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Editorial

This is the first issue of *Spes Christiana* in its new appearance. But a new cover design and some typographical modifications are not the only novelties.

In the past three decades this journal was sponsored and published by Friedensau Adventist University. During that time many noteworthy issues were published that will retain their place in many book cases. However, from this issue onwards *Spes Christiana* will be the official publication of the European Adventist Society of Theology and Religious Studies (EASTRS).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe owns and operates a significant number of educational institutions, with departments of theological and other disciplines of the humanities. For a long time, the teaching staff of these departments have met for a biennial study conference. During the conference of 2017 it was decided to strengthen the bond between the European professors of theology and related fields by forming an association. This association is *European* in its geographical spread and most definitely *Adventist* in its approach to the study of theology and religion in general, as well as in other fields that are usually classified as the humanities. As this new organization was getting established, Friedensau Adventist University negotiated with the EASTRS leadership to assume the responsibility for the publication of *Spes Christiana*, which already had members of Newbold College and the Faculté adventiste de théologie, Collonges-sous-Salève, on its editorial board. This was approved by the members of the EASTRS during their conference of 2019, when also a General Editor and an Editorial Board were elected. This was with the understanding that, at least for the foreseeable future, Friedensau Adventist University would continue to give technical and logistical support. Stefan Höschele, the previous General Editor, continues to be available as a valued advisor, while Kerstin Maiwald, a research scholar at Friedensau, plays a key role with regard to the organizational aspects and in the editorial process that gives the articles their final form. Considering my background in editorial and publishing work, and my lifelong interest in academic pursuits, the EASTRS members asked me to serve as the General Editor of the journal for the next four years.

The mission of the journal has not changed. The plan is to publish a Spring issue and an Autumn issue. Different from the past, its primary distribution will be in digital form, but printed copies are available through Amazon.com/Amazon.de. The aim of our journal is to offer the members of EASTRS a platform where they can share the results of their research with their fellow-members, and to include relevant contributions from others who wish to publish in *Spes Christiana*. The journal will, also in the future, aim at maintaining a high academic standard and will ensure that all articles are peer-reviewed.

This first issue in this new form offers a few contributions that are based on papers read during the 2019 EASTRS conference, and a few other important articles. But in addition to these quite lengthy articles a section of book reviews is now included.

The journal can only flourish if a constant stream of articles is assured. I therefore appeal to all EASTRS members (and other men and women with relevant expertise) to consider this journal for the publication of their research. I look forward to receiving a significant number of contributions in the disciplines that the journal wants to cover. Suggestions as to where the editor might look for such contributions are certainly also welcome, as well as suggestions regarding books that might be reviewed. Offers to be a book reviewer are also appreciated.

Our journal proudly bears the name *Spes Christiana*. As a journal by and for Seventh-day Adventist scholars, it is anchored in the basic convictions of the Adventist tradition, and SPES – HOPE – remains one of the key elements of the Adventist faith. However, the title of the journal is not *Spes Adventistica* but *Spes Christiana*. It wants to explore topics and questions that are also of interest to other Christian scholars.

This issue of our journal is sent on its way with the hope – and the prayer – that it will be a first modest step in developing our journal into a valuable tool for Adventist (and other) professionals in the fields of theology and other humanities.

Reinder Bruinsma, General Editor

Adventist Ethics?
Laying the Groundwork for an Evolving Field

Stefan Höschele

Abstract

Adventist ethics is an evolving field that, thus far, has lacked comprehensive theoretical grounding. Publications in this academic area fall into six major categories that reflect the importance of the Bible, denominational tradition, and cultural contexts; however, meta-ethics of an Adventist kind is yet to be developed. Therefore, this article proposes a paradigm building on the emphases of the extant body of literature, and calls this paradigm *missional ethics*. This approach is consistent with the essential aspects of Adventist theological tradition, is already exemplified in several significant publications, and encompasses themes of moral concern that are prevalent in the denomination's Fundamental Beliefs.

1.   Adventist Ethics?

Two very different books from the area of moral theory will be the point of departure in this paper.[1] Both force the reader to look at Christian ethics in a new manner. The books are entitled *Strange Virtues: Ethics in a Multicultural World* (Adeney 1995) and *Virtuous Violence* (Fiske and Rai 2014). The main thesis of the latter (a recent work written by two psychologists) is that most violence does *not* happen because of some pathological impetus or lack of morality in an agent but precisely *because* of moral convictions that *necessitate*, in certain instances, the use of violent means for those to whom certain virtues

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[1] A previous version of this paper was presented on April 5, 2019 in the context of the procedures leading towards the appointment as professor of Systematic Theology and Adventist Studies at Theologische Hochschule Friedensau. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing me to Rudi Maier's book *Church and Society* (see footnotes 25 and 52) and suggesting a few improvements to be made.

are important. The title of the former book (authored by a Christian theologian and missionary) is almost self-explanatory: on a globe inhabited by peoples of radically different cultures, one should expect that moral ideas and ideals vary so much that our ethical reflection must take account of this state of affairs. What connects the two is the conviction that in the realm of "virtue" (and this may also be applied to competing models of ethics that focus on "values" or "the good") much of what seems to be common sense, even among those of us who – broadly speaking – subscribe to a democratic orientation,[2] should not be taken for granted.

This point is hardly surprising for any scholar who does not subscribe to a particular philosophical school or single orientation of ethics such as the common deontological, teleological, and virtue branches, which are commonly referred to in introductory classifications. After all, the very definition of ethics is not easily agreed upon by its representatives in academia, neither among philosophers nor in the Christian discourse – whether it is called moral theology or theological ethics (as Protestants often prefer). In lieu of an extended discussion on whether some notion of "duty," "love," "life," "actions," "behaviour," "character," "conduct," "consequences," or "being in the world" is more helpful as a focus,[3] I would like to offer a formulation with which I have worked so far, "the study of appropriate decisions," and point out why it fits in well with the main topic, i.e. "Adventist Ethics." Paralleling the wisdom ethos in the Old Testament,[4] "appropriate" implies a potential range of options, indicating that at least in some instances there is more than a simple "right" and "wrong" – there may be "more or less tolerable" or "well-fitting and less well-fitting" and degrees of constructive or healing acts. Moreover, the focus on decisions implies that at least in those areas where humans *can* decide matters because of their free will (and, one might want to add, actual

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[2] Fiske and Rai (*Virtuous Violence*, 298) refer to evidence that in the realm of psychology, there is a strong bias towards what has been called WEIRD individuals (i.e., those with a western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic background) – a group to which the overwhelming majority of persons in the world does not belong. See also Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan 2010.

[3] Cf. Markus Mühling's comprehensive presentation on ethics as reflection on actions which include (1) a person with a will, affects, and reason, (2) other persons, (3) natural happenings, (4) empirical and religious certitudes, (5) rules, (6) means, (7) expectations, (8) goals, and (9) results. See Mühling 2012, 19.

[4] I would like to thank Kerstin Maiwald for this observation.

personal freedom in their particular social context), they do have a responsibility for their decisions and resulting actions. This emphasis resonates well with the Arminian background of Adventist theology, and therefore leads us to the question in the title of the paper.

Should there really be a thing called Adventist Ethics? There are at least four possible answers – (1) yes, (2) no, (3) yes *and* no, and (4) *neither* yes nor no. Position 2 (no) might imply that Adventist ethics is simply to be proper Christian ethics or the best of it. This thinking overlooks the fact that there is no "pure" Christian ethic – reflection on the Christian life, on actions or decisions is always coloured by tradition and culture. Position 3 (yes and no) would presumably mean rejecting the sectarian impulse to offer ethical reflection only for a particular group of people, an in-group code, as it were, and instead focus on, say, "biblical ethics." Proponents of this stance then run into the well-known hermeneutical conundrums, which is why I suggest *not* to identify Adventist Ethics with the parenesis, norms, and ideals of biblical writers. In spite of the inherited Adventist desire to restore first-century Christianity, attempts at actually doing so will simply not work out in a world that has experienced twenty centuries of Christian history. Position 4 (neither yes nor no) would imply that a specifically Adventist ethic is needed only in some cases – those where the prophet has spoken or the denomination's tradition is particularly strong (e.g. abstinence from smoking, pork, and alcohol, from political involvement, and from "worldly" amusements).[5] This perspective would support a casuistic understanding of ethics and, therefore, narrow it to a small set of rules and the reasoning behind them. This is a far cry from the kingdom ethics that we see expounded in the New Testament scriptures.

I propose position 1 (yes) – for several reasons. One is that there are parallel discourses in other Christian traditions: Mennonite ethics (cf. Toews 1963;

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[5] Cf. denominational Fundamental Beliefs no. 22 (Christian Behavior), which addresses matters of "amusement and entertainment" as well as health, diet, unclean foods, and abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, but (like no. 21, "Stewardship") does not include aspects of social ethics.

Burkholder 2018), Lutheran ethics,[6] Baptist, Methodist, and Reformed ethics,[7] etc.[8] The second is that Adventist ethics actually exists as a discourse,[9] and I suggest, therefore (this being the third reason), that it is both meaningful and important to discuss this discourse. This discussion is necessary for another reason; actually several "layers" of ethics can be, and should be, distinguished – and each of them needs appropriate reflection:

(1) *An outer layer: lifestyle traditions*. In the denominational heritage regarding the believer's conduct, there is a definite set of what are regarded as typical marks of an Adventist believer's life in this world. Examples include health habits, a set of conservative Evangelical lifestyle elements (e.g. in the area of sexuality, jewelry, and dress), and the rejection of violence and military involvement.

(2) *An inner layer: cultural diversity*. Much less recognized so far is the variety of ethical reflection globally. Regional Adventisms differ much more in matters of everyday morality and emphasis on particular values than in actual doctrinal formulation.

(3) *An upper layer: academic discussion*. A growing stream of publications (but few symposia and conferences so far)[10] indicate that Adventist ethics is

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[6] Cf. the *Journal of Lutheran Ethics*, an academic journal published in the context of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Bayer 2007. Interestingly, the original German edition of Bayer's book does *not* include "Lutheran Ethics" but is subtitled "Zur theologischen Ethik."

[7] See the pertinent articles in the *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (Green 2011): McSwain and Gushee 2011, 89–92 ("Baptist Ethics"); Reuschling 2011, 284–287 ("Evangelical Ethics"); Simpson 2011, 497–501 ("Lutheran Ethics"); Smit 2011, 661–664 ("Reformed Ethics"); Mgallanes 2011, 833–836 ("Wesleyan Ethics").

[8] For a rather critical viz. self-critical piece on free church ethics, see Lütz 2004. Lütz refers to empirical "free church ethics" as a system of commandments, biblicism, prohibitions, and moralism.

[9] More on the elements of discourse will be presented in the second part of this paper; for the moment, it is interesting to note that the *term* "Adventist ethics" has not been used frequently, but it appears in a few instances. See, e.g., Walters 1981; Andreasen 1986; Badenas, and Höschele 2010.

[10] Among the few significant symposia are the annual Bioethics Conferences of the Adventist Bioethics Consortium, held since 2016, and a 2014 conference at the Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, titled "The Global Ethics Crisis: Implications for the Adventist Church in Africa."

on the verge of becoming a field of inquiry in its own right, thus graduating from being a mere conversation.

(4) *A deeper layer: theological foundations*. Analogous to Adventism's unique mix in expressing the Christian faith, its search for appropriate ethics has been molded by several major influences: Puritan strictness, Methodist Holiness theology, common sense philosophy, a unique brand of biblicism (emphasizing the continuity between the Testaments), and the moral government of God concept (with its concomitant social activism).[11]

Like every prolonged conversation and field of inquiry, the Adventist Ethics discourse raises a number of questions[12] – not all of which can be dealt with here at length. The aim of this paper will be twofold: (1) identifying and categorizing approaches to Adventist Ethics that exist so far, and (2) suggesting the major parameters for, and proposing an adequate approach to, doing Adventist Ethics. This is, of course, a vast project; therefore, no claim of presenting a fully comprehensive theory is made. Moreover, the paper will touch on questions of applied ethics only in passing; its focus is constructive fundamental ethics.

2.   Extant Approaches

2.1   Phases

Before turning to an overview and analysis of extant approaches to Adventist Ethics, a brief historical overview of the development of Adventist ethical reflection will help provide a setting for identifying types of ethics prevalent in the denomination's sphere. Similar to the history of doctrine (cf. Pöhler 1995; Knight 2000), ethical reflection in Adventism went through several stages, but there is also a marked difference with the dogmatic realm: there has been much less controversy for several generations, and hence the overall process has been smoother – so much so that distinguishing clear-cut periods is almost

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[11] On the "moral government of God" concept and its importance for Adventist thinking, see Miller 2016.

[12] E.g. *who* are the major contributors (I would argue that there are several players but no major individual so far); *why* its state of affairs is the way it is (this interpretation is partly contained in the dissertations by Pearson and Plantak, but an overall evaluation would necessitate a large study of its own); and *what* role Adventist ethics plays in the overall realm of Adventist theology (again, this presumably calls for a dissertation).

impossible. I suggest, therefore, the following phases should be regarded not so much as being distinct, but as stages in the growth of a discourse that has broadened rather than turning or changing its direction.

I: *The pioneer phase*. Until the death of the denomination's pioneer generation (Ellen White died in 1915), church leaders reacted to moral issues mainly on the basis of a shared ethos of radical discipleship and (largely) a plain reading of biblical texts, with respect to the charismatic authority of the movement's prophet, and on the basis of experience in the world around (e.g. in the Civil War).

II: *The orthodox phase*. The absence of a prophetic voice in their midst, dramatic international expansion, and the significant numerical growth of membership in the early 20th century moved the denomination into a phase in which institutional logic and adherence to models developed in the pioneer phase characterized not only their organizational operations, but also their attitude to moral issues. Thus orthopraxy in everyday life, formerly largely agreed upon but not codified, became sanctioned by such publications as the church's first *Church Manual* (1930) and a growing number of Ellen White compilations, which served the purpose of presenting to church members standards to be followed in a wide variety of life situations – with a concomitant leaning towards casuistic morals.

III: *The contemporary phase*. A discernible ethics discourse on the academic and intercultural levels developed from about 1980 onward.[13] The first (unpublished) dissertations on Adventist ethics were written in the 1970s (Davis 1970; Larson 1973); the 1980 Fundamental Beliefs contained significantly stronger elements of ethical relevance than the 1931 version;[14] comprehensive published academic studies on Adventist ethics began to appear (Dudley and

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[13] The nine-page bibliography in the first edition of Schwartz 1979, the major denominational history textbook, contained no single reference to a publication on ethics as such. The closest (and only) items with ethical implications were Kellogg, *The Living Temple* (1903), Wilcox, *Seventh-day Adventists in Time of War* (1936), and Robinson, *The Story of Our Health Message* (1943).

[14] The 1980 version more than doubled section on stewardship (from 44 to 103 words) and considerably expanded the section on "Christian Behaviour" (from 113 to 199 words). The 1931 text mainly formulates rules and prohibitions, while the 1980 version presents a reasoned articulation of a theology of responsibility and virtue. Moreover, it adds a separate and lengthy paragraph on "Marriage and the Family" (no. 22; 218 words).

Hernandez 1982);[15] a bioethics centre was established at Loma Linda University in 1986, being the first important institutional anchoring of ethical reflection in the Adventist context; and a growing stream of statements to the public on ethical questions was published by the General Conference.

Which approaches have characterized Adventist Ethics thus far? At least six types of contributions to the denominational discourse on ethics can be discerned when analysing the method or type of reasoning that is utilized.

2.2 Bible-Centred Approaches

(1) *The biblicist-traditionalist approach*.[16] Similar to other Evangelical systems of, or treatises on, ethics, arguments in this kind of contribution are couched in biblical phraseology and derived particularly from New Testament texts. Different from those systems, the moral traditions peculiar to Adventism are a second force behind such expositions. Quotations from E.G. White may be used as evidence or serve as Halakha.[17] Since both her original writings and books made from her manuscripts were a major reference for moral reasoning in the generations after her death,[18] this seems natural, for formulations and concepts taken from them are already present in the collective Adventist psyche in many instances.

This biblicist-traditionalist approach easily lends itself to a deontological perspective: "it is written," and therefore an Adventist Christian is to fulfil his

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[15] Until the 1970s, Adventists published popular books on ethics, and there were a few unpublished dissertations by Adventists, but not on Adventist topics.

[16] For examples, see footnotes 20 to 22.

[17] In local churches, one sometimes hears members arguing that questions ought to be settled with the help of "the Bible, Ellen White, and the Church Manual." I heard this idea at least once almost every year in classes when I taught theology in Tanzania between 1997 and 2003.

[18] Examples for compilations relevant to moral reflection (with years of first publication and page numbers in brackets): *The Adventist Home* (1952; 583 pp.); *Christian Leadership* (1974; 77 pp.); *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (1938; 511 pp.); *Counsels on Stewardship* (1940; 372 pp.); *Mind, Character, and Personality*, 2 vols. (1977; 882 pp.); *Selected Messages*, 3 books (1958, 1980; 416, 488, 465 pp.); *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce* (1989; 270 pp.); *Welfare Ministry* (1952; 349 pp.).

or her duty and follow the letter, even if this is done eclectically.[19] Both popular writers and well-known Adventist theologians[20] have used this approach until recent years,[21] even though professional ethicists tend to abstain from such a narrow system of arguing their cases.[22] Nevertheless, biblicist reasoning resonates with an important part of the Adventist tradition, and due to the fact that the role of Ellen White's writings has not always been clear vis-à-vis Scripture, law-oriented patterns of moral thought that build on the prophet's voluminous corpus of texts are attractive to those who emphasize their reliability and wish to preserve the inherited Adventist ethical code.

(2) *The biblical-theological approach*, which is used mainly by theologians, shares a strong foundation in the biblical material with the orientation in the first, but desists from the inherited Adventist propensity towards "proof texting" (and, thus, emphasizing some parts of Scripture at the expense of others), and to some extent from the temptation to adjust biblical interpretation to pre-defined outcomes. There are numerous examples from different areas of ethics, written by Old and New Testament scholars and by systematic theologians both in popular and academic formats: on the area of sexuality (Davidson 2007 [844 pp!]), health (Moskala 1998), relationships (Kubo 1993), and the Ten Commandments as foundation for Christian ethics (see Londis 1978

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[19] Walters 1981, 2 argues that Adventist ethics is traditionally *teleological* because believers "keenly anticipate a soon-coming, perfect world" and translate this belief into the maxim "act so as to promote the Second Coming." This may have been true for individuals and for some phases and aspects of Adventist moral reasoning, notably for those who adhere to the perfectionist ideas of a "last generation theology," a minority view (which gained support by a few church leaders). Cf. Douglass 1976.

[20] One example is Rodriguez 1999. At the time of publishing, Rodriguez, an Old Testament scholar, was Associate Director of the denomination's Biblical Research Institute; later he was the Director. Other examples are Samuele Bacchiocchi's books: Bacchiocchi 1898; 1995; 2000. Bacchiocchi, a church historian, self-published these books, which were quite popular among certain parts of the church membership at the time.

[21] Further well-known publications of this kind are Springett 1988 and Koranteng-Pipim 2001.

[22] An exception is du Preez 1993, the published version of a D.Min. dissertation, in which the author rejects any notion that biblical writers allow for polygamy to be practiced among the people of God. In other publications, du Preez follows a pure duty ethics approach; see, e.g., his article with the puzzling title "A Holocaust of Deception: Lying to Save Life and Biblical Morality," (du Preez 1998), where he insists that lying is prohibited for Christians even in extreme cases. Cf. also his popular-style book: du Preez 2006.

and Mainka 2004). Actually the major introductory textbook for Adventist theology, *The Reign of God* (Rice 1985), which also belongs to this category, covers almost all major areas of ethics – love, law, resources, family, social responsibilities, and political responsibilities.[23] The *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Dederen 2000) uses a similar approach and devotes several chapters to themes of ethics,[24] but lacks references to the political and economic realms and to subjects such as war and the military.[25]

The contributions to this sub-discourse characterize Adventist ethics as squarely belonging to conservative Protestantism, and although empirical findings would have to verify this claim, it is probably safe to say that this type of reasoning has become the Adventist mainstream, at least in the Western world. Building upon biblical premises and honouring traditional denominational perspectives but evaluating them critically in the light of Old and New Testament research, this approach parallels the common Adventist perception of theology being identical to "topical Bible study."[26] Because of this framework, this type of ethics will commonly be limited to issues on which sufficient clarity seems to be found in the biblical writings, and the deontological orientation coupled with the biblicist-traditionalist approach is checked here with a biblically founded virtue ethics orientation. The major limitation may be that intercultural aspects often seem of little importance, and that much of these works have been written from a Western or North American perspective; thus the awareness of contextual embeddedness, which is so vital in many areas of ethics, is at times hardly visible.

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[23] Rice 1985, chapter 12, pp. 259–287 ("Members of the Christian Church: Their Way of Life"). The entire book is largely based on biblical texts and adds to literature from the Adventist tradition as well as other backgrounds in the footnotes and in the bibliographical suggestions (pp. 285–287). The chapter shortly covers questions of salvation and Christian life, love, law, resources, family, social responsibilities, and political responsibilities.

[24] Especially relevant are the chapters on "Sin" (pp. 233–270), "The Law of God" (pp. 457–492), "Stewardship" (pp. 651–674), "Christian Lifestyle and Behavior" (pp. 675–723), "Marriage and Family" (pp. 724–750), and "Health and Healing" (pp. 751–783).

[25] A wide array of issues in the realm of health, development, human rights, public life, and family life is addressed, however, in Maier 2015. The book has 31 chapters and almost 800 pages.

[26] See Richard Rice's review article (Rice 2001) on the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Dederen 2000).

2.3   Tradition-Focused Approaches

(3) *The historical approach* has (understandably) developed much later than the first two types of Adventist argumentation. The earliest major works of this kind were written in the 1970s as unpublished dissertations and theses (see Davis 1970 and Larson 1973). Several key themes and most of those with a significant SDA heritage have been covered in comprehensive published studies:[27] health (cf. Reid 1976; Reid 1982), sexuality (cf. Pearson 1990), human rights (cf. Plantak 1998), politics (cf. Morgan 2001), and gender (cf. Vance 1999). A number of other issues and peculiar aspects of larger themes have been addressed in shorter works (cf. Dick 1976; Anderson 1982; Höschele 2015), and a voluminous monograph interpretation of Adventism, *Seeking a Sanctuary* (Bull and Lockhart 2007), written by two sympathetic non-Adventist scholars devotes several chapters to questions of ethics while integrating them into their overall analysis that the denomination essentially represents a variety of the American dream.[28]

This is, of course, the domain of historically oriented scholars. Their contributions aim at understanding the discourses of the past and at critically reviewing the underlying causes and logic of development in Adventist positions and practices relevant for ethical reflection. Different from a biblical-theological approach, their scholarship is limited by the caveat imposed on historiography and ethics by Hume's law (i.e., the ought-is problem): in retrospect, we may be able to grasp – at least approximately – how things *have been* and why, but such insights do not necessarily have a decisive impact on how people *ought to* decide or act today. On the other hand, all serious ethicists will want to reflect on their subject matter on the basis of a sufficient set of data, which includes the historical perspective. This is why the history of Adventist ethics is a necessary ingredient in the theological-ethical task, as is a grasp of the history of doctrine in constructive theology.

(4) *The systematic-theological* approach to ethics is (somewhat surprisingly) a relatively recent phenomenon in Adventist scholarship as well. Although

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[27] What is missing so far is a historical analysis of Adventist ethical method and of Adventists and the economy; in the latter realm, the topic of labour unions has played a significant role in SDA thinking. Cf. Rittenhouse 1977, and Kistler 1984.

[28] See particularly chapters 9 ("The Science of Happiness"), 10 ("The Politics of Liberty"), 14 ("Gender"), and 15 ("Race").

deriving ethical reflection and positions from main tenets of Adventist doctrine had been part of the denominational heritage since the time of Ellen White, systematic attempts at connecting core teachings of Adventism with social ethics were made only from the 1980s onward.[29] Such efforts did not become mainstream and appeared only occasionally – in a few unpublished theses (see e.g. Mirilov 1994; Jackson 2007)[30] and some articles and book sections.[31] Only one full-length book publication (of 1995) has been devoted to the reflection on the relevance of doctrine to ethics so far (Teel 1995). In it, ten leading SDA ethicists of the period relate most of the typically Adventist teachings to themes in personal and social ethics,[32] thereby pointing out that the denomination's traditional dogmatic and personal ethics orientation naturally connects with the social sphere.

While such creative efforts are promising and bear the potential of enlarging the theological discourse in the denomination in a meaningful way,[33] they also point to the limits of what seems plausible in a global movement that hinges on very specific theological traditions and secondary norms (i.e., elements found in Ellen White's writings). So far, Mrs. White's impact as an ethicist has hardly been a topic of reflection in its own right, in spite of the fact

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[29] A first short book addressing this connection from an Adventist perspective and written in popular style is Brunt 1987 (90 pp.). The book cover includes the subtitle, "How Do People Waiting for the Second Coming Respond to Poverty, Lawsuits, Hunger, Political Oppression, Sexuality, and Sin?"

[30] Mirilov 1994 has a focus on the Second Advent and remnant teachings; and Jackson 2007 has a theoretical focus and an application to the race issue.

[31] A fine example is Larson 1992, with the contributions by Allen 1992, 89–98 ("Immortality of the Soul and the Abortion of the Body") and Hanks-Harwood 1992, 99–112 ("Abortion and Adventist Interpretation: Significant Theological Themes").

[32] Charles Teel (remnant); Jack Provonsha (creation); Michael Pearson (covenant); David Larson (sanctuary); Miroslav Kis (Sabbath); James Walters (law); Charles Scriven (salvation); Ginger Hanks-Harwood (wholeness); Roy Branson (second advent); Gerald Winslow (millennium). The one major theme of traditional Adventist theology that is not addressed in this volume is the gift of prophecy; other subjects that could have been included are the New Earth, judgement, and the "great controversy" theme.

[33] For an analogous approach in the realm of doctrine presented to a popular audience, see Bruinsma 1998.

that through her writings earlier Adventist moral thought – like early Adventist theology – has been codified. Her thinking appears in the major historical studies on SDA ethics,[34] but even the most important publications on Ellen White do not address her development, or influences on her, as a moral thinker.[35] Such a broad and yet thorough study would be needed, however, precisely because the bearing of her writings on Adventist systematic theology (including ethics)[36] today is far from clarified, which points to a need for reflecting method in Adventist theological ethics. A case in point is the massive *Systematic Theology* by Norman Gulley, the first ever multi-volume work of Adventist dogmatics, published between 2003 and 2016. Although the entire set is essentially an exposition of traditional Adventist positions, it does not interact with Ellen White's thought[37] and does not address ethics anywhere – actually it is four volumes of dogmatics and some fundamental theology.

2.4   Context-Sensitive Approaches

(5) The fifth approach is what I would call *local ethics*. The fact that ethics always has to do with the actual lives of people suggests that cultural factors and the meaning of particular actions in a contextual setting play an important role when it comes to reflections on moral choice. A growing number of empirical studies, notably the American and European "Valuegenesis" studies on Adventist youth, their lifestyle, and views (see Dudley 1992; Case 1996; Gelbrich and Höschele 2013), contribute to such a

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[34] See, e.g., Pearson 1990, 44–47, and further short sections in several other chapters; Plantak 1998, 53–57, 76–79, 82–84, 92–94, 102–104, and 172–174.

[35] Aamodt, Land, and Numbers 2014 contains chapters on "Testimonies," "Theology," "Society," "War, Slavery, and Race," and "Gender," but does not deal with Ellen White as an ethicist of her own kind. Of course, her role was that of a prophet-counsellor; however, her importance for the *types of* ethical reasoning that Adventists adopted is yet to be evaluated. Burt 2015 likewise does not have a chapter on Mrs. White and ethics (there is one, however, on "Ellen White and Vegetarianism," 199–212, by Theodore Levterov).

[36] For the latest voice on interpreting Ellen White's writings, see Knight 2019.

[37] Gulley does not quote Ellen White anywhere and only deals with her ministry on seven pages in the context of remnant ecclesiology; see Gulley 2016, 478–484. Here his main emphasis is to demonstrate that she was a true prophet.

contextual perspective on ethics in the Adventist tradition.[38] Other examples include studies on homosexuality (see Drumm 1998; Nyarenchi Matwetwe 2005; Fergusan, Guy, and Larson 2008), church-state interactions (see Rosado 1985, focusing on the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and Dixon-Fyle 1978), and race relations (see Magethi and Nkosi 1991; Makapela 1996), being areas where cultural contexts and regional discourses naturally affect the positions that scholars take. Moreover, although there is little academic study of this phenomenon so far, *popular* Adventist moral reflection[39] clearly belongs to the "local ethics" category and is of significance because the *de facto* morality and ways of reasoning among believers at the grassroots cannot be dismissed as irrelevant in thinking about what can be reasonably expected of moral agents.

At first glance, an approach that aims at better understanding the cultural environment and social setting in which ethical positions will be translated into action may seem valuable in balancing the traditional Adventist emphasis on universally valid law (viz. biblical instructions in general). Yet regarding ethics as a contextual endeavour will also help reminding those who reflect on moral issues that Adventist ethics has mostly been a contextual undertaking anyway. The Millerite movement and the groups resulting from its sudden end in 1844 were both the product of cultural forces and created a culture that came with a rather clear set of dos and don'ts. All theology is contextual – and so is all ethical reflection. This may be easier to accept regarding other Christian movements, distant generations, and discourses on some Pacific islands, but contextuality (with its concomitant danger, narrow-minded parochiality) is of course also a trait of our own reasoning. Obviously cultural values do not equal ultimate norms, but they need to be studied in order to be understood and to be taken seriously – hence the significance of proper empirical methodology[40] – and then, in a second step, Christians and

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[38] See also the older empirical studies: Crider and Kistler 1979; Dudley and Hernandez 1982.

[39] For attempts in this realm, see Doss 2006; and two long chapters of Höschele 2007: chapter 7 ("Adventism and Culture in Traditional and Modern Tanzanian Society"), pp. 259–263, with a focus on circumcision, marriage issues, and Adventist lifestyle questions, and chapter 8 ("Tanzanian Adventists and Public Matters"), pp. 363–430, which highlights the issues of Adventism and colonialism, government relations and political involvement, and the question of military service.

[40] For reflections and a model on this nexus, see Höschele 2009.

churches can decide whether to support such values or to oppose them (cf. Höschele 2007a). In this sense the growing number of official denominational statements on issues in the realm of ethics[41] are helpful in that they present typical, but non-binding Adventist positions on many topics.

(6) A sixth approach may be termed *missionary ethics*. It closely relates to the fifth but differs from it in that it relates ethical reflection to the perceived tension that arises from the communication of the gospel (or the denominational understanding of the same) and indigenous cultural practices, values, and views. The most striking example of such reflections in the Adventist context is polygamy: several major studies have explored this practice in light of the church's mission (see Kisaka 1979; Kuranga 1991 [on polygamy: pp. 222–235]; Annor-Boahen 2010; the historical overview in Höschele 2015). Other significant issues have been the questions of circumcision (see Papu and Verster 2006),[42] jewellery (cf. Samir 2019), and the use of certain musical styles and instruments.[43]

In view of the fact that the denomination has been firmly dedicated to mission since the late 19th century and that its academicians have published in the field of missiology since the 1960s, it may seem surprising that very little scholarly work has been done so far on the impact of missionary practice on ethics and vice versa. Among the hundreds of major scholarly items in the field of Adventist missiology,[44] fewer than ten focus on matters of morality. Presumably, the reason for this scarcity of ethical reflection in the mission context is that Seventh-day Adventism was brought to "overseas" regions with the heritage of a rather well-defined ethical code. Little discussion seemed to be necessary, therefore – only in those areas where tradition was *not* very

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[41] For a collection, see Dabrowski 2005. Further statements are available on the denominational website (https://www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements). A reflection on the role of these statements is offered in Höschele 2006.

[42] Papu and Verster argue that Christians should not participate in male circumcision rituals because of their cultural and religious connotations.

[43] While music may also be merely viewed as a matter of aesthetics, some Adventist scholars believe musical practices to belong to the realm of ethics as well. Cf. Bacchiocchi 2000 and Stefani 1993. The balanced approach of Christian 2002 contains a critical reply to Bacchiocchi's wholesale rejection of what he calls "rock music."

[44] I.e. published scholarly articles, monographs, and Ph.D., D.Miss., and D.Min. dissertations. I evaluated more than 300 of such items from my fairly comprehensive collection.

strong (such as the circumcision question) or where the missionary culture associated with inherited Adventist morality seems to be utterly challenging in the propagation of the gospel (as was the case with polygamy in some contexts). Nonetheless, for constructing the groundwork of Adventist ethics in the 21st century, a missionary approach to ethics is of crucial importance because it reflects the ubiquitous encounter of cultures in a worldwide movement and a globalized setting.

3.   Missional Ethics

It is not hard to see that the major six Adventist approaches to ethics come in pairs and neatly fit in three main categories: *Bible-centred* approaches (1 and 2), *tradition-focused* approaches (3 and 4), and *context-sensitive* approaches (5 and 6). It also appears that, taken as a whole, these approaches reflect most of the significant ingredients needed in properly constructing Christian reflection on moral matters (and on theology at large).[45] Admittedly, the Adventist ethics discourse has been rather weak so far in two other realms that belong to the "context" category – the dialogue with philosophical ethics and communication with science (except in medical ethics / bioethics).[46] It appears, however, that the denomination's philosophically inclined intellectuals and ethicists are on the way to catching up.[47]

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[45] The similarity with Fritz Guy's "tripolar thinking" with regard to Adventist theology (Christian gospel – Adventist heritage – Cultural context) is not entirely accidental; see Guy 1999, 225–252. The main difference, at this point, is that the observations above refer to how Adventist ethics has *actually* been done while Guy argues Adventist theology *should* be done in this manner.

[46] There has been, however, a committee at the global denominational level (the General Conference) that has considered a large number of issues (including many which needed input from the sciences) before the denomination issued statements on them: the Public and Official Statements Committee. See Dabrowski 2005. Since 2012, the General Conference's *Biblical Research Institute also has an Ethics Committee.*

[47] The Society of Adventist Philosophers was established in 2010, and it has held annual conferences and symposia since that time. Four of the meetings addressed themes in the realm of ethics (2013: race and gender; 2014: Adventism and moral philosophy; 2016: Adventism and the good life; 2017: free markets), and only some of the papers have been published. It would be too early to call this an Adventist discourse on philosophical ethics, but it is a beginning. See https://adventistphilosophy.org.

One area in which little has been done so far by Adventist scholars in the entire discipline (and not a single comprehensive study has been produced) is the field of meta-ethics, i.e. the reflection on foundations, method, and limitations of the ethical task. A large number of extant works do not present any reflection on theories of ethical reasoning, and the few short items that can be classified as belonging to meta-ethics do not make comprehensive proposals but focus on particular aspects such as the role of the Bible in ethics (cf. Brunt and Winslow 1982; Andreasen 1986), main philosophical positions (cf. Larson 1981), or models of social ethics (cf. Jackson 2007).

3.1   Principles of Constructing Adventist Ethics

What, therefore, would be an approach to ethics that builds on the best of the Adventist tradition, rests on solid biblical foundations, and relates meaningfully to the glocal realities in the contemporary world? Future scholars will be able to embark on a full-length discussion of the issues in constructing such an approach; here I merely want to point out that there are several principles one needs to bear in mind in delineating any academic field or discipline and from which insights for doing Adventist ethics can be derived. They are[48] (1) a precise object of reasonable proportions; (2) comprehensiveness of scope with regard to this object; (3) continuity with academic tradition and the discipline culture; (4) relevance for the subsystem of society concerned; and (5) interaction, but as little competition as possible, with neighbouring disciplines.

The application of these standard principles to Adventist Ethics will lead to the following contours with several implications for method:

(1) and (2): Adventist Ethics has a precise object – the life of the Christian in the world seen from an Adventist perspective, or appropriate decisions in context as a follower of Jesus. The proportions of this task are large but reasonable, as is the discipline of ethics in general. Methodological implications will be that (a) scholars will bear in mind that any study in the field relates to a larger body of issues and theological foundations and (b) no aspect of ethics is excluded.

(3) Continuity with academic tradition and the discipline culture implies that (c) Adventist Ethics will be in constant conversation with ethics as it is done

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[48] These criteria are derived from the insights found in Krishnan 2009, 9, 12–47.

in other Christian communities and in the non-Christian and philosophical context.

(4) Relevance implies (d) a focus on the themes of the community that is involved (here: Adventists in their various environments); methodologically, this also implies that (e) the biblical and dogmatic aspects of moral reasoning need to be duly considered, and (f) studies of the variety of contexts and their impact on Adventist thinking is of importance.

(5) Competition with neighbouring disciplines will presumably not be a problem (as long as scholars of dogmatics and social scientists remain true to their theological viz. interpretative task rather than jumping to normative concepts regarding the Christian life). (g) Learning from a fruitful interaction with these disciplines, however, will be a necessity in order to refrain from generalizations and one-sided evaluations.

To summarize, Adventist ethics is to be conceived as a field viz. discipline that

(a) is well-embedded in the overall body of Adventist theology,

(b) aims at comprehensively treating all issues and aspects of the field,

(c) benefits from and actively engages with the general ethics discourse,

(d) focuses on themes that are relevant for Adventist communities in their contexts,

(e) builds on sound biblical and dogmatic foundations,

(f) is informed by cultural and philosophical environments in which Adventists operate,

(g) and learns from the social sciences and other pertinent academic disciplines.

Translated into an overall shape of the field, this means that a *combination* of the Bible-centred, tradition-focused, and context-sensitive approaches will best reflect the aspects that need to be considered and the method of evaluating data in attempting to arrive at well-founded and wise insights. Similarly to dogmatics, where the biblical message is reflected upon by deliberating models in the history of doctrine and the communicability of statements or imagery in particular contexts, Adventist Ethics will thus build on the *norma normans* (Scripture) while relating its message to the variety of cultural and denominational norms.

Stefan Höschele

3.2   *Missio Dei and Adventist Ethics*

Before expounding what this means for the use of biblical materials, dogmatic tradition, and contextual factors, I want to suggest a term for the kind of ethics paradigm that has just been delineated: *missional ethics*. Ethicists have begun to use this term only recently;[49] yet its appropriateness for a well-crafted Adventist ethic is evident. "Missional ethics" is derived from the *missio Dei* concept, the insight that God himself is the true missionary. *Missio Dei*, therefore, focuses on his coming into, and purpose for, this world – and connects well with the Adventist emphases on salvation history, the proclamation of the gospel, and a serious Christian lifestyle. It further builds on major themes in the denomination's theology such as the focus on God's kingdom, which is not yet but already present in Christ, and God the creator, whose *shalom* is the intention for all humankind.

Missional ethics essentially means that the theoretical separation between the Christian life and a Christian's proclamation is removed. How a follower of Christ ought to act is not solely derived from either holy texts or cherished traditions or the conventions of communes but is always to be weighed with the question in mind of how God's goals, his kingdom values, and the purposes of his creation, can be realized, restored, or reflected in particular settings.[50] If it is true that mission is the mother of theology,[51] is it far-fetched to

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[49] Draycott and Rowe 2012 seems to be the first book to use the term in its title. The expression was earlier utilized by Wright 2006, 358–387. A recent author also includes it in in its title: Salter 2019. The latter is a revised dissertation with a focus on exegesis of text that the author views as crucial for missional ethics ("An Exegetical Definition of Missional Ethics," University of Aberdeen, 2017).

[50] Needless to say, this means that ethics, like theology in general, is quite unlike the exact sciences. Its normative character implies that some negatives are universal (e.g., "thou shalt not murder"), but it is important to realize that many positive norms (e.g., "be fruitful and multiply") cannot be universalized as command: context is crucial, and even in specific configurations, God's saints will come to different conclusions due to biographical backgrounds and different cognitive capacities.

[51] Martin Kähler's well-known statement that "the oldest mission became the mother of theology" written in 1908, has often been shortened to this formula. For the context of his thought, see Kähler 1971, 190.

postulate that God's mission is also the space for, defining distinctive, and crucial principle for properly doing Christian ethics?[52]

The missional ethics concept implies that ethics has to learn from historical mission encounters, but it is much more than an enhanced version of mission-ary ethics[53] (which is often conceptualized as translation or indigenization, thus regularly implying cultural one-way communications[54]). The point of de-parture in this concept of reflection on moral matters is that each Christian finds himself in a mission situation as a participant in the *missio Dei*, and that her actions may often speak louder than her words. In this kind of reflection, all the other approaches (Bible-centred, tradition-focused, and context-sensi-tive) will have their proper place and space, but missional ethics will empha-size the importance of opening up to the future and transform their direction (does this conform to the wording of certain biblical texts? – can this fit in with confessional tradition? – will people accept this?). The question will now be, "does this correspond to God's kingdom?" or, "what would Jesus do" – in this particular configuration of external demands, inherited values and potential manifestations of the Good?

Before discussing what this missional paradigm of ethics will do to the use of the Bible and dogmatic emphases in the Adventist tradition, and how it will impact Adventisms in their real life context, I would like to cite a few exam-ples of where such an approach has worked out well in SDA ethics. While the term "missional" has not been used by Adventists so far, these examples il-lustrate what this paradigm can mean if applied to various areas of moral thought.

(1) *Steve Daily's "Adventism for a New Generation,"* 1993. While this (popular style) book was actually published one generation ago, its ethics chapters[55]

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[52] This is also the concern behind the massive volume *Church and Society* (Maier 2015).

[53] While the term "missional" has been criticized for being fuzzy, it builds on the thought of em-inent missiologists such as David Bosch and Lesslie Newbigin, who emphasized that mission is more than merely propagating a certain set of ideas.

[54] Cf. the "translation models" and "adaptation models" mentioned by Schreiter 1985, 6–12.

[55] Daily 1993, especially 206–216 (chapter 20 on Adventist family life), 252–261 (chapter 24 on money), 262–271 (chapter 25 on medicine, health, and healing), 283–293 (chapter 27 on social eth-ics), 294–311 (chapter 28 on various controversial issues such as homosexuality, divorce, nuclear war, politics, lawsuits, animal rights, etc.), and 317–323 (chapter 30 on altruistic service).

largely remain valid approaches to a North American situation in which Adventists were slow at the time to interact with public discourses on cultural change. Daily, then a long-time chaplain at La Sierra University, advocated a reasonable, non-legalistic, Christ-centred, and value-focused approach to Adventist Ethics.

(2) *The denominational statement on birth control*, 1999. Titled "Birth Control: A Seventh-day Adventist Statement of Consensus," this three-page document was voted by the denomination's Annual Council.[56] It lists seven "biblically based principles,"[57] insists on responsible, informed personal choice, and notes that there is diversity of opinions on this matter in the church. At the same time, it draws clear boundaries (by rejecting abortion for birth control) and insists that sexual intercourse properly belongs to the marriage context.

(3) *A 2003 monograph focusing on biomedicine* (Wong 2003). In this introductory textbook, John B. Wong, a physician, trained lawyer, and scholar of ethics, discussed a large number of contemporary issues, providing case studies and biblical reflections, referring to court decisions, and adding scholars' responses to questions and case studies he provided.

3.3 A Missional Paradigm of Adventist Ethics

How, then, will Adventist Ethics done according to a missional paradigm *deal with the Christian's primary sources*? It may seem obvious, but because of a biblicist bent in inherited Adventist theological arguing patterns, it is important to emphasize that the *reasoned* use of material found in the Bible will serve as providing a foundation and principles for further deliberation. It is impossible to include here a well-rounded account of different uses of the Scriptures in Christian ethics,[58] but it is clear that a casuistic use of instructions in the New

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[56] For the full text, see Dabrowski 2005, 6–9.

[57] These are: (1) Responsible stewardship, (2) procreative purpose (of sexuality being *one* purpose), (3) unifying purpose (of sexuality being another major purpose), (4) freedom to choose (number of children and having children at all), (5) appropriate methods of birth control (abortion as birth control is rejected here; other methods are discussed and accepted), (6) misuse of birth control (extra-marital sexual relations), (7) a redemptive approach.

[58] For different perspectives on this vast field, see Green 2011, e.g. s.v. "Narrative Ethics," "New Testament Ethics," "Parables, Use in Ethics," "Public Theology and Ethics," articles on specific biblical books, and articles on philosophical schools in the same volume.

Testament parenesis is as inappropriate as eclectic (or even wholesale) applications of Old Testament precepts to the Christian's conduct. Of course, the biblical writings stipulate minimum requirements for those belonging to God's people, such as obedience to the Decalogue. Beyond such timeless instructions, however, much of the biblical material that addresses moral issues is directed towards particular people in specific situations and social environments. There is, therefore, no shortcut from the Scriptures to ethics that would bypass sound exegesis *and* thorough reflection on the meaning of narratives and instructions in the light of God's mission in today's diverse environments.

At the same time, some of the major motifs that the normative writings of Christendom present imply that their substance of ethical argument is well-balanced and philosophically broad. Figures of thought and imagery such as (1) faithfulness and (2) obedience (passim), (3) spotlessness (e.g. in the Apocalypse), and (4) principledness indicate – when taken as a whole – that corresponding notions and perspectives of (1) devotion or relational ethics, (2) service or deontological ethics, (3) righteousness or virtue ethics, and (4) rationality or utilitarian ethics all resonate with Christian conceptions of the Good and the Right.[59] There is, therefore, no lack of connectors with those moral theories that philosophers have produced over the millennia. With regard to a missional perspective, this implies that a Christian ethic that is derived from a biblical orientation can be related with many of the major philosophical and cultural patterns of moral reasoning, thus helping the Christian embody the gospel in a variety of environments.

In the Seventh-day Adventist context, the importance of a reasoned (i.e. historically analytical and contextually attentive) use of sources extends to its major secondary authority as well: the writings of Ellen G. White. As a prophetic voice, the importance attributed to her writings regarding moral matters has at times been elevated in the popular mind almost beyond the New

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[59] The differentiation between the Right and the Good is crucial, especially in the conversation between theology and philosophy, but cannot be discussed here. For a classic on this issue, see Ross 1930. – Other terms and imagery also relate to further philosophical theories, such as "steward" and responsibility ethics.

Testament as far as practical matters are concerned, e.g. with reference to vegetarian or vegan nutrition.[60] Although scholars have discussed the hermeneutics of her writings for more than a generation now (see Knight 1997 and 1998), their critical *and* constructive use in Adventist Ethics is still emerging. It goes without saying that such a reasoned use of material from tradition is a necessity with regard to other sources of authority as well. Since Adventists perceive themselves as a non-credal movement, authorities such as the Fundamental Beliefs[61] and other texts voted by the denomination's leading body (e.g. the *Church Manual*, the General Conference *Working Policy*, and official statements [cf. Dabrowski 2005]) may be secondary (or tertiary) norms or guidelines, but must be interpreted and applied in a historically and contextually appropriate manner and with a view of God's mission in the world, i.e. an orientation that is as much future-oriented as it connects with the past.

Adventist Ethics done according to a missional paradigm will, furthermore, *build on dogmatic emphases and traditions* that are particularly dear to Seventh-day Adventists. Since one comprehensive attempt at constructing ethical reflection on such a basis[62] has already been presented in the volume *Remnant and Republic* (Teel 1995), this paper does not need to repeat the argument presented there at length. The book expounds that doctrines with a more obvious social reference (creation, covenant, Sabbath, law, and wholeness) as well as those more typically associated with the Christian individual and Adventist peculiar teachings (remnant, sanctuary, salvation, second advent, millennium) provide a platform for the entire range of themes in ethics. What this

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[60] The schismatic Reform Adventists actually codified vegetarianism and in practice tend to be vegans; among Adventists, there is a considerable group that relies on Ellen White's writings for a similar lifestyle. On Reform Adventism, see Ruttmann 2002.

[61] The denomination's 28 Fundamental Beliefs include a preamble that emphasizes that "Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed" and explains that "revision … may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word."

[62] Another book that works on a similar basis but with a specific focus (bioethics and death issues), thus majoring on creation and eschatology as dogmatic basis, is Reinder Bruinsma's well-reasoned *Matters of Life and Death* (Bruinsma 2000). This is one of the very few Adventist monographs addressing (in its twelve chapters) a large number of ethical topics for a popular audience.

volume does not address, however, is the mission aspect that is so prominent in Adventist doctrine[63] and that would point to missional ethics as well.

It may well be that the academic reflection on Adventist mission, likewise, has rarely connected with ethics because the inherited emphases in the denomination's missionary endeavours have been an apocalyptic element and the Sabbath doctrine as a distinctive teaching that marks Adventists as being "different from the world." A missional ethics paradigm, therefore, will be a helpful corrective to a one-sided mission theology that shaped the Adventist movement in its earliest period ("warning the world" and a mission mainly built on Revelation 14; cf. Schantz 1983, 267–275). It can also adjust related concepts that continue to lurk in the denominational psyche, such as the theory that Adventists have to "bring forth" the end of time by accomplishing God's task of proclamation everywhere (Schantz 1983, 488–489), and the legalistic temptation associated with the so-called "last generation" theology (see footnote 14 and Evans 2010). Missional ethics, by way of contrast, would emphasize God's initiative in propagating his kingdom, thus properly attributing the Christians' task as *participating* in his mission both by thoughtful proclamation and by their very lives. This will presumably even reflect in more appropriate manner the main moral impetus of the book of Revelation, which Adventists cherished from their beginning: remaining faithful until the end.[64]

When one relates the denomination's doctrinal body as a whole to applied ethics, three major realms stand out: (1) time,[65] (2) the body, and (3) community.[66] It is likely that Adventists can make their most significant contribution to Christian ethics in these realms. *Time* is an aspect of the emphasis on the Sabbath commandment with its life-structuring rhythm of work and rest. It is also an intrinsic part of *Advent*-ist theology proper, i.e. the anticipatory shape of the Christian existence. An eschatology that moulds the believer's plans

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[63] None of the section headings in the volume refers to mission, and the content has no more than passing references to missionary matters.

[64] Rev. 2:10; 13:10; 14:12; cf. also Hebr. 3:14 and Matt. 10:22.

[65] It is more than a coincidence that Bull and Lockhart interpret Adventism's locus of the holy in time (as opposed to their Mormon cousins, who came to hallow space); see Bull and Lockhart 2007, 252–255.

[66] See the appendix for a listing of Fundamental Beliefs that relate to each of these three realms.

and attitudes, a philosophy of (salvation) history that makes the followers of Jesus look far beyond the cares of the present day and of this world: the appropriate use of time is at the core of the Adventist moral consciousness. While these themes may have to be developed further in future studies – and other Christians have done this as well, particularly with regard to "Sabbath ethics" (Segbers 2002) – one must note here that missional ethics enriched by Adventist theology will certainly reason with reference to Qohelet's realization that "there is a time for everything" (Eccl. 3:1).

The body is a crucial realm of Adventist ethics in several respects. The strong emphasis on God the creator, as well as a literal, material new earth (rather than popular Christian beliefs about "going to heaven"), connect with the rejection of ideas that attribute immortality to a "soul" that is thought of as being non-bodily. Thus human life *in* the body is key for understanding the Adventist approach to everyday living: the physical is part of the holistic human existence rather than an inferior part of a being. Thus the denomination's traditional health emphasis and teachings on decency viz. propriety, i.e. a focus on the appropriate conduct of a Christian as a bodily being. As in the realm of time, the Adventist heritage of an ethic that treats the human body with utmost seriousness can certainly enrich Christian missional ethics and the discourse on being missional (which, so far, has not yet touched the question of the body to any great extent).

Community, by way of contrast, is already key in accounts of "being missional" (see, e.g., Guder 2015). Adventists explicitly touch aspects of community in about half of the Fundamental Beliefs;[67] as in most Christian churches, the communitarian character of the Christian existence – and of human life at large – is a crucial part of doctrine. While Adventist holism (which traditionally focuses on body, thinking, and the psyche) may still benefit from an even more holistic view that gives more emphasis to the social sphere, the prominence given to mission and social service in Adventism and the historic nexus to social reform movements (Smith 1974) indicate that Adventist Ethics is well-embedded in the denomination's theology in this respect and that it naturally links with a missional ethics approach.

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[67] See the appendix.

Finally, doing Adventist Ethics in a missional manner means incorporating a consciousness of, and a reflected discourse about, the *glocal character of Christianity* in a more systematic way. Globalization theories are diverse and contested; therefore, it suffices to state here that the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as one of the few Christian churches with a traditionally very strong worldwide coherence, combines in itself global spread and outlook on the one side and regional and cultural contextualities on the other. With the robust American legacy that is inbuilt in its administration, subculture, and some of its discourses, the denomination continues to meet the challenges of cultural friction and diverging interests even in the realm of theology. Quite naturally, such setups – and the mixtures, overlays, syntheses, and new creations that result from the encounter of the local and the global – can lead to viewpoints in the moral realm that were foreign to previous generations.[68]

It is here that a missional approach may be most helpful in steering the Adventist Ethics discourse to an adequate level. As in global Christianity as a whole, "strange virtues" are virtues nonetheless: if Adventists aim at proclaiming the "everlasting gospel … to every nation, tribe, language and people" (Rev. 14:6), they will have to appreciate the variety of cultural logic with regard to moral reasoning among them. This does not mean that the culture-affirming option must be the only and major one; Adventist history has numerous examples of reasonable and successful counter-cultural and culture transforming instances, which implied conflict on moral matters.[69]

3.4   Application: An Example

This section, and the paper, ends with an example of applying missional Adventist Ethics – to the question of violence.[70] Every human being encounters, or is affected by, some form of violence sooner or later. The degree to which violent actions are deemed acceptable in different cultural settings varies a lot, and as

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[68] The global Adventist debate on gender equality, notably with regard to the ordination question, and differing views on LGBTQ issues, illustrate this point.

[69] Cf. the various interactional patterns between Christianity and culture presented in Höschele 2007b.

[70] Some other such helpful examples would be issues of monetary resources, work, the question of power in human relationships, and the twin subjects of belonging to and duties to a nation. These will be addressed in later versions of this study.

has been hinted at in the introduction to this paper, many aspects of this disconcerting reality may be interpreted as *virtuous violence* – actions done not in spite of, but *because* of moral codes (cf. Adeney 1995; Fiske and Rai 2014). Yet what is considered an adequate use of force in some settings may be viewed as completely intolerable elsewhere.

Seventh-day Adventists share the Anabaptist heritage of non-violence. They have also developed an end-time scenario that includes the persecution of God's saints by those who oppose the gospel. These two conceptions result in a general commitment to non-violent conflict resolution, which emphasizes that it is preferable to suffer rather than inflicting suffering on others. However, being children of modernity, Adventists have also been inclined to appeal to authorities regarding religious liberty and human rights. The SDA tradition actually combines elements of an apocalyptic-driven critique of the powers that be with a cooperative attitude where improvements in welfare seems attainable. In a missional ethics approach, the delicate balance between these elements of the Adventist heritage will also have to be weighed against the tangible situation that a Christian faces.

Other spheres where believers approach instances of violence in very divergent ways are the discipline of children, religious insults, and involvement in armed forces or the police. In the latter case, the Adventist ideal of non-combatancy and refraining from work where killing can happen have remained stable; however, in practice one finds a large variety of such careers that have found acceptance among the church membership. As in the case of punishing children and verbally attacking people of other religious convictions, individuals will point to biblical instances that seem to justify such actions. What such perspectives indicate is that a missional ethic will have to start reflection from where people are, since the same actions can have widely different meanings to them. At the same time, the transformational impulse of kingdom values will often lead to challenging the status quo, even if this means that we as Christians have to suffer. Or, as the first epistle of Peter, which portrays a missional ethic contextualized in the first century and contains a total of 16 references to "suffering," puts it, "Live such exemplary lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." (1 Peter 2:12).

A missional ethics approach to thinking about morality will deal with instances of real world violence in the way Adventists have essentially done it in

the past: with a kingdom-oriented but non-legalistic, restorative, patience-of-the-saints orientation. By thus fulfilling their calling, by participating in God's mission, they will act according to the prayer that the Lord taught his disciples and that epitomizes the best in Adventist attitudes and faith: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

Appendix:
The 28 Fundamental Beliefs and their Relevance for Adventist Ethics

Basis of Ethics

Meta-Ethics (Fundamental Theology)
    0. Preamble
    1. The Holy Scriptures
    7. The Nature of Humanity
    11. Growing in Christ
    18. The Gift of Prophecy
    19. The Law of God

Theologia (Doctrine of God)
    2. The Trinity
    3. The Father
    4. The Son
    5. The Holy Spirit

Oikonomia (Salvation)
    8. The Great Controversy
    9. The Life, Death, and
        Resurrection of Christ
    10. The Experience of
        Salvation
    11. Growing in Christ
    24. Christ's Ministry in the
        Heavenly Sanctuary
    25. The Second Coming of
        Christ

Themes of Ethics

Body
    6. Creation
    7. The Nature of Humanity
    21. Stewardship
    22. Christian Behaviour
    23. Marriage and the Family
    26. Death and Resurrection
    28. The New Earth

Time
    20. The Sabbath
    21. Stewardship
    22. Christian Behaviour
    25. The Second Coming of
        Christ
    27. The Millennium and the
        End of Sin
    28. The New Earth

Community
    6. Creation
    7. The Nature of Humanity
    11. Growing in Christ
    12. The Church
    13. The Remnant and Its
        Mission
    14. Unity in the Body of Christ
    15. Baptism
    16. The Lord's Supper
    17. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries
    18. The Gift of Prophecy
    19. The Law of God
    20. The Sabbath
    21. Stewardship
    22. Christian Behaviour
    23. Marriage and the Family

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Stefan Höschele

Zusammenfassung

Adventistische Ethik ist ein sich entwickelndes Arbeitsgebiet, für das bislang eine umfassende theoretische Fundierung fehlt. Veröffentlichungen in diesem Feld lassen sich in sechs Hauptbereiche einteilen, die die Bedeutung der Bibel, konfessioneller Tradition und kultureller Kontexte widerspiegeln; eine adventistische geprägte Metaethik muss jedoch noch erarbeitet werden. Dieser Artikel schlägt hierfür ein Paradigma vor, das auf die Schwerpunkte der vorliegenden Literatur aufbaut, und nennt dieses *missionale Ethik*. Dieser Ansatz entspricht wesentlichen Aspekten der adventistischen theologischen Tradition, ist beispielhaft in einigen wichtigen Publikationen bereits angewandt und umfasst Themen von moralischem Belang, die in den Glaubensüberzeugungen der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten vorherrschen.

Résumé

L'éthique adventiste est un domaine en évolution qui, jusqu'à présent, a manqué de fondement théorique complet. Les publications dans ce domaine universitaire se répartissent en six grandes catégories qui reflètent l'importance de la Bible, de la tradition confessionnelle et des contextes culturels; cependant, une méta-éthique de type adventiste reste à développer. Par conséquent, cet article propose un paradigme s'appuyant sur l'accent mis sur le corps existant de la littérature, et appelle ce paradigme *éthique missionnelle*. Cette approche est cohérente avec les aspects essentiels de la tradition théologique adventiste, elle est déjà illustrée dans plusieurs publications importantes et englobe des thèmes de préoccupation morale qui prévalent dans les croyances fondamentales de la dénomination.

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A Theology of Pastoral Ministry from an Adventist Perspective

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Abstract

This article aims to review the main biblical texts that refer to the pastoral function in the Old and New Testaments. In reviewing these texts as a whole, it is possible to identify a series of orientations that can contribute to the elaboration of a Theology of Pastoral Ministry from an Adventist perspective. There are some essential concepts that emerge from this study: (1) Jehovah is the pastor of his people par excellence. (2) God decides to share the pastoral ministry with human pastors who are sovereignly elected by Him. (3) These human pastors are in charge of leading the church in fulfilling the mission that God shares with them. (4) The concept of pastoral leadership in the NT reaches its climax with the incarnation of the Son of God. (5) After the ascension of Christ, the apostles are in charge of leading pastorally the new church. (6) With the ministry of Paul, a ministerial paradigm focused on the fulfilment of the world mission was strengthened. (7) Later, the pioneers of the Adventist movement, with the guidelines of Ellen G. White, developed a pastoral model following the Pauline example.

1.   Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventist Church attaches unique importance to pastoral ministry. This ministry is understood as a divine call to exercise spiritual leadership at the different organizational levels of its ecclesiastical structure. In general, it is usually pastors who lead the different levels of the organization.

Recent research shows that there is confusion regarding the pastoral office (Fain III 2010, 1–2). An insufficient understanding of the role of the pastor from a biblical and theological perspective seems to be one of the main causes

of this situation.[1] The divergence of opinions regarding the role of the pastor has resulted in pastors who are overloaded with multiple tasks as they do not have defined guiding criteria that help them determine their priorities. Without a clear theology of the pastoral ministry that provides them with a definite understanding of what is expected of them, they are disposed to copy ministerial models shaped by cultural pressures or by the expectations of their denomination. The present study is a contribution to the development of a biblical theology of pastoral ministry that can guide the ministerial exercise of pastors in the midst of multiple contemporary challenges.

As we read the Sacred text, it is noted that throughout history God chose human instruments to lead His people through a distinctive style of leadership that the Bible qualifies as pastoral (Ps. 77:20; 78:70–72; Jer. 23; Isa. 44:28; Ezek. 34; John 10:11; 21:15–17; Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:7). In his book, Timothy S. Laniak concludes that "One of the primary metaphors by which biblical authors conceptualized leadership is shepherding. This is quite consistent throughout the Old and New Testament" (Laniak 2006, 21).[2] Although these people were called to perform different functions, they had the duty of exercising pastoral leadership. That is to say, they should act as human shepherds in representation of the divine Shepherd (Gen. 49:24; Ps. 23:1; Isa. 44:28; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4). In this sense, every leading task could be compared with pastoral work.

2.   Notions of Pastoral Leadership in the OT

The notion of pastoral leadership was widespread in Old Testament times. Laniak says (Laniak 2006, 24):

> Most of the Bible's pastoral imagery is embedded in two traditions … The first is the exodus/wilderness complex. Looking back on this time in Israel's history, inspired writers saw YHWH revealing himself as protector, provider and guide, the ultimate Shepherd of his flock. In this setting Moses functioned as God's undershepherd. When Israel subsequently requests a king, another major tradition emerges that is

[1] Some examples of different opinions about pastoral office are: Purves 2001, 5; Stitzinger 1995, 36; Thompson 2006, 7.

[2] Longman III also mentions that "Shepherd is a common metaphor (Ps. 23; Ezek. 34) for the leaders of Israel" (Longman III 2008, 97).

associated with the shepherd king David and his dynasty. Many messianic promises are situated in this latter stream. These two traditions provide prototypes for the leaders who follow. Moses and David are prototypical leaders. More importantly, YHWH reveals himself as the true Shepherd Ruler of Israel.

On the other hand, it is important to consider that the figure of the king as a shepherd is common among archaeological findings in the Ancient Near East (cf. Alter 2007, pos. 6404 [Kindle edition]). This reference to the monarch as a shepherd was also common in Egypt and Greece (cf. Awes Freeman 2015, 168–174). From the biblical perspective, this kind of leadership involved a set of crucial responsibilities to ensure the well-being of God's people.

The Hebrew term to describe the pastoral function is רָעָה. This word can be translated as "being a shepherd", either in a literal or figurative sense. The shepherd "cares for and attends the sheep, but also has authority over the flock and its rules as a superior" (Swanson 2014, s.v. "רָעָה"). The Hebrew root רעה is a cognate of an ancient Akkadian root that was used as an honorary title as part of royal names around 2300 BC (White 1980, 2:852). In the OT, it appears more than 160 times and it is related to the pastoral task more than 60 times. Its main meaning is related to "feeding" domestic animals (Gen 29:7).

Although from ancient times, the rulers of the nations were considered responsible for pastoring their subjects, in the OT it is God who shepherds His people and who receives praise for His merciful provision (Gen. 48:16; Ps. 23:1; 28:9; Isa. 40:11; Hos. 4:16). However, it is important to notice that God, the divine Shepherd of His people, decides to take care of and guide His people through human shepherds (2 Sam. 5:2; Jer. 3:15).[3] "This attribute of God is one of the marks of the offices of the prophet, priest, and king." (W. White 1980, 2:853)[4]

The human instruments chosen by God to provide pastoral care to His people have three fundamental tasks: (1) to take care of all the herd placed under their care (Ezek. 34:4); (2) to pasture the people of God with the right food, looking for all of the nourishment and well-being of the people, especially the

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[3] W. White 1980, 2:853. Ellen G. White, referring to the pastoral work, states: "In every period of this earth's history, God has had His men of opportunity, to whom He has said, 'Ye are My witnesses.'" (E. G. White 1915, 13)

[4] Although it is not an issue covered in this research, it is interesting to notice that prophets, priests and kings were anointed with oil before they could perform their functions.

word of God treasured in their hearts;[5] and (3) to lead the people toward the fulfilment of the purposes of the divine Pastor.[6] These activities require both character qualities and adequate skills. In this sense, Ps. 78:72 states: "So he shepherded them [רעה] according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them [נחה] with his skillful hands."

2.1 Moses and David: Shepherd Models for the Lord's Flock

In the OT, it is clear that different characters who played different roles understood the great need that the people of God had to be led by leaders. People like Moses (Num. 27:17.) and the psalmist Asaph (Ps. 78:70–72) understood that the success of the people of Israel was inextricably linked to an adequate leadership.

A careful reading of the OT in relation to this subject suggests that Moses (Ex. 2:15–4:31, 14:30–31; 32:11–12; 33:11–23; cf. Ps. 77:20; Isa. 63:11) and later David (Ps. 78:70–72; cf. 1 Sam. 16: 7,11–12; 2 Sam. 5:2; 1 Kings 9:4; 14:8; 15:5, etc.) were models as shepherds of the flock of God. Moses is the shepherd used by God to bring deliverance to His people and to lead them through the wilderness toward Canaan. In the book of Isaiah there is a paradigmatic passage that emphasizes the way how God, the divine Shepherd, leads His people by a human shepherd.

The prophet Isaiah depicts the great deliverance during the exodus using His servant Moses:

> Then his people recalled[a] the days of old,
>   the days of Moses and his people—
> where is he who brought them through the sea,
>   with the shepherd of his flock?
> Where is he who set
>   his Holy Spirit among them,

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[5] See especially Ezek. 34 where God denounces that the main problem of the shepherds of His people is that they are worried about "feeding themselves" (v. 2) rather than "appealing to the people" (vv. 2, 3). Later, Jesus will say that "every scribe learned in the kingdom of heaven is like a father of a family, who brings out of his treasure new things and old things" (Matt. 13:52).

[6] Ps. 77:20 is a good example of this. This text says that God guided or led (Heb. נחה) His people by the hand of Moses and Aaron. At the same time, Ps. 78:14 mentions that God guided or led (Heb. נחה) His people by the cloud and the columns of fire. It seems to highlight the need of the human shepherd to know the divine will in order to follow it precisely.

> who sent his glorious arm of power
>   to be at Moses' right hand,
> who divided the waters before them,
>   to gain for himself everlasting renown,
> who led them through the depths?
> Like a horse in open country,
>   they did not stumble; (Isa. 63:11–13 NIV)

Besides this, Deut. 17:14–20 shows the biblical ideal of a king. David was the shepherd who appears in the Bible as the best example of such a description.

Walter Brueggemann explains that the term *shepherd* is a conventional metaphor used in the ancient world to refer to the king. Brueggemann underscores the fact that the monarch had to take care of, feed, nurture and protect the community which was under him. Using this metaphor, it is possible to see how the narrative of David progresses from being a shepherd boy (1 Sam. 16:11) until he becomes the shepherd-king (cf. Brueggemann 1990, 237).

David was the instrument used by God to defeat His enemies and to establish true worship. In that way, it started a reign of peace and prosperity that was called to attract other monarchs of those days (1 Chr. 11:2, 9; 12:1–40; 18:13; 22:17–19). Ps. 78 highlights the divine election of David, his character and the abilities he possessed. This Psalm states:

> He also chose David His servant,
> And took him from the sheepfolds;
> From following the ewes that had young He brought him,
> To shepherd Jacob His people,
> And Israel His inheritance.
> So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart,
> And guided them by the skilfulness of his hands (Ps. 78:70–72).

2.2   *Unfaithful Shepherds and Prophecies about the Future and Ideal Shepherd*

Prophets like Micaiah (1 Kings 22:17), Jeremiah (Jer. 50:6) and Zechariah (Zech. 10:2) denounced the infidelity of the shepherds on duty and the terrible consequences that would result from their regrettable behaviour. Tremper Longman III states that the mistake of the leaders (kings, prophets and priests)

was to neglect their duty, which was, to guide the people (Longman III 2008, 306).

Unfortunately, the sacred record makes it clear that in most cases the exercise of pastoral leadership was not performed with solemnity and responsibility. On the contrary, the flock of God was poorly nourished by receiving human teachings instead of the word of God (Jer. 8:9–11)[7] and was mistreated by leaders who used their position for their own benefit (Jer. 23:1–4). It is an obvious truth throughout the OT that the failure of the spiritual leaders in fulfilling their pastoral function eventually led to apostasy and the subsequent destruction of the people of God." (Jer. 10:21; 50:6,17).[8]

Finally, because of the repeated failure by those in charge of pastoring the people of Israel, the pre-exilic and post-exilic prophets prophesied the arrival of the ideal Pastor, the messianic and Davidic king who would rule and tend the people with justice. He would be responsible for ensuring that the people of God would move forward along the path of obedience to the commandments of the Lord and thus would receive all the covenantal blessings (Jer. 3:15; 23:1–6; Ezek. 34:1–31; Mic. 5:1–9; Zech. 11:4–13:9).

As God's spokesmen, Isaiah and Ezekiel reiterate the announcement:

> Like a shepherd He will tend His flock,
> In His arm He will gather the lambs
> And carry them in His bosom;
> He will gently lead the nursing ewes (Isa. 40:11 NASB).
>
> I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—
> My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I,
> the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among
> them; I, the LORD, have spoken (Ezek. 34:23–24 NKJV).

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[7] Longman III (2008, 81) points out that, in prophetic passages, "It is particularly the religious leaders who are to blame for the rebellion of the people."

[8] It is paradoxical to note that in the midst of a long period characterized by the continuous infidelity of those who had to exercise pastoral leadership, God announces that He will fulfil His purposes through a foreign monarch, Cyrus, declaring: "He is my shepherd and he will accomplish all that I want" (Isa. 44:28).

> My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one
> shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes
> and observe them. (Ezek. 37:24).

2.3   Summary

The OT highlights the following teachings about pastoral ministry:

(1) God is the true Shepherd of His people.

(2) God cares pastorally for His people through human instruments (priests, kings and prophets) chosen by Him.

(3) The main pastoral functions include the feeding, nurturing, leading and protection of the flock.

(4) Moses and David are depicted as examples of the pastoral leadership that God desires for His people.

(5) The persistent infidelity of the leaders was the main cause of Israel's failure to fulfil its mission.

(6) God promises to send the ideal Pastor who would be responsible for restoring pastoral leadership in the midst of His people.

Beatrix Pias concludes that the work of a shepherd, "because of the richness of the day-to-day experience of the shepherd, ... became the primary metaphor for leaders and even for God in the Bible. Both Israel's leaders and God himself are portrayed as shepherds of their flock/people." (Pias Kahlasi 2015, 12) She also points out that the OT use of the metaphor of the shepherd and his sheep "introduces an entire theory of government and power. But power ought to be used in the spirit of service." (Pias Kahlasi 2015, 17)

3.   Notions of Pastoral Leadership in the NT

References to pastoral leadership are also evident throughout the NT. In the following lines, this kind of leadership is presented based on the synoptic Gospels and especially on John. After that, the apostolic perspective regarding the pastoral role is described, focusing especially on the apostolic ministry of Paul.

3.1   Pastoral Leadership in the Synoptic Gospels

The Gospels point out that Jesus of Nazareth was the fulfilment of the OT prophecies that announced the substitution of the unfaithful shepherds of the

people of Israel for the ideal Pastor, the promised Messiah, who would come from the lineage of David.

Matthew has as one of the essential purposes of his gospel the demonstration that Jesus is the Messiah prophesied in the OT. In that sense, he quotes the OT prophecy found in Mic. 5:2 and applies it directly to Jesus: "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd [ποιμαίνω] My people Israel." (Matt. 2:6) The compassion of Jesus stands out as it stated that: "when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep [πρόβατον] having no shepherd [ποιμήν]." (Matt. 9:36)

Another important detail presented by Matthew is the itinerant and complete pastoral ministry of Jesus when the evangelist states: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people." (Matt. 4:23; cf. 9:35) "Jesus' teaching and preaching were accompanied by His healing ministry; He healed the sick, diseased, demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics (v. 24). This ministry consisted of both word and deed—proclamation of the good news of the kingdom alongside demonstrations of the greatness of the King" (Platt 2013, pos. 1511 [Kindle edition]).[9]

The gospel of Mark, generally accepted as the first gospel to be written, also endorses the pastoral language used in the OT when he mentions: "And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep [πρόβατον] not having a shepherd [ποιμήν]." (Mark 6:34; cf. Matt. 9:36; Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17; 2 Chr. 18:16). However, Mark adds at the end of this verse: "So He began to teach them many things". Later Mark quotes Jesus when He applies the prophecy of Zech. 13:7 to Himself: "I will strike the Shepherd [ποιμήν], and the sheep [πρόβατον] will be scattered." (Mark 14:27; cf. Matt. 26:31)

In the apocalyptic section of Matthew, Jesus is the Shepherd-King who judges the nations: "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy

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[9] For her part, Ellen G. White also highlights the importance of Jesus's integral ministry and the priority He gave to His healing ministry. She says: "During His ministry, Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching. His miracles testified to the truth of His words, that He came not to destroy, but to save .... As He passed through the towns and cities He was like a vital current, diffusing life and joy." (White 1905, 19)

angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats" (Matt. 25:31–32).

Moving to another gospel, Luke presents Christ as the one who guides the believers and as the one who searches for the lost sheep (Luke 15:3–7). Through these passages, Christ is represented as the good Shepherd who knows, protects, seeks, provides, sacrifices Himself for and ultimately judges (vindicates) His sheep. Another emphasis in this gospel is the frequent mention of the action of the Holy Spirit in the life and work of the Messiah (Luke 3:21–22; 4:1,14). Later, this pattern would serve as a model for His followers. In the same way as He fulfilled His ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit they, His disciples, should do as well (Luke 24:29).

3.2 *Pastoral Leadership in the Gospel of John*

The Gospel of John is the place where the identity of Jesus as the ideal Shepherd stands out most clearly. The Gospel of John declares directly that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. While the Jewish leaders (human pastors appointed to shepherd the people of Israel in representation of the divine Shepherd) expel a blind man from the synagogue (John 9:22,34), Jesus, after healing him, establishes the contrast between the Good Shepherd and the false shepherds who take advantage of the flock of God (John 10–11).

It is important to note that there are occasions on which Jesus refers to His divinity through the use of the expression "I am," as a clear allusion to the name by which God revealed Himself to Moses (Ex. 3:23–15).[10] Two of these cases occur in John 10: "I am the door of the sheep" (10:7,9) and: "I am the Good Shepherd" (10:11,15). Besides, there are three main themes in relation to the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd in John 10 (Talbert 1992, 164): first,

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[10] Cf. Pias Kahlasi 2015, 15. She says: "The evangelist carefully selected seven (7) statements each beginning with the declaration – I am (ἐγώ εἰμί)

1. – I am the bread of life (6:35,41,48–51)

2. – I am the light of the world (8:12; 9:5)

3. – I am the door of the sheep (10:7,9)

4. – I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep (10:11,14)

5. – I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)

6. – I am the way, the truth, and the life (14:6)

7. – I am the true vine (15:1,5)."

as a good shepherd, I give my life for the sheep (10:11,15); second, My sheep hear my voice, I give them eternal life and they will never perish (10:27–28); and third, I must bring my other sheep into a single flock (10:16).

Undoubtedly, one of the highlights of John 10 is the description of Jesus as the exemplary "Good Shepherd/King" whose death is interpreted as a complete sacrifice for the sheep (John 10:11). This passage stablishes a clear contrast between Jesus and the false shepherds of Israel, represented by the Pharisees, who rejected instead of having saved the man who had received his sight (cf. Vawter 1968, 444).

Another purpose of John 10:1–21 is to demonstrate that Jesus is the incarnation of the divine Shepherd announced in Ps. 23 and Ezek. 34. Although it is possible to establish several similarities regarding the divine Shepherd among these passages (John 10:1–21; Ps. 23; and Ezek. 34), there are some qualities attributed to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, which appear neither in Ps. 23 nor Ezek. 34. John says that: He knows His sheep and they know Him (10:14b-14c); He gives His life for them (10:11b,15c,17b,18b); He also brings to His fold other sheep which are not part of His flock (cf. Vargas 2013, 201).

Everything mentioned up to this point makes it clear that Jesus is announced as the Good Shepherd. The apostle intends to expand the comprehension of the shepherd image based on the OT. Actually, Jesus – the incarnate Good Shepherd – is the one who opens a better and full understanding of this image. Besides the functions of caring, nurturing and protection observed all along in the OT, John also emphasizes other functions which are pivotal for the pastoral work: First, there should be a close relationship between the shepherd and the sheep; second, the spirit of commitment and sacrifice that should characterize the pastoral work; and third, the importance of seeking for the lost sheep in order to bring them to the safety of the divine flock.

John 21:1–19 is another pivotal NT passage in the development for the understanding of the pastoral function. In this passage, Jesus as the Good Shepherd shares with the apostles, represented on this occasion by Peter, the pastoral function. This *pastoral mission* (cf. Kim 2017) is a fundamental part of the redemptive dialogue between Jesus and Peter in the presence of the disciples. This becomes evident through the use of two pairs of words in the repetition of the command to *feed [βόσκω]* / *tend [ποιμαίνω]* the *lambs [ἀρνίον]* / *sheep [πρόβατον]* (vv. 15–17). In these verses, ποιμαίνω appears once (v. 16)

and βόσκω appears twice (vv. 15,17); while ἀρνίον appears once (v. 15) and πρόβατον appears twice (vv. 16–17).[11]

Obviously, the command given by Jesus to Peter to tend the sheep must be understood in the context of the language and pastoral images that are used throughout the OT. Also, it is important to consider the pastoral language that John himself uses in other passages of his Gospel (see especially John 10). The intertextuality of John 21:15–17 and the Septuagint is established by the use of the terms βόσκω and ποιμαίνω. On the one hand, βόσκω appears frequently in Ezek. 34, where God faces the unfaithfulness of the shepherds of His people, announcing that He himself will tend His people (Ezek. 34:13–16). On the other hand, this term is only used in the NT to refer to the action of shepherding in John 21:15,17.[12] According to Sean Seongik Kim, the evangelist stresses in this passage the idea of God as "the Shepherd" (Kim 2017, 58).

The word ποιμαίνω, a synonym for βόσκω, appears frequently in the Septuagint in passages where God presents himself as the Shepherd of His people and also in texts where He provides leaders to pasture His people according to His own way (Ps. 23:1; 80:1; Mic. 7:14; Jer. 3:15). By the use of this term, John reinforces the OT message in the sense that the mission of shepherding the people of God is a divine prerogative; therefore, the pastoral work must be assumed considering that God Himself is the supreme Shepherd of His people. Then, those who have been chosen by Him to share in this work must accomplish the task according to the heart of God (Jer. 3:15).

Regarding the context provided by the same Gospel of John, the mission of shepherding should be understood based on the essential claim that Jesus is the Good Shepherd, as it is suggested by the intertextuality between John 10:1–18,26–30 and 21:15–17. Although ποιμήν does not appear in John 21, the connection is established through the terms πρόβατον (10:1–4,7–8,11–13,15–16,26–27; cf. 21:16–17) and ποιμήν (10:2,11–12,14,16). Jesus emphasizes in John 10 what it means to *feed the sheep* when he mentions what He does as a

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[11] Regarding this episode, Ellen G. White notes: "The great Shepherd has under-shepherds, to whom He delegates the care of His sheep and lambs. The first work that Christ entrusted to Peter, on restoring him to the ministry, was to feed the lambs." (White 1915, 182) "The charge given to Peter by Christ just before His ascension was, 'Feed My lambs;' [John 21:15] and this charge is given to every minister." (White 1915, 207)

[12] The other times that βόσκω is used in the NT is to refer to the work of grazing pigs (Matt. 8:30,33; Mark 5:11,14; Luke 8:32,34 and Luke 15:15).

Good Shepherd (cf. Kim 2017, 59). The Shepherd knows His sheep (10:14,27), calls them by name (10:3), takes them out (10:3), leads them (10:4), gives them abundant life (10:9,10,28), protects them (10:13,28,29), and finally gives His life for them (10:11,15,17,18).

This analysis leads to the conclusion that when Jesus ordered Peter to pasture His sheep, He is calling him to follow His own example as the Good Shepherd (cf. Culpepper 2010). Moreover, some authors observe that in the previous verses (21:1–14), Jesus is modelling how to take care of His sheep. This kind of work must be carried out by the one who has been pastored by the Good Shepherd. In essence, the pastoral task is about continuing the work of love performed by the Father and the Son as Pastors (cf. Lincoln 2005, 515).

In this episode with Peter, Jesus delegates to His apostles the task of shepherding the new people of God (His church). Laniak states: "Having given the disciples his promised Spirit (20:22) and authority to forgive sins (20:23), he has revived their faith, even that of Thomas (20:25). In the epilogue, the disciples are now (re)called from their fishing nets to follow him." (Laniak 2006, 221)[13] On that occasion, the Lord Jesus clearly established that love should be the foundation of the pastoral task. Before he denied his master, Peter had shown signs of self-sufficiency. In this redemptive dialogue, Jesus showed him that true pastoral ministry can only be exercised when those who have been appointed to be pastors have the right motivation: an undivided love for the Good Shepherd (John 21:15–17).

This message is in complete harmony with what was previously said by Jesus in John 10:7 and 9 where He describes himself as "the door of the sheep." Then, He is the Good Shepherd and also "the only access door" to the sheep

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[13] Additionally, Jesus' concern for the ongoing care of his sheep was clearly seen as he walked through the cities and villages of Galilee. His words in Matthew 9:36 are an evidence of this. "Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd". Witmer suggests that Jesus' "compassionate response was twofold. First, he commended his disciples to 'beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest' (Matt. 9:38). Second, his compassion led to action. He immediately authorized and sent his disciples to 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matt. 10:6). His mission was to become their commission. Jesus had every intention of providing shepherding care for his sheep, even in his absence. The apostles were to be the foundation of the perpetual ministry that Jesus intended for his flock." (Witmer 2010, 32–33)

of the flock of God. Therefore, only through a close relationship with Jesus, are human pastors recognized as true shepherd by both, God and the sheep (John 10: 8,9).

Ellen White comments:

> The Saviour's manner of dealing with Peter had a lesson *for him* and *for his brethren*. It taught them to meet the transgressor with patience, sympathy, and forgiving love. Although Peter had denied his Lord, the love which Jesus bore him never faltered. Just such love should the *undershepherd* feel for the sheep and lambs committed to his care. Remembering his own weakness and failure, Peter was to deal with his flock as tenderly as Christ had dealt with him. (White 1898, 815; italics added)

3.3   Apostolic Pastoral Leadership

The book of Acts narrates that after the ascension of Christ, the apostles assumed the commission of pastorally leading the emerging church that was entrusted to them by Jesus during their dialogue by the sea in John 21:1–19.[14] Earlier, in John 20:19–22, Jesus had defined the role of his disciples as missionaries. "So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent [ἀποστέλλω] Me, I also send [πέμπω] you'" (John 20:21).[15] Through these words, Jesus wanted to emphasize that "He sends his disciples in the same way in which he was sent (vv. 21–23): in obedience to the Father, empowered by Spirit, to proclaim the message of salvation." (Carter and Wredberg 2017, pos. 8179 [Kindle edition]) Such a description should be considered a pivotal aspect of the apostolic pastoral ministry.

From the very beginning, the narrative structure of the book of Acts clearly shows that its theology is about mission (Marshall 2008, 55). In that vein, Eckhard J. Schnabel presents an exegetical structure of Acts of the Apostles focusing on the missional feature of the book. For that reason, his structure will be commented upon in the following paragraphs. Schnabel's structure starts with the first section entitled "Jesus' Exaltation and the Commission of the

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[14] See footnote 13.

[15] In this case, "Jesus used two different terms to "send", which in John are synonymous." This is clearly seen in chapter 8, where *pempo* is used to present Jesus being sent by the Father (8:16,18, 26,29), and *apostello* is used in 8:42; which also applies to chapter 5.6. See www.bible studytools.com/commentaries/utley/juan/juan20.html (accessed: April 17, 2019).

apostles" (1:1–14; cf. Schnabel 2012, pos. 1720 [Kindle edition]). The reference to the kingdom of God in v. 3 and also in the last sentence of the book (28:31) establishes an *inclusio*. This phenomenon connects the content of Acts, the life of the church and the missionary activity of the apostles, with Jesus and His proclamation of the arrival of the kind and sovereign kingdom of God (cf. ibid, pos. 1843).

Under the pastoral leadership of the apostles, the church consisted of missionary communities, strengthened by the Spirit of God, in order to spread the message of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth (cf. Köstenberger and O'Brien 2011, 157). Schnabel points out that if the title *Acts of the Apostles* is attributed to Luke himself, "whose work focuses particularly on Peter (Acts 1–6; 10–12) and Paul (Acts 9; 13–28), the formulation 'Acts of the Apostles' may be intended to emphasize that both Peter and Paul are apostles par excellence." (Schnabel 2012, pos. 1128 [Kindle edition])

In his first intervention, Peter proposes that the replacement of Judas Iscariot should be tackled (Acts 1:21–22). It is important to note that, following the example of Jesus (Luke 24:27–32,44), Peter considers the Scriptures as the foundation of his actions (Acts 1:20–21; cf. Ps. 69:25; 109:8). Moreover,

> The reconstitution of the Twelve through the election of Matthias underscores the identity of the community of Jesus' followers as the people of God, as the manifestation of the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, and emphasizes the mission of the church, whose leaders are commissioned to be witnesses of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. (Schnabel 2012, pos. 2528 [Kindle edition])

Thus, from the beginning, Luke makes clear that God is the one who takes the initiative for entrusting the mission to the emerging church. In that sense, the responsibility of human agents in Acts is not a responsibility in the sense of planning events or deciding strategies but "the responsibility of being obedient to God" (Gaventa 2004, 81).

Besides, the book of Acts makes clear the centrality of the word (λόγος) for apostolic pastoral ministry. This word should be the foundation for both their preaching and way of life. Out of the 134 times λόγος appears in the NT, 33 are found in the book of Acts. Those who receive the word are later on baptized (2:41). Peter's speeches in Acts 2 and 3 are the proclamation of the Word. Those who believe are the ones who hear the word (4:40) and to proclaim the word requires courage (4:29,31).

In the context of their pastoral ministry, the apostles announced the primacy of prayer and the ministering of the Word (6:2,4). Sometimes the solution to administrative issues could be delegated, but not prayer and the ministry of the Word. Such procedure not only preserved unity within the church, but kept "the priority of preaching and teaching, which require much prayer" (Schnabel 2012, pos. 9157 [Kindle edition]).[16] In that consideration, the idea of prayer could also refer to prayer with and for sick believers (cf. Schnabel 2012, pos. 9294 [Kindle edition]).[17]

This decision was vital for the proclamation of the gospel. Acts 6:7 states: "And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith" (ESV). Schnabel suggests that the reference to "growth of the Word" (Schnabel 2012, pos. 9515 [Kindle edition]) in Acts 6:7 would be an echo of Isa. 2:3 which reads: "Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

Therefore, the *growth of the Word* can be understood primarily as a reference to the numerical growth of the people who accepted Jesus as Messiah and Saviour. However, it should not be excluded that this growth occurred within the congregation, in the sense that believers continued to be transformed by the presence of the Holy Spirit as they heard and obeyed the teachings of the apostles (cf. Schnabel 2012, pos. 9363 [Kindle edition]).

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[16] Schnabel points out that the Greek phrase that appears in Acts 6:2 (οὐκ ἀρεστόν ἐστιν) which is translated as "is not fair" or "is not appropriate" could be understood as "not appropriate for the twelve." However, considering the description of the commission given by Jesus in 1:8,21–22; it could more likely refer to "God." For her part, Ellen G. White comments: "The Holy Spirit suggested a method whereby the apostles might be relieved from the task of apportioning to the poor, and similar burdens, so that they could be left free to preach Christ." (White 1947, 259)

[17] On the importance of prayer for the sick as an essential part of the pastoral ministry, Ellen G. White instructs: "The very essence of the gospel is restoration, and the Saviour would have His servants bid the sick, the hopeless, and the afflicted take hold upon His strength. God's servants are the channels of His grace, and through them He desires to exercise His healing power. It is their work to present the sick and suffering to the Saviour in the arms of faith. They should live so near to Him, and so clearly reveal in their lives the working of His truth, that He can make them a means of blessing to those in need of bodily as well as spiritual healing." (White 1915, 213)

All along in the book of Acts, it is also observed that "the ministry of the apostles is parallel to the ministry of Jesus" (ibid, pos. 30903 [Kindle edition]). Actually, the pastoral ministry of the apostles was an extension of Jesus' ministry. Thanks to the power of the Holy Spirit, in the likeness of Jesus, they also preached (Acts 2 and 3), taught (15:35, 20:20) and healed and expelled demons (3:1–10; 9:32–35; 36–43; 5:16; 8:7; 16:16–24, etc.).

3.4   *The Apostolic and Pastoral Ministry of Paul*
In the book of Acts, Luke describes not only the ministry of Peter (chapters 1–6; 10–12) but also the ministry of Paul (chapters 9; 13–28). Most of these passages are written as historical narratives describing paradigmatically the life and ministry of the early church led by the apostles. Schnabel suggests that the best way to address these passages is by considering them not only as narratives with principles and rules but as paradigms (cf. ibid., pos. 30956–30964 [Kindle edition]).

The apostleship of Paul should be studied carefully since it seems to introduce a new biblical scope of the pastoral function. On the one hand, there is a broad consensus regarding the idea that the position of the twelve apostles and Paul was unique. They fulfilled a foundational role for the entire church (Eph. 2:20–22) and in this sense, their function was limited to the period of the early church. In the same vein, Raoul Dederen concludes regarding the apostleship of the twelve and Paul: "As foundation of the church they have no successors" (Dederen 2009, 553; own translation from Spanish). Therefore, from a biblical perspective it is not possible to speak of the succession of the apostolic office after the twelve.
Moreover, Viggo N. Olsen seems to be right when he says that the apostolic succession "is not to be found in the establishment of an apostolic office, order or position, but functionally in the proclamation, as Christ`s ambassadors, of the gospel" (Olsen 1990, 70). Then he adds,

> the essence of various functions and offices or orders of church ministry, as it developed within New Testament times, is rooted in the apostleship of the Twelve. The different ministries which Paul mentions in his list of spiritual gifts were to a large degree bestowed upon the Twelve. In this sense, and only in this sense, can we speak—like the Protestant Fathers did—about apostolic succession and apostolicity. (Ibid., 70–71)

At the same time, Olsen considers that Paul represents an apostle or figure of transition.

> In one sense Paul belonged to the Twelve although "ultimately born" (1 Cor. 15:8-11), and in another to a wider group which includes Barnabas, Andronicus, Junia, Silvanus, Timothy, Apollos and Epaphroditus. Directly and indirectly these are referred to as apostles and representatives of the church (See Acts 13:2,3; 14:14, Gal. 2:9, Rom. 16:7, 1 Cor. 4:6,9; 1 Thess. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; 2:25). (Ibid.)

From this second perspective, the apostolic ministry can be considered as a point of reference or paradigm for the pastoral ministry of the people of God. The apostolic ministry lead to the establishing of a new local congregation of believers; and that local congregation, as part of the body of Christ, must also develop an apostolic ministry (cf. Manson 1948, 58). In other words, the apostolic pastoral ministry produced apostolic churches. Thus, "from its very inception the church was a witnessing and missionary community, and its activities and ministry must necessarily be evaluated from the perspective of outreach. The apostles were called 'our brothers … messengers [Gr. *Apostoloi*] of the churches, and the glory of Christ' (2 Cor. 8:23)" (Olsen 1990, 73).

Ellen G. White seems to share this perspective because she considers the apostolic ministry in general, and that of Paul in particular, as a paradigm for the Seventh-day Adventist pastoral ministry. This is particularly evident in her work also entitled *The Acts of the Apostles,* published in 1911, near the end of her ministry. In that book one can distinguish her concept of the church and her philosophy of the SDA pastoral ministry, which has the life and ministry of Paul as its main point of reference.

In a statement that clearly defines the SDA pastoral ministry as the apostleship, she points out:

> The conversion of sinners and their sanctification through the truth is the strongest proof a minister can have that God has called him to the ministry. The evidence of his *apostleship* is written upon the hearts of those converted, and is witnessed to by their renewed lives. Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. A minister is greatly strengthened by these seals of his ministry. (White 1911, 328; italics added)

Later, she presents Paul's ministerial experience as a reference for the SDA pastoral ministry:

> What the church needs in these days of peril is an army of workers who, like Paul, have educated themselves for usefulness, who have a deep experience in the things of God, and who are filled with earnestness and zeal. Sanctified, self-sacrificing men are needed; men who will not shun trial and responsibility; men who are brave and true; men in whose hearts Christ is formed "the hope of glory," and who with lips touched with holy fire will "preach the word." For want of such workers the cause of God languishes, and fatal errors, like a deadly poison, taint the morals and blight the hopes of a large part of the human race. (Ibid., 507)

In another of her writings, Ellen White pointed out that SDA ministers should follow the example of Paul by investing time in preparing future gospel ministers:

> Paul made it a part of his work to educate young men for the gospel ministry. He took them with him on his missionary journeys, and thus they gained an experience that later enabled them to fill positions of responsibility. When separated from them, he still kept in touch with their work, and his letters to Timothy and Titus are an evidence of how deep was his desire for their success. "The things that thou hast heard," he wrote, "commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. 2:2).
>
> This feature of Paul's work teaches an important lesson to ministers today. Experienced laborers do a noble work when, instead of trying to carry all the burdens themselves, they train younger men, and place burdens on their shoulders. It is God's desire that those who have gained an experience in His cause, shall train young men for His service. (White 1915, 102)

This apostolic ministerial paradigm promoted by the writings of Ellen G. White was supported by the church leadership of her time. Arthur G. Daniells, president of the General Conference in those days, was a strong promoter of this apostolic ministerial paradigm. In a statement summarizing his position, Daniells declared:

> In the New Testament record we find that Jesus abolished the priesthood. He brought the old covenant priesthood to an end at His death; but He prepared for it before His death, in establishing the ministry by the selection of the apostles. He chose and ordained the first ministers of the new dispensation ... From that time to this, men have been chosen by God to succeed the apostles to represent His church, and to

> have charge of the work of promulgating the gospel of the kingdom
> of God in this world. (Daniel n./d., 21)

In a recent study on the historical development of the understanding of SDA pastoral ministry from 1844 to 1915, Wellington Barbosa summarizes the prevailing SDA position during the years when Adventism moved from being a small local movement to a world church. During that period of time, it was believed that:

> In general terms, ministers should adopt an apostolic model for the pastoral work by planting churches, teaching spiritual issues to the church members, developing missionary plans and maintaining a line of supervision that would serve congregations. Regarding the church elders, they were considered as local pastors, representatives of the church and responsible for the missionary performance of the congregation. (Barbosa 2015, Summary)

This apostolic model should consider the priority of an evangelism focus, but at the same time take care of church's health. In this sense, Michael W. Campbell mentions:

> Thus, from 1863 through 1881 ministerial identity was connected to both evangelism and the local church. The primary task of the minister was outreach: ministers should preach the gospel and hold evangelistic meetings. This was especially true of young aspiring ministers. At the same time, the role of the minister was closely connected to ecclesiology and the life of the local church. As ministers travelled, they were responsible to make sure that order was maintained. (Campbell 2019, 44)[18]

All of these ideas make it reasonable to agree with Russell Burrill, when he refers to the pastoral model developed by the pioneers:

> Apparently the organization of the Adventist Church as a lay movement without settled pastors was not an accident or a temporary arrangement due to the size of the church, but a deliberate theological

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[18] In this article, Campbell also suggest that today, "One of the greatest challenges facing the denomination is the need for Adventist pastors who can achieve balance by focusing on both church health as well as evangelism, the two original tasks of the Adventist pastor." (Ibid., 47)

> attempt to return to a missional New Testament ecclesiology. (Burrill 1998, 153)[19]

It is interesting to notice the similarities that can be established between the pastoral paradigm of the apostles that started with Paul and the pastoral model progressively developed by the Adventist pioneers, based on the guidelines of Ellen G. White. The following table presents interesting parallels:[20]

Table 1. A Comparison of Paul and the beginning of the SDA Church

Rights and functions of the apostolic pastoral paradigm from Paul	Ministerial rights and functions at the beginning of the SDA Church
Call made directly by God and confirmed by the Church (Acts 9:15)	Call made directly by God and confirmed by the Church
The apostleship is supported by the church (1 Cor. 9:14)	The pastoral ministry is supported by the church
Ministering the Word as its main responsibility (2 Tim. 4: 1–5)	Ministering the Word as its main Responsibility
Itinerant ministry (Rom. 15:19)	Itinerant ministry
Evangelism and church planting (Rom. 15:20)	Evangelism and church planting
The apostle as the first ecclesiastical authority (1 Cor. 4: 1, 2)	The minister as the first ecclesiastical authority
The local pastoral leadership is empowered and the local church members are equipped for the fulfilment of the mission through the use of their spiritual gifts (Acts 20:17–31; Eph. 4:11,12)	The local pastoral leadership is empowered and the local church members are equipped for the fulfilment of the mission through the use of their spiritual gifts

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[19] On other hand, Damsteegt has argued about how this *apostolic model* was replaced by a *settled pastor model*. He affirms that "The Adventist pioneers adopted the New Testament model. Local elders had the oversight of congregations and functioned as their pastors. Throughout the nineteenth century this model was maintained, with full support of the Spirit of Prophecy. After the death of Ellen White the model was abandoned, and the 'settled minister' took the local church leadership function of the elder, who then became the minister's assistant. With the introduction of a Church Manual in 1932 this new leadership model became institutionalized. Subsequent manuals showed an increase of the influence of the minister over the congregation." See Damsteegt 2005, 685.

[20] This table summarizes some of the conclusions presented in Soto 2012, 161–195.

At the same time outside of Adventism, the ministry of Paul is also considered by some as the paradigm for the pastoral function. Thomas Oden pointed out that in recent decades pastoral theology has been neglected and has lacked a sustainable theoretical reflection (cf. Oden 1983, xi). Such negligence is evident since after the writing of the work of Washington Gladden's, *The Christian Pastor* (1898), there is no other systematic and biblically based pastoral theology written in English (cf. Oden 1983, 9).[21] James W. Thompson, in agreement to Oden, states that "Paul provides a coherent pastoral vision that can be the basis for a contemporary pastoral theology." (Thompson 2006, pos. 89 [Kindle edition])

Thompson recognizes that there are other biblical portions that can be taken as a guide for the establishment of a pastoral theology. But at the same time, he points out that the Pauline Epistles have a special value because they trace a clear comprehension of the ultimate goal of pastoral ministry (see ibid., pos. 98, 107). Then, he explains:

> The center of Paul's thought is a theology of transformation, which provides the basis for Paul's pastoral theology.
> A very consistent understanding of ministry emerges in all of his letters, allowing us to define it in precise terms: *ministry is participation in God's work of transforming the community of faith until it is "blameless" at the coming of Christ.* The community is unfinished business, standing between its beginning at baptism and its completion at the end. Paul's pastoral ambition, as he states consistently in his letters, is community formation [...] is to participate with God in affecting the transformation of his communities. (Ibid., pos. 204, 213, 2655)[22]

For Paul,[23] Jesus Christ is the supreme "Apostle and High Priest" (Heb. 3:1) who in the heavenly sanctuary continues ministering as the "great Shepherd

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[21] According to the same author, "Pastoral Theology is the branch of Christian theology that deals with the office and function of the pastor" (ibid., x).

[22] Italics in the original. According to this same author, Pauline pastoral theology challenges the contemporary focus on the individual and emphasizes the development of the community.

[23] William L. Lane suggests, regarding the author of Hebrews, that "it is certain that he is not Paul" (Lane 1991, xlix). The same idea is given by various scholars such as Hagner 1990, 9; Guthrie 1983, 21; Bruce 1990, 19–20; Long 1997, 1. However, it is also said that the reasons for ruling out Paul as the author are "notoriously subjective and have also been used to prove highly untenable propositions" (Hodges 1983, 2:777). At the same time, "the evidence in favour of Barnabas or

of the sheep" (Heb. 13:20). His high priestly work is part of His pastoral ministry, that has the purpose of equipping the faithful for "every good work"; and enabling them "to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ" (Heb. 13:21). In this way, "the work of God makes man's work possible" (Westcott 1982, 449).[24]

The aforementioned seems to be sufficient to affirm that, through Paul's pastoral apostolic ministry, God provided for His new church a pastoral paradigm with a clear missional focus for the community. Such a paradigm, through the witness of the church members filled with the Holy Spirit, might spread the Gospel unexpectedly and surprisingly fast throughout the world as a prelude to the imminent return of the Lord Jesus.[25]

Later on, in what seems to be one of the last steps in the development of pastoral ministry in the NT, Paul orders Timothy (1 Tim. 3:1–7) and Titus (1:5–9) to appoint bishops/elders in the churches already established as the result of the apostolic pastoral work.[26] Those who would be appointed for this pastoral work in the local church should be individuals of a firm character and a

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Apollos or any other candidate is not decisive" (Peterson 1994, 1321). Moreover, among the proposals about the author of the book, Paul is still possible since the arguments given can be find solution as follows. It is said basically that the vocabulary, language and style of Hebrews is different from Paul writings. However, it can be argued that in the other letters Paul is writing to Gentiles while in Hebrews, the readers are the Jews. At the same time, it can be argued from 2 Peter 3:15 that Paul did write a letter to them (cf. 1 Peter 1:1); cf. Phillips 1977, 10–11.

[24] See also Westcott's quotation in Guthrie 1983, 280.

[25] Wellington Barbosa (Barbosa 215, 69) concludes that "Adventist pioneers identified the minister as an *itinerant* elder or *evangelist*, following the apostolic model, which established congregations and set out for new, still unexplored fields."

[26] Angel M. Rodriguez notes: "The New Testament also refers to church elders as 'overseers' (episkopoi). Paul speaks to the elders (presbyteroi) of the church in Ephesus (Acts 20:17), where the Holy Spirit appointed them as overseers (episkopoi) to shepherd (poimainō) the church of God (v. 28). Peter also seems to use overseer and shepherd (or 'shepherd') synonymously when he speaks of Jesus as 'the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls' (1 Peter 2:25), as well as in his exhortation to the leaders of the churches of Asia Minor to 'shepherd the flock of God … exercising oversight (episkopountes)' (5:2). It would appear that during the time of the apostolic church the terms overseers, elders, and pastors were used interchangeably for those appointed to watch over God's 'Flock' and to protect it from danger and deception (Acts 20:29)." (Rodriguez, "Toward a Theology of Ordination," 17).

consistent Christian witness. These leaders should first guide their own families properly in order to be qualified to lead a larger community, the family of God (the Church). It is interesting to realise that in the list of qualities of character, there is an essential competence which stands out: they must be "able to teach [the Word]" (1 Tim. 3:2; cf. Titus 1:9).

In that sense, it seems that a crucial step is taken by the establishment of a pastoral paradigm shared between the apostles and the elders/bishops. This pastoral model offered an important balance between the initial pastoral work led by the apostles (who were itinerant evangelists)[27] and the pastoral work of preserving and providing care for the church members, which was highly necessary for the development of a mature community led by the elders/bishops. These two kinds of leaders – apostles and local elders – worked together as a team (Acts 15:4,22; 20:17–38).

Ellen G. White promoted and supported this ministerial paradigm for the community of believers with a clear missionary focus during her prophetic ministry. She emphasized this perspective as she came closer to the end of her ministry. In 1869, regarding the advantages of an itinerant ministry and the dangers when the ministers spent most of their time managing the local church issues, she declared:

> It is often the case that ministers are inclined to visit almost entirely among the churches, devoting their time and strength where their labor will do no good. Frequently the churches are in advance of the ministers who labor among them, *and would be in a more prosperous condition if those ministers would keep out of their way and give them an opportunity to work.* The effort of such ministers to build up the churches only tears them down.... *If they would leave the churches, go out into new fields, and labor to raise up churches, they would understand their ability and what it costs to bring souls out to take their position upon the truth.* And they would then realize how careful they should be that their example and influence might never discourage or weaken those whom it had required so much hard, prayerful labor to convert to the truth. (White 1871, 340; italics added)

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[27] John Knox states: "The very term suggests – what all our data confirm – that the apostle was an itinerant evangelist. Paul not only gives such a picture of himself, but he seems to imply it of 'the other apostles' also (1 Cor. 9:5)" (Knox 1956, 7).

> The gospel is to go to every nation, tongue, and people, and ministers are not to devote their labors so entirely to the churches which know the truth. Both ministers and people lose much by following this method of labor. (White 1895, §8)

In 1900, she repeated her admonition with these words:

> Instead of keeping the ministers at work for the churches that already know the truth, let the members of the churches say to these laborers: "Go work for souls that are perishing in darkness. We ourselves will carry forward the services of the church. We will keep up the meetings, and, by abiding in Christ, will maintain spiritual life. We will work for souls that are about us, and we will send our prayers and our gifts to sustain the laborers in more needy and destitute fields." (White 1946, 382; originally: White 1900, 30)

The next year, in 1901, regarding the burden upon the hearts of the ministers for the salvation of the lost, she pointed out:

> As I traveled through the South on my way to the conference, I saw city after city that was unworked. What is the matter? The ministers are hovering over churches which know the truth while thousands are perishing out of Christ.
>
> If the proper instruction were given, if the proper methods were followed, every church member would do his work as a member of the body. He would do Christian missionary work. But the churches are dying, and they want a minister to preach to them.
>
> They should be taught to bring a faithful tithe to God, that He may strengthen and bless them. *They should be brought into working order, that the breath of God may come to them. They should be taught that unless they can stand alone, without a minister, they need to be converted anew, and baptized anew. They need to be born again*. (White 1946, 381; italics added; originally in: Manuscript 150, 1901)

One year later, in 1902, in the context of the reorganization of the church, she wrote several statements emphasizing the need for ministers to maintain the evangelistic focus and the education of the church members to carry out the missionary work. She said:

Place after place is to be visited; church after church is to be raised up. *Those who take their stand for the truth are to be organized into churches, and then the minister is to pass on to other equally important fields*.

Just as soon as a church is organized, let the minister set the members at work. They will need to be taught how to labour successfully …

The power of the gospel is to come upon the companies raised up, fitting them for service. Some of the new converts will be so filled with the power of God that they will at once enter the work. They will labor so diligently that they will have neither time nor disposition to weaken the hands of their brethren by unkind criticism. Their one desire will be to carry the truth to the regions beyond. (White 1946, 353; italics added; originally: White 1902, 19f.)

God has not given His ministers the work of setting the churches right. No sooner is this work done, apparently, that it has to be done over again. Church members that are thus looked after and labored for become religious weaklings. *If nine tenths of the effort that has been put forth for those who know the truth had been put forth for those who have never heard the truth, how much greater would have been the advancement made! God has withheld His blessings because His people have not worked in harmony with His directions*.

It weakens those who know the truth for our ministers to expend on them the time and talent that should be given to the unconverted. The greatest help that can be given our people is to teach them to work for God, and to depend on Him, not on the ministers ...

There are times when it is fitting for our ministers to give on the Sabbath, in our churches, short discourses, full of the life and love of Christ. But the church members are not to expect a sermon every Sabbath.

Just as soon as a church is organized, let the minister set the members at work. They will need to be taught how to labor successfully. Let the minister devote more of his time to educating than to preaching. (White 1902, 18–20)

Later, in 1909, she reiterated her admonition:

It is the duty of those who stand as leaders and teachers of the people to instruct church members how to labor in missionary lines, and then to set in operation the great, grand work of proclaiming widely this message, that must arouse every unworked city before the crisis shall come, when, through the working of satanic agencies, the doors now open to the message of the third angel shall be closed …

> The righteous judgments of God, with their weight of final decision, are coming upon the land. *Do not hover over the churches to repeat over and over again the same truths to the people, while the cities are left in ignorance and sin, unwarned and unlabored for*. Soon the way will be hedged up and these cities will be closed to the gospel message. Wake up the church members, that they may unite in doing a definite and self-denying work. (White, Manuscript 61, September 17, 1909; italics added)

4.　　Summary

The concept of pastoral leadership in the NT reaches its climax with the incarnation of the Son of God. According to the synoptic Gospels, Jesus is the messianic and ideal Shepherd who fully cares for His flock and was promised by the prophets of the OT. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is depicted as the Good Shepherd, who sacrifices Himself for His sheep. At the same time, He is interested in reaching His sheep that are not yet part of His flock. At the end of this gospel, Jesus delegates the pastoral function to His apostles who will become His representatives.

After the ascension of Christ, the apostles are in charge of leading the new church pastorally. They, following the model of their Teacher, need be filled with the Holy Spirit and lead the Church into the same experience. In the book of Acts, the apostles appear as models for the pastoral ministry. Following the example of their Master, they prioritize the ministry of prayer and the Word. This clear missionary focus resulted in the exponential growth of the Church.

With the ministry of Paul, a ministerial paradigm focused on the fulfilment of the world mission was strengthened. Later, the pioneers of the Adventist movement, with the guidelines of Ellen G. White, developed a pastoral model following the Pauline example. This view about the ministry became an influential factor within Adventism which grew from a small movement to become a worldwide Church in few decades. Today, one of our more urgent needs it is to recover this biblical paradigm of pastoral ministry.

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Zusammenfassung

Dieser Artikel gibt einen Überblick über die wichtigsten biblischen Texte zur pastoralen Funktion im Alten und Neuen Testament. Bei der Durchsicht aller dieser Texte ist es möglich, eine Reihe von Orientierungspunkten zu identifizieren, die zur Ausarbeitung einer Pastoraltheologie aus adventistischer Perspektive beitragen können. Einige wesentliche Vorstellungen, die sich aus dieser Studie ergeben: 1. Jahwe ist der Hirte seines Volkes par excellence. 2. Gott entscheidet, den Hirtendienst mit menschlichen Hirten zu teilen, die von ihm souverän gewählt werden. 3. Diese menschlichen Hirten haben die Aufgabe, die Kirche bei der Erfüllung des Auftrags, den Gott mit ihnen teilt, zu leiten. 4. Das Konzept der pastoralen Leitung im NT erreicht seinen Höhepunkt mit der Menschwerdung des Sohnes Gottes. 5. Nach der Himmelfahrt Christi haben die Apostel die Aufgabe, die neue Kirche pastoral zu leiten. 6. Mit dem Dienst des Paulus wurde ein auf die Erfüllung der Weltmission ausgerichtetes Amtsparadigma gestärkt. 7. Später entwickelten die Pioniere der adventistischen Bewegung mit den Richtlinien von Ellen G. White ein pastorales Modell nach paulinischem Vorbild.

Résumé

Cet article vise à passer en revue les principaux textes bibliques qui se réfèrent à la fonction pastorale dans l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament. En examinant ces textes dans leur ensemble, il est possible d'identifier une série d'orientations qui peuvent contribuer à l'élaboration d'une théologie de la pastorale dans une perspective adventiste. Il y a quelques concepts essentiels qui se dégagent de cette étude : (1) Jéhovah est le pasteur de son peuple par excellence. (2) Dieu décide de partager le ministère pastoral avec des pasteurs humains qui sont élus souverainement par lui. (3) Ces pasteurs humains sont chargés de diriger l'église dans l'accomplissement de la mission que Dieu partage avec eux. (4) Le concept de leadership pastoral dans le NT atteint son apogée avec l'incarnation du Fils de Dieu. (5) Après l'ascension du Christ, les apôtres sont chargés de diriger pastoralement la nouvelle église. (6) Avec le ministère de Paul, un paradigme ministériel axé sur l'accomplissement de la mission mondiale a été renforcé. (7) Plus tard, les pionniers du mouvement adventiste, avec les directives d'Ellen G. White, ont développé un modèle pastoral suivant l'exemple de Paul.

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The Dilemma of the Pastor
in a Post-Modern Society[1]

Rudy Van Moere

Abstract

To what extent can the Bible, the Christian message, and especially the ministers, as their public representatives, have an impact upon our post-modern society? As public role models of God's pathos, some leading biblical prophets demonstrated a strong conviction nourished by the basic texts of Israel's heritage. Consequently, they stood firm for the authentic practice of God's Torah with a stress on genuine *tsedaqa* or *righteousness* as the fundamental principle of social justice. Pastors, who see themselves as God's servants, should therefore consult anew their own heritage, i.e. the roots of the faith of Jesus of Nazareth and of early Judeo-Christians. Their sympathy with God's pathos for humanity will make them understand that the main point in religion is ethics, which need to be given priority above worship and dogmatism. It will help them to become effective debaters and strong partners of culture and therefore increasingly relevant public pastors.

After a millennium of gradual change in the western world we have gone through a period of rapid transformation in the last 200 years. From romanticism through to modernism, we now find ourselves in a post-modernist society. Although we have not yet recovered from the initial shock it created in the 1980s and early 1990s, we find ourselves now on the threshold of what is beyond post-modernism. Should one speak of meta-modernism, pseudo-modernism, post-postmodernism or new-modernism?[2] Not being an expert in this area of research, and belonging to a modernist 1968 generation, I will

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[1] A previous French version of this paper is printed in *SERVIR – Revue adventiste de théologie* 5, Autumn 2019, 27–39.

[2] I.e. a return to traditional concepts, theoretical premises, and authorial practices.

make but a few observations, which do not stem from a thorough study of this phenomena, and add some personal impressions.

1. The Bible, Christians and their Pastors in a Secular and Post-Modern Society

According to cultural anthropologist J. Tennekes, a growing proportion of society has withdrawn from the sphere of influence of religious representations and argumentations and of the power or striving for power of religious institutions and religious groupings (Tennekes 1992, 72)[3]. Could one state that quite a few Christians feel alienated within post-modern society? Do they suffer loss? Certainly, in the Western world the answer appears in the affirmative as seen in the following:

- the many empty pews in almost empty churches;
- the decline of confessing church members;
- the number of those who obey the call to the ministry is greatly decreasing;
- the reduced supply of Christian broadcasting and television programmes;
- the sporadic religious reporting in newspapers and reviews;
- and the increasing disappearance of the adjective "Christian" by numerous organizations.

So the question arises to what extent the Bible, the Christian message, and the minister as their representative, are having an impact upon society and upon the individual in particular? Is the fact that these hardly get any voice when it comes to ethical questions like abortion, euthanasia, gay and lesbian marriages, cloning and genetic manipulated food (or GM food) symptomatic of the decreased impact of Christianity? In times when Christianity was still fashionable, Christians and their ministers referred to God as an all-determining supreme being from 'up there.' In the biblical worldview, God had his place in the heavens (Keel 1984, 29–39). Besides life on earth and the presence of Sheol, heaven represented the third realm where the real decisions were made. Since Copernicus and Galileo, numerous changes have occurred. The Deity became a God from 'out there,' from beyond the solar system (van der Hoeven 1966, 105–138). Suddenly he appeared to be a lot more distant, and it

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[3] English: *The Unknown Dimension: On Culture, Cultural Differences, and Power*.

gave the impression that he had much less of a grip on people who became independent of God. Consequently, God became more irrelevant in their lives.

When Isaac Newton, as theologian and physicist, proved to be capable of explaining a number of miracles in the Bible, and Charles Darwin presented his theory of evolution, man's role increased at the cost of the God of the book of Exodus and the God of the book of Genesis (Richardson 1966, 39–43). The latter became more and more discredited and his religious advocates were heading for the collapse of their authority and reputation.

After Einstein demonstrated with the aid of his relativity theory an expanding universe with innumerable solar systems, the Anglican Bishop John A. T. Robinson in the sixties advanced the idea that the time had dawned to proclaim the 'death of God.' With his books such as *Honest to God* (Robinson 1963), and *But That I Can't Believe* (Robinson 1967) he said farewell to traditional Christian belief and he made a call to change course completely. And while the Presbyterian bishop Lesslie Newbigin admitted that for secularized man faith in God was no longer part of his spiritual substance (Newbigin 1968, 82), some 40 years later another Episcopalian bishop, John Shelby Spong, made the passionate statement *Why Christianity must Change or Die* as his book title (Spong 1998). Others, like the Roman-Catholic theology and philosophy professor Thierry-Dominique Humbrecht, lecture on topics like "La fin de la chrétienté" [English: The end of Christianity] and the German Catholic theologian and religious didactician Hubertus Halbfas wrote a book *Glaubensverlust: Warum sich das Christentum neu erfinden muss* [English: The loss of faith: Why Christianity should reinvent itself] (Halbfas 2011). In the Dutch documentary "The Last Supper" three communication students[4] sketched in 2011 a gloomy future for the church in The Netherlands. According to them, their country appears to be the worldwide leader when it comes to secularization. This country would even be "the experiment for the obliteration of Christianity." Of course, a caricature but nevertheless ... On top of all this come the shock of the Auschwitz catastrophe of the last century and the immense drama of 9/11. One could also mention the child sex scandals that have rocked the church, the Roman church in particular, in recent times. These do not help at all! Since then quite a few Christians indeed wonder whether there is still a God and, if he exists, whether he even cares. Moreover, we have good reason

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[4] Robert-Jan Zwart, Thijs Driessen, and Esther Raaijmakers.

to believe that as a result of some natural disasters, such as the Indian Ocean tsunami, which killed many thousands and affected many countries, many lost faith in God at the time.

Therefore, some legitimate questions do arise. Is Christianity indeed in its final hours? Do Christians accept a secular society that is trying to convince them that all new things man has achieved in the area of science, philosophy and culture are making the Bible, Christianity and their spokesmen superfluous? Or is there for them a point in fighting for the conservation of their own identity and can they still contribute to a renewed and reinvigorated Christianity, based on the Jewish- Christian Bible, by drawing some lessons from its history in order to generate some new impulses?

Naturally, one can sketch the syndrome, search for an explanation, but however it appears, it is essential to look for any possible remedy or therapy. Obviously, secularization is a global social phenomenon and an inevitable process with its positive and negative powers. Easy solutions are not self-evident.

However, in our society in which eastern religions, new age, and views concerning a new world order are taking root, influencing our thoughts and our knowledge, the awareness should grow that through the Bible, the Christian philosophy of life and through their pastoral representatives, we can definitely hold our own. After all, Christianity has held out over a period of 2,000 years despite the fact that it has survived all kinds of circumstances and influences. Christianity can still attract. The Bible continues to give evidence of an unprecedented depth: ethically, historically, philosophically and theologically. Could it be that a growing number of Christians do not realize *that* anymore, nor have any knowledge of their own rich heritage?

Within this socio-religious problematic situation, pastors and ministers find themselves in the frontline and in the middle of a dilemma. As paragons for their ecclesiastical communities, should they put up a stubborn resistance or give up with a resigned attitude? What kind of antidote can help them escape a fatalistic attitude? Can they withstand the ongoing pressure of a society that focusses on consumptive enjoyment, a complex digital highway, mass media and many other secularized items?

The experiences of some leading biblical figures, in quite problematical situations and in different centuries, could probably provide a background for a thought provoking reflection and discussion about the dilemma of pastors in a post-modern society and possibly also beyond.

2. The Prophet as a Role Model

The prophet Amos, a Judean citizen, was commissioned by YHWH to go to the Northern Kingdom Israel. This nation found itself in a splendid situation of success on almost all levels. The two world empires Egypt and Assyria did not show any urge to expand or interfere, which allowed Israel's king Jeroboam to enlarge Israel's territory. His conquests ensured that important caravan and trade routes passed through his country. Commerce and industries flourished, money and products poured into the country. Jeroboam added lustre to this comfortable position by the construction of palaces and city reinforcements. It became Israel's golden age! In next to no time a general euphoria prevailed in the sense of 'no harm can come to us' and 'God is with us'! Progression, peace and welfare conveyed the impression that they had an excellent relationship with their God YHWH. At least, that is what they mistakenly deduced from the blessings that were enumerated in Moses' discourse in Deut. 28.

Amos, at his appearance in Israel, confronted this mentality of arrogance, pride and confident attitude of the powers. His clash with Amaziah, the main priest of the national temple in Bethel, is exemplary. The latter forbade him to proclaim YHWH's word in what he named the royal sanctuary. He ordered Amos to leave and to do his work in his own home country Judah. Amos however replied energetically that he wasn't a professional prophet but a shepherd and a cultivator whom YHWH ordered to go and prophesy to his people Israel (Amos 7:14–15).

Thereupon he rebuked not only this militant priest as an exponent of Israel's clergy, who transgressed Moses' prescriptions, but also as a defender of king Jeroboam's dynasty. The royal influence on the religious institutions and their forms of worship appeared to be extremely forceful and opposite to the role of the king prescribed by Moses' Torah. Besides the fact that in each of the main temples in Dan and Bethel a bull calf was being worshiped, Aramaic and Assyrian gods were also being honoured in Israel. Amos however did not limit his rebukes on Israel's failure to serve its God YHWH in the prescribed way, but he turned his arrows on the practices of the leading classes of society.

As a matter of fact, Jeroboam's military successes and excessive temple services hid deplorable social situations. The ever-expanding economy was the immediate cause that merchants, large land and cattle owners, noblemen and military officers became increasingly powerful and wealthy. Their house con-

structions and country residences, their lavish furniture and luxurious life-styles proved this in an abundant way. The numerous occasions to earn big money grew considerably, thanks to counterfeit balances, exorbitant charges of interest, flagrant usurious prices, distortion of judicial processes, promotions of debt slavery, bribes during judicial conflicts and extortions. Additionally, violence was used against vulnerable ordinary people who were being exploited not only materially, but also socially, sexually and morally! They were trodden underfoot and downgraded to the status of serfs. YHWH refused to continue to stand by and watch this any longer. For this reason, he called Amos in order to expose these awful practices. Amos addressed the leading classes in magnificent literary style, proclaiming that it does not pay to worship YHWH in Israel's sanctuaries while they continued to behave in an unjust manner. On behalf of YHWH he cried out:

> 4–7 Seek me and live; but do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal or cross over to Beer-Sheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into exile, and Bethel shall come to nothing. Seek YHWH and live, or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire, and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it. Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood, and bring righteousness to the ground!
> 11–12 Therefore because you trample on the poor and take from them levies of grain, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not live in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine. For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great are your sins-- you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and push aside the needy in the gate.
> 14–15 Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so YHWH, the God of hosts, will be with you, just as you have said. Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that YHWH, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph. (Amos 5:4–7,11–12, 14–15 NRS)

This is an example of God's pathos. The "basic feature and primary concern of the prophet's consciousness is" – as Abraham Joshua calls it – "divine attentiveness and concern." Whatever message he appropriates, it reflects that awareness ... in which the prophet shares and which he tries to convey. And

it is God's concern for man that is the root of the prophet's work to save the people." (Heschel 1962, 263; cf. also the Dutch edition: 2013, 605)

Amos harked back to the past, to Israel's heritage and debated publicly with arguments. The poor were being oppressed just as if they still lived in Egypt! YHWH however stood model as the one who cared for the powerless in society. He was anxious about widows, orphans and strangers and paid heed to hungry and thirsty people (Deut. 10:12–20; Ps. 107:8–9). He expected and required that Israelites would follow his example and prove themselves to be acting as his images.

In order to concretize this ideal Moses gave them on behalf of YHWH practical guidelines. He stipulated: "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land ..." and motivated it by: "Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and YHWH your God redeemed you; for this reason I lay this command upon you today" and concluded: "and the YHWH your God will bless you in all that you do" (Deut. 15:11,15,18 NRS).

Amos was the first prophet who expressed his theology in writing, and in so doing, he inspired later generations of prophets. His fight for *mishpat* and *tsedaqa*, right and righteousness, was adopted by prophets like for example Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In other circumstances and in different societies they fought on the barricades for the lower classes. Jeremiah did this while his people was in Jerusalem under siege of the Babylonians. He also claimed that they should not put their hope in the presence of YHWH's temple. In a totally different situation, in the company of the deportees in Babylon, Ezekiel stressed the absolute necessity of ethical behaviour in harmony with Moses' guidelines.

Just like Amos, they referred with a strong conviction to Israel's heritage. They called upon its Mosaic traditions and had a firm knowledge of them. They derived their authority from them. One cannot but agree with the late French theologian and philosopher André Néher, who wrote: "A firm knowledge is a must. The prophets drew this certainty from their knowledge, from the presence in them of an absolute reality. This presence made them share the experience." (Néher 1983, 100)

According to Heschel the ultimate category of prophetic theology is: "involvement (in the sense of justice and compassion), attentiveness and concern. It should be defined not as what man does with his ultimate concern, but rather what man does with God's concern." (Heschel 1962, 264)

In this respect, and in again a different society – a society under foreign occupation – Jesus gave the indisputable demonstration of his strong conviction. He stood firm for what he esteemed to be of the greatest importance: the authentic practice of God's Torah with a stress on genuine *tsedaqa* or *righteousness*.

3.   Energetically Facing the Dilemma

Since postmodernism is advocating that truth is relative and everything under consideration is open to interpretation, and that interpretation deserves to be considered legitimate, it creates among Christians in general and pastors in particular feelings of uncertainty, loss of trust in the institutional churches, and a lack of faith. Quite often it leaves them powerless "to seek alternatives." They are left with the idea that Christianity (including doctrine) is no longer providing the ultimate answers people seek. It pushes them to a position where they feel like exiles in a society that used to be their own and in which the churches have made themselves irrelevant by not meeting human aspirations and needs as well as being out of step with current thinking. Consequently, people feel alienated, unsafe and desperate in search of a renewed solid ground on which to rebuild their faith. All of this makes the task and the role of pastors extremely difficult and sometimes even awkward. How can they relieve people's feelings and respond to their needs, while they themselves are subject to the same situation?

Of course, Christians and their ministers could blame postmodernism for being a culture of relativism and try to convince themselves or even hope that in the end all relativism will annul itself. They could even imagine that postmodernism in attempting to do away with the traditional grand narratives will eventually undo all previous steps of humankind and will finally become itself irrelevant. Allow me to quote Christian philosopher William Lane Craig who has noted:

> People are not relativistic when it comes to matters of science, engineering, and technology; rather they are relativistic and pluralistic in matters of religion and ethics. (quoted in: Dorsey and Collier 2018, 219)

And also the American philosopher, writer, and cognitive scientist Daniel Dennett who declared:

> Postmodernism, the school of 'thought' that proclaimed 'There are no
> truths, only interpretations' has largely played itself out in absurdity,
> but it has left behind a generation of academics in the humanities dis-
> abled by their distrust of the very idea of truth and their disrespect for
> evidence, settling for 'conversations' in which nobody is wrong and
> nothing can be confirmed, only asserted with whatever style you can
> muster. (Dennett 2013)

For Christians and their pastors, rather than bemoaning this awkward post-
modern malaise, it is more useful to find ways to generate a renaissance and a
revitalization of their religious convictions without simply repeating or revamp-
ing traditional beliefs. These will absolutely not suffice. Much more is needed.

3.1   A Challenge for any Pastor

To avoid a definite loss of their identity and to avoid being swallowed up by
postmodern society, Christians and their ministers should remember the bib-
lical lessons of the past. Did not the Ba'al Sjem Tov, the founder of Hasidism,
teach: "Forgetfulness leads to exile while remembrance is the secret of re-
demption." Memory must function, as it does in the Bible, as a positive force.
Being pastors mainly by hanging on to a Christian culture or to its church
community does not represent a sufficient reason. Their own roots should
never be forgotten and this requires from pastors that they go back to the basis
of Christianity, its initial sources, the original Scriptures. Is such an effort a
valuable way forward or a too simplistic remedy for Christians and their min-
isters who feel pushed into a position of exile?

All four prophets – Amos, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Jesus – demonstrated a
strong conviction nourished by their knowledge of the basic texts of Israel's
heritage. As public figures, they drew from them their prophetic critical argu-
ments and stood consistently on the barricades for those who were in need of
YHWH. Single-mindedly they opposed the views on God, man and the world
of the societies of their time and became role models for their contemporaries
and later generations. They remained in tune with God's pathos and shared
it without restraint with their contemporaries.

The shepherd and trader Amos, the unauthorized priest Jeremiah and the
authorized priest Ezekiel and the carpenter rabbi Jesus were indeed public
figures. Not only because of their profession but especially because of their
speaking in the open, in society. They not only shared their insights but gave

themselves completely, passionately in their mediating role between God and his people.

Pastors who see themselves as God's servants should therefore primarily go public. There are quite a few among them who no longer have this vision of pastoral ministry as such. This is possibly because they have been influenced and even misled by postmodern society. Depending on the size of their congregation, they think they should instead be organizers, administrators and counsellors.

Those four great men were able to contextualize God's Word and help people to think theologically. In other words, to teach them to look at their society and at all aspects of their own lives, with the eyes and the heart of God. What these public figures had in common was their participation in God's pathos, or namely his love for people, his sense of justice, and his willingness to forgive. In other words: "his concern about the ethical, political, religious situation of his people," as Heschel puts it (Heschel 1962, 265).

Shouldn't that be the goal of any pastor and shouldn't he or she be a pastor theologian? Shouldn't such a pastor expose society to their church members in the light of God's Word? To help them bridge the immeasurable distance between the world of the Bible in the then and there, and postmodern society in the here and now? In so doing he or she will be able to lead church members towards wisdom, happiness and love which God wishes them to attain.

In the spirit of the aforementioned great spokesmen of God who gave the best of themselves and their lives in their respective periods and contexts, the vision of the pastoral ministry in our postmodern society lost by contemporary pastors could be regained. A pastor, therefore, should first and foremost be a public theologian. As Kevin Vanhoozer and Owen Strachan put it in three steps:

> First, pastors are and always have been theologians. Secondly, every theologian is in a way a public theologian, a strange kind of intellectual, a certain type of generalist ... Third, the purpose of the pastor-theologian being a public intellectual is to serve the people of God by building them up in 'the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.' (Vanhoozer and Strachan 2015, 15–16)

This pastor theologian faces the challenge of shifting the paradigm with regard to his or her idea of what a preacher is called to be and to do: a positive alternative image inspired by, among others, the abovementioned prophets. Each of them represents a role model especially for the pastor theologian. To some extent he or she can also become a prophet if he or she endeavours to

meet God in a very personal way. It does not have to be in the same way as those four have experienced it. The personal encounter between the pastor and God can become a reality through meditation, certainly, but – if you allow me to stress – not without a thorough and meticulous study of his Word being maximized with the help of its original languages. Then and then alone will the pastor be on the same wavelength and get in tune with the revelation of God's Word. His preaching, teaching and sharing will then have a maximal impact on his hearers. Those who subscribe to this approach will see that the Hebrew Bible and the Greek Testament are first of all about ethics, secondly about worship and then and only then about doctrine, which anyhow does not get any credit in our postmodern society.

3.2   *A Challenge for Pastors in a Time of Exile*

The pattern that underlies the lives of the prophets cannot be transposed directly into our postmodern society. It is out of the question that it represents a straightforward remedy, but it can inspire pastors to think of survival strategies. Would it not be an idea for those who live in a world in which man has been alienated to an increasing extent from the Bible (Heschel 1995, 57) to consult anew their own heritage? Back to the roots of the Judeo-Christian faith? Back to Jesus of Nazareth and his community of followers with their Hebrew Bible? Beyond the Reformation and the Council of Trent? Beyond the mystics and the scholastics? Beyond Augustine and Chrysostom? Leading to his teachings and his life and through them to the Torah of Moses and the Prophets? Following this route, the pastor theologian will be able to help Christians to understand Jesus' programme, to discover their own Christian identity and enable Christianity to make sense in their situation. It's about another method that does not romanticize Jesus, but seeks to do justice to his message and teachings.

This means that the pastor theologian might rather go for Hans Küng's understanding of Jesus (Küng 2012) than for Joseph Ratzinger's presentation (Ratzinger 2007; 2011; 2012). Rather for *Jesus, the Central Jew* of André LaCocque (LaCocque 2015) than for the Nicean Christ of Riemer Roukema (Roukema 2010).

Instead of sticking to a traditional dogmatic of doctrinal Christianity, the pastor theologian could seek the adventure of trying out a *Christianity in the manner of Jesus*. Why not have the nerve to learn to read the Bible with Jewish eyes and in so doing see the Gospels in a more dynamic way, than to stand on the Greco-

Roman conceptualization of the New Testament as the bulk of Christian churches do?

Earlier I mentioned Bishop John Shelby Spong as making a plea for "discovering anew the Jesus of the New Testament" and to learn from him where the human and the divine meet each other, to find a new basis for Christian ethics and to interpret anew liturgical signs. This learning process will, according to him, bring secular man closer to Jesus and help Christians in the postmodern time to read him and the God he worshiped more effectively (Spong 1998; and further Spong 1996).

4.   Conclusion

The above suggestions intend to help pastors in their role in our postmodern – or in an almost post-postmodern/meta-modern – society which requires effective debater's abilities. They need to become strong partners of culture, being well informed about and educated in their own Judeo-Christian heritage. Sharing the critical perspectives based on the teachings of prophets like Amos, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel and above all of Jesus, who demonstrated publicly their strong convictions by upholding and enriching Moses' Torah. Their lives proved that they were authentic role models in their respective societies and that is what pastor theologians nowadays need to be for their Christian fellow believers and in the sight of all secular people. Their sympathy with God's pathos for humanity will make them understand that the main point in religion is ethics which need to be given priority above any formal worship and any dogmatism.

Perhaps the demand for "the active priesthood for all believers" should be complemented by a demand for "the prophethood of all pastors." Then together they will be able to create communities where people meet who are in need of God providing them with emotional, social and intellectual guidance. This is why public pastors should change or ... become increasingly irrelevant.

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Zusammenfassung

Inwieweit können die Bibel, die christliche Botschaft und vor allem die Pastoren als ihre öffentlichen Vertreter einen Einfluss auf unsere post-moderne Gesellschaft haben? Als öffentliche Vorbilder für Gottes Pathos zeigten einige führende biblische Propheten eine starke Überzeugung, die aus den grundlegenden Texten des Erbes von Israel resultiert. Folglich standen sie fest ein für das authentische Praktizieren von Gottes Thora mit Betonung der echten *tsedaqa* oder *Gerechtigkeit* als Grundprinzip der sozialen Gerechtigkeit. Pastoren, die sich selbst als Diener Gottes sehen, sollten daher ihr eigenes Erbe, d. h. die Wurzeln des Glaubens Jesu von Nazareth und der frühen Judenchristen, erneut konsultieren. Weil sie mit Gottes Pathos für die Menschheit sympathisieren, verstehen sie, dass die Hauptsache in der Religion die Ethik ist, der Vorrang vor Gottesdienst und Dogmatismus gegeben werden muss. Das wird ihnen helfen, wirksam zu diskutieren und starke Partner innerhalb der Kultur und damit zunehmend relevante öffentliche Pastoren zu werden.

Résumé

Dans quelle mesure la Bible, le message chrétien et surtout les pasteurs, en tant que leurs représentants publics, peuvent-ils avoir un impact sur notre société post-moderne ? En tant que modèles de rôle public du pathos de Dieu, certains prophètes bibliques de premier plan ont démontré une forte conviction nourrie par les textes fondateurs de l'héritage d'Israël. Par conséquent, ils ont défendu la pratique authentique de la Torah de Dieu en insistant sur la véritable *tsedaqa* ou la justice comme principes fondamentaux de la justice sociale. Les pasteurs qui se considèrent comme les serviteurs de Dieu devraient donc consulter à nouveau leur propre héritage, c'est-à-dire les racines de la foi de Jésus de Nazareth et des premiers judéo-chrétiens. Leur sympathie pour le pathos de Dieu pour l'humanité leur fera comprendre que le point principal de la religion est l'éthique, qui doit avoir la priorité sur le culte et le dogmatisme. Cela les aidera à devenir des débatteurs efficaces et des partenaires solides de la culture et donc des pasteurs publics de plus en plus pertinents.

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Authority and Conscience[1]
The Authority of the Denomination and the Freedom of the Pastor

Reinder Bruinsma

Abstract

The article firstly deals with church authority in general and with the way this is understood and functions in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. All church authority is delegated authority, and the church's authority is always subject to God and the revelation in his Word. The Adventist governmental structure has not always sufficiently resisted authoritarian and hierarchical tendencies. The second part of this article focuses on the relationship between the pastor and his employing church entity. His freedom is limited, in terms of church policies and in expressing theologically unacceptable opinions. On the other hand, he cannot be expected to show blind obedience, and some forms of dissent can actually enrich the community. The pastor must listen to his conscience, but must in some cases expect to be disciplined. Any discipline requires great care, lest political elements and a denial of the right of critical thinking obscure the real issues.

1.   Church Authority

Authority and compliance are topics that dominate much of recent Adventist discussion. Many are concerned about the manner in which authority functions within the denominational structure, and wonder whether the exercise of this authority is not too much "top-down" and has not acquired too many hierarchical features. Questions are asked about the legitimate spheres of au-

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[1] A previous French version of this paper is printed in *SERVIR – Revue adventiste de théologie* 5, Autumn 2019, 41–55.

thority and about the extent and limits of authority in the various organizational echelons. There is rather widespread criticism with regard to current attempts of the "higher" organizations to enforce compliance with certain doctrinal positions and policies of the church. Church leaders claim that measures must be taken to ensure the unity of the worldwide church. Many, on the other hand, point to the positive aspects of diversity and demand space for the role of personal conscience in responding to doctrinal and policy issues.

This article will briefly explore the nature of authority in the Christian church—in particular in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. It will give attention to the question how the authority of the leaders and institutions of the church relates to the authority and freedom of the pastor and will zoom in on the tensions that develop when pastors disagree with specific things the denomination says or does, and expects of them.[2]

1.1   Authority

It should not surprise us that in the church, just as in society, authority and respect for authoritative speaking and acting has become increasingly problematic. Congregations and individuals no longer accept the word of pastors and other church leaders unchallenged. "The assumption that position guarantees respect is no longer valid" (Blackaby and Blackaby 2001, 18). In postmodern thinking institutional religion is mostly considered irrelevant and the metanarratives (including those of the church) which supposedly explain everything and proclaim one absolute *Truth*, which all must accept, are rejected. Postmodernity contends that personal autonomy is the path to *truth* for each individual. Whether authority is acquired and executed by use of power, through a claim to special expertise, or as the fruit of charisma – or by a combination of these factors – it faces serious challenges (Reuschling 2005, 65).

The Latin roots of the word "authority" – *auctor* and *auctoritatis* – have the meaning of "invention, advice, influence, command." In English, the word acquired, from the fourteenth century onwards, the connotation of "the right to rule or command, power to enforce obedience, power or right to command

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[2] When referring to pastors or ministers in this article, I will use the male pronouns. It should be understood, however, that the ministerial force of the church also includes many female pastoral staff.

or act."[3] In various translations of Hebrews 12:2 (as e.g. in KJV and NIV), Christ is called the "author" of our faith. This does not primarily point to his power, and other translations translate the original word *archegon* more appropriately as *pioneer* (e.g. NRSV; see also Knight 2003, 223.225), or as *the precursor*.[4] Perhaps our word i*nitiator* would be a good modern equivalent. In any case, it does not emphasize the power aspect. The two New Testament words that are most closely connected with the power aspect of authority are *dunamis* and *exousia*. *Dunamis* "suggests the inherent capacity of someone or something to carry something out" (Betz 1971a). *Exousia*, on the other hand, denotes "freedom of choice, the right or power to exercise authority;" it is "the power which may be displayed in the areas of legal, political social or moral affairs" (Betz 1971b).

Whatever shades of meaning these words may have, they do not convey the idea of authoritarian power, or of force and coercion. This has a direct impact on how authority should function in the church.

> It is clear beyond dispute that Jesus established something entirely new in the authority which he conferred upon the church. Authority as a function of love and as an operation of the Spirit has no precedent in societies which existed in Old Testament times or in the Hellenistic world, nor does it appear in social ethics of ancient or modern times. (McKenzie 1964, 420)

Jesus created a new structure of authority, which is real, even though not all members and leaders in the church are aware of that. The unfortunate fact is that we always

> face the danger that the structure of the church will take on the forms of secular society and that the church will employ means proper to secular society. When the Church becomes a power structure, unless that power be the power of love, it takes on a secular character. (McKenzie 1964, 421)

The well-known Anglican preacher, theologian and church leader John Stott (1921–2011) expressed this in these pertinent words:

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[3] https://www.etymonline.com/word/authority (accessed February 2, 2020).

[4] As does the prestigious Dutch theologian F. W Grosheide, in his commentary: Grosheide 1966, 161.163.

> The authority by which the Christian leader leads is not power but love, not force but example, not coercion but reasoned persuasion. Leaders have power, but power is safe only in the hands of those who humble themselves to serve.[5]

The biblical model of the exercise of authority is not the secular CEO model. And "spiritual leaders do not try to satisfy the goals and ambitions of the people they lead but those of the God they serve" (Blackaby and Blackaby 2001, 10.18).

1.2   Power vs. Servanthood

God looks for servants. We see this already in God's interaction with his people in Old Testament times. Isaiah paints a powerful picture of God's decisive future intervention through his suffering Servant (chapter 53). We learn from Moses' summary of the criteria for kingly leadership that a human leader should show the humility of a servant and not consider himself better than the people he serves (Deut. 17:20).

Christ is very clear about servanthood as the only acceptable model for leadership among his followers. He set the supreme example. "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45). During the last supper Jesus manifested his willingness to serve when he washed the feet of his disciples (John 13:1–17). He told the twelve to imitate his example and said in this context: "Who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? But I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27). When there was an argument among the disciples about position and status in the Kingdom, Jesus minced no words and underlined that authority in his Kingdom should not reflect secular power structures. You know, he said, how it works in the world around you. But you must follow a different model: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve" (Matt. 20:25–28).

Robert Greenleaf (1904–1990) developed the theory of servant leadership while working in the world of business. His book *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Greenleaf 1977) has been very

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[5] https://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/top-15-christian-quotes-about-authority/#ixzz5f 9eJUMc5 (accessed February 2, 2020).

influential in and outside the ecclesiastical world. There has been widespread acknowledgment that it reflects in many ways the leadership model that Christ taught and manifested. Hermann Hesse's novel *The Journey to the East* (see the new edition: Hesse 2011), which first appeared in German in 1932, is a powerful story about the meaning of servant leadership, that perhaps captures the essence of servant leadership in a more powerful way than any academic book about leadership theories. As a group of people goes on a pilgrimage to the East, a man called Leo carries the bags and does all the chores. But later it becomes clear that he did far more than that. He also kept the group together with his presence and his songs (Ciulla 2004, 17).

I would suggest that there is a particular area that needs more thought, namely the nomenclature that is commonly used when we speak of persons in the church who have authority. The fact that they are called to be "servants" is often not reflected in the terminology by which they are described or by which they are addressed. Terms like "reverend" and the Dutch word "dominee" (derived from the Latin *dominus*, lord) are contrary to the concept of servanthood. The terms "minister" and "pastor" are much more appropriate. And there is much to be said for avoiding terms like "church office" or "church officer" (and equivalent words in other languages) when referring to functions in the church. This word "office" (from the Latin *officium*, an official task that carries a particular status) suggests to many that those who hold an "office" in the church have a ranking that is superior to other members.

The characteristic New Testament word for the work that is done in the church of Christ is *diakonia*—service (Brienen 2008, 17). Raoul Dederen (1925–2016) wrote, just prior to the General Conference session of 1995 in Utrecht (where the ministry of women in the church was one of the important agenda items):

> As an expression of the Spirit's ministry among us, authority bears the characteristics of the supreme gift of grace, namely love. Like all functions of the church, the exercise of authority is a function of love, a *diakonia*, a service. (Dederen 1995, 9)

One element that should not be overlooked is that all authority in the church is "delegated authority." This does not primarily mean that the "higher" decision making bodies receive their authority from the lower echelons in the denominational structure – and ultimately from the members of

the local church – as is (at least officially) the case in the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Cf. *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* [18th edition of 2010, 28–30]). It means first of all that all authority in the church is "delegated," because it is God-given.

The fundamental biblical principle of the priesthood of all believers excludes a hierarchical structure of church governance in a denomination. It also mitigates against any hierarchical structure at the level of the local congregation. There is no New Testament justification for according the pastor a higher status than the elder and for making the elder more important than the deacon (Brienen 2008, 36). And it seems to me that speaking of "senior pastors" and "lead pastors" is rather dubious, since it does not just point to differences in the tasks that they perform but also carries the unfortunate suggestion of a hierarchy in status.

1.3   Organizational Structure

Although at first very hesitant in adopting any organizational structure, the leaders of the incipient Adventist movement soon recognized that some form of organization was needed.[6]

The church structure at the local level that was adopted was not the result of profound biblical and theological study, but rather a matter of borrowing, and somewhat adapting, patterns from the movement of the Christian Connexion, a small "restorationist" denomination to which several of the "pioneers" had belonged before becoming Adventists. And since American Protestantism in general was deeply influenced by Calvinism, it should come as no surprise to find that (like the Christian Connexion) the Adventist Church to a major extent followed the Calvinistic pattern of local church governance – i.e. through the three "offices" of minister, elder and deacon (Bruinsma 2009, 134–135). As far as the supra-local structure of church governance is concerned early Adventism copied the basic Methodist pattern of regional conferences and a General Conference (Mustard 1987, 32; Bruinsma 2009, 136–137). Unions and divisions were administrative levels that were added when

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[6] For a concise and highly readable survey of the development of the Adventist organizational model, see Knight 2001. Other good resources are: Oliver 1989; Mustard 1987; Beach and Beach 1985.

the Adventist Church became a world-wide denomination (Knight 2001, 80–86; Chudley 2013, 18–20).

By and large this structure has served the church quite well and has, no doubt, been a major factor in the execution of its mission. After all, the mission of the church is a crucial reason for having an organization. However, in actual practice, the organizational structure of the church has also brought its challenges. The servant-character has often been obscured when a small group of individuals began to exercise "kingly power." Except for the first General Conference president (John Byington), Ellen G. White, at one time or another, reproved all presidents of the church, whom she worked with during her long life, of abusing their authority (Moore 2013, 921–922).

Recently, critics have argued that the top denominational leadership is increasingly hierarchical in its thinking and in its interpretation and application of policies, and it has even been accused of following the Roman Catholic pattern of governance which the church traditionally so forcefully condemned (see e.g. Knight 2017a and 2017b). We do well to remember the words of Charles Bradford (former president of the North-American Division):

> The various levels of church structure (conference, union, division, General Conference) derive their authority from local congregations. Their existence is made legitimate only by their relevance and service to the total fellowship. (Bradford 1979, 15)

I wholeheartedly agree with a Baptist scholar who suggested that it would be much better to speak of a "web" rather than of a "structure" of church governance. "Structure" has the connotation of being rigid and stiff, while the metaphor of a "web" may suggest a major degree of vulnerability, but also of flexibility and pliability, while with its stickiness it also "holds those who move and dwell upon it" (Pool 1997, 444–445).

Before moving on to the second part of this article, one further point must be mentioned. Keeping in mind that all authority in the church is God-given, we must recognize a difference in the weight of authority—not by accepting that the various levels of a denominational organization may have an intrinsically different degree of authority, but in the realization that God is the Source of all authority. "As Lord and King of all creation and history, He has the right to exercise authority over humanity." (Kinnamon 1982, 201) He is the ultimate source of all church authority. Moreover, with other Christians, Adventists hold that God disclosed Himself in Jesus Christ, the living Word

and the Head of the church. In his love and grace God further spoke and speaks to us though the written Word, that witnesses supremely to Jesus Christ (Dederen 1995, 2). Therefore, the authority of the church is always subject to a far higher authority. The church must always know its subordinate place. It can never claim to be inerrant or infallible. It is the "body of Christ" in this world, but "it is not mystically fused with Christ." "Christ stands over against it exercising his Lordship. It must listen in obedience and only then speak in the name of its Lord." (Meilaender 2007, 37)

This recognition should help us in the interpretation of statements by Ellen White about the authority of a General Conference session. Whatever authority it has, it is always subject to an infinitely higher authority.

In the recent controversies about policy compliance it has been argued that individual opinions and decisions of "lower" denominational entities, must always be subject to the decisions of General Conference sessions, since this is the "highest authority that God has upon the earth" (White 1948a, 492). When this statement, that dates from 1875, is quoted, there is usually no mention of its context. Ellen White addressed these words to an employee who had refused to accept a particular church assignment (Chudley 2013, 27). And as we try to assess the weight of this statement we must not forget that, repeatedly, Ellen White strongly expressed her doubts about the ways in which the General Conference leadership at certain times was leading the church. She wrote in her diary in 1894 that the leadership of the General Conference had become "a strange voice" and that "God does not speak through them" (White, Manuscript 114, 1894). Many similar statements could be quoted.[7] Nonetheless, in 1909 she once again emphasized the unique authority of a General Conference session:

> When in a General Conference, the judgment of the brethren assembled from all parts of the field is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered. Never should a laborer regard as a virtue the persistent maintenance of his position of independence, contrary to the decision of the general body. (White 1948b, 260)

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[7] For a fascinating study of Ellen White's interaction with three General Conference presidents, see Valentine 2011.

Robert Pierson, the General Conference from 1966 to 1979, went even a step further and admonished the staff of the General Conference to remember that "we are daily, hourly, momentarily, a part of a group of leaders that constitute the highest authority of God on earth" (Pierson 1976).

In 1877, the General Conference during its session passed the following significant resolution:

> Resolved, That the highest authority under God among Seventh-day Adventists is found in the will of the body of that people, as expressed in the decisions of the General Conference *when acting in its proper jurisdiction*; and that such decisions should be submitted to by all without exception, *unless they can be shown to conflict with the word of God and the rights of the individual conscience*. (*Review and Herald*, October 4, 1877, 106; italics added)

It is to be noted that in this statement it is clearly stated that a General Conference session must remain within its "proper jurisdiction" and that the individual conscience does not lose its significant role. Perhaps these conditions are not always sufficiently adhered to in recent times.

2.   The Pastor – Role and Relationships

The almost 30,000 ministerial "workers" play an important role in the Adventist denomination ("Annual Statistical Report 2017," 10). It is, however, difficult to state in a few words how they function in various parts of the world and how they relate to their conferences or unions in their daily activities, or to describe what degree of autonomy they have. It is no secret that there is a significant difference between the district pastor in a rural region in Africa or South-America and the "senior" pastor of a university church in North America. But, according to church policy, they are all subject to the authority of their employing bodies—in most instances their local conferences. The *Minister's Manual* emphasizes the subordinate status of the local pastor. In earlier versions of the *Minister's Manual* the conference president was described as the "overseer" of the pastors in his conference. That rather hierarchical description is no longer found in the current edition. The statement that the conference president is, however, "largely dependent on pastors in carrying out the plans and policies of the conference" is retained. The pastor is required to strictly apply all church policies and closely adhere to the *Church Manual* (cf. *Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Manual*, 78).

The authority of the pastor is clearly quite limited, when seen from the perspective of the employing organization. He has, however, a significant degree of authority in his role in his local church(es). He "assumes principal leadership of the congregation" (*Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Manual*, 101). He is a *primus inter pares* among the elders and must instruct the church officers in their duties and plan with them for all lines of church work and activities. Under normal circumstances he chairs the church board. Ordained ministers can officiate at all rites and perform all official function of the church, while some restrictions apply to those holding other credentials (*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, rev. edition, 2010, 33).

The various official documents of the church make it clear that the pastor is limited in his personal freedom. The language of previous editions of the *Minister's Manual* expresses this more unequivocally than the 2009 edition does. In the earlier edition [1992] ministers are advised that "when you do become an employee and leader in the church, you accept a responsibility to the church that may curtail your personal freedom" (*Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Manual*, 64). Pastors must trust their leaders, consult with them and support them. "One right surrendered while in the employ of a denomination is the freedom to preach, print, or propagate views that contradict the official or accepted position of the church." Furthermore, the pastor is told: "You do not have the right to discuss your personal studies in a way that will undermine the faith of any member" (ibid., 65). Although this wording is no longer there, this still expresses what is expected of the pastor.

2.1 Obedience or Dissent?

So, where does that leave the pastor who has some reservations regarding the way some of the *Fundamental Beliefs* of the church are formulated? And can the pastor follow his conscience when confronted with particular pastoral situations, or must he always go "by the book"? Can he, when he feels he has good reason to do so, deviate from the official church policy with regard to persons he is allowed to baptize or marry? Or with regard to the administering of church discipline? Is he free to openly declare that he disagrees with the decisions of the church regarding the ordination of female pastors?

A pastor must, like all other members, realize that he belongs to the faith community that he serves. In his book *The Problem of Christianity*, first published in 1913, the American philosopher Josiah Royce (1855–1916) defined

the concept of community in a way that is spot-on. He says that a community is a group of people who are bound together by the memory of a shared past and the projection of common hopes for the future (quoted by Bracken 1970, 440). This applies also very much to the faith community of Seventh-day Adventists. In order to remain a community and to be able to pursue its goals, the faith community must organize itself as efficiently as possible. It must arrive at a broad consensus as to what the community believes, and it must, inevitably, develop policies so that it can continue to operate as a community in the pursuit of its mission. This is a process that will never be complete and final. From time to time policies will need to be changed or refined. Theology always remains work in process, and this is true of doctrines, however "fundamental" they may be. They are imperfect human attempts to put into human language what we understand of what the infinite God has revealed to us. As the preamble of the *Fundamental Beliefs* indicates, even these fundamentals are not forever set in concrete.[8]

The question is (in the words of an official at the World Council of Churches): "Can Christian liberty under the Gospel be preserved by ecclesiastical structures for teaching and decision making?" (Kinnamon 1982, 196) Or, in my words: Is there space for diversity of opinion on certain issues and for conscientious dissent, while remaining a loyal member of the community? Raoul Dederen voiced a warning. Listening to the voice of the community, he says, is not a sign of "sheepish, spineless neutralism." No,

> it is rather a cast of mind that expresses itself in a succession of ways. First, it means the readiness to go beyond the privacy of one's own views and to open up to the persuasion of a broader vision. Next, it implies the willingness to reassess one's own position in the light of the church's decision. Third, it means a considerable reluctance to conclude right off that the church's decision is erroneous. (Dederen 1995, 8)

Yet, at the same time, as we have seen earlier, the biblical view of authority is not one of dominating power and coercion, but of servanthood. "True authority can never be imposed: it only works when it is offered, chosen and freely adopted" (Kinnamon 1982, 201). Personal moral development requires critical thinking and not merely following conventions and conformity to rules. "When morality is constrained by simply focusing on obedience to

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[8] Cf. https://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental-beliefs/ (accessed February 3, 2020).

moral authorities, we risk not becoming free, choosing, responsible individuals." (Reuschling 2005, 67)

Accepting the teaching and governing authority of the church does not presuppose blind obedience. We must not forget that all people – pastors most definitely included – will be required to give an account to Christ for everything they have done (Blackaby and Blackaby 2001, 91). Did the great Reformer Martin Luther not model proper conscientious dissent for us when he said that his conscience was "captive to the Word of God," and that it is neither "safe nor salutary" to go against conscience (Bradbury 2014, 33)? Ellen White endorsed that principle when she wrote that political and ecclesial authorities sin against God when they compel people to go against their consciences (White 1895). Gilbert Meilaender, a professor in Christian Ethics at the University of Valparaiso, makes an important point when he maintains that the authority of the church must be respected, because the church is addressed by the Lord. "But the believer is also addressed singly. That is, each believer is addressed not only by the Body of Christ, but also by the Head of that Body, the Lord Himself."(Meilaender 2007, 37)

There can be a tension between the necessity of respecting the authority of the church and listening to the voice of one's own conscience. While it is true that the individual – *in casu* the pastor – must listen to the voice of the church, the church also has the obligation to listen to, and examine, the view of the individual believer/pastor. "Even if found unacceptable in many respects" such an opinion may contain "a part of the truth, which can then be opened up in fuller and richer ways" (ibid., 35). Johannes A. van der Ven, a Dutch professor in Practical Theology, is of the opinion that the church is always in need of reformation and that this reformation will never take place without conflict. "In fact," he writes,

> the reformation of the church depends on conflicts and their balanced treatment. Being without conflicts is often a sign of a low frequency and meager intensity of interactions between members in the church. (van der Ven 1996, 381)

While it is true that a community cannot exist without general consensus about its goals and its self-identity, responsible dissent can have a healthy influence, and does not necessarily threaten the unity of the church. Dissent

forces the community to re-assess its self-understanding. It is, therefore, important that the community creates channels for the expression of dissent (Bracken 1970, 446–447).

There is a point when the tension between the official views of the church and those of the individual pastor rises to a point where the church must take measures to protect its identity and unity. The church has the right to discipline ministers when they manifest a persistent lack of loyalty and no longer support the essential Adventist beliefs.

The other side of the coin is: No one is forced to remain a member of the church or continue to serve as a pastor. The church is voluntary community. If anyone feels he/she cannot in good conscience supports the views and actions of the church, there may be no other option but to leave.

Many questions remain as to how the church community must deal with those who are seen as having become a threat to the well-being and unity of the church. How does the church determine, and if necessary, enforce what is and what is not acceptable within the diversity of belief? It seems to me that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not yet found a fully satisfactory answer to that question and I agree with those voices in the church that believe that establishing a system of compliance committees is certainly not a satisfactory reaction.

3.   Conclusions

Currently we face some unfortunate controversies in the church and see a lamentable degree of polarization. No one should suggest that the issues that are at stake are not important. Allow me to make a few personal suggestions that I believe are worthy of consideration:

1. We must, in our discussions of where we differ, focus much more on the many points where we agree. We should not lose sight of the fact that, with all its diversity, the Adventist Church is still remarkably united, certainly when compared to many other faith communities.
2. It would also help if the church would be less selective in the selection of the theological and policy issues that are the focus of current compliance concerns. Why is doubt about the literal days of creation a greater concern than, for instance, a denial of Trinitarian doctrine? Why is "orthodoxy" with regard to homosexuality more vital than

maintaining a balanced biblical view of "Last Generation Theology" issues?

3. The church must be extremely careful in disciplining dissenting voices, even if it considers particular theological views to be unacceptable. Great damage may be done and much personal and corporate distress may result if theological controversies are not handled with great care and with a great amount of patience, ensuring that political issues and power elements do not muddle the waters. Whatever we think, for instance of theological issues in the Ford-crisis, we should learn from the (often political) way in which this was handled. Defrocking Desmond Ford and the resignation or firing of hundreds of pastors did not stop the discussions, and many of the ideas that Ford promoted are still very much alive in spite of his removal.[9] Perhaps one of the challenges for the Adventist Church is how to display a greater trust in the long-term work of the Holy Spirit in guiding the church in the guarding and refining of its understanding of biblical truth.

4. There must be a greater awareness in some quarters of the church of the danger of hierarchical thinking, and a greater willingness to recognize cultural differences and, therefore, to allow for flexibility. Above all, in dealing with differences of opinion or dissent, the church must use its authority in ways that are characterized by a spirit of true servant leadership and love.

5. We should emphasize what Josiah Joyce stated as one of the conditions for the formation of a true community: all members must maintain a special love and loyalty to other members of the community and to the community as a whole (Bracken 1970, 440). This requires from members – pastors included – who disagree with their church about particular issues, a distinct sense of responsibility for the well-being of the community and great care – and sometimes reticence – in voicing their opinions.

6. Many issues could – over time – be solved, or at least diffused, if we would allow – corporately and individually – our thinking and interaction to be characterized not so much by being proven right but by being gracious. *It would make a great difference in the church if we would*

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[9] A careful study of the aftermath of this crisis is: Ballis 1999.

always operate from the basic assumption that, whatever our differences of
opinion, these differences do not make us into enemies, and that we all love
our Lord and our church.

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Reinder Bruinsma

Zusammenfassung

Der Artikel behandelt zuerst kirchliche Autorität im Allgemeinen und die Art und Weise, wie diese in der weltweiten Kirche der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten verstanden wird und funktioniert. Alle kirchliche Autorität ist delegierte Autorität, und die Autorität der Kirche ist immer Gott und der Offenbarung in seinem Wort unterworfen. Die adventistische Leitungsstruktur hat sich nicht immer ausreichend gegen autoritäre und hierarchische Tendenzen gewehrt. Der zweite Teil dieses Artikels konzentriert sich auf die Beziehung zwischen dem Pastor und der Kirche, die ihn beschäftigt. Seine Freiheit ist begrenzt, was Kirchenpolitik und die Äußerung theologisch nicht akzeptabler Meinungen betrifft. Andererseits kann von ihm nicht erwartet werden, dass er blinden Gehorsam zeigt, und einige Formen des Dissenses können die Gemeinschaft sogar bereichern. Der Pastor muss auf sein Gewissen hören, muss aber in einigen Fällen Disziplinierungsmaßnahmen erwarten. Jede Disziplinierung erfordert große Sorgfalt, damit nicht politische Elemente und die Verweigerung des Rechts auf kritisches Nachdenken die wirklichen Probleme verdecken.

Résumé

L'article traite d'abord de l'autorité de l'Eglise en général et de la façon dont elle est comprise et fonctionne dans l'Église adventiste du septième jour. Toute autorité de l'Eglise est une autorité déléguée, et elle est toujours soumise à Dieu et à la révélation dans sa Parole. La structure gouvernementale adventiste n'a pas toujours suffisamment résisté aux tendances autoritaires et hiérarchiques. La deuxième partie de cet article se concentre sur la relation entre le pasteur et son entité Eglise employeuse. Sa liberté est limitée, en termes de politiques ecclésiastiques et d'expression d'opinions théologiquement inacceptables. D'un autre côté, on ne peut pas s'attendre à ce qu'il manifeste une obéissance aveugle, et certaines formes de dissidence peuvent réellement enrichir la communauté. Le pasteur doit écouter sa conscience, mais dans certains cas, il doit s'attendre à être repris. Toute discipline requiert un grand soin, de peur que des éléments politiques et un déni du droit à la pensée critique ne masquent les vrais problèmes.

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Millennial Leadership
People, Participation, and Plurality

Bjørn Ottesen

Abstract

This study attempts to find and describe a leadership style for a church organization that matches the needs and expectations of the generation called "Millennials." Lessons are drawn from the workplace where employing entities have had to adapt to the strengths, weaknesses, demands and expectations of a generation that carries particular cultural trends. Leaning on research from the employment context and adding insights from two major theories on leadership, conclusions are drawn on how to lead, involve, engage and include Millennials in the life of the church. Conclusions point in the direction of a "softer" and more "feminine" approach to leadership, emphasizing collaboration, consensus, cooperation, accepting personal autonomy and participation – displaying modesty and humility.

Prelude

Traveling and observing church life on different continents, particularly in different European settings, and watching delegates from around the world speaking and voting at General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church meetings, this writer has noted that the leadership styles in church entities tend to reflect local cultural norms and political structures. In societies with a history of strong hierarchical structures, church members often seem to expect strong and somewhat dominant leaders, whereas members in highly democratic communities with a tradition of collaboration, cooperation and consensus, expect a softer leadership style and want to be heard and to participate in decision-making. One example of this cultural correlation can be seen in the Seventh-day Adventist representatives from the Nordic countries' (among others) stance on the issue of women's ordination; feeling at liberty to

question the relevance and correctness of the votes in General Conference meetings; and assertively settling for alternative practises (cf. Scandinavian Unions of the SDA Church 2018). In The return of the Vikings (2018) Shern and Jeberg describe the general Nordic leadership style as emphasising collaboration, consensus, cooperation, accepting personal autonomy and participation – emphasising a feminine orientation; displaying modesty and humility (Shern and Jeberg 2018, 36–37). The pattern of strong individuals working in a diverse environment and still seeking cooperation might partly explain the actions of the Nordic unions in the debate over the ordination of women; one expects to be heard and be given some space. Variance, freedom to act on local convictions and some autonomy within the larger structure are expected. This behaviour might seem provocative and disloyal in the eyes of representatives from other cultures. It is one example of how church leadership tends to reflect leadership styles in society at large.

1.   Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on what could be appropriate leadership styles in the western Seventh-day Adventist Church (hereafter SDA) now that the common culture has passed through postmodernism and is moving into post-postmodern times – an era still looking for a name.[1] A particular focus will be on the Millennial generation (born 1980–2000) which is setting cultural trends, tends to live by particular values, priorities and characteristics, and therefore also set expectations to leadership styles. Now that Millennials are more than one third of the workforce and many are moving into leadership and management, some new trends are observable in their leadership style and what they want from their leaders. In the following we will look at Millennials as they operate in the workplace and society in general and see if

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[1] The terminologies used for describing what might replace postmodernism are multiple. A major anthology introducing several of these varying attempts is *Supplanting the Postmodern* edited by David Stavris and Nicholas Rudrum (2015). A variety of critics writing from perspectives of literature, art, architecture, movies, politics or other, name the cultural trends that seems to replace postmodernism as "Remodernism" (Childish and Thomson 2000; cf. Evans 2000), "Altermodernism" (Bourriaud 2009), "Metamodernism" (Vermeulen and den Akker 2010), "Renewalism" (Toth and Brooks 2007), "Performatism" (Eshelman 2008), "Hypermodernism" (Lipovetsky 2005), "Digimodernism" (Kirby 2009) and "Auto-modernism" (Samuels 2007). More terms can be added from other thinkers: Geo-modernism, Neo-modernism, Post-postmodern.

there are lessons to be learned for how the Church might incorporate them in its community and operation. There are plenty of primary sources describing trends among Millennials and there seems to be a strong consensus about general trends in that population segment.[2] As the primary purpose of this paper is reflection, there will only be limited reference to primary sources, and more interaction with secondary sources and authors who try to draw lessons from current research.

In the Western world the SDA young people tend to leave church attendance in their 20s. While Millennials are described as being more spiritual than their parent generation (McFarland and Jimenez 2017, 53, 58), churches are not able to connect to their spirituality[3] and keep them involved in their life and ministry. The church needs to gain more understanding of how Millennials think, prioritise and live. Through this understanding, the Church might be able to form leadership styles and create structures that will engage.

At the risk of simplification, Millennials in the so-called "western world" are described as one. There are differences between young people in Europe, Australia and North America, but at the same time common trends are significant.[4] It should be noted that there is a lot more published on Millennials in America than in Europe, particularly about their relationship to the Church.

This paper has three sections: (1) Summarise lessons from research on Millennials in society and the workplace. (2) Relate these observations to leadership theories. (3) Make an attempt to draw lessons from 1 and 2 and relate them to leadership in a church setting.

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[2] The primary sources for the study of Millennials come in public statistical information, and in qualitative and quantitative studies. Only a few random samples can be mentioned here as a taster: "YouGov 2017 Survey on Religion;" "Office for National Statistics – Religion;" "What Is Your Religion?;" Suh and Russel 2015; Niemäla 2015; Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons 2010; Mäkinen et al. 2018; McClure 2016.

[3] The challenge the church has in reaching Millennials was clearly demonstrated in a large study by "The Barna Institute" done on in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists; published in Jenkin and Martin 2014 a.

[4] This similarity is evident in the primary sources. As this paper is of a more reflective kind, the demonstration of this fact will be left for another article. See also footnote 1.

2.   Some Trends and Characteristics about Millennials in the Workplace

The following summary of the characteristics of Millennials by Anne P. Horan can prove helpful as an introduction to Millennials:

> While millennials are considered coddled, conditioned to feel special while expecting affirmation for just participating, they are also resourceful, hard-working, service-oriented, technologically savvy, and ready to change the world .... This unique generation is at risk from aftershocks of indulgent parenting, unrealistic perspectives of adulthood portrayed through media, education preparing them to be students rather than workers, a cynicism fostered through postmodernism, and a culture of convenience over commitment .... Unlike prior generations, millennials have too many choices leading to inner conflict and indecisiveness .... These characteristics confound spiritual formation and prompt uncertainty and stress. (Horan 2017, 58–59)

The millennial generation comes with significant strengths. They are better educated than any generation before (McFarland and Jimenenz 2017, 17), at least in the number of higher degrees granted (Hobart and Sendek 2014, 69). They are more ethnically diverse and are comfortable with diversity (ibid., 91). They bring to the table some positive social habits like teamwork, achievement, modesty and good conduct. In the words of William Strass: "Over the next decade, the millennial Generation will entirely recast the image of youth from downbeat and alienated to upbeat and engaged – with potentially seismic consequences for America." (Pontier and DeVries 2017, 88)

In a similar fashion McFarland and Jimenez summarise the positive characteristics of Millennials to be huge in numbers, diverse in terms of ethnicity and belief, optimistic about changing the world, seeking for meaning in work and free time, setting realistic goals, relationally oriented, and wanting change for the better (McFarland and Jimenez 2017, 106).

The search for meaning and making a contribution also comes at a cost. Carolyn Wason expresses this in *Millennials and the Mission of God* (2017) where she describes the tendency of the Millennial to feel guilt and shame for everything that is not optimal. She says about herself: "I am twenty-six-years-old and I'm already tired" (cited in Bush and Wason 2017, 104).

A major work on Millennials in the workplace was done by Hobard and Sendek published in *Gen Y Now – Millennials and the Evolution of Leadership*

(Hobart and Sendek 2014) and they note several characteristics of that generation. Firstly, Millennials look for meaning in the workplace (ibid., 110). They are not happy to just "have a job" and do it for the income, but they need to see how their work makes a difference. They ask not only "what" about work but also the "why" (ibid., 17). Their view of work is that it is part of life and like all other aspects of existence it has to carry meaning. This is also confirmed by Paul Sohn, leadership coach, in *Quarter Life Calling* (2017) where he describes his own experience as a Millennial desperately searching for meaning beyond the consumerism of western societies (Sohn 2017, 1–10). The Millennials' search for meaning is also demonstrated in their willingness to do volunteer work and seek employment in NGOs at a rate that goes far beyond that of their parents' generation (Hobart and Sendek 2014, 54).

A second aspect of the search for meaning is that Millennials want to integrate all of life so that personal interests, family, hobbies, social life and work all have their proper part (ibid., 21). The aim of finding purpose, meaning and balance is often made possible through flexible working hours and for tasks to be done more or less anytime and anywhere, thanks to modern technology and media (ibid., 38–39).

Yet another aspect of the search for meaning is the expectation of possibilities for personal growth. Work has to be interesting and challenging and give opportunity for personal development (ibid., 51–52). If these criteria for meaning are not present in his or her environment, the Millennial will simply move on. There is little loyalty to the workplace, something that has become evident from the rapid turnover in employment for that generation. Millennials are opportunists and American research show that 70 % of all Millennials will have changed jobs within the two first years of employment. Companies experience twice as high turnover of Millennial employees as compared with older generations (Pontier and DeVries 2017, 154).

Although Millennials often are individualistic and seek fulfilment for their life, they are not narcissistic, nor driven by egoism. They just want to be in a context where things are meaningful and they can have a sense of "changing the world" (ibid., 103–105). Bringing together the fact that Millennials are well educated and want to make a contribution makes collaboration and teamwork the natural work environment; all have a contribution to make (Hobart and Sendek 2015, 56).

Millennials are looking for relationships in the workplace. They want to be part of a team and expect to be heard and have frequent feedback in open communication (ibid., 17). Leaders of Millennials should try to create a "small company feel" even in a large organisation to facilitate for this need and mentality (ibid., 86). The sense of relationship in closeness to others and frequent communication is a high priority, a need and an expectation.

A Finnish qualitative study from 2018 of thirteen preservice teachers confirms the same priorities and values in a European setting. Four researchers connected to the University of Tampere found the following three areas the main concerns of younger teachers-to-be: The experience of time, the experience of reciprocal participation, and the experience of meaningfulness. The following quote relates to "the experience of time:"

> The themes of possessing, investing, wasting and budgeting time were identified as primary issues in the data. Interviewees tended to consciously allocate time resources to their studies, work, families, hobbies and other activities and to schedule their lives with high efficacy and flexibility. (Mäkinen et al. 2018, 8)

The researchers concluded the following with a view to "the experience of reciprocal participation:"

> Participants' prior pedagogical knowledge was affected by their experience of the school as a social environment involving interpersonal relationships. While they expected teaching and learning to be a collaborative enterprise, many of them came into conflict with the locally situated and individualistic working culture around the triad of the STEP [= Secondary Teacher Educational Programme]. (Ibid., 9)

Millennial preservice teachers expected high levels of communication and clarity around expectations, tasks and other issues related to their work. They also expected to be included in the thought processes of the teaching team. They were not afraid to express anger or dissatisfaction when such expectations were not met (ibid., 10).

On the issue of "meaning" the researchers noted that

> The interviewees presented themselves as people looking for value in every area of their lives, including their studies. They therefore expected the STEP to reveal the connections between their personal experiences, required tasks and real-life professional competencies. (Ibid., 11)

From the findings so far, six points of particular interest for a church setting can be highlighted:

(1) Millennials want to find meaning in what they do – both in their private sphere and in their work. They are a generation that "want to change the world" and are willing to make sacrifices for a cause.

(2) Millennials expect to be heard, know they have a contribution to make and want to be part of a team.

(3) Millennials expect their work environment to leave room for authenticity and autonomous action. With an individualistic attitude Millennials expect acceptance. One belongs to the team to a large extent on one's own terms.

(4) A work environment needs to give opportunities for flexibility and growth. Together with the importance of meaning, these priorities count for more than the making of money (Hesselbein 2014, 6).

(5) Millennials tend to be loyal to certain values and causes, but not to organizations and institutions. As noted above they tend to move on when better opportunities come along.

(6) Social Media leads many (particularly younger) Millennials to a spontaneous lifestyle with an emphasis on personal relevance and a life organized around events rather than set routines (Twenge 2017)[5].

How these different factors affect Millennials relationship to the Church will be discussed in the third section.

3.   Two Leadership Models Relevant for Millennials

Two leadership theories that correspond to the expectations of Millennials can be mentioned here: The "Servant Leadership" model introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf in his two volumes (Greenleaf and Vaill 1998; Greenleaf 1977) and

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[5] The effects of social Media on youth thought and behaviour is discussed throughout this volume.

the later emphasis on vulnerability, humility and collaboration presented by Brené Brown in her latest book *Dare to Lead* (2018).

Greenleaf, executive officer at AT&T, presented his theories on "Servant Leadership" for the first time as early as the 1970s. It is interesting to note that more than forty years later several authors mention this model as fitting for the Millennial culture. Having studied three generational cohorts, Barbuto and Gottfredsson suggested that "servant leadership is likely the optimal leadership style for creating an organization rich in human capital development and for making an organization a preferred workplace for the Millennial generation" (Barbuto and Gottfredson 2016, 59). Robert Vecchiotti, writing on how current leadership styles have been formed largely by feminine values and priorities, notes that "The practice of servant leadership is having a resurgence prompting the question: Is the servant leadership model first proposed by Robert Greenleaf in a 1970 pamphlet ... the best fit for the Millennial cohort?" (Vecchiotti 2018, 43) The suggested answer is yes. A third example comes from the research done by Balda and Mora (2011) who, having gone through key characteristics of Millennials and their role in the workplace, mention the relevance of "transformational leadership" and connect this to Greenleaf's theories. "Servant leadership fits within this broader understanding of the relationship between leaders and followers, looking at follower well-being and its relationship to overall performance" (Balda and Mora 2011, 19). Reflecting on the Millennial values of relationships, collaboration, communication and the common good, Balda and Mora suggest a slight twist in the name of the theory; stating that "service leader" might be an even better term than "servant leader." (Ibid., 21)

The essence of Robert Greenleaf's servant leadership theory is well summarised in the early pages of his first volume:

> The servant-leader is servant first ... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions ... The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.
> The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as

persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (Greenleaf 1977, 13–14)

The emphasis on "softer" values in leadership are also displayed in Brené Brown's recent volume *Dare to Lead* (2018).[6] Central to her theory is that the way leaders respond to their fear of failure or rejection can be the greatest barrier to effective leadership. If leaders choose to put on an "armour" of protection rather than being vulnerable, relational and communicating openly, true leadership and personal development cannot happen. Brown lists a number of ways in which leaders put on armours of protection, power, authority and hierarchy rather than seeking understanding, collaboration and vulnerability through communication (Brown 2018, 76–77). It is the courage to be vulnerable that creates the type of atmosphere Millennials appreciate in the workplace; openness, recognition of one's own shortcomings, the need for team work and collaboration, and authenticity in communication. The leader becomes more of a facilitator than a boss.

Arguing along the same lines as Brown, Thomas Maier et al. suggest the following preference among Millennials for leadership style:

> Findings indicated Millennials value leaders that are more orientated toward people rather than task and organizational mission. In terms of value-centred leadership competencies, findings indicated Millennials place a higher degree of importance on value-centered leaders that are inclusive, collaborative and committed. (Maier et al. n. d., 382)[7]

Some would argue that the leadership style relevant for Millennials carries more "feminine" values whereas the leadership style coming out of the industrial revolution tended to carry the more masculine values of productivity, one-sided focus and hierarchical structures. Robert Vecchiotti describes this shift in "Contemporary Leadership: The Perspective of a Practitioner" (2018),

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[6] Brené Brown is research professor at the University of Houston, famous for her research on vulnerability and the 5th most viewed TED Talk ever.

[7] See also Seel 2018, 142, and Bush and Wason 2017, 15.

and states that "new collaboration and teamwork, work-life balance, and continuous feedback and learning are added considerations" (Vecchiotti 2018, 40) in this development. Based on research he notes that

> Many women leaders focus on employees and their development. They are willing to say 'I do not know the answer.' They are willing to focus on the long term and the short term. They are more collaborative than men and express their style as a process of nurturing and evolving to get business results. (Vecchiotti 2018, 41)

Having interviewed Millennials all over the world, Gerzema and D'Antonio report that both young men and women

> ... recognized aggressive and hierarchical management techniques as 'masculine.' Similarly, we found that they regarded generous, communicative leadership to be feminine. And in the context of a complex, highly connected work world, they saw great value in the feminine traits. (Gerzema and D'Antonio 2017, 64)

Gibbs and Bolger, reporting on changes in leadership styles in the "emerging church"[8], note a shift towards a more organic view of leadership; leadership as a process with in a community. Space does not allow for a detailed discussion of their findings here, but the following sub-headings from their section on leadership, can illustrate that shift (Gibbs and Bolger 2005, 194–205):
- from stifling control to creative freedom;
- from the vision of the leader to the vision of all;
- from powerful group leaders to leaderless groups;
- from leadership based on willingness to leadership based on gifting;
- from leadership based on position to leadership based on passion;
- from authority based on position to influence based on track record;
- from closed leadership to open leadership;
- from leaders setting the agenda to congregational agenda setting;
- from exclusive decision making to inclusive consensus building.

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[8] "Emerging Church" is a term used to express a number of church plants or initiatives trying to connect Christian faith and community to a post-modern culture.

#### 4.	Possible Lessons for the Church

Based on the descriptions of Millennials above, we suggest six possible lessons for leadership in Church. The appreciation of a leadership style that is built on softer values and more "feminine" traits redefines the role of the local pastor or elder. Firstly, leadership is no longer based on authority or power coming out of an office or position, but is based on the ability to communicate, be real, be supportive and collaborate. Authority is given to the person who is trustworthy and can demonstrate competence. Trust comes from listening to others, involving others, being vulnerable and sharing responsibility. This model of leadership is more complex and asks for emotional health, maturity and humility. If the Church function as a hierarchical "machine," demanding obedience to a "system," it becomes a "beast" in the eyes of Millennials, and they are not interested in feeding such a beast. The more open pose recommended here must be reflected in preaching and teaching, in how communication is done, and meetings are conducted. Hierarchy is out – network is in.

Secondly, Millennials put people and relationships above institutions and set policies. Individualism with its strong emphasis on autonomy, respect, authenticity and vulnerability demand a flexible organisation that recognizes individual needs and the uniqueness of each (Ottesen 2014)[9]. Institutional traditions and set policies are questioned as Millennials want to be part of defining their own framework, routines, responsibilities, involvement and obligations. Policy is often seen as an artificial external power or authority speaking to the local group "from above." The Millennial expects to be part of the discussion that sets the parameters for her or his own environment.

Thirdly, the new leadership style is about involvement and ownership. The church should not ask "What can we do *for* the Millennials?" but rather "What can we do *with* the Millennials?" They are knowledgeable and they want to be heard, included, and involved. They want to be part of a team and belong. Being a passive spectator is not interesting and kills the feeling of belonging (McFarland and Jimenez 2017, 84). Church leadership needs to happen in a

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[9] The issue of individualism is discussed at length in this chapter.

conversation where each individual is listened to with respect and where the group owns the decisions.

A fourth lesson for the Church is the fact that Millennials are looking for meaning; they have a desire to "change the world." They want to make a practical difference. This desire does not correspond to the traditional denominational approach which tried to convince others of certain doctrinal positions or propositional truths. The words of Jesus in the parable of the last judgement (Matt. 25:31–46) where healing, helping, caring and connecting are central concepts, are the kinds of actions Millennials would like to be part of. Gabe Lyons writes about this in *The Next Christians* (2010). Based on the large study of Millennials, *UnChristian* (Kinnaman 2012), Lyons concludes that this generation can be characterised as the "Restorers." The focus is on justice, beauty, environmental issues and equality. Millennials want to live in the world and be a blessing. "They [the next Christians] see themselves on a mission, partnering with God to breathe justice and mercy and peace and compassion and generosity into the world" (Lyons 2010, 59). Gabe Lyons describes the future Christians this way:

> They no longer feel bound to wait for heaven or spend all of their time telling people what they should believe. Instead, they are participating with God in his restoration project for the whole world. (Lyons 2010, 53)

> They see themselves on a mission, partnering with God to breathe justice and mercy and peace and compassion and generosity into the world. (Lyons 2010, 59)

McFarland and Jimenez argue that the Church should respond to this desire in young people and "send out Millennials as missionaries" and that a young person doing Christian service will see themselves as Christian in a more significant way than if they acknowledged and agreed to some dogmatic statements (McFarland and Jimenez 2017, 84).

Relating to the same sentiment, Pontier and DeVries point out that the best way the church can be relevant for Millennials is to help them find a way to change the world (Pontier and DeVries 2017, 106–107).

> A typical Millennial might say: *Nothing's wrong with the church. It still works fine. But the applications I need for my life are just different from a generation ago – so different, in fact, the church might be a mostly useless artefact. Sure, I can still go there to sing hymns and sit in class, but that is*

not exactly how I want to spend my time. (Ibid., 110; italics in the original)

This quote connects to the fifth lesson: Millennials have little or no loyalty to organisations or institutions (Hobart and Sendek 2014, 109; see also Pontier and DeVries 2017, 154). As observed above Millennials easily swap jobs if something better comes along. The Church can expect a similar attitude; even if strongly committed to Christian beliefs, the Millennial does not feel loyalty to the church institution or the programme of the Church unless it brings meaning to their lives. Combined with the high value Millennials put on their time, this makes regular church attendance a challenge. If coming to church does not bring a contribution to life and/or if they are not in some ways engaged themselves, they might choose to spend their time in another way. A leadership challenge in the church is therefore to engage young people in what they define as meaningful; finding areas where they can live out their discipleship for Christ within parameters that make sense to them. Often churches define commitment and belonging as proportionate to the level of attendance at weekend services. Some major rethinking might be needed at this point. Asking the Millennials how they would want to express their Christianity might set a new agenda for a local church, but might be just as Christian. There is more emphasis in Scripture about helping orphans, widows and immigrants than there is on meeting for worship services. Being a team, working in collaboration, listening to all and accepting diversity, the church can be a force for good in the world as it releases young people to live out their values.

A sixth lesson is the need for mentorships. Young people want to be involved, take ownership, and be heard. But they want to do this in a community and appreciate the experience of others – particularly that of people older than themselves. Many young people have grown up with little adult contact and appreciate relationships with the parent generation. Leadership for Millennials includes being a personal mentor – taking the time for deep conversations. McFarland and Jemenez state: "If young people have just a few adults who will come alongside them and encourage them to grow in their faith, there's a much better chance they will remain in the church and be rooted in Jesus long into adulthood" (McFarland and Jimenez 2017, 67). Furthermore they discuss leadership through mentorship as a dialogue:

> Discipleship in this new context [new spirituality] requires a great commitment to developing and mentoring leaders – and to allow younger leaders real opportunities to shape their churches and businesses. It also requires what we describe as "vocational discipleship," the concept of helping Millennials understand their God-given purpose through work and also how to be faithful in the complexity of life's callings. (Ibid., 85)

The desire among Millennials for adult mentors is confirmed through research done by *The Barna Institute* (Jenkin and Martin 2014b) and several other authors (Pontier and DeVries 2017, 134; see also pp. 31, 98, 133–134).

At this point it seems relevant to make a reflection on the developments in the worldwide SDA community as it relates to Millennials' expectations of leadership.

Over the last several years, there has been a trend towards centralized power and decision-making in the worldwide SDA church. This has been of concern for many influential people in this denomination. A couple of examples would be William G. Johnsson (Johnsson 2017) and George R. Knight (Knight 2017). Some later initiatives coming from the world headquarters with compliance documents and committees working on compliance issues,[10] illustrate a move towards control, the use of structural "muscles," and an expected obedience to policy and a majority vote.

These trends are taking the Church in the opposite direction from Millennial values. They clash with the general acceptance of plurality as opposed to uniformity, individualism rather than institutionalised identity and personal authenticity as opposed to loyalty to a system. The trends in the world headquarters are bringing the church backwards in time rather than initiating fresh dialogue with current trends and other ways to do church. This is a development that might push even more Millennials away from church fellowship, particularly in the western world.

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[10] Cf. https://spectrummagazine.org/news/2018/general-conference-issues-statement-compliance-committees.

5.   Conclusions

The worldwide church is in some ways at a crossroads. As a thoroughly "modern" institution still carrying many of the values and approaches of 19th century, it is struggling to survive in the "West." There, Postmodernism brought a devastating challenge to Christianity and Adventism in the latter half of the 20th century. Later developments are still a challenge. Millennials live by values and priorities that do not always match those of the traditional Church. This has implications on so many levels, not least for leadership locally and worldwide. This reflection paper has looked at leadership issues in light of Millennial characteristics. Many other aspects of the Millennial challenge to the Church need attention. Here it is argued that leading Millennials requires the creation of community; building teams based on collaboration in a listening environment, communicating in an open fashion where it is normal to be authentic and vulnerable. Such environment would suit the typical Millennials and would be a place to express their Christian identity; not through the repetition and promotion of a set of dogma, but by being involved in activities that "change the world" and bring meaning to their own lives. Being part of the decision process and finding personal growth and development can make a church fellowship relevant to Millennial needs.

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Bjørn Ottesen

Zusammenfassung

Diese Studie unternimmt einen Versuch, einen Leitungsstil für eine kirchliche Organisation zu finden und zu beschreiben, der den Bedürfnissen und Erwartungen der Generation der „Millennials" entspricht. Es werden Lehren aus der Arbeitswelt gezogen, in der sich die Arbeitgeber an die Stärken, Schwächen, Forderungen und Erwartungen einer Generation anpassen mussten, die mit bestimmten kulturellen Trends verbunden ist. Auf der Grundlage von Forschungsergebnissen aus dem Beschäftigungskontext und unter Berücksichtigung von Erkenntnissen von zwei wichtigen Theorien über Leiterschaft wird geschlussfolgert, wie die „Millennials" geleitet, involviert, beschäftigt und in das Leben der Kirche einbezogen werden können. Die Schlussfolgerungen weisen auf einen „weicheren" und „feminineren" Führungsansatz, der Zusammenarbeit, Konsens, Kooperation, die Akzeptanz persönlicher Autonomie und Partizipation sowie Bescheidenheit und Demut in den Vordergrund stellt.

Résumé

Cette étude tente de trouver et de décrire un style de leadership pour une organisation ecclésiale qui correspond aux besoins et aux attentes de la génération appelée « Millennial ». Les leçons sont tirées du lieu de travail où les entités employeuses ont dû s'adapter aux forces, aux faiblesses, aux demandes et aux attentes d'une génération qui porte des tendances culturelles particulières. En s'appuyant sur la recherche du contexte de l'emploi et en ajoutant des idées de deux théories majeures sur le leadership, des conclusions sont tirées sur la manière de diriger, impliquer, engager et inclure les Millennials dans la vie de l'Eglise. Les conclusions pointent dans le sens d'une approche « plus douce » et plus « féminine » du leadership, mettant l'accent sur la collaboration, le consensus, la coopération, l'acceptation de l'autonomie et de la participation personnelles – faisant preuve de modestie et d'humilité.

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Seeing is Believing
The Digital Bible and Bible Verses Online

Tom de Bruin

Abstract

Millions of Bible verses are shared on Twitter every year. This article examines the Bible on Twitter, by looking at Bible verse images produced by three organisations: Faithlife/Logos Bible Software, Dutch Bible Society, and Graceway. I examine the way these three organisations mediate the Bible on social media. The outputs of these companies form the basis for an analysis of the hermeneutics of a visual, digital Bible. I analyse the way engagement with the Bible changes due to digitalisation, and in which ways the digital Bible influences (theological) authority. Ultimately, the power that the illustrator has in influencing the interpretation of biblical texts is emphasised.

1.   Introduction

This paper will examine the ideological choices three different professional organisations make in creating visuals of Bible verses. Faithlife/Logos Bible Software creates free videos and still images, which are arguably the best-known visuals in the English language. They are intended for sharing online and viewing on digital devices. The Dutch Bible Society posts free, still images on Twitter as part of its mission to "make the Bible available" and to "let others experience the relevance of the Bible."[1] Graceway, a subscription service, creates visual media for worship services to "bring the Bible to life visually." In this way, all three organisations influence digital Bible culture.

    The three organisations have similar goals, yet from even a cursory look at their productions, it is apparent that their selection and presentation of Bible verses are markedly different. These differences can be attributed to varying

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[1] https://www.bijbelgenootschap.nl/missie/ (accessed July 17, 2017).

audiences, locations and ideological priorities. I will briefly examine these three organisations and the Bible images they produce. The differences in audience, location and ideological priorities cause the Bible to be transformed in different ways by these different organisations.

This article examines the Bible as a mediated text, which is "far from a modern innovation" (Poleg 2013, 1). For centuries the Bible existed as mediated through liturgy and lectionaries. Even with the modern rise of personal ownership of the biblical text, sermons and study guides have mediated biblical literacy. Yet, while the Bible has always been mediated, mediation itself does influence the message. This influence, argues Esther McIntosh, is not fully explored or appreciated: neither "the effect of mediating the Christian message through digital technology, nor the possible distortions of that message that media and especially digital media make possible are analysed fully" (McIntosh 2015, 136). Additionally, the digitally mediated Bible – be that on social media, in apps, or online – is a thoroughly visual one (Phillip 2018, 404). As such, this article engages with this newly, visually mediated, digital Bible, and analyses the effect that the mediation has on the text.

2.   Method
The research on Bible images was conducted in June and July 2017. I had chosen to compare three sources of images – Faithlife, Graceway Media, and the Dutch Bible Society – and the choice was made to capture the images shared on Twitter by Faithlife[2] and the Dutch Bible Society,[3] and on Graceway Media's website.[4] Graceway Media does not share its images on any social media, as they are meant for worship settings. From Twitter I captured all the Bible verse images that both companies shared between January 1, 2017 and June 30, 2017, I did the same for Graceway Media from their website. This time frame ensured that we included various Christian and secular holidays such as Easter, Ascension day, Pentecost, Mother's day, Father's day, and World Refugee day.

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[2] Logos Bible Software, Twitter feed, https://twitter.com/Logos.

[3] Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap, https://twitter.com/NBG_Bijbel.

[4] Graceway Media, https://www.gracewaymedia.com. Graceway Media has renamed itself as Igniter Media in late 2017, after this research was completed. Their new website is: https://www.ignitermedia.com.

The Dutch Bible Society shared thirty-six images in the time period, Graceway Media created thirty-eight images,[5] Faithlife shared 181. There is thus a significant difference in output between Faithlife and the other two sources. In order to keep the comparison equal, I have chosen to include only Faithlife's images that were shared on the same day as the Dutch Bible Society shared an image.[6] Graceway Media's images are put on a website and therefore are not necessarily linked to a date; because of this and because their corpus is of similar size to the Dutch Bible Society, I have included all of their images. This creates three corpora of almost equal size.

Faithlife shares an image with a complete transcription of the applicable Bible verse from the English Standard Version (ESV) and the Dutch Bible Society selects from various of its translations, most often choosing its newest translation – *Bijbel in Gewone Taal* (*Bible in Normal Language*, BGT).[7] Graceway Media creates a soundbite or title based on the passage. When doing quantitative analysis of the texts of the three sources of images, I compared the ESV versions of both Faithlife's and the Dutch Bible Society's texts with the text on Graceway Media's images. For qualitative analysis and close readings, I compared the sources as they are created in the original languages.

As a result of the selection procedure I collected three corpora. Faithlife's thirty-six images contain 1,035 words in total. The Dutch Bible Society's thirty-six images, when collected from the ESV, contain 710 words. Graceway's thirty-eight images, paraphrasing selected Bible verses, are the shortest, just 136 words in total.

An attempt was made to judge the relative popularity of the images. On Twitter this was done by recording the number of replies, retweets and likes. While the first two are not a true measure of approval, in general these statistics show which images spark the most interest. Graceway Media publishes the total downloads of each image; one could argue that the old images will

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[5] Graceway Media produces various images, I have only included still images (i.e. not videos), that include a Bible reference.

[6] On April 13 the Dutch Bible Society shared five Bible verses as a tie-in to a televised passion narrative, Faithlife only shared one image that day. In order to keep the corpora of equal size, I have included Faithlife's images from surrounding days, which are all part of Faithlife's collection of Easter tweets, that share a similar design.

[7] 22 times from the Bijbel in Gewone Taal, 11 times from the Nieuwe Bijbelvertaling, 3 times from the Groot Nieuws Bijbel.

have higher download rates, so these numbers should be taken with the appropriate caveats.

To judge the emotive responses of the images, an online survey was set up containing twenty-seven images. These images were selected as follows: Seventeen[8] in total were chosen as indicative of each corpus after an initial qualitative analysis;[9] eight images were chosen from three holidays – the national holiday of the country, Mother's day[10] and Pentecost; two images were selected as indicative of very different emphases on the same Bible verse.[11] For each image the respondents were asked to describe how the image made them feel. After sharing this survey online, thirty-four people filled in the survey, with age ranges from twenty-six to seventy-four, 70% of whom identified as female.

This means, ultimately, that we are dealing with three audiences in this research. Each organisation has a target audience, the people they try to reach; we cannot access this audience as it is hypothetical. They also have an actual audience, who may or may not overlap with the target audience; this audience is measured in online relative popularity. And then, for the purpose of the survey, we have a third audience. While having three audiences might appear to make any analysis unsound, this need not be the case. We can use the target audience to analyse the production of the images and the actual audience to analyse the reception of the images. The third audience, the survey's respondents, is only used in very general terms to help understand how people react to images. There is little reason to assume that the reactions of the third audience are completely different from those of the other two audiences, and the reactions themselves are not necessarily part of the analysis of these images, they function more as descriptive guides.

3.   Quantitative Analysis

Simple quantitative analysis showed some marked differences between the three corpora (see Table 1). The ten most frequent words used throughout all three corpora together were common words in the Christian vocabulary: Lord

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[8] 8 images by Faithlife, 6 images by Graceway Media, 3 images by the Dutch Bible Society.

[9] The Dutch images were supplied with an English translation of the Dutch text by the author.

[10] Graceway Media did not have a Bible image for Mother's day.

[11] The Bible verse in question is from 1 Peter 2:21, which discusses suffering.

(22 times), God (16 times), Jesus (12 times), love (11 times), said (11 times), Spirit (9 times), Christ (8 times), Father (7 times), heaven (7 times), and come (7 times). Yet, the relative usage[12] of these words was by no means evenly distributed between the three corpora. Starting with the most different, Graceway Media, it is apparent that it does not refer to "Spirit" at all. Yet it uses "love" (22.1), and "Jesus" (7.3) or "Christ" (14.7) significantly more frequently than the Dutch Bible Society and Faithlife. Faithlife's usage of these ten most common words is in line with the others, except that it uses love (1.9) very irregularly. The Dutch Bible uses Father (5.6) regularly, more than twice as often as Faithlife, suggesting a more familial tone for the Godhead.

Table 1. Occurrence of ten most common words in the three corpora

Terms	Absolute usage	Relative usage (times/ thousand)	Graceway relative usage (times/ thousand)	Dutch Bible Society relative usage (times/ thousand)	Faithlife relative usage (times/ thousand)
Lord	22	11.7	7.4	5.6	16.4
God	16	8.5	14.7	9.9	6.8
Jesus	12	6.4	7.4	7	5.8
love	11	5.8	22	8.5	1.9
said	11	5.8	0	5.6	6.8
Spirit	9	4.8	0	4.2	5.8
Christ	8	4.3	14.7	2.8	3.9
Father	7	3.7	7.4	5.6	1.9
Heaven	7	3.7	0	2.8	4.8
come	7	3.7	0	1.4	5.8

Continuing to the most common words in each of the three corpora, once again Graceway Media stands out (see Table 2). The Dutch Bible Society and Faithlife's most common words are names for the Godhead and their identity: God, Love, Jesus, Father, Lord and Lord, God, said, Jesus, Spirit respectively.

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[12] Relative usage will be given in brackets behind the word, as usages per thousand words.

Graceway Media's most common words, on the other hand, while overlapping with the previous two, include some unique words: life, love, Christ, death, God. Neither of the two other corpora include "death" and both only refer to "life" once.

If we look at the terminology used to refer to the Godhead, the differences remain. When referring to the Godhead, Graceway uses "God" (14.7) and "Father" (14.7) twice as often as "Lord" (7.4), and when referring to God the Son, "Christ" (14.7) twice as often as "Jesus" (7.4). The Dutch Bible Society shares Graceway's preference for "God" (9.9), and the more intimate "Father" (5.6), over "Lord" (4.2). In contrast to Graceway, it vastly prefers "Jesus" (7.0) over "Christ" (2.8).[13] Faithlife, on the other hand, uses "Lord" (15.8)[14] more than twice as many times as "God" (6.9), and prefers "Jesus" (5.9) over "Christ" (3.9).[15] Thus we can conclude that Graceway and the Dutch Bible Society predominantly use "God" to refer to the Godhead, against Faithlife's "Lord"; and that Faithlife and the Dutch Bible Society use "Jesus" against Graceway's "Christ." Their preference for Jesus reflects the New Testament usage.[16] More surprisingly, the preference for Jesus resonates with contemporary English trends,[17] whereas Graceway's paraphrase – which *should* be contemporary English – goes against it.[18]

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[13] "Lord" (1.4) is used once to refer to Jesus.

[14] Lord is used one more time, but that usage refers to Jesus.

[15] "Lord" (1.0) is used once to refer to Jesus.

[16] In the New Testament "Jesus" occurs 966 times, "Christ" only 504.

[17] According to Google Books Ngram Viewer, the relative frequency of "Jesus" (0.070) overtook "Christ" (0.068) in 1989, and in 2008 (the latest year available) it was used 17% more often. See: https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Jesus%2CChrist&year_start=1800&year_end= 2000&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2CJesus%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2C Christ%3B%2Cc0.

[18] This may be due to the selection. Graceway Media only allows searching in the titles of the images, which do not always reflect the words on the image themselves. However, this search shows 106 images that contain "Jesus" in the title and 63 containing "Christ." Not all of these images include "Jesus" or "Christ," and some of these are not Bible images. Nonetheless, this search shows that there might be usage of "Jesus" and "Christ" that reflects the biblical statistics.

Table 2. Relative usage of ten most common words in each corpus

Graceway		Faithlife		Dutch Bible Society	
Term	Relative usage (times/ thousand)	Term	Relative usage (times/ thousand)	Term	Relative usage (times/ thousand)
love	22.1	Lord	16.4	God	9.9
life	22.1	shall	10.6	love	8.5
power	14.7	said	6.8	Jesus	7.0
God	14.7	God	6.8	said	5.6
death	14.7	Spirit	5.8	receives	5.6
Christ	14.7	let	5.8	Lord	5.6
world	7.4	Jesus	5.8	Father	5.6
what's	7.4	come	5.8	Spirit	4.2
way	7.4	heaven	4.8	say	4.2
unity	7.4	men	3.9	let	4.2

Comparing the frequency statistics of the three corpora to that of the canon shows the selection bias of these texts. Most of the frequently used terms from the corpora are used much more often than in the ESV.[19] For "God" (52%) and "Lord" (11%) this difference is not very large, but other are significantly higher. "Jesus" is used more than five times as much, "Christ" and "Spirit" more than six, and "love" more than eight times as much. In some corpora these numbers are even higher, Graceway Media, for example, refers to love 31.4 times as often as the ESV. All three organisations focus on texts that refer to God, love and heaven and select texts to match. This selection procedure is hardly surprising, as texts about God will have an ideological priority for all of these organisations.

In this quantitative analysis of the most common words a couple of trends stand out. Firstly, it is clear that Graceway Media is rather different to the other two. For example, Graceway Media uses "Christ" more often than "Jesus," and refers to "love," "life," and "death" more often than both Faithlife or the Dutch Bible Society. Secondly, all organisations choose texts that match

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[19] The relative usage statistics of the ESV are: Lord (10.5), God (5.6), Jesus (1.2), love (0.7), said (5.3), Spirit (0.7), Christ (0.7), father (1.1), heaven (0.6), come (1.8).

a certain ideological priority, and it does not appear that any attempt is made to reflect the breadth of the Bible in these images.

4.   Qualitative Analysis

In the previous section we drew some conclusions based on quantitative analysis. Graceway Media is the most different of the three corpora. They refer to "love," "life," and "death" more often than the others. We also noted that all three organisations are selective in which Bible verses become images. In this section, through a qualitative analysis, I will elucidate the differences between the three corpora more significantly.

To do this I pursue three avenues: an analysis of the imagery and the emotive response that these images elicit, a comparison of the most popular posts of each organisation, and a discussion of how the three organisations let their images tie into secular and religious holidays. These three avenues of research will show the influence that audience, location and ideological priorities have on the selection and presentation of the Bible images.

4.1   Imagery

Comparing the Dutch Bible Society's images to Faithlife and Graceway's images a general trend is immediately obvious: Faithlife and Graceway's graphics are much more extensive and unique (see Fig. 1). The Dutch Bible Society's images (see Fig. 2) almost all consist of a simple centred text over a, sometimes generic, sometimes applicable, background. On the other hand, the Dutch Bible Society's designs places the text front and centre, showcasing their own product: the Bible in Dutch.

Fig. 1. Examples of Graceway's (left) and Faithlife's (right) images

Fig. 2. Example of the Dutch Bible Society's image

The graphics seem to play a large role in the interpretation of the text itself. Respondents reacted very positively to two of Graceway's images (see Fig. 3). The first reads "life & death. Deuteronomy 30:15–20," and is a photograph of a small sprouting plant coming out of the dirt. The second reads "The way, the truth & the life. John 14:1–14" and is a photograph of the silhouette of a man looking out of a tunnel towards distant mountains. These two images received 72% and 61% positive reactions.

Fig. 3. Two of Graceway's images

Deuteronomy 30:15–20 contains a description of the blessings and curses that will result from the Israelites obeying the commandments of the Lord: prosperous life or death in the promised land. This Bible text, while containing a positive promise, also has a dark side. The text itself would probably not warrant the large amount of positive reactions like "hopeful," "peace," "calm," and "energised." The imagery itself primes the audience towards a positive response.

The second of Graceway's images that received overwhelming positive reactions is based on a much more positive text. John 1:1–14 is a famous text that contains powerful, positive promises. Yet, the imagery of a man looking out

towards mountains pushes many respondents away from the positive message. Some are just confused,[20] others doubt whether the image is suitable at all.[21] The imagery is innocent in itself, and suggests a certain openness to the world and discovery. Yet, for 21 % of the respondents the imagery leads them to disconnect with the text, in a similar way to what happened with the images of the Dutch Bible Society. Here, however, the dissonance is not because of the emotive colour of the text, but the rational disconnect between the image and the text itself.

Traditionally, Protestant churches have downplayed "the visuality of the Bible in favor of engaging with the words of the Bible – the printed text – and the act of reading. Contemporary biblical literacy becomes an exercise in logocentricity" (Stephen 2019, 24–25). This stands in contrast to these Bible images. The two specifically protestant companies (Graceway and Faithlife) have the most visually stimulating images, whereas the non-denominational Bible Society the least. Whatever the case, for all three companies, it is very clear the role that the imagery plays in the emotive response of the audience. Colouring affects emotion, and even a perceived mismatch between the images and the text can lead to negative reception. The illustrators, as they rewrite the biblical text, have the power to wholly transform the text. To take this argument further, I will move on to examining audience response to the most popular posts.

4.2   *Popular Posts*

Popular posts by the three organisations show a diverse grouping. I will examine the top four most popular posts for each organisation. Faithlife's most popular posts are 1 Corinthians 5:7 (17 retweets, 22 likes), Acts 2:24 (17 retweets, 20 likes), John 13:1 (17 retweets, 15 likes), and John 10:27 (17 retweets, 14 likes) (see Fig. 4).[22] The first three of these four were part of Faithlife's Easter images, which all shared a similar design. They contain a colourful background of splotches of paint with text. Some text is in a larger handwriting font for emphasis. The texts themselves are general texts about Jesus's death

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[20] "[I feel] bewildered," "I do not get it," and "It doesn't make sense to me."

[21] "I don't see/feel the connection between the image and Bible quote," or, as one respondent muses, "Was the designer tired?".

[22] The average for Faithlife's posts is 7.7 retweets and 8.8 likes.

and resurrection. The fourth image is a photograph of sheep in a pasture with "My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me." These images stand out as being simpler than Faithlife's usual images. The texts must be popular due to their portrayal of Christ's sacrifice, in all probability this "may be interpreted as a form of 'witnessing' to outsiders" (Hutchings 2015, 3827).

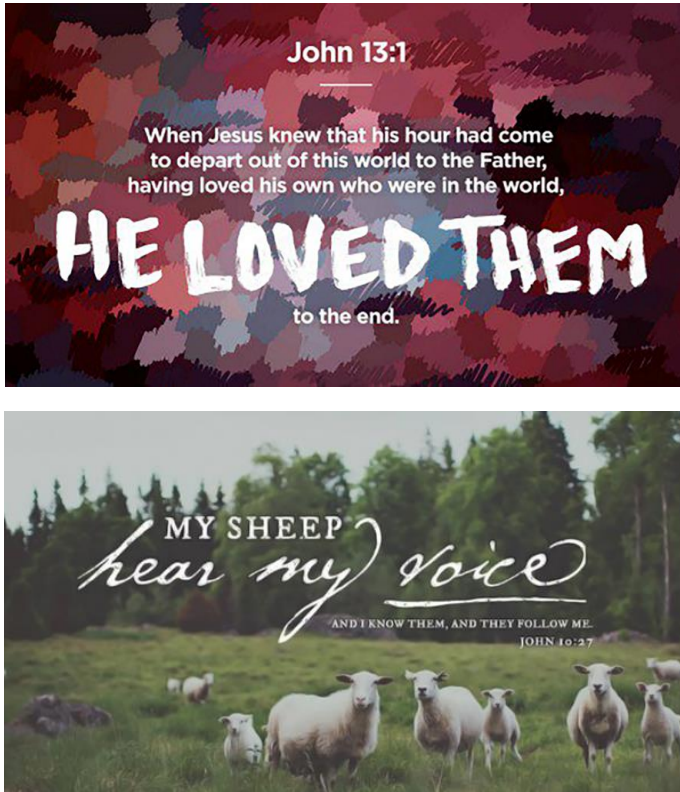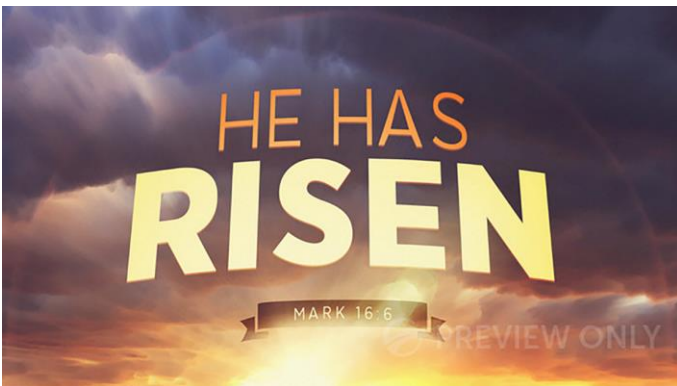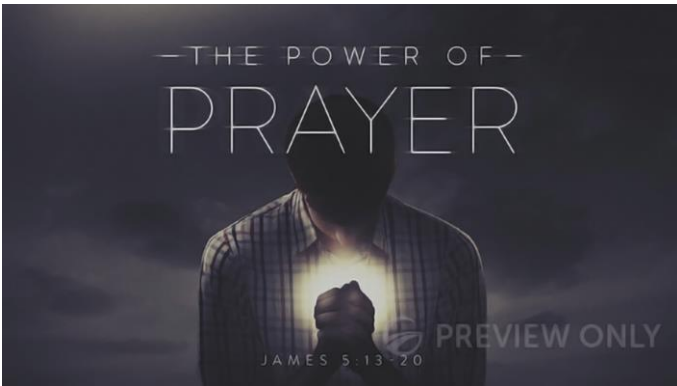

Fig. 4. Faithlife's most popular posts

Fig. 4 (*continued*). Faithlife's most popular posts

Graceway's most popular posts are all darker or moodier than Faithlife's popular ones (see Fig. 5). They read "Habitat for divinity" (643 downloads), "The power of prayer" (497 downloads) "He has risen" (441 downloads), and "What's love got to do with it?" (432 downloads).[23] The graphics themselves are well-designed and clean. They stand out for being less colourful and bright than many of Graceway's designs. The first image's popularity might not be immediately obvious from the title and text, which talks about eschewing fornication because a Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The other three images have generic and popular theological topics: love, prayer and the resurrection.

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[23] The average for Graceway's images is 220 downloads.

Fig. 5. Graceway's most popular posts

Fig. 5 (*continued*). Graceway's most popular posts

Unlike Faithlife, none of the Dutch Bible Society's Easter tweets was very popular. The Dutch Bible Society's Easter tweets were intended to tie in with a huge live TV broadcast, *The Passion*, which draws one of the highest yearly TV audiences.[24] Thus one might expect a higher popularity of these tweets. By far the two most popular tweets (see Fig. 6) were the tweets on World Refugee Day (23 retweets, 28 likes) and on the Dutch national holiday: Kingsday (20 retweets, 32 likes).[25] On Refugee day, the image that shared Jesus's words:

> Because when I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you gave me a drink. When I was a stranger, you took me in your home.[26]

The link with the refugee crisis is apparent and current. On Kingsday, which traditionally stars enormous second-hand markets, the Society shared a Proverb (Prov. 20:14):

> A buyer will always say: 'It is too expensive.' If he then needs to pay less, he is satisfied.[27]

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[24] 3.4 million people watched *The Passion* on tv, making it the eighth most watched programme in 2016, and third non-sporting event. https://kijkonderzoek.nl/images/SKO_Jaarrapport/SKO_Jaarrapport_TV_2016.pdf.

[25] The Dutch Bible Society's averages were 6.2 retweets and 7.7 likes.

[26] The Dutch is taken from the Bijbel in Gewone Taal, and reads "Want toen ik honger had, gaven jullie mij te eten. Toen ik dorst had, gaven jullie mij te drinken. Toen ik een vreemdeling was, namen jullie mij in huis."

[27] Taken from the Bijbel in Gewone Taal, the Dutch reads "Een koper zal altijd zeggen: 'Het is te duur.' Als hij dan minder hoeft te betalen, is hij tevreden."

This image is clearly making a joke, yet at the same time showing that the Bible is applicable to contemporary situations.

Fig. 6. The Dutch Bible Society's most popular posts

These popular images show a couple of trends. Firstly, Faithlife's popular images are popular in spite of their less extensive imagery. In their case, a simple background with a text that their followers like seems to be equally or more effective than fancy graphics. The Dutch Bible Society's less extensive graphics might not be as disadvantageous as one might think on first sight. Certainly, for Faithlife's Easter tweets, as the text is transformed, the text remains for many readers more important than the media around it. This means that there seems to a clash between what Faithlife's audience appreciates and Faithlife's attempts to equip the church with technological products. As they give their audience more extensive and engaging images, their audience veers towards traditional theologically-laden texts.

Secondly, in the case of the Dutch Bible Society, images that are current and applicable are much more popular than ones that are overly religious. This will be related to their audience and context. Yet it shows a way that the Bible is rewritten and narrated online that might be different from traditional methods. The texts are chosen and transformed to apply to current events in a way that is not necessarily religious. The Bible is interpreted as applicable and interesting outside of the Christian faith. This reflects both the Dutch Bible Society's ideological priority – making the Bible relevant – and largely non-religious audience.

Peter Phillips has argued that there has been a shift in Bible usage due to social media. He demonstrates that "the 'liking' and 'sharing' of Bible texts [… resulted] in a shift in public engagement with the Bible," (Phillips 2019, 21) where propositional texts (John 3:16) have been replaced by therapeutic texts (Jer. 29:11). In some respects this thesis holds up with the images examined, though Faithlife's audience appears to prefer propositional texts more than therapeutic ones, potentially indicating their much older, boomer audience. Examining popular posts shows the role the audience plays in the selection and presentation of the Bible texts. Those receiving and passing on the text select according to their own preferences, even if the imagery is less impressive. Furthermore, the audience's and association's ideological priorities show that selection and presentation of the texts can even transform the Bible for non-Christian audiences. Let us now look at how ideological priorities define the way these three organisations interact with secular and religious holidays.

4.3   *Special Days*

The Dutch Bible Society is very intentional in including special days in their posts. They tweeted a specific text for fourteen Dutch and international days, including a hashtag for the day.[28] Faithlife, on the other hand, posts the same

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[28] The days are: New Year's Day (January 1), Gedichtendag (Poetry day, January 26), Valentine's Day (February 14), the first day of Spring (March 21), World Compliment Day (March 1), April First (April 1), Easter (April 16), Koningsdag (King's day, April 27), Bevrijdingsdag (Freedom day, April 5), Mother's Day (May 14), Ascension Day (May 25), Pentecost (June 4), Father's Day (June 18), and World Refugee Day (June 20).

generic tweet every day, but on five occasions the text did match the holiday.[29] Both Faithlife and the Bible Society had a collection of eight images leading up to Easter. I will examine two secular days (Mother's Day, Valentine's Day) and two religious days (Ascension day and Pentecost) when both companies shared an applicable image.

On Mother's day Faithlife shared a predominantly green image of nine abstract figures looking at the reader (see Fig. 7). Above the heads of these figures is written:

> And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.' (Matthew 12:49–50)

"Here are my mother and my brothers!" is printed in larger and bright yellow. The link to Mother's Day must be the reference to Jesus's mother, and the spiritual familial bonds in Christ. Neither the text, nor the image, are well-suited for Mother's Day. The text implies that mothers do not matter, and that Christians should focus on the spiritual family. This text, therefore, stands in stark contrast to the traditions of Mother's Day.
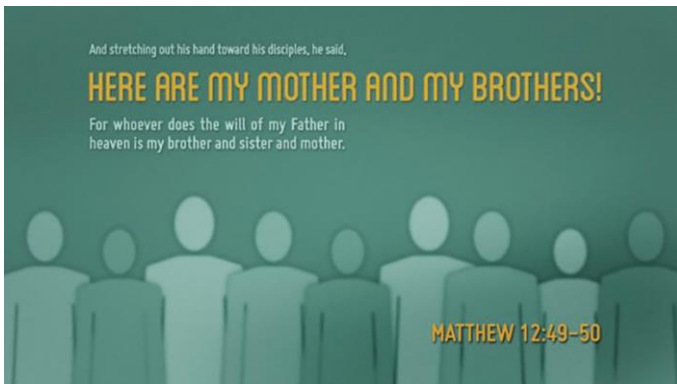
Fig. 7. Faithlife's image for Mother's Day

The image, containing abstract figures of undefined gender, does not engender a positive emotive response towards mothers. Respondents noticed

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[29] Faithlife had a specific Bible verse for: Valentine's Day (February 14), Easter (April 16), Mother's Day (May 14), Ascension Day (May 25), and Pentecost (June 4).

this,[30] overall, 16 % of the respondents had something positive to say about this image, whereas 81 % gave a negative emotional response. The image that the Dutch Bible Society shared gets a much more positive response. The image itself is a soft-focus photograph of a green jewelled ring, with large white text in the middle (see Fig. 8):

> A strong woman is very valuable, she is worth more than the most beautiful jewels. (Proverbs 31:10)[31]

The image itself has very little to do with mothers, but is a simple background to the text. The text is much more positive about women in general than Faithlife's, which probably explains the more positive responses. Yet at the same time, many respondents rightly point out that the text refers to "women" not "mothers." The text is much more down-to-earth and simply applicable to Mother's Day, whereas Faithlife's image is theologically abstract and theoretical.

Fig. 8. The Dutch Bible Society's image for Mother's Day

   A similar trend towards the abstract can be seen in the images both companies shared on Valentine's Day (see Fig. 9). The Dutch Bible Society tweeted "Who makes you happy?" and shared an autumn-coloured photograph of hearts. Superimposed on this photograph, in white text, you can read:

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[30] Some responses were: 'Makes me feel mothers are not important! I can't recognise any on the picture!', 'Disturbed. Puzzled. These are not people,' and probably most eloquent, 'Using non-specific gender figures means that it looks like men. I do not identify a mother personality in the picture.'

[31] The Dutch, taken from the Bijbel in Gewone Taal, reads: "Een sterke vrouw is veel waard, ze is meer waard dan de mooiste edelstenen."

I am happy with you and I sing about you, I tell everyone about your love. (Song of Songs 1:4)[32]

The text and the image both speak of love and romance, very applicable topics on Valentine's Day.

Fig. 9. Valentine's Day images from the Dutch Bible Society (above) and from Faithlife (below)

On that same day, Faithlife shared a light-blue image with an anatomical line-drawing of a ribcage in black; a rib is removed. This is accompanied by a block of text:

Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.' (Genesis 2:18)

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[32] The Dutch is taken from the Bijbel in Gewone Taal, and it reads "Ik ben gelukkig met je en ik zing over je, aan iedereen vertel ik over jouw liefde."

The image and text are once again much more theologically abstract than the Bible Society's image. Love and romance are not emphasised, but rather the theological source of marriage: the creation of the male and female out of the first human. This image and its link to Valentine's Day, while immediately obvious for the biblically literate, might be quite hard to place for one who does not know the narratives of Genesis well. These two images demonstrate a fundamental difference in the way that Faithlife interacts with the Bible and (online) culture. The Dutch Bible Society engages the Bible with culture on a simpler and more concrete level.

Considering what both companies shared on Ascension Day and Pentecost, we can see that the established trend seems to hold (see Figs. 10–13). On Ascension Day, the Dutch Bible Society shared a text (see Fig. 10) saying

> While Jesus was blessing his disciples, he left them and was taken up into heaven" (Luke 24:51)[33]

This is the concrete description of what Ascension Day celebrates. Faithlife, on the other hand, shared Jesus's words from John 14:3 (see Fig. 11):

> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

This text gives a theological meaning of the ascension.

Fig. 10. Ascension Day image from the Dutch Bible Society

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[33] The Dutch, from the Nieuwe Bijbelvertaling, reads "Terwijl Jezus zijn leerlingen zegende, ging hij van hen heen en werd opgenomen in de hemel."
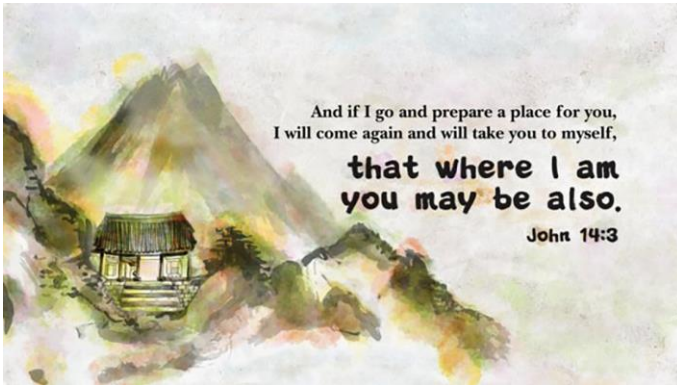
Fig. 11. Ascension Day image from Faithlife

On Pentecost, Faithlife shared an image of flames on a black background (see Fig. 12), accompanied by the text from Joel that Peter quotes:

> And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. (Joel 2:28)

"I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh" is written in flame-coloured letters, emphasising them very strongly. A bit more than half of the respondents reacted positively to this image, giving emotions such as "hopeful," "excited," "warm," and – suitably – "inspired." 30% reacted negatively, seeing the image as "too predictable," "overdone," and "scary."

Fig. 12. Pentecost image from Faithlife

Fig. 13. Pentecost image from the Dutch Bible Society

The Dutch Bible Society shared a much simple image for Pentecost (see Fig. 13). It was of a wooden background, with white text:

> I will give my spirit to all people who serve me. Then they will make my message known. (Acts 2:18)[34]

On each side of the text is a single white dove. This is image stands out as being particularly sparse. 23% of the respondents gave "boring" as their primary emotive response to the image. Some even pointed out that disparity between the text and the image "Good text, but looks a bit boring" said one, "This had some meaning … the words only … I am not distracted by a poor visual," explained another. All in all, 55% reacted negatively to this image, against 29% who felt this image made them "excited," "happy," and "thrilled."

The texts of the two images are worthy of a bit more analysis. Faithlife's text is taken from Joel 2:29, but is also quoted (with minor emendations) as Acts 2:17. It describes God's actions in the last days, when God will pour out the Spirit on all of humanity. Humanity is described as "your sons," "your daughters," "your young men," and "your old men," the possessive pronouns are all in the second person. This shifts in the next verse, which the Dutch Bible Society quotes, where the pronouns are now in the first person.[35] There

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[34] The Dutch text is from the Bijbel in Gewone Taal. It reads „Ik zal mijn Geest geven aan alle mensen die mij dienen. Dan zullen ze mijn boodschap bekendmaken."

[35] These first person possessives are Luke's addition. Pervo writes "By adding the pronoun 'my' to 'slaves' in v. 19 Luke has shifted the emphasis from broad inclusion (male/female, old/young, slave/free) to an emphasis on the 'servants of God,' that is, believers" (Pervo 2009, 79).

God says, I will pour out the Spirit on "my servants," this verse breaks down the dichotomy between God and humanity, and views part of humanity as belonging to or with God. The second verse is much more familial that the first. Therefore, these two organisations quote from almost the same verse, yet Faithlife chooses a more distant one than the Dutch Bible Society.

Concluding this third avenue of qualitative analysis, it is clear that the organizations engage with the Bible at different levels. Faithlife, wishing to equip Christians, has a much more abstract theological way of narrating the biblical text as it relates to special days. The audience is expected to be biblically literate and understand, albeit basic, theological concepts. The Dutch Bible Society engages with its audience on a wholly different level. Attempting to make the Bible relevant, they use concrete texts to apply to special days, selecting texts that are much less abstract, less theological, and even less overtly religious.

5.   Conclusions

The three organisations engage with their differing audiences in different ways. All three are selective in their choice of Bible verses, frequently selecting texts that portray God and God's identity. In their selection and transformation of the biblical text, they effectively rewrite the canon and the passages they select. In particular, my analysis of the role of imagery in the audience's emotive response showed the power that the illustrator has as a re-interpreter of the text. In this respect the illustrator of Bible images is similar to the programmer of Bible software. "Bible software," writes Timothy Hutchings, "can emphasise the authority of the Bible itself, while encouraging the user to overlook the work of the designer." (Hutchings 2017, 217) Bible software, relying on the inherent authority of Scripture, subtly employs persuasive technologies to lead users to adopt specifically Evangelical reading practices (ibid., 206). The illustrator of Bible images has the same power to use design to exert "influence without claiming authority" (ibid., 217).

Authority remains a concern with any digital Bible. John Weaver argues that, with the deconstruction of the Bible as a "book" to a personalised collection of bytes, fundamentally changes the nature of the good book, resulting:

> in a disembodied Bible that has a virtual reality and some material housing in a digital screen and device, but not the same dedicated and

> tangible tome that was characteristic of the Bible as both an instrument of concrete religious authority and an icon (a material representation of divine presence or power) for both individual and communal devotion. (Weaver 2018, 154)

This evidences the latest in a long history of resistance to change in text media, from Plato bemoaning the transition from oral to writing, to Rabbinical resistance to the codex (Van Peursen 2014, 46).

Wido van Peursen argues that the Bible "losing its covers" is a return to a more original Bible, predating the printing press, the codex, and the concept of canon itself (ibid., 51–53). He does not see this as a worrying trend. Yet for many, the digital Bible is feared to be a return to a time when the Bible was not a cultural icon, when holding up a black-and-gold, leather bound book was not a symbol for all that Christianity stands for. The engagement with the text (though not with a physical book), that I examined, argues for a continuing value of the Bible as cultural object. Ultimately, the "nonphysical aspect of the text" remains, and this mitigates any destabilisation by digitalisation (Ford 2019, 361–381).

A more legitimate concern for authority, I feel, lies in how the digital Bible "relocates the source of theological authority and accountability away from the community and community leaders, giving it instead to disembodied voices and individuals" (Weaver 2018, 153). As with the Bible apps Hutchings examined, it is not always immediately apparent how or by whom the users, consumers, and readers of digital Bibles are being influenced. Whereas traditionally Christians engaged with the Bible in the context of their own denomination, the murky waters of the digital Bible create a much more diverse landscape of engagement, where accessibility, speed and technological innovation outweigh denominational alignment.

Considering each organisation in turn we can note some variations in the theology they introduce into their products. Graceway is situated in Texas, USA. They lean towards fundamentalist evangelical Christianity.[36] They attempt to help "effectively communicate the Gospel through visual media," thus designing digital products for a worship service, and are generally accompanied by other media, including an oral presentation.[37] Their products,

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[36] Cf. https://www.gracewaymedia.com/company/beliefs.

[37] Cf. https://www.gracewaymedia.com/company/about.

therefore, are purchased and supported by people engaged in Christian ministry, and are intended to be consumed by Christians and those influenced by Christian worship services. As such they attempt, not to give the text or even a summary of that text, but a catchy phrase that represents and introduces the text to the audience. They also attempt to elicit positive emotional responses to selected passages.[38]

Faithlife hails from the Pacific Northwest, and strives to be ecumenically inclusive. They are best known for their *Logos Bible Software*. They intentionally attempt to appeal to a world-wide Christian audience, as they wish "to equip the Church to grow in the light of the Bible."[39] Faithlife utilises very extensive imagery. In some cases, their imagery might be too foregrounded, creating cognitive dissonance between the text and the imagery. Indeed, for much of their audience, as an analysis of their most popular images showed, the text itself is more important that the imagery. Their audience seems to prefer traditional Christian texts, and Faithlife focusses on abstract and theological interpretations.

The Dutch Bible Society are denominationally non-specific and represent the variety of churches in the Netherlands. Their goals are making the Bible available and letting people experience the relevance of the Bible. As such the audience of their Bible images goes beyond Christians. Additionally, when they create a Bible image, they are the producers of both the text *and* the image. This means that, besides sharing an image, they are also sharing the text that they created. The Dutch Bible Society has the least extensive images of the three. As direct producers of both the translated texts and accompanying images, they place the text in a prominent position. Despite their simple imagery, however, there is still a strong emotive response to the images. In attempting to make the Bible relevant, the Dutch Bible Society engages with popular and current culture in a way that is not necessarily religious. As such it represents a non-religious retelling of the Bible to interact with current affairs. They also focus on a more concrete and personal selection of texts.

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[38] Outside of the scope of this article are a number of Graceway's images that are very fundamentalist Christian. They focus on judgement and suffering, which would probably lead to negative emotive responses.

[39] https://faithlife.com/about (accessed June 3, 2020).

These three organisations mediate the Bible for millions of people online. While it may seem that social media places the Bible in a secular space, this does not seem to be the case. Christians online exist in a "micro-bubble, with churchgoing Christians being most likely to see Bible verses on social media" (Ford, Mann, and Phillips 2019, 50). This means that most of the people seeing or interacting with these Bible images are Christians (ibid., 49–67). Though the audience is Christian, they see and interact with these images in a secular space. People viewing, liking and retweeting these texts, then, do this in the public arena. As such, to borrow from Durkheim's definition of religion, when they 'perform' their faith they do so differently to how they would react to these texts in, for example, a church. Religious performance is guided, not so much by your own personal faith, but how you are constructing your identity in reference to who you think is your audience (which includes yourself). As Peter Phillips argues, "They may be evangelizing their audience … They may be offering guidance … They may be offering judgement … Or they may simply be offering to the wider world something which they themselves have found in some way beautiful, touching, healing" (Phillips 2019, 4). This understanding is key to interpreting the results. We have noticed that Faithlife's audience preferred traditional Christian texts, yet the reason for this is not completely discernable. When they like images about the "Lamb of God," are they evangelising, judging, sharing or something else? Digital media shows a different, and infinitely harder to establish, interaction with the Bible from traditional ones.

A further complicating factor lies in what John Weaver calls the "idolatrous" aspects of digital Bibles (Weaver 2018, 151). Pointing to many automated spambots that sent out millions Bible verse tweets a year, he argues that the combined effect of the Bible on social media "is a combination of misinformation and information overload, both of which desensitize viewers to the power of scriptures because of their mass quantity and questionable quality" (ibid., 152). The danger lies, he argues, in this leading to a consumerist use of the Bible, where engagement with the text stands outside of the context of a church community. This danger is mitigated by the fact that Twitter, as a social medium, ends up creating a bubble, i.e., an implicit community of like-minded people.

In conclusion, then, the ideological priorities and audience of the three organisations clearly drive their choice and depiction of biblical texts. Graceway

emphasises texts on love and interprets difficult texts in a positive way. Faith-life emphasises strong visuals to equip Christians, yet their audience do not seem to appreciate the visuals as strongly as one might expect; the reader's own religious performance with the text plays a large role. The Dutch Bible Society chooses texts that apply to current events in non-traditional ways, reading the text for non-Christian audiences.

All in all, the power of the reader-illustrator to rewrite and transform the text should be apparent. The addition of images primes the audience to receive the text in a certain way, and the rewriter has extensive control over the emotions of the audience. Yet, at the same time, the audience retains some interpretative control – many will have their own previous experiences with the same texts. Nonetheless, the ideological priorities and theological preferences of the producer clearly have an impact on the reader of a multimodal Bible, whose own interpretation of the text is subconsciously influenced by the producer's artistic re-mediation.

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Tom de Bruin

Zusammenfassung

Millionen von Bibelversen werden jährlich auf Twitter geteilt. Dieser Artikel untersucht die Bibel auf Twitter, indem Bilder mit Bibelversen herangezogen werden, die von drei Organisationen produziert werden: Faithlife/Logos Bible Software, die Niederländische Bibelgesellschaft und Graceway. Ich untersuche, auf welche Art diese drei Organisationen die Bibel auf Social Media vermitteln. Die Veröffentlichungen dieser Unternehmen bilden die Grundlage für eine Analyse der Hermeneutik einer visuellen, digitalen Bibel. Ich analysiere, wie sich der Umgang mit der Bibel durch die Digitalisierung verändert und auf welche Weise die digitale Bibel die (theologische) Autorität beeinflusst. Letztlich wird die Macht des Illustrators bei der Beeinflussung der Interpretation biblischer Texte hervorgehoben.

Résumé

Des millions de versets bibliques sont partagés sur Twitter chaque année. Cet article examine la Bible sur Twitter, en considérant les images des versets bibliques produites par trois organisations: Faithlife/Logos Bible Software, Dutch Bible Society et Graceway. J'examine la façon dont ces trois organisations utilisent la Bible sur les réseaux sociaux. Les résultats fournis par ces sociétés constituent la base d'une analyse de l'herméneutique d'une Bible visuelle et numérique. J'analyse la façon dont le regard sur la Bible change en raison de la numérisation et de quelle manière la Bible numérique influence l'autorité (théologique). Finalement, comment le pouvoir qu'a l'illustrateur d'influencer l'interprétation des textes bibliques est mis en évidence.

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Book Review

Brown, Nathan. *For the Least of These*. Nampa: Pacific Press, 2019. 120 pp.

Nathan Brown's book was written as a companion volume to a recent set of Sabbath School study guides (third quarter 2019). It is thus divided into thirteen chapters each of about eight pages. As such, it is directed towards a popular readership within the church. The sequencing of the chapters is not particularly logical and not, one suspects, what Brown would have chosen had he been able to provide his own structure. That said, he works well within these constraints and offers this short, very readable volume on social justice, a subject much neglected by Adventist publishers over the years.

Brown is the manager of the Australian Adventist publishing house, and he also does a fair amount of writing, which provides some of the backdrop for the book. Its authority derives in no small part from the fact that he is not a mere armchair commentator. He has worked with several NGOs including Adventist Development and Relief Agency and Amnesty International. His work with ADRA provides him with some of the narratives which illustrate his case.

The chapters visit some well-worn themes like the creation, the Sabbath, the Egyptian captivity, the life of Jesus and the prophets but offer fresh perspectives, which relate to the plight of the underprivileged in our world. In addition to that the book draws on the work of Adventist pioneers, most notably Ellen White, showing that the contemporary church has somewhat lost touch with some of the radical teachings on social justice of its early leaders.

Brown notes that well over 2,000 verses in the Bible speak of the concern of God for those who suffer poverty, injustice and oppression. That being the case, he asks how those who profess to be followers of Jesus can *not* be interested in those on the margins.

In chapter 1 Brown laments the fact that so much conversation about creation has been devoted to polemic about dogmatic matters that we miss the central teaching that we are all made in the image of God, "part of the great

web of humanity", and thus have responsibilities to each other. Quoting Martin Luther King Jr., obviously a hero of his, he says "I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be"(16). In chapter 2 he notes that a staggering number of people in our world are refugees, are forced into various kinds of modern slavery, are the victims of genocide and persecution, or through accidents of birth are subject to social exclusion in its many and terrible forms. "[I]n the face of injustice, God is inviting us to *join* the work he is already doing" (p. 20).

Chapter 3 is devoted to the Sabbath, which provides an opportunity to rebalance our own lives and our relationships with others. It is too easy to be caught up in the values of the marketplace. As well as the weekly Sabbath itself, the Sabbatical year and the Year of Jubilee remind us of the need to examine our relationship with the economic systems with which we are bound up. It is easy to oppress remotely.

Chapter 4 acknowledges that tackling social injustice requires a great deal more than personal action however committed that may be. Inevitably, it is a political question, which the Adventist Church has typically shied away from. All our choices are in some sense political; we cannot avoid involvement in politics, the life of the *polis*. Brown offers a severe indictment of the record of the Adventist Church. The corporate silence of Adventists displays a profound misunderstanding of the church's mission, and the need to rethink our role in matters of social concern.

Chapter 5 supplies a call for the Church to speak again with a prophetic voice. There is a time to be angry. "God's anger always comes with tears," he says (p. 44). Too often it has settled down with the status quo. We have been complicit in the oppression of those at the bottom of the human chain. At the same time, he warns us against a guilt which would prevent us from doing the little that we can. In chapter 6 he makes the connection between social justice and worship. Too often perhaps our acts of worship focus rather on personal piety at the expense of our social obligations.

In chapter 7 Brown comes to the heart of Christian teaching – that God is *with us* – through all the experiences of life. Citing Bono – and displaying a refreshing range of reference – Brown notes: "God is with us if we are with them". "With-ness" is an inescapable part of Christian discipleship, uncomfortable as it may sometimes be.

Chapter 8 tackles the question of righteousness and how we have tended to emphasize individual freedom from blemish over restorative justice. Immediate aid is good but long-term development is even better. This is impossible without political action and that may well involve compromise – such is life.

Chapter 9 confronts a difficult question for the Christian church. It concerns the matter of investing energy into preaching the gospel on the one hand and engaging in social action on the other. Quoting another observer, he says: "A church that is invisible and largely absent from the public arena will not be taken seriously by educated citizens who care about their communities." The next chapter follows a similar theme.

Chapter 11 tells the story of Adventists who helped Jews to escape the clutches of the Nazis at the risk of their own lives. Several are now honoured at the Holocaust memorial at Yad Vashem. This episode he takes to be a stark instance of the larger cosmic struggle between "the Righteous among the Nations" and the force of evil empire. "Empire" has to be resisted in all its forms.

In chapter 12 Brown invites us to examine our own prejudices, our tendency to view certain categories of people as somehow less than ourselves. Our money is often a prism, which focuses our values. He asks us to consider disinvestment of our funds in companies where exploitation is to be found somewhere along the supply chain. Fair trade and sustainability are important elements in our consumer choices.

Chapter 13 highlights the fact that the early Adventists had a strong record on abolitionism, peace witness, and temperance. The contemporary church dare not do less. Only then can we profess to "do justice, love kindness, walk humbly."

A striking omission from Brown's book – because it did not feature in the Sabbath School studies presumably – is a consideration of the effect of Adventist apocalyptic teaching on social action. If God will soon intervene in human affairs to right all injustices, there seems little point in seeking to rectify them now. A prime example of this is Joseph Bates who came to believe that proclaiming the imminent advent trumped his commitment to the abolition of slavery and to the temperance cause. It is a good thing the slaves did not depend on the Adventists for their freedom. The protection of the environment in the climate emergency might offer a contemporary example.

Brown's book is gentle, generous and broad in its sympathies. He treads lightly around many contentious issues. That is no doubt because of the context in which the book emerged. There is room for a more angry, or at least, impatient, appeal to the Church. Perhaps Brown will in time produce it.

For those who have already given serious thought to issues of social justice Brown's book may contain little that is new. The strength of the work is that it is very readable and makes accessible to a wide church readership many of the pressing issues of the day. In addition to that Brown's own commitment to social justice brings a freshness and passion to these burning issues. The only sadness is that such a book did not emerge from an Adventist publisher long before this. That is an indictment of us all.

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Book Review

Hasel, Frank M., Magyarosi, Barna, and Höschele, Stefan, eds. *Adventists and Military Service: Biblical, Historical, and Ethical Perspectives.* **Madrid: Safeliz, 2019. 225 pp.**

Die Frage, wie Adventisten sich gegenüber den Forderungen des Militärdienstes verhalten sollen, wurde während der gesamten Geschichte der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten kontrovers diskutiert. Zwei wesentliche Ursachen können dafür benannt werden: 1. Einerseits existiert in den Vereinigten Staaten eine Berufsarmee, die nur im besonderen Kriegsfall durch Einberufungen ergänzt wird, während in vielen anderen Ländern eine reguläre Militärpflicht üblich war bzw. ist, der sich jeder junge Man zu unterwerfen hat. 2. In den Vereinigten Staaten existiert eine demokratische Grundstruktur, die einen Einspruch gegen Einberufungen bzw. im Ausnahmefall Noncombatant-Dienste für solche Rekruten ermöglicht, die aus Gewissensgründen keine Waffe in die Hand nehmen möchten. In vielen anderen Ländern der Erde finden sich Diktaturen bzw. solche Staaten, die weder Noncombatanten anerkennen, noch gewillt sind, Gewissensentscheidungen Einzelner zu akzeptieren. Diese Gegebenheiten führen bis in die Gegenwart zu Spannungen bzw. dazu, dass Adventisten keine gemeinsamen Antworten auf die ethischen Herausforderungen des Militärdienstes geben können. Bereits nach dem Amerikanischen Bürgerkrieg wurde als Defizit erkannt, dass zu Fragen des Militärdienstes keine gemeinsame Grundauffassung existiert, und die Generalkonferenz beauftragte John N. Andrews eine systematische Studie als Entscheidungsvorlage für die Kirchenleitung vorzulegen; allerdings führte er diesen Auftrag nicht aus, und die Frage blieb zur Gegenwart unbeantwortet.

Umso verdienstvoller ist die Leistung des Biblical Research Committee der Inter-Europäischen Division zu bewerten, diese Thematik aufzugreifen und aus verschiedenen Blickwinkeln zu erörtern. Die ersten beiden Aufsätze beschäftigen sich mit der Darstellung und dem Verhalten gegenüber Krieg im Alten und Neuen Testament. Während die Darstellung zum Alten Testament sich ausschließlich auf den Textbefund des AT stützt, wird im Kapitel „War

and Nonviolence in the New Testament" der Bogen weiter gespannt und auch die Makkabäerzeit und der Jüdische Krieg eingeschlossen.

Nach diesen mehr theologisch-systematischen Betrachtungen wird in Kapitel 3 die vor allem in den afrikanischen Staaten sehr bedeutsame Frage der Ethnie, bzw. der Stammeszugehörigkeit, angesprochen. So entstehender Tribalismus, bzw. auch Nationalismus, führt nicht selten zu gewalttätigen Auseinandersetzungen auch in den Adventgemeinden und verdeutlicht, dass mit demokratischem Grundverständnis, das z. B. die frühen Adventisten aus tiefstem Herzen vertraten, hier keine einfachen und schnellen Lösungen gefunden werden können, sondern eine sehr komplexe Situation vorliegt, die die verschiedensten ethischen Fragestellungen und Antworten beinhaltet.

Die folgende Darstellung (Kapitel 4) gibt einen rein historischen Abriss über das Verständnis vom gerechten Krieg durch die Geschichte der Christenheit. Dabei wird die Zeit von den frühen Christen bis zum 21. Jahrhundert, in dem seit dem Golfkrieg und den Anschlägen vom 11. September 2001 der schon totgeglaubte Begriff des gerechten Krieges wieder reaktiviert wurde, behandelt. Hier hätten kurze Hinweise auf den Umstand, dass Adventisten am Beginn des Amerikanischen Bürgerkrieges und sogar noch im Ersten Weltkrieg die Idee vom gerechten Krieg favorisierten, den Bezug zur konkreten Thematik des Titels herstellen können. In diesen Zusammenhang gehört auch die spannungsgeladene Aussage, dass im Fall eines Krieges der Souverän alle Verantwortung für die Handlungen des Krieges trägt und damit das Gewissen des einzelnen Soldaten entlastet ist. Frühe Adventisten haben auch diese Idee verteidigt.

Der fünfte Artikel beschäftigt sich mit dem in der Geschichte der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten bestehenden Spannungsfeld zwischen der Haltung Einzelner als Pazifisten, Conscientious Cooperators und solchen, die Militärdienst mit der Waffe leisten. Dabei liegt der Fokus ausschließlich auf den unterschiedlichen Betonungen der einzelnen Standpunkte innerhalb der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten, die sich im Wesentlichen aus dem Wachstum der Kirche von Nordamerika nach Europa und dann nach Afrika und anderen Ländern ergaben. Die Ausführungen könnten durch die kleine, aber doch bedeutsame Unterscheidung zwischen Pazifisten und Wehrdienst- bzw. Kriegsdienstverweigerern, die vor allem in europäischen Staaten vorgenommen wurde, erweitert werden.

Das folgende Kapitel 6 dokumentiert die Haltung europäischer Adventisten zur Frage des Militärdienstes in Kriegszeiten, vor allem die Haltung derer, die aus Gewissensgründen oder anderer Motivation heraus verweigert haben. Hier ist es das Verdienst des Autors, die weithin unbekannten und vergessenen Einzelschicksale nicht nur dem Vergessen entrissen zu haben, sondern ebenso die Spannung zu dokumentieren, die sich aus dem Umstand ergeben hat, dass häufig die Kirchenleitungen aus verschiedensten Gründen den Betroffenen keine Unterstützung zuteilwerden ließen. Gleichzeitig verdeutlicht diese Darstellung ein nach wie vor wenig erforschtes Kapitel in der Geschichte der Adventisten in vielen Ländern Europas.

Im Kapitel 7, „Ethical Challenges in Military Service", behandelt der Autor systematisch die Herausforderungen, die sich beim Militärdienst aus adventistischer Perspektive ergeben. Der Blickwinkel ist hier nicht auf die Geschichte, sondern auf die Gegenwart mit ihren sehr komplexen und teils auch neuen Herausforderungen, wie sie unter anderem die moderne Kriegsführung bedingt, gelegt. Den angesprochenen Problemfeldern werden offizielle Verlautbarungen der Kirche gegenübergestellt. Hier ist der Leser mitten in der aktuellen Situation der Gegenwart angelangt. Die sehr konzentrierte Darstellung bietet eine hervorragende Grundlage für weitergehende Diskussionen.

Im abschließenden Kapitel 8 werden die Fragen angesprochen, die sich für einen Pastor ergeben, wenn er mit Personen zu tun hat, die seelsorgerliche Beratung aufgrund von Kriegseinsätzen bzw. von Gewalt im Krieg suchen. Hier wird deutlich, dass über solche Konsequenzen bislang im adventistischen Kontext kaum reflektiert wurde, vor allem nicht, wenn die Frage nach Militärdienst im Krieg zur Debatte steht.

Den acht Artikeln von unterschiedlichen Autoren sind drei für die weitere Forschung kurze, aber wichtige Anhänge beigefügt: eine Zusammenfassung, die noch einmal die konkreten Herausforderungen, die sich für Adventisten beim Militärdienst ergeben, formuliert und damit eine weitergehende Diskussion eröffnet; dann ein erster Anhang (Appendix I), in dem die offiziellen adventistischen Statements zum Militärdienst chronologisch mit Quellenangaben aufgelistet werden und schließlich eine ausführliche Bibliografie zur Thematik (Appendix II und III).

Das Buch ist mit den teils sehr konzentriert formulierten Artikeln bestens geeignet, die bis heute nur partiell beantwortete Frage, wie sich Adventisten

zum Militärdienst positionieren sollten, neu in Gang zu bringen bzw. im Bewusstsein zu halten und jungen Adventisten so Entscheidungshilfen zu vermitteln. Es ist zu wünschen, dass die Veröffentlichung viele Leser findet.

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Book Review

Campbell, Michael W. *1919: The Untold Story of Adventism's Struggle with Fundamentalism.* **Nampa: Pacific Press, 2019, 124 pp.**

1919 is one of the significant dates in Seventh-day Adventist history. In this year, an important conference took place of the denomination's leaders and theology and history teachers. However, the (incomplete) transcripts of the conference disappeared in the archives of the church's headquarters and were not unearthed until the 1970s. Soon thereafter, the independent Adventist journal *Spectrum* published major excerpts from the *Report* of the conference. This caused quite a stir as it showed that several of the divisive issues in contemporary Adventism were also key topics during this conference, in particular with regard to biblical hermeneutics and the inspiration of the Bible and of the Ellen G. White writings.

In his recent book – *1919: The Untold Story of Adventism's Struggle with Fundamentalism* – Dr. Campbell (currently teaching theology and history at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas, USA), guides the reader through this conference. He discusses the context in which the conference was held. Protestant Fundamentalism was emerging as a major reaction to liberal trends in various denominations, with a strong emphasis on verbal inspiration as one of its major tenets. In addition, there was a renewed interest in prophetic themes and in the Second Coming of Christ. Some of these themes resonated well with several Adventist leaders and theologians. A few years after the death of Ellen G. White, the Adventist Church had to learn to be without a living prophet and faced questions with regard to the continued authority of her writings.

The first part of the book (pp. 25–59), reports on the three-week conference. Campbell shows how a distinct polarization between *progressives* and *conservatives* coloured the discussions of the main topics. These included several issues (which are dealt with in the second part; pp. 63–103), concerning details of traditional Adventist prophetic interpretations (such as *the daily*, the dating of the 1260 year-period, the identity of the ten toes of the image of Daniel 2

and of *the king of the North* in Daniel 11). Another important topic at the conference was the church's attitude towards the doctrine of the Trinity. But the conference's hottest topic was the doctrine of inspiration and how the Adventist understanding of inspiration related to the abiding role and authority of Ellen White. One of the key questions that dominated the discussions on this issue was to what extent the writing of the prophet should be seen as inerrant and as an absolute authority – also in the sphere of history.

In a mere 116 pages Campbell succeeds in providing a good overview of the setting of the conference (chapter 1–2), of the conference itself (chapter 3–8), of the aftermath (chapter 9) and the contemporary significance of the event (chapter 10). One of the persons who endorsed the book calls it the "definitive account" of the conference. That, however, may be somewhat of an overstatement. In fact, the author's dissertation (on which this book is based) should perhaps be given that epithet. Readers who want to have more detailed information on some points will (like me) want to check the digital version of Campbell's dissertation, which is available through Andrews University.[1] Whether or not the subtitle of the book, *The Untold Story of Adventism's Struggle with Fundamentalism*, is fully warranted, may also be questioned. My "Beach Lectures" at Newbold College (2000), entitled *Seventh-day Adventism and Fundamentalism*,[2] and an extensive article in *Spectrum*, based on these lectures,[3] provide ample bibliographical information about Adventist sources that deal with the history of the Adventist attitude towards Fundamentalism.

Of course, one could wish that the author had dealt with some aspects in greater depth. In his dissertation, Campbell gives a full list of the 64 participants to the conference. There he also briefly mentions the reason for the absence of William C. White, the prophet's oldest son and her right hand in her later years. Why did the wedding of his twin children deter him from attending at least a part of the conference? A notable absentee was also M. L. Andreasen, who at the time was one of the most prominent Adventist theologians. In view of his later controversy with some notable colleagues and with the church's

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[1] Cf. https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/21/.

[2] Cf. the published version: Bruinsma, Reinder. *Seventh-day Adventism and Fundamentalism*. Occasional Papers 4. Bracknell: Newbold College, Centre of the Study of Religious and Cultural Diversity, 2006.

[3] Cf. Bruinsma, Reinder. "Adventism and Protestant Fundamentalism." *Spectrum* 30.1, 2002, 24–36.

leadership, it would have been important to discover what caused his absence? Was he not invited? Did he decline the invitation?

The short section about Margaret M. Rowen (pp. 39–41)[4], who after Ellen White's death claimed to be her prophetic successor whets the appetite for a much fuller description of who she was, what motivated her prophetic claim and what happened to her afterwards. Perhaps Campbell will, before too long, pursue that story further.

Since the book draws heavily on the transcripts of the conference (the *Report*), it would have been helpful if the reader would have been provided with the link to the denomination's archives, where a digital copy may be consulted.

1919: The Untold Story of Adventism's Struggle with Fundamentalism is to be highly recommended to all Adventist professionals in the field of theology and Adventist studies. It should also be read by those Seventh-day Adventist church members who are interested in the history of their church, and who are eager to get a better understanding of the historical background of the current polarization. These contemporary divisions are to a large extent continuations of the 1919 conference's debates about different approaches to inspiration and hermeneutics.

Although the paper on which the book is printed does not allow for high quality photographs, the portraits of the main players in and around the 1919 Bible conference and a few pictures of some relevant items, in the back of the book, are an extra bonus that will be appreciated by many readers.

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[4] See also Campbell, Michael W. "Rowen, Margaret Mathilda (Wright)." Fortin, Dennis, and Moon, Jerry, eds. *The Ellen White Encyclopedia*. Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2013, 503–504.

Book Review

Valentine, Gilbert. *J. N. Andrews: Mission Pioneer, Evangelist, and Thought Leader.* **Nampa: Pacific Press, 2019. 733 pp.**

There are books with content that one can understand in a couple of minutes or read in a few hours. Others need days, and some can take you weeks. This book actually will entertain you – and challenge you – for months. The author admits that it turned out "a little longer than originally intended" (p. 22); with its more than 700 pages of text, it is actually the longest by far in all the Adventist Pioneer Library biographies.

To be honest, at the outset I doubted that anything of significance could be added to what we already know about 19th century Adventist history. Had not all the letters, manuscripts, and papers been already worked upon in dozens of research projects, dissertations, and popular publications? I only accepted the assignment because I knew the author was among the premier Adventist historians and I presumed that the book would make interesting reading in my Christmas holidays, substituting for novels (which I rarely read), thanks to its narrative layout and dramatic content.

Before commenting on the subject, some key details, and insights gained from this biography, let me highlight what I consider to be the main importance of the book. Beyond presenting to the scholarly world and to the general readership a comprehensive and incredibly thoroughly researched biography of John Nevins Andrews, this monograph represents a real breakthrough in Adventist historiography. We knew of various aspects of the relationships and conflicts between the denomination's pioneers before, but no author hitherto attempted to use anything like the socio-psychological historiographical approach that Valentine has chosen as his main method. He masterfully weaves accounts of developing personal interactions and individual struggles into the fabric of developing church realities, theological issues, and the denomination's expansion in such a way that, for the first time, proper

space is given to that aspect of human life that characterizes much of our existence in general: the psyche and the web of relations with those who are close to us.[1]

But this is not all. The author combines an astounding empathy with Andrews (as well as with those who surrounded him), with what I consider an almost ethnographic approach to Andrews's life. Thus, the monograph is also a history of the mentality of early Adventism, resulting from a perspective that comes so close to participant observation that a reader often feels that the author actually accompanied Andrews during his travels, interviewed him, and obtained information from other informants around him. We know, of course, that this was not the case. The fortunate situation that contemporaries' diaries exist (e.g. of his aunt Persis, pp. 89 ff., and of Swiss apprentice Jean Vuilleumier, pp. 668 ff.), as well as stacks of letters and other archival material, is helpful in this regard, but we can only marvel at how Valentine weaves insights from these documents into an account that reveals the atmosphere, values, and patterns that characterized Andrews's epoch and Adventists in this defining phase of their history.

On a more theoretical level, the volume combines elements of various narrative schemes in a subtle but appropriate manner. Particularly in religious history, it is easy to find examples of how authors follow (mostly unconsciously), one particular approach of those outlined in Hayden White's classic *Metahistory*. He distinguishes what he calls the "four archetypal story forms"[2] romance, tragedy, comedy, and satire; and we know examples even in Adventist historiography of sceptical history ("satire" – focusing on that which does not develop well), hagiography ("romance" – the good always overcomes evil) and conservative approaches ("comedy" – in the end, everything is okay). Valentine's narrative is at times close to the type that Hayden White

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[1] Valentine does not name his approach. Yet his frequent discussions of personality conflicts (see discussion and page references below), extended reflections on Andrews's actions, and regular references to his feelings, perceptions, sense of inadequacy, issues of blame, guilt, and remorse indicate that this really is a key theme (cf. pp. 19, 21–22, 714). Moreover, the way the author presents these episodes demonstrates that he circumnavigated the "dangers of superficial psychobiography" (230, footnote 79, referring to Kay Redfield Jamison. *Touched with Fire*: *Manic Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament.* New York, NY: Free Press Paperback, 1993).

[2] *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973, 10.

calls "tragedy" (the failure to match ideals), but he actually incorporates aspects of all the other three story forms as well, which makes the overall presentation diversified *and* balanced.

The monograph's topic, is of course, John Andrews – at least at one level of reading. No full account of this pioneer's life existed before. One wonders why: was it because a 1985 collection of papers, published by Andrews University Press,[3] suggested that all had been said? The papers dated from 1974, however – a time when the General Conference Archives and the research infrastructure needed to do in-depth studies such as these had not even come into existence. Or is it because this man, who was certainly the fourth in importance among the earliest Adventists (next to the Whites and Bates), seemed somewhat of a failure at the end of his life? Andrews's legacy has been a chequered one in the denomination's collective memory: a man who was a great scholar compared with all the other leaders – but too scholarly for the Whites' taste (p. 717); an American with unusual linguistic abilities – but struggling to communicate with the French Swiss surroundings in which he worked for almost ten years (pp. 538–541); the movement's first official missionary – but one who did not produce the success that his brethren back home expected. Perhaps the last period of his life simply did not look as promising for a biographer-to-be as for instance Kellogg, Daniells, the Whites, and Miller.

But Valentine now teaches us that this life was much richer and more significant than the surface reveals. This is why the book actually is as much a book on Adventism until the early 1880s as it is about Andrews himself. It is a walk through its organizational development and emerging institutions, and various experiments of the leaders. One meets almost all the key personalities of the time, gains a sense of the discourse on mission in the period, and how the prophetic role of Ellen White worked in practice. There are some elements of theology, of course, but the often forgotten weight of personal relationships (as well as of kinship), are given the rightful place they ought to have in a historical account of people who constituted the movement with which they identified. In short, reading this book is the equivalent of several university seminars in early Adventist history.

At the same time, it is a prime example of portraying and assessing how memories of people's decisions and actions can be lost, narrowed, or changed.

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[3] Harry Leonard, ed. *J. N. Andrews: The Man and the Mission*.

Valentine both portrays how Adventists sacrificed themselves – and how at times the movement sacrificed individuals. Granting or receiving insufficient support, risking health and life, and the constant pressures of working on minimum budgets: all this may have felt normal at the time. Although friction and lament about such situations is a recurring theme, chronic attempts of identifying who is to be blamed when things went wrong in such a framework indicate that it was easy for the movement to retain one side of a story in its memory. In the case of Andrews, although Valentine does not set out to "vindicate" him against less than enthusiastic assessments from the brethren in far away America during his ministry in Europe, he clearly comes to the conclusion that contemporary critiques of his mission approach were largely flawed and represented a monocultural perspective of those who had never set foot on European soil (pp. 589–594, 665–669, 701–708).

Since the book is so long, this review cannot comment on all chapters and not even on all the major aspects of Andrews's life, his contributions during the 54 years granted to him, and the author's account of the same. Of course, this biography describes almost every knowable detail of John Nevins's background, formation, and ministry: his upbringing, the aftermath of the Great Disappointment as a teenager, the shut door period and the peculiar circumstances at Paris, Maine; and his early ministry, his moves to Rochester, Waukon, Battle Creek, and Switzerland. Valentine also illuminates his various roles as a pastor, writer, Conference President, de facto and de jure General Conference President (pp. 323–327, 333–354), theologian (e.g. of the Sabbath, pp. 447–468), missionary (chapter 17 ff.), and publisher. Of special interest are those many instances when he played a less official yet decisive role in the defining developments and crises of the young denomination: the beginnings of publishing; theological discussions such as the beginning time of Sabbath (pp. 156–157), the organization question in the 1850s, debates on Ellen White's prophetic ministry (see, e.g., pp. 240–242, 321), health reform (pp. 281–285), the young denomination's stance towards the Civil War (285–290), the Battle Creek church purge (pp. 394–398), and many instances of leadership friction. And, finally, the account of the challenges he encountered as the European mission started reveals what most missionaries experience even today. However, it also conveys a sense of the particular perplexities of the period. He was the first missionary sent by a movement that had believed just one generation earlier that proclamation beyond Millerite circles was against God's

will. Andrews was challenged by flawed beginnings, language learning, cultural differences, misunderstandings, disappointment, economic crises, tragic losses of family members, extended phases of disease, and the gnawing question of why God does not grant more success if the end of time is to come so rapidly

Underneath these various parts of the Andrews story as told by Valentine lies a common thread that can only be detected when one reads the entire tome. Again and again, the author analyses the leadership styles of Andrews, James White and others and thus presents a narrative that succeeds in applying insights from social science in an unobtrusive way.[4] Thus the biographical and documentary framework is enhanced by an interpretative lens; Valentine uses enough of it to add a flavour of meaningful interpretation, yet fortunately he does not exaggerate this approach (which would have been easy for a Professor Emeritus of Leadership and Administration).

The portrayal of the instances of conflict among leaders forms the fabric of Valentine's contribution. It is here that his account links the psychological, social, cultural, and leadership aspects in the most forceful manner. These occurrences abound, and I will list them only to substantiate my claim that they play a crucial role in the narrative as well as in Andrews's life: conflicts around and among Millerites (pp. 59, 63 ff.); conflicts with "fanatics," i.e. the Paris group, to which Andrews belonged, in the painful years after 1844, with his later father in-law judged insane (87–95);[5] discord with the Whites (pp. 124–127); "strains in personal relationships among the publishing personnel in Rochester" in the context of "close, communal living" (p. 153); Ellen's comments on J. N. Andrews's relationship with Annie (pp. 160–161) and Angeline (pp. 173–176); conflicts at Battle Creek between Uriah Smith and the Whites

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[4] A few examples: in several instances, Valentine calls Andrews "James White's Melanchthon" (cf. the section pp. 145–150 and 19, 139, 180, 204, 657) and thus compares the leadership role of the historic scholar among the Magisterial Reformers with the "Adventist Luther," James White. Beyond observations on leadership in the sections on conflict (see below), comments on leadership theory viz. leadership approaches are usually short but penetrating (see, e.g., p. 590 on lack of policy and micromanagement; p. 599 on the repeal of the denomination's 1873 statement on leadership by the General Conference; and p. 715 with a short overall evaluation).

[5] Cyprian Stevens was one of those post-Millerites who were crawling on the streets to manifest humility, and together with his family he stopped working for several years due to his conviction that this would indicate that he did not any longer believe in Jesus' soon coming.

(with Andrews being indirectly involved as the brother-in-law of Smith's wife; pp. 193–194); numerous instances of clashes between James White and Andrews (plus his family; pp. 206–207, 224–226, 276–277, 295–296, 423–433); and severe controversy between James and several other leaders, including Andrews (pp. 232–261 [chapter 9], 375–386, 388–394, 473–503 [chapter 16]), not to mention the tensions regarding Andrews's missionary methods in Europe during almost the entire last decade of this life. Had the Great Controversy motif not become a crucial theological ingredient of Adventism, one might almost be tempted to attribute defining importance to interpersonal controversy among these 19th century believers.

Clearly this book is not for those in search of hagiography or for the faint-hearted when it comes to the glories of the Adventist past. Valentine tells the story as it was (at least as it must have been for the participants), without embellishing the unpleasant parts. In fact, the lengthy listing in the paragraph above is also to give the reader a sense of how draining especially the crises at Battle Creek must have been; they kept repeating themselves, and the solace for the bewildered reader is that it must have been much worse for the people involved. There were instances of public shaming (chapter 16, pp. 238, 251, 266; cf. also p. 424), which built on the practice of "plain speaking,"[6] and in 1870, almost the entire Battle Creek Church membership was excommunicated (pp. 389–400); of about 300, only 12 remained (p. 395), with Andrews being among the remaining ones. He had the gift of submission, even to the point of "subservience" (p. 426), as Valentine explains; halting self-destructing tendencies among the movement's leadership was evidently not his strength.

This points toward the connection between the psychogram of Andrews, which the author presents from the outset (pp. 19, 21), and doctrine. Although this giant of early Adventism was instrumental in clarifying, defining, and systematizing many aspects of the movement's tenets of faith, he essentially remained an apologist. His theological contribution, which Valentine outlines in two separate chapters on the Sabbath (chapter 15) and other areas of doctrine (chapter 21: restorationist theology, sanctuary, soul sleep), was a service

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[6] For references (about 20!), see the index, which is slightly uncommon for biographies but extremely helpful. The phenomenon of "plain speaking" or "plain speech," which meant a direct and public reference to someone's perceived fault, was apparently as much a New England practice as it was typical for Adventists at the time; cf. the explanations pp. 390–392.

to his church largely by collecting arguments and making the denomination's beliefs seem plausible. Andrews's personal centre of theological attention, however, was the law and God's judgement (see, e.g. pp. 50, 56, and *passim*) – and his analogous personality trait was a crushing sense of duty.[7] This overly strong motif had roots in his New England upbringing (pp. 27–28), but the concomitant fear-driven theology, which somehow combined the negative side effects of both Calvinistic (a judgemental God, but with no way to prove that you are among the predestined) and Arminian strands (total responsibility of humans for their free-will decisions) made a disastrous soteriological cocktail. One wonders what would have happened to Andrews in 1888, especially after James White, who often defined God's will for him, could no longer do so. While his notions of "duty" propelled him to Europe to propagate the Adventist interpretation of Christianity, the joy of the gospel apparently remained dim to the very missionary who sacrificed his daughter and his own life for the cause.

One could comment on a host of other topics, but that would mean writing an entire review article, which was not intended. Two should be enough: health (as an example of external factors) and ministry (an issue demonstrating the internal workings of an organization).

(1) I am writing in the midst of the international Corona virus crisis, with governments around the globe shutting down public life to protect the vulnerable. At Andrews's time, tuberculosis was an unseen enemy of humanity that threatened everyone and took its toll in a manner that exceeds our imagination. The millions who regularly died of what was then called "consumption" characterized the period and could hardly be addressed theologically: Had people not always died from disease? But why Andrews at age 54, so few years after his daughter Mary? And so many other early Adventists (Nathaniel White and printer Luman Masters in 1853 [p. 154]; Annie Smith [p. 160]; several who went to Switzerland with Andrews in his later years; and, in earlier years, James White, Ellen White, and James's sister Anna – all were sick and possibly contracted tuberculosis)? "The good old times, they were terrible" (as Otto Bettman's classic puts it).

(2) Changing times bring changing expectations; as one reads about the personalities who shaped the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its first two

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[7] The index lists 19 instances for "sense of duty."

generations, one cannot help but wonder if they would make it into the ranks of ministers today. Apart from the well-known fact that individuals on all sides in the episodes of friction had non-Trinitarian or anti-Trinitarian theologies and would not be even accepted as baptismal candidates – would not the character traits, individual styles, and values that made them suitable for working for a nascent denomination prevent them from serving as employees of a well-structured and democratic organization today? These questions point to the limits of "learning from history"; while human beings always have their peculiar shortcomings and challenges, each phase of the past highlights different demands on those who "made history."

   This leads us to the general evaluation of the book and the author's achievements in writing it. First let me state that – with the only minor blemish being a couple of typos (for which I charge the unknown copy editor rather than the author, and which I will communicate to him directly) – this book is, in my view, worth two doctoral dissertations not only with regard to length but also in terms of contribution. In the introduction, he expresses his "hope … that this study will help a new generation of readers see this first scholar-evangelist of Adventism, and his associates, as real people – people of the nineteenth century who believed deeply that God was using them, in spite of their failings and missteps, to build a movement that had a message about the end times and about accountability before a divine judgment that their world needed to hear" (p. 22). The author certainly did everything to enable readers to come to this conclusion. To put it more technically, this is church history as socio-psychological history at its best on both the micro and meso levels, and certainly an inspiring piece of literature about impressive personalities as well as a most perceptive appreciation of such real life believers' decisions, limitations, and achievements. As such, this biography is refreshing in many ways with regard to our understanding of Andrews and all those who were close to him, including James and Ellen White, and thus of Adventism at large, and will be indispensable reading for all future students of Adventist history.

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Book Review

Papaioannou, Kim, and Giantzaklidis, Ioannis, eds. *Earthly Shadows, Heavenly Realities: Temple/Sanctuary Cosmology in Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Jewish Literature*. **Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2016. 367 pp.**

Heavenly sanctuary, earthly sanctuary – has not all been said from an Adventist point of view? It is astonishing that to date there is no comprehensive, scholarly collection analysing the pertinent references that includes not only biblical findings but also ancient Near Eastern (ANE) and early Jewish literature. This has now changed due to this fundamental work on the relationship between the heavenly and earthly sanctuary. By providing lexeme and other linguistic studies, motif studies considering stylistic devices, as well as interdisciplinary comparisons, this work traces Jewish, Christian and ANE temple conceptions. With an almost detective-like instinct, the authors uncover astonishing details.

This volume is the result of an annual Theological Forum of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in Silang, Cavite, Philippines. The 20 articles written by 16 authors focus on the heavenly sanctuary rather than the earthly one. 14 authors have a Th.D. or Ph.D. in Religion or Theology; two are Th.D. candidates.

The articles demonstrate a widespread belief in a heavenly sanctuary with practical consequences as it was an "integral part of Israel and the early church" (p. 339). The importance of the earthly temple rituals with their original heavenly realities are to contribute to a better understanding of "the death of Jesus on the cross, as well as other aspects of the Christian faith which are at times described in ritual terms" (pp. 339–340). Moreover, the focus on the heavenly temple as "idealized and glorious archetype" (p. 340), and the earthly temple as corresponding model aim at a de-hellenization and de-spiritualization of Christian theology about heaven. In short, this is a reference collection from an Adventist point of view and mainly from the point of view of Fundamental Belief no. 24.

It is difficult to select individual articles for review because many provide detailed, and sometimes controversial, insights. As an Assyriologist I will have a different view of the contributions than that of a theologian. Therefore, I shall focus especially on the ANE article and, subsequently, on the OT ones.

The first contribution by Elias Brasil de Souza (pp. 9–28) analyses the ANE sources (Sumerian, Akkadian, Ugaritic, Egyptian). As a former member of the *Collegium Mythologicum*, an interdisciplinary, scientific research group on ancient myths in Göttingen, Germany, and also in my dissertation in Assyriology, I have researched Mesopotamian texts on temple creation, among others. That is why I am going to discuss this interesting article at length.

De Souza understands the earthly temple in the Sumerian texts as "related to a heavenly counterpart" (p. 11). However, the *heavenly* temple is the actual "command centre where the deity makes decisions and performs activities related to the administration of his domain" (p. 13). Though, this does not quite do justice to the Sumerian sources: One of the passages from *Enki and Sumer* (traditional: *Enki and the World Order*) that he cites (p. 13), is precisely a decision of fate for the country of Sumer that Enki makes *in Sumer* and not from the heavenly sphere. The temple concept of the ancient Sumerians is furthermore clarified by a text that is not mentioned in the article: In the Sumerian *Innana Robs the Heavenly House*, heaven comes to earth in the form of the temple; heaven virtually becomes a part of the earth, and has already laid out the entire Sumerian civilization in itself.[1] The heavenly essence of the earthly temple and the ability of the gods to manifest themselves in different places, and thus also in the earthly temple, results in the *earthly* temple being a living place for divine legal decisions in the sense of a divine centre of power. Thus, the Sumerian *Kesh Hymn* also describes the earthly temple as the third cosmic entity besides heaven and earth. Sume-

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[1] Cf. the new translation and new interpretation of this text: Zgoll, Annette. "Innana holt das erste Himmelshaus auf die Erde. Ein sumerischer Mythos aus der Blütezeit der Stadt Uruk." Janowski, Bernd, and Schwemer, Daniel, eds. *Mythen*. Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments 8. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2015, 45–55.

rian *earthly* temples (not only the heavenly prototypes) are real cosmic, numinous, living organisms. In this case, it would have been helpful to consider further recent ANE research.[2]

De Souza's brief but concise analyses of the Akkadian sources reveal an interesting phenomenon: The reflection of heavenly temple reality in the earthly temple also includes concrete temple rituals and the decoration of temple rooms. I have also encountered this phenomenon of Akkadian (and most notably Sumerian) texts in my dissertation. De Souza's article would profit from additional insights: the changed temple conception in *Enuma Elish*. In this text, a vertical axis is assumed, in which the temple in Babylon forms the centre on the earth's surface with the heavenly temple above and the temple in the midst of the earth below.[3] The earthly temple is, then, the indispensable connecting link of this axis. Its importance is also shown by the cult pedestal in the forecourt of the Marduk temple in Babylon, where every year on New Year's Day, the exaltation of Marduk as king of the gods is re-actualized and the destiny is decided anew for Babylon, the king and the whole country. The *earthly* temple rituals, therefore, have a direct effect on the gods, who could reside in both entities (earthly and non-earthly temples). The direction of movement of these rituals is, therefore, not from heaven to earth, but the other way round!

The evaluation of Hittite sources points to a divine assembly in the heavenly temple and a corresponding earthly counterpart. De Souza's profound analyses of the Ugaritic *Story of Aqhat* show the same phenomenon as the Akkadian texts: Rituals addressed to the gods in the *earthly* temple have a direct effect on the gods in the heavenly counterpart. Here the earthly temple is not just a shadow of material, heavenly reality, but a *complement or extension* of it.

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[2] Cf. e.g. Ragavan, Dina. "The Cosmic Imagery of the Temple in Sumerian Literature." Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2010; Zgoll, Annette. "Das Universum als Stadt. Welt, Götter und Menschen in den Schöpfungsentwürfen des antiken Mesopotamien." Schmid, Klaus, ed. *Schöpfung*. Themen der Theologie 4. UTB Taschenbuch 3514. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012, 17–70; Hundley, Michael B. *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East*. Atlanta: SBL, 2013 (especially chapter 3: "Mesopotamian Temples").

[3] Cf. Maul, Stefan. "Babylon, das Fadenkreuz von Raum und Zeit." Galle, Roland, and Klingen-Protti, Johannes, eds. *Städte der Literatur*. Heidelberg: Winter, 2005, 1–16 (especially pp. 8 and 10).

His research from Egyptian sources shows that the *heavenly* temple as a place of divine gatherings and legal decisions is emphasized more than the earthly temple.

The conclusion of the article sums it up: Heavenly temples as "archetype[s]" are "in close relationship and dynamic interaction with their earthly counterparts" (p. 28). The fact that this dynamic interaction was much more extensive than mentioned in the article does not diminish the importance of this article for the Adventist understanding of the ANE belief in heavenly temples. Furthermore, de Souza's article is the first Adventist study with texts from three millennia and in four languages on that specific subject.

The next section deals with the heavenly temple in the OT and its relationship to the earthly one: in the Pentateuch (chapter 2), historical books (chapter 3), Psalms (chapter 4), Isaiah and Zechariah (chapter 5) and Daniel (chapter 6). These studies contain fascinating and detailed observations. As an example, I will discuss the contribution of Felix Poniatowski to the texts of the Pentateuch (pp. 31–41). Poniatowski recognizes three phases of worship in the Pentateuch (cf. p. 41): The altar was for the patriarchs the "foot of the heavenly temple" (p. 41). Thus, Jacob's place of theophany (Gen. 28:12–15) is mentioned as "house of God" and "gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:17), although there was no building, but later an altar and a memorial pillar (Gen 35:7,14). The altar was an "extension of the heavenly realm" (p. 35), where you crossed over to the heavenly sphere, to the heavenly "house of God." Since the construction of the tabernacle under Moses, the earthly tabernacle was the "territory of heaven on earth" (p. 39). In Deuteronomy, a shift happened, and God's presence became hidden and spiritual and the earthly tabernacle became a "shadow of the heavenly temple" (p. 41). The temple concept in the Pentateuch reads in the article as follows: The heavenly temple gets a gate on earth in the form of the altars of the patriarchs (Gen.) – heaven comes down on earth in the form of the earthly temple (Ex.) – the earthly temple becomes a shadow of the heavenly temple (Deut.).

It is striking that the articles in this section interpret the earthly temple as visually and functionally corresponding to the heavenly counterpart with each having two compartments. As the main reason for these two compartments in both temples, the authors interpret *tabnît* (Ex. 25:9,40) as visual "model, pattern" of the heavenly temple for the earthly temple (cf. Felix

Poniatowski: pp. 38–39; Patrick Enoughé Anani: pp. 47–52); thus, the cherubim over the ark of the covenant in the earthly Most Holy Place are seen as the counterparts of the cherubim at God's heavenly throne (cf. David Tasker: p. 61 [Psalms]). Starting from the earthly sanctuary, they conclude with the heavenly sanctuary. In my opinion, there is a weakness in the argument here. Since there are no explicit spatial statements about the design of the heavenly sanctuary (= prototype) in the OT, we would have to be cautious in drawing conclusions about them from the design of the earthly temple (= counterpart). Other visual words with an earthly equivalent, such as "image" in Gen. 1:26–27, do not necessarily imply a visual equality of God and his "image" (= mankind). The prototype defines the correspondence and not the other way around. Nor does this literal temple concept take into account that God meets the respective people in their imaginary world and relates to them where they are. To what extent can visions of the heavenly temple in the Prophets or similar poetic descriptions in the Psalms be interpreted literally? Genre-specific research can tie in here. Even after the arguments presented in this volume, it remains open for me whether the functional conceptions common to the heavenly and earthly sanctuaries demand exact spatial correspondences between the two in the OT. Nevertheless, the collection is excellently researched with a lot of secondary literature.

The New Testament sections comprises ten articles: Luke-Acts (chapter 7), John 14:2 (chapter 8), Pauline texts (chapter 9), 2 Thessalonians 2:4 (chapter 10), Hebrews (chapters 11–12), 1 Peter 4:17 (chapter 13) and Revelation (chapters 14–16). As an Assyriologist, this is not my field, and therefore, my evaluation is done with the caveat of being a non-specialist.

An example is the thrilling article by Kim Papaioannou about John 14:2 (pp. 123-134). He shows with his lexeme studies the connection between Jesus as temple, the believers (individually, corporate) as temple and the heavenly temple in John 14:2 and 14:23. John indicates that the physical body of Jesus will replace the earthly temple in Jerusalem (p. 130). This new temple will be enlarged by Father and Son on earth as they dwell in the believer (individually, corporate), thus making the believers the extended Jesus temple temporarily until its consummation in the heavenly temple (pp. 132–133). He interprets the heavenly temple as a "glorious building in line with Jewish and Christian apocalyptic depictions of heaven" (p. 134). Cf. also the next article by Mario Phillip (chapter 9) about believers (individually and

corporate) as complementary to the heavenly temple in Paul's metaphoric language.

The last section contains four articles about early Jewish literature: non-canonical apocalyptic (chapter 17), *Book of Watchers* (chapter 18), *Testament of Levi* (chapter 19), and rabbinic literature (chapter 20). They provide insight into how widespread the idea of the heavenly temple was with real architectural structures and angels as priests.

An epilogue with a condensed summary of the results completes the book. The conclusions at the end of each article as well as comprehensive bibliographical information in the articles and the index of text passages, which invite further studies, are extremely helpful.

Adventists (theologians, other academics, pastors, interested laypersons), who need arguments for Fundamental Belief no. 24, are well advised to consult this anthology. However, a critical examination of the material without the background of the Adventist doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary in mind has not been attempted in this volume. This comprehensive collection is also suitable for non-Adventist theologians and Assyriologists for further research.

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Book Review

Tonstad, Sigve K. *Revelation.* **Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019. 398 pp.**

When I researched the role of τὸ πνεῦμα in the Book of Revelation, which resulted in a doctorate from the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Brussels in 2018, I discovered that at least a dozen SDA scholars are participating in the Revelation discussion in the wider academic arena. Sigve Tonstad is one of them. His breakthrough is his published doctoral thesis "Saving God's Reputation: The Theological Function of Pistis Iesou in the Cosmic Narratives of Revelation" (2006). Other SDA scholars who have contributed significantly in the field of Revelation-studies, and are mentioned by Tonstad, are D. F. Mazzaferri, L. Gallusz, J. Paulien, R. Stefanovic, K. H. Valentine, S. Thompson, H. K. LaRondelle, W. H. Shea, K. Strand. The fact that Tonstad was invited to write a 398-page commentary on Revelation in the Paideia Series on the New Testament is a further step in this development of SDA contributions. From the Foreword to this series we read that "the primary focus remains on the text and not its historical context or its interpretations in the secondary literature" (p. x). That is probably the reason why the vast area of intertext such as from Qumran and other Jewish Second Temple literature is absent. The commentary of Tonstad succeeds, however, in dealing with the three main goals set out by the general editors for the different blocks of text: "(1) introductory matters; (2) tracing the train of thought or narrative or rhetorical flow of the argument; and (3) theological issues raised by the text that are of interest to the contemporary Christian" (p. x). This approach opens up the rich meanings of the text as it stands and prevents preconceived ideas or mere interpretations from specific religious traditions claiming unique "copyright." In this way, Tonstad has done a great favour, not only to the academic community, but also to the general student of the fascinating last book of the Scriptures. Firmly set in this hermeneutical frame, Tonstad, paradoxically is able to show a few gems, which echo his Adventist background. For example: the Lord's day of Revelation 1:10 is

mainly interpreted in light of OT allusions: "my holy day" in Isaiah meaning the Sabbath (Isa. 58:13) and "the Day of the Lord" in an eschatological sense (pp. 53, 54). Also, the phrase that John was on Patmos because of "the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (a favourite term in SDA interpretation of Revelation) is highlighted, as Tonstad says "this phrase and its variants epitomize the message of the book" (p. 52). The echo of SDA tradition is heard in his tongue in cheek comment: "When we factor in that the one who is seen 'in the middle of the lampstands' (Revelation 1:12) will also appear 'in the middle of the throne' (Revelation 5:6), the connection between heaven and earth is firm and decisive" (p. 56). The words "firm and decisive" come near to "'close and decided" as one of the Adventist pioneers used to pinpoint the message of Revelation.

Tonstad has captured the height, length and depth of this intriguing apocalyptic book. By scrutinizing many ancient and contemporary sources he is able to show that the author of Revelation has written a piece of art, like Bach's *Matthäus-Passion*. Tonstad places the apocalyptic narrative in the context of a cosmic conflict between God and Mudslinger (as the devil is translated). The weapons to conquer Satan, the Deceiver, are revelation and witness. This commentary is full of new insights, which are born in a setting of (1) rereading the narrative, (2) discovering the allusions to the OT and (3) realizing that God is not the only One at work in this world. Tonstad does not correlate apocalyptic symbols directly with any specific historical place or event. The seven hills do not refer to Rome. 666 is not Nero, or better said: it is more than Nero. But that does not mean that the cosmic conflict is not fought in specific instances. The whole tenure of Tonstad's superb approach is best put in these words of L. Thompson, quoted by Tonstad on page 216:

"'There is a permanence to the crucified Lamb that cannot be captured by locating the crucifixion in time, for example under 'Pontius Pilate' or 'in the first century of the Common Era.' To put it differently, the crucifixion is much more than a momentary event in history. That permanence is captured in the book of Revelation through spatial, not temporal imagery. The 'slain Lamb' appears not only on earth but also in heaven, close to the throne (5:6). The Lamb was not slain at a particular moment in time; rather the Lamb was slain before time. The seer describes that time in spatial language 'from the foundation of the world' (13:8; cf. 17:8). The crucifixion is enfolded in the 'deep' permanent structures of the seer's vision and it unfolds in the life of

Jesus and those who are his faithful followers" (Thompson, Leonard. *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, 85).

I like the surprising links Tonstad makes with the Book of Genesis and the Gospel of John, as well as with powerful stories from world literature (Dostoevsky) and wisdom from psychiatry (Jung). I also appreciate the repeated strong suggestion that Jesus was not only incarnated as a human but also as an angel. For a book like Revelation that is an important notion.

Obviously, this *opus magnum* was developed over the years with old and new wine in its skins. The rich Revelation library over the years (including the *ABC*: Aune, Bauckham, and Charles) is fully present plus I noticed at least 46 books published after 2010 in Tonstad's bibliography. Kudos.

Among the many strengths, we also note some weaker points. A few relevant SDA contributions I find missing in Tonstad's commentary: L. Hongisto (former president of Middle East University), with his in-depth study of the communication riddle between sender and receiver in the Book of Revelation *(Experiencing the Apocalypse at the Limits of Alterity.* Leiden: Brill, 2010) and E. Müller, who wrote his Andrews University dissertation on "Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4–11" (1996). Especially Hongisto's unique work has a lot to offer in those areas the Paideia Commentaries want to focus on: "reader-centered literary approaches … with careful attention to the extratext of the original readers …" (p. ix).

I was somewhat baffled that the concept of spirit seems lacking in this commentary. As someone who has given so much attention to τὸ πνεῦμα in the Book of Revelation I am certainly biased. And that will explain part of my disappointment. On the other hand, the inner revelation of God is not limited to the Lamb but is also through the seven spirits (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6). This commentary seems to say: no comment. A superb intertext with the seven spirits (of truth and wickedness) in the Qumran literature would have enriched the author's intentions. And the link of "word of God"/"testimony of Jesus" with "Spirit of prophecy" (19:10) is not elaborated upon. When there is a tendency to overlook the role of the Spirit, then the vocabulary of the Revelator's theology has not been fully exploited.

All in all, I warmly recommend Tonstad's intelligent masterpiece. It opens up a book which wants to be revealed. Tonstad's heart beats in harmony with the central message of the gospel when he says: "For sin in all its

expressions, the violent death of Jesus is the means of deliverance. God's love comes first, however, and the self-giving of Jesus is the expression of God's love. The converse is false. God's love is the cause, not the result, of Jesus's self-giving" (p. 47).

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Book Review

Lehmann, Richard. *L'Apocalypse de Jean.* **Collonges-sous-Salève: Faculté adventiste de théologie, 2018. 602 pp.**

The book of Revelation has always enjoyed great interest in Adventist circles and has often been the subject of detailed study. Many scholarly studies and articles on the theology of the last book of the Bible have been written, but thorough Adventist exegetical commentaries following the biblical text verse by verse are rather rare. The new commentary from Richard Lehmann, published recently by the Adventist University of France (Collonges-sous-Salève), is therefore a welcome contribution to a deeper understanding of this unique book.

This comprehensive and detailed commentary on the book of Revelation is the result of Richard Lehmann's many years of personal interest and thorough research. The author is Professor Emeritus and former Dean of the Faculty of Theology at Collonges-sous-Salève, France. For many years, as a preacher, theologian and historian, he has devoted himself, with passion, to the study of Revelation. This extensive commentary (602 pages with 1490 footnotes) is thus a synthesis of years of his research.

The author is well aware that the interpretation of the book of Revelation depends on the hermeneutical approach chosen. Having presented the various perspectives advocated by different groups of theologians, Lehmann takes a clear stance right in the preface in which he unambiguously endorses the historicist approach. However, although the writer identifies with a very typical Adventist approach, his book does not seem to be primarily apologetic, but strives to honestly interpret the biblical text itself.

In the introductory part the author presents his understanding of the overall literary structure of the whole book of Revelation. He does not propose a completely new concept, but more or less endorses the seven-part structure (similarly already defined by Kenneth Strand), which has a chiastic form with the centre in chapters 12–14. Obviously, Richard Lehmann does not aim nec-

essarily to bring a "new perspective," but on the basis of research made already by others he seeks to delve deeper into the text in order to illuminate the message of the book more fully.

The main part of the commentary, which focuses on the interpretation of the biblical text itself, is structured according to the individual chapters of the book of Revelation.

Each chapter is introduced by the literary structure of the biblical text. The commented text itself is then divided into small logical parts – most often in the range of 1–2 verses, which are commented on in detail, with an emphasis on both the overall message and the specific terms used (to make the text available to a wide range of readers, Greek terms are transliterated in the Latin alphabet). The author's approach seems to be well balanced – he does not read the book of Revelation in isolation from the rest of the Bible (which he perceives clearly as a great whole, in the context of which Revelation makes sense), nor does he create hastily artificial links to other Bible passages mentioning the same Greek terms. He always tries to explain, justify and prove that any proposed intertextual parallel does not correspond only at the level of words, but also of whole concepts and ideas.

Thus, each chapter of the book of Revelation corresponds to one chapter of the commentary. Only chapters 4 and 5 are supplemented by annexes which focus on hermeneutical rules important for a correct understanding of the following texts: (1) Comparison between the scenes in Daniel 7 and Revelation 4 and 5, (2) An identical vocabulary for two different objects, (3) Psalm of Solomon XVII, 1–32, and (4) The elevation of Christ to the right hand of God. The individual chapters do not form closed, isolated units, but are continually linked, just as the author perceives in the book of Revelation the great, evolving story of the history of salvation.

In the passages that the author perceives (from his historicist point of view), as great images depicting the chronology of Christian history, he does not place a primary emphasis on historical data and a precise definition of historical fulfilment, but on the text itself, its exegesis, the message and the possible meaning for the early readers. It is only after a thorough analysis of the text that he adds a (usually shorter) part dealing with the possible identification of the fulfilment of these dramatic prophetic images throughout history. His perception of history is thus not crisis-centric, but clearly Christo-centric.

It is quite obvious that Richard Lehmann is well acquainted with other Adventist commentaries and studies (Shea, Strand, LaRondelle, Paulien, Stefanovic, etc.) and is in dialogue with them. But the abundant footnotes also point to his in-depth knowledge of other scholarly literature, from both Protestant and Catholic backgrounds. In his research he does not remain only in the environment of Adventist theology; his views are often supported by the conclusions of research of renowned experts from other denominations. The Adventist reader can be blessed and also enriched by the fact that the author often refers in his commentary to various books and articles from the French-speaking environment, which is not very common in Adventist literature.

As far as the interpretation of the biblical text itself is concerned, the commentary in many areas draws conclusions shared by the majority of Adventist theologians. It seems that the unique contribution of this commentary is not so much in brand-new perspectives as in their deepening, on the basis of very honest and thorough exegesis. Nevertheless, the book also offers some fresh interpretative views that cannot be categorized as completely traditional.

An example of this is Lehmann's understanding of the symbol of a seven-headed scarlet beast from the abyss, described in Revelation 17. While most commentators identify it with the beast of chapter 13, the author of this commentary, on the contrary, points to the significant differences between the two symbols. Therefore, he does not identify it with the symbol of the historical Roman papacy and the post-Constantine church, but with the eschatological enemy that "once was, now is not, and yet will come" (Rev. 17:8): *"We will endeavour not to seek the meaning of events in the past, but in the future described in chapters 18 to 20."* (p. 455) The author draws the reader's attention to the fact that this beast resembles a dragon (Rev. 12), and ultimately "will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction" (Rev. 17:8). Since the Abyss is a place associated with Satan itself (Rev. 9), this symbolic image does not seem to represent the fall of Babylon that returns to the scene, but a disappearance of Satan for a thousand years in the Abyss and His reappearance thereafter (Rev. 20:1–3). Although Lehmann is not the only one to interpret the text this way (see e.g. Müller, Ekkehardt. "Interpreting the Beast of Revelation 17:

A Suggestion"[1]), this interpretation is still rather exceptional among Adventist theologians. The unique contribution of Lehmann's commentary is definitely a thorough examination of this interpretation and a careful exegetical analysis that takes up six pages (pp. 454–459).

All in all, Lehmann's commentary is indeed a significant asset for all who want to look closely at the last book of the Bible. The author combines in this book his professional erudition with personal enthusiasm and deep love for God, thanks to which he does not remain only in the impersonal analysis of the text, but the individual conclusions of his exegetical work lead to practical conclusions that touch the personal spirituality of the reader.

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[1] Online available: https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/The%20Beast%20of%20Revelation%2201.pdf (accessed May 8, 2020); cf. also Müller, Ekkehardt. "The Beast of Revelation 17 – A Suggestion (Part 1)." *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* 10.1, 2007, 27–50, and Müller, Ekkehardt. "The Beast of Revelation 17 – A Suggestion (Part 2)." *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* 10.2, 2007, 153–176.