

PURPOSE

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

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NEWS AND COMMENTS

BRI NEWSLETTER ONLINE EDITION

We regret to inform our readers that for reasons beyond our control we will not be able to continue to make available our Newsletter through our website. We will continue sending it via e-mail to pastors, theologians, and church administrators.

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BIOGEOGRAPHY: DISPERSAL OR VICARIANCE OF TROPICAL TREES?

Recently C. W. Dick, E. Bermingham, M. R. Lemes, and R. Gribel published the interesting article "Extreme long-distance of the lowland tropical rainforest tree *Ceiba pentandra* L. (Malvaceae) in Africa and the Neotropics" in *Molecular Ecology* 16 (2007):3039-3049.

Ceiba pentandra is a rainforest tree commonly called the cotton tree or kapok tree, and is widely distributed in the tropics of Africa and the New World. More than one hundred species of flowering plants

are shared between the two continents. The presence of similar plants in both Africa and South America has often been explained as the result of vicariance, that is, a splitting of an ancestral range that occurred when African and South American plates diverged. An alternative explanation is dispersal of seeds across the Atlantic Ocean. This article reports the results of a molecular test to distinguish vicariance from dispersal in the case of the cotton tree.

If the cotton trees of Africa and South America have been separated for 100 million years as in the vicariance explanation, there should be a large difference in the DNA sequences of trees from the two regions. A small difference would indicate a more recent separation, which would imply dispersal. The molecular test showed only a small difference between trees from Africa and South America, ruling out the vicariance explanation and indicating that the cotton tree has somehow been able to disperse across the Atlantic Ocean, probably from Africa to South America.

Comment: Floral and faunal similarities among the southern continents have been interpreted as evidence for vicariance caused by a long history of the movement of tectonic plates. However, few of the proposed examples have withstood testing based either on molecular comparisons or on fossil evidence. Present understanding indicates that dispersal played the major role in distributions of



organisms restricted to the southern hemisphere, especially among plants, marine organisms, and invertebrates. These results are consistent with creationist expectations.

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SEX-CHANGE SURGERY: AN OPINION*

We have received in our office an increasing number of concerns related to the ethical implications of sex-change surgery. The church has not taken an official position on this specific issue, but its silence does not necessarily imply indifference to the ethical and spiritual dimensions raised by it. It is our purpose to provide some guidance on this difficult topic. In doing that we also want to remind the reader that this is not simply an impersonal ethical issue about which we can only argue. This is about human beings who are experiencing deep pain as they try to deal with their personal gender identity. They need our prayers, our love, and all the guidance we can provide for them. As a community of believers, we should always be open to sustain and support those who in their existential and spiritual journey face serious personal challenges, but who nevertheless are searching for God.

Gender identification is usually quite easy, but sometimes situations of genetic, chromosomal, hormonal, and intrauterine influences may result in ambiguity of anatomical sexual differentiation. In these situations anatomical development of genitalia can result in a spectrum of disorders spanning the gamut from definitely female to overly male. Those born with ambiguous genitalia may well benefit from surgical realignment with their correct gender identity. It is not my purpose, and neither am I qualified, to discuss the surgical correction of physical anomalies.

There is another group of patients whose anatomical gender identity is clearly male or female but who claim to be of the opposite gender trapped within an anatomical anomaly. Such individuals often request surgical intervention to change their genitalia into that approximating the opposite sex. True and complete transformation is not possible. It is the psychological, theological, and ethical implications of such sex-change surgery that I want to explore.

As already indicated, when dealing with this complex topic we should not become insensitive to the struggles of such an individual, but show them the respect they deserve as children of God. We also need to be aware of the limitations of our knowledge as well as the biblical principles that should be applied in evaluating this ethical issue. Concerning the limitations of knowledge, the phenomenon of persons claiming that their psychological and emotional gender does not correspond with their physical sexual organs is one about which psychologists, scientists, and physicians struggle to comprehend. But even if we grant the possibility of prenatal influences, the question

is whether the best way to bring psychological healing to individuals struggling with their gender identity is to have a sex-change surgery.

At the present time it is not known whether the psychological effects of sex-change surgery are beneficial or permanently damaging. We do know that any type of alteration to our human body impacts our emotional well-being in one way or another. Sexual identity is not independent of the body, or to be restricted to human anatomy, but goes deep into the human psyche. In fact, our identity is to a significant extent determined by our gender. We are meant to be an undivided sexual entity. When it is claimed that some individuals do not have an integrated sexual identity because the inner identity differs from the sexual identity provided by their sexual organs, we face a serious type of psychological dichotomy. This deep psychological disturbance or brokenness reveals one of the damaging effects of sin on humans. No one can confirm that the psychological anomaly is overcome through sex-surgery. This is a case in which the treatment could psychologically disturb the patient even more.

There is insufficient data to define the extent of the damaging effects that constant hormone therapy could have on the physical well-being of the person. In fact, it could be argued that since the person who undergoes a sex-change surgery

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has to use hormones for the rest of his/her life, an integrated sexual identity is not achieved through the surgery. The individual lives and struggles with the psychological condition the rest of his/her life. Hence, the surgery never totally solves the problem. What aggravates this situation is the fact that surgery is irreversible but people may change psychologically with growth and maturity. Since the gospel proclaims freedom from the enslaving power of sin and its effects in our lives, we feel that the church should not advocate that specific type of radical and irreversible physical sexual change. At the same time, the church should demonstrate care and regard toward those who struggle with this most disturbing issue.

It would appear that in some cases of sex-change surgery, we may be dealing with a more sophisticated case of homosexual behavior. According to Scripture, the satisfaction of sexual drives is to take place within certain parameters, that is between a man and a woman who have been united in sacred matrimony. Undergoing sex-change surgery in order to satisfy a homosexual urge to have sex with a person of the same gender would not resolve the ethical and moral biblical perspective on homosexuality.

Finally, the Scriptures call humans to control their emotions and passions by bringing them under the Lordship of Christ. Sexual drives are not to be simply satisfied on the ground that since they are considered to be normal or natural we should let nature run its course. Sin and evil have corrupted human sexuality. Therefore self-discipline is indispensable in bringing it under subjection to biblical values and principles. This would require, even from those who may want to have a sex-change surgery to heal their brokenness and not because of homosexual concerns, to learn living with the condition of a perceived or real dichotomy in their sexual identity. Self-control on sexually related matters applies to all those who want to live a holy life before the Lord. So, for instance in the case of single individuals, it would mean abstention from premarital sexual intercourse, and in the case of a married person abstention from extramarital sexual affairs. Should humans seek to find in sex-change surgery a way of circumventing the biblical principles dealing with human sexuality and the proper way to satisfy it, they would be acting against God's revealed will. The church must remain loyal to its commitment to the will of the risen Lord as revealed in the Scripture, while displaying love and understanding to all.

*This position paper was discussed with a number of Adventist theologians and benefited from input given by medical practitioners. Nevertheless the author is responsible for its content.

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THE TRINITY IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HISTORY

The last decade has seen increased anti-Trinitarian activity within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Though significant, anti-Trinitarianism has remained at the margins of the movement. Four reasons for this activity should be mentioned. (1) There is the availability of information through the internet. (2) Several other Adventist groups, that emerged from the Millerite movement, continue to hold to an anti-Trinitarian perspective. (3) Some Adventists think that the doctrine of the Trinity comes from Catholic theology and therefore must be false. What many have not realized is that the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity differs from the Seventh-day Adventist biblical doctrine of the Trinity. This includes eternal generation of the Son and divine impassability, which are influenced by Greek philosophy. (4) Perhaps most significant, over the last few decades some Seventh-day Adventists have thought to return to the early historical Adventist faith, or what might be called neo-restorationism.

Some have failed to recognize the dynamic nature of Seventh-day Adventist theology. Adventists have always sought a clearer understanding of Bible truth. Historically, their doctrines have developed in the context of the original

distinctive core of the Three Angel's Message and kindred concepts. A small though significant and growing segment of "historic" Adventists are advocating a return to an anti-Trinitarian

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have rejected a static creed and have ever sought to study, understand, and follow the Bible as the source of doctrine and the guide for experience. Consequently, it should not be surprising that Adventist doctrine has developed over time building upon previous and new Bible study.

As Sabbatarian Adventism emerged during the late 1840s, it brought various Christian truths and placed them in the framework of fulfilled prophecy and ongoing discovery of biblical teachings. A cluster of biblical teachings explained what had happened in 1844 and why Jesus had not come. The heavenly sanctuary, the end-time ministry of Jesus in the Most Holy Place, and the Sabbath as the seal of God were a particular focus. Adventist understanding of various theological perspectives continued to develop and improve over time. Two examples are the Sabbath and tithing. Early Adventists initially concluded that the Sabbath should begin and end at 6:00 p.m. It was in 1855, nearly a decade after the initial Sabbath emphasis, that J. N. Andrews' biblical and historical presentation influenced believers to adopt sundown as the correct time to begin and end the Sabbath. Tithing first began in 1859 as "Systematic Benevolence" and had little or no link to the Biblical teaching of ten percent. It was not until the 1870s that a careful restudy of the topic led Seventh-day Adventists to adopt the tithing framework we practice today. A similar process is evident in the Adventist understanding of the nature of God and the Trinity.

The purpose of this article is to briefly outline the historical development of the view of the Trinity for Seventh-day Adventists from its beginning to the present day.

Up to 1890: Anti-Trinitarian Period

Until near the turn of the twentieth century Seventh-day Adventist literature was almost unanimous in opposing the eternal deity of Jesus and the personhood of the Holy Spirit. During the earlier years some even held the view that Christ was created. It is very important to understand that Adventist views were not homogeneous. Theological tension within Adventism began during the Millerite movement and is illustrated by the two principal leaders, William Miller and Joshua V. Himes.

Miller, being a Baptist, was a Trinitarian. He wrote, "I believe in one living and true God, and that there are three

persons in the Godhead. . . . The three persons of the Triune God are connected.”¹ Himes, a close associate of William

Though James White rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, he did believe in the three great powers in heaven. Though opposed to the Trinity he did not believe that Christ was inferior to the Father.

Miller, was of the Christian Connection persuasion. The northeastern branch of the Christian Church rejected the Trinitarian doctrine as unscriptural.² It is important to note that Millerite Adventists were focused on the soon coming of Jesus and did not consider it necessary

to argue on the subject of the Trinity.

Two of the principal founders of the Seventh-day Adventist church, Joseph Bates and James White, like Himes, had been members of the Christian Connection and rejected the doctrine of the Trinity. Joseph Bates wrote of his views, “Respecting the trinity, I concluded that it was an impossibility for me to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, was also the Almighty God.”³ James White wrote: “Here we might mention the Trinity, which does away [with] the personality of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ.”⁴ Both Bates and White were anxious to maintain the separate personalities of the Father and the Son. This concern was caused, in part, by the strong spiritualizing influence among Bridegroom Adventists during 1845 and 1846. A similar problem would resurface around the turn of the twentieth century with the de-personalizing of God and J. H. Kellogg’s pantheistic views.⁵

Though James White rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, he did believe in the three great powers in heaven. This is reflected in his first hymn book.⁶ Though opposed to the Trinity he did not believe that Christ was inferior to the Father. In 1877 he wrote, “The inexplicable trinity that makes the godhead three in one and one in three, is bad enough; but the ultra Unitarianism that makes Christ inferior to the Father is worse.”⁷

Not all agreed with James White on the equality of Father and Son. During the 1860s Uriah Smith, long time editor of the *Review and Herald*, believed that Jesus was “the first created being.”⁸ By 1881, he had changed to the belief that Jesus was “begotten” and not created.⁹

While the early positions on the Trinity and deity of Christ were flawed, there was a sincere attempt to oppose certain legitimate errors.

A selective list of Adventists who either spoke against the Trinity and/or rejected the eternal deity of Christ include J. B. Frisbie, J. N. Loughborough, R. F. Cottrell, J. N. Andrews, D. M. Canright, J. H. Waggoner, and C. W. Stone.¹⁰ W. A. Spicer at one point told A. W. Spalding that his father, after becoming a Seventh-day Adventist (he was formerly a Seventh Day Baptist minister), “grew

so offended at the anti-Trinitarian atmosphere in Battle Creek that he ceased preaching.”¹¹

In surveying the writings of various pioneers, certain concerns frequently appear. In rejecting the Trinity, some saw the “orthodox” Christian view as pagan tri-theism. Others argued that the Trinity degraded the personhood of Christ and the Father by blurring the distinction between them. While the early positions on the Trinity and deity of Christ were flawed, there was a sincere attempt to oppose certain legitimate errors.

By about 1890, Adventists had come to a more-or-less harmonious position that viewed Jesus as the “begotten” or originated divine Son of God. He was seen as the divine Creator with the Father. The nature of the Holy Spirit was lightly discussed though He was generally considered to be the omnipresent influence from the Father or the Son rather than a person.

From 1890 to 1900: Emergence of Trinitarian Sentiment

As the 1890’s began, two of the key thinkers on each side of the righteousness by faith/law in Galatians issue agreed on the derived divinity of Jesus. E. J. Waggoner wrote in his 1890 *Christ and His Righteousness*, “There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God . . . but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it was practically without beginning.”¹² In 1898 Uriah Smith wrote in *Looking Unto Jesus*, “God alone is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be,—a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity,—appeared the Word.”¹³

The period after the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference saw a new emphasis on Jesus and the plan of salvation. This naturally led to a consideration of His deity and what it meant for the redemption of humanity. A. T. Jones was among the first (with the significant exception of Ellen White) to suggest that Christ was eternally pre-existent. Jones emphasized Colossians 2:9 and the idea that in Christ was the “fullness of the Godhead bodily.” He also described Christ as “the eternal Word.”¹⁴ Though he avoided the word “Trinity,” in 1899 he wrote: “God is one. Jesus Christ is one. The Holy Spirit is one. And these three are one: there is no dissent nor division among them.”¹⁵

Ellen G. White wrote: “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.”

Ellen White played a prophetic role in confirming the eternal deity of Jesus and the three-person Godhead. As early as 1878, she referred to Jesus as the “eternal Son of God.”¹⁶ In *Desire of Ages* she wrote: “[Christ] announced Himself to be the self-existent One” and “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.”¹⁷ She wrote of the Holy Spirit as the “Third Person of the Godhead.”¹⁸ Ellen White played an important role in urging the church toward a biblical Trinitarian position. However, for years

after the publication of *Desire of Ages*, the church generally avoided these and other statements. While she never used the term “Trinity” in her published writings, she repeatedly conveyed the concept.

M. L. Andreasen questioned whether Ellen White had actually written some of her statements in *Desire of Ages* and other books. During 1909, Andreasen spent three months at Elmhaven, California, and was convinced of the accuracy of her published position.¹⁹

From 1900 to 1931: Transition and Conflict

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, the church remained divided in its position on the deity of Christ. The use of the word “Trinity” in print continued to be avoided. W. W. Prescott and F. M. Wilcox, both editors of the *Review and Herald*, were key supporters of the full and eternal deity of Jesus. During the 1890s Prescott was slower than Jones to accept the new view. But after 1900, as editor of the *Review and Herald*, he published articles on the personhood, and eternal nature of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.²⁰ Still Prescott believed that Jesus had a derived existence from God the Father. At the 1919 Bible Conference he presented a series of eight devotionals for the conference titled “The Person of Christ” that expressed this view. Careful discussion at this conference showed that there were varying opinions.²¹

The early twentieth century saw Adventists and Protestant Fundamentalists battling higher criticism and the “new modernism” growing in Christianity. Liberalism rejected the deity of Jesus and His virgin birth. Adventist articles defending the biblical view began to appear more frequently in church papers. Irrespective of individual differences on details, Adventist ministers pulled into line against dangerous liberal views. Naturally, those who rejected the eternal pre-existence of Christ did not want to speak of His beginning and weaken the argument against higher criticism. Even articles on the Trinity were tolerated.²² The result was an increased appreciation of the full deity of the Son of God.

From 1931 to 1957: Acceptance of the Trinitarian View

F. M. Wilcox was crucial in facilitating the final transition to an accepted Seventh-day Adventist view on the Trin-

During the 1940s an ever-increasing majority of the church believed in the eternal underived deity of Christ and the personhood of the Holy Spirit, yet there were some who held back and even actively resisted the change.

ity through his guidance in the 1931 Statement of Fundamental Beliefs and his articles in the *Review and Herald*.²³ Doctrinal summaries were carefully avoided during the first decades of the twentieth century

to the Spirit of Prophecy—he, as editor of the *Review*, did what probably no other man could have done to achieve unity in acceptance.²⁴ It was not until 1946 that the General Conference Session officially voted a Statement of Fundamental Beliefs.²⁵

During the 1940s an ever-increasing majority of the church believed in the eternal underived deity of Christ and the personhood of the Holy Spirit, yet there were some who held back and even actively resisted the change. These were mainly comprised of a few older ministers and Bible teachers. In 1944 Uriah Smith’s *Daniel and the Revelation* was revised and his comments on the derived nature of Christ’s divinity were removed.²⁶

In 1957, the book *Questions on Doctrine* anchored the doctrine of the Trinity or Godhead for Adventists. While the book produced theological conflict in other areas, there was virtually no dissent on the book’s clear teaching of the Trinity.²⁷ The current unambiguous statement on the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs was revised and voted at the 1980 General Conference Session.

The process of adopting the Trinity continued from 1900 to 1950. Key influences in the change were: (1) Repeated published biblical studies on the topic; (2) Ellen White’s clear statements; (3) Adventist response to the attacks of “modern liberalism” on the deity of Christ and his virgin birth; and (4) F. M. Wilcox’s statement of “Fundamental Beliefs” and his *Review and Herald* editorials.

It was ultimately the Bible that led Seventh-day Adventists to adopt their present position on the Godhead or Trinity.

We may learn several lessons from the history of the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist church. First, we must acknowledge that the development of Adventist biblical theology has usually been progressive and corrective. This is clearly illustrated in the doctrine of the Trinity. The leading of the Holy Spirit is dynamic and not static. Other doctrinal concepts like the time to begin the Sabbath (1855) and tithing (1878) developed in a similar manner. This development never supposed a paradigm shift that contradicted the clear Biblical teaching of the heavenly sanctuary ministry of Jesus and the prophetic foundation of the Church. Second, the development of the doctrine of the Trinity demonstrates that doctrinal change sometimes requires the passing of a previous generation. For Seventh-day Adventists it took over 50 years for the doctrine of the Trinity to become normative. Third, the gift of prophecy helped the church to have confidence and biblical unity on the Trinity. Ellen White’s unambiguous statements subdued controversy and provided confidence in the transition to our current view. Finally, Adventist theology is always supremely dependent upon Scripture. The Bible tells us that the “path of the just [is] as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”²⁸ Hebrews 2:1 reads: “Therefore we

due in part to the conflict on the Trinity. According to L. E. Froom, Wilcox was “respected by all parties for his soundness, integrity, and loyalty to the Advent Faith—and

ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard.” It was ultimately the Bible that led Seventh-day Adventists to adopt their present position on the Godhead or Trinity.

¹Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1853), 77-78.

²Joshua V. Himes, “Christian Connection,” in *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. J. Newton Brown (Brattleboro, VT: Brattleboro Typographic, 1838), 363.

³Joseph Bates, *Autobiography of Elder Joseph Bates* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist, 1868), 205.

⁴James White, *Review and Herald*, December 11, 1855, 85.

⁵See J. H. Kellogg, *The Living Temple* (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health, 1903), 26-36, 396-398, 450-460, 484-486.

⁶Arthur L. White to Hedy Jemison, July 2, 1969; James White, comp., *Hymns for God's Peculiar People* (Oswego, NY: Richard Oliphant, 1849), 47.

⁷James White, *Review and Herald*, November 29, 1877, 72.

⁸Uriah Smith, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist, 1865), 59.

⁹Smith, *Thoughts*, 1881, 74.

¹⁰J. B. Frisbie, *Review and Herald*, March 7, 1854, 50; J. N. Loughborough, *Review and Herald*, November 5, 1861, 184; R. F. Cottrell, *Review and Herald*, July 6, 1869, 10-11; [J. N. Andrews], *Review and Herald*, September 7, 1869, 84; D. M. Canright, *Review and Herald*, August 29, 1878, 73-74; September 5, 1878, 81-82; September 12, 1878, 89-90; September 19, 1878, 97; J. H. Waggoner, *The Atonement* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1884), 164-179; C. W. Stone, *The Captain of our Salvation* (Battle Creek, MI: n.p., 1886), 15-20.

¹¹A. W. Spalding to H. C. Lacey, June 2, 1947.

¹²E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1890), 21-22.

¹³Uriah Smith, *Looking Unto Jesus* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1898), 10.

¹⁴A. T. Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, February 25, 1895, 332; idem, *General Conference Bulletin*, February 27, 1895, 382.

¹⁵A. T. Jones, *Review and Herald*, January 10, 1899, 24.

¹⁶Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, August 8, 1878, 49, 50.

¹⁷Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1898), 530.

¹⁸White, *Desire of Ages*, 671.

¹⁹M. L. Andreasen, “Testimony of M. L. Andreasen,” October 15, 1953, 3.

²⁰W. W. Prescott, *Review and Herald*, April 4, 1896, 232; General Conference Committee Minutes for February 15, 1902, cited in Gilbert Valentine, *William Warren Prescott* (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1982), 351; W. W. Prescott, *Review and Herald*, September 2, 1902, 4; idem, *Review and Herald*, September 23, 1902, 6; idem, *Review and Herald*, December 23, 1902, 4; idem, *Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly*, first quarter, 1921, 2, 9, 20; idem, *The Doctrine of Christ* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1920), 3, 20, 21.

²¹Donald E. Mansell, “How the 1919 Bible Conference Transcript Was Found,” White Document File, July 6, 1975.

²²Stemple White, *Canadian Watchman*, September 1923, 18; C. P. Bollman, *Review and Herald*, March 15, 1923, 4; Lyle C. Shepard, *Canadian Watchman*, September 1927, 12.

²³F. M. Wilcox, *Review and Herald*, March 23, 1944, 2; idem, *Review and Herald*, January 3, 1945, 5-6.

²⁴L. E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971), 413, 415.

²⁵Robert Olson and Bert Haloviak, “Who Decides What Adventists Believe: A Chronological Survey of Sources, 1844-1977,” February 24, 1977.

²⁶Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1941), 400; idem, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1944), 391.

²⁷*Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 30, 31, 36.

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UNIVERSAL LEGAL JUSTIFICATION IN THE WRITINGS OF E. J. WAGGONER

A number of notable twentieth and twenty-first century interpreters of Waggoner have claimed that he taught a doctrine of “universal legal justification.”¹ This position holds that God pardons the sinner prior to any conscious belief in Christ. In fact, its ad-
vocates claim that this under-
standing is one of the unique
contributions of Waggoner
to Christian thought and has
been a leading bone of conten-
tion between them and other
Waggoner interpreters. Thus a clear distinction is made
between being universally, legally justified at the death of
Christ and experientially justified at the moment of belief,
or the conscious appropriation of the merits or justifying
benefits of Christ’s atoning work.

Universal legal justification holds that God pardons the sinner prior to any conscious belief in Christ.

I. The Case Before 1888

The simple facts are these: If this was Waggoner’s pre-1888 understanding, he did not emphasize it. I am aware of only one statement that even comes close to suggesting such a distinction between a universal legal justification of all humanity and the experiential appropriation of the merits of Christ during the conversion experience of the repentant believer: “It may be said that God does not actually forgive men until they repent. This is true; but He desired that they shall receive His pardon, and therefore, so far as He is concerned, He has pardoned them. All that is lacking is for them to accept the pardon which He offers them; if they will not, He is clear, and the responsibility of their ruin rests upon themselves.”²

It is instructive that Waggoner here affirmed the truth that “God does not actually forgive men until they repent.” He explicitly said that “this is true.” Yet, positively, what he seemed to want to communicate was not some version of “universal legal justification,” but the deep “desires” of God “that they shall receive His pardon.” Thus, in the mind of God “He has pardoned them.”

In one sense, He has forgiven us long ago, but this is not the biblical understanding of justification by faith. Normally, only an act of genuinely trusting faith can ef-

fectually appropriate the justifying merits of Christ.³ This is not just Waggoner's consensus position, but also the overall emphasis of both Ellen White and the Bible.

Furthermore, Waggoner was explicit that justification is a personal, not a corporate, or collective, matter. Commenting on Galatians 3, he plainly declared that "there can be no Christian experience, no faith, no justification, no righteousness that is not an individual matter. People are saved as individuals, and not as nations."⁴ Could words be plainer?

There is at least one more key point that Waggoner himself made about the issue of justification by faith. What follows is a strongly expressed concept by which Waggoner

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seemed effectively to preclude any possibility of universal legal justification:

"It must not be forgotten that we are now speaking only of the sins that are *past*. It is impossible that *remission* of sins could have reference to anything else, for that which does not exist cannot be taken away; and to justify a man for sins not yet committed, in other words, to grant indulgence for sins, would throw contempt on the law, and bring in anarchy and ruin. And no sins are remitted except of those who believe in Jesus. If any are Christ's, they are Abraham's seed (Gal 3:29), and therefore, with him, their faith is imputed unto them for righteousness (James 2:23)."⁵

It just seems that if we impute the doctrine of "universal legal justification" to E. J. Waggoner, we would have Waggoner militating against Waggoner. Thus in the pre-1888 years, the support for it is slim to non-existent. In fact, we could justifiably classify the evidence against this alleged teaching of "universal legal justification" during the early years of Waggoner's writings and the larger context of his Protestant theological background (especially the Wesleyan tradition) as an outright rejection of this well-meant, but misplaced concept.

II. 1888-1892

In the era, immediately following the 1888 General Conference, there is no real appreciable development of his concepts. All are agreed that God provides a temporary shield against the execution of His justice, and sinners are granted time to ponder the benefits of God's great atoning work which has made full provision for salvation from the guilt of sin.

Waggoner himself made this point very clear: "If it had not been that Christ was given for man's redemption, death would have ended all for Adam, and for the human race. But the promise of a Redeemer carried with it another probation, and so the execution of the sentence was suspended until it should be seen what use men would make of that probation. God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world . . . and until that time the sentence

will be held in abeyance . . . But those who reject the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God will abide on them."⁶ All Arminian, or free-will Christians are clear on this. But things get a bit more complicated when one claims that God has actually justified the whole human race, not just provided them with probationary time.

The key issue is this: Does God actually, legally bestow legal justification on all? Does he actually come and place it, as it were, in our laps? For Waggoner, it appears that in the years from before 1888 and up through 1892, the answer is no! Certainly legal justification is an offer, but unless there is a real heart embrace of the offer by genuine, living faith, we in essence "spurn" it. All that can be said for the pre-1888 thought of Waggoner applies to this era from 1888 to 1892.

Even if one accepts the metaphor that the gift has actually been placed in your mailbox or hands or lap, this still does not imply the embracing of the gift. Here is the key issue, even for the Universal Legal Justification interpreters of Waggoner: Even if it is effectively stuck in your lap or your hands, it is not savingly effectual unless there is the subsequent experience of what they call "experiential justification," or a real heart embrace of the universally bestowed gift of legal justification.

The key issue is this: Does God actually, legally bestow legal justification on all? Does He actually come and place it, as it were, in our laps?

At this stage of Waggoner's expression in his writings--which is up to 1892--there is simply no evidence for the claim that God actually places the gift of legal justification in our laps and we are legally justified whether we want to be or not.

III. 1893-1903

According to the advocates of this theme, the most compelling evidence for universal legal justification in the writings of Waggoner were set forth during the period reaching from 1893 to 1903. They claim that the following published statements present the strongest evidence for their interpretation of Waggoner.

The first statement is based on an exposition of Romans 5:15-18: "There is no exception here. As the condemnation came upon all, so the justification comes upon all. Christ has tasted death for every man. He has given Himself for all. Nay, He has given Himself to every man. The free gift has come upon all."⁷ On the face of it, the case seems quite convincing. Especially the expressions "justification comes upon all" and "to every man" seem to point to something that is universally placed in the hands or laps of "all." But this is not the full story; there is more to come.

While the "gift of righteousness and life in Christ has come to every man on earth," it is also true that "there is not the slightest reason why every man that has ever lived should not be saved unto eternal life, except that they

would not have it.”⁸ Thus salvation “unto eternal life” is conditional upon believers actually having it. So there is an essential, saving condition that must be experienced, if the alleged universal legal bestowment is to prove effective for the receipt of “eternal life.” But Waggoner is not through with his exposition of the conditional qualification of salvation to “eternal life.” He promptly goes on to say that “so many spurn the gift offered so freely” and that “the free gift comes upon all, but all will not accept it, and therefore all are not made righteous by it.”⁹

The reader should carefully note the expression “spurn the gift offered so freely.” The “to every man” and the coming “upon all” means to receive an “offer” that can be “spurned.” This very definitely qualifies the apparently unconditional force of the words that seemed to suggest the “free gift” has been placed “upon all” or given “to every man.” There is a significant difference between an “offer” that can be “spurned” and something that is actually and legally bestowed into the hands or laps (as it were) of “every man on earth.” Thus the case is not nearly as self-evident as the universal legal interpreters of Waggoner allege.

Once more, in 1895, Waggoner writes in a manner quite similar to the previous article of 1894: “Jesus is the

It is one thing to have light shining upon sinners and that they sense that God's love is embracing all the world, but quite another to be actually justified.

light of the world; so He is the true Light, ‘which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.’ Or, as some render it, In coming into the world, He lights every man. The point

is that all do have the light . . . That life-giving light has shone upon all, and is still shining.” And once more the key Romans passage is then cited: “‘By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.’ Rom v. 18. God’s love embraces all the world, and every man in it. To all He has given ‘His unspeakable gift.’ What a sad awakening it will be at last when men realise what was within their grasp, and what they let go.”¹⁰

While this exposition has a bit more force to it in support of the argument of Waggoner’s universal legal justification interpreters, it is also not compelling. It is one thing to have light shining upon sinners and that they sense that God’s love is embracing all the world, but quite another to be actually justified. Furthermore, the expression “what was within their grasp” does not necessarily mean to actually have something for sure; it can also mean to be in a position to actually be able to receive what the light has illuminated. In other words, the tragedy is that what was in the clear realm of possibility was “let go.” To reject light is to “let go” the offer of a life-time. Thus it seems more natural to see Paul’s “justification of life” to be the offer of salvation that has been spotlighted as something that is “within the grasp” of the truly responsive believer, but is also an opportunity that can be “let go” of or neglected.

But is there any further evidence for the concept of universal legal justification? And the answer is that, in fact, there is some rather convincing evidence. But it seems to show up in some surprising and disconcerting settings.

Consider the following: At the 1897 General Conference, Waggoner presented a series of lectures on the book of Hebrews. The following concepts are quite revealing: “The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart—in thy flesh; confess this fact, and ‘thou shalt be saved.’ This teaches the presence of Christ in every soul, waiting for recognition, in order that he may save. ‘Then you would make no difference between a sinner and a Christian?’—Oh, yes, indeed; all the difference in the world, or, rather, all the difference between the world and heaven. Christ has come in the flesh,—that is in all mankind, for man is flesh (Gen vii. 3),—but while he dwells in the sinner without recognition, and is held down in unrighteousness (Rom i. 15), in the Christian He dwells ‘by faith.’ Eph iii. 19.”¹¹ Very clearly there is the “presence of Christ in every soul.” He is not just standing by offering it, but actually is in the soul.

But this concept would become even more explicit as the years after 1897 unfolded. Carefully ponder the following: “The difference, then, between the sinner and the Christian is this: that, whereas Christ is crucified and risen in every man, in the sinner He is there unrecognized and ignored, while in the Christian He dwells there by faith. Christ is crucified in the sinner, for wherever there is sin and the curse, there is Christ bearing it . . . Faith in the eternal power and Divinity of God, that are seen in all the things He has made,¹² will enable any one to grasp this mystery.”¹³

In a subsequent article in the same series, Waggoner elaborates on the issue of who are among God’s children:

“What a blessed thing it is that God counts even the ungodly, those who are in the bondage of sin, as His children! Wandering,

Beginning in 1894 and then flooding forth like a tidal rush of muddy water in 1897, Waggoner clearly evidenced pantheistic tendencies.

prodigal sons, but still children. God has made all men ‘accepted in the Beloved.’ This probationary life is given us for the purpose of giving us a chance to acknowledge Him as Father, and to become sons indeed.”¹⁴

In these three statements is unmistakable evidence that Waggoner definitely taught that Christ was “crucified and risen in every man” and that He is “bearing” their “sin” and that even the “ungodly” are counted as “His children” and are “accepted in the Beloved.” This is far beyond an “offer” to them or the possibility of “spurning.” And while it is not the same status as those who “acknowledge Him as Father, and . . . become sons indeed,” they are still “His children” and are “accepted in the Beloved” (justified). So the question then arises, why the change?

The answer is actually quite simple. Beginning in 1894 and then flooding forth like a tidal rush of muddy water

in 1897, Waggoner clearly evidenced pantheistic tendencies.¹⁵ In this seemingly vibrant world-view, the “eternal power and Divinity of God” are “seen in all the things He has made.” Such a world-view, however, contained subtle darkness that was to ultimately lead Waggoner into the sloughs of murky and deadly deception. But in reference to our present issue, the rationale is quite simple: If the “eternal power and Divinity of God” are “in all the things He has made,” then it is one easy, logical step to conclude that He dwells in the “ungodly” and thus they are viewed as “accepted in the Beloved.”

Is there a doctrine of universal legal justification for the ungodly in Waggoner? Yes, there clearly is, and it appears to be the offspring of the pagan philosophy of pantheism.

While Waggoner did make some truly significant contributions to theological clarity, they all were essentially in place by 1888, not afterward. What comes afterward is a body of theology that descends into theological confusion and error in just about every major issue he sought to highlight.

What then are we to make of this teaching? While the pre-pantheistic Waggoner can possibly be interpreted as teaching universal legal justification (especially after 1892), the evidence is not compelling that he did. But aside from its clear emergence in Waggoner’s later pantheistic distortions, the doctrine has one other interesting downside. The interpreters of Waggoner, who have touted this doctrine as somehow the most wonderful discovery in the history of the doctrine of salvation by faith, have unwittingly employed this allegedly glorious discovery to effectively legitimate Waggoner’s numerous other theological directions. The net effect is that many do not realize the depths of the problem of the wrong directions that Waggoner’s overall theology was moving towards after 1889 and especially after 1893. I know that this is not what is intended by his interpreters, but it is the unwitting net effect. I would simply suggest that the whole thrust of any real teaching of universal legal justification in the teachings of Waggoner essentially hangs on a number of false theological principles, but especially his pantheism.

So what is the sum of the matter? Universal legal justification is simply a doctrine that we can do without. The positive thrust regarding the granting of temporary forgiveness in the interest of making room for a time of probation in which sin-confused sinners can weigh their options in the face of God’s calling and convicting grace has already been laid out by the vast majority of Arminian Christians, including John Wesley and the pre-1888 Ellen G. White. And while Waggoner did make some truly significant contributions to theological clarity, they all were essentially in place by 1888, not afterward. In fact, what comes afterward is, on balance, a body of theology that descends into theological confusion and error in just about every major issue he sought to highlight. And the alleged

universal legal justification only stands out clearly as it was enveloped in the mists of pantheism.

¹They include Robert J. Wieland and Donald K. Short, their leading colleagues in the 1888 Study Committee movement, and their well-known fellow traveler, Pastor Jack Sequeira. For ready documentation, see Robert J. Wieland, *The 1888 Message: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association) chapter 8, especially pages 95 to 104, and Jack Sequeira, *Beyond Belief* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1993), especially chapter 3, pages 29 to 37.

²E. J. Waggoner, “The Lord’s Prayer. Forgive Us Our Debts,” *The Signs of the Times*, May 5, 1887.

³I invoke the qualifier “normally” here in order to recognize two key issues: (1) the salvation of infants and little children who have not yet come to accountability; and (2) the cases of non-Christians who have not been formally evangelized, but who will be redeemed. While these issues certainly allow for the possibility of salvation, they do not deny the overall biblical emphasis that salvation is by grace, through consciously trusting in the saving merits of Christ.

⁴E. J. Waggoner, *The Gospel in the Book of Galatians* (Oakland, CA: n. p., 1888), 45.

⁵E. J. Waggoner, “Justified by Faith,” *The Signs of the Times*, Nov. 23, 1891.

⁶E. J. Waggoner, “The Penalty of the Law,” *Signs of the Times*, Vol. 16, No. 30, August 4, 1890.

⁷E. J. Waggoner, “Studies in Romans. The Free Gift. Rom. V. 12–19,” *The Present Truth*, Oct. 18, 1894. The same article was republished under the very same title in the North American *Signs of the Times*, March 12, 1896. (Emphasis supplied).

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰E. J. Waggoner, “The Word of Life and Light,” *The Present Truth*, Nov. 21, 1895.

¹¹E. J. Waggoner, “Lessons from the Book of Hebrews. The True Confession of Faith,” *The Present Truth*, Vol. 13, No. 47, November 25, 1897.

¹²Compare this with the following: “The fact that a man lives and has breath . . . is proof of the presence of God in his flesh” (E. J. Waggoner, “Studies in the Gospel of John. Words of Comfort. John xiv. 1–14,” *The Present Truth*, Vol. 15, No. 14, April 13, 1899).

¹³E. J. Waggoner, “Studies in Galatians. The Ever-Present Cross. Gal 2: 17–21; 3:1,” *Signs of the Times*, Vol. 25, No. 3, January 18, 1899.

¹⁴E. J. Waggoner, “Studies in Galatians. The Adoption of Sons. Gal 4: 1–7,” *Signs of the Times*, Vol. 25, No. 10, March 8, 1899.

¹⁵The word “pantheistic,” though not the most technically correct term, is the commonly used word to describe this concept; the expression “panentheistic” is the more accurate descriptor of Waggoner’s troubling philosophical directions.

Woodrow Whidden, AIIAS

SCRIPTURE APPLIED—A BIBLE STUDY

THE OWNER AND THE STEWARD

Fraud is a problem in this world. We encounter it on a daily basis. People pretend to be someone else. In a Brussels’ marathon a trainer switched roles with his athlete and ran twelve kilometers for him pretending he was the other

person. It was estimated that in 1984 approximately 10,000 American physicians had not finished their studies but had bought papers which attested that they had received doctoral degrees. Fraud! But there is an even greater fraud in which almost all humanity is involved—knowingly or unknowingly.

I. The Real Owner

1. The Owner

- 1 Cor 10:26; Ps 50:10-12 - God is the real owner of all things (Hos 2:8; Hag 2:8).
 John 1:11 - Jesus came to His own. The context tells us that He is the real owner, because He is our Creator and Savior (John 1:3, 29).

According to Scripture, it is very clear that God owns everything. This is easy to acknowledge, but it hits us hard, if we look at what this includes: all material possessions, our time, our gifts and talents, our body, and fellow humans.

2. Advantages and Disadvantages

Apparent disadvantages that God is the Owner: (1) We are not independent, but are subject to God; (2) we do not enjoy absolute freedom; (3) we are accountable for what we do.

Advantages that God is the Owner: (1) God carries the ultimate responsibility; (2) we do not need to worry, because God helps us in good and bad times; (3) to be dependent on God is good, because God knows what is best for us, cares for us, and does not make mistakes; (4) the freedom that God grants us surpasses the so-called freedom of the adversary. God always gives us freedom of choice; (5) we live a happy life in inner peace, joy, and love.

The disadvantages listed above are even advantages, if looked at from the right perspective. Moreover, the human experience of birth and death affirms that we are not owners. We come into this world with nothing of our own. When we die, we cannot take anything along apart from our character. Therefore, we should use the words “I,” “me,” “my,” and “mine” cautiously.

3. Examples

- (1) *The King of Assyria (Isa 10:12-19)*. In his speech the king mentions about five times “I” and three about “my,” depending on the translation. He makes the mistake to think he was the owner. According to verse 15 he is only an axe, saw, club, or rod, that is, a tool to be used. However he does not consider himself a tool in the hand of God but makes himself owner. Therefore, God’s judgment comes upon him (verses 16-19).
 (2) *The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (Matt 21:33-41)*. Again these people behave as if they were owners, and they mistreat God’s servants.

- (3) *David’s Prayer (1 Chron 29:11-16)*. David is quite different. He acknowledges that God is the one to whom everything belongs. In his prayer he speaks about God constantly (“yours/your” about nine times and “you” eight times, depending on the translation).

II. The Steward

1. The Parable in Luke 12:16-21

The main character of this parable is rich, probably intelligent and well respected, but he has wrong goals for his life (1 Cor 15:32). He practically denies the existence of God, he thinks that he can control the future, but in reality he is extremely poor. His life is meaningless and useless.

The rich man has not learned the lesson that everything belongs to God and that he is called to administer God’s property. Speaking about himself constantly (about six times “I” and five times “my,” depending on the translation) he reveals that he is an egotist without pity and concern for the poor, and by usurping God’s property he proves to be a thief.

2. Status and Responsibility of a Steward

To be a steward means to preserve, multiply, and utilize the property of the owner in an adequate way. To some extent a steward is a partner of and coworker with the boss. He carries important responsibilities. This makes his life meaningful.

All humans, whether or not they realize and accept it, are stewards. They are stewards of all that God has entrusted to them: material things, time, body, faculties, fellow humans, environment, and the gospel. Even in the future kingdom of God they will remain stewards (Luke 19:17).

What can a boss expect from his employees (God from us)?

- | | |
|------------|---|
| John 6:38 | - Respecting the will of the boss and acting accordingly. |
| Matt 6:33 | - Making the cause of the boss first priority. |
| 1 Cor 4:2 | - Faithfulness |
| Mark 11:22 | - Trust |

What can the employee expect from the employer (we from God)? The employee can expect “reward,” i.e., blessings in this life such as food, clothing, a place to live, joy, peace, serenity, love, etc., and a wonderful eternal life. And yet salvation is always God’s gift and cannot be earned. Our service as stewards is a response to His gracious provisions.

III. Why Fraud?

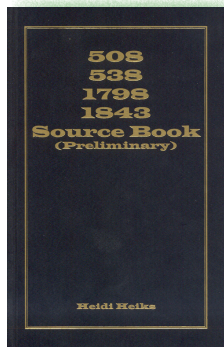
Why do humans not recognize that they are only stewards and that everything belongs to God and has to be administered according to His will? Some people do not know it. They have not been confronted with this truth directly. Others do not want to recognize it. They prefer to

play God on an earthly level. They want to be independent and do not trust God. They believe they would miss out on life, if they returned everything to God. They love sin.

But we can make a decision today. We can ask God for forgiveness for having taken His place by acting as if we were the owners of what we are and what we have. We can return God's property to Him and happily accept Him as our Lord. We can ask Him for His help in administering what in reality belongs to Him.

Ekkehardt Mueller, BRI

BOOK NOTES



Heidi Heiks, *508, 538, 1798, 1843 Source Book (Preliminary)* (Knoxville, IL: Hope International, 2005). 120 pp.

This small volume on prophetic times, according to H. Heiks a comprehensive book will follow, seeks to provide historical sources supporting the historicist (Seventh-day Adventist) interpretation of the 1260, 1290, and 1335 day prophecies in the book of Daniel. In his preface Heiks claims, "All

of the objections raised by those who have tried to move the 1260-, 1290- or 1335-year dates to some time in the future, or renounced them altogether instead of calculating the longest of the prophetic periods of Daniel to the autumn of 1844, can now by documentation be officially refuted." (p. x). By documentation he means primary sources like the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* of emperor Justinian or the *Lex Romana Visigothorum* and quotations from reputable historians like Charles J. Hefele.

Thus, the book is largely a collection of quotations from different sources with explanatory notes. The book has sixteen chapters, seven of which deal with the date 508, the beginning of the 1290 and 1335-year prophecy, which hitherto has been the most difficult date to substantiate historically. The importance of the date lies in the fact that in that year the amalgamation or union of church and state took place (pp. 25, 31) which in prophecy was the setting up of "the abomination that makes desolate" (p. 31). Heiks dates the conversion of Clovis to 508, historians, however, are divided on this. Most historians date his conversion to 496 rather than 508. Christian Pfister in the *Cambridge Medieval History* says the king allowed his children to be baptized but he did not make up his mind until after his first victory over the Alemanni. He "defeated his adversaries in a bloody battle (A.D. 496), but was unable to reduce them to subjection. He began to perceive at this time what strength he would gain by embracing Christianity. . . . It was doubtless from such considerations of policy, rather than from any profound conviction, that he decided to be baptized. The ceremony, to which numerous persons of

note were invited, took place at Rheims, whatever some modern historians may say to the contrary. It was celebrated on Christmas day of the year 496" (2:112). The ancient sources do not indicate in which year Clovis was baptized, they only mention that it happened in connection with his fight against the Alemanni. The main battle against the Alemanni was in 498, a smaller skirmish took place in 508. Then there is the question, would Clovis have led his army in a "holy war" against the Visigoths in 507 as a non-Christian? Whatever the case, the issue for the date 508 as the beginning of the 1290 and 1335-year prophecy is not the baptism of Clovis but the cooperation between the papacy and the Franks, i.e., the union of church and state.

Traditionally, Seventh-day Adventists have stated that the 1260-year rule of the little horn in Daniel 7:25 began in 538 with the removal of the Ostrogothic kingdom, the third of the three horns uprooted by the little horn. Heiks correctly states that although a decisive battle was fought in 538, which broke the siege of Rome by the Ostrogoths, the Ostrogothic kingdom did not end until 553 (p. 43). Heiks, therefore, concludes that the fall of the three Arian kingdoms "is not the prophetic marker associated with A. D. 538" (p. 44). In its place he puts the Sunday law of the third council of Orleans in 538 as an expression of the rise of the little-horn power and the beginning of the 1260-year period (p. 48). The third Synod of Orleans, in A.D. 538, issued a Sunday law which concluded with the threat, "If anyone be found doing the works forbidden above, let him be punished, not as the civil authorities may direct, but as the ecclesiastical powers may determine" (p. 49). While Heiks claims that the Synod of Orleans was "not merely a provincial synod" (p. 48), there is no historical evidence that its decrees had any impact beyond the borders of the Frankish kingdom.

In 1798 the "deadly wound" of Revelation 13:3 was inflicted on the papacy with the removal of the papacy from Rome by the army of Napoleon. This event is correctly seen as the terminal point of the 1260 and 1290-year prophecies. Adding 1335 years to 508 brings us to the year 1843 in which the Millerites expected the Second Advent and which, according to Heiks, indicates the commencement of the events of Revelation 10. "Without this prophecy of Revelation chapter ten, we, as a people, would be at a loss for a definitive date to identify the termination of the 1335-year prophecy and, in turn, the beginning of the prophetic fulfillment of the events in Revelation chapter ten" (p. 83).

Heiks distinguishes between the fulfillment of the 1335-year prophecy in 1843 and the fulfillment of the 2300-year prophecy of Daniel 8:14 in 1844. In support he quotes (p. 83) from Leroy Froom's *magnum opus The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* which says, "There were two major phases of the Millerite movement – the initial, or '1843,' phase, and the later and larger '1844' phase, in

which it reached its climax” (Le Roy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 1-4 [Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1950], 4:445). Froom, however, ends the 1335-year period in 1844 (see his chart in *Prophetic Faith*, 4:1128-1129), possibly because the last year of the 2300 year-prophecy extended from the fall of 1843 to the fall of 1844, overlapping the last year of the 1335-year prophecy.

While the book provides some very interesting and important historical sources to bolster the historicist interpretation of the time prophecies in Daniel and Revelation, some items await further clarification. It is hoped that the comprehensive book, which Heiks has promised, will do just that. In the meantime, every Adventist interested in the historicist interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation will do well to take note of this book.

Gerhard Pfandl, BRI

Zdravko Stefanovic, *Daniel* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2007), 480 pp. US\$34.99

Zdravko Stefanovic is professor of Old Testament languages and biblical studies at Walla Walla University. His commentary on the Book of Daniel is an in-depth study of the Hebrew and Aramaic text of Daniel, along the lines of the Anchor Bible Commentary on Daniel, i.e., each text passage is followed by textual notes and a commentary.” As is common to many scholarly commentaries, the lengthy introduction (30 pages) deals with such topics as authorship, the literary features, and the purpose of the book. In addition, Stefanovic has two chapters which give a general overview of Daniel 2-6 and 7-12 respectively.

This commentary majors on the exegesis of the original text, and the notes provide some helpful insights, but it is rather weak when it comes to the interpretation and explanation of the historical fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecies. Hence, not only does he say little about the pre-advent judgment in Daniel 7 and the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8, but several interpretations or the lack thereof will be of concern to Adventist readers. For example:

1. On page 237, Stefanovic claims that “One cannot comprehend Daniel’s prophetic messages without constant reference to the messages of the other biblical prophets, to which they are closely related.” Unfortunately, he does not provide any examples, but given the fact that Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, etc. are classical prophets dealing primarily with the nation of Israel whereas Daniel is an apocalyptic prophet dealing primarily with cosmic, apocalyptic, and worldwide issues, one wonders in what sense they are “closely related.”

2. From an Adventist point of view, the manuscript suffers from a distinct lack of a thorough and scholarly defense of the historicist interpretation of Daniel. For

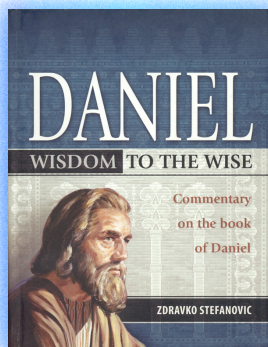
example, the year-day principle is mentioned (pp. 282, 310) and applied, but nowhere is there a clear explanation and defense of it. The references to Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 (p. 282) are not going to convince many readers that the year-day principle is a biblical principle. In view of the fact that outside of the Adventist Church hardly anyone still uses this principle of prophetic interpretation, it should have received a vigorous defense in this book which will be read by Adventists and non-Adventists alike. Desmond Ford in his 1978 *Daniel* commentary has a good defense of the year-day principle in appendix F and William Shea spent more than 40 pages in his book *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation* on the year-day principle. A reference to these sources would have been helpful.

3. In regard to the judgment scene in Daniel 7:9-14 Stefanovic writes, “The event described here in Daniel 7 closely resembles what Revelation 5 presents as the inauguration of Jesus Christ as King of the universe. Both chapters end with the universal worship of the Divine Person. Ephesians 1:19b-22 seems to allude to this same event in salvation history” (pp. 269, 270). If Daniel 7:9-14 refers

to the same event as Ephesians 1 and Revelation 5, then the judgment in Daniel 7:9-14 began in A.D. 31 and not in 1844. Although Daniel 7 does not provide a precise date for the judgment, verses 21-26 provide a general idea as to when the judgment is to take place. It follows the domination of the little horn over the saints during the 1260 years which ended in 1798. On the basis of Daniel 8:14 Seventh-day Adventists believe that it began in 1844 and not in A.D. 31.

4. On page 267, Stefanovic writes, “The context of this vision of Daniel 7 suggests that the primary focus of God’s judgment concerns ‘the power realities—kingdoms and rulers who do as they please.’” A few pages further on he says, “Thus, the saints are not the object, but rather the beneficiaries of this judgment” (p. 272). The Hebrew text says “judgment was given in favor of the saints.” If a judgment is rendered in favor of the saints then they themselves must also have been the object and not just the beneficiary of these court proceedings. Stephen Miller in *The New American Commentary* says the decision of the court in 7:22 “is that the horn is worthy of punishment (guilty), but the saints are worthy of blessing (innocent).” If they are declared worthy of blessing an investigation of their status must have taken place in the judgment. This is in harmony with the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the “investigative” or “pre-Advent” judgment in Daniel 7.

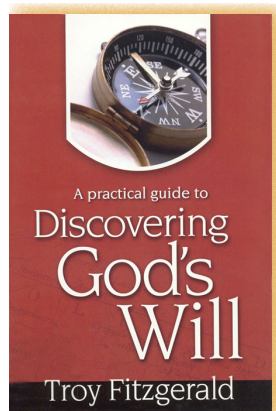
Overall, the reader will find many new insights in the linguistic notes and in the “application in personal life” sections. Some of the commentary sections are very good, others less so. The Adventist interpretation of the prophecies



of Daniel is found primarily in the summaries of the views of William Shea, Mervin Maxwell, and Jacques Doukhan.

Finally, a word has to be said about the physical appearance of the book. Pacific Press is to be congratulated; it has done an outstanding job in the production of the book. The layout, the cover and the general appearance of the book are excellent.

Gerhard Pfandl, BRI



Troy Fitzgerald, *A Practical Guide to Discovering God's Will* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2007), 143 pp. US\$12.99.

The author has divided the eight chapters of the book into three parts dealing with “The Search for God’s Will,” “The Discovery of God’s Will,” and “Doing God’s Will.” In his introduction he shares his core beliefs which include the fact that God has communicated

his will and does not play hide and seek (p. 10), and that “knowing God’s will for our lives is more about knowing God than knowing the future” (p. 11). In chapters 1 and 2 which form the section “The Search for God’s Will” he discusses common myths and provides guiding principles.

It may come as a surprise to the reader who has bought a book on discovering God’s will that the author

does not right away delve into questions such as, which career to choose and whom to marry, which are pressing questions for many young and older people. Rather, he stays with basic biblical statements on the will of God such as, it is the will of God to receive salvation (p. 58), to grow (p. 60), to be filled with the Holy Spirit (p. 61), and to do acts of goodness (p. 63) and discusses the problem that our will may—for various reasons—be opposed to God’s will. Even the issue of theodicy is addressed. This is definitely a strength of the book, because the author attempts to lead his audience to a complete surrender to God, avoiding the use of God as a kind of oracle only.

In the third part of his book Fitzgerald approaches the questions mentioned above which normally are on people’s mind and makes some helpful suggestions. Then he challenges his audience: “God’s greatest desire—greater than finding you a particular job, place to live, or person to marry—is to walk with you. . . . God’s guidance is a byproduct of a walking, living relationship with Him. . . . Deliberately begin living the will clearly revealed in His Word, and God will guide you one step at a time” (p. 128). “Do you trust God? Will you follow Him whether or not you understand Him?” (p. 141).

A Practical Guide to Discovering God’s Will is a well-written and easy to read volume which emphasizes the core of what it means to be a Christian. The present reviewer felt that some statements were too generalized, but the overall message came across clearly. For this the author must be commended.

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