. When the health message is used for winning souls, we have health evangelism. The following is a good explanation of what health evangelism is:

When a minister gives our message, our fundamental doctrines, and these are understood and accepted by an individual, a change begins to be noted in the individual's life. This change we call conversion. Similarly, when our health principles or physical laws are given, are understood and accepted, a change takes place. This change is health reform. The use of spiritual doctrines to win souls is termed evangelism. So too, the use of the health principles to win souls is called health evangelism.<sup>3</sup>

The health message provides the principles upon which the methods of health evangelism are based. The health message provides ways to break down prejudices and gain sympathies among nonbelievers. The health message is the door to the heart, but the other doctrines are equally important to lead a person to the full knowledge of the way to salvation.

According to the SDA *Church Manual*, "evangelism is the primary work of the church."<sup>4</sup> Speaking of pastors, Ellen White said, "To win souls to the kingdom of God must be their first consideration."<sup>5</sup> All activities of the church should aim to save those who are outside the church as well as to maintain those who are already inside. The work of God on this earth will never be finished by pastors

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health and Instruction to Medical Missionary Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1951), 528.

<sup>2</sup>Carlos Martin, *Syllabus for MSSN 500 Introduction to Missiology*, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines, 1998, 251.

<sup>3</sup>Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Aflame for God* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1951), 348.

<sup>4</sup>General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1995), 80.

<sup>5</sup>White, *Gospel Workers*, 31.

exclusively doing “maintenance work” or by exclusively offering lifestyle seminars. The work of God will be finished by pastors and other church members persuasively proclaiming the eternal gospel, of which health is only a part.

According to the definition of Adventist evangelism quoted above, friendship evangelism, the work of language schools, health evangelism, and many other forms of ministry do not by themselves fully qualify as “evangelism.” They are useful entering paths to the heart, but they are not designed as strategies to present the whole truth and to persuade people to join the Church. If an “evangelistic effort” using NEWSTART ends without a connection with a doctrinal series, it does not qualify as such. This leads to the concluding concern of this presentation: how to connect the message presented in health evangelism with the other Adventist doctrines.

### **The Health Message and Other Doctrines**

The role of the health message in evangelism is to open doors.<sup>1</sup> Ellen White explains,

Much of the prejudice that prevents the truth of the third angel’s message from reaching the hearts of the people might be removed if more attention were given to health reform. When people become interested in this subject the way is prepared for the entrance of other truths.<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere she adds that the work of health evangelism “will break down prejudice as nothing else can.”<sup>3</sup>

Just as public evangelism needs the presentation of the health message, the health message of NEWSTART needs the other doctrines to be really meaningful:

The gospel ministry is needed to give permanence and stability to the medical missionary work; and the ministry needs the medical missionary work to demonstrate the practical working of the gospel. Neither part of the work is complete without the other.<sup>4</sup>

Seventh-day Adventist pastors using approaches such as NEWSTART must secure a proper connection with the other “twenty-seven fundamental beliefs.” This is not optional. We are instructed to “combine medical missionary work with

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry: A Treatise on Medical Missionary Work in the Gospel* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1963), 238.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1976), 76.

<sup>3</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 9:211.

<sup>4</sup>White, *Counsels on Health*, 514.



the proclamation of the third angel's message."<sup>1</sup> The ultimate role of the subject of health in evangelism is to integrate it with the religious and doctrinal.

Although the work of health evangelism opens doors, experience has taught that when pastors using NEWSTART do not secure an immediate continuity with the other Adventist doctrines, much of the gains of the effort dissipates in a few days. The door is opened for a few days, when hundreds attend NEWSTART sessions, but too often the people are left in darkness with respect to the most important truths for this time. Just as "the great object of receiving unbelievers" into the Health Institute was, for Ellen White, "to lead them to embrace the truth,"<sup>2</sup> the great object of NEWSTART should be no less.

Jesus mastered the art of combining health evangelism with the proclamation of additional doctrines. After He fed the multitudes with bread (John 6:1-15), He announced, "I am the bread of life" (v. 35). Furthermore, He told the multitudes of the need of accepting His sacrifice (vv. 53-58). Despite that, many "went back, and walked no more with him" (v. 66), while those who had accepted His "words of eternal life" (vv. 68-69) decided to follow Him.

According to Luke, Jesus commissioned the Twelve to go out and teach and preach to the people. They were sent out to cure diseases and to proclaim the gospel (9:1-2). Jesus also instructed the Seventy to do the same (10:9). "He commanded them to heal the sick, and *next* to preach that the kingdom of God had come nigh unto them. Their physical health was to be *first* cared for, in order that the way might be prepared for their minds to be reached by those truths which the apostles were to preach"<sup>3</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists are specifically instructed not to allow the "hand" to receive a greater role than the "body." We must not allow the "health arm" to become the entire message.<sup>4</sup> We must not allow the means to become an end in itself. In other words, the work should not stop with the health message but should continue with the rest of the doctrines.

There are several options for the use of the health message as an "entering wedge"<sup>5</sup> to the hearts of nonbelievers. Two are selected here because of their full integration with evangelism. One involves using health to emphasize and teach religion, and using religion to strengthen and support the principles of health.<sup>6</sup> The other approach is to present health principles and then, after a "bridge," to offer an advanced series on spiritual matters for those who are attracted to the spiritual elements from the first series.

<sup>1</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 6:267. "The third angel's message" is a reference to the solemn warning of impending judgment found in Rev 14:9-11.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 3:167.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 4:225; emphasis supplied.

<sup>4</sup>White, *Welfare Ministry*, 123.

<sup>5</sup>White, *Counsels on Health*, 535.

<sup>6</sup>See Williams, Kuzma, and Van Dolson, 59-69; and Raymond Woolsey, *Evangelism Handbook* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1972), 153-55.

The NEWSTART program fits very well the second approach. In an attractive way it presents the message of holistic health to nonbelievers and naturally moves to the issue of trusting in God. This is an ideal bridge to continue with additional transitional issues such as prayer and the Bible. It is essential that the transitional series be offered with the same enthusiasm and quality as the NEWSTART segment. It is also essential that the doctrinal series follow immediately.

Of course, NEWSTART may be combined with other approaches to the presentation of the whole message. Pastors will find many opportunities to launch evangelistic events during the year 2000. I encourage those pastors with a burden for health evangelism to tie their efforts in with a doctrinal series. God will bless our efforts as we follow His instructions. I pray that our ministry will see a new start as we follow God's guidance.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT AS ONE OF THE RESOURCES FOR DOING THEOLOGY IN ASIA

FERDINAND O. REGALADO

Belief in the centrality of biblical revelation for our task of doing theology is imperative.<sup>1</sup> There are some misconceptions with regard to certain understandings of some concepts and themes of the Bible.<sup>2</sup> On account of many interpretations coming from Western scholars, some tend to look at the Bible from the Western perspective. This leads to some uneasiness on the part of Asian scholars when using certain biblical data. They appropriate instead their own cultural, social, and personal resources in "doing theology." I think this kind of attitude overlooks the fact that the Scripture has its original setting,<sup>3</sup> which is an Oriental setting—an Asian setting.

<sup>1</sup>This point is stressed by Masao Takenaka: "We want to make it openly clear that we continuously maintain the centrality of the Biblical revelation in our common endeavour." Masao Takenaka, foreword to *Doing Theology with Asian Resources: Ten Years in the Formation of Living Theology in Asia*, ed. John C. England and Archie C. C. Lee (Auckland, New Zealand: Programme for Theology & Cultures in Asia, 1993), 3.

<sup>2</sup>Kim Soon Young notes that "a number of parts of the Bible discriminate against women" and "the sexually discriminatory texts of the Bible had women subordinated or dependent to men in ordinary life and the life of faith as well." Thus, she proposes "that we have to re-interpret our Bible from the feminist critical perspective." Kim Soon Young, "Harmony Against Harmony: Korean Women's Story Theology," in *Doing Theology with Asian Resources: Ten Years in the Formation of Living Theology in Asia*, ed. John C. England and Archie C. C. Lee (Auckland, New Zealand: Programme for Theology & Cultures in Asia, 1993), 65-66.

<sup>3</sup>R. K. Harrison recognizes this fact in the context of some issues in approaching and understanding OT history. He argues, "Since modern occidental methods of historical interpretation may present decided problems when imposed upon oriental cultures, particularly those of antiquity, it is probably wise to consider the historical outlook and methods of compilation of the Near Eastern cultures on their own terms also, lest the historiographical attempts of antiquity unwittingly be assessed in terms of the scientific methods of more recent times, with equally unfortunate results." R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 295.

In saying that the original setting of the Bible is oriental, the predominant thought is that it is Hebraic in nature. Hebrew thoughts, concepts, and cultures are apparent in the Bible, especially in the OT. This we are forced to recognize.

There is much that can be learned from the OT in our task of doing theology in Asia, for the OT is visibly an Asian book.<sup>1</sup> The cultural setting of the OT is very familiar to those of us who live in Asia because of its resemblance to Asian culture in general.

The OT has been overlooked at times in regard to the application of its themes to some social issues. This is evident in the study of William King that held that the majority of the social gospel apologists, especially in America during the first half of the twentieth century, based their social theology on the teachings of Jesus, "especially those teachings that dealt with the kingdom of God."<sup>2</sup> Although "they did not ignore the rest of the Bible, they did not devote as much attention to it as they did to the Gospel materials."<sup>3</sup>

In this paper we shall attempt to see how the OT can contribute to the discussions on doing theology in the Asian context. The subjects we shall study focus on the Hebrew words 'ābōdā and 'ādām and their implications for social issues like relieving the poor and the employer-employee relationship. I have chosen these two Hebrew terms because they are the best representatives of the holistic thought of the Jews, which is very close to the holistic thinking of Filipinos in general, as well as of their Oriental neighbors.

### The Meaning of the Hebrew Word 'ābōdā

One of the examples of the Asian worldview in the Hebrew Bible, as just mentioned, is their holistic view of life. The Hebrew people considered themselves, their community, and their world as a complete, united whole.<sup>4</sup> From this worldview, we can draw implications and lessons in confronting some social issues in Asia, particularly in the Philippines, like labor questions and the relief of the poor.

The meaning of the Hebrew word 'ābōdā supports the idea that the Hebrew people view their life as a dynamic unity. It is very significant that the word 'ābōdā

<sup>1</sup>Zdravko Stefanovic, "For the Asian First and Then for the Westerner," *Asia Journal of Theology* 4 (1990): 412-13, enumerated some of the examples in the OT and NT which are Eastern or Asian in concepts and practices.

<sup>2</sup>William McGuire King, "The Biblical Base of the Social Gospel," in *The Bible and Social Reform*, ed. Ernest R. Sandeen (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 62.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>This is also true with the way the Filipino thinks. His way of thinking is holistic, not compartmentalized. See Leonardo N. Mercado, *Applied Filipino Philosophy* (Tacloban City, Philippines: Divine Word University Publications, 1977), 61; idem, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy* (Tacloban City, Philippines: Divine Word University Publications, 1974), 53-67.

is translated as both work<sup>1</sup> and worship.<sup>2</sup> Apparently, it signifies that service rendered to God is viewed as a form of worship. Work, in some contexts, can be considered as worship to God. So the saying that “worship is a way of life” or “worship is a lifestyle” was indeed true for the Jews.

There are many examples in the OT where ‘*ābōdā*’ is used in the context of worship.<sup>3</sup> One example is when Moses went to Mount Horeb to feed the flock and the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. God called Moses to liberate the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, but Moses was hesitant to go and appear before Pharaoh, to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. So God gave assurance to Moses that it was Yahweh who called him and that He would be with him:

And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship (*ta ābdūn*) God on this mountain.” (Exod 3:12)<sup>4</sup>

The form *ta ābdūn* in this particular context is from the same root as ‘*ābōdā*’. The former is in its verbal form, while the latter is in its nominal form. But the important point here is that the Hebrew word for “work” may also be translated as “worship” in some contexts. This idea suggests that “the Hebrew saw his God-given vocation—whether it be that of farmer, herdsman, fisherman, tax collector, teacher or scribe—as a means of bringing glory to God by the very privilege of the work itself.”<sup>5</sup> Again, one can see the holistic view of life of the Hebrew people even in the workplace. “There were no secular occupations and there were no sacred ones. Every domain of life belongs to God.”<sup>6</sup>

If that same attitude would be manifested towards one’s work or vocation now, that person would become efficient in a given task. The same person would look at that particular job as a means to glorify God. Any form of selfishness in the workplace would be abandoned. Concern for fellow workers would be evident.

In the book of Ruth, the concepts of work and worship are very well exemplified. In one particular scene, while Ruth the Moabitess was picking up the leftover grain in the fields owned by Boaz, it happened that he visited the place. And when Boaz arrived in the field he greeted the harvesters, “The LORD be with

<sup>1</sup>There are many instances where ‘*ābōdā*’ is translated as “work.” See, e.g., Gen 29:27; Exod 1:14; Lev 23:7-8; Num 28:18,25-26; Ps 104:23; 1 Chron 27:26.

<sup>2</sup>The translation “worship” is also reflected in its Arabic root meaning. See Walter C. Kaiser, “*ābad*,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 2:639.

<sup>3</sup>See, e.g., Exod 4:23; 7:16; 8:1; Josh 22:27.

<sup>4</sup>All Bible quotations in this paper are from the New International Version, unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>5</sup>Marvin R. Wilson, “Hebrew Thought in the Life of the Church,” in *The Living and Active Word of God: Studies in Honor of Samuel J. Schultz*, ed. Morris Inch and Ronald Youngblood (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 131.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

you!” And the harvesters replied in return, “The LORD bless you!” (Ruth 2:4) These were his own harvesters, so he must have been their boss. In our modern setting today, we have here an employer/employee relationship. Boaz must have been a good employer or manager, for he was greeting them in the name of God. At the same time, his workers had a good attitude toward their master, for they asked God’s blessings to be upon Boaz. However, the significant aspect of this scenario was the inclusion of God even in the ordinary greeting in the workplace.

This greeting of Boaz and the reply of his harvesters is a manifestation of Hebrew thinking. For them there was no distinction between work life and spiritual life. Spirituality or piety cannot be put aside in the workplace—work and worship should go hand in hand. This is illustrated in Paul’s familiar Hebraic idiom, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31). There is no partition between secular and sacred areas of life.<sup>1</sup> All is viewed in terms of its totality.

How should one apply the concept of worship in the workplace in a practical way? Does it mean that one should always hold a religious convocation at the beginning and at the end of the day’s work? We give only a partially affirmative answer here.

Admittedly, the answer to this question rests on the definition of worship. The modern English word “worship” is derived from the Anglo-Saxon “weorthscipe”—“worth” and “ship”—meaning worthy of reverence and honor.<sup>2</sup> In Christianity the only One who is worthy of our reverence and honor is God, because we derive everything from Him, whether it is spiritual blessings or material blessings. Now, in the context of our own occupation we can worship God by gratefully acknowledging that all of our material benefits come from God. Simply put, we are to acknowledge all blessings as God’s gifts. Likewise, the view that all aspects of life have no distinction between the sacred and the secular and all of life is considered as God’s domain, is best illustrated in the Hebrew farmer’s special prayer found in Deut 26:5-10a. This special prayer is recited “to remind him that the occupation of tilling the soil is sacred.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Judaism is not a faith system serving as one compartment of life, separate and apart from all others. It is a way of life that embraces the totality of existence and forms the root of all the Jews, commitments. For this reason blessings are recited over some of the most mundane items, such as upon seeing lightning, hearing thunder, and even after using the washroom. For it is man’s daily routine—eating, sleeping, working, and so on—that is most in need of sanctification.” Yechiel Eckstein, *What Christians Should Know About Jews and Judaism* (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 70-71.

<sup>2</sup>Ralph P. Martin, “Worship,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, completely rev. and reset ed. (1979-88), 4:1117.

<sup>3</sup>Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 157. See also Walther Zimmerli, *The Old Testament and the World*, trans. John J. Scullon (Atlanta: John Knox, 1976), 10.

Then you shall declare before the Lord your God: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous. But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, putting us to hard labor. Then we cried out to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our misery, toil, and oppression. So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey: and now I bring the first fruits of the soil that you, O Lord, have given me.

### The Significant Meaning of the Word *'ādām*

Another holistic worldview of the Jews that contributes to our task of doing theology in Asia is the concept of organic solidarity.<sup>1</sup> This concept of organic solidarity is demonstrated in the usage of the Hebrew word *'ādām*. This generic word is translated both collectively, as mankind or people, and individually, as a single man or person.<sup>2</sup>

In Gen 1:27 it is recorded that "God created man [*hā- 'ādām*] in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." This text expresses that "man and woman together make *'ādām* (man)."<sup>3</sup> As these two parts of *'ādām* are joined together, they "together form a whole human being."<sup>4</sup> "Likewise, in Gen 1 man is presented as male and female (Gen 1:27); not that the text suggests that the original man was androgynous, but on account of this total view of man."<sup>5</sup> The aforementioned concepts maintain the idea of social unity and brotherhood among the Hebrew people. The true meaning of life can only be found by the members of the community in their relationship to each other.

<sup>1</sup>Thorleif Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1960), 70.

<sup>2</sup>William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (1971), s.v. "*'ādām*"; Leonard J. Coppes, "*'dm*," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1:10-11.

<sup>3</sup>Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture*, vol. 1-2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1926; Copenhagen: Branner og Korch, 1926), 61. This points to the equality of man and woman. It is appropriate here to quote the striking words of Victor P. Hamilton: "Both man and woman are made in the image of God. Sexual identification is irrelevant, certainly not a qualifying factor. Thus the command to rule and have dominion is directed to both male and female." Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 28.

<sup>4</sup>Pedersen, 61.

<sup>5</sup>Jacques B. Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians: A Textbook for the Study of Biblical Hebrew in Relation to Hebrew Thinking* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993), 211.

Hence, we notice the idea of corporate personality or the “corporate life of the community of faith.”<sup>1</sup> This suggests that every person is “mutually accountable for one another and [should] mutually participate in the life of one another.”<sup>2</sup>

This communal accountability is best demonstrated in the OT teaching that everyone is his brother’s keeper (Gen 4:9). Also, in one of the commandments of the Decalogue, God said that He was going to extend the consequences of the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him, but He would show mercy to thousands of those who love Him and keep His commandments (Exod 20:5b-6). Nahum Sarna poignantly explains this commandment:

Society is collectively responsible for its action, and the individual too is accountable for behavior that affects the life of the community. There is thus forged a mutuality of responsibility and consequences. It is further recognized that contemporary conduct inevitably has an impact upon succeeding generations.<sup>3</sup>

One can observe that, because of this organic unity between the group and its members, “the slightest mistake of a member will affect the totality of the group, the present and the future (Gen 3:19; 9:25-27; Josh 7).”<sup>4</sup> Thus each member of the community must show a sense of responsibility “for his neighbor’s shortcomings and needs.”<sup>5</sup> There is no display of Western individualism here.

This idea of shared accountability and social responsibility as explained in the profound meaning of *’ādām* can be applied to the issue of helping the poor. According to a striking passage in Deut 15:11a: “There will always be poor in the land.” This text suggests that poor people are ubiquitous members of the community.<sup>6</sup> In other words, they are part of the totality of the society. We cannot ignore them or eradicate them. So if they are part of our social structure, we have a sacred responsibility to them. That is the reason why Deut 15:11 enjoins us, “There will always be poor in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.”

This concept of family-community and brotherhood is reflected in another Hebrew word, *mishpāhā* (clan or family). The term *mishpāhā*

<sup>1</sup>Wilson, “Hebrew Thought,” 132.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 134.

<sup>3</sup>Nahum N. Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 110.

<sup>4</sup>Doukhan, 212.

<sup>5</sup>Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 188.

<sup>6</sup>For another view of this text, see R. S. Sugirtharajah, “‘For You Always Have the Poor with You:’ An Example of Hermeneutics of Suspicion,” *Asia Journal of Theology* 4 (1990): 102-7.



refers not only to parents and children; it is a whole social unit that includes uncles, aunts, and even remote cousins. Furthermore, each *mishpāhā* sees itself as part of a single worldwide Jewish family.<sup>1</sup>

To stress the idea that whoever belongs to our community is our “brother,” Johannes Pedersen notes that “the city-community is a *mishpāhā*, and consequently the fellow-citizen becomes a brother.”<sup>2</sup> So the question being asked of Jesus, Who is my neighbor? was “not so easy to answer in ancient Israel. Because the neighbor, the fellow citizen, is the one with whom one lives in community.”<sup>3</sup>

This is not only true with fellow-citizens. Even foreigners (*gērīm*), particularly poor aliens, were considered as fellow Israelites. Pedersen observes concerning the poor alien, “The Israelite is not allowed to oppress him, but is pledged to love him and treat him as an Israelite, not forgetting that Israel is itself a plebeian nation which has been *gēr* in Egypt (Exod. 22,20; 23,9; Lev. 19,33f.; Deut. 10,19; 24,17f.; Ez. 22,29, etc.).”<sup>4</sup>

The Mosaic code had a variety of regulations designed to protect the poor.<sup>5</sup>

If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be open-handed and freely lend him whatever he needs. (Deut 15:7-8)

If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so he can continue to live among you. (Lev 25:35)

If one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative is to come and redeem what his countryman has sold. If, however, a man has no one to redeem it for him but he himself prospers and acquires sufficient means to redeem it, he is to determine the value for the years since he sold it and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it; he can then go back to his own property. But if he does not acquire the means to repay him, what he sold will remain in the possession of the buyer until the Year of Jubilee. It will be returned in the Jubilee, and he can then go back to his property. (Lev 25:25-28)

In this latter passage one can observe the important role played by the kinsman-redeemer in protecting the poor. This kinsman-redeemer is a member of

<sup>1</sup>Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 188.

<sup>2</sup>Pedersen, 59.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 60.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 41.

<sup>5</sup>See also Paul Heinisch, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. William G. Heidt (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1955), 187-90.

the extended family.<sup>1</sup> The idea of kinsman-redeemer emphasizes the accountability and responsibility of each member of the society and, at the same time, the idea of family. The Year of Jubilee is also mentioned as one of the institutions established to safeguard the poor. If these principles were applied today, we could avoid the oppression and abuse of poor people.

The community-family notion from the OT can be applied also in the subject of employer-employee relationships. If the concept of family were implemented in any organization, many conflicts and misunderstandings between the employer and the employee could be lessened. The concept of family in any business establishment would lead to interpersonal relationships among the workers and a family orientation between the employer and the employee. I am not talking about a patronage system, but the positive qualities of the concept of family. The best example of this thought may be found in the interesting description by Leonardo Mercado of the Filipino model of personnel management. He cites the study of James Anderson<sup>2</sup> about the relationship of the landlords and tenants of Pangasinan, which is an example of "mutual understanding as equal partners".<sup>3</sup>

A 'good' landowner does not treat his tenants as social inferiors, does not remind the tenants of his debt or gratitude, does not supervise too much [but] demonstrates his trust in his partner, assumes his part of the mutual obligations by using his influence on his tenant's behalf and giving them help during emergencies and contributions for the celebrations of life crisis events. On the other hand, the good tenant should be loyal to his landowner and should assist the owner by giving services to him when the opportunity presents itself. It is a relationship based on mutual dependence which is adaptive as it functions in the larger system. This does not make the traditional agricultural tenancy system "good," but it makes it more difficult to replace without considerable dislocation in the entire social system.<sup>4</sup>

Then Mercado adds, regarding the idea of the hierarchic nature of interpersonalism, which is very close to the idea of family in the Hebrew Bible,

What was said of the landlord-tenant relationship is also true in small-scale industries, such as furniture factories and machine shops. The mutual relationship often leads to the *compadrazco* system wherein the owner/manager becomes the godfather in his employees' weddings and baptisms. The close bond between the

<sup>1</sup>See an example of this kind of treatment in Steven Hick, *Land Our Life* (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian, 1987), 111-21. I will not discuss about the Year of Jubilee in this paper. There is a need of another paper on this topic to identify some implications for the social issues or the subject of land ownership.

<sup>2</sup>James Anderson, "Some Aspects of Land Society in a Pangasinan Community," *Philippine Sociological Review* 10 (1962): 51-52.

<sup>3</sup>Mercado, *Applied Filipino Philosophy*, 46.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

manager/owner and the employees increases the morale of the latter since they are treated as persons and not as efficient machines.

The same interpersonal and hierarchic pattern can also be applied to barrio and national phenomena. An association in a Bulacan barrio is described as "closely identified with its president or ruling clique. The success of the organization is viewed as the president or clique's success; its failure, their failure." In a study of the 1961 presidential election, the investigators find in four sampling barrios of Laguna that the people do not think of the presidential candidates in terms of their party platforms but in terms of their images as fathers, and that the government is thought of as a big family. Everyone in the government—even senators or congressmen—"is expected to work as members of a big family in order to attain the objectives of the Philippine people."<sup>1</sup>

We notice that the concept of family can be an effective tool to establish a harmonious relationship between employer and employee among Filipinos. So if this family value is applied in any business establishment or other Filipino institution, it will work.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, we recognize that extreme concern for one's family can be abused to some extent. That is where nepotism and tribalism come in, wherein the society is sacrificed for the sake of one's family or kinship.<sup>3</sup> Today, because of certain factors, many Filipinos as well as other Asians become too individualistic and "seem to be losing their Biblical sense of accountability to each other and think they can, for the most part, operate on their own."<sup>4</sup> It may be appropriate here to close this section of the paper with the words of Marvin Wilson:

In the Bible, piety is always oriented toward community. God and one's neighbor belong inseparably together. The Church must never become so self-centered and

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>See Benjamin B. Cruz, "Family, Not Country, Is Where the Heart of the Filipino Lies," in *Who and What Is the Pinoy?* ed. V. P. Gapuz and C. D. Lozada, Jr. (Manila: V. P. Gapuz and C. D. Lozada, Jr., 1990), 33-39, where the family factor can be utilized by the government in promoting a just and social order in the country. This is also true to John Eliot's method of converting the native Americans. "A careful examination of conversion patterns from one generation to the next reveals that Eliot's emphasis on the family as a teaching tool was well justified." James P. Ronda, "The Bible and Early American Indian Missions," in *The Bible and Social Reform*, ed. Ernest R. Sandeen, The Bible in American Culture, Society of Biblical Literature Centennial Publications (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1982), 14.

<sup>3</sup>According to Bishop Teodoro C. Bacani, this flaw in the Filipino character came from the concept of Filipino tribalism. See Ma. Victoria Gochoco-Perez, "Individualism: Biggest Block to the Pinoy's Progress," in *Who and What Is the Pinoy?* ed. V. P. Gapuz and C. D. Lozada, Jr. (Manila: V. P. Gapuz and C. D. Lozada, Jr., 1990), 18-20. This is also seen in the "tayo-tayo lamang ["only us"] mentality" of the Filipino, which limits concern to the interests of the immediate group. See Tomas D. Andres, *Understanding Filipino Values: A Management Approach* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day, 1981), 127.

<sup>4</sup>Wilson, "Hebrew Thought," 132.

self-sufficient that it fails to grasp this fact. For the concept of the priesthood of the believer means that each Christian functions as a priest not only unto God but also unto his neighbor.<sup>1</sup>

### **Conclusion**

From this short essay, we see how the OT can contribute to our pursuit of doing theology in Asia, particularly in the Philippines. This paper also reveals the need to study afresh the OT to look for some concepts and themes related to social issues and other life-ethical issues. Furthermore, it calls us to understand the OT and the whole Bible in its original Asian setting to see its relevance in this part of the world. Hence, we can continue in our task of doing theology based on biblical revelation.

We also observe in this short study that the holistic worldview of the Hebrew people is similar to the pervasive holistic worldview of the Filipino. This study might be a starting point to look for other correspondences between the Hebrew culture, the Filipino culture, and the Asian culture, as well.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 135.

AASS 2 (1999): 51-57

Keynote address given during the

1999 AIIAS Theological Forum: Millennium and Prophecy

August 4-7, 1999

## GOD'S PROMISES FOR HARVESTERS

LARRY R. COLBURN

Associate Secretary

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

The leadership for this theological forum has convened a broad cross-section of Seventh-day Adventist Church theologians, other professors who teach various aspects of the sacred Word, and also many ministerial secretaries. I commend the planners of this forum for their attempt to keep all that is done in this forum on a meaningful, practical, biblical level. I also commend them for inviting ministerial secretaries to be present. While the Bible truths to be pondered and plumbed may be deep, they need always to be understood and applied in the context of the crucified, risen, and coming Jesus. Jesus' life and His death testify to the necessity of keeping all we do in the context of the Good News going to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

To remind you again of the intent of the Great Commission which remains before us as a church, I will reference briefly a meeting which took place five weeks ago in Virginia. Andrews University Department of Missions professors, the Institute of World Mission leadership, and the General Conference Secretariat representatives met to take a serious look at the mission of the church. Together we studied the book *The Church Is Bigger Than You Think* by Patrick Johnstone.<sup>1</sup> In the center of this book, considerable attention was given to the largeness of the task of reaching the people living within the 10/40 Window. As you know, 65 percent of the world's population lives in this part of the world. Most of the world's one billion Muslims live in this rectangular portion of the world between the tenth and fortieth parallels. The 10/40 Window territory includes Northern Africa, the Middle East, India, and China. Within this territory are countries which have outlawed Christianity. Eighty-five percent of the world's poor live in this section of the world. How should we, as harvesters, relate to this sacred

<sup>1</sup>Patrick Johnstone, *The Church Is Bigger Than You Think* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1998).

responsibility? This will be one of the considerations before us during the 2000 General Conference Session as we meet in Toronto, Canada.

### **Harvesters for the Kingdom**

For the purpose of this opening presentation, I am placing all of us in this room in one category—harvesters. We are all to be harvesters for the Kingdom of God. Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matt 9:37,38).<sup>1</sup> We exist for one reason—to participate in the great harvest for which the harvesters are few. Whether we are teachers in the classroom or pastors counseling in the home of a church member, we are to be one of the harvesters. We have one purpose, and that is to prepare for the coming of Jesus—to harvest precious people for the Kingdom of God. We are to be used by the Holy Spirit for this harvest of all harvests.

The last chapter in the book *The Church Is Bigger Than You Think* focuses on the portion of Scripture I want us to consider together—Isa 54. Here we find precious promises given to God’s harvesters. There are six precious promises which are applicable to harvesters. I will incorporate some of the insights Johnstone gained from the study of Isa 54, as well as my own. I hope we will understand better that, as Johnstone states, “We are never closer to God than when we share His heart for the unevangelized.”

Isa 54:2 places the six precious promises to harvesters in the proper context. “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.” The principles and hope God expressed to Israel were not to be kept for merely themselves. Sure, Canaan was the place of Israel’s tent, but the people and followers were to “enlarge the place of your tent, . . . lengthen your cords, [and] strengthen your stakes,” until the entire world would be embraced. Sadly, Israel failed to accomplish God’s will for them and for the world. Ellen G. White states, “The words of the Lord in the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah are for us.”<sup>2</sup> Then she quotes Isa 54:2-5. The Word of God says God’s people should expect great things of Him and should attempt great things for Him. Now is the time the church is to unite with divine agencies to proclaim the knowledge of a crucified, risen, and soon coming Savior.

### **God’s Promises to the Harvesters**

Here are God’s promises to the harvesters as the tent is enlarged, the cords lengthened, and the stakes strengthened:

<sup>1</sup>Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 6:23.

1. Fear is removed. "Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood" (Isa 54:4).

"Do not be afraid." What words these are in times like these! When there is so much to be afraid of, we are admonished, "Do not be afraid." For us who are full-time servants of the living God, this is ever so comforting and encouraging. "Do not be afraid" comes to us when even the term "missionary" does not command the respect it used to. As gospel workers, our sanity or theology can be questioned by our fellow believers at home or even maligned by people within the system where we serve. Everything may fail, but God will never fail us. This covers the entire spectrum of living.

There is a double promise in this verse. The last part says, "You will forget the shame of your youth, and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood." Israel had turned from the true God to serve false gods. This was the sin of her youth. Serious, but forgiven and forgotten. "The reproach of your widowhood" refers to the captivity of Israel in Babylon. This too will be forgiven and forgotten. This promise of forgiven and forgotten sin through Jesus is ours today. Things of the past need no longer tie us down with feelings of failure and inadequacy. There is no need to fear things of the past or the future. When we come to Jesus, He forgives and forgets the sins of youth and immaturity. God says, "Do not be afraid."

2. Christ is united with us. "For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth" (Isa 54:5).

Could there be any more comfort and support than this? Our Maker declares that He is our husband. The Holy One of Israel is our Redeemer. To be forgiven for our past foolishness and sin is already beyond comprehension, but now Isaiah says we are married to our Maker. It is almost overwhelming to realize we are joined with the One who is our Redeemer. He lavishes love and care on you and me, His bride. This is more than any doting husband could ever bestow. Jesus is our Lover, our Provider, our All! The great pre-Reformer in Italy, Savonarola, said, "What must a man possess who possesses the Possessor of all things?" When God is our husband, we can face the world and all its scorn and opposition with confidence "because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

An acceptance of this relationship will provide confidence and assurance unequalled anywhere. The burdens of this work are not bearable alone. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. . . . For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt 11:28,30). To attempt to bear these responsibilities and burdens alone will destroy, but when yoked with Christ, this crushing weight becomes light and bearable.

Hudson Taylor, the missionary to China, knew what it was to be almost crushed by the weight of responsibility and the slow progress of the gospel. It was

at the time of his first furlough that Hudson Taylor learned what it meant to have God as one's husband. He was at the point of a nervous breakdown in 1868. Everything seemed dark and he felt as though he was a failure. He met God in a new way on the beach at Brighton in England. There he learned the meaning of Gal 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." He no longer attempted to carry the burdens and responsibilities himself. Christ was his yoke mate. He had nothing to fear. Hudson Taylor went on to found the China Inland Mission, one of the most innovative and successful missions in the nineteenth century.

How many of us have to be reminded often that we cannot bear the burdens of God's work alone? How often have I personally needed to be reminded that this is God's work and not mine? Many times! How good it is to know Christ is our husband! He is united with us! We are not alone!

3. Our purpose is redefined. "'The LORD will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit—a wife who married young, only to be rejected,' says your God" (Isa 54:6).

These are hauntingly beautiful words. We are the poor deserted wife—married young and rejected. That forlorn woman is you and I. Even though we are poor, deserted, and forlorn, God says of us as Hosea said of his wife Gomer, "I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD" (Hos 2:19-20).

God has a purpose for us. He redefines this purpose and it is that which makes life worth living. We believe there is a God-shaped vacuum within each person. Johnstone also suggests there is a *YOU*-shaped hole in God's kingdom which only *YOU* can fit. God has a plan for each of us.

Rom 12:1-2 indicates that God's guidance is conditional and can only be proved after three tough conditions are met. Paul states these as follows:

a. "Offer your bodies as living sacrifices" (v. 1). Everything we have and are must be committed to God. This is to be without reservation. If we have unforgiven sin in our lives, or if we are unwilling to do what He wants us to do, we would be presumptuous to believe we are reflecting God's plan for our lives.

b. "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world" (v. 2). We live in the world, but are not to be of the world. God's will is to be foremost in all that we do. Johnstone asks, "How can you know God's will if you want to please others or yourself, or if you are more concerned about what others think or say?"<sup>1</sup>

c. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (v. 2). How is the mind to be transformed? I know of no other way than for the mind to be "bathed" and "washed" daily in the promises and hope found in God's word. Our minds need to be fed with the good and the wholesome, that which comes from God in his

<sup>1</sup>Johnstone, 288.



word, in nature, and from those who also love the Lord. The heart will then be ready to hear the clear, distinct, but still, small voice of God speaking to us.

As the one who married young and went astray, we are called by God to be His own possession. Herein His purpose for our lives and service is redefined.

In ministry there must be the deep assurance that God has personally led you. The safest place for you is in the center of God's will—even with chains on your feet as a hostage, with your body racked with fever or trembling in a cellar with . . . rockets crashing into the house above.<sup>1</sup>

4. Failures are covered with compassion. God says in Isa 54:7-8,10,

"For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the LORD your Redeemer. . . . "Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

"With deep compassion I will bring you back." Failures are covered with compassion and forgiveness. If God ever seems afar off, or if we ever feel rejected by God, it is the enemy planting these thoughts, and we are to resist him. When we become overburdened with work, when we fail to have the right balance between work and recreation, there is a price to be paid.

Every one of us can look back and remember when we failed, made a wrong decision, or reacted inappropriately. A sense of failure can crush us and lead us into spiritual darkness. This promise in Isa 54 says we can never go too far for God to not pick us up again, forgive, restore, and perhaps lead us into a new and more effective ministry which would not have been possible without the failure. What a marvelous God we serve! Regardless of our past mistakes, God has a "Plan A" for each one of us.<sup>2</sup>

Ellen White states, "We know altogether too little of the greatness of the love and compassion of God."<sup>3</sup> Failure is covered with compassion. What love this is!

5. There is fruit for the harvester. God promises in Isa 54:11-13,

"O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires. I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones. All your sons will be taught by the LORD, and great will be your children's peace."

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 288-89.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 289.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students Regarding Christian Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1943), 455.

These are beautiful, poetic verses. At first reading their meaning may seem a bit obscure, but let us examine them further. The imagery of the jewels and precious stones seems to be a glorious preview of the New Jerusalem in Rev 21. We observe victory over the evil one being described in these verses. In other parts of Scripture, twelve stones on the breastplate of the high priest represent the twelve sons or tribes of Israel. These stones clearly represent tribes and people.

Could it be that the stones described here by Isaiah are also referring to the harvest, the fruitage of the preached and witnessed gospel? The sapphires, the rubies, the sparkling jewels—could they be the fruit from every nation from throughout the 10/40 Window and every other nation of the world and island of the sea? Perhaps. What a glorious picture!

“All your sons will be taught of the LORD, and great will be your children’s peace” (Isa 54:13). “Sons” includes those who are young of years, but does not refer to them exclusively. All who come to God the Father through Jesus are “sons . . . taught of the LORD.” Jews and all others who will respond to the saving blood of Jesus are included as “sons.”

Finally, as parents who have been called to be harvesters, we claim the promise that “All your sons [and daughters] will be taught of the LORD, and great will be your children’s peace.” I praise the Lord for children who love the Lord and are preparing for the return of Jesus. They indeed have a most precious gift—peace.

6. Protection is promised. God promises us further in Isa 54:15,17,

“If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing; whoever attacks you will surrender to you. . . . No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the LORD.

We are involved in the greatest and most bitterly fought war ever to be waged. *The Great Controversy*, by Ellen White,<sup>1</sup> describes in graphic detail the culmination of this great struggle between righteousness and evil. The enemy will not surrender his final grip on his crumbling empire until the King of kings breaks through the clouds in glory. Every stronghold, every bunker, every sinful heart is and will be a battlefield. Wounds and casualties will be severe. Prior to those final moments, suffering and martyrdom are our expected lot. Yet we have the promise of supernatural protection in it all. Isa 54:17 says, “No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you.”

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan: The Conflict of the Ages in the Christian Dispensation* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1950).

### **Conclusion**

In the words of Jesus, as recorded in John 16:33, we are reminded, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” God’s protection is assured, for Jesus overcame the world. We are privileged to be a part of the final events of this old world. With this responsibility comes the assurance that in Jesus we will be conquerors.

As we by the grace of God enlarge the tent, lengthen the cords, and strengthen the stakes, these six promises are for each harvester.

Fear is removed, Christ is united with us, purpose is redefined, failures are covered with God’s matchless compassion, fruitage for the harvester is assured, and protection is promised. With these promises clearly in focus, let us prayerfully begin the study for this forum entitled “Millennium and Prophecy.” May we each become more effective harvesters for the Kingdom of God as the result of this study and our time together.



AASS 2 (1999): 59-67  
Devotional talk given during the  
1999 AIIAS Theological Forum: Millennium and Prophecy  
August 4-7, 1999

## ARE YOU PREPARED?

VIOLETO F. BOCALA  
President  
Southern Asia-Pacific Division  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

As we face the final conflict between good and evil, there will be more and more manifestations of supernatural power. “Satan is marshalling his hosts; and are we individually prepared for the fearful conflict that is just before us? Are we preparing our children for the great crisis?”<sup>1</sup>

### False Christs Working Miracles

Chapter 24 of the Gospel of Matthew is a chapter on the signs of the second coming of Christ. Christ enumerated those signs while He was with His disciples on the Mount of Olives. It is interesting to note that the first signs He mentioned are happening in many places of the world and have resulted in many believers following other Christs. Let us take a look at the words of Jesus in Matt 24:3-5:

And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately saying, Tell us when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home: Counsels to Seventh-day Adventist Families as Set Forth in the Writings of Ellen G White* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), 18.

The first sign that Jesus gave is the appearance of many who will claim to be Christ. Satan knows that the people of God are eagerly looking forward to that blessed hope of “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). Therefore, by doing miracles and claiming to be Christ, he will lead astray those who are ignorant of the Scriptures. Jesus repeated the warning against this deception over and over again in Matt 24. Note the following passages:

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. (v. 11)

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert: go not forth; or behold, he is in the secret chambers: believe it not. (vv. 23-26)

Ellen G. White tells us that Satan will even imitate certain aspects of the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ. If we rely only on Matt 24:27, which states that Christ will come with the brightness of His glory that fills the whole world and is as bright as lightning that can be seen from the east to the west, I am afraid that Satan could deceive us.

Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world's Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures.

As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear as though Christ has come. In different parts of the earth Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: “Christ has come! Christ has come!” The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people; and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to

listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion.<sup>1</sup>

The apostle Paul gave advance warning in 2 Cor 11:14,15:

And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

### **Seducing Spirits and Doctrines of Devils**

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul issued another important warning: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils” (1 Tim 4:1). How can we identify these deceptions of the enemy?

#### **The Seducing Spirits**

Ellen G. White has many passages on the seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. The seducing spirits will work miracles to deceive people and make them accept the doctrines of devils. I want to identify two erroneous doctrines of devils. But before I do that, let us discover also how the seducing spirits work miracles. Here are three quotations about the seducing spirits and doctrines of devils:

As trials thicken around us, both separation and unity will be seen in our ranks. . . . Those who have had great light and precious privileges, but have not improved them will, under one pretext or another, go out from us. Not having received the love of the truth, they will be taken in the delusions of the enemy; they will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and will depart from the faith.<sup>2</sup>

When the law of God is made void, the church will be sifted by fiery trials, and a larger proportion than we now anticipate will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.<sup>3</sup>

We have reached the perils of the last days, when some, yes, many, shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. Be cautious in regard to what you read and how you hear. Take not a particle of interest in spiritualistic theories. Satan is waiting to steal a march upon every one who allows

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan: The Conflict of the Ages in the Christian Dispensation* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1950), 624-25.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 6:400-401.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1946), 361.

himself to be deceived by his hypnotism. He begins to exert his power over them just as soon as they begin to investigate his theories.<sup>1</sup>

How do the seducing spirits perform miracles? Ellen G. White offers some answers here as well:

Through the agency of spiritualism miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed. And as the spirits will profess faith in the Bible, and manifest respect for the institutions of the church, their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine power.<sup>2</sup>

Through spiritualism, Satan appears as a benefactor of the race, healing the diseases of the people, and professing to present a new and exalted system of religious faith; but at the same time he works as a destroyer. His temptations are leading multitudes to ruin.<sup>3</sup>

The time will come, Christ tells us of, when many deceivers will go forth, declaring themselves to be Christ. The Saviour says, Go ye not after them. We need not be deceived. Wonderful scenes, with which Satan will be closely connected, will soon take place. God's word declares that Satan will work miracles. He will make people sick, and then will suddenly remove from them his satanic power. They will then be regarded as healed. These works of apparent healing will bring Seventh-day Adventists to the test. Many who have had great light will fail to walk in the light, because they have not become one with Christ.<sup>4</sup>

These reputed wonder-working activities constitute a false manifestation of the "loud cry" of Rev 14:9-11, an imitation of the latter rain. Joel 2:23 speaks of the former and the latter rain. Please note that the verse says that the former rain will be given "moderately." And then in vv. 28-29 we see the effect of the outpouring of the latter rain: "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and so upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit."

Ellen White clearly reveals to us the meaning of the former and latter rains:

In the East the former rain falls at the sowing time. It is necessary in order that the seed may germinate. Under the influence of the fertilizing showers, the tender shoot springs up. The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry: A Treatise on Medical Missionary Work in the Gospel* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1963), 101-2.

<sup>2</sup>White, *Great Controversy*, 588.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 589.

<sup>4</sup>Ellen G. White to "Our Leading Medical Workers" in Battle Creek, Michigan, 12 November 1903 (Battle Creek Letters B-57-04, Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD).



grain, and prepares it for the sickle. The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

The former rain was given at the time of the early Christian church on the day of Pentecost. That was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in which genuine miracles accompanied the ministry of the people of God. That was necessary for the growth of the seed of Christianity. And Joel says it was given moderately. The latter rain will be the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in greater abundance “near the close of the season,” to ripen the grain and prepare it for the sickle.

The outpouring of the latter rain will result in the “Loud Cry.” The loud voice of the proclamation of the gospel will be heard throughout the whole world. The witnessing of God’s people will be more powerful because of the Holy Spirit that is working with them. The day of Pentecost will be repeated, at which time many genuine miracles will accompany the proclamation of the gospel. And it will be in greater magnitude than that of the former rain. The Loud Cry is the last warning message to the world before the close of probation. It will be near the close of the season to prepare the field for the harvest. Jesus said, “The harvest is the end of the world” (Matt 13:39).

God has honest children among the fallen churches of Babylon. And before the close of probation, before the seven last plagues are poured out, many ministers and members of these fallen churches will be enlightened and will gladly receive the truth.<sup>2</sup> Jesus said, “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:16). Commenting on this situation, Ellen White wrote,

Satan knows this; and before the loud cry of the third angel is given, he raises an excitement in these religious bodies, that those who have rejected the truth may think that God is with them. He hopes to deceive the honest and lead them to think that God is still working for the churches. But the light will shine, and all who are honest will leave the fallen churches, and take their stand with the remnant.<sup>3</sup>

It is very clear that before the outpouring of the latter rain, Satan will steal a march, and the seducing spirits will work miracles through spiritualism, through the church system, claiming belief in the Bible, and they will ascribe their miracles to the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the false Loud Cry.

If we study carefully the writings of Ellen White, we will know that the Loud Cry will occur after the passing of a national Sunday law. The Beast from the earth (Rev 13:11-17), which represents Protestant America, will initiate it, forming an

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1962), 506.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, *Early Writings of Ellen G. White* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1945), 261.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

image to the first Beast, and the whole world will follow. Hence, the Sunday law will begin in the United States as a national Sunday law before it becomes a universal Sunday law.

The timing here is very important. The true Loud Cry will come after the national Sunday law. The miracle healings and the speaking in tongues, which are imitations of Pentecost that are happening now, are in reality the false loud cry. They are the work of seducing spirits, the work of Satan to deceive, if possible, even the very elect. Satan will try to imitate many of the miracles that God has done for His people.

During the time of Elijah, at his ministry on Mount Carmel, fire came down from heaven. Rev 13:13 tells us that this kind of sign will be repeated. Jesus and His disciples healed many diseases. The present false Loud Cry is doing this also. At Pentecost, the members of the early Christian church were enabled by the Holy Spirit to speak in different tongues. This too claims to be happening today. It appears to be like the work of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, but careful scrutiny will reveal that the spurious is different from the genuine. Please read Acts 2:1,4-11.

Pentecost is the festival that the Jews celebrate every year in gratitude for the abundant spring harvest. It was on the day of that feast, after the ascension of Jesus Christ, that the former rain was poured out. Acts 2:4 says that "they were filled with the Holy Ghost." Verse 5 says that in Jerusalem at that time there were many devout Jews that came from every nation under heaven to celebrate the feast of Pentecost.

That was a golden opportunity for the early Christian church to proclaim the gospel. The message would spread throughout the known world because there were Jews "out of every nation under heaven." They were born and grew up in foreign lands. They could not understand the language in Jerusalem. Hence, God, through the Holy Spirit, enabled the early Christian church members to speak in the languages of those people from other countries so that they would fully understand the message. Note vv. 7-8: "And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?"

Everybody had complete understanding of what was spoken. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the early Christians were able to effectively communicate the gospel in foreign languages. Verses 9-11 list sixteen countries from which people came. Read vv. 22-36 and you will notice that Peter in his preaching emphasized that Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, was the Messiah. Verses 37-41 tell us the victory of the gospel—three thousand were baptized in one day.

The point that I want to drive home is that in the true Pentecostal speaking in tongues, the speaker understands what he is speaking and the listeners understand also what they hear. What about the speaking in tongues today by the charismatic movement? The one speaking in tongues is somewhat hypnotized. He does not know what he is talking about. His tongue is out of control. How about the

listeners? Do they understand? No. The speaker does not even understand what he is talking about; even less the listeners. Here is what the Scripture counsels us with regard to speaking in tongues, "For God is not the author of confusion. . . . Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor 14:33,40).

Let me emphasize again that the present charismatic movement is the false Loud Cry. It is the work of seducing spirits.

One very important thing for us to consider is, if the false Loud Cry is now happening, what will follow? Yes, the true Loud Cry is just around the corner. Are we ready for the final conflict? These seducing spirits are now at work to influence the rulers and dignitaries of this world. This is to prepare for Armageddon, the final conflict between good and evil. Rev 16:13-14 says,

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Ellen White describes this threefold union:

When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near.<sup>1</sup>

What are these "papal falsehoods and delusions," and why are they so readily accepted? It is the phenomena of signs and miracles that leads the world to accept doctrines of devils. "Papists, who boast of miracles as a certain sign of the true church, will be readily deceived by this wonder-working power; and Protestants, having cast away the shield of truth, will also be deluded."<sup>2</sup>

### **Doctrines of Devils**

Let me present to you two doctrines accepted by the world today as truth. One originated in Eden; the other came from the pagan world, was adopted by the Roman power, and was propagated to the Christian world.

<sup>1</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:451.

<sup>2</sup>White, *Great Controversy*, 588.

Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome.<sup>1</sup>

Those who accept the doctrine of the immortality of the soul can easily be deceived by seducing spirits. When Satan will impersonate Christ, work miracles, and proclaim the change of the Sabbath to Sunday, they will readily accept it.

Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. . . . Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism.<sup>2</sup>

Spiritualism is communication with the spirits as the source of help. And those who believe in the doctrine of the devil about the immortality of the soul, which was first introduced to Eve in the garden of Eden (Gen 3:4), accept that the spirits or souls of the dead live on after death and one can communicate with them. Satan made that the foundation for his masterpiece of deception.

### **Be Ready for the Final Conflict**

“As we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study.”<sup>3</sup>

Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. Every element of power is about to be set to work. Past history will be repeated; old controversies will arouse to new life, and peril will beset God’s people on every side. Intensity is taking hold of the human family. It is permeating everything upon the earth.<sup>4</sup>

Ellen White wrote already in 1854, “I saw that God’s people are on the enchanted ground, and that some have lost nearly all sense of the shortness of time and the worth of the soul.”<sup>5</sup>

Let me reiterate the timing and the sequence of events. The false Loud Cry comes ahead of the true Loud Cry. The Loud Cry of the third angel’s message will come after the national Sunday law, which has not come yet. Therefore, all those miracles today ascribed as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit are spurious. The time of the latter rain has not come yet. Ellen White clearly outlines the sequence of events. Let us not be deceived.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 561.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1941), 133.

<sup>4</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1962), 116.

<sup>5</sup>White, *Evangelism*, 139.

Our success will depend on carrying forward the work in the simplicity in which Christ carried it forward.<sup>1</sup>

The way in which Christ worked was to preach the word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way, for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God's servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.<sup>2</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Our only defense against the onslaught of Satan is to be fortified by the word of God.

“Search the Scriptures.” Study your Bible as you have never studied it before. Unless you arise to a higher, holier state in your religious life, you will not be ready for the appearing of our Lord.<sup>3</sup>

Our enemy is more powerful than we are. We cannot overcome him by our own power. It is only by abiding in Christ that we will be victorious.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. (James 4:7-8)

And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. (Ps 50:15)

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. (1 Pet 5:7)

God loves this church. He loves you and me. Let us stay close to Him and be shielded from the wiles of Satan.

<sup>1</sup>White, *Early Writings*, 120.

<sup>2</sup>White, *Medical Ministry*, 14.

<sup>3</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:717.



*AASS 2 (1999): 69-76*  
*Devotional talk given during the*  
*1999 AIIAS Theological Forum: Millennium and Prophecy*  
*August 4-7, 1999*

## LEST WE FORGET

G. T. NG  
Dean, Theological Seminary  
AIIAS

Forgetfulness is a problem for some people. Sometimes you find yourself in the middle of the stairway, and you can't remember if you are downstairs going up or upstairs going down.

An old man met an old lady, and they fell in love. One day, the old man gathered up all his courage and asked the old lady to marry him. She said "Yes."

When the old man got home, he remembered asking the old lady to marry him, but he couldn't remember whether she had said "Yes" or "No." Rather embarrassed that he had forgotten, he decided not to mention marriage to her again.

After a few weeks, it bothered the old man so much that he gathered up enough courage to ask the old lady what the answer was that she gave when he asked her to marry him. The old lady shouted with glee and said, "I'm so glad you asked! Some man asked me to marry him a few weeks ago, and I said "Yes," but I couldn't remember who it was that asked me!"

Someone once said that the most effective way to remember your wife's birthday is to forget it once. I am glad the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles did not forget. They were in focus. Their eyes were on the coming Kingdom.

### **Patriarchs and Prophets**

#### **Enoch**

Enoch did not forget. Enoch had the courage back then to preach the Lord's return. He lived seven generations this side of Adam. Enoch prophesied, "Behold,

the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints” (Jude 14).<sup>1</sup> Enoch had the courage to preach the second coming about five thousand years ago.

### **Job**

Job did not forget either. Job is one of the very early Bible characters. He affirmed positively, “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God” (Job 19:25-26).

### **David**

David did not forget. He proclaimed vigorously, “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him” (Ps 50:3). David apparently saw in vision the glory of the coming of the Lord. He said that God will come and will not keep quiet.

### **Joel**

Joel did not forget. Joel said that the voice of God will come from above, and will shake the heavens as the whole earth trembles at His coming: “The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel” (Joel 3:16).

### **Isaiah**

Isaiah did not forget. Referring to the day when Jesus comes, he said, “He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces” (Isa 25:8). I’ll be so glad when God will finally wipe away all the tears, won’t you? I find a lot of sorrow in this world: many heartaches, many homes that are going on the rocks. I am glad that the day is coming when the Lord will take away all sorrow, wipe away all tears. It shall be said in that day, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation” (Isa 25:9).

The patriarchs and prophets did not forget. They were in focus. Their eyes were on the coming Kingdom.

<sup>1</sup>Except as noted, Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version.



## Apostles

### Paul

In the NT, we find that the Second Advent is the focus of the apostles' writings. Paul did not forget. The Second Advent was central to Paul's teaching and preaching. Paul considered Christ's return "the blessed hope" (Titus 2:13; cf. Heb 9:28). Seven times Paul referred to the advent of Christ by means of the term *parousia*, which gives the twin meanings of presence and arrival. The word also connotes power and victory. *Parousia* implies the complete and final victory of Christ over sin and death. "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thess 4:16).

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" (1 Cor 15:51-55)

### Peter

Peter did not forget. He said affirmatively that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2 Pet 3:10).

### James

James did not forget. James liked to deal with practical ethics, but he never lost sight of the Second Advent.

Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. (James 5:7-8)

### John

John the Revelator did not forget. He portrays Christ as riding on a white horse accompanied by innumerable armies of heaven (Rev 19:11-16). He also announces, "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even

they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him” (Rev 1:7).

## Modern Movements

### Harvard University

Like the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles of old, the Puritans did not forget their faith in Jesus as the coming King. Because of persecution, they fled England. Some sought refuge in Holland, while others found a home in the New World. To them, liberty of conscience was more important than safety and livelihood.

One of the pilgrims, a minister by the name of John Harvard, had a burden for the education of the clergy. He donated his books and half of his estate in order to establish a seminary.<sup>1</sup> The original charter states,

After God had carried us safe to New England and we had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, rear'd convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government: One of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present ministers shall lie in the dust.<sup>2</sup>

The year was 1637, sixteen years after the arrival of the pilgrims at Plymouth. The seminary grew into a university and later became known as Harvard University, the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States. It is also one of the most prestigious universities in the world. Today it boasts an enrollment of more than eighteen thousand students. It has two undergraduate schools and ten graduate and professional schools in arts and sciences, design, divinity, education, law, government, business administration, dental medicine, medicine, and public health. In addition, thirteen thousand students are enrolled in one or more courses in the Harvard Extension School.

Despite its prominence, Harvard University had a humble beginning. The university actually started out as a ministerial training school. The purpose for establishing Harvard was to educate pastors and religious leaders.

The seminary followed the Puritan philosophy of the first colonists.<sup>3</sup> The curriculum included the Scriptures, Syriac, Greek, Latin, mathematics, physics, astronomy, politics, ethics, and logic. Each student was required to read the Old

<sup>1</sup>F. O. Vaille and H. A. Clark, *Harvard Book: A Series of Historical, Biographical, and Descriptive Sketches* (Cambridge, MA: University Press, 1875), 1:25.

<sup>2</sup>“The Harvard Guide,” available from <http://www.news.harvard.edu/guide/intro/index.html>; Internet; accessed 4 July 1999.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

and New Testaments in the original languages. Many early graduates became ministers in Puritan congregations throughout New England.

Today, the Harvard Divinity School has one of the lowest enrollments (about five hundred) among the schools. Have they forgotten something important?

### **Yale University**

Another university in the Ivy League is Yale University, also established by pastors and begun as a seminary. To found Yale in 1701, ten Connecticut clergymen donated their books to establish the new college. Yale was intended to be a place “wherein youth, through the blessing of Almighty God, may be fitted for public employment both in church and civil state.”<sup>1</sup>

Today, out of the total enrollment of eleven thousand, Yale University has less than three hundred enrolled in the Divinity School. Has Yale forgotten something?

### **Princeton University**

Princeton University has a similar history. In the 1700s a widespread religious revival swept America, called the Great Awakening. The revival challenged the established churches and their theologies, and swelled the ranks of new groups such as the Baptists and Presbyterians. The Great Awakening also provided impetus for the founding of a new generation of colleges to train ministers. One of them was Princeton University founded in 1746 by revivalist Presbyterians.

Princeton University celebrated 250 years of existence in 1996. Reverend Aaron Burr, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Newark, New Jersey, became the first president. The third president, Presbyterian luminary Jonathan Edwards, had led the Great Awakening movement in the 1730s and 1740s. This movement emphasized the importance of individual decision and conversion and also encouraged education. That is how Princeton University was born.

Harvard, Yale, and Princeton Universities were all established by the clergy—Harvard by the Puritans and Princeton by the Presbyterians. They started as seminaries. Today, are they still the keepers of the flame of their original mandates? Are they still true and loyal to the charters for which the seminaries were founded? Is the same vigor and vision still being maintained? Or have they forgotten?

### **Seventh-day Adventists**

How about us Seventh-day Adventists as a people? Do we remember our roots? Are we still keepers of the flame which our pioneers treasured so much?

<sup>1</sup>“Yale Divinity School,” available from <http://www.yale.edu/divinity/ayds/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 5 July 1999.

William Miller and the other early Adventists never intended to create a new church. In fact, the Adventist pioneers were not sure if they should organize themselves. Many were against formal ecclesiastical organization, fearing that a church would become Babylon the moment it was organized.<sup>1</sup> Yet, having no legal body was not an ideal situation either. In the absence of a formal organization, some local congregations incorporated the properties either in the name of the believer providing the site or in the name of the local congregation. Some called themselves the "Church of Christ's Second Advent," others "The Church of the Living God." As it turned out, the believers were "compelled" to organize themselves because of the need for legal ownership of properties.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, a committee of three was appointed to give further study to the matter and propose a name for the church.<sup>3</sup> The committee reported at the next session that they were not able to resolve the issue on the name, but proposed that a legal association be set up. Not until the fifth session was the issue of a name settled. The believers had called themselves "the Brethren," "the Little Flock," "the Remnant People," "Sabbathkeepers," "Believers in the Second Advent," and "the Church of God."<sup>4</sup> The last name aroused quite a bit of discussion among the believers. Some thought the name was too arrogant; others brought up the fact that the name had already been used by other groups; still others said a more distinctive name should be chosen and proposed the name "Seventh-day Adventist." Ellen White supported the latter name saying,

<sup>1</sup>See Arthur Spalding, *Origin and History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1961), 291. See also Anne Devereaux Jordan, *The Seventh-day Adventists: A History* (New York: Hippocrene, 1988), 59.

<sup>2</sup>R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1979), 93.

<sup>3</sup>Schwarz believes the meeting on 29 September 1860 was probably the most significant meeting sabbatarian Adventists had ever held. Joseph Bates served as the chairman and Uriah Smith as secretary. *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>4</sup>Spalding, 302. J. N. Loughborough opposed the name "The Church of God" and sided with "Seventh-day Adventist." "I think the name 'Seventh-day Adventists' is the most natural and appropriate name we could take. In Hillsdale I came across a handbill that was used there some four years ago when our brethren were going to have a conference there. It reads, 'There will be a conference of the *Seventh-day Advent* people held in Waldron's Hall.' &c. This name I suppose was used in the handbill because everybody would know at once who it meant. Again, it had been proposed that we should be called 'The Church of God.' While we were at Gilboa a friend attended the meeting from Findlay, and became much interested. . . . Bro. W[aggoner] asked him what church he belonged to. Church of God was the reply. What, Winnebrenarians? 'No; Church of God.' Dunkers? 'No; Church of God.' Here was a poser; a man that belonged to the Church of God, but we had to find out who he belonged to, of somebody else; for the name 'Church of God' was not enough to tell us who he was. Neither would the name Church of God alone tell others who we are." J. N. Loughborough, "Eastern Tour," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald (ARSH)*, 13 November 1860, 204.

The name Seventh-day Adventist carries the true features of our faith in front, and will convict the inquiring mind. Like an arrow from the Lord's quiver, it will wound the transgressors of God's law, and will lead to repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

With affirmation from Ellen White, the name "Seventh-day Adventist" was finally adopted on 1 October 1860.<sup>2</sup> From that humble inception, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has become a worldwide movement. The pioneers had always felt a sense of mission. They were always mindful of their roots in prophecy, "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (Rev 10:11 AV). Today the church has grown. We have schools, hospitals, publishing houses, and food factories. We have come of age. But have we also become forgetful? Have we forgotten our roots?

### Conclusion

A man stopped at a rural gas station, and after filling his tank, he paid the bill and bought a soft drink. As he stood by his car, drinking his soda, he noticed a couple of men working along the roadside. One man would dig a hole two or three feet deep and then move on. The other man came along behind and filled in the hole. While one was digging a new hole, the other was about ten meters behind filling in the dug holes. Unable to contain his curiosity, the man with the soda walked over to where the two men were working. "Hold it, hold it!" he exclaimed. "Can you tell me what's going on here with this digging?"

"Well, we work for the government," one of the men said.

"But one of you is digging a hole and the other fills it up. You are not accomplishing anything. Aren't you wasting the government's money?"

"You don't understand, mister," one of the men said, leaning on his shovel and wiping his brow. "Normally there are three of us—me, Rodney, and Mike. I dig the hole, Rodney sticks in the tree, and Mike here puts the soil back. Now just because Rodney's sick, that doesn't mean that Mike and me can't work."

All too often our work for the Lord falls into the latter category. We have good intentions and think we are doing something important for the advancement of the cause of Christ. In reality, we busy ourselves with peripherals. The Great Commission sometimes becomes the 'great commotion' or even the 'great omission'! We tend to forget the reasons for our existence. We easily lose sight of

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948) 1:224.

<sup>2</sup>Other discussions of the denominational name or reference to a proposed name may be found in "Making Us a Name" and "Meetings in Parkville, Michigan," *ARSH*, 29 May 1860, 8-9; "I Want the *Review* Discontinued," *ARSH*, 25 September 1860, 148; "Constitution," *ARSH*, 23 October 1860, 178-79; "The Action of the Conference," *ARSH*, 30 October 1860, 189; "Western Tour," *ARSH*, 6 November 1860, 196; "Meeting in Northern Iowa," *ARSH*, 11 June 1861, 22.

the central purpose of the Adventist Church, which is to fulfil the gospel commission. God forbid that we should forget!

A little boy who lived far out in the country in the late 1800s had reached the age of twelve without ever seeing a circus. You can imagine his excitement when, one day, a poster went up at school announcing that on the next Sunday a traveling circus would be coming to the nearby town. He ran home with the glad news and the question, "Daddy, can I go?"

Although the family was poor, the father sensed how important this was to the child. "If you do your Sunday chores ahead of time," he said, "I'll see to it that you have the money to go."

Come Sunday morning, the chores were done and the little boy stood by the breakfast table dressed in his best clothes. His father reached down into his pocket and pulled out a dollar bill—the most money the little boy had possessed at one time in all his life. The father cautioned him to be careful, then sent him on his way to town.

The boy was so excited, his feet hardly seemed to touch the ground all the way. As he neared the outskirts of the village, he noticed people lining the streets. He worked his way through the crowd until he could see what was happening. It was the approaching spectacle of a circus parade!

The parade was the grandest thing this child had ever seen. Caged animals snarled as they passed, bands played shiny horns to the rhythm of beating drums, midgets performed acrobatics, while flags and ribbons swirled overhead. Finally, after everything had passed where he was standing, the traditional circus clown with floppy shoes, baggy pants, and a brightly painted face brought up the rear. As the clown passed by, the little boy reached into his pocket and took out that precious dollar bill. Handing the money to the clown, the boy turned around and went home. That innocent, unfortunate, provincial boy had thought that he had seen the circus when he had only seen the parade!

Theological education is only a means to an end, not an end in itself. Organizations, too, must function as means. Activities and projects are means, not ends in themselves. The church must have a concrete mission by which it directs its activities. The Adventist mission as an end-time movement must become a part of our prophetic consciousness.

Enoch remembered. So did David, Joel, Isaiah, Paul, Peter, James, and John. So did the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. God forbid that we should suffer from historical amnesia. We too must remember. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev 22:20).

*AASS 2 (1999): 77-83*

*Paper presented during the*

*1999 AIIAS Theological Forum: Millennium and Prophecy*

*August 4-7, 1999*

## **THE END OF THE WORLD SHOW: A SHORT HISTORY OF MILLENNIUMISM**

**BARRY OLIVER**

**Executive Secretary**

**South Pacific Division**

**General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists**

On Wednesday evening, 28 July 1999, an unprecedented event occurred. A program entitled "Seven Signs of Christ's Return" was broadcast during prime time by Australia's leading commercial television network. People who do not live in Australia and who do not have an experiential awareness of the particular brand of secularism that is endemic in Australian culture and society may not find that event particularly noteworthy. Those of us who have lived there most of our lives have found it mind boggling. Religious programming just does not happen during prime time on the major commercial networks in Australia.

Commenting on the significance of the broadcast, Nat Devenish, previously the manager of the South Pacific Division Media Centre and, as such, the person responsible for negotiating time slots for programming Adventist media productions, stated that he recalled a conversation with the manager of the same network in which the manager stated that "even if you were to give me a million dollars I would not put a religious program in prime time."<sup>1</sup>

This radical change in thinking has been brought about by the colossal upsurge of community interest in the coming new millennium and the end of the world. While this paper will devote its attention primarily to the phenomenon among those who espouse Christianity, it must be noted that it is by no means confined there.

The title of this paper has been adapted from the title of an article that appeared in London's *Sunday Times* just four weeks ago.<sup>2</sup> The article was written

<sup>1</sup>Nat Devenish is currently the Associate Secretary of the South Pacific Division. The Media Centre is managed at present by John Banks.

<sup>2</sup>Margaret Driscoll, "It's the End of the World Show," *Sunday Times* (London), 4 July 1999.

on the fourth of July, because Nostradamus had “prophesied that the ‘King of Terror’ would arrive in the seventh month of 1999.”<sup>1</sup> Apparently, somewhere in the prophecy there was reference to an eagle, which led some to believe that the apocalypse of Nostradamus would occur on America’s Independence Day. The author alluded to several quasi-Christian and non-Christian groups who have become obsessed with the new millennium and its supposed connection with the end of the world. The dramatic and wildly diverse nature of the beliefs and activities of the various groups is such that the author called the whole charade “the end of the world show.” She cautions,

As the millennial dawn approaches, a cauldron of prophets and doomsday cults is coming ominously to the boil. . . . The dawn of a new era holds a profound fascination for cults, evangelical Christians and modern soothsayers, which could easily turn dangerous.<sup>2</sup>

It is the purpose of this paper to briefly survey some historical perspectives on millenniumism—the obsession with the change of the millennium and end-of-the-world thinking—particularly in the years leading up to A.D. 1000, and to make some observations about some evidence of speculative milleniumism in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today.

### **Millenniumism Leading up to A.D. 1000**

Consider the following news item which might reflect the prevailing mood in Canterbury, England, in A.D. 999:

An atmosphere close to panic prevails today throughout Europe as the millennial year 1000 approaches, bringing with it the so-called ‘Y1K Bug,’ a menace which, until recently, hardly anyone had ever heard of. Prophets of doom are warning that the entire fabric of Western Civilization, based as it now is upon monastic computations, could collapse, and that there is simply not enough time left to fix the problem.

Just how did this disaster-in-the-making ever arise? Why did no one anticipate that a change from a three-digit to a four-digit year would throw into total disarray all liturgical chants and all metrical verse in which any date is mentioned? Every formulaic hymn, prayer, ceremony, and incantation dealing with dated events will have to be rewritten to accommodate three extra syllables. All tabular chronologies with three-space year columns, maintained for generations by scribes using carefully hand-ruled lines on vellum sheets, will now have to be converted to four-space columns, at enormous cost.

In the meantime, the validity of every official event, from baptisms to burials, from confirmations to coronations, may be called into question. “We should have

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



seen it coming," says Brother Cedric of St. Michael Abbey here in Canterbury. "What worries me most is that 'thousand' contains the word 'thou,' which occurs in nearly all our prayers, and of course always refers to God. Using it now in the name of the year will seem almost blasphemous, and is bound to cause terrible confusion. Of course, we could always use Latin, but that might be even worse—the Latin word for 'thousand' is *mille*, which is the same as the Latin for 'mile'. We won't know whether we're talking about time or distance!"

Stonemasons are already reportedly threatening to demand a proportional pay increase for having to carve an extra numeral in all dates on tombstones, cornerstones, and monuments. Together with its inevitable ripple effects, this alone could plunge the hitherto stable medieval economy into chaos.

A conference of clerics has been called at Winchester to discuss the entire issue, but doomsayers are convinced that the matter is now one of personal survival. Many families, in expectation of the worst, are stocking up on holy water and indulgences.

What we have in this light-hearted look at the Y2K problem is a reading back into history of the supposition that the events surrounding the dawning of the year 2000 and the new millennium are somehow a reworking of events that foreshadowed the year 1000 and the second Christian millennium. Historians are divided as to whether such a supposition is justified.

In his book *The End of Time: Faith and Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium*, Damian Thompson recounts the story of a community of monks in Lotharingia who were celebrating Easter in the year 1000. Two events occurred which, it is attested, moved that small community of monks mightily: the earth was shaken with a "vast and general tremor," and soon afterward, a comet appeared in the sky and remained visible for three months. These events were interpreted as signs of impending final judgment.<sup>1</sup>

Numerous historians have endeavored to demonstrate that the "terrors of the year 1000," as they were labeled by some, inspired all sorts of apocalyptic expectations. One nineteenth-century historian supposed that thousands of people had been inspired to abandon their family and friends and hurry to Jerusalem to witness the Second Coming.

Buildings of every sort were suffered to fall into ruins. It was thought useless to repair them, when the end of the world was so near. . . . [People were] looking with fearful eyes upon the sky, which they expected each moment to open, to let the Son of God descend in his glory.<sup>2</sup>

Jules Michelet, a noted nineteenth-century French historian found some evidence of terror and expectation for a new world order around A.D. 1000. One wonders, however, if

<sup>1</sup>See Damian Thompson, *The End of Time: Faith and Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium* (London: Sinclair-Thompson, 1996), 35-36.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Mackay, *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of the Crowds* (London: n.p., 1852), 257-58, quoted in Thompson, 36.

his "discoveries" had more to do with his socialist philosophies and biases than with the reality and enormity of the situation. He wrote,

The captive expected it in his gloomy dungeon. . . . The serf expected it whilst tracing the furrow under the shadow of his lord's hated tower. The monk expected it amidst the privations of the cloister, amidst the solitary tumults of his heart, amidst temptations and backslidings, repentances and strange visions.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the assertions of these and other historians, it seems unlikely that the "terrors of the year 1000" were as graphic and as widespread as has been supposed by some. Certainly it appears that linking the year with the Second Coming was virtually unknown in the literature of the time. Thompson states that the only tenth-century writer who links the Second Coming with the year 1000 appears to have been the theologian Abbo of Fleury, who did so to dismiss the idea.<sup>2</sup>

That Abbo of Fleury should act to dismiss the notion of any connection between millennial speculation and the Second Coming of Christ should make sense to the alert student of history and theology, of course. Roman Catholic teaching was not and is not premillennialist. Nor, for that matter, is it postmillennialist. It would more correctly be described as amillennialist.<sup>3</sup> Taking its cue from Augustine, the Roman Church has always seen reference to one thousand years as purely figurative. That being the case, the Church could not have been at all enamored by those who taught that the world would end in the year 1000, and more than likely would have strongly opposed those who attempted to suggest that the end was near. Any adherent who ventured out to wait expectantly for some apocalyptic event to occur on the night of 31 December 1999 would in the eyes of the Church have been advertising for all to see their open disregard for the sacred teachings of the Church.

But even if there were at that time those who may have dared to speak against the Church and proclaim a literal return of Christ in the year 1000, it is likely that the date would have passed without incident because it is probable that the vast majority of people did not know what year it was anyway. The A.D. system as we know it was not then universal. Many were still dating significant events by local regnal calendars. The poor peasant who did the bidding of his feudal lord was totally ignorant of and completely unconcerned about any significance of the year 1000.

Having said all that, however, one cannot escape the notion that there was more than likely some significance placed on the dawning of the new millennium, at least in continental Europe. This notion persists in spite of the reality that much

<sup>1</sup>Jules Michelet, *History of France* (n.p.: Whittaker & Co., 1844), 143-44, quoted in Thompson, 36.

<sup>2</sup>Thompson, 37-38.

<sup>3</sup>For a brief discussion of premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism see Darrell L. Bock, ed., *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999).

of what occurred is shrouded in almost total obscurity. Thompson alludes to a peace movement in southern France which began in the 990s and which, he asserts, had the hallmarks of an authentic millennialist movement. He recounts that the monk from St. Amand of Lobbes in Lotharingia, who carefully recorded the date and time of the earthquake, added these cryptic words: "For these, and other signs which were foretold as necessary, having been fulfilled, from here already our hope grows more certain of those things which remain to be completed in order."<sup>1</sup> It would be difficult to interpret these words other than as having some very specific reference, especially given the care with which the monk apparently recorded the date of the earthquake: "in the year of the incarnation 1000, indiction 13, epacts 12, concurrents 1, paschal term 9, the 4th of the kalends of April, the sixth day."<sup>2</sup>

In summary then, it is likely that, for the monks of Lotharingia, the crowds who were shouting "Peace, peace" in the fields of France, the pilgrims who rushed to Jerusalem in 1033 to celebrate 1000 years since Christ's resurrection, and perhaps many others of similar persuasion, the period seems to have aroused different forms of millennial expectation. On the other hand, for the vast majority of the population, particularly in areas where the *anno Domini* calendar was not fully established, the year 1000 was of no significance whatsoever and just like any other year.

### Millenniumism Leading up to AD 2000

While it is necessary to concede that a certain level of mystery surrounds the events of the year 1000, the situation as we face the third millennium of Christian history is very different. Now, with the advantages of modern communications technology and the sophisticated media that are at our disposal, speculation concerning the significance of the new millennium and its connection to prophecies about the return of Christ are endemic. The careful student should be warned, however. Increased interest and increased output do not automatically result in increased authenticity. Indeed many of the popularist versions of events are without factual foundation. In his book published in 1994, Stephen Skinner, referring to events just before the year 1000, speaks of "bands of flagellants" roaming the countryside and of mobs who "called for the execution of supposed sorcerers or unpopular burghers." He states that "some farm animals were freed to roam through the towns, giving a slightly surrealistic air to the proceedings."<sup>3</sup> These things may have happened. Indeed, more than likely, they were part of everyday life in 1000. But to imply that such events were in any way connected with an expectation of impending doom is an exercise akin to the habits of some

<sup>1</sup>Thompson, 48.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Stephen Skinner, *Millennium Prophecies* (New York: Virgin, 1994), 69.

today who want to dramatize and sensationalize everyday events as if the preservation of their faith were contingent on the multiplication of the extraordinary.

Seventh-day Adventists who are living at the dawn of the new millennium, who live in expectation of the imminent return of Jesus Christ, and who are committed to the certainty of a literal, visible parousia need to be especially vigilant to ensure that they do not fall into the trap of allowing apocalyptic speculation of this kind to sway their thinking. There are certainly many scholars who have sought to lay such a charge at our feet. The origins of our church and the predisposition of the Millerites to set dates for the return of Christ are happy hunting grounds for those who wish to do us a disservice.

While we believe there are signs of Christ's return and that Christ himself has made it very clear that we should be alert, the kind of apocalyptic speculation that seems to thrive on the sensational and speculative has no place in authentic Seventh-day Adventism. I am referring to publications such as those, for example, that attempt to make more of the Y2K bug than we can possibly know at the present time. I quote one such publication as follows:

Approximately thirty years ago when the world's mainframe computers were being developed, a bug was deliberately programmed into the information technology systems of the world. It is called the MILLENNIUM BUG. Every mainframe computer system is designed to collapse by January 1, 2000. It is a systematic problem, and many COBOL programmers believe that it cannot be corrected. They also believe that time has run out. In other words we do not have time to correct it. If this is true—and they believe that it is—then the Millennium Bug will be the trigger causing the dominoes to begin to fall, and out of the ashes will rise a NEW WORLDECONOMIC ORDER very similar to that which has been outlined in this brochure.<sup>1</sup>

The generalizations and logical inconsistencies which the author uses in this quotation to attain his argument are unacceptable. Such do not have any place in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The truth is more important than speculation, no matter how desirable the end may be. Means do not justify the ends. The tragedy is that many Seventh-day Adventists are being enticed by just such forms of reasoning and speculation.

Permit me to remind us of three reasons why Seventh-day Adventists must avoid this kind of speculation:

1. Jesus told us clearly in Matt 24:36-44 that the time of His return is not known. To speculate is to engage in a kind of quasi date-setting.

2. Careful students know that no significance can be placed on the years 1000 or 2000 as such, because Jesus was born approximately four years B.C. A monk named Dionysius Exiguus, who drafted the anno Domini calendar, was four

<sup>1</sup>Steps to Life, *Globalism* (Healsville, Victoria, Australia: Maranatha, [1998]), 14-15.

years out in his calculation. In actual fact, the third millennium after Christ's birth has already started.

3. While we earnestly await the return of our Lord and Savior, there is the danger that faith becomes motivated in an unbalanced way by expectation alone. The writers of the NT were very clear that the Christian Church and its faith were to be grounded on the kerygmatic preaching of the apostles. The substance of that preaching was first and foremost the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The person of Jesus Christ, as the incarnated revelation of God, was that which gave substance to faith and grounded the hope of the early Christians. The formula has not changed. Seventh-day Adventists, as an apocalyptic movement of prophecy, must ensure that they remain distinct from every other apocalyptic movement by ensuring that they maintain a balanced theological perspective.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has sought to accomplish two primary objectives. First, it has presented a brief survey of the views of some historians who have reflected on millennial expectation surrounding the year 1000. While there is some evidence to suggest that there was some stirring, the weight of evidence seems to suggest that the date passed without anything like the level of expectation that is being experienced as we approach 2000.

Second, it has suggested that in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, there is no place for apocalyptic speculation which concerns itself with the year 2000. Seventh-day Adventists are to continue to ground their hope in the return of Jesus Christ on the sure word of revelation. To go beyond that which has been revealed is to tread where no authentic Seventh-day Adventist should tread.



*AASS 2 (1999): 85-93*

*Paper presented during the*

*1999 AIIAS Theological Forum: Millennium and Prophecy*

*August 4-7, 1999*

## **NOW IS THE TIME! THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

**EDWIN REYNOLDS**

**Chair, Biblical Studies Department**

**AIIAS Theological Seminary**

Facing the imminent turn of the millennium, we live at a time when eschatology is on many, if not most, people's minds. Further, many expect something dramatic to happen in the year 2000—or 2001. Many Christians are wondering whether or not we should expect Christ to come about the year 2000. Some are already preaching it. We have people within our own community who have taken their children out of school because they sincerely expect Christ to come in the year 2000 and believe it is a waste of time and money for their children to be in school at this point in history. They believe we should be fully engaged in nothing but evangelism now, in view of the imminence of Christ's return. How shall we relate ourselves to these ideas and events? What is the teaching of the NT with regard to such eschatological views? Can we know what God expects of us at such a time as this? We believe in the imminence of the Second Advent. What should be our attitude toward estimating its nearness and preparing for a specific time in the near future? We turn to the NT for answers.

The NT writers stood between two decisive events in the history of this world: the first and second comings of Jesus Christ. The first was recent past history, the second was yet future history. No one knew for certain how far in the future the second coming of Jesus would take place. Some seemed convinced that it was immediately imminent, while others seemed to suggest that some time must pass first, during which certain events must take place. Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica about this very thing:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come,

until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. (2 Thess 2:1-3)<sup>1</sup>

The question which most concerned the NT writers, however, was how to live in the interim between these two momentous events, so that when Christ should appear, His people would be found ready and waiting for Him.

### **The Teaching of Jesus**

This was the concern of Jesus Himself, according to Matt 24:32-51. After presenting a series of signs which would precede His second coming, He told His disciples to learn a lesson from the fig tree: just as the approach of summer could be recognized by the tender new shoots and leaves which appeared on the fig trees, so when they should see all the signs He had given them taking place, they would know that His coming was near, "right at the door" (v. 33). At the same time, however, He warned them, "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, but only the Father" (v. 36). Therefore, the task of the true disciple would be to watch and be ready at all times, recognizing, on the one hand, that he or she is to keep busy doing the Master's business while He is away, not knowing when He will return, and, on the other hand, not behaving in a manner that suggests that the servant does not expect the Master to return for a long time (vv. 42-51).

The parable of the Ten Virgins, which directly follows in Matt 25, reinforces this concept of watching and being ready at all times. Those who fail to make adequate preparation for the surprise arrival of the Bridegroom end up being excluding from the marriage feast. The parable of the Talents, which comes next, was given for the purpose of admonishing the believer to be active and productive rather than idle while awaiting the Master's return.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the parable of the Separation of the Sheep from the Goats closes Jesus' discourse with a reminder that there will be a judgment to face at His coming, and all will be judged by what they have done or left undone in demonstrating Christlike love for those less fortunate than themselves. In the words of Jesus, "It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns" (24:46). It is the evil servant who says in his or her heart, "My master is staying away a long time" (v. 48), and begins to behave as though he or she were not going to be called to account any time soon.

It was never the intent of Jesus that His followers should think in terms of a delay in judgment. Observing this, not a few scholars speak of a modified 'realized eschatology' in the NT, especially in the Fourth Gospel, in which judgment is understood to have already come with the radical call of Jesus to belief and our

<sup>1</sup>All Scripture quotations in this paper are from the New International Version.

<sup>2</sup>In Luke's account of this parable, Jesus told it because His hearers "thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once" (Luke 19:11).



individual response to that call.<sup>1</sup> For example, Jesus told Nicodemus concerning His own coming into the world for salvation, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" (John 3:18). Later He said something very similar to the Jews who were persecuting Him: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (5:24).

Although Jesus clearly proclaimed this kind of individualized judgment at the moment of decision, this was in no sense considered to be a final judgment, and we should not see it as a substitute for His return to judge the world at the eschaton. Jesus repeated four times in John 6 that He would raise up "at the last day" those who believe on Him (6:39,40,44,54). He also spoke several times about a future day of judgment (Matt 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36; par.). Further, He seemed to know that His physical return would not be for quite some time, as evidenced by several statements in His Matt 24 discourse concerning the signs of His return. In v. 6 He spoke of wars and rumors of wars, but He added, "But see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come."<sup>2</sup> In v. 8, after speaking of international strife, famines, and earthquakes, He noted that "all these are the beginning of birth pains." Again, in vv. 12-13, Jesus observed, "Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved." He was very clear in pointing out in v. 14 that the end could not come until the gospel of the kingdom had been proclaimed to the whole world. Finally, He pointed to a future time of intense distress for God's people, and He spoke of that period being shortened in order to assure the survival of at least a remnant of the elect who were enduring tribulation (vv. 21-22). Yet even in regard to that time, Jesus counseled, "At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time" (vv. 23-25).

### Resolving the Tension

The only way to properly understand this tension between the call for imminent expectation and watchfulness and a series of prophesied historical events which must yet take place before the parousia, is in terms of Jesus' stress on the judgment that takes place at the moment of individual decision, in view of the

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, George Eldon Ladd, *The Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 301-2; C. F. D. Moule, "The Individualism of the Fourth Gospel," *Novum Testamentum* 5 (1962): 174.

<sup>2</sup>With reference to the parallel statements in Mark 13, Ladd remarks, "Far from being signs by which the coming of the end can be calculated, these are signs that *the end is delayed.*" Ladd, 201, emphasis his.

biblical emphasis on the transience of human life. 1 Pet 1:24-25 quotes from Isa 40:6-8, which stresses that all human life is like grass and like the flowers of the field which quickly wither and fall. James 4:13-15 admonishes against making plans for the future, since we do not know what will happen tomorrow. "What is your life?" he argues in vv. 14-15. "You are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'" Thus, it is not the parousia itself which is imminently expected, but the close of our personal probation, which can take place at any time through death. Since we can never know when our personal probation will close in death, leaving us to face the judgment without further notice or preparation, we must be prepared at all times. When we die, the next thing we will experience will be the coming of Jesus Christ. So, the return of Christ for every person is as imminent as his or her death, making it imperative that we make the necessary decision for Christ immediately and hold to it faithfully, in light of our transience. This is undoubtedly the sense of imminent expectation which Jesus intended we should have.

After His resurrection, the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (vv. 7-8). Jesus was saying that we are not to concern ourselves with the time of His return; rather, we are to concern ourselves with the work which He has given us to do in the interim.

Our focus should not be on the length of time until the physical return of Christ, but on our daily and hourly state of personal preparedness. With this understanding, we need to be very careful in speaking of a delay in Christ's return. This is the message of Heb 10:23-39. There we are admonished to "hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful" (v. 23). Meanwhile, we are to "spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (v. 24). And, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (v. 25). We are instructed further not to abandon our confidence (v. 35), for we need endurance, "so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised" (v. 36). Verse 37 is paraphrased from Hab 2:3: "For in just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay.'" What Habakkuk actually said was, "For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay." Clearly this does not mean that there is no time lapse until the fulfillment of the promise, for it explicitly declares that there will be a time interval before the end, but the point is that when the predetermined time arrives, the promised event will take place. While there may seem to be a delay beyond what we expect or hope for, there is no real delay in the purpose of God.

In this context, still paraphrasing Habakkuk, the passage in Heb 10 continues, "But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him" (v. 38). Heb 11 goes on to provide examples of such faith. Verse 13 summarizes,

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

Verses 39-40 explain why they did not receive the things promised: "Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better, so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect." The sleep of the death of the faithful is only a temporary state, awaiting the call of the Lifegiver, when all believers, both those who have fallen asleep in Jesus and those who are alive until the parousia, are taken together to receive the promised inheritance (1 Thess 4:15-17; Rev 6:10-11; cf. John 14:2-3). Those who have fallen asleep have no consciousness of any delay in their Lord's return.

### **The Testimony of Peter**

The testimony of Peter in 2 Pet 3 is very similar to that of the author of Hebrews. There Peter notes that in the last days scoffers will come, following their own evil desires, and saying, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation" (vv. 3-4). Then he assures the believers that just as surely as the old world was destroyed by a flood of water, "the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men" (v. 7). He reminds them further that the Lord does not reckon time as man does (v. 8), so we should not accuse the Lord of delay, for, "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (v. 9). Finally, he assures us that "the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire; and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare."

A series of ethical imperatives follows this announcement. Verses 11-12 read, "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming." Verse 14 adds, "So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace." Finally, vv. 17-18 admonish, "Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

### **The Teaching of Paul**

Paul taught a similar message concerning Christian responsibility in the face of a time interval before the second coming of Christ. That there would be a time interval he made clear in 2 Thess 2:1-6, as already noted. He urged the believers not to be shaken in mind or troubled by any message to the effect that the day of Christ had arrived. "Don't let anyone deceive you in any way," he wrote, "for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction" (v. 3). This lawless one was being restrained, but he would be revealed in his own time, Paul declared in v. 6, though the mystery of lawlessness was already at work (v. 7).

While he taught an interval of time before the end, Paul did not encourage carelessness or inactivity during the interim. In 1 Thess 5:1-6, he wrote,

Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness, So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.

He added in v. 8, "But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet." Verses 12-22 contain various exhortations for practical godliness, while v. 23 concludes, "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

### **The Witness of John**

We have observed already the importance given to personal preparedness for judgment in the Gospel of John, particularly in his record of the words of Jesus. The first Johannine epistle promotes a strong sense of imminent expectation. 1 John 2:18 declares, "Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour." In light of this expectation, John encouraged the believers, "And now, dear children, continue in Him, so that when he appears, we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming" (v. 26). What did he mean by "continue in him"? Is this a passive state of comfortable inactivity? No. John defines continuing in Jesus in terms of walking in the same way in which He walked (2:6), letting what we heard from the beginning continue in us (2:24), not sinning (3:6), keeping His commandments (3:24), receiving His Spirit (4:13),

confessing that Jesus is the Son of God (4:15), and continuing in love (4:16), which means not only loving God but also loving one another (4:12,20-21).

John, however, does not hold out the hope of eternal life as only a future possibility to be received at the parousia. Rather, as in his Gospel, it is to be a present reality for the believer. He writes in 1 John 5:13, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." This present reality, nonetheless, does not detract from the future hope of being personally with the Lord and seeing Him face to face. In 1 John 3:2 he holds out before the believer a living hope: "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." This hope transforms our present with an ethical imperative: "Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure" (v. 3).

The book of Revelation presents a similar perspective on the balance between imminent expectation and continuance in the practice of patient endurance and faith. Rev 1:3 declares that the time for the fulfillment of the prophecies of the book is near. The same assertion is made in 22:6,10, while three times in chap. 22 Jesus announces, "I am coming soon" (vv. 7,12,20). At the same time, however, the reminders of imminence elsewhere in the book are confined to the later portions of the various septenaries. For example, the declaration, "I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown" (3:11), is given to the church at Philadelphia, the sixth of the seven churches. It is under the opening of the fifth seal that the martyrs are portrayed as asking how long it will be until God will judge and avenge their blood on those who dwell on the earth (6:9-10), to which they are told to rest a little while longer until their fellow servants and their brethren, who were to be killed as they had been, should be made complete (6:11). It is in the excursus between the sixth and seventh trumpets recorded in chap. 10 that there is an announcement that there should be no more measured time (*χρόνος*), "but in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets" (10:6-7). It is under the sixth bowl plague that the proclamation is made, "Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed" (16:15).

The messages to the seven churches of Revelation focus on the attitudes and behavior of the people of God as they live in the interim before the parousia. "I know your deeds," Christ says to each of the seven churches, after which He describes their distinctive characteristics, both good and bad. He praises works of love, service, faith, and patience, while He urges repentance for attitudes of carelessness and indifference and for practices leading to apostasy, idolatry, and immorality. Later, in 13:10 and 14:12, the saints are described as characterized by patience, faith, and the keeping of the commandments. Throughout the book of Revelation, the return of Christ to judge the world is kept before the reader as a

future expectation, but the emphasis is on decision making in the present. "How shall we then live?" would seem to be a major concern of the book. It begins and ends with a blessing pronounced upon the one who keeps the words that are written in it (1:3; 22:7), and its epilogue contains the reminder, "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to every one according to what he has done" (22:12).

### Conclusion

Whether one is dead or alive at the return of Christ is considered essentially irrelevant in the NT. Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies" (John 11:25). According to Paul, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, so it is necessary that, though we shall not all sleep, we shall all be changed, whether dead or alive, from corruptible to incorruptible and from mortal to immortal (1 Cor 15:50-53). In 2 Cor 5:1, he states that we know that if our earthly house, our physical body, is destroyed, we still have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. He assures the believers further in 1 Thess 4:13-18 that those who are alive at the coming of the Lord will have no priority over those who are dead, for the dead will be brought to life first. "After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (v. 17). Thus there is no theological reason to concern ourselves over whether or not we live until the coming of the Lord. The important thing is to live each day so that death will not catch us unprepared to face our Maker at the judgment.

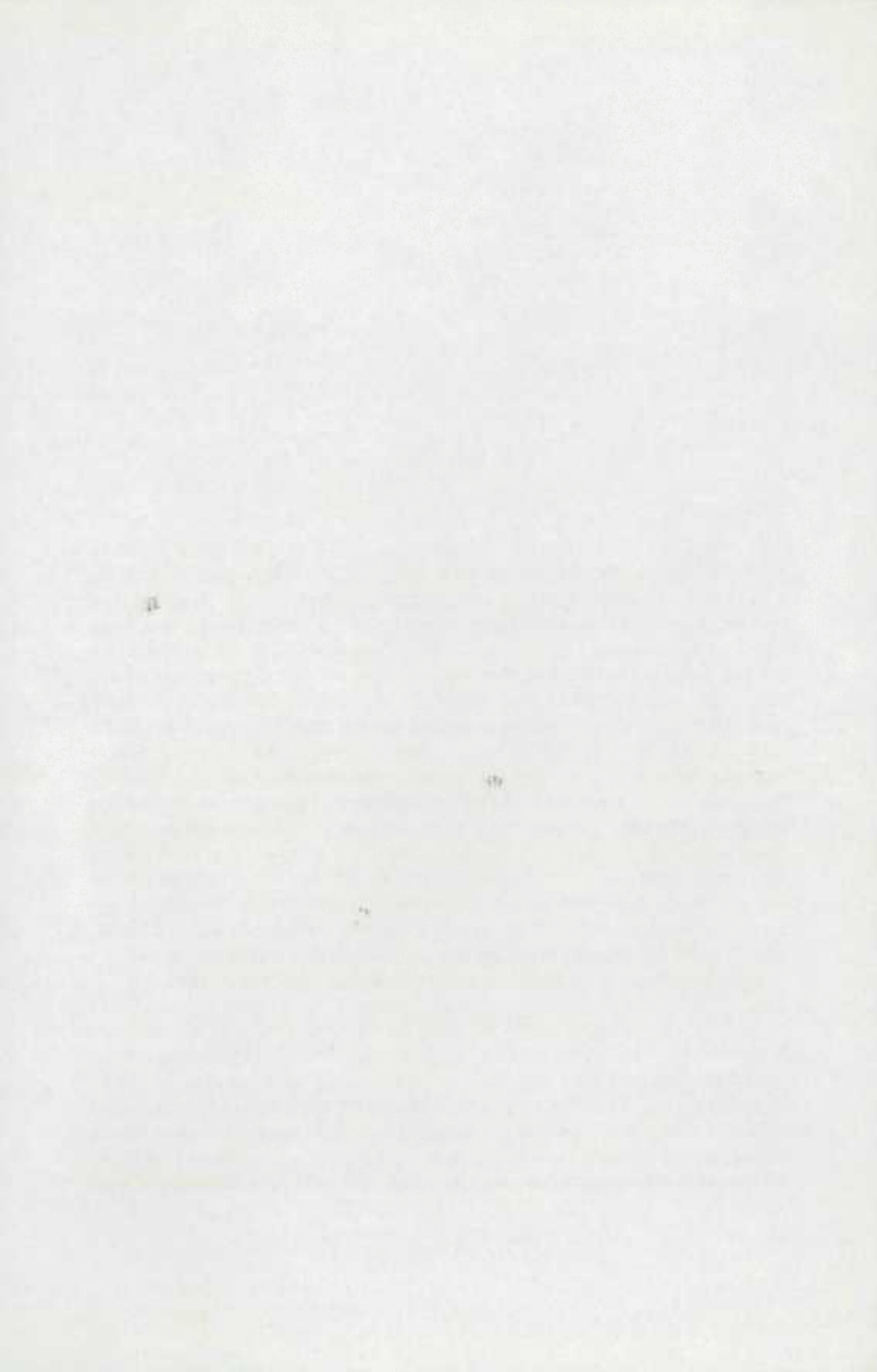
Death is nothing to be feared if we have made the necessary spiritual preparation. Ps 116:15 declares, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Rev 14:13 adds a special blessing to all those who die in the Lord after the time of the proclamation of the messages of the three angels. It may be that they have a part in the special resurrection mentioned in Dan 12:2, in which some of the righteous, as well as some of the wicked (cf. Matt 26:64; Mark 14:62; Rev 1:7) will apparently be raised beforehand to see Christ come.

In the Bible, the time of personal salvation is not a future time which is extrinsically determined, but it is the time of decision, which is determined within each individual heart, and that time is the present. As Paul stated succinctly in 2 Cor 6:2, "I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." Jesus Himself, we recall, had made clear in John 5:24 that the time of decision is the moment of salvation: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

In light of the NT evidence, then, Christians should not be time setters. Nor should they be clock and sign watchers to the extent that their focus is always on what God is going to do at some future point, while they may be guilty of neglecting present duty and personal preparedness. It is just as true today as it was when Jesus warned against it, that the one who is inclined to think in terms of a delay in Christ's return is likely to make poor use of the interim, thinking that there

is no real urgency in preparing for the Master's return, while the one who expects the Master to return at any time is far more likely to be found ready. When the Master returns for most people in the history of this earth is effectively at their death, the time of which few have the privilege of foreknowing. The NT therefore keeps the advent hope before the Christian, but does not encourage any consideration of calculating or estimating the time for the parousia. Rather, one is challenged to be always ready, for we know not what hour our Lord is coming for us.

The point of this paper is to refocus attention away from a clock-watching or sign-watching approach to eschatology that tends toward time setting or at least focusing on the future to the possible neglect of present duty. A careful study of NT eschatology reveals that the emphasis is on personal preparedness in the present, in light of the transitory nature of human life, and that death rather than the Parousia is the time of judgment we should be preparing for. "Now is the time!" refers to the present time of decision as the most important time we should be focusing on, according to this understanding of NT eschatology. The time of the Parousia is unknown and unknowable. While there appears to be a tension between expressions of its imminence and descriptions of all that must first transpire, careful exegesis reveals that the expressions of imminence have little to do with historical time measurements; rather, they should be understood in light of the brevity of time individuals are allotted for making the necessary decisions that will affect their destiny in the judgment. Death closes a person's probationary time. The next event which that person will experience is the judgment, either at the Parousia or at the Great White Throne judgment of Rev 20:11-15. Since we cannot know the time our probation will close, "Now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2).





*AASS 2 (1999): 95-106*  
*Paper presented during the*  
*1999 AIIAS Theological Forum: Millennium and Prophecy*  
*August 4-7, 1999*

## COMING: THE ESCHATOLOGICAL CONSUMMATION IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

SEIZO WAGATSUMA  
Chair, Theology Department  
Saniku Gakuin College  
Japan

Christians, especially Adventists, tend to be Christocentric and neglect the theocentric. They emphasize the work of Christ and His second coming, but often forget or never think of those of God the Father. In fact, the role of Christ was to be the messenger or mediator of the covenant between God and His people (Mal 3:1; Heb. 8:6), and to lead every one to God, His “Father and their Father” (John 17:6; 20:17), as well as to Himself (John 12:32; 14:6; cf. Matt 11:28).

Most commentators on the book of Revelation lose sight of its theocentricity. The thinking of most Christians today tends to stop merely at Jesus Christ, but He tries to lead people’s minds toward the Father also.

In studying the book of Revelation, we need to think of the roles of both Christ and His Father, and see the relationship that exists between the theocentric and the Christocentric. The meaning of the name, Jesus, which Joseph was told in a dream by an angel of the Lord to give to the Christ child, is that the Lord saves His people from their sins. Sin means a separation of men from God the Creator, while salvation means reconciliation, the restoration and sealing of the relationship between men and God. At the eschaton God will at last be worshiped by all of His creatures, especially by men whom He created in His image. The blotting out of sins from the universe and the reestablishment of the relationship between God the Creator and human beings are far more important matters on which to focus than various eschatological events or other matters, such as the signs of the last days or even the second coming of Jesus.

The purpose of this paper is to give theological consideration, by means of an exegesis of Rev 1:4-8, to the coming of God the Father as the eschatological consummation presented in the book of Revelation.

### The One Who Is to Come—*Ho Erchomenos*

#### Exegesis of Rev 1:4,8 Focusing on *Ho Erchomenos*

The Greek phrase, *ho erchomenos*, is a part of the descriptive title, “him who is, and who was, and who is to come,” which is found only in the book of Revelation (1:4,8; 4:8).<sup>1</sup> From the context of Rev 1:4,5, it seems evident that this phrase refers to God the Father, for in the following clauses the divine Spirit and Jesus Christ are pointed out successively as persons distinct from this One. In Rev 1:8, this phrase, paralleled with “the Almighty,” *ho pantocrator*, is used in apposition with “the Lord God” (NIV), *kurios ho theos*. In Rev 4:8, the phrase is in apposition to “the Lord God Almighty” (NIV), *ho theos ho pantocrator*. Therefore, this phrase is a special description of God the Father in the book of Revelation. *Ho erchomenos* is part of the name for God the Father who sits on the throne in heaven, while Jesus Christ is described as the Lamb who had been slain and stands beside the throne.

The phrase “who is to come” (*ho erchomenos*) is used in an unusual way, not only in its grammatical usage related to *apo*, but also in its attribution to God, being compared with its idiomatic usage. Grammatically, the expression “who is to come” has not been found as a description of God in Jewish or Greek literature. *Ho erchomenos*, literally “the one who is coming,” is a futuristic use of the present participle, because the previous two phrases of the series, “who is, and who was,” clearly point to the present tense and the past, respectively.

The description of God as he “who is, and who was, and who is to come” is considered by some scholars to be an adaptation of the name of God made known to Moses at the burning bush in Exod 3:14. The LXX there renders “I am who I am” as “I am who is” (*egō eimi ho ōn*). According to G. R. Beasley-Murray, the Jerusalem Targum “expanded this to ‘I am he who is and who will be’; but in its comment on Deut 32:29 it is reproduced as ‘I am he who is, and who was, and I am who will be.’”<sup>2</sup> Similar definitions of God in terms of time were known in the ancient Greek world. Robert Mounce informs us that the shrine of Minerva at Sais provides the inscription, “I am all that hath been and is and shall be.”<sup>3</sup> We may also

<sup>1</sup>This title is normally rendered in this paper according to the New International Version rendition of 1:4,8. The first two elements are reversed in 4:8.

<sup>2</sup>G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation*, softback ed., New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1981), 54.

<sup>3</sup>Plutarch *De Isid.* 9, quoted in Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 68.

read in the song of the doves at Dodona of "Zeus who was, Zeus who is, and Zeus who will be."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, a reader with a background in Jewish or Greek concepts of God might expect the third element of the title "who is and who was and who is to come" to be "who will be." God, in the book of Revelation, however, is not simply One who will *be* but One who will *come*.

The writer of Revelation deliberately modifies the divine name "with a definite reference to the contexts of the Book," to His eternal existence, and especially "to the coming."<sup>2</sup> Instead of defining God in simple terms of time, John gives a twist to the name which no Jew apparently thought of and no Greek was capable of imagining. Such a paraphrase of the divine name could be done only by the heavenly creatures who praise God day and night saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come" (Rev 4:8 RSV), or by such a person as John, who vividly saw God and received "things which must shortly come to pass" (1:1). God not only transcends the ages and is an eternal immanence, especially as seen in Immanuel (Matt 1:23; cf. John 1:14), but also He will come to us.

#### *Ho Erchomenos* and Its Theological Meaning

As we have seen, in Rev 1:4,8; 4:8, God the Father is called the One who is coming. According to these texts it seems that not merely Jesus Christ, but also God the Father, will come at the eschatological time. In the declaration, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, . . . and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God," Rev 21:3 provides even more convincing evidence that the Father is coming. Regarding the holy city in the new earth, 22:3 adds, "But the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it." Thus, God the Father, as well as the Lamb, will come to earth after the millennium described in chap. 20.

Some may say that God's coming is spiritual. In a sense this is true until His throne is literally established in the new earth. God has always been abiding in the past and present with His people, as implied by the words in 4:8 (NIV), "who was and is." His existence is eternal. He is the transcendent and yet immanent God. This is especially true in Jesus Christ, who was called "Immanuel," "God with us" (Matt 12:3). Jesus Himself declared to Philip, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9; cf. 12:45). In the life of Jesus Christ we continually see the Father spiritually. Thus God has come to us in Jesus Christ.

In the eschatological time, however, God's existence with His people will be fully realized in His actual coming, since He is called *ho erchomenos*, the One who is to come. The evidence of the usage of *ho erchomenos* indicates that John uses

<sup>1</sup>Pausanias 10.12, quoted in Mounce, 68.

<sup>2</sup>R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1920), 1:10.

it with a definite reference to the contents of the book,<sup>1</sup> and especially to the eschatological coming of God.

In order to fit with NT theology, the writer modifies the traditional name of God used in the OT and in other cultures. Thus, the physical reality of God will be consummated with God's actual coming to and dwelling with His people, so that in a real sense God will be worshiped at last as the source of every blessing. In fact, His people "shall see his face" (Rev 22:4). Indeed, His name expresses not merely His eternity but His coming.

It is of interest in this connection to notice Rev 11:17. In this passage, God is called, "Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was" (NIV). In almost all Greek manuscripts, *ho erchomenos* does not appear. This is no doubt because God's coming is no longer in the future:<sup>2</sup> "Thou hast taken thy great power and begun to reign" (v. 17 RSV). Thus, in the eschatological time, God's existence with His people will be fully realized in His actual coming to reign in their midst.

### **Theocentric and Christocentric Teaching in the New Testament**

Many commentators on the book of Revelation lose sight of its theocentricity, and the thinking of many Christians today tends to stop merely at Jesus Christ, while Christ tries to lead people's minds toward both Himself and the Father. In studying the book, we need to think of the roles of both Christ and God Himself, seeing the relationship that exists between the theocentric and Christocentric.

#### **In the Books Attributed to John**

The book of Revelation was given by God to Jesus Christ (1:1). All the information given in the book originated with God Himself. It was given to Christ, so that He might show His servants what must shortly happen. Jesus gave the message to John as a revelation by sending His angel (1:1).

The role of Christ is central in the book of Revelation. Rev 1:1 says that the book is "the revelation of Jesus Christ," so the importance of its Christocentrism cannot be denied. However, what should be noted in this book is that the authority of God the Father can always be observed behind Jesus Christ. It is God the Father who sits on the throne<sup>3</sup> and is called "the Almighty."<sup>4</sup> The ultimate source of "the revelation of Jesus Christ" is God.

God's activity in the Revelation is remarkably pictured. The word "God," which clearly denotes God the Father, is used 98 times in the book, while the

<sup>1</sup>Charles, 1:10.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Charles, 1:295.

<sup>3</sup>Rev 1:4; 4:2,9-10; 5:1,7,13; 6:16; 7:10,15; 12:5; 14:5; 19:4; 21:5; 22:1,3.

<sup>4</sup>Rev 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7,14; 19:6,15; 21:22.

words which denote Jesus are used only half as many times—49 times: “Jesus” is used 7 times; “the Son,” 3 times; “Christ,” 4 times; “Jesus Christ,” 7 times; and “the Lamb,” 28 times. Though Jesus Christ carries out the primary active role in the history of salvation, the central issue is to worship God (19:10; 22:3,9; cf. 14:7). Christ’s redemptive work has the goal of bringing this world back to God, who is to be the center of worship for all creatures. Rev 14:6-7 calls all to worship God as the source or all things:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

The “new song” for Jesus Christ in 5:9-10 also indicates the theocentric focus of redemption:

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Jesus Christ is praised because He has redeemed us to God by His blood and has made us kings and priests unto our God. The role of Christ was to lead people to God, His Father and their Father (cf. John 20:17). This portrayal in anthem form may be compared with statements in Jesus’ prayer recorded in John 17, where Christ repeatedly mentioned His earthly role with respect to His Father: “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (v. 4); “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me” (v. 6); “I have given them thy word” (v. 14); and “I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it” (v. 26).

Jesus took a place of subordination to God the Father (John 14:28).<sup>1</sup> He came to reveal the Father by doing the Father’s will, working the Father’s works, and speaking the Father’s words (John 5:19-23,30,36; 6:38; 7:16; 8:29; 12:49; 14:9-10,24,31; 15:10; 17:4,26). Christ’s subordinate role highlights the theocentricity of NT theology.

There are further references to Christ’s role in the Fourth Gospel. Jesus declares to the Samaritan woman in 4:23, “The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” Thus, in the Fourth Gospel we see that Jesus always shifts the emphasis from Himself to His Father. This can be further noticed in the following passages:

<sup>1</sup>Cf. 1 Cor 15:24-28; Phil 2:5-7; Heb 2:9.

1. John 3:16-17 (RSV): "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. . . . For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." God's supreme love in sending Jesus Christ and saving the world is here emphasized.

2. John 12:44-45: "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me, seeth Him that sent me." Jesus directs people's attention to the Father.

3. John 16:23: "Verily, verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." Jesus Christ also guided His disciples to pray to the Father, not to Him.

4. John 16:26b-27 (RSV): "I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loves you." Jesus emphasized that prayers are answered not merely because of Christ's petition but because of the Father's own love.

5. John 20:17: "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Even after His resurrection, Christ pointed His disciples to the Father.

As seen above, Jesus Christ was continually showing the Father to His disciples (cf. 14:7-11). Thus, Jesus taught that believers should not confine their thinking to Himself alone. Rather their thinking should proceed on to the Father, who sent Him.

However, the theocentricity of Revelation cannot be realized apart from its Christocentricity. Christ is the only being "worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof" (Rev 5:2). The fact that Christ "prevailed to open the book" (v. 5) means that He is the conqueror in the controversy with evil. He alone is worthy to open the scroll of destiny, and both to reveal and to carry out the final dissolution of all forces set in opposition to the eternal kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup> He is thus the key Person to carry out God's plan of salvation.

Christ and the Father are one (John 10:30). He was sent by the Father (17:18), and He speaks the words and does the works of the Father (14:10). Indeed, God the Father "has given all things into his hand" (3:35 RSV). All power is given to Him by the Father (17:2; cf. Matt 28:18). "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them," even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (5:21-22). Jesus glorified the Father and asked to be glorified by Him (17:4-5). He went to the Father to prepare a place for His disciples (14:2-3,12). He is the only One who truly knows the Father. No one comes to the Father but by Him (14:6). To know Him is to know the Father (14:7). He is in fact the only-begotten Son, who stands in a unique relationship to the Father (1:18; 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10).

Because of this special relationship to the Father, Jesus Christ is glorified by John. In Rev 1:5-6, John says in his greeting to the seven churches,

<sup>1</sup>See Mounce, 144.

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The praising voices of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders, were heard in John's vision saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (5:12).

The glory of Christ is repeatedly revealed in the Revelation: in the exalted vision of Jesus (1:13-20); in John's greeting to the seven churches (1:5-6); and in the vision of the Lamb "as though it had been slain" (5:6 [RSV], 9-13). But it is very important to note that this emphasis on Christ does not stop with Him. Rather it proceeds on to praise God as well. Christocentricity is one facet of theocentricity.

### **In the Chiastic Structure of the Book of Revelation**

The chiastic structure of the book of Revelation, which is suggested by Kenneth A. Strand<sup>1</sup> and modified somewhat in this paper, vividly reveals the relationship between theocentricity and Christocentricity (see figure 1). In the prologue, both God (1:4,8) and Christ (1:7) are denoted as coming Ones. God is the ultimate source of everything; however, it is through Christ that one receives "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants" (1:1).

In the A section of figure 1, "Church in Present Earth," the account starts with the vision of Jesus Christ walking among His churches on earth in 1:9-20, and ends with a foretaste of the throne in heaven (3:21). At the same time that Jesus reveals Himself as walking among the churches on earth (2:1), He claims to sit on the throne with the Father (3:21), who is ruling as the creator of the whole universe (4:8-11).

Then, in section B, God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ (chaps. 4-5) is shown to end with God's wiping away every tear (7:17).

The following two sections, C(a)+C(b) and C(a)'+C(b)', start with visions of the heavenly sanctuary (8:3-5 and 15:5-8) where Jesus Christ, as the High Priest, serves before the throne, and ends with the bringing of glory to God the Almighty by the saints as they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb (15:3-4 and 19:1-8).

<sup>1</sup>Kenneth A. Strand, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation: Hermeneutical Guidelines, with Brief Introduction to Literary Analysis*, 2d ed. (Naples, FL: Ann Arbor, 1979), 51-52.

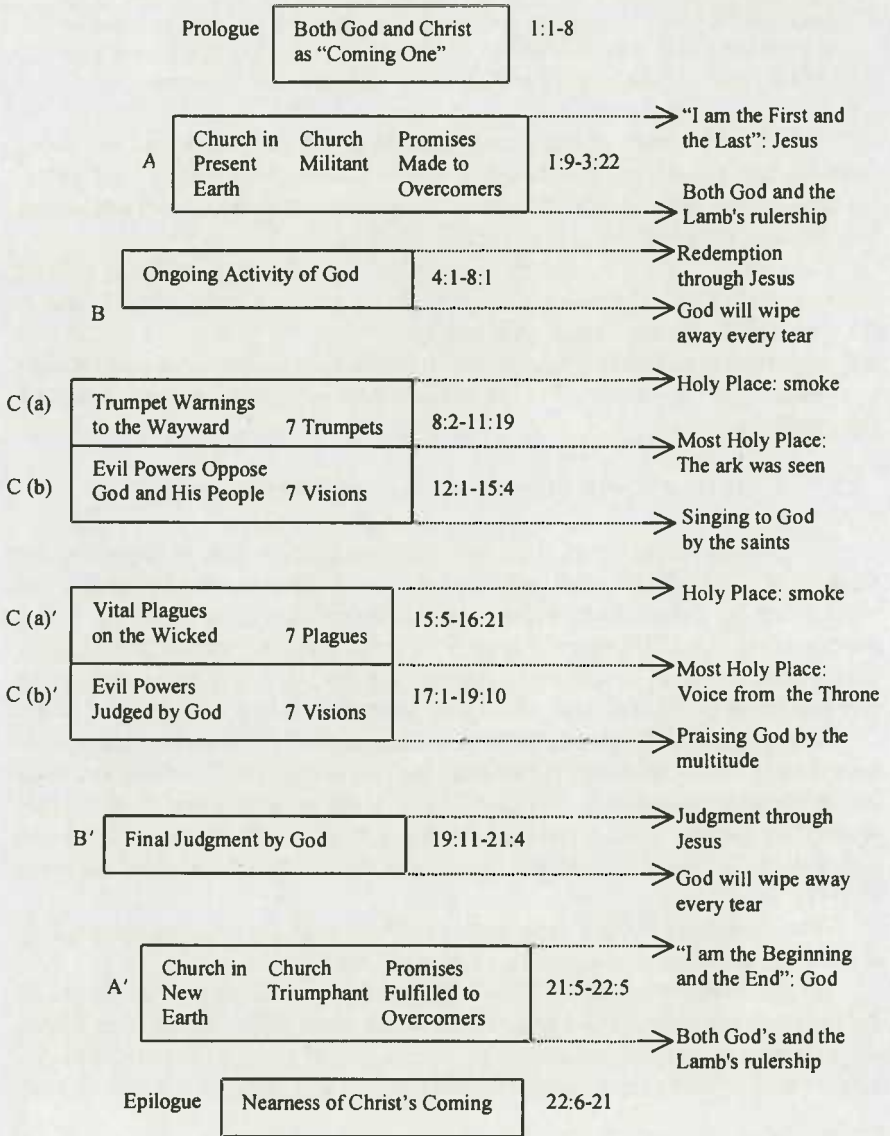


Fig. 1. Chiasmatic structure of the book of Revelation. See Strand, 52. In this chart there are several suggested modifications with respect to chapters and verses.



God, who works through Jesus Christ, is praised by all as the final outcome of salvation history.

The next section, B', starts with the judgment through Jesus (19:11-16) and results in God's wiping away every tear (21:1-4), parallel to section B (5:1-8:1).

Next, in section A', we can hear the voice of God say, "Behold, I make all things new"; "Write: for these words are true and faithful"; "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (21:5,6). It is interesting to note that in the parallel section, A, Jesus Christ, not God the Father, appears and says, "I am the First and the Last"; "I hold the keys of death and Hades"; "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now, and what will take place later" (1:17,18,19 NIV). While section A ends with reference to the sovereign rulership of God the Father on His throne, with Christ seated with Him (3:21), in section A', God's sovereignty is more clearly depicted and actualized (22:3-4). Thus, in the eschatological time, the Father's sovereign rulership will be ultimately and fully revealed.

In section A', God Himself declares, "it is done" (21:6); the final establishment of the kingdom of God is accomplished and the new Jerusalem in the New Earth, that is, "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb" (21:9 RSV), is well depicted. This kingdom is called the kingdom "of our Lord" and, at the same time, "of his Christ" (11:15). "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it" (22:3). Therefore, in the closing vision, God and the Lamb are united as co-rulers of their kingdom and the source of its blessings. It is especially noteworthy that John depicts the throne of God and the Lamb as the source of the river of the water of life in the city, thereby conveying the notion of a single throne, a single rule (cf. 3:21), and a single source of life. He adds, "His servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads" (22:3-4 RSV).

Beasley-Murray points out that in this context it is difficult to interpret the pronoun "his" as meaning anything other than "God and the Lamb as the unity."<sup>1</sup> This notion is very interesting, but there should still be a careful attitude in order to understand well this unity and singleness.<sup>2</sup>

"Worship God," said the angel who was sent to give the message of the revelation to John (Rev 19:10; 22:9). We need to know that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as the eternal, incarnated Savior, wants us to worship God the Father. If we give homage to Christ, we naturally worship the Father. Especially, in the end, we, together with our Lord Jesus Christ, will be bound to God the Father in unity. In fact, both God and the Lamb are repeatedly praised in the book of Revelation (5:13; 7:9-11; 11:15; 12:10; 14:4; cf. 15:3), but the worship is called for only for

<sup>1</sup>Beasley-Murray, 25.

<sup>2</sup>According to 1 Cor 15:24-28, at the end, when all things shall be subdued unto Jesus Christ—Christocentricity—"then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him"; He then "shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father," "that God may be all in all"—theocentricity.

God, though in this calling for the worship of God, Christ's role is indispensable. Thus, through Christocentricity, theocentricity is realized at the end of salvation history, at His coming.

#### In Other New Testament Passages

It should be noticed that every NT writer expresses theocentric teaching. The apostle Peter, for example, says, "your faith and hope are in God" (1 Pet 1:21). It is God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead (Acts 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 1 Pet 1:3) and sent Him to us to bless us in turning every one of us from our wickedness (Acts 3:20,26). God anointed Jesus (12:38), glorified Him (3:13), exalted Him (5:31), and ordained Him to be judge (10:42). God's authority is indeed behind Christ Jesus in everything.

In writing that God "glorified his servant Jesus" (3:13; cf. v. 26; 4:27), Peter even dares to call Jesus God's "servant." The parables of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), the wicked tenants (Matt 21:33-44; Mark 12:1-12), or the wedding garment (Matt 22:1-14) are also good illustrations of theocentric teaching. The father or the key figure in those parables represents God the Father.

The apostle Paul, who wrote more than half of the NT, also strongly supports theocentricity. In several places in his letters he ascribes glory to God through Jesus Christ (Rom 16:27; Eph 3:21; Phil 2:11; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16). For Paul, God is the King of kings and the Lord of lords (1 Tim 6:15-16), while the same title is used for Jesus in Revelation (Rev 19:16; cf. 1:5; 17:14). Of course, it is God that glorified Jesus (Phil 2:8-9), raised Him from the dead (Acts 13:30; Rom 4:24; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:20; Col 2:12), sent him "in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin" (Rom 8:3 RSV), fixed a day of judgment, and appointed Jesus to be judge (Acts 17:31). We are predestined by God to be conformed to the image of Christ, and we cry "Abba, Father" by the Spirit of God (Rom 8:29,14-16). God leads us to repent and to put Jesus forward as the reconciling sacrifice (Rom 3:25; cf. 8:3; Eph 5:8). Through the death of Christ, God showed His love for us (Rom 5:8). So Paul says, "If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will He not also give us all things with him?" (Rom 8:31-32 RSV).

In harmony with Pauline theocentricity, we return to the passage that sets forth a most interesting conclusion:

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. . . . When all things are subjected to him then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one. (1 Cor 15:24-28 RSV)

It is necessary for Christ to reign until the complete subjugation of all God's enemies. We can see that Christ has not yet subjugated all (cf. Heb 2:8). Now is

the time of Christ; He must reign now. We need to see Christ as central now, but at the same time we need to note that Christ reigns under the Father's mandate. In other words, even Christocentricity is under theocentricity. According to the passage just quoted, theocentricity will be fully established at the consummation of salvation history (1 Cor 15:28).

Wilhelm Mundle points out that "the idea of coming has a fundamental theological significance in relation to the coming of Christ, and the coming of God and His kingdom" in the NT.<sup>1</sup> The process of redemption and the establishment of the sovereignty of God constitute an indivisible whole. The coming of Christ for redemption is a prelude to the coming of the kingdom of God in its fullness.

### Conclusion

The theme of the "coming" is peculiar in the book of Revelation. We may observe an emphasis of this theme in the last phrase of the series, "who is, and who was, and who is to come," because the last phrase substitutes for the usage of the future tense, "who will be."

As we have seen, God is referred to three times in this book by this descriptive title. The first two parts indicate that God is present from eternity to eternity. Through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, God the Father spiritually reveals Himself, comes to, and abides among us even now. However, in Revelation, there seems also to be an emphasis on His eschatological coming—not only His spiritual coming as the One "who is, and who was," but also His actual coming, as the One "who is to come." At the ultimate eschatological time, God Himself, as well as Jesus Christ, will come to the new earth and there establish their eternal kingdom (Rev 21:3; 22:3).

It has been proposed by some that the phrase *ho erchomenos* refers to the second coming of Christ.<sup>2</sup> The interpretation, however, while verbally possible, does not agree with the context, which shows that this was hardly in the mind of the writer of Revelation.

Even though the role of Christ is significant in Revelation, and the importance of Christocentricity should never be denied, what should be noted is that the authority of God always has to be observed behind or with Jesus Christ. It is God the Father in Revelation that is "the Almighty" and is portrayed as the One who is seated on the throne, reigning. Though Jesus Christ is also the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (22:13), He sits down with the Father on His throne (3:21) and receives worship with the Father (22:3), never independently.

<sup>1</sup>Wilhelm Mundle, "Come," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-78), 1:322.

<sup>2</sup>"Which Is to Come" [Rev 1:4], *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1953-57), 7:732. (This source reports but does not support that view.)

Thus, it is essential to understand both the theocentricity and the Christocentricity of the theology of the book of Revelation. Now is the time of Christocentricity. God the Father wants us to be subjugated to Jesus. But at the same time we have to remember that the role of Christ is to lead His people to their God and His Father, a theocentric emphasis. This is the ultimate aim of salvation through Jesus Christ. So at this end time we need to focus on this ultimate goal: God at last will be worshiped by His people when He comes.

Ellen G. White vividly describes the consummate occasion of all salvation history, at the Coming:

Christ took with Him to the heavenly courts His glorified humanity. To those who receive Him, He gives power to become the sons of God, that at last God may receive them as His, to dwell with Him throughout eternity. If, during this life, they are loyal to God, they will at last “see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.” And what is the happiness of heaven but to see God? What greater joy could come to the sinner saved by the grace of Christ than to look upon the face of God, and know Him as Father?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1904), 8:268.

## AIAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

### DISSERTATION AND THESIS ABSTRACTS

THE REST THAT REMAINS: A HISTORICAL, BIBLICAL, AND  
THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF GOD'S REST, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE  
TO HEBREWS 4:1-11

Researcher: **Thundiyl Pothan Kurian, Ph.D., 1999**

Advisor: **Humberto Trejyer, Ph.D.**

This dissertation explores the theology of God's rest, its meanings, scope, and implications. According to Genesis, at the conclusion of the work of creation God rested in the satisfaction of a completed and perfect work. At that time He blessed and sanctified the seventh day, establishing it as weekly reminder of His work as Creator and Sustainer of everything. The introduction of sin into the world seriously affected humankind's experience of sacred rest. However, God made possible the restoration of His rest to man through the plan of redemption. The author of Hebrews insists on warning believers about the sad consequence of rejecting God's invitation to spiritual rest. In full assurance and without ambiguity, he affirms that there is a rest that remains for God's people.

The problem addressed in this research was to clarify the relationship between two biblical dimensions of God's rest, its quantitative dimension as expressed in the fourth commandment of the Decalogue, and its qualitative dimension found in several other passages, particularly in Heb 4:1-11. A useful background to the exploration of the problem was provided by a cluster of related questions designed to explore the relationship between these two dimensions.

The second and third chapters investigate the views of selected Church Fathers, the most outstanding Reformers, and modern theologians. The fourth chapter is an etymological and theological examination of the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek terms usually translated "rest." The fifth chapter consists of an exegetical study on Heb 4:1-11, with special reference to the usage of the terms *katapausis* and *sabbatismos* and their implications.

This research has made clear that God's rest, as explained by the author of Hebrews, goes far beyond any weekly Sabbath rest. It offers a foretaste of the eternal

bliss which is made accessible to man through the free bestowing of Christ's righteousness on the believer, and which is only partially understood and enjoyed on earth in anticipation of its fullness in the world to come. The present and the future experience of rest are combined and blended together in Hebrews. Only those who enter by grace and faith into God's rest can truly keep the Sabbath. Spiritual rest and forgiveness belong together—one cannot be experienced without the other.

#### A STRATEGY FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY IN A PHILIPPINE LOCAL CHURCH THROUGH AIIAS KOREAN STUDENTS

Researcher: **Seong Ok Lee, D.Min., 1998**

Advisor: **Carlos G. Martin, Ph.D.**

There are many Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Filipino churches around AIIAS, but some may not receive proper pastoral care because of a lack of Filipino pastors. However, many Korean students are studying at AIIAS and, from 1992, Korean students have served in a pastoral capacity for some Filipino churches around AIIAS. This study suggests a strategy for pastoral ministry in Philippine local SDA churches through AIIAS Korean students.

The author selects four examples of pastoral ministry in the Bible: Moses, Samuel, Jesus, and Paul, who ministered as leaders, organizers, teachers, counselors, preachers, evangelists, and trainers. He then studies pastoral ministry through the perspectives of theology and Seventh-day Adventism.

This study affirms that Korean students should know the geographical history, religious background, and social structure of Cavite province and of the SDA churches around AIIAS. It seeks to give Korean students a better understanding of Filipino culture and needs, and to provide them with a helpful resource for ministry in Filipino churches.

Finally, the author suggests a strategy for pastoral ministry in the Biga Company through the service of Korean students. First, he analyzes Biga Company. Then he suggests the recruitment of Korean students for Biga Company and the preliminary training which they should receive. He describes strategies for practical pastoral ministry for the Biga Company. These strategies may improve the training of church members by Korean student pastors, as well as enhance worship services, evangelism, visitation, counseling, and the promotion of church building.

This study may be useful to those who want to serve in pastoral ministry in Filipino churches. Proper implementation of the strategies suggested may help to increase the growth of Filipino churches and bring blessings to Korean students who serve in them.

**TED PETERS'S PROLEPTIC THEORY OF THE CREATION OF HUMANKIND IN GOD'S IMAGE: A CRITICAL EVALUATION**

Researcher: **Lameck Miyayo, Ph.D., 1999**

Advisor: **Humberto Treiyer, Ph.D.**

The purpose of this study is to describe, analyze, and evaluate Ted Peters's proleptic theory of the creation of humankind in God's image. To achieve this purpose, after the introduction, the study first reviews in chapter 2 Peters's theological biography, the context of his theology, and his theological system and method. Peters differs from the more traditional Christian understanding of the creation of humankind in God's image in that he denies the historicity of the original perfect creation of Adam and Eve in God's image and of the Fall. To him, this image is to be achieved eventually, after the eschatological resurrection.

Peters's application of the concept of prolepsis to the creation of humankind in God's image is presented in chapter 3. According to this concept, the creation of humankind is a process of becoming fully human, in anticipation of the future fulfillment. It is a response to the call forward to the image of God.

The evaluation of Peters's proleptic theory of the creation of humankind in God's image is done in chapter 4 by examining how Peters applies the historical-hypothetical method, especially with respect to the biblical account of the creation and fall of Adam and Eve, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the eventual transformation of human beings at the final resurrection. While Peters denies the historicity of the perfect creation and the subsequent fall of Adam and Eve for lack of historical evidence, he accepts the resurrection of Jesus Christ by faith in the future evidence of the new creation. In view of the fact that Peters is not fully consistent in how he uses his historical-hypothetical method, the final chapter concludes that Peters's proleptic theory is not a valid explication of the biblical account of the creation of humankind in God's image.

**THE ROLES OF PASTORS AS SUGGESTED BY ELLEN G. WHITE AND PRACTICES OF PASTORS IN EAST INDONESIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

Researcher: **Suryanika Aristas Pasuhuk, M.A., 1999**

Advisor: **Adrie Legoh, D.Min.**

Most of the local church pastors are confused about what role they should perform in the church. Some believe that pastors should be mainly evangelists, or shepherds, or teachers, or preachers, or leaders, or administrators, or even leaders of church services.

This study relates to the need for pastors in the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church in East Indonesia, particularly in the North Minahasa Mission (NMM) and the South Minahasa Conference (SMC), to reconsider what their role is in the church. The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of the pastor as suggested by Ellen G. White and compare it with the practices of pastors in the NMM and SMC.

Ellen White emphasized that the roles of the pastor as evangelist, as shepherd, as preacher, as teacher, as leader, as church services leader, and as administrator are all important. Pastors need to perform all of these roles in order to establish ministry which is balanced between nurture and witness.

The pastors in NMM and SMC spend most of their time in shepherding through visitation and in evangelism by giving Bible studies. Pastors in East Indonesia give less attention to training the members.

The future trends of ministry in East Indonesia are projected based on the present practices of the pastors. The recommendations in this study are given to the pastors, leaders, and educational institutions to help facilitate necessary improvements.

Pastors in East Indonesia, and particularly in the NMM and SMC, need to perform their pastoral roles in such a way that there will be balance between nurture and witnessing. The above pastoral roles suggested by Ellen White are not naturally exclusive but complementary.

## THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE PRINCE OF PERSIA IN DANIEL 10

Researcher: **Larry Roy Pitoy, M.A., 1999**  
 Advisor: **Zdravko Stefanovic, Ph.D.**

This thesis attempts to identify the “prince of Persia” in Dan 10, specifically in vv. 13 and 20. The identification of the “prince of Persia” has long been in dispute among scholars. There are two schools of interpretation regarding the “prince of Persia.” The first identifies him as an extra-terrestrial being, while the second views him as human. Both schools rely heavily on their understanding of the Hebrew word *śār*, “prince”.

Following a general introduction of the thesis and a review of literature in chapter 1, chapter 2 contains a study of Hebrew words for “prince” and “Persia,” *śār* and *pāras* respectively. Both etymology and semantics are applied to these two words. The word *śār*, commonly translated as “prince” in English, has a wide range of meanings. Originally *śār* meant “king,” or someone in rulership. Virtually, *śār* is applied to human beings in the OT, but in a special way in the book of Daniel, *śār* plays a significant role. It represents in a contrasting way both good and evil heavenly beings.



Chapter 3 presents an exegesis of Dan 10:13,20. Three main aspects are discussed: the historical-geographical setting, the literary study, and the theological implications, which all provide valuable insights into the identification of the “prince of Persia.”

Chapter 4 contains the summary and conclusions of the study. Based on the findings of the study, this thesis proposes a dual identification of the “prince of Persia.” The contemporary kings of Persia, namely, Cyrus II and Cambyses II, are the human “princes of Persia,” while Satan, the fallen angel hostile to God’s prince, Michael, is the cosmic “Prince of Persia.”

#### TOWARDS A STRATEGY FOR PLANTING MEGACHURCHES AMONG SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS: A KOREAN PERSPECTIVE

Researcher: **Byung-Sun So, M.A., 1998**

Advisor: **Carlos G. Martin, Ph.D.**

In spite of the flourishing and rapid growth of megachurches, Seventh-day Adventists in general do not seem to favor the megachurch style. The major question raised by this study is, Why do Adventists hesitate to plant megachurches, although some megachurches are growing fast, not only quantitatively but also qualitatively? To support the planting of megachurches as a possible strategy among Seventh-day Adventists, this study attempts to define what a megachurch is: its theological and biblical foundation, its justification from the perspective of Ellen G. White, and its strategic implementation.

Large assemblies of God’s people are evaluated from both Testaments. Israelite tribes in the OT and the Jerusalem Church before the Christian Diaspora in the NT are taken to represent megachurches. These large assemblies of God’s people consisted of subdivided units that nurtured and fulfilled the daily spiritual needs of members just like the small group ministries in current megachurches.

To determine White’s perspectives on megachurches, this study explores two major aspects: first, the situation of the church and its institutions in Battle Creek, Michigan; second, Ellen White’s perspectives on large churches in relation to the three functions of the church—celebration, congregation, and cell. The study suggests the possibility that the negative situation of the Battle Creek Church and its institutions strongly affected White’s negative perspectives on large churches.

White never gave any negative statement related to the function of celebration in large churches. Her opposition to large churches generally came from the non-existence of the functions of cell and congregation. Furthermore, White did not mention any specific large church’s name, other than that of the Battle Creek Church, to express any negative idea concerning large churches.

Megachurches have more advantages than disadvantages. It is through small group ministry that current megachurches are overcoming their fundamental

disadvantages—lack of fellowship among members and failure to nurture members. Today, megachurches are overcoming these barriers successfully and are developing their potential and advantages. Hence, megachurches are growing at a faster rate than smaller churches.

In view, therefore, of the theological and biblical bases for megachurches, the justification gleaned from Ellen White's perspectives, and the strategic implementation presented, the author suggests that planting megachurches among Seventh-day Adventists can be an effective strategy towards discipling.

#### DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN: A HISTORICAL-BIBLICAL EVALUATION OF THE THEORIES OF ORIGINAL SIN AS SUGGESTED BETWEEN THE SIXTEENTH AND THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Researcher: **Kyung Ho Song**, Ph.D., 1998

Advisor: Humberto R. Treiyer, Ph.D.

This study seeks to give a satisfactory, though not necessarily final, answer to the question, Does the human race share in the guilt of Adam's first sin, or only in the results of his sin? To reach this goal, it first explores the historical developments of the doctrine of original sin, especially between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries. Then it provides an evaluation of the theories of original sin presented during those centuries by means of the testimony of the Scriptures.

After an introduction to the dissertation and a review of the relevant literature, chapter 2 surveys the development of the doctrine of original sin between the second and the fifteenth centuries as a background for the study.

Chapters 3 and 4 explore the theories of original sin formulated between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries. During those centuries, the Augustinian-Calvinistic view of original sin was dominant in both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The Protestant Calvinistic view of original sin found expression in three main theories—the realistic theory, the federal theory, and the mediate imputation theory. This prominent Calvinistic view of original sin was challenged by Zwingli, the Anabaptists (sixteenth century), Arminianism (seventeenth century), and the New England Theology (eighteenth century).

Chapter 5 evaluates the theories of original sin elaborated during the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries based on the testimony of the Scriptures. No clear evidence is found in the Bible that Adam's guilt is transmitted or imputed to his posterity. Therefore, the Augustinian-Calvinistic theories of original sin, which claim that every human being is born guilty, do not seem to find any clear support in the Bible.

Chapter 6 summarizes the results of the research and offers the final conclusions.

**TOWARDS EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL RETENTION OF NEW CHURCH MEMBERS IN TANZANIA****Researcher: Ibihya Paul K. Tulla, M.A., 1999****Advisor: G. T. Ng, Ph.D.**

Tanzania Union Mission is using different methods to draw many new members into the church fellowship. Despite their best efforts to increase membership and retain new church members, almost 30 percent of the members have been leaving the church annually. The results of these efforts have proved them unsuccessful, despite the expectation of winning and holding new members. This is because zeal without understanding how to retain converts has brought about the problem of apostasy. This problem inspired the researcher to study and work to find out reasons why some new members become discouraged and finally leave the church fellowship. The researcher's interest has gone beyond the problem of why members leave, to the point of suggesting possible preventive methods for this wide-spread apostasy.

The study is descriptive and empirical. To achieve the goal of retaining new members in Tanzania, each local congregation should consolidate methods of preparing baptismal candidates, caring for them after baptism, and reclaiming those who apostatize. This is not an option but a must, because evidences of God's purpose for saving souls and the instructions for the church's evangelistic task in the world are presented in the Bible.

Methodologically, relevant strategies should be developed for effective evangelism. The work of retaining newly baptized members, as well as reclaiming efforts, should be given first priority in every local church.



## BOOK REVIEWS

Bacchiocchi, Samuele. *The Sabbath under Crossfire: A Biblical Analysis of Recent Sabbath/Sunday Developments*. Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1999. 303 pp.

Samuele Bacchiocchi is well known among theologians and serious Bible students in the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church to which he belongs, and in other denominations as well, as a dedicated and skilled Bible scholar, lecturer, and writer. He is perhaps best known for his doctoral dissertation and subsequent writings on the seventh-day Sabbath and the historical change in the Christian Church from observance of the seventh day to observance of Sunday. Recent debates concerning the Sabbath, in which he has been deeply involved, have gained wide attention.

Two major events provided Bacchiocchi with much of the motivation and material for writing *The Sabbath under Crossfire*. The first was the pastoral letter *Dies Domini* issued by Pope John Paul II on 31 May 1998. The second was a televised discussion on 15 June 1998 and subsequent debates on radio and the internet between Bacchiocchi and Dale Ratzlaff, a former SDA pastor who has come to believe that the Sabbath was an “Old Covenant” institution abolished by Christ on the cross. The book is divided into seven chapters.

In his first chapter, Bacchiocchi presents a number of quotations from Pope John Paul’s encyclical which lead him to the conclusion that the latter demonstrates a significant change in the basis upon which the Roman Catholic Church regards Sunday observance as obligatory. Prior to the letter, according to Bacchiocchi, Catholic theologians had generally held that Christ had given the Church authority to establish holy days and festivals and that the Church had changed the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday by virtue of that authority. Usually, no scriptural command was given as a direct basis for Sunday observance. John Paul now asserts, however, that Sunday observance is the post-resurrection fulfillment of the command in the Decalogue to remember to keep holy the Sabbath day, the seventh day of the week.

Bacchiocchi’s response to the above assertion is, in the opinion of this reviewer, biblically sound, well-reasoned, and well-balanced—an excellent response. Those who believe in observance of the seventh-day Sabbath will certainly agree, and may regard this chapter alone as making the book well worth its purchase price. Those

who uphold Sunday-sacredness as a fulfillment of the Sabbath command will undoubtedly find it challenging.

Bacchiocchi's second chapter deals with the question of whether the Sabbath was, from its very beginning, creational or ceremonial. In it he musters significant biblical evidence in support of the former position. Like the first chapter, this chapter is well written, which is typical of most of Bacchiocchi's published materials on Sabbath/Sunday issues.

The first part of Bacchiocchi's response to Dale Ratzlaff and other former Sabbath-keepers is presented in chapter III. Against the claim that the Ten Commandments (including the Sabbath commandment) constituted the Old Covenant, that they were "nailed to the cross," and that "New Covenant Christians" therefore need not observe the Sabbath, Bacchiocchi argues that it was the record of human sins, not the Law, which was nailed to the cross. Against Ratzlaff's emphasis on discontinuity between the Old and New Covenants, he points to significant areas of continuity. One such area he seeks to establish is that the New Covenant, as well as the Old, is based on the "Moral Law" of the Ten Commandments.

Bacchiocchi presents many good points in chapter III, but the chapter as a whole is not, in my opinion, his best. When he cites Heb 8 in discussing the Old and New Covenants, he gives little attention to the very significant use the author of Hebrews makes of Jer 31:31-34, although this is briefly mentioned in a later chapter. A thorough biblical study of the covenants, and a careful comparison of his views point-by-point with those of Ratzlaff and similar "New Covenant Christians," can hardly be done effectively in one short chapter. The subject deserves much more.

Chapter IV addresses the relationship between the Savior and the Sabbath. The first part deals with Christ and the Sabbath in the OT. Curiously, it does not seem to apply the NT understanding of Christ's role in creation (e.g., John 14:1-3,14; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:2) to His relationship with the Sabbath at creation, and seems generally strained in trying to establish any significant OT connection between Christ and the Sabbath. Like much of chapter III, it does not seem to represent Bacchiocchi's best writing. The latter part of the chapter is on the relationship between Christ and the Sabbath in the NT and is much more substantive and convincing.

Bacchiocchi's discussion in chapter V on "Paul and the Law" focuses on a number of Pauline "problem" passages which are often interpreted as presenting a very negative attitude toward the Law. This chapter is, for the most part, very good. Even a few SDA theologians, however, may differ with his interpretation of some passages. For instance, they may believe he is correct in disagreeing with Ratzlaff's insistence that when Paul declared Christians to be not "under law" but "under grace" (Rom 6:14), he meant that the Law is no longer to serve as a guide for Christian behavior. But they may also believe that Bacchiocchi's apparent agreement with the traditional SDA interpretation of "under law" as "under the *condemnation* of the law" does not represent the most carefully thought out or the best understanding of the passage.

Chapter VI addresses Pauline “problem texts” which relate directly to the Sabbath. Part 1 deals with Col 2:14-17, and is, in my opinion, very well written and convincing. The same may be said for part 2, which considers the Sabbath in Romans and Galatians.

Part 1 of the final chapter provides interesting and helpful information concerning a number of individuals and groups who have rediscovered the biblical meaning and spirit of Sabbath observance and have endeavored to apply it to the observance of Sunday. Even more interesting and encouraging for SDAs, part 2 identifies some former Sunday-keeping groups which have rediscovered the significance and meaning of the biblical seventh-day Sabbath and have begun to observe it.

*The Sabbath under Crossfire* is somewhat repetitious in places. Many theologians, even some among SDAs, may not regard it as equally valid or valuable in all chapters and sections. It is, however, and will undoubtedly continue to be, a very important, useful, and helpful book in ongoing discussions concerning Sabbath/Sunday issues and observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. For this, its author is to be commended.

Ronald D. Bissell

Bray, Gerald. *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*. Downers Grove, IL, and Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1996. 608 pp.

Gerald Bray writes as Anglican Professor of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama. Formerly, he served as Lecturer in Christian Doctrine at Oak Hill College, London. In this book, he has, perhaps, achieved his magnum opus. To my knowledge, this is the first thorough historical survey of biblical interpretation that carefully analyzes the impact of hermeneutical methods on Christian tradition and theology at every stage of Christian history.

Bray's survey is well organized and readable, on the whole. Though not so indicated in the table of contents, each historical period follows the same structure: an introduction to the period and its particular methods of biblical interpretation; a list of the interpreters and their work, giving a brief summary of the major contributions of each; a summary of the major issues that were especially relevant to the period; an analysis of the most representative methods of interpretation; a bibliography; and finally, a case study selected to demonstrate the hermeneutical methods typical of the period. This organization proves most helpful in clearly communicating the distinctive features of each period, though there is some redundancy or overlap between different sections. Only the sections on the interpreters are somewhat laborious and poorly organized in terms of indicating divisions. The problem is due largely to the fact that some minor group headings are set in exactly the same style as the units that fall under them, making it difficult at

times to tell where a group begins and ends (see, e.g., 230-36). On the whole, the interpreters are presented chronologically, though occasionally there seems to be a certain randomness to the sequence.

Despite the fact that Bray, at a personal level, clearly leans toward a fairly conservative and traditional model of biblical interpretation, he is to be commended for maintaining a reasonably objective and fair attitude toward and evaluation of the more critical interpretational methods. He endeavors to assess their strengths and weaknesses on their own terms as far as possible, without an overtly apologetic or dogmatic agenda. He seems genuinely interested in understanding the history of biblical interpretation according to the dynamics of the respective periods and the developments that took place in both the secular and religious spheres. It can be seen by the attentive observer that biblical interpretation was largely a product of the times and varied according to the prevalent world-view, educational background of the interpreters, and religious, political, and scientific developments taking place during each respective historical period. It is only when Bray gets to the post-modern period that he begins to lose some of his objective distance from his subject and betray his strong bias against sociological methods of interpretation, especially feminist interpretation, and in favor of evangelical, but not fundamentalist, forms of interpretation. He wants the Bible to find a permanent place in the life of the church, directed by the Holy Spirit, and he ends on a note of hope that this may truly happen.

*Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* is a very useful tool for understanding the history of biblical interpretation, including the issues, methods, and personalities involved. It offers more than most such surveys, especially in the periods before the Reformation. Most historical surveys touch only briefly on early Christian interpretation, move rapidly through Reformation hermeneutics, then introduce Semler and the historical-critical scholars, giving primary emphasis to the last two centuries. Bray offers a more balanced survey. Without a thorough understanding of the issues relevant to the different periods, it is difficult to explain why biblical interpretation took the routes it did. Bray provides such an understanding. His work is highly recommended to all who are interested in biblical interpretation, but especially to students looking for a single resource that will cover the field of biblical interpretation comprehensively.

Edwin Reynolds

LaRondelle, Hans K. *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible*. Sarasota, FL: First Impressions, 1997. x + 501 pp.

Hans LaRondelle is Professor Emeritus of Theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Currently living in retirement in Florida, LaRondelle is known for his cogent writing and careful theology, especially in the area of prophetic interpretation. In this recent



work on understanding end-time prophecies, he has produced what may be his best work yet.

LaRondelle states that his purpose "is to investigate the theological unity of the Hebrew prophecies and the Christian gospel of the New Testament" (489). He does this by using a consistent "*contextual* method of exegesis" that attempts "to bring to light the essential continuity of Israel's end-time prophecies in the prophetic outlook of Jesus, Paul, and John's Apocalypse" (ibid.). He begins by establishing a careful biblical hermeneutic for interpreting apocalyptic prophecies in the NT. He looks at OT apocalyptic, particularly Daniel, noting its essential characteristics, then studies how Christ and Paul interpreted Daniel's prophecies. Their use of Daniel becomes the basis for the hermeneutic he then uses to interpret the book of Revelation, particularly in the light of Daniel, which he calls "the major root of John's apocalypse" (219; cf. 238, 244).

LaRondelle's book does not claim to be a commentary on Revelation, yet that is what the majority of the book turns out to be, albeit a bit selective. At the same time, it is no ordinary commentary. It is a very theological approach to the prophecies of Revelation, looking at them faithfully in the light of the OT Scriptures, especially Daniel, but also using a Christocentric outlook and the "gospel hermeneutic" as "inspired guidelines" for interpreting the OT backgrounds found in Revelation (490). LaRondelle explicitly rejects the philosophical principles of literalism, allegorism, and idealism, preferring to follow a continuous-historical application (490, 315, 319), which he finds consistent with Christ's and Paul's interpretation of Daniel. The result is very satisfactory. One readily observes that LaRondelle has done his homework well, both exegetically and theologically.

In this volume one will find no simplistic solutions proposed, no speculative reconstructions of history or projections regarding the future, but rather a comprehensive theological analysis of the meaning of the text that is as relevant for the present as for the past or the future. This is what a commentary on Revelation ought to be. Though he adheres to a continuous-historical interpretation, LaRondelle does not feel compelled to repeat or reinforce historicist interpretations from the past, unless the evidence of the text in its theological context makes a compelling case. He is quick to dismiss many of these as speculative and not grounded in a theological approach to the text. He proposes alternative interpretations which are rooted in the essential theological message of the book of Revelation.

Having observed some strengths of LaRondelle's work, I would also take note of a few weaknesses. Because his work is well researched and generally theologically sound does not mean that all of his interpretations are equally defensible. One can still find inconsistencies, flawed correspondences, and some poor choices of citations.

La Rondelle has taken inconsistent positions, for example, regarding both the 144,000 and the little scroll of Rev 10. In discussing Rev 7, he first correctly equates the 144,000 with the numberless multitude, asserting that they are "the countless believers in Christ" and "the totality of spiritual Israel among the human race" (149).

Then, with only “the end-time context of Rev. 7” as a basis for doing so, he quickly confines the group to “the worldwide covenant people of God during the final crisis of the Christian age” (150). In Rev 14, without justification, he calls them “the last companions of the Lamb in the church age” (328). Here his apparent failure to see the larger theological role that this group plays as the entire host of the redeemed of all ages—there is no other larger, more complete group of redeemed in the book—has caused him to succumb to an artificial restricting of the 144,000 (the symbol of the numberless multitude before the throne) to a special group limited to the final era. This creates a whole host of theological problems.

In Rev 10 he argues that the scroll in the hand of the mighty Angel is both the scroll that was sealed with seven seals in Rev 5 (198-99) and the part of the book of Daniel that was sealed until the time of the end (199). To be the seven-sealed scroll of Rev 5, which he says is the book of the covenant or the book of destiny (114, 118), would be impossible, since Rev 10 is still in historical time, before the close of probation (204), and the scroll is already open, whereas the scroll of Rev 5 cannot be opened until the seventh seal is broken, which takes place at the great day of God’s wrath (cf. 141). Simple correspondences are not adequate criteria for making interpretations, as he himself has noted (219).

Yet LaRondelle makes other poor correspondences also, resulting in erroneous interpretations. For example, while he faults André Feuillet for drawing a correspondence between Rev 11:2-3 and Luke 21:24, he later draws a correspondence between the Beast from the sea in Rev 13:1-10 and the Beast from the abyss in Rev 17 based on some similarities in expression (300-302). From this he concludes that the Beast of Rev 17 is a later historical phase of the Beast of Rev 13, and it functions after the healing of the deadly wound at the end of the 1260 days, that is, after 1798 (409-10). There is no space here to discuss the complexities of Rev 17, but suffice it to say that LaRondelle fails to distinguish adequately between the Beast and its heads, and to distinguish carefully between historical and eschatological visions. The Beast of Rev 17 is part of an eschatological vision pertaining to the judgment of Babylon, which takes place under the seventh bowl plague. Only the Beast itself as an eighth king, not the seven historical heads which it follows, is of serious concern in this vision. Thus the heads and horns have no crowns.

In interpreting the number 666, LaRondelle rejects the use of gematria “because John nowhere in the Apocalypse uses gematria as a method” (310), despite the fact that John explicitly states that the number should be calculated—not converted to a symbol—as the number of a man’s name. Any first-century reader should have understood this to point to the use of gematria to determine exactly to whom this number referred. This does not deny any symbolic value the number may have, but neither does a symbolic value deny a real value that may exist. It is usually not what we affirm that creates a problem, but what we deny. The problem with the symbolic value of 666 is that it is just as subjective and speculative as the various results of practicing gematria independent of the rest of the witness of the text. In fact, the use

of gematria is safer, because it is only one of many factors that the text provides to identify the Beast, and when put together, they form an irrefutable whole. The conjectured symbolic value of 666 may seem significant, but it can hardly be used to confirm with certainty the identification of the Beast, which is the implicit purpose of the giving of the number.

LaRondelle gives considerable evidence of a broad familiarity with the current literature on the book of Revelation. Sometimes, however, he seems a little too quick to cite it for support. I seriously question whether he would really agree fully with the sentiments quoted from, for example, Richard Bauckham on p. 230, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza on p. 383, and George R. Beasley-Murray on p. 384.

The book could use some careful editing or proofreading as well. There are many spelling and other mechanical errors and inconsistencies throughout the book that cheapen it. These should be corrected in the likely prospect of another printing.

Despite certain minor weaknesses, this is a book that should be required reading for every serious course on the book of Revelation, and every serious student of Revelation should have a dog-eared copy in his or her library.

Edwin Reynolds

Mosher, Steve. *God's Power, Jesus' Faith, and World Mission: A Study in Romans*.  
Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1996. 360 pp.

Steve Mosher holds a Ph.D. degree in New Testament and has served as a missionary in the Philippines for eight years. In this book he combines his academic and missionary backgrounds well. His missionary spirit has been revealed in his use of simple English for those who read it only as a second language. This was a boon for me.

In this thematic commentary Mosher tries to show how Paul developed three themes in Romans: God's power, Jesus' faith, and world mission. He divides the Epistle to the Romans into thirty-four passages, approximately ten to fifteen verses each. This facilitates sermon making and other forms of sharing. Mosher finds 1:16-17 to be the source for the basic thematic message that he wants to develop. He believes that he had an illumination from God in seeing the three themes he found in 1:16-17 (16). He also believes that they are clues to the broad interpretation of the letter to the Romans.

Mosher's theological starting point can be seen in his emphasis that Paul meant the "faith of Jesus" rather than "faith in Jesus." Paul's teaching, Mosher observes, is full of the new faith that Jesus introduced. Rom 3:21-31 is discussed under the title "God's Righteous Power, Jesus' Faith, and World Mission." Perhaps it is the only passage besides 1:16-17 where the reader can clearly see these three themes coming together. "Christ's faith, not our faith in Christ, plays the pivotal role. As a

result, God's powerful grace is making righteous both Jews and Gentiles who share Jesus' faith." (88)

The primary problem Paul describes is the power of sin, not the guilt of sin. So the redemption in Jesus Christ is not primarily forgiveness. Above all, God's redemption and grace mean deliverance from slavery to sin and liberation from the power of sin. . . . God's greatest gift is not a righteous status, but a righteous life. (89)

Mosher does not offer any discussion of various possible interpretations. He usually presents the best interpretation according to his own exegetical judgment, although its reasons are not often given. The most interesting parts of this volume are the frequent discussions of practical applications of the issues in Romans. He shares insights from many missionaries who, like Paul, are practical persons.

It appears that his criticism of many centuries of organized missionary endeavors is rather like a criticism of civilization. Any missionary endeavor is severely criticized that has safeguarded the benefits of the rich, has been politically oriented, or has produced nominal Christians. Mosher believes that any missionary motivation based on a feeling of cultural superiority has failed to be a true mission.

He believes that when Paul wrote Romans, he wanted the Roman Christians to share his vision for world mission and his emphasis on God's ruling power in history. Paul's mission included his concern for all, whether in Jerusalem, in Rome, or in Spain. The commentary is more practical than exegetical, more concerned with missiology than with biblical theology, and full of poignant critiques of historical and current mission endeavors from the viewpoint of the powerless. This stimulates repentance.

The church at Rome, as Mosher understands rightly, was a house church, a setting in which the gospel could be more effective in many ways. His suggestions and his own practice along this line are refreshing at this time of the megachurch syndrome. House churches can be inexpensive, more effective, and more active.

It is regrettable that Mosher overemphasizes the discontinuity between the OT and NT when he criticizes the Western powers for misapplying the literal teaching of the OT. We cannot isolate Mosher from his Baptist background. A misuse of Scripture does not justify its rejection. Rather, it is important to discover the continuity in the spirit of the entire Scriptures and correct our abuses accordingly.

No text of Romans is given. No new translation is given except for his theme verses. Detailed endnotes are provided. Footnotes could have been more reader friendly, for it is, after all, a commentary, and people are interested in certain exegetical points on which he is building his missiological edifice. His bibliography has more items on missiological interest than on exegetical ones. Had an index been provided, it would also have been more user friendly. Otherwise, Mosher's work is an excellent example of how one can create a bridge between biblical scholarship and practical theology, especially missiology.

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