

Homosexuality in History

BY EKKEHARDT MUELLER

This article investigates the historical development of homosexuality. It begins with the Ancient Near East, continues with Israel and Judaism, the Greco-Roman world, Christianity and Gnosticism, and finishes with Europe between the Medieval Ages and our time.

The Ancient Near East

Egypt

So far no Egyptian laws have been found dealing with homosexuality.¹ “Unconventional sexual practices are not well documented in ancient Egypt.”² But there are some. Pharaoh Pepi II (dated 24th cent. B.C.) may have had a homosexual relationship with one of his generals. Some scholars suggest “that homosexuality was frowned upon by the Egyptians.”³

“The ideal family relationship in Egypt was for a young man to find himself a good wife and raise a fine family of children. Since inheritance was through the female line, daughters were important. The young husband stood in close relationship with his maternal grandfather.”⁴

One of the texts dealing with homosexuality is a coffin text. The deceased person claims to have had homosexual intercourse with a god. Since the active partner was the one in power, and the passive partner was considered powerless, the deceased person in this text claimed that he has nothing to fear from the god Atum.⁵ To affirm their power, the Egyptians may also have raped defeated male enemies.

“The outstanding account of homosexuality in Egyptian literature is a story about the attempt of the god Seth to violate his younger brother. . . Seth shows a decided interest in the body of Horus. . . . The sexuality of Seth is always irregular; he does not care whether women are married or not. . . . He is given two Syrian goddesses, Anat and Astarte, as wives. He rapes Anat. But in the account in P. Chester Beatty VII, she is dressed like a man. The Egyptian word used is not that for human in-

tercourse . . . but for intercourse between animals.”⁶ The gods set not only “the moral tone for the people” but they are also human constructs used to rationalize one’s own behavior. “The worshippers of Seth would imitate his deeds although these acts might be considered an abomination by those devoted to other gods.”⁷

Pederasty seems to have occurred in Egypt. Homosexual relations may not have been “considered wrong as long as they were based on mutual consent.”⁸ On the other hand, in the *Book of the Dead*, a deceased man who “appears before the judge in the next world” says, “I have not had sexual relations with a boy. I have not defiled myself. . . . I have not been perverted; I have not had sexual relations with a boy.”⁹ Wold states, “Until the end of the first millennium B.C., no prohibition or legal ramifications of same-gender sexual contact can be found. What affected a change in Egyptian attitudes toward homosexuality, then, cannot be shown.”

Mesopotamia

The situation is similar in Mesopotamia. There seems to be no early legislation regarding homosexuality. In the middle of the second millennium B.C., homosexuality is listed among sexual crimes. However, it is discussed whether or not the law refers to homosexual rape only. The penalty is, among other things, castration so that the perpetrator cannot continue his behavior. Another law deals with a false accusation of homosexual behavior. It is implied that this is not homosexual rape, but describes a consensual relationship. In such a case, the accuser should also be castrated.¹⁰

But following the law is not necessarily what one may find in society. In the *šumma alû* prescriptions, a magical text, the following statements are found:

1. If a man has intercourse with the hindquarters of his equal (male), that man will be foremost among his brothers and colleagues.
2. If a man yearns to express his manhood while in prison and thus, like a male cult prostitute, mating with men becomes his

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desire, he will experience evil.

3. If a man has intercourse with a (male) cult prostitute, care [in the sense of ‘trouble’] will leave him.
4. If a man has intercourse with a (male) courtier for one whole year, the worry that plagued him will vanish.
5. If a man has intercourse with a (male) slave, care will seize him.¹¹

However, these texts may relate to the cult and may not reflect accurately what was happening in everyday life. Springett notes: “Sexual intercourse in the service of a god or goddess was a common practice, which was not regarded as criminal, but a sign of dedication or devotion. Priestesses who followed the custom apparently were highly respected in some manner since even kings dedicated their daughters to the temple. . . . On the other hand, temple prostitutes were not recommended as wives even by Babylonian authors The males attached to the cult (*assinnu*) are sometimes considered to be eunuchs or homosexuals or both.”¹²

The goddess Ishtar/Inanna, as deity of love and war, was an ambiguous figure, sometimes acting like a female and sometimes behaving like a male. She “did not conform to the expected role of a woman as a wife and mother, but on many occasions acted as a man. . . . Accordingly, Ištar was worshiped as a lovely maiden but also as a bearded warrior.”¹³ A Sumerian hymn claims that Ishtar had the power to turn men into women and women into men.¹⁴ No wonder devotees, the *assinnus*, the *kurgarrûs*, and the *kulu’us* or *galas* exhibited the same pattern. “It seems that all three groups of cultic functionaries were born as men (or hermaphrodites), but . . . their appearance was either totally feminine, or they had both male and female characteristics.”¹⁵ “. . . it seems possible that the devotees sometimes participated in same-sex relations. . . . Their gender is definitely ambiguous: even the corresponding cuneiform sign for them (UR.SAL) means a ‘man-woman’ or literally ‘dog-woman’ (‘dog’ represents masculinity in negative sense).”¹⁶ As to how were they perceived by society, Teppo answers:

As members of a third gender, *assinnus*, *kurgarrûs*, and *kulu’us* break one of the most important boundaries of Mesopotamian society—the boundary between men and women. They are anomalies: gender-ambivalent devotees of the ambivalent goddess Ištar, who herself is the supreme transgressor of boundaries. This makes the devotees sacred, powerful, and dangerous but at the same time impure, marginal, and feared.¹⁷

This paucity of information may indicate that homosexuality was not very widespread in Mesopotamia.¹⁸

Hittites

“None of the Hittite laws proscribes homosexuality, except for the case of incest: ‘If a man violates his son, it is a capital punishment.’”¹⁹ Since we know so little about homosexuality among the Hittites, we cannot tell whether it was accepted or it was uncommon. However, we know about bestiality. “Sexual intercourse with sheep and cows was forbidden. . . . But intercourse with horses or mules incurred no punishment.”²⁰

Canaanites

Texts describing Canaanite homosexuality have not survived. Based on Leviticus 18:24 and its immediate context, it can be assumed that homosexual acts were practiced in Canaan. “At this point, however, we must say that homosexuality as a common practice in Canaan cannot be identified in the available texts, nor is it represented in the art we have. Fertility, promiscuity, bestiality, incest, yes—but not homosexuality.”²¹

Ancient Israel and Judaism

Israel

The Old Testament has not only clear



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prohibitions against homosexuality (Lev 18:22; 20:13), but it also relates instances in which homosexuality occurred. However, such occurrences are treated negatively. Homosexuality is an abomination and will be punished.

Judaism

The OT Apocrypha such as the *Wisdom of Solomon* discuss the sin of Sodom repeatedly and condemn it, however, under the category of inhospitality. Yet Wisdom 14:26 speaks about the confusion of sex which may point to homosexuality.

The Pseudepigrapha are also opposed to homosexuality, most clearly *2 Enoch*. “*Second Enoch* 34:1-3 refers broadly to adult sodomy, whereas 10:4-5 primarily refers to pederasty. The speaker in *2 Enoch* adds his negative evaluation to both.”²² According to *2 Enoch*, the practice of homosexuality occurred even before the Flood. The authors of the Pseudepigrapha that mention sodomy considered it not only “as sin in a religious sense but also as lawless in a civil or criminal sense. . . these Jews held Gentiles accountable for tolerating sodomy in their own law codes²³ . . .”

Rabbinic Judaism was not different. “The Mishnah viewed homosexuality as demanding a more severe form of death than murder!” *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 8:7 “places homosexuality with the clearly universal crimes of murder and adultery and not with the ‘ritualistic’ offenses. The Mishnah views homosexuality as an offense more grave than murder, yet views it as not so grave as bestiality, the profanation of the Sabbath, or idolatry with regard to its spiritual consequence. . . . The Mishnah also prohibits an unmarried man from teaching children, and two unmarried men from sleeping under the same cloak (*Qiddushin* 4.13f.).”

“The Talmud in later versions regards lesbianism as disqualifying a woman from marriage to a high priest (*Bab. Shabbat* 65a) and does not admit to court the witness of one who consents in the act of pederasty (*Bab. Yevamot* 25a).”²⁴

Philo of Alexandria and Josephus condemned homosexuality. They believed “that law should prohibit homosexual activity . . . such laws should exist among all the nations. It is not possible to limit their convictions to pederasty, since they deal with androgynous people and the events of Sodom. Both writers uphold Mosaic legislation as superior law to the pagan codes.”²⁵

Greco-Roman World

Greece

“Greek society probably was the ancient society in which homosexuality was most prevalent No doubt homosexuality in Greece was due in large measure to the narcissistic character of Greek life and the influence

of religion. The gods practiced it (e.g., Zeus with Gany-mede, Heracles with Iolaus or Hylas, and Apollo with Hyacinth), so people were justified to pursue it.”²⁶

Some scholars believe homosexuality could have been introduced to Greek society around 1400 B.C. During the seventh/sixth century B.C., a lady called Sappho from the island of Lesbos began writing about her feelings for other girls. Lesbianism is derived from her place of origin. Whether she had sexual intercourse with other females or just had feelings for them is not completely clear. In any case, there was no cultic association.

“The most common form of homosexuality among Greek males was pederasty. This term refers to a plan of education for boys in which they were placed by their fathers under the care of another man to be trained. As a feature of the system the boy, called the *eromenos*, could be expected at times to provide his mentor, the *erastes*, with homosexual favors.”²⁷ It was considered an honorable institution. The boys, typically up to the age of puberty, were not expected to enjoy the sexual relationship but endure it. Otherwise they were considered perverts. After the boys had grown up they were expected no longer to play the passive role in a sexual relationship.²⁸

The Timarchus case in the court of Athens reveals that this city administrator was involved in pederasty, homosexuality, prostitution, and bestiality.²⁹ He was sentenced to death.³⁰

De Young holds: “Greek homosexuality was diverse: pederasty, adult male and female, and male prostitution. It was characterized by mutuality and permanency, as well as rape and infidelity Homosexuality became institutionalized in the military, in education, in the home, and in laws. Many of the great philosophers, artists, poets, and leaders—including Socrates, Plato, Aristotle . . . —were homosexuals or pederasts.”³¹ Although Plato supported pederasty, he later changed his position somewhat.³² Laws are necessary “to regulate sexual activities among heterosexuals and homosexuals.”³³ Plato also shares the androgynous myth³⁴ about “the emergence of sexual differentiation.”³⁵ Aeschines sought to protect boys and even slaves from sexual harassment and assault.

Rome

“Roman society seems to have inherited widespread homosexuality from Greece in the second century B.C. It occurred in all forms (pederasty, male prostitution, mercenary catamites, adult mutuality, and lesbianism). The Romans fashioned several law codes over several centuries to legislate homosexuality in various ways.”³⁶ They are: (1) *Lex Scantia* (around 226 B.C.); (2) *Lex Julia de adulteriis coecendi* (around 17 B.C.); (3) *First novella* (A.D. 538); (4) *Second novella* (A.D. 544). It is remarkable that the first laws against homosexuality

were drafted before the Christian church was founded.

Christianity and Gnosticism

Orthodox Christianity

The New Testament followed the OT in condemning homosexual activity. This was supported by the church fathers such as Augustine and Chrysostom. “*Apostolic Constitutions* (7.2) says that sodomy is unacceptable Christian behavior³⁷ . . .” And “[b]y the fourth century church councils began enacting rules and canons on the subject. Soon the church’s position became that of the Roman government, and Rome began to enforce legislation already in place.”³⁸

Gnostic Groups

While orthodox Christianity upheld the position of the OT and NT, Gnostic groups took a different approach. They reinterpreted the biblical texts. Church father Epiphanius describes a group called Barbelites. They engaged “in ritualistic opposite-sex copulation [going] to special and sometimes extreme measure, so as to prevent insemination and procreation³⁹ . . .” Those involved were still considered to be virgins and are in the image of God and reflect the holiness of God. But “these opposite-sex acts are only for the neophytes; the more advanced adherents of the sect”⁴⁰ are involved in homosexuality. “. . . for these Gnostics, the same-sex act, being such a horrid distortion of the process of gendering, the antidote to the proscribed opposite-sex act if you will, enabled them to free themselves from the shackles of gender.”⁴¹ They did not want to become subject to the horrible entity called Nature.

For the Naassenes, heterosexual intercourse is “an utterly wicked and defiling thing. . . . Paul claimed that sexual acts between females were ‘unnatural’ (*para physin*); the Naassenes rejoined that since gender is ‘natural,’ it is a blessing to act ‘unnaturally.’”⁴² “. . . the pure human according to these gnostics was ‘neither male nor female, but a new creature, a new Human.’ Indeed this is a recurrent motif in most, if not all, Gnostic writings: the original perfect human, or *anthrōpos*, is neither gendered nor sexed, and gender is the creation of an evil, inferior and overly masculine god whose purpose is to delude humankind lest they recognize their heavenly origin.”⁴³

Europe between the Medieval Ages and Our Time

The Christian Church understood homosexual activity as a grave sin. According to Gregory of Nyssa, punishment varied between nine years of penance and excommunication. The most comprehensive treatment of the issue is found in the work of Cummean. He also focused on lesbianism. In the Medieval Ages, homosexuality is once again associated with heresy.

Thomas Aquinas evaluated homosexuality and stated that the sexual organs are not be used in such a way as to exclude procreation. Homosexuality is almost as bad as bestiality.⁴⁴ The position of the church influenced the government. Oftentimes, homosexuals were persecuted and even executed.

While the French civil code did not mention homosexuality, the British laws as well as the German and Austrian laws threatened homosexual behavior with punishment even as late as the end of the 19th century and in some cases even the midst of the 20th century.⁴⁵ Since then, homosexual partnerships have been accepted in many countries, often treated like heterosexual marriages. Liberalism and secularism along with homosexual lobbying has contributed to a complete change of approach in many societies.

In the meantime, so-called hate speech laws curtail the freedom of speech in a number of countries, and non-discrimination laws attempt to force even churches that are opposed to a homosexual lifestyle to hire practicing homosexuals, thereby militating against the freedom of conscience. While it is deplorable that homosexuals have been persecuted and killed—certainly against the implications of the gospel—discrimination of those who do not agree with a homosexual agenda is not a better approach. Humans must learn to live with differences of opinions and yet respect each other.

Conclusion

This brief survey has shown that various forms of homosexual behavior were known and present in most, if not all, cultures of the Ancient Near East. Such practices were not always exploitive and violent. Nevertheless, many cultures were ambivalent regarding forms of homosexual behavior. While it may have been tolerated under certain circumstances, it was not the norm and was not necessarily accepted by the population that upheld the value of heterosexual marriage and family relationships in which children played an important role.

Following the unique biblical position, Jewish and Christian societies rejected any type of homosexual activity for centuries. Only recently, some churches, following the new approach of various cultures and secular governments, have made provisions for a homosexual life style while others respect homosexual persons without advocating or condoning their lifestyle.

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¹Cf. Donald J. Wold, *Out of Order: Homosexuality in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books Publish-

ing Company, 1998), 56.

²Ronald M. Springett, *Homosexuality in History and the Scriptures* (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference, 1988), 34.

³Wold, 56.

⁴Springett, 34.

⁵Wold, 56.

⁶Springett, 35, 37.

⁷Springett, 39.

⁸Wold, 59.

⁹Wold, 57-58.

¹⁰See Wold, 47-58; Springett, 40-41.

¹¹Wold, 48.

¹²Springett, 41.

¹³Saana Teppo, "Sacred Marriage and the Devotees of Ištar," in *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity*, ed. Marti Nissinen and Risto Uro (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 76.

¹⁴See Teppo, 85.

¹⁵See Teppo, 77.

¹⁶Teppo, 81. In her article Kathleen McCaffrey, "Reconsidering Gender Ambiguity in Mesopotamia: Is a Beard Just a Beard?," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, ed. Simo Parpola and Robert Whiting (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002), 379-391, she argues that these males who took on a female role should be considered a third gender in their society.

¹⁷Teppo, 91.

¹⁸See Wold, 51.

¹⁹Wold, 54.

²⁰Martha Tobi Roth, Harry A. Hoffner, and Piotr Michalowski, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 236.

²¹Wold, 60.

²²James B. De Young, *Homosexuality: Contemporary Claims Examined in the Light of the Bible and Other Ancient Literature and Law* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2000), 87.

²³De Young, 244.

²⁴De Young, 246.

²⁵De Young, 248.

²⁶De Young, 252.

²⁷Springett, 87.

²⁸Cf. Springett, 87-88.

²⁹See De Young, 235-237.

³⁰See De Young, 235-237, for a detailed description.

³¹De Young, 252-253.

³²For details see David L. Balch (ed.), *Homosexuality, Science, and the "Plain Sense" of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 44-45.

³³De Young, 253-254.

³⁴Springett, 97-98: "In this myth Plato explains that primal man was dual. He had four hands, four feet, two faces and two privy parts, that is, like two people back to back—the faces opposite directions. Some of these dual, primal creatures were male in both parts, others were female in both parts and yet others (a third sex) part male and part female. These primal creatures were so strong that they became insolent, attacking the gods. Because of their continued insolence, Zeus divided these dual four-legged creatures into two-legged creatures. A dual male became two males, a dual female two females and the male-female (androgynous) became a male and a female. On this basis he accounts for the differing sexual desires apparent in society, for each creature searches out its own or opposite kind, according to its original

orientation. When dual parts encounter each other they fall in love. By the creation of this myth Plato attempts to explain the attraction some men and women have for persons of the same sex."

³⁵Balch, 46.

³⁶Cf. De Young, 257.

³⁷De Young, 251.

³⁸De Young, 252.

³⁹Jonathan Cahana, "Gnostically Queer: Gender Trouble in Gnosticism," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 41/1 (2011): 26.

⁴⁰Cahana, 27.

⁴¹Cahana, 26-27.

⁴²Cahana, 28, 29.

⁴³Cahana, 30.

⁴⁴Cf. S. Bailey, "Homosexuality," in *Die Religion in Gescyhichte und Gegenwart*, third edition, ed. Kurt Galling (Tübingen: J. B. C. Mohr, 1959), 443.

⁴⁵Bailey, 443.

Miles Grant, D. M. Canright, and the Credibility of Ellen G. White: A New Perspective on the Israel Dammon Trial

BY MICHAEL W. CAMPBELL

Introduction

In 1983, Fred Hoyt discovered a newspaper account, published in the *Piscataquis Farmer* of March 7, 1845, of the arrest and trial of Israel Dammon (1811-1886). The report includes testimony from witnesses about Ellen G. Harmon, as well as another visionary, Dorinda Baker. It provides a rare glimpse into the early prophetic career of Ellen G. Harmon (later Ellen G. White). The events that unfolded in 1845 were no secret. Ellen G. White described the incident 15 years later in *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2 (1860). Yet the description in the *Piscataquis Farmer* is far more detailed and significantly earlier. It furthermore describes Ellen G. Harmon as an ecstatic visionary caught up in a bedlam of fanaticism.

While previous research, both friendly as well as hostile, has highlighted the differences between the two accounts (which I will not repeat in this article), Ellen G. White, in her later account, described her role as one in which she rebuked early fanatics. The newspaper account makes it appear that she was swept up and very much a part of this fanaticism. While Adventist historians generally accept that Ellen G. Harmon and other early believers were indeed a part of the "shouting Methodist" tradition—perhaps to a greater extent than has been previously acknowledged¹—the bottom line is an issue of credibility. Was Ellen G. White simply one of many visionaries who was adept enough to suppress other rivals in her quest to found a church, or was she

instead trying to share her own unique perspective that included rebuking fanaticism? The two interpretations are diametrically opposite.

Critics furthermore allege that this discovery is the greatest historical discovery about her life since her death in 1915 and that the Ellen G. White Estate “has studiously ignored” its significance.² Since that time, James R. Nix, the current director of the Ellen G. White Estate, has published both an extensive paper and, most recently, an article about Dammon in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*.³ Far more is known about the details of his life, but the issue of credibility remains. New research into a debate in 1874 challenges these allegations from critics.

The Beginnings of a Debate

Beginning in 1859, the Seventh-day Adventist Church expanded to the west coast of the United States. In 1872, James and Ellen White, when they were not speaking at camp meetings, alternated between the fledgling work in California and their home in Battle Creek,⁴ Michigan. On Dec. 29, 1873, they arrived in Santa Rosa, California, where over the coming weeks they helped to strengthen a small church.⁵ It appears that, at least for a time, they considered making this their new home, and perhaps even a base for the future publishing house on the west coast that James White envisioned. On Jan. 4, 1874, Ellen G. White was handed a challenge by a Presbyterian minister in Santa Rosa who was going to speak against the Adventists on the change of the Sabbath. James White responded with a sermon the following week about the “perpetuity of the law of God.”

Then on Sabbath, Feb. 14, 1874, after Ellen White finished preaching to the church group in Santa Rosa, the church received another invitation to speak, this time from Miles Grant (1819-1911). A “hasty vote [was] taken,” noted Ellen G. White in her diary. Apparently James White, who was not present due to illness, shared Ellen White’s concern about Grant. “All was not right in this matter,” she observed in her diary. Together they went to the Bowls, leaders of the First Day Adventists, the same denomination that Grant belonged to (spiritual descendants of the Millerite movement, but who repudiated the seventh-day Sabbath and the gift of prophecy). The Whites explained the situation from their perspective and left with them the “responsibility” of extending an invitation for Grant to speak at the Santa Rosa Seventh-day Adventist Church.⁶

After earlier encounters with Miles Grant, James and Ellen G. White were concerned because he was the most forceful antagonist of Ellen G. White and the Seventh-day Adventist Church during the 1870s, which makes it surprising that the church accepted the invitation from Miles Grant to speak at all.⁷

Miles Grant Attacks Ellen G. White

It appears that Grant held a personal vendetta toward James and Ellen G. White. They met for the first time in person on an 1868 train ride.⁸ Grant stated to James White: “I can worship with you, but your views will not let you [to] worship with me.” James White later sent a note with his intention to attend an Advent Christian camp meeting in Springfield, Illinois. While there, he adhered to his promise not to distribute tracts or to speak in public, but he did give away tracts in his tent to those who requested them. Advent Christian Church leaders at the camp meeting, the “camp meeting committee,” summoned James White to answer to charges that he had distributed literature on the grounds of the camp meeting. James White agreed not to distribute any literature, even at his tent. Scarcely had James White returned to his tent (and before he could explain the delicacy of the situation to his traveling companions), when a lady stopped by to request more literature. Five minutes later, the “camp meeting committee” was back, requesting them to leave the grounds immediately. Joshua V. Himes intervened and an agreement was made to leave the next morning. A second incident, the timing of which is unclear, also occurred during the camp meeting (presumably before the tract incident) one morning between breakfast and the first meeting of the day. The Whites joined a small group that was praying and singing. Afterward, Ellen G. White began to speak until an estimated 1,000 people listened. Miles Grant constantly interrupted until they were forced to leave. The interaction at this camp meeting appears to be the catalyst for subsequent attacks by Grant against the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White.⁹ Ellen G. White responded with a testimony titled “Opposing Adventists” (3T 36-39) in which she described, “Our most bitter opponents are found among the first-day Adventists.” As a policy, she encouraged Seventh-day Adventists not to be disconcerted by this “unjust warfare.” “Silent contempt” was the “best approach.”¹⁰

After this encounter, Grant believed that Ellen G. White was possessed by a demon. He then began to develop arguments against Ellen G. White’s prophetic ministry during the 1870s and 1880s (up until D. M. Canright’s final and permanent defection from the denomination in 1887). The animosity of Grant toward Ellen G. White increased dramatically in 1874 as he traveled west to California. When Grant arrived in Napa, California, he held a series of “revival and sanctification sermons.” According to James White, these “discourses took well with a few who came out to hear them. Having gained this foothold, he then proposed a discussion.” James White furthermore observed that since he had no “interest to defend in this city,” Grant came with “the

spirit of war, to tear down.” He challenged the Seventh-day Adventists to a debate, and D. M. Canright took up the challenge.¹¹

Grant pushed for what he considered Seventh-day Adventist “weak” spots. Whenever he was pushed in a corner, according to James White, he would attack their understanding of the “two covenants.”¹² This subsequently prompted an article by Uriah Smith on the covenants as a direct response to these attacks.¹³ As the debate unfolded, Grant alleged that James and Ellen G. White were “wild fanatics.” She “was inspired by a demon, the same as all spirit mediums.” He said that he had a letter from Israel Dammon stating that he had been personally acquainted with the Whites when she had her first visions. At first Dammon had confidence in them, but then later renounced them. Ellen White furthermore saw in vision that Saturday was the Sabbath, and thus introduced it among Adventists. Canright replied:

I stated that I was personally acquainted with Eld. Dammon, and knew him to be a notorious fanatic. While preaching, he will halloo, and jump about, even over the desk into the congregation. He was a leader of a band of fanatics in Maine in 1845 who held that the dead had arisen and gone up. The visions condemned him for his fanaticism, which caused him to turn against them. He was associated with one Simeon Hall, who disturbed my meetings to that degree that I had to have him arrested to keep the peace.¹⁴

It appears that Canright’s response, at least regarding the alleged testimony of Israel Dammon, was sufficient to squelch any future attacks from Grant, at least on this point. Although Seventh-day Adventists had faced fierce opposition, this aggressive attack by Grant was unprecedented from the perspective of early Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders. At the same time, Uriah Smith saw God’s hand in the “recent contest between truth and error” and “resulted in greatly strengthening the friends of truth” in California.¹⁵ A year later, the “first-day Adventists” in California were split because of Grant’s harsh attacks upon Seventh-day Adventists.¹⁶ Ellen G. White’s counsel of caution and to show kindness to opponents appears to have won over some of the early Advent Christians who lived in California.

Observations

The debate of 1874 between Miles Grant and D. M. Canright certainly provides a rare window into the interactions between Seventh-day Adventists and the Advent Christian Church. The much earlier 1868 saga

between the Whites and Grant furthermore helps explain the intense animosity that Grant carried with him the rest of his life toward Ellen G. White and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Yet I believe the real significance of the 1874 debate for current Ellen White Studies has to do with Miles Grant’s use of a letter by Israel Dammon. Canright later went through his own crisis of faith. He permanently resigned from the Seventh-day Adventist Church on Feb. 17, 1887. He subsequently published two major books, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*¹⁷ (1887) and *Life of Mrs. E. G. White* (1919).¹⁸ As Adventist historian Jud Lake has ably demonstrated, Canright systematized all previous criticisms as well as adding some of his own. He is thus rightly considered the “father” of Ellen G. White critics.¹⁹ Therefore, if Canright felt there was even the slightest credibility to Israel Dammon’s accusations, it would therefore make sense that he would have used this with his arsenal of arguments against Ellen G. White. He was certainly familiar with the criticism and interacted with Dammon at some unknown point during his evangelistic work in Maine (presumably between 1866 to 1868 when Canright “labored” extensively in that state). The fact is that after Canright’s apostasy, he never mentions Dammon in his attacks against Ellen G. White and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Obviously, he was familiar with the criticism, and while he presumably would have liked to use it to undermine her prophetic authority, the absence of Dammon in his arsenal of criticisms gives credibility to Ellen G. White’s later (1860) version about what transpired. Although historians generally attribute earlier historical sources as being more reliable than later ones, in this particular instance there is no earlier source with which to compare Ellen G. White’s account. This incident therefore shows that Ellen G. White’s later account should be considered more reliable.

The description of Israel Dammon by D. M. Canright furthermore gives greater perspective to Ellen G. White’s later description: Dammon was someone who initially believed Ellen G. Harmon’s early visions, but who repudiated them once he was the recipient of one of her visions. Ellen Harmon received a vision when the bedlam occurred. Could it be that he was the recipient of reproof? It seems possible, perhaps even likely, that as Ellen G. Harmon shared her vision that included reproof, their negative response was the catalyst for the pandemonium that ensued.

Altogether, this new evidence from the 1874 debate over Israel Dammon’s arrest and trial (as well as Canright’s subsequent silence on the topic after his apostasy) showcases the early prophetic role of Ellen G. Harmon during the first few weeks and months of her ministry.

She clearly understood her role as one in which she both encouraged the “scattered flock” but, although timid, sought to share messages or reproof through divine revelation.

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¹For an overview, see Michael W. Campbell, “Ecstatic Experiences,” in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, ed. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 791-793.

²Douglas Hackleman, “A Question of Character,” in *Adventist Currents* (April 1988), 3.

³James R. Nix, “Another Look at Israel Dammon,” unpublished paper available at: http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/israel_damman.html; idem., “Israel Dammon,” in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*. Ed. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 358-360.

⁴Michael W. Campbell, “California,” in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, ed. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 671-673.

⁵See note, *Review and Herald*, Dec. 20, 1873, 20.

⁶This early reconstruction of how Miles Grant came to Santa Rosa

is based upon Ellen G. White’s diary. See Manuscript 3, 1874, entries Jan. 4, 11, and Feb. 8, 1874.

⁷Denis Fortin, “Miles Grant,” in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*.

⁸*Review and Herald*, Nov. 17, 1868, 244-245.

⁹[Uriah Smith], “Springfield Camp-meeting,” *Review and Herald Extra*, April 14, 1874, 2.

¹⁰Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), vol. 3, 36, 37.

¹¹James White, “The Cause on the Pacific,” *Review and Herald*, April 7, 1874, 134.

¹²James White, “Discussion at Napa,” *Review and Herald*, April 21, 1874, 152.

¹³Uriah Smith, “Which is Right?” *Review and Herald*, Dec. 8, 1874, 188-189.

¹⁴D. M. Canright, “Eld. Grant’s Attack Upon Eld. James White and Wife at Napa, Cal., March 28, 1874,” *Review and Herald Extra*, April 14, 1874, 3.

¹⁵See comment by U[riah] S[mith], *Review and Herald*, May 26, 1874, 192.

¹⁶See James White’s description in *Review and Herald*, Nov. 4, 1875, 138.

¹⁷D. M. Canright, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced: After an Experience of Twenty-eight Years* (Kalamazoo, MI: Kalamazoo Publishing Co. Print, 1887, 1888).

¹⁸D. M. Canright, *Life of Mrs. E. G. White, Seventh-day Adventist Prophet: Her False Claims Refuted* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing Company, 1919).

¹⁹Jud Lake, *Ellen White Under Fire* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2010), 45-64.

SCRIPTURE APPLIED

The Last Message for this World

BY EKKEHARDT MUELLER

Last messages or last warnings are very important. If one does not take them seriously, one has to count on unpleasant consequences. On the other hand, if they are followed, one can enjoy wonderful benefits. The Bible presents a last message in Rev 14:6-12.

I. The Context

1. The Larger Context

Rev 12-14 portrays the final conflict of earth’s history. From Rev 15 onward, the last moments of this drama are revealed: God’s intervention in favor of His saints in the form of seven plagues. Plagues six and seven depict the collapse of Babylon in the battle of Armageddon. Rev 17 and 18 describe this fall of Babylon in more detail, and Rev 19 pictures the intervention of Jesus with His army as the rider on the white horse. This is followed by the Millennium (Rev 20) and the new heaven and new earth including the New Jerusalem (Rev 21-22). Thus the message of the three angels is the final

and universal message addressed to all people in the last time of earth’s history.

2. The Context of the Central Vision of Revelation (Rev 12-14)

a. Chapter 12

After a short introduction (Rev 11:19), Rev 12 narrates in symbolic form:

- The birth (coming forth) of the Messiah (the male child) from the true people of God (the woman) and the attempt of Satan (the dragon/serpent) to kill Him (Rev 12:1-5).
- Satan’s war against the church throughout the centuries (1260 symbolic days=1260 years) after the ascension of the Messiah to God in order to destroy her (Rev 12:6, 13-16).
- A heavenly battle between Satan and Jesus (Michael), which ended in Satan’s defeat but not destruction (Rev 12:7-12).
- Satan’s battle at the end time against God’s people, called remnant, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:17).

b. Chapter 13

In two parts, chapter 13 develops how Satan attempts to achieve his goal of the destruction of God’s people.

- He uses a beast coming out of the sea (the papacy) to wage war against those who are true to God and to enforce universal worship of the dragon and the beast (Rev 13:1-10).
- In addition, he uses a beast coming out of the earth (fallen Protestantism) to erect an image of the first beast, forcing the world population to worship the sea beast and to accept the mark of the beast (Rev 13:11-18).

c. Chapter 14

This chapter not only presents the divine counter message to the evil propaganda of the evil powers, but also shows the final outcome of the great controversy.

- First, this chapter portrays those who have withstood the satanic trinity (dragon, sea beast, and earth beast which is later called Babylon) and are with Jesus Christ—the 144,000 (Rev 14:1-5).
- Then follows the last message, the message of the three symbolic angels, which is proclaimed by the remnant (the 144,000) (Rev 14:6-13).
- Next occurs Christ's second coming, described symbolically as the harvest of the earth with two groups involved—the saved and the lost (Rev 14:14-20).

II. God's Last Message (Rev 14:6-12)

This message comes in three parts proclaimed by three angels. But this message, although sounding like judgment, is nevertheless the great eternal gospel.

1. The First Part of the Message (Rev 14:6-7)

a. The Universal Proclamation of the Eternal Gospel

Revelation shares with the rest of the New Testament the conviction that the gospel must be preached to all nations before the end comes (Mark 13:10; Matt 24:14). The eternal gospel of the last message is by definition good news for those who accept it.

The prologue of the Apocalypse contains a clear description of the gospel—Rev 1:5-7—and we should understand the term “eternal gospel” on this background:

- Jesus loves us.
- Jesus has saved us.
- Jesus has set us in a new state, being a kingdom and priests.
- Jesus comes again.

Therefore, those who die in the Lord have nothing to fear (Rev 14:13). They rest in the Lord until the resurrection day.

b. “Fear God and Give Him Glory”

It is good news that even in this late hour of world history, salvation is still available. People can still make

a decision for the Creator God, accepting redemption. They can commit their lives to Him and give glory to Him, that is, repent (Rev 11:13; 16:9) and acknowledge Him as the most important being in the entire universe. Glory is associated with creation (Rev 4:11), but also with salvation (Rev 1:6; 5:12; 19:1).

c. “The Hour of His Judgment Has Come”

The final message is good news because the investigative judgment, also called “pre-advent judgment,” is in progress (e.g., Dan 7). In the heavenly sanctuary, depicted in many places in Revelation, Christ is still working on our behalf. The decision is being made about who will be accepted to be with Christ at His second coming.

d. “Worship Him”

It is good news because it calls us to worship God instead of demonic or human-made systems (see Rev 13:4, 8, 12-18). These systems are coercive and oppressive, and cannot give peace or a real future. They do not provide meaning in life as the Lord does.

e. “Who Made the Heaven and the Earth and the Sea and the Springs of Water”

The message is good news because the Savior God is also the Creator God. Creation and salvation are clearly linked in the New Testament and in Revelation (e.g., chapters 4-5). We cannot have one without the other. And if there was not creation in the beginning, it does not make much sense to expect re-creation at the end of human history.

At the same time, the phrasing is taken from the fourth commandment; it has in mind the Sabbath commandment. During the last period of earth's history, faith in the Creator God and keeping his commandments—including the Sabbath commandment—will be challenged. The conflict will focus on how we relate to God and His law. Verse 12 will come back to this issue. So apart from our relationship to God, the Sabbath will become a test of loyalty to God for all humankind.

2. The Second Part of the Message (Rev 14:8)

a. “Fallen, Fallen is Babylon the Great”

The second message proclaims the spiritual fall of Babylon (compare Rev 2:5). This is in some sense good news because people can leave behind deception and come out of Babylon. This message is repeated in Rev 18:2-4 with the call to leave Babylon. On the other hand, the executive phase of the judgment mentioned later assures believers that there will be justice, vindication, and a bright future for them.

b. “She has Made all the Nations Drink From the Wine of Wrath of Her Immorality”

Babylon will try to force all people worldwide to accept a system of worship, which talks about God and yet is opposed to the true God. It is a blasphemous, idolatrous, and therefore, immoral system. But not all will follow Babylon. The 144,000 will follow the Lamb, Jesus Christ (Rev 14:1 and 4).

3. The Third Part of the Message (Rev 14:9-13)

a. False Worshipers “will Drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God” (Rev 14:9-11)

In the third part of God’s final message, the angel announces the Lord’s final judgment on those who worship the beast or its image and carry the mark of the beast. God responds to the Babylonian wine of wrath with His own wine of wrath. The followers of the beast—which will also include many professed Christians—have made a decision against Jesus (the Lamb) and have persecuted His people. God intervenes on behalf of His children (Ps 75:9). Again, good news!

b. The Saints and Their Characteristics (Rev 14:12)

Finally, the worshipers of the beast and its image are contrasted with the true worshipers of God and followers of Jesus. Three characteristics are:

- They are patient and persevere. They do not give up.
- They keep God’s commandments, especially the Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath commandment.
- They have faith in Jesus and have the faith of Jesus. They are saved by grace and live with the Lord day by day. They rely on Him completely (justification of faith by grace). They believe what Jesus believed.

c. Blessings (Rev 14:13)

The blessing that follows in verse 13 points out that, although some may have to pay for their loyalty and their relationship to Jesus with their life or may die during the end time, they are blessed. They may rest until the resurrection.

III. Summary and Implications

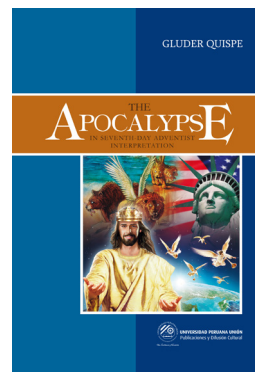
This is a wonderful message, and it is God’s last message. We summarize: The first message emphasizes worship of the Creator in contrast to worship of man-made systems and worship of Satan. It accentuates the pre-advent judgment and obedience to God, including the keeping of the biblical Sabbath.

The second message warns us of being associated with Babylon. The ties have to be cut with this apostate power and belief system. God’s people are called to come out of Babylon and join the remnant.

The third message does not only depict the judgment on Babylon but also the character, and to some extent the fate, of the faithful ones. It is a group of people who love God and follow Him no matter what.

This last message challenges us: (1) To stop playing around and not taking God and His will seriously—to stop misjudging the enormity of the last conflict that is developing right before our eyes. As those who are saved, we decide to be loyal to the Lord. (2) To pass on this last message to others so that they may be invited to become children of God, be warned of the end-time deception, and be ready to meet the coming Lord Jesus.

BOOK NOTES



Gluder Quispe, *The Apocalypse in Seventh-Day Adventist Interpretation*, Lima: Universidad Peruana Unión, 2013. xii + 354 pp. US\$20.00.

Summary

This is the published version of the Ph.D. dissertation of Gluder Quispe, professor of Adventist Studies and New Testament Interpretation at the Peruvian Union University and director of the Ellen G. White Research Center in Peru. Published in 2013, it was presented at the Symposium on the Book of Revelation of the South American Division in Chile in the same year.

The book contains five major chapters along with a table of contents, an acknowledgment, various lists, and a bibliography. The first and last chapters are somewhat unusual insofar as the first chapter is called “Introduction” and consists of an extended introduction, which normally would be considered to go beyond an introduction, and the last chapter is named “Summary and Conclusions” and contains, among other things not previously mentioned, “Suggestions for Possible Improvement.”

In the first chapter, the author suggests that the study of Revelation in the Adventist Church can be divided into three periods, which he first calls “The Thought in the Revelation Period” (1862-1944), “The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Period” (1944-1970), and “The Multiple Emphasis Period” (1970-). These periods are dealt with in chapters 2-4. However, they are later renamed “Biblical-Historical Emphasis,” “Biblical Theological Emphasis,” and “Biblical–Exegetical Emphasis.”

Quispe describes the purpose of his study as analyzing and assessing the different Adventist approaches to Revelation. In spite of differences, he calls all of them historicist (20). Yet it seems to this reviewer that Quispe intends to find out whether or not commitment to a historicist interpretation of the Apocalypse has changed and/or weakened over the years during the respective periods of interpretation of apocalyptic prophecy in the Adventist Church. For this purpose, he looks for a definition of historicism in each of the periods suggested by him and checks how the seven trumpets of Revelation 8-11 and 12 have been interpreted.

In chapter 2, the period of the biblical-historical emphasis, he deals with Miller's interpretation and investigates how U. Smith, M. Maxwell, and A. Treiyr have interpreted the different symbols in Revelation 8-12.

Chapter 3 focuses on the biblical-theological emphasis. After having provided some background by discussing the role of L. F. Were and five Adventist commentaries on John's Apocalypse, Quispe deals with the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary on Revelation, H. LaRondelle's work, and R. Naden's commentary in more detail.

Chapter 4 brings the author to the last phase, the period of biblical-exegetical emphasis. Again he provides background information, this time on K. Strand, the 1974 Bible Conference, four significant commentaries, and the Daniel and Revelation Committee (DARCOM). The author discusses more intensely the contributions of J. Paulien and R. Stefanovic to Adventist interpretation of Revelation.

In chapter 5, he claims that all three approaches remain alive, while each one has shortcomings. Therefore, they should be considered to be complementary (266). The biblical-historical emphasis is strong with regards to identifying historical entities that are mentioned in the text but overlooks aspects of the text. The biblical-theological emphasis avoids being dogmatic and stresses, for instance, the Christology of Revelation, tending toward "spiritualizing" the message of the Apocalypse (270) and therefore resembling the idealist approach to apocalyptic prophecy. Quispe holds that the biblical-exegetical emphasis, found in a number of Adventist scholars, focuses primarily on the first-century setting of the text and therefore "can resemble the preterist approach" (271).

He concludes: "Without denying the valuable contributions of the biblical-theological and biblical-exegetical approaches, it seems that the Adventist identity is most directly rooted in the *historicist* interpretation of the prophecies of both Daniel and Revelation. It is the historicist concreteness of prophecies fulfilled in specific dates, events, and religious and political powers that grounds Adventist identity as a divinely called people with a mission to the world" (271).

So while pointing to the complementary nature of the three approaches, in reality he seems to prefer the biblical-historical emphasis. Since there may be a kind of departure from the historicist method in Adventism, he asks the question, "What should Adventists do?" (271) and answers, "The three different emphases are on the table, and as a Church we need to create a balance in the application of the historical method of the interpretation of the prophecies" (271). This leads him to make nine suggestions, among them the organization of a new Daniel and Revelation Committee by BRI (272), the creation of an interdisciplinary Revelation commentary, a refinement of our methodology, which includes hermeneutics and exegesis (273), a more thorough study of Ellen G. White (274), and an effort "for evangelists, pastors, preachers, and scholars to take the same language on the interpretation of the Apocalypse" (274).

Evaluation

Quispe's renaming of the originally suggested periods of Adventist interpretation of Revelation has advantages since it portrays how one can assess and evaluate major emphases in the respective periods. However, it also has disadvantages because his taxonomy does not acknowledge the overlaps between the periods and dates assigned to each category. Categorization can certainly help in pointing out major emphases and problematic developments, but the reader has to keep in mind the limitations of the system. For instance, categorization does not cover all the data and such a neat division of Adventist history can only provide a rough outline. Quispe seems to acknowledge this fact. One wonders if it would not have been better to perform a diachronic analysis of major publications without ascribing to them specific approaches, or conversely to adopt a synchronic investigation of the several approaches independent of dates such as 1944-1970.¹

The volume contains a number of problems—some minor, some more serious: (1) The work contains quite a number of typographical errors, some of them annoying.² (2) At times there is a lack of precision in terminology, historical data, and quoting.³ (3) References are missing or are incomplete.⁴ (4) Some scholarly works mentioned in the text and endnotes do not appear in the bibliography.⁵ (5) Summaries and tables are very helpful, but result in too much repetition. In addition, sometimes too many details are provided of what major representatives published, preached, and recorded. (6) At times Quispe seems not to correctly present the view of some authors. This may be due to a limited literary context considered or available. Nevertheless, one has to be cautious when evaluating persons and adding them to a category.⁶ (7) The title of the dissertation seems somewhat misleading and probably should

be limited to the English-speaking, Adventist world because, with a few exceptions, non-English works have hardly been considered; although quite a number, even on a scholarly level, are available. (8) It would have been better to distinguish between interpretations of Revelation by individuals and semi-official interpretations (211). For instance, the DARCOM meetings have a different character than a private initiative organized by 3ABN, a ministry that is not part of the official Church (211). Under the heading “SDA Church’s Definition of Historicism” we find the definitions of K. Strand, F. Hardy, K. Arasola, and others. This arrangement tends to distort the picture.

Some questions remain: (1) Would it have been better to separate scholarly commentaries from non-scholarly treatments in order to provide a snapshot of what was and is going on in the Adventist scholarly world, in addition to what happens in churches, public evangelism, etc.? (2) Is the “spiritual meaning” or theological meaning of a passage in Revelation really more subjective than the historical meaning, namely attempting to find historical entities as fulfillment of prophecy (169, 172)? Even representatives of the biblical-historical approach did not agree completely on the interpretation of the fifth and sixth trumpet. The “spiritual meaning” is one important aspect of the text but not the only one. The historical meaning is another important part and again not the only one. (3) Should it not have been mentioned that one of the strengths of the Adventist Bible Commentary on Revelation was to list two or three interpretations among Adventists in cases where a definite decision could not be made—at least not at the time of publication—and still favoring one, while not necessarily ruling out the others?

Contribution

In spite of the issues mentioned, this tome contains a lot of information on the Adventist interpretation of Revelation. The review of history is extremely helpful and contains interesting details. This history of interpretation also shows that some issues that caused problems later (e.g., the apotelesmatic principle, multiple fulfillments) had occurred earlier (141, 142, 171) and did not necessarily arise out of a vacuum.

The work is generally very thorough. Many sources have been used. The extensive endnotes at the end of each chapter contain a wealth of material, although this reviewer would have preferred footnotes that fit better the scholarly interest.

While some other characters and their work could have been investigated, major players have been identified and discussed. Again, summaries and tables are extremely helpful, condensing the flood of information and allowing for a quick comparison of the various views.

A closer look at the relevance of historicism and its use in the Adventist Church was overdue. The author must be commended for having tackled this issue. His attempt to be balanced by making room for thorough exegesis, in-depth exploration of Revelation’s theology, and careful identification of the book’s historical fulfillment must be applauded. Persons interested in the study of the Apocalypse may wish to consult this important contribution to Adventist theology.

Ekkehardt Mueller, BRI

¹For instance, can the approach taken by the Adventist Bible Commentary be described as more or less the same approach that H. LaRondelle has used?

²E.g., “Valdals” instead of “Vandals” (54); “&c.” instead of “etc.” (60); “Saracenes” without an initial “S” (98); missing spaces between words (135) and endnotes (41, 102 and 103); incorrect numbering (170); “Theile” instead of “Thiele” (three times, 172); “Rome Empire” instead of “Roman Empire” (174); a line with hardly any spaces between the words (199); an endnote number not connected to the preceding word (213); “Gerard Pfandl” instead of “Gerhard Pfandl” (215); misspelled title of the current reviewer’s book (256); and typographic widows and orphans (268).

³If we call the identification of historical realities with textual descriptions “application” instead of “interpretation” (169, 229), we may actually weaken the historicist approach. Application is often understood as a kind of spiritualization for the reader’s sake. Second, instead of “*Reflections—the BRI Newsletter*,” the reference in the main body of the text is shortened to “Biblical Research” (219), which may be misunderstood. Third, it is suggested that J. Paulien was chairman of the NT Department of the Theological Seminary of Andrews University for 25 years. This would mean that he was department chair before he got his Ph.D. (217). Fourth, on page 149, Quispe quotes a statement from the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 7, that “a single prophetic passage may embrace more than one fulfillment.” However, this statement is found in the context of the seven churches, particularly the church of Ephesus. The author(s) may not have intended this statement to apply to the entire Apocalypse.

⁴E.g., on page 5, an Ellen G. White quotation occurs, but endnote 29 does not contain the reference. Instead it employs another Ellen G. White quotation. Endnote 185 in the text of page 225 seems to refer to an article of J. Paulien, but the endnote itself on p. 255 just gives a book edited by G. Reid and not the respective article.

⁵E.g., Desmond Ford’s commentary *Crisis!* (204, 239) and G. Reid’s (ed.) *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach* (255) are missing in the bibliography.

⁶E.g., the conclusion drawn on a statement by G. Pfandl on the nature of exegesis (216) may not fairly represent his strong commitment to historicism (215). Greater care should also be used when conclusions are drawn on J. Paulien’s statement dealing with the remnant. Paulien’s quotation on page 225 reads that “God’s remnant will have a message not just for Christians, but also for Jews, for Muslims, for Buddhists, and for Hindus—for all people,” while the table on page 235 may suggest that for Paulien the remnant consists not only of the SDA Church but the aforementioned groups. At least the formulation on page 235 is confusing.

WORLDWIDE HIGHLIGHTS

Bible Conference in Ghana and Dedication of Research Center



The first BRI Bible Conference in 2014 took place in Ghana, January 6-11. The pastors of the Central Ghana Conference and the South Central Ghana Conference met for a very intense time of study, including revival meetings with church elders in the evening. K. Donkor and E. Mueller lectured on topics such as hermeneutics, sexual ethics, worship, and ecclesiology. The meetings started at 5 a.m. and lasted until about 8 p.m. The audience must be commended for being so attentive, in spite of some challenging topics, hot weather, and a high number of lectures, devotionals, sermons, and other speeches. The Union and Conference administrators supported the meetings by their presence and contributed to an excellent climate.

The icing on the cake was the dedication of a research center for the pastors of the South Central Ghana Confer-

ence with prayer, short speeches, and ribbon cutting. The center was named after BRI associate director Dr. Donkor and his wife Comfort as "Pastor & Mrs. Kwabena Donkor



Administration and staff of South Central Ghana Conference: in the center, Ekkehardt Mueller, Kwabena Donkor and his wife.

Research Center," in appreciation of his leadership. He was the one who had the idea of allowing pastors to come and study and find resources in the newly created center, which is located in the South Central Ghana Conference administrative building. It was also he who brought books for the library and continues to help with equipment.

If readers of this newsletter would like to make a book donation (e.g., from their own library) to support the Ghanaian colleagues in their ministry, they may contact Dr. Donkor at (biblicalresearch@gc.adventist.org).