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ARTICLES

Ethics of Communication in a Digital Age

By Frank M. Hasel

We live in a digital age where our lives are influenced in significant ways through social media. The digital revolution has powerfully transformed how we communicate.¹ Instead of communicating personally through live, in-person interaction with others, we are getting increasingly accustomed to a virtual-only form of communication on social media platforms. The virtual world of digital communication gives the illusion of somehow still being personally involved in communicating with others while at the same time doing it remotely and from a distance. Such digital and virtual communication, however, often comes with a distinct loss in social and relational quality as compared to our real interactions when we are physically present to communicate with others. We are realizing now that the experience of live, physical reactions and expressions is very important for effective and successful communication.² There are a number of drawbacks we suffer when communicating only digitally or online: 1) we are often not able to fully see the other person,³ and sometimes we cannot see the person but only hear our counterpart; 2) we are not able to benefit from physical touch of the other person; and 3) no perception of smell enters into communication with someone faced only digitally.⁴ In light of the fact that digital communication is now largely influenced by bots⁵ and increasingly driven by “community-based” algorithms rather than by objective facts and/or principles guided by truth or other ethical-biblical virtues, we need

to reflect on some ethical principles regarding how we should communicate as Seventh-day Adventist Christians. This has implications for our personal communication in everyday life and also impacts how we communicate the gospel and biblical truth—even more so since, unfortunately, much of the language on social media has become aggressive, violent, and even destructive hate speech.

These ethical principles should not be limited to our communication on social media platforms. But they nevertheless have particular relevance for the way we present our personal opinions and share information digitally. As followers of Christ, we should exercise spiritual discernment, be transparent, and conduct our communication in ways that reflect God’s character and give glory to Him.

The Challenge of Living and Communicating in a Post-Truth Era

Since the outbreak of the COVID pandemic, we have been confronted with a social phenomenon that is nothing short of mind-boggling, calling for a biblical ethics of communication. So-called “fake news,” “alternative facts,” and “conspiracy theories”⁶ have caused havoc and divided people, even within the church. The perceived loss of absolute truth in our postmodern society, where “truth” no longer corresponds to external reality nor is based on demonstrable facts, has strongly affected the Christian faith, which is grounded in history and established on the reliable

reality of historical facts. Without such real-world anchoring, truth loses its universal appeal and morphs into a subjectivism of just “my personal truth.” Truth has degenerated into “truthiness,” a sweet-sounding word that refers to a *seemingly* truthful quality that one *wishes* to be true—not because of supporting facts or evidence, but because of a feeling that it is true or a desire for it to be true.⁷

In 2016, Oxford University Press chose “post-truth” as its word of the year. It is defined as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”⁸ In such a context, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish falsehood from truth. “Fake news,”⁹ misinformation,¹⁰ and disinformation¹¹ have become prevalent in our age of social media. However, when dealing with “fake facts” and “alternative facts,” facts alone will not convince anyone of the truth anymore.

In this post-truth era, digital communication poses significant challenges for Christians and for our responsibility in sharing things on the internet: on the one hand, the World Wide Web is borderless and has literally widened our global reach to the ends of the earth. On the other hand, however, digital communication on social media sites has let many users into what has been called an “echo chamber.”¹² An echo chamber is an environment, especially on social media sites, in which any statement of opinion is likely to be greeted with approval because it will only be read and heard by people who hold similar views. The same could be said of cable news channels and other venues that generally cater to only one side of the political spectrum. Thus, while the digital age has globalized our outreach, it has at the same time fostered an isolationist pattern that increasingly jeopardizes any meaningful communication and is deadly to civil discourse and any genuine attempt to solve problems because people only listen to what they want to hear and what their subjective preference will allow. This means that often the only solution perceived by a given side is absolute conquest over or even the destruction of the opposing side. There is no longer any middle ground or room for legitimate compromise.¹³

The Need for Ethical Principles of Communication

The question we need to address is: Why does factual evidence seem to have so little influence on people’s beliefs? In a post-fact and post-truth society, more is needed than a mere listing of facts.¹⁴ We need an ethics of communication informed by the wisdom of ancient biblical virtues that enables us to implement in meaningful ways pertinent biblical principles for the challenges we face. In Luke 10:27 a noteworthy word of Jesus is recorded. Here the Bible tells us that we should love God with all our heart, with all our

soul, with all our strength, and *with all our mind*. This virtuous thinking is a way of thinking that is characterized by certain inner attitudes and dispositions toward things like truth, knowledge, and understanding, which we all should exercise when we are engaged in communicating digitally and on various social media platforms. Without virtuous thinking, we cannot truly love God, nor will we give honor to Him, and neither will it be an honor for us if we are deficient in these aspects.¹⁵ Let us look at some key characteristics of virtuous thinking that can guide our communication to be ethical.¹⁶

Carefulness

In the digital world—as well as in the analog world we inhabit—our communication should be guided by carefulness. Whenever we want to communicate our insights in an ethically credible way, we need to cultivate intellectual carefulness.¹⁷ Such carefulness is at the foundation of all knowledge. In the Bible we are repeatedly called to be careful in what we speak (Matt 5:37; Jas 5:12) and how we observe what God has told us to do (Deut 12:32; 2 Tim 3:10). Jesus tells us that the one “who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much” (Luke 16:10 NKJV). Therefore, those who are careful in their communication do not want to distort the truth but earnestly want to know the truth and consistently make sure not to rush to any hasty conclusions that are based rather on limited knowledge. Intellectually careful people are thorough and diligent in their thinking, and cautious not to overlook any important details. We all know stories where hastiness or carelessness in our work, in our studies, in our relationships, in science, and in theology have led to disastrous results. Careless thinking is always dangerous. An essential ethical component in our communication is the need for accuracy. Accuracy safeguards our communication so that information is not distorted by partial reports or inaccurate presentations.¹⁸

The biblical virtue of carefulness is particularly crucial in an era of digital communication. First of all, digitized information may easily undergo at least two processes: decontextualization and recombination.¹⁹ By copying text out of its original context and pasting it into another context, it is difficult to protect the original information, and the changed meaning is almost impossible to control.²⁰ We certainly should not communicate content that is taken out of context and distorts the original meaning, and we should not plagiarize content. Another reason to call for carefulness and prudence in sharing information on social media is the fact that once something has appeared on the internet, it remains there effectively forever. Even when comments and posts are deleted by an individual, some form of it remains traceable in the wide—and sometimes dark—places of the internet. Thus, whatever we

share—even if it is nonsense or comments given in the spur of the moment—may be associated with us even in the years to come. This fact alone should make us cautious and very careful in how we share digital information and what we communicate with others on the internet.

In the Bible we are repeatedly admonished to be careful in how we observe God's Word (Deut 4:6; 6:3; 28:58; 31:12; etc.). The one who is careful in observing and doing the will of God will prosper (1 Chr 22:13), we are told. Paul calls the believers to carefully follow good doctrine (1 Tim 4:6; 2 Tim 3:10). In a similar manner, we need to carefully check the truthfulness of what we share, and the validity and veracity of the sources we use as well as the helpfulness of the content we want to communicate.

As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, we should pursue and cherish intellectual carefulness not just because it is academically sound and scientifically mandated, but because it grows out of our respect of God, who is our Creator and our Redeemer. *His* character compels us to work and think and communicate carefully. *His* example in creation and salvation leads the way for our carefulness. Faith is not sloppy. Faith knows no haste. We do not honor God if we are not meticulous and careful in what we think, say, research, publish, and share on the internet! This leads us to a second characteristic: fair-mindedness.

Fair-Mindedness

We live in a world of bias. When we turn on the news, we are likely to hear current events explained in a partisan and even a polemical way. Few people are willing to carefully and impartially consider thoughts and ideas that might even challenge their own biases. A biblical example of fair-mindedness can be seen with the believers in Berea, who were noble-minded, because “they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11 NASB). God is described in Scripture as judging “each person's work impartially” (1 Pet 1:17 NIV) and as His children we should show the same attitude in dealing with others.

Fair-minded people are people who earnestly want to know the truth and therefore deliberately take into consideration all the factors that impact a certain conclusion. This does not mean having no convictions or not standing for those convictions. The secret of fair-minded people is that they have chosen to put the truth above any allegiance to their own egos or cherished opinions. Therefore, fair-minded people consistently try to be as impartial as possible, even if they already have a strong view on the subject. Fair-minded people also try to view issues from the perspectives of those they disagree with, because they are aware that they do not always have the most complete or accurate perspective on a given topic. An intellectually

fair-minded person cares more about knowing what is actually true than about convincing themselves or others that they are right. Intellectual bias is the corresponding vice.²¹ They are willing to see the good, or the good intention, in another person, without necessarily thereby approving everything that person might do or endorse.

Such fair-mindedness has significant practical relational benefits. Genuinely fair-minded people tend to make and keep friends more easily than those whose thinking habits are closed-minded or biased. Why? The reason is simple. There is an inherent link between fair-mindedness and attentive listening. Because they are committed to discovering and exploring truth, fair-minded people listen! They actually really listen! Very few things give people a greater sense of their own value and worth and nothing attracts us to another person more than the belief that that person values us. And respect is often expressed through attentive listening. In other words: fair-minded people are curious learners, active listeners, and brave explorers of truth.

This habit adds invaluable depth, richness, and wisdom to life. It is also incredibly significant for communicating in an ethically and appealing way in the digital age. In an age when many people have significant doubts as to who can still be trusted, a mere listing of facts will no longer convince others. We must first win their trust! This is accomplished more easily when we are willing to genuinely listen to other opinions and positions. This means that we should not enter any discussion with a desire to bully the other person or to be someone who wants to contradict the other position and show its flawed reasoning. Instead, we must first learn to listen attentively. Our impulse to speak is often greater than our eagerness to listen. Fair-mindedness also safeguards our responses on social media. Rather than responding with quick emotional outbursts of anger and upset feelings, we will be willing first to reflect and better understand where the other person is coming from. This willingness to stay open and to deliberately pay attention to significant details is an important part of an ethics of communication. Eventually, it will even enable us to learn how to ask informed and thoughtful but inoffensive questions rather than quickly denouncing and condemning what we are hearing. Seeking to address the issue another person has articulated rather than trying to silence the other party will open a door for more meaningful conversations in an atmosphere of mutual trust that enables our dialogue partner also to attentively listen to us. This means that in our communication we will be doing everything to avoid inflammatory language and any derogatory or belittling comments. Such an attitude will go a long way toward reestablishing civil discussions. This leads us to a third characteristic: truthfulness.

Truthfulness

One of the most significant values of being truthful in our communication is that it fosters community. It also affirms shared values and beliefs. In the Bible truth (Heb. *emet*) is associated with faithfulness and reliability. It is something that is permanent and trustworthy.²²

To be truthful and reliable in our communication with each other signals respect for the other person. The provision of truthful information is one way to enable others to make accurate and appropriate decisions that will benefit their overall health as well as the health of the social and spiritual community they are part of. Truthful information is essentially significant for everybody who wants to obtain informed consent on issues that are presented before others.

Truthfulness also builds trust amongst each other. In any social relationship, trust is essential for a harmonious functioning of the different members of the group. But trust deteriorates when people discover that they have been deceived or not told the truth, especially by people who are otherwise trusted not to tell lies. As such, truth and trust are essential to human life. Mistrust, however, makes us feel refused, rejected, and even hated. Mistrust fosters aggression. Therefore, our communication needs to reflect truthfulness if it wants to be healing and inspiring and supportive of human flourishing.

A third value of truthfulness is the physical and spiritual benefits of telling the truth. Here truthfulness overlaps with honesty, which is connected with the process of how we use and present the things we know. Truthfulness and honesty will not allow information to be used out of context and will not distort the truth through loaded language; nor will it mislead others with twisted statistics and other information that might have a deceptive effect. Those who are well informed and who are truthfully informed tend to cooperate and collaborate better with the people they interact with. Such cooperation is important for unity and even fosters physical and spiritual well-being.

A fourth value of truth and truthfulness is that it often possesses very practical benefits.²³ Any society that wants to be even minimally functional must have a robust appreciation of this benefit of truth. Without it nobody could come to sufficiently well-informed judgments and decisions concerning the most important aspects of public life.²⁴ The success of public life depends upon something we all do quite often: we identify certain propositions as true and others as false. Public life and society at large would not properly function without such truthful integrity.²⁵

Beyond these general benefits and blessings of truthfulness in our communication, there is a fifth value that makes the virtue of truthfulness particularly significant and important to Christians who take their faith commitment seriously. Being truthful will let us

flourish and thrive as human beings who are created in the image of God. Truthfulness reflects the character of the biblical God we gladly serve. As His children we have a desire to reflect His truthful character. As His followers we want to emulate God's truthfulness and dependability in our interactions with God and our fellow human beings. This thought is embedded in the ninth commandment that admonishes us not to bear false witness (Exod 20:16). Being truthful is not limited to giving witness in a court, but implies not to lie in whatever situation we are in. God is God because He cannot lie (Titus 1:2). He is Truth (Ps 31:5; John 1:14). His word is truth (Ps 119:160). As His followers we are called to deal equally truthfully and honestly with each other. This truthfulness implies a recognizable conformity to and agreement with the expressed will of God as found in Scripture through our actions that reflect and correspond to it. In digital communications, this personal conformity of thoughts and actions is often at risk because we can easily read what the other person writes or hear what he says but are not able to see whether his life is actually in harmony with what he states. But sometimes the choice of strong words and the use of inflammatory language to insinuate doubt and mistrust speaks a clearer language than all the verbal affirmations to the contrary. That leads us to another related virtue in ethical communication: humility.

Humility

The virtue of humility is perhaps the most misunderstood virtue. What does it mean to be humble in the way we think and communicate? Intellectually humble people have the amazing realization and humbling insight that they are dependent upon something or someone outside themselves. They realize that they are not the measure of everything. They are aware that truth is not of their own making but is ultimately God breathed (2 Tim 3:16). Realizing that their reason and rational intelligence are not the measure of everything,²⁶ they gladly submit their thoughts in obedience to Christ and His Word (cf. 2 Cor 10:5).

Humble people understand that the larger their egos are, the less space is left in their minds for anything or anyone else. Humble people value truth over their ego's need to be right. Humility of thought has countless benefits. Humble curiosity is the foundation of all growth in knowledge. Why? Because it naturally produces a teachable spirit. This makes humble people very pleasant to work with and interact with, as anyone who has had to work with proud, arrogant people can easily testify!

Intellectual humility does not lead to a lack of firm conviction. Humble Christians are confident in God's truth and submissive to it. At the same time, they are aware of the limitations of their own knowledge. Therefore, they can expand their understanding of

the world in a way that arrogant and proud people are utterly incapable of.²⁷ Proud people do not feel the need to learn from anyone, but think they know it all. If we want to continue to learn and grow, our knowledge must be tempered by humility.²⁸ Furthermore, the virtue of humility should be coupled with civility and decency in our communication.

Civility and Decency

Much of the digital communication on social platforms suffers from inflammatory language and words and images that are used to convey derogatory messages. An aggressive demeanor, however, fosters violence, disrespect, and hate. If this is combined with fake facts or false information, the negative effects are exponential. This calls for a deliberate and informed response and for more civility in our communication because we are increasingly shaped by radical connectivity and everybody's ability to publish messages globally with the tip of the finger. Uncivil communication tends toward anarchy.²⁹ Civility and decency in our communication also includes that we do not push through our opinion no matter what, especially when we are in a position of power, and that we do not try to silence or ignore dissenting voices.

Instead of hate speech, or language that disseminates doubts about leadership and institutions, and evidence-based scientific information, or supports dubious opinions and unspecified or unjustified fears, we should cultivate what the apostle Paul elucidates in Philippians 4:8: "Whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (ESV). Our communication should be cognizant of the impact our words and actions have on other people. Cultivating and learning to share positive thoughts and things that edify and build up others honors God and is a blessing to the world. This leads us to a final aspect of ethical communication: responsibility.

Responsibility

Often people who disseminate questionable content or inflammatory comments claim the right to their freedom of expression, freedom of speech, or their right to privacy. But there is more to public discourse than that. What we are dealing with is not just a matter of freedom of speech or freedom of expression. In any public discourse there is also the aspect of responsibility. How will our words be perceived and received and what impact will they have? What will our words evoke in response based on how they are communicated and what kind of reactions will they produce once they are uttered and expressed? This is even more important in light of the fact that digital communication allows us to reach an exceeding-

ly large number of people globally, way beyond the normal number of people with whom we are usually able to interact with physically. This makes our subjective opinions and individual voices much more powerful, and it raises important issues of power and personal influence. In the digital age, our local perspectives have a potentially global outreach. This comes with important ethical responsibilities that are often not fully understood nor appreciated.

Even Jesus was aware that there were still "many things" He had to share, "but you cannot bear them now" (John 16:12 NKJV). The apostle John echoes this sentiment when he states at the end of his Gospel that there were many more things that Jesus did that were not recorded, because we would not have been able to adequately deal with that surplus of information (cf. John 21:25). We need to learn from Jesus that not everything we know is helpful to others nor wise to share in every situation. We need to be mindful what effect such sharing will have on those we want to reach. This insight expresses an awareness of our responsibility in how we communicate and what we communicate. Just like Jesus and John, we need to exercise prudence and restraint in sharing what we might know, but also have the needed courage to speak the truth in love—even more so since in digital communication messages can easily be decontextualized and used out of context and algorithms of powerful companies (and nations) can quickly circulate certain snippets of news to specially targeted audiences.³⁰

Conclusion

As followers of Christ, we should emulate an ethic of communication that exhibits carefulness, fair-mindedness, accuracy, truthfulness, honesty, humility, civility, decency, and responsibility. These virtues will not only enhance our communication in a digital age, but also positively impact the way we relate to each other. This in turn reflects the character of God whom we worship. Honoring these principles of communication can help to make our engagement with others and our interaction with them on social media an expression of our "reasonable service" to God that is not "conformed to this world but . . . transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:1–2 NKJV). This biblical lifestyle is a living worship of God and is closely tied to the character of our minds and the truthfulness of our words. Of course, worship is far more than just knowing a lot of information about God. But our worship and our relationship with God demand that our minds be fully engaged and that our lives and words exhibit the virtues we have described above. We cannot truly worship God without thinking. When we take on those virtues of communication, our actions also will increasingly reflect God's goodness.

This is hardly surprising. How we think influences how we behave, including how we communicate. If you are careful in what you say about me, if you begin to treat my opinions in a fair-minded way, if you are honest in your dealings with me, if your demeanor reflects truthfulness and humbleness, if you are kind and responsible in how you interact with me, it is only natural that your actual behavior toward me will also grow increasingly gracious!³¹ This is how God deals with each of us.

Imagine if our homes and workplaces, our classrooms, our schools, our churches, our communities, and our social media platforms were filled with people of such a character and attitude. What a blessing that would be! Imagine how the relationships and the atmosphere within the church and the world at large

would change for the better if we all practiced this kind of interaction with each other and how our mission and outreach would benefit from it. God would be delighted, people would be attracted, and each one of us would be greatly blessed! Effective and ethical communication would become a reality among us.



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¹ The psychotherapist, sociologist, and author Paul Watzlawick points out five axioms in the theory of communication. His famous statement that “one cannot not communicate” means that human beings communicate as soon as they perceive each other. This means that any behavior of yours observed by another person might be considered communication from you even if you do not intend for it to be looked upon that way. From this follows that every kind of interaction is communication. Interestingly, Watzlawick has already pointed out that analog communication often conveys messages also at the relational level, whereas digital communication covers primarily the content of the messages themselves. See “Die Axiome von Paul Watzlawick,” Paul Watzlawick, <https://www.paulwatzlawick.de/axiome.html> (accessed June 10, 2022); and Harald Sack, “You Cannot Not Communicate—Paul Watzlawick,” SciHi, blog, July 15, 2018, <http://scihi.org/communication-paul-watzlawick/> (accessed June 10, 2022).

² With all the benefits that online teaching has opened for us in recent months and years, it has become obvious that it cannot fully replace the value of the learning dynamic that in-person teaching brings. Theologically speaking, there is a bodily dimension to our human experience and existence that cannot adequately be exchanged, replaced, or replicated through digital communication or a virtual experience.

³ Often, we see only the upper half of a person on a video screen. We normally do not see the person from different perspectives, but rather just with her frontal appearance. Sometimes there is no visual contact at all, which makes it even more difficult to respond to perceived reactions.

⁴ Smell is one of the most powerful sensory factors through which we experience and communicate something. Smells are often deeply anchored in our memory and stick with us for many years and even decades. Smell and taste are the sensory experiences that still cannot be replicated digitally!

⁵ A “bot” in this sense is a software program that performs automated, repetitive, predefined tasks. They imitate and/or replace human behavior. Because they are automated, they react much faster than human users. They can carry out useful functions but can also come as malware (cf. “What Are Bots?—Definition and Explanation,” Kaspersky, <https://www.kaspersky.com/resource-center/definitions/what-are-bots> [accessed June 10, 2022]). According to Adrienne LaFrance, “The Internet Is Mostly Bots,” *The Atlantic*, January 31, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2017/01/bots-bots-bots/515043/> (accessed June 10, 2022), it is estimated that bots are responsible for 52% of web traffic.

⁶ On the problem of conspiracy theories, see Frank M. Hasel, “Dealing With Conspiracy Theories,” *Reflections: The BRI Newsletter* 76 (December 2021): 1–8.

⁷ See Merriam-Webster Online, s.v. “Truthiness,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/truthiness> (accessed June 10, 2022).

⁸ “Word of the Year 2016,” Oxford Languages, <https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/2016/> (accessed June 10, 2022).

⁹ “Collins 2017 Word of the Year Shortlist,” Collins Language Lovers,

blog, Collins Dictionary, November 2, 2017, <https://blog.collinsdictionary.com/language-lovers/collins-2017-word-of-the-year-shortlist/> (accessed June 10, 2022). “Fake news” is defined as “false, often sensational, information disseminated under the guise of news reporting” (ibid.).

¹⁰ Misinformation is the unintentional spreading of false information.

¹¹ Disinformation is the intentional spreading of false information. So-called “deepfakes” would fall under this rubric. Deepfake technology can seamlessly stitch anyone in the world into a video or photo they never actually participated in. See Sally Adey, “What Are Deepfakes and How Are They Created?,” *IEEE Spectrum*, April 29, 2020, <https://spectrum.ieee.org/what-is-deepfake> (accessed June 10, 2022); see also Ian Sample, “What Are Deepfakes and How Can You Spot Them?,” *The Guardian*, January 13, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/jan/13/what-are-deepfakes-and-how-can-you-spot-them> (accessed June 10, 2022).

¹² “Echo chamber” was another term on the shortlist of words for the word of the year in 2017. See “Collins 2017 Word of the Year Shortlist,” Collins Language Lovers.

¹³ In a sense, these toxic sentiments are an apocalyptic fulfillment of the radical subjective perspective that Friedrich Nietzsche formulated with almost prophetic insight when he developed his idea of the will to power that sets itself up as absolute but lacks any reference point that would constrain it. See the discussion in Heinzpeter Hempelmann, “Was sind denn diese Kirchen noch...?” *Christlicher Wahrheitsanspruch vor den Provokationen der Postmoderne* (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 2006), esp. 15–35.

¹⁴ Cf. Bill Arnold, “Which Is More Convincing: Biblical Facts or Personal Testimony?,” August 9, 2018, *Afternoons With Bill Arnold*, podcast, <https://myfaithradio.com/2018/which-is-more-convincing-biblical-facts-or-personal-testimony/> (accessed June 10, 2022); Shankar Vedantam, “Facts Aren’t Enough: The Psychology of False Beliefs,” July 22, 2019, *Hidden Brain*, radio broadcast, NPR, <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/743195213> (accessed June 10, 2022); Michael Shermer, “How to Convince Someone When Facts Fail,” *Scientific American*, January 1, 2017, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-convince-someone-when-facts-fail/> (accessed June 10, 2022); Ozan Varol, “Facts Don’t Change People’s Minds: Here’s What Does,” *Next Big Idea Club*, September 8, 2017, <https://nextbigideaclub.com/magazine/facts-dont-change-peoples-minds-heres/16242/> (accessed June 10, 2022); Tali Sharot, “Why Don’t Facts Matter,” *CNN*, September 14, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/09/13/opinions/why-dont-facts-matter-sharot-opinion/index.html> (accessed June 10, 2022); Elizabeth Kolbert, “Why Facts Don’t Change Our Minds,” *The New Yorker*, February 19, 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/02/27/why-facts-dont-change-our-minds> (accessed June 10, 2022); and Julie Beck, “This Article Won’t Change Your Mind,” *The Atlantic*, March 13, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/03/this-article-wont-change-your-mind/519093/> (accessed June 10, 2022).

¹⁵ Some of the following ideas are taken from a delightful book that

has greatly stimulated the present author's own thinking, inspiring him to become a more thoughtful person. The present author is greatly indebted to Philip E. Dow, *Virtuous Minds: Intellectual Character Development* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013), and follows several of his ideas closely in this article.

¹⁶ For Seventh-day Adventists ethical communication is a type of communication that is guided by certain biblical values. They define a framework or set of acceptable communication principles that are in line with our biblical convictions and overarching code of conduct: how we relate to others and how we want to be treated by them in turn.

¹⁷ Here we follow the insights in Dow, 32–38.

¹⁸ This is part of the ethical code of journalism that was published in 1921 by the powerful American Society of News Editors and that would go on to be disseminated throughout the world as the century progressed. A more recent example of this can be found in the International Federation of Journalists' "Global Charter of Ethics of Journalists," <https://www.ifj.org/who/rules-and-policy/global-charter-of-ethics-for-journalists.html> (accessed June 10, 2022), which was adopted at the 30th IFJ World Congress in Tunis in 2019. The present author is indebted to the insightful discussion of these aspects in Hugo Aznar, "Truthfulness, Beneficence, and Vulnerability as Key Concepts in Communication Ethics," *The Ecumenical Review* 72, no. 2 (2020): 270–283, esp. 273–275.

¹⁹ Derrick de Kerckhove, *The Skin of Culture: Investigating the New Electronic Reality* (London: Sommerville House, 1995), 201, quoted in Joana T. Puntel and Moisés Sbardelotto, "From the Historical Reformation to the 'Digital Reformation': Contemporary Theological Challenges," *The Ecumenical Review* 72, no. 2 (2020): 215.

²⁰ Puntel and Sbardelotto, 215.

²¹ Cf. Dow, 49, 149.

²² "אֱמֶת" in *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. Ludwig Koehler et al. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 68–69; and אֱמֶת in *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, ed. David J. A. Clines, vol. 1 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press; Sheffield Phoenix Press, 1993–2011), 328–332.

²³ Cf. Harry G. Frankfurt, *On Truth* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), 15.

²⁴ Ibid., 16–17.

²⁵ Admittedly, there is an element of subjectivity. We cannot expect works of history or social commentary to be rigorously impartial and objective. There are, however, important limits to what this admission implies concerning the facts that serious historians interpret. According to Frankfurt, 26–27, "there is a dimension of reality into which even the boldest—or the laziest—indulgence of subjectivity cannot dare to intrude. This is the spirit of Georges Clemenceau's famous response, when he was asked to speculate as to what future historians would say about the First World War: 'They will not say Belgium invaded Germany.'" George Clemenceau (1841–1929) served as French prime minister from 1906 to 1909 and again from 1917 to 1920.

²⁶ Cf. Dow, 72, 152–153.

²⁷ Cf. Ibid., 72.

²⁸ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 462. See also Frank M. Hasel, "Elements of Biblical Hermeneutics in Harmony With Scripture's Self-Claims," in *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach*, ed. Frank M. Hasel (Silver Spring, MD: BRI/Review and Herald Academic, 2020), 54–56.

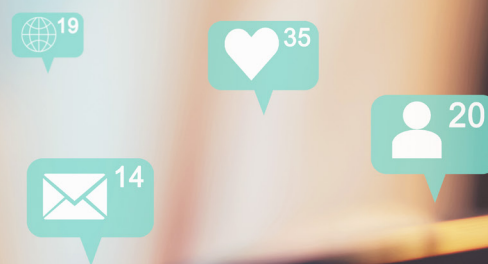
²⁹ So, Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, "The Ethical Challenges of the Digital Age," *The Ecumenical Review* 72, no. 2 (2020): 170.

³⁰ There is also a great ethical responsibility for companies that make big money on the marketing and use of those algorithms. Research has shown that companies like Facebook and Google have helped spread fake news because it leads to greater attention spans with many customers. Algorithms often serve the interest of profit, not the pursuit of the common good. See Bedford-Strohm, 167–182, esp. 171–172. See also Sheera Frenkel and Cecilia Kang, *An Ugly Truth: Inside Facebook's Battle for Dominion* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2022).

³¹ Cf. Dow, 97–98.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is
true, whatever is **noble**, whatever is **right**,
whatever is **pure**, whatever is **lovely**,
whatever is **admirable**—if anything is
excellent or praiseworthy—
think about such things.

Philippians 4:8



Lessons from Matthew 19

By Clinton Wahlen

In Matthew 19 Jesus begins pressing toward Jerusalem with His disciples, entering Judea beyond the Jordan where John the Baptist's work had focused. Nevertheless, the Pharisees continue to pursue Jesus and opposition to His work will continue to grow. But Jesus will not be distracted or diverted from His purpose and uses these moments as teaching opportunities, beginning with the issues of marriage, divorce, and celibacy (Matt 19:1–12). Although the disciples try hindering children being brought to Him, Jesus draws from this a lesson about the kingdom and blesses the children (vv. 13–15). In the second half of the chapter, Jesus answers a rich young man's question about eternal life (vv. 16–22) and replies to the disciples' concern over what reward they themselves will have (vv. 23–30).

Interpretation of Matthew 19

1. Verses 1–12

- Jesus' departure from Galilee closes His ministry in the north of Israel (cf. Matt 4:12). The continuation of His ministry at this juncture is chronicled by Luke and John, but not by Matthew and Mark. However, all four Gospels meet up again with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt 21:1 // Mark 11:1 // Luke 19:28 // John 12:12).
- In reply to the Pharisees' question regarding divorce, Jesus points to the Edenic origin of marriage, "from the beginning" (Gk. *ap archēs*, Matt 19:4; cf. 19:8; 24:21).¹ The creation of human beings as male and female and joining them together in marriage as "one flesh" (Gen 1:27; 2:24) were acts of God as the Creator (Matt 19:5). Thus Jesus shows the divine design of marriage as based on the principles of monogamy, complementarity, and permanence.
- Leaving one's parents means transferring loyalty to one's spouse. Cleaving means to be joined in such a way so as to be impossible to separate without damage to the individuals involved. The word for "joined" (Gk. *synezeuxen*) literally means "yoked together," which suggests living in harmony with each other and working as a team to accomplish greater tasks, having more impact than would be possible alone.
- The divorce certificate was a small sheet of papyrus, written out by the husband and given to the woman to protect her from accusations of adultery and enabling her to remarry. Such a certificate in Aramaic, dating to AD 72 and found at Masada, includes the names of the two parties and of three witnesses, the financial terms, as well as this key wording: "That you are free on your part to go and become the wife of any Jewish man that you wish. This is for you a writ of release and a bill of divorce."² Within a Christian context that includes both Jews and Gentiles, Paul reiterates the teaching of Jesus that marriage is designed to be permanent (1 Cor 7:10–11). Rather than speaking of being free to marry a "Jewish man," he refers to marrying "whom she wishes, only in the Lord" (1 Cor 7:39)—that is, the prospective spouse should be a believer in Jesus and His gospel of salvation (cf. 2 Cor 6:14–18). Paul also gives specific guidelines in the event that one spouse becomes a believer but the other refuses. He permits divorce only if the unbelieving spouse chooses to dissolve the marriage (1 Cor 7:12–16).
- The Pharisees speak of the Mosaic law dealing with divorce as a "command," but Jesus corrects their view by saying it was only "permitted." He suggests it is the "hardness" of one's heart that makes forgiveness and reconciliation impossible. As Christians, however, because we have received the ultimate gift of forgiveness and reconciliation through the gospel, we are called to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another" (Eph 4:32) and "bearing with one another . . . even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do" (Col 3:13). Therefore, despite unpleasant circumstances, Christian couples have the opportunity to forgive and to bear with each other's faults rather than divorce. Although Jesus allows for divorce in the case of sexual immorality (Matt 5:32), dissolving a marriage always leaves damage in its wake and, ideally, should be avoided by allowing God's grace and forgiveness to soften hearts and provide reconciliation.
- The Pharisees' initial question, concerning the grounds for divorce according to Deuteronomy 24:1, was an issue the followers

of first-century Jewish sages Shammai and Hillel hotly debated. That passage refers to “some uncleanness” (Heb. *‘ervat davar*) as the basis and was interpreted by the Shammaites to mean “unchastity,” while the Hillelites allowed divorce for “any reason” (Matt 19:3), even if the wife “spoiled his dish” (m. *Gittin* 9:10) or “burned his dinner” (*Sifre Deuteronomy* 269). As Jesus makes clear in response to their further question, divorce is not permitted at all “except for sexual immorality” (Matt 19:9).

- The Greek word translated “sexual immorality” is *porneia*. It is a broad term referring not only to adultery (Gk. *moicheia*), but also other forms of sexual activity outside of marriage, including promiscuity, homosexuality, and pedophilia (cf. Matt 15:19).
- Jesus’ insistence on monogamy places a much greater responsibility on husbands to ensure marital success than existed previously, because divorce for any reason other than sexual immorality and remarriage, whether by the wife *or* the husband, would constitute adultery (Matt 19:9).
- Jesus’ revolutionary pronouncement leads the disciples to exclaim, “It is better not to marry” (Matt 19:10), apparently siding with the Pharisees that divorce needs to remain an option.
- The “saying” Jesus refers to in Matthew 19:11 seems to be that of the disciples—that it is better to remain single—because their assertion that it is better to remain single leads more naturally into Jesus’ saying on eunuchs and assists its interpretation. In saying singleness is only for “those to whom it has been given,” He affirms that “celibacy is a real option, but it is not for everyone.”³ Jesus seems to indicate the choice to remain celibate is a God-given understanding and not based merely on human wisdom or considerations, because it constitutes a rare exception to God’s otherwise expressed will in Genesis 2:24.
- It is in this context that Jesus identifies three groups of eunuchs:

1. Those “born thus from their mother’s womb,” meaning either they were born with some congenital defect or otherwise are unable to have sexual intercourse. It could also, perhaps, refer to people lacking an erotic desire toward those of the opposite sex, but this would be a modern application of the underlying principle.

2. Those “made eunuchs by men,” meaning they were castrated or mutilated in such a way that their sexual desire is diminished and they are made incapable of begetting children.
3. Those “who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake,” meaning they have chosen to remain celibate in order to advance God’s purposes more effectively. Those with this God-given, divinely revealed “gift of celibacy” would seem to include John the Baptist, Jesus Himself, and Paul (1 Cor 7:7–9).

2. Verses 13–15

- That the children are “brought” to Jesus (presumably by their mothers) suggests they are not yet old enough to come to Him on their own.
- Although left unmentioned by Matthew, the purpose for bringing children to Jesus seems to be for Him to bless them (Mark 10:16; cf. Luke 2:28), which includes laying hands on them and praying for them.
- The disciples rebuke those who bring their children to Jesus. They apparently consider children unworthy of Jesus’ attention, because in both Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures children had very low social status. But rather than responding with a rebuke in turn, because they had obviously forgotten what He had taught them just a little while before (see Matt 18:1–5), Jesus takes the opportunity to instruct them further on this point.
- The people who will compose the kingdom of heaven are to be like little children who humbly realize their dependence and need for help.

3. Verses 16–22

- The story of the rich young man is found in all three Synoptic Gospels. Described by Luke as a “ruler” and “extremely rich” (Luke 18:18, 23), Matthew says “he had great possessions” (Matt 19:22). Like many today, he obviously finds his wealth unsatisfying.
- According to widespread and early textual evidence, the man does not call Jesus good, but simply addresses Him as “Teacher”⁴ and asks “what good thing” he can do to “have eternal life” (Matt 19:16). Then Jesus asks a question to correct his faulty understanding of the good, because only God is truly and inherently good, which is reflected in the Decalogue.

- Jesus points to the Ten Commandments, not as means of salvation, but because no one will be saved without obedience. A new experience is needed, described as being “born from above” (John 3:3, 5), because sinful human nature, as it is constituted from birth, is incapable of doing good.
- Some limit Jesus’ commandments to two—love to God and love to one’s neighbor (Matt 22:36–40)—or even to one, the Golden Rule (Matt 7:12). But in Matthew, when Jesus refers to specific commandments, they are normally from the Decalogue (e.g., Matt 5:21, 27; 15:4), as here, quoting the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and fifth commandments and summing them up with the command of Leviticus 19:18.
- Interestingly, Jesus quotes the entire second table of the Decalogue except for the tenth commandment, perhaps because the man asked what he should *do* while the prohibition against coveting deals with thoughts, not actions. It is also the commandment the man finds particularly problematic and, as a result, goes away “sorrowful” (Matt 19:22).
- Being “perfect” (Gk. *teleios*) is not referring to a higher level of commitment for only a select few. Rather, the idea connects closely with Jesus’ amplification of the commandments in the Sermon on the Mount (of which the man is probably unaware; see Matt 5:21–48; cf. 12:34; 15:19). It refers to kingdom righteousness, which is shown by expressing the love and mercy that characterizes the Father (Matt 5:43–48; Luke 6:36).

4. Verses 23–30

- Most Jews viewed the rich as being blessed by God and having their place in the kingdom secure but, as Jesus indicates, wealth can hinder a person from entering. It is the rare person who is able to have wealth without that wealth having them (cf. Mark 10:24).
- Jesus uses hyperbole to make the point even more forcefully: it is easier for a camel (the largest land animal in Israel) to go through the tiny aperture of a needle than for the rich to enter through the straight and narrow gate that “leads to life” (Matt 7:13).
- The disciples, now understandably worried, ask, “Who then can be saved?” (Matt 19:25), to which Jesus replies, “With God all things are possible” (Matt 19:26). Not wealth or position, but a miracle of God is the means of salvation, which is why Jesus sets the standard of righteousness impossibly high.
- Peter’s question, like that of the rich young

man, focuses on possessions: “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore, what shall we have?” (Matt 19:27). But eternal life is not so much a possession as something we enter now and will experience more completely when Jesus comes.

- Jesus’ answer to Peter begins with this greater future fulfillment “in the regeneration,” using a word that literally means “re-creation” (Gk. *palingenesia*) and points to the passing away of “heaven and earth” (Matt 24:35) when Jesus, as the Son of Man, comes in glory (Matt 24:30; 25:31; cf. 2 Pet 3:10), “in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God” (2 Thess 1:8) and bestowing upon believers the finishing touch of immortality (1 Cor 15:52–53). The only other occurrence of *palingenesia* in the New Testament points to the new life believers may even now experience through the Spirit (Titus 3:5; cf. 2 Cor 5:17), which is a foretaste of the “eternal life” to come (Matt 19:29).
- Jesus promises His disciples two more things: a role in the future judgment (cf. 1 Cor 6:1–3; Rev 20:4–6) and “a hundredfold” now—not necessarily in terms of houses or lands, such as the rich man cherished, because the greatest riches from the perspective of eternity will be measured in terms of character and the final harvest of souls who have chosen to follow Jesus (Matt 13:23, 43; 16:24–27), become members of His spiritual “family” (Matt 12:48–50), and who will, “in the age to come,” inherit eternal life (cf. Mark 10:30).

Application of the Chapter

Some valuable lessons from Matthew 19 include:

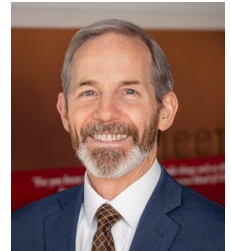
1. Since God makes the husband and wife one through the process of marriage, no human being has the right to separate them through divorce (cf. 1 Cor 7:10–11), apart from the one biblically sanctioned exception—the case of sexual immorality (Matt 5:32; 19:9).
2. There is no biblical basis for sexual relations outside of marriage, nor for same-sex marriages, both of which would constitute sin against God’s creative design and intent.
3. The future tense of “the two shall become one flesh” describes a process of growing together spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually as well as physically, so that sex by itself cannot constitute marriage, but is the physical consummation of the oneness implicit in God’s blessing of the marital union.
4. In a divorce there are no winners; damage to all involved is inevitable and inescap-

able. This is especially true for children of divorced parents, which may be one reason God hates it (Mal 2:16)—because it could cause “one of these little ones who believe . . . to stumble” (Matt 18:6 NAS95).

5. With greater light comes greater responsibility, so it should be no surprise that the standards of morality for disciples of the heavenly kingdom are higher than those that pertained in earlier periods of biblical history. But the new covenant also includes a new creation and the power of the Holy Spirit that make complete obedience possible.
6. The gift of celibacy mentioned by Jesus, though possessed by only a few who might otherwise enter marriage as husband and wife, provides a way, through God’s blessing, of enjoying fulfilled and meaningful lives as single persons serving the Lord. It may also resonate with those who struggle with either same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria.
7. No one is unimportant to Jesus. He helped even those whom others despised (Matt 15:28) or ignored (Luke 7:14–15), and every child, as potentially a citizen of heaven, should be encouraged in the things of the kingdom of God by their parents through regular family worship and prayer.

8. Like the rich young man, Jesus calls upon all who believe in Him to choose between clinging to “treasure” built up on earth and enjoying the more lasting heavenly treasure (Matt 6:19–21), which can be experienced now by following Jesus and learning from Him. It is a call to faith in and reliance upon Jesus rather than trusting in one’s wealth for security. Unfortunately, the more a person has, the harder it is for them to do that.
9. The principle of salvation by faith through God’s grace and power alone is illustrated repeatedly in Scripture: Abraham having a son through his barren wife Sarah, Israel being delivered from slavery in Egypt, Mary having a son despite being a virgin, people being healed by Jesus with a touch or a word—all these examples and more point to the unlimited possibilities open to those who have faith.

Clinton Wahlen
Associate Director
Biblical Research Institute



¹All biblical quotations are from the NKJV, unless otherwise indicated.

²The complete Aramaic transcription with English translation of *Papyrus Murabba'at* 20 may be found in Tal Illan, “Notes and Observations on a Newly Published Divorce Bill from the Judean Desert,” *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1996): 199. The wording quoted here is from lines 6b–9a.

³R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 723 (emphasis original).

⁴See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994), 39–40.

“Children cannot be brought
to the Lord **by force**.
They can be **led**,
but not driven.”

(Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 307)

René Gehring

Die Dreieinigkeit
in Bibel und
Adventgeschichte
(The Trinity in
the Bible and in
Adventist History)

(Austria: Seminar
Schloss Bogenhofen,
2021. 161 pp;
US \$ 19.00)



Die Dreieinigkeit in Bibel und Adventgeschichte (The Trinity in the Bible and in Adventist History)

By Gerhard Pfandl

Dr. René Gehring, the author of this volume in German, is the president of Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen in Austria. Following an introduction, the book is divided into five chapters, the first four of which investigate the Trinity in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, in the writings of Ellen G. White, and in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Chapter 5 deals with critical questions concerning the doctrine of the Trinity.

The chapter on the Old Testament begins with Bible texts that emphasize monotheism, God is one (Deut 6:4). The rest of the chapter focuses on the three persons of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. A section at the end of the chapter presents texts that show the Holy Spirit is a person, not simply a power. In his conclusion the author reiterates that monotheism does not mean the Godhead consists only of one person. All three persons of the Godhead are involved in creation and in the plan of salvation (p. 32).

The second chapter is primarily a list of texts from the Old Testament and New Testament showing that Old Testament passages attributed to God are in the New Testament ascribed to Jesus—for example, “I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior” (Isa 43:11 RSV). The New Testament, speaking of Jesus in similar terms, tells us, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12 RSV). Various divine attributes, such as divinity, omnipresence, and omniscience are in the New Testament assigned to Jesus. At the end of this chapter there is again a section showing from the New Testament that the Holy Spirit is a person.

The third and longest chapter (pp. 63–101) addresses the issue of the Trinity in the writings of Ellen G. White. Sixty-six quotations deal with the divinity of Jesus. The most important one is from *The Desire of Ages*, where Ellen White writes, “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.”¹ When the book was published in 1898, many Adventist ministers could not believe that she had written it. They thought the

editor must have put this in. Only when they saw this sentence in her own handwriting did they accept that she had indeed written it (pp. 100–101). But it took another thirty years before most of them accepted that Jesus was fully divine and did not have a beginning.

The fourth chapter recounts the colorful history of the doctrine of the Trinity in Adventism. Most of the early leaders, including James White, were semi-Arians, believing that Christ had a similar substance as the Father, but not the same substance and was subordinate to Him. The author divides the Adventist history of thought on this topic into five sections:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| • Until 1888 | The non-Trinitarian time |
| • 1888–1898 | Development of the Trinitarian understanding |
| • 1898–1913 | Change of paradigm (transitional phase) |
| • 1913–1946 | Consolidation of the Trinitarian position |
| • Since 1946 | Trinity is the standard belief |

In each section he quotes several Adventist authors representing the emphases of the various time periods. He begins with Joseph Bates and James White, who both came from the Christian Connection Church that denied the Trinity, and ends with the statement on the Trinity at the Dallas General Conference in 1980: “There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons.”²

The last chapter of the book responds to critical questions such as: Was Jesus born or begotten? Is Jesus less than the Father? Is Jesus omniscient? Is the Holy Spirit the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of God?

The book is written for church members and is easy to read, yet scholars will also find it interesting and beneficial. The content is well organized and clearly presented. In the case of the translation of Ellen White quotes, important English concepts or terms are added in parentheses. Each chapter has a summary with the results of the investigation. There is also a final section with the results and consequences of the full study.

The book plainly illustrates that the most important factor in the paradigm change from anti-Trinitarianism to Trinitarianism in the Adventist Church was the inspired writings of Ellen White, who early on pointed the church in the direction of the Trinitarian understanding. First, she emphasized the equality between Father and Son. For example, in 1869 she wrote, “This Saviour was the brightness of His Father’s glory and the express image of His person. He possessed divine majesty, perfection, and excellence. He was equal with God.”³ Then she underscored the personality of the Holy Spirit: “The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, in Christ’s name. He personifies Christ, yet is a distinct personality.”⁴ Finally, she clearly spelled out that the Godhead consisted of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: “When you gave yourself to Christ, you made a pledge in the presence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—the three great personal dignitaries of heaven. ‘Hold fast’ to this pledge.”⁵

In his introduction the author states that he has only chosen texts that are clear and have evidential value

(p. 11). However, this reviewer is not convinced that Proverbs 8:22–23 clearly portrays the Father and the Son, or that Genesis 1:1–3 contains the Trinity. “God said” in Genesis 1:3 cannot exegetically be changed into “God said” [the word=God’s Son].” Nevertheless, the book is a valuable asset to every Adventist reader of German, when confronted with anti-Trinitarian arguments, and every German-speaking minister should have a copy in his library.

The publishers have done an excellent job producing the book. The cover picture is full of meaning and the green color and the font are pleasing to the eye.

Gerhard Pfandl
Associate Director (ret.)
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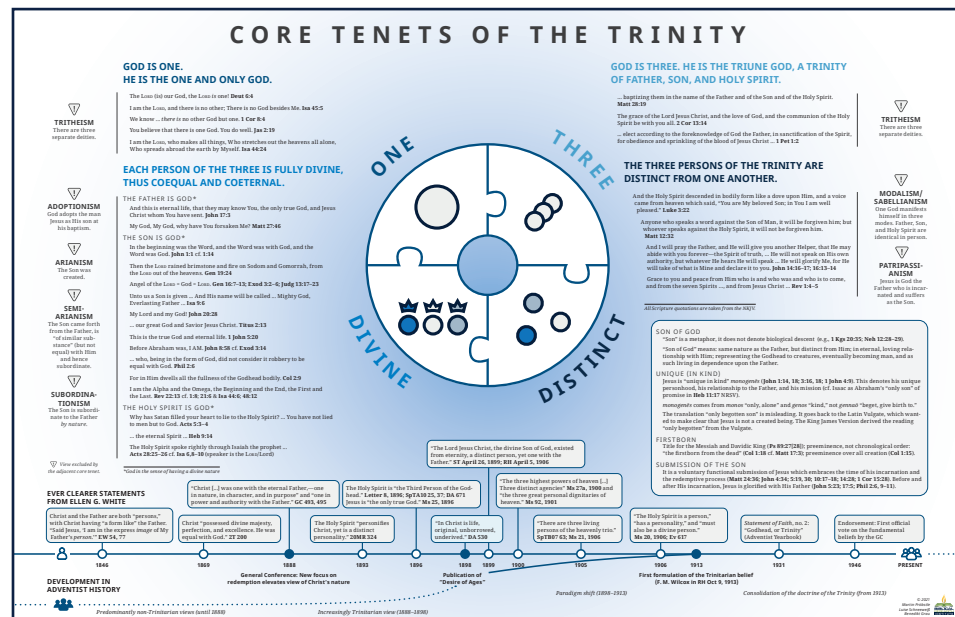
¹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 530.

² *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald, 2018), 23.

³ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1868), 200.

⁴ Ellen G. White, “Privileges and Responsibilities of Sons of God,” Ms 93, 1893.

⁵ Ellen G. White, “And Unto the Angel of the Church . . .,” Ms 92, 1901.



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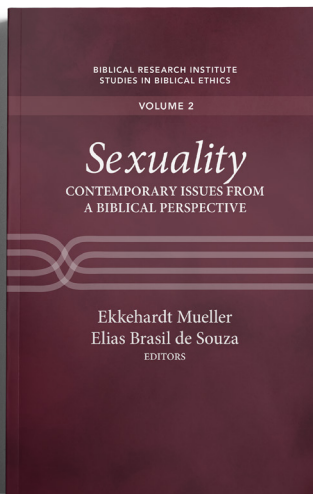
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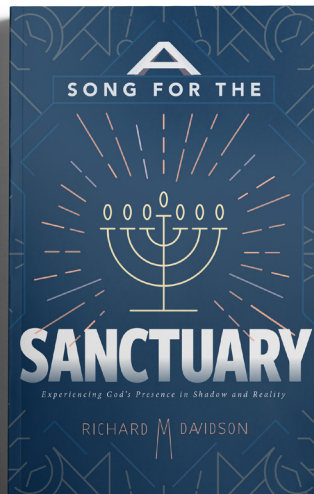


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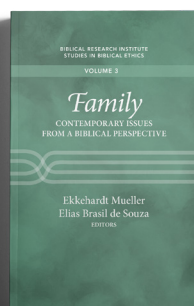
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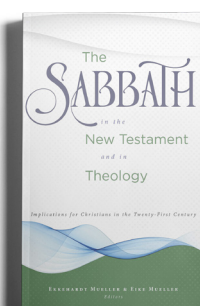
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