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Adriani Milli Rodrigues
Andrews University

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Even though Protestant Reformers did not begin the renewal of the church from a systematically developed ecclesiology, they had to elaborate theological ideas concerning the church in order to criticize the decadent condition of the late medieval church, and afterwards to explain the nature of the churches that were arising from this movement.[1] In opposition to Roman Catholicism, which emphasized the importance of the visible church, they supported that the church is, at the same time, a visible and invisible community.[2] According to that idea, the hidden aspect of the church implies the totality of the elect who are known only to God, whereas its visible aspect means the institutional body on earth.[3] This paradoxical concept engenders an intricate relationship between the notion of God's people and the institutional church.

This complex relationship is also found in Seventh-day Adventist theology, particularly in the central idea of its ecclesiological understanding: the remnant church.[4] Actually, the Protestant concept of visible and invisible church has been employed in diverse forms in the Adventist study of the remnant.[5] First, emphasizing visibility, Frank Hasel argued that "over the years, Sabbatarian Adventists

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1. Kärkkäinen properly stated that "whenever Protestant ecclesiologies are studied, whether Lutheran or Reformed, it has to be acknowledged that these views represented at their best response to existing needs; they were occasional works rather than systematic theologies of the church." Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 54.

2. See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845), 4.1.7; Martin Luther, *Preface to the Revelation of St. John [II]*, Luther's Works, 35 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 409-411.

3. For further information, see Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 40, 52.

4. According to Goldstein, "through the years, the word *remnant*, or the phrase *the remnant church*, has become the definitive, self-proclaimed mark of Seventh-day Adventists." Clifford Goldstein, *The Remnant: Biblical Reality or Wishful Thinking?* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1994), 11.

5. For a useful historical overview about the discussion of the concept of the remnant among Seventh-day Adventists, see Samuel Garbi, "The Seventh-day Adventist Church as the Remnant Church: Various Views over 150 Years of Denominational History" (paper presented for CHIS 674 Development of SDA Theology, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, December 1994), 13-50.

have considered themselves God's prophetic end-time remnant people."[6] This understanding is presented in many official[7] and representative[8] Seventh-day Adventist publications. Second, emphasizing both visible and invisible aspects, the significant work in the history of Adventist theology, *Questions on Doctrine*, states that "God has a precious remnant, a multitude of earnest, sincere believers, in every church,"[9] which seems to stress the idea of invisibility, but this text also affirms a visible remnant on the basis of Rev 12:17.[10] Third, there is an emphasis on the invisibility of the remnant. In this sense, regarding that God has "an invisible church or kingdom whose members cannot be numbered," S. Daily recommends that Adventists should cease to think about themselves as the remnant church and start to see themselves "as a part of God's larger remnant."[11] In another way, Jack Provonsha argued that the remnant of Rev 12:17, which is more than an institution, represents a prophecy that has not yet been fulfilled. It implies that the visible remnant is not a present reality.[12]

The various interpretations regarding the remnant church presented above indicate that there is no consensus about the visibility and/or invisibility of the remnant. This situation may lead to some questions. What is the relation between the concept of visible and invisible church and the remnant? Should it be applied to the remnant church? Is the remnant visible, visible and invisible, or invisible? What is the biblical understanding of its visibility and/or invisibility? How does this understanding impact the Adventist concept of the remnant church? Having these questions in mind, the purpose of this study is to explore the concept of the remnant in connection with the visible/invisible reality of the church.

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6. Frank M. Hasel, "The Remnant in Contemporary Adventist Theology," in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, ed. Angel M. Rodriguez (Silver Spring, MD.: Biblical Research Institute, 2009). For further information about the concept of the remnant among Adventist pioneers, see Alberto R. Timm, "The Sanctuary and the Three Angels' Messages: Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines" (PhD diss. Andrews University, 1995), 415-420; P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-Day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 147, 164, 243-244.

7. Cf. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 17th ed. (Hagerstown, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 33, 35; Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 181, 190-197.

8. F. D. Nichol, ed., *SDA Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1953-1957), 7:815; Hans K. LaRondelle, "The Remnant and the Three Angel's Message," in *A Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2000), 887-888.

9. George R. Knight, ed., *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* [*QOD*], Annotated ed., Adventist Classic Library (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003), 162.

10. The text seems to work with two different definitions of remnant: (1) "the church invisible," (2) the remnant of "Revelation 12:17." Knight, *QOD*, 159.

11. Steven Daily, *Adventism for a New Generation* (Portland, OR: Better Living, 1993), 315. Steven Daily labeled traditional Adventist remnant theology as an ethnocentric attitude, which does not acknowledge "that 'the kingdom of God on earth' transcends every religious movement of humankind." Ibid., 314.

12. Provonsha declared that the Adventist "claim to be a special people, the remnant, the people of God, seems almost perverse." In addition, he argued that the Adventist church may consider itself "a proleptic remnant," which "may one day be absorbed into a final remnant." Jack W. Provonsha, *A Remnant in Crisis* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1993), 35, 163.

In order to achieve this purpose, I will take three basic steps. First, I will begin with a historical reflection on the aspects of the visible and invisible church, especially covering the period of the Protestant Reformation. Second, I will describe the concept of remnant in the context of the Scriptures through a systematic approach, verifying how the idea of visibility and invisibility is presented or implied in the description of the remnant. Third, I will briefly summarize the discussion and indicate the main implications of this study on the Adventist understanding of the remnant church.

The Concept of Visible and Invisible Church in Historical Theology

In this section, I will briefly present the idea of visible/invisible church from the Patristic period until the Reformation. Despite the fact that the term *invisible* church was probably "first used by Luther,"[13] this notion seems to be rooted in some patristic writings. In addition, the Catholic emphasis on the *visible* church, and the subsequent Protestant reaction, cannot be fully grasped without a knowledge of the Patristic and Medieval periods.

The Patristic Period

Since the second century, "the rise of heresies made it necessary to designate some external characteristics by which the true Catholic Church could be known."[14] In this context, the Church Fathers stressed ever increasingly the visible church. By the third century, according to "his reputation for legalism and moralism,"[15] Cyprian "brought out, for the first time, with anything like clearness or distinctness, the idea of a catholic church comprehending all the true branches of the church of Christ, and *bound together by a visible and external unity*."[16] Strongly emphasizing the importance of being part of the visible church, he wrote:

> The spouse of Christ cannot be adulterous; she is uncorrupted and pure. She knows one home; she guards with chaste modesty the sanctity of one couch. She keeps us for God. She appoints the sons whom she has born for the kingdom. *Whoever is separated from the Church and is joined to an adulteress, is separated from the promises of the Church; nor can he who forsakes the Church of Christ attain to the rewards of Christ. He is a stranger; he is profane; he is an enemy. He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother.* If any one

13. Reinhold Seeberg, *Text-Book of the History of Doctrines*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1905), 2:293.

14. Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, Twin Brooks Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1975), 227.

15. Roger E. Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 270.

16. William Cunningham, *Historical Theology: A Review of the Principal Doctrinal Discussions in the Christian Church since the Apostolic Age*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1863), 1:169 (italics mine). For further information about Cyprian and his ideas concerning the church, see John Alfred Faulkner, *Men of the Kingdom Cyprian the Churchman* (New York: Bibliolife, 2009); J. Patout Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop,* Routledge Early Church Monographs (London: Routledge, 2002); George Stuart Murdoch Walker, *The Churchmanship of St Cyprian* Library of Ecclesiastical History (London: James Clarke, 2002); Jane E. Merdinger, *Rome and the African Church in the Time of Augustine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 36-42.

could escape who was outside the ark of Noah, then he also may escape who shall be outside of the Church.[17]

In short, his basic idea is that true Christians "will always obey and remain in the Church, outside of which there is no possibility of being saved."[18] Following this understanding, H. Milman pointed out that "Cyprian entertained the loftiest notion of the episcopal authority. The severe and inviolate unity of the outward and visible Church appeared to him an integral part of Christianity, and the rigid discipline enforced by the episcopal order the only means of maintaining that unity."[19]

However, "whereas for Cyprian the boundary between those who are 'outside' and those who are 'inside' coincides simply with the bounds of the visible church, Augustine distinguishes the visible church from the 'elect' whose number and limits are known only to the predestinating foreknowledge of God."[20] In his wrestling against the Donatists, Augustine was "compelled . . . to reflect more deeply on the essence of the Church."[21] In order to refute the Donatist argument that the true church is constituted by pious and holy believers,[22]

> Augustine argued that the Church was a mixed community . . . made up of the truly pious, but also of the wicked and unfaithful. Its holiness did not lie in the holiness of its members but in its participation in Christ. Augustine conceived of the Church as both visible and invisible. The visible Church is the empirical and sociological reality that we can see and this is a mixed community. The invisible Church is known only to God and consists of those who are truly elect.[23]

With the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares (see Matt 13:24-30; 36-43) in mind, Augustine explained that, in this "mixed church," "hypocrites cannot even now be said to be in Him [i.e., in Christ], although they seem to be in His

17. Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Church*, 6, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson,1885-1887, 10 vols., repr. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 5:867-868 (italics mine).

18. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 228.

19. H. H. Milman, *The History of Christianity: From the Birth of Christ to the Abolition of Paganism in the Roman Empire*, Baudry's Collection of Ancient and Modern British Authors, 1 (Paris: Baudry's European Library, 1840), 371.

20. Maurice F. Wiles and Mark Santer, *Documents in Early Christian Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 159.

21. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 229.

22. For details about the history of Donatism and its ideas concerning the church, see David Benedict, *History of the Donatists: With Notes*, Memorial ed. (Providence, R.I.: Maria M. Benedict, 1875); James Alexander, "Donatism," in *The Early Christian World*, ed. Philip Francis Esler (London: Routledge, 2000), 2:218-236; W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa*, Oxford Scholarly Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

23. Peter McEnhill and G. M. Newlands, *Fifty Key Christian Thinkers*, Routledge Key Guides (London: Routledge, 2004), 37. For additional information about the debate between Augustine and Donatists, see Geoffrey Grimshaw Willis, *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005); Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Oxford; Blackwell, 1994), 407-410.

Church."[24] Nevertheless, according to his writings against the Donatists, the separation between the pious and the wicked is not a human task:

> Nor will you separate yourselves by an impious secession, because of the mixture of the tares, from the society of that good wheat, whose source is that grain that dies and is multiplied thereby, and that grows together throughout the world until the harvest. For the field is the world, — not only Africa; and the harvest is the end of the world, — not the era of Donatus.[25]

Through this explanation, Augustine attempted to solve the contradiction between the traditional idea of visible church and the presence of impiety inside this church. Evidently, his solution included the idea of invisible church, which indicates that "the real unity of the saints and therefore of the Church is an invisible one."[26] However, at the same time that real and invisible unity "exists only within the catholic Church,"[27] the visible church is characterized mainly by the episcopal succession and the administration of the sacraments. Therefore, on the one hand, Augustine made "no hard distinction between a visible and an invisible church,"[28] since the notion of invisible church was used for the sake of the visible church.

On the other hand, there is an evident contradiction between the traditional emphasis on the visible church, particularly in its understanding of the church as the ark of salvation with its sacramental system, and the invisible church made up of those predestined by God. That contradiction may be expressed by questions such as the following: "Which is the true Church, the external communion of the baptized, or the spiritual communion of the elect and the saints, or both, since there is no salvation outside of either? . . . [and also,] what about the elect who never join the Church?" In any case, it seems that "Augustine's predestination views kept him from going as far as some of his contemporaries did in the direction of sacramentalism."[29]

The Medieval Period and the Roman Catholic Position

The scholastic development of the concept of the visible church can be basically depicted as the intensification of the Cyprianic understanding of the necessity of the church for salvation and the Augustinian notion of the church as the

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24. Augustine, *Christian Doctrine* 3.32, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Series 1, ed. Philip Schaff, 1886-1889, 14 vols., repr. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 2:1191. C. Hall argues that, in contrast to Augustine, "the Cyprianic model of the church pictures the church in this present age as a pure, holy community of only genuine believers." Christopher A. Hall, *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 245.

25. Augustine, *Answer to The Letters of Petilian the Donatist* 3.2, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 1, ed. Philip Schaff, 1886-1889, 14 vols., repr., (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 4:1127.

26. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 229.

27. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 229.

28. Frederick Van Fleteren and Joseph C. Schnaubelt, *Augustine: Biblical Exegete* (Augustinian Historical Institute (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 104.

29. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 231.

kingdom of God on earth.[30] In this sense, medieval theology ascribed an "undue significance . . . to the outward ordinances of the church," because "all the blessings of salvation were thought of as coming to man through the ordinances of the church."[31] Moreover, there was a total "identification of the visible and organized church with the kingdom of God."[32]

This ecclesiological comprehension strongly emphasizes the visible nature of the church. Then, through this idea of visibility, Roman Catholic theology was able to explain its understanding of invisibility of the church, particularly in connection with its notion of Christ's incarnation and human soul. Assuming the church as a continuation of Christ's incarnation on earth, the church is described as

> the Mystical Body of Christ [which comprises] an external, visible, juridical element (i.e., the legal organization), and an inner, invisible, mystical element (i.e., the communication of grace), just as in Christ, the Head of the Church, there is the visible human nature, and the invisible Divine nature, and in the Sacraments, the outward signs and the inward grace.[33]

Likewise, employing the analogy of the dichotomous conception of human soul and body, the Holy Ghost is compared to the soul of the church, and this soul is considered the invisible aspect of the church: "While the Holy Ghost is the soul of the Church, the lawfully organized visible commonwealth of the faithful is the body of the Church. Both conjointly form a coherent whole as do the soul and the body in man."[34] Thus, "he who culpably persists in remaining outside the body of the Church cannot participate in the Holy Ghost." Exceptionally, those who do "not know the true Church of Christ, can receive the supernatural life given by the Holy Ghost outside the body of the Church. Such a person, however, must have at least an implicit desire to belong to the Church of Christ."[35]

As can be seen, the invisible church is basically discussed within the boundaries of the visible church. This means that "Catholics are willing to admit that there is an invisible side to the church, but prefer to reserve the name 'church' for the visible communion of believers,"[36] since "the visible church is first, then comes the invisible; the former gives birth to the latter."[37] Therefore, "the institute of the

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30. P. Tillich pointed out that "the Catholic Church could use Augustine" to "identify the kingdom of God with the church to such degree that the church became absolutized; this was the one development which actually happened." Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought: From Its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968), 121. For further information about the relation between the kingdom of God and the church in Augustine, see *Christian Doctrine*, 3.121-122; Hall, *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*, 25; Henry Martyn Herrick, *The Kingdom of God in the Writings of the Fathers* (New York: Bibliolife, 2010), 78-91; Adolf von Harnack, *Outlines of the History of Dogma*, trans. Edwin Know Mitchell (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1893), 358-360.

31. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 233.

32. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 23.

33. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1974), 277.

34. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1974), 294.

35. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1974), -294-295.

36. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 562.

37. John Adam Moehler, *Symbolism or Exposition on the Doctrinal Differences between Catholics and Protestants as Evidenced by Their Symbolic Writings*, trans. James Burton Robertson (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2003), 331.

Church logically precedes the organism, the visible Church precedes the invisible."[38] As a result, "the order in the work of salvation is, not that God by means of His Word leads men to the Church, but just the reverse, that the Church leads men to the Word and to Christ."[39]

The Reformation Period

Even though von Harnack declared that the Protestant "reflections on the visible and invisible church are indefinite and unclear,"[40] it seems evident that "the Reformation was a reaction against the externalism of Rome in general, and in particular, also against its external conception of the church. [In Protestantism,] . . . the essence of the church is not found in the external organization of the church."[41] Actually, "the church universal is spiritually united [which means an invisible unity,] rather than institutionally united."[42] According to W. Pauck,

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38. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 235. In opposition to the idea of an invisible church independent of the visible church, the First Vatican Council declared in 1870: "No one should ever believe that the members of the Church are united with merely internal, hidden bonds and that, therefore, they constitute a hidden and completely invisible society. For the eternal wisdom and power of the Godhead willed that, to these spiritual and invisible bonds by which the faithful through the Holy Spirit adhere to the supreme and invisible head of the Church, there should be corresponding external, visible bonds also in order that this spiritual and supernatural society might appear in external form and be conspicuously evident. . . . Thus the Church of Christ on earth is neither invisible nor hidden; but it is placed in clear view like a city upon a mountain, high and brilliant, impossible to hide." Jesuit Fathers of St. Mary's College, *The Church Teaches: Documents of the Church in English Translation*, ed. John F. Clarkson, John H. Edwards, William J. Kelly, and John J. Welch (St. Louis: Herder, 1955), 89-90. R. Olson argued that "the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) softened the perspective of the Catholic church somewhat with regard to Christians who are not members of the Roman Catholic Church, but it did not change the historic Catholic belief in the visibility and institutional hierarchy of the church. Even in the post-Vatican II era, in which the Catholic Church has reached out to 'separated brethren' (Protestants) as fellow true believers in Jesus Christ, the Roman Catholic belief in the church's visible and institutional unity under the pope around the bishops has remained intact. The Church of Rome throughout the world is the only true Christian church; all other groups of Christians are 'ecclesial communities,' religious clubs or parachurch organizations." Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*, 296.

39. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 236.

40. Harnack, *Outlines of the History of Dogma*, 540. He also maintained that, at least at the beginning, the Reformers were concerned with the visible church: "Neither a communion of believers, nor an invisible church, as is falsely believed, did the Reformers have in view, but their object was to improve the old church of priests and sacraments by dissolving her hierarchic monarchical constitution, by abolishing her assumed political powers and by carefully shifting her priests according to the standard of the law of Christ, or of the Bible. On these conditions she was also esteemed by the Reformers as the visible, holy church, through which God realizes his predestinations." Ibid., 448-449.

41. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 563-564. Stuart R. Jones indicated that even "on the Reformation's eve, John Wycliffe attacked the corruption of the church by defining the true church as the congregation of all who are predestined to salvation." Stuart R. Jones, "The Invisible Church of the Westminster Confession of Faith," *Westminster Theological Journal* 59 (1997): 71.

42. Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*, 296. S. Jones explained that the Reformation faced an "epistemological problem" in attacking Roman Catholic ecclesiology: "Rome, by claiming the four Nicene attributes (unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity) defined in institutional terms, forced the Reformers to refine their understanding of those attributes. In rejecting the purely institutional approach of Rome, the Reformers emphasized a less institutionally tangible and visible notion of the church attributes. From this conception the formula 'invisible church' eventually developed." Jones, "The Invisible Church," 71.

the chief difference between Luther and [medieval] scholasticism was that, while scholasticism interpreted the *corpus Christi* in connection with the sacraments and the hierarchical order, Luther emphasized the Word. Within this new frame of reference, he declared the nature of the church spiritual and apprehendable only by faith. In so far as Christ renders his spirit efficacious through the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments, this invisible church undergoes a process of materialisation (W. Koehler) in becoming a visible cult congregation.[43]

Hence, contrary to Catholic teaching, Luther proposed that "from the invisible emerges the visible Church: and the former is the groundwork of the latter."[44] Following this idea, "the church of Christ is not a hidden reality in every sense of the word . . . [and] Luther does not distinguish a visible church from an invisible church but teaches that the one and the same church of Christendomis both invisible and visible, hidden and at the same time revealed – in different dimensions."[45] In its invisible aspect, the church is the "spiritual communion of those who believe in Christ." However, "this same church . . . becomes visible and can be known . . . by the pure administration of the Word and the sacraments." Therefore, "the really important thing for man is that he belongs to the spiritual or invisible church; but this is closely connected with membership in the visible church."[46]

Similarly, the Reformed tradition believes that the "universal Church, which is *invisible*, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof."[47] In fact, this invisibility is understood "in more than one sense: (1) as *ecclesia universalis*, because no one can ever see the church of all places and all times; (2) as *coetus electorum*, which will not be completed and visible until de parousia; and (3) as *coetus electorum vocatorum*, because we are not able to distinguish absolutely the true believers from the false."[48]

Although there is a direct connection between the invisibility of the church with its visibility, the Reformed tradition also admits that "in times of religious depression, as in the days of Elijah and the late medieval period, the true church

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43. Wilhelm Pauck, "The Idea of the Church in Christian History," *Church History* 21 (1952): 209. About the invisibility of the church, Luther stated: "Because these mighty and imposing powers are to fight against Christendom, and it is to be deprived of outward shape and concealed under so many tribulations and heresies and other faults, it is impossible for the natural reason to recognize Christendom. On the contrary, natural reason falls away and take offense. It calls that 'the Christian church' which is really the worst enemy of the Christian church. Similarly, it calls those persons damned heretics who are really the true Christian church." Therefore, "Christendom will not be known by sight, but by faith. And faith has to do with things not seen." Luther, *Preface to the Revelation of St. John* [II], 409-410.

44. Moehler, *Symbolism or Exposition*, 331.

45. Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. R. C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 293.

46. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 236-237.

47. John Macpherson, ed., *The Westminster Confession of Faith* 25.1 (New York: Forgotten Books, 2007), 50 (italics mine). According to Calvin, the invisible church "is manifest to the eye of God only." *Institutes* IV.1.7, 1165.

48. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 238. In this way, "it is possible that some who belong to the invisible Church never become members of the visible organization." "On the other hand there may be unregenerated children and adults who, while professing Christ, have no true faith in Him, in the Church as an external institution; and these, as long as they are in that condition, do not belong to the invisible church" Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 566.

is driven almost to invisibility."[49] In fact, this idea was radicalized by the Ana-baptists in their belief that "the true church was in heaven, and its institutional parodies were on earth," which means that the true church is totally invisible. Such understanding denies that the church is a "mixed body" and affirms, like the Donatists, that the church is a "holy and pure body." Hence, this invisible and pure church is depicted "as a faithful remnant in conflict with the world." Certainly, that notion is compatible "with the Anabaptist experience of persecution."[50]

Against the accusation that some scholars regard the Protestant concept of invisible and visible church as being based on some kind of Platonism and its idea of two worlds,[51] A. McGrath argued that this concept is not primarily philosoph-ical, but eschatological:

> The former [invisible] consists only of the elect; the latter [visible] includes both good and evil, elect and reprobate. The former is an object of faith and hope, the latter of present experience. . . . The invisible church is the church which will come into being at the end of time, as God ushers in the final judgment of humanity.[52]

In short, in this historical section, I have provided a panoramic overview of the idea of visible/invisible church in the Patristic Period, and in the Roman Cath-olic and Protestant traditions. Concerning the ancient Fathers, Cyprian stressed that salvation is only possible in the visible church, and Augustine admitted that there is an invisible church made up of the elected by God. Further, Roman Ca-tholicism intensified the importance of the visible church through its sacramental and hierarchical system and acknowledged the invisible church only within the visible one. On the other hand, the Reformers underscored the invisible unity of the church (the church as God sees it), which engenders a visible community (the church as humans see it). However, the Protestant notion of invisible church is based on the Augustinian concept of predestination.

My second step is to explore the visibility/invisibility of the remnant in Scripture.

The Visibility and Invisibility of the Remnant in Scripture

In this section I will broadly describe the idea of visibility and invisibility of the remnant in the Scripture, concisely examining the remnant motif in the OT and NT.

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49. John T. McNeill, "The Church in Sixteenth-Century Reformed Theology," *Journal of Re-ligion* 22 (1942): 268. Cf. Macperson, The Westminster Confession 25.4; Calvin, Institutes IV.1.2.

50. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 415-416.

51. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 413; McNeill, "The Church in Sixteenth-Century Reformed Theology," 268. See for example the interpretation of Willard L. Sperry, "The Nature of the Church," *The Harvard Theological Review* 24 (1931): 155-196. It appears that this accusation was made in the sixteenth century, since Philip Melanchthon wrote in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531): "We are not dreaming about some Platonic republic, as has been slanderously alleged, but we teach that this church actually exists, made up of true believers and righteous men scattered throughout the world. And we add its marks, the pure teaching of the Gospel and the sacraments." Theodore G. Tappert et al., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Sixteenth Printing ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 171.

52. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 413.

The Remnant Motif in the OT

In this study of the remnant motif in the OT, I will first indicate the terminology used for remnant in the First Testament, even though it must be noted that in both OT and NT "some passages that lack specific remnant terminology reveal remnant theology through related concepts."[53] Further, the notion of remnant will be examined in three main parts: (1) the period prior to the Israelite community;[54] (2) the pre-exilic Israelite community; and (3) the post-exilic community.

Terminology. The remnant theme is chiefly expressed in the OT by derivatives of six Hebrew roots (*š'r*[55], *plṭ*[56], *mlṭ*[57], *ytr*[58], *šryd*[59], *'hryt*[60]), "which are employed over 540 times."[61] According to the meaning of these roots, remnant conveys the basic idea of a survivor of a great calamity. Overall, this concept describes three types of groups: (1) the "*historical* remnant," merely "made up of survivors of a catastrophe"; (2) "the *faithful* remnant," which carries the divine election promises and maintains a genuine relationship with God; and (3) "the *eschatological* remnant, consisting of those of the faithful remnant who go through the cleansing judgment and apocalyptic woes of the end time and emerge victoriously after the Day of Yahweh as the recipients of the everlasting kingdom."[62] Certainly, these three categories are not strict and there are areas of overlap between them. For instance, the eschatological and faithful remnants are also a historical remnant, since they can be survivors of physical calamities along with spiritual catastrophes. Although those categories are considered as "approximate labels,"[63] they will be useful for our study (specifically, the faithful and eschatological remnants).

The Period Prior to the Israelite Community. Taking into account the purpose of this study, the most relevant occurrences of the remnant motif before the estab-

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53. G. F. Hasel, "Remnant," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (ISBE), ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 4:130.

54. By using the term "Israelite community," this study simply means God's people of Israel, without distinguishing between Israel in the north and Judah in the south.

55. This root is used 266 times and its verbal forms "denote 'to remain' (*qal*), 'to be left over, remain (over, behind)' (*niph'al*), and 'to leave (over, behind), have left' (*hiph'il*). The nouns *š'r* and *šě'ērît* denote 'remnant, remainder, rest, residue'." In fact, *šě'ār* "is Isaiah's favorite word of his remnant theology with twelve of twenty-six usages in the OT (10:19-21; 11:11, 16)." G. F. Hasel, "Remnant," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume* (IDBS) (ed. Lloyd R. Bailey Keith Crim, Victor P. Furnish, Emory S. Bucke; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1976), 735.

56. With 80 usages of this root, the verbal forms mean "'to escape, get away' (*qal*), 'to deliver, bring to safety' (*pi'el, hiph'il*), and as nouns *pālıˆṭ* and *pallēṭ*, 'escape, fugitive,' and *p*ᵉ*lêṭâ* (often parallel to nouns of the root *š'r*), 'escape, deliverance'." Hasel, "Remnant," 735.

57. In its 89 usages, this root "appears only in verbal forms and denotes 'to escape, get oneself to safety, make for safety' (*niph'al*) and 'to deliver, save, let escape' (*pi'el*)." Hasel, "Remnant," 735.

58. "At least 110 usages of 248 forms of derivatives of this root (attested in cognate languages) contain the remnant idea. They contain the meanings 'to be left over, remain over' (*niph'al*), 'to leave over (behind), have remaining, have left' (*hiph'il*) in verbal forms, and in nominal forms 'remainder, rest, remnant'." Hasel, "Remnant," 735.

59. With 28 usages, it "describes the 'survivor' from military disaster (Josh. 10:20; Deut. 3:3)." Hasel, "Remnant," 735.

60. "Has clearly the meaning 'remnant' in Num. 24:20 . . . Amos 4:2; 9:1; and Ezek. 23:25 and possibly in Jer. 31:17." Hasel, "Remnant," 735.

61. Hasel, "Remnant," 735.

62. Hasel, *ISBE*, 4:130; see also LaRondelle, "The Remnant and the Three Angel's Message," 860-863.

63. Tarsee Li, "The Remnant in the Old Testament," in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, ed. Angel M. Rodriguez (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 27.

lishment of the Israelite community are found in the book of Genesis, particularly in the narratives of the Flood (Gen 6-9), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:16-19:38), the encounter between Jacob and Esau (Gen 32-33), and Joseph as governor of Egypt (Gen 45).

The narrative of the Flood presents Noah and his family as the surviving remnant of the Deluge, as Gen 7:23 reads: "Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land . . . and *only Noah was left* [*niph'al* form of *š'r*] *together with those that were with him in the ark*."[64] In fact, that salvation of the remnant is clearly connected with Noah's faithfulness, since the narrative emphasizes that he was "righteous" (cf. Gen 6:8-9; 7:1).[65]

Furthermore, the narrative of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah depicts Lot and his two daughters as the sole surviving remnant. Such deliverance is described especially by the use of the root *mlṭ*. It appears five times in the *niph'al* form, stressing the necessity of "escape" from that destruction (Gen 19:17, 19, 20, 22). Once more, the idea of faithfulness is implied, inasmuch as the narrative is introduced by Abraham's dialogue with God, particularly his insistence that God could not slay "the righteous with the wicked" (Gen 18:23, 25).[66]

In his encounter with Esau, Jacob divided his people into two companies in order to preserve a remnant of his offspring. Thus, according to Gen 32:8 (32:9 MT), if Esau destroyed one company, the other one "which is left" (*niph'al* form of *š'r*) would "escape" (derivative noun of *plṭ*).[67] Likewise, when Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, he declared, "God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant [derivative noun of *š'r*] in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance [derivative noun of *plṭ*]"[68] (Gen 45:7). On the one hand, there is no complete connection between the ideas of remnant and human faithfulness in these two situations, especially considering that in both cases Jacob and Joseph's brothers were conscious of their sins (cf. Gen 32:7, 11; 45:3, 5; 50:15). On the other hand, it seems that this consciousness was followed by repentance and forgiveness (cf. Gen 32:9-12, 26, 30; 33:4, 10-11; 45:3-5, 15; 50:15-21). In this sense, their faithfulness is implied and they can be regarded as faithful remnant, since they still were the depositories of the divine election promises (cf. Gen

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64. Italics mine. Unless otherwise indicated, all English Bible references in this paper are to the New American Standard Bible (NASB) (La Habra, Calif.: The Lockman Foundation, 1995). The Masoretic Text (MT) used in this paper is the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS) (4th corrected ed.; K. Elliger and W. Rudolph; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1990).

65. According to G. Hasel, this faithfulness "is much more comprehensive than a narrow forensic or ethical notion." In other words, "Noah had no claim upon God on the basis of some intrinsic merit on his own." Rather, "by believing and trusting in God, Noah stands in the right relationship and thus finds favor in God's eyes." Therefore, "it is God's grace and mercy which brings Noah safely through the judgment of the flood." Gerhard F. Hasel, *The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1980), 143-145.

66. G. Hasel also highlights that "the salvation of Lot is neither attributed to his own righteousness nor to that of Abraham." Rather, "the salvation of this remnant is due to the grace of Yahweh." Hasel, *The Remnant*, 151.

67. Cf. G. F. Hasel, "פָּלַט," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (TDOT) (ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, Heiz-Josef Fabry; Grand Rapids, MI: 2001), 11:562; Hasel, *ISBE*, 4:131; Hasel, *IDBS*, 735.

68. Cf. Hasel, *TDOT*, 11:562; Hasel, *IDBS*, 735.

32:11-12; 45:7). Therefore, "it reveals once more that the remnant can escape judgment only through God's grace."[69]

In summary, "we have up to this point four different kinds of threats in connection with which the remnant motif appears: flood [Noah], brimstone and fire [Lot], family feud [Jacob], and famine [Joseph]."[70] In all of them, the grace of God is the ground of their salvation, in contrast to any notion of human merit; but there is also a human faithful response to that grace.[71] Moreover, the faithful remnant community is clearly identifiable. However, the clear visibility of the remnant people does not mean total visibility, because those communities "often included members who were not completely faithful." For example, "although Noah and his family were a faithful remnant that survived the flood (Gen 6:9; 7:23), Ham later uncovered Noah's 'nakedness' (9:20-27)." Similarly, "Lot and his family were a faithful remnant that escaped Sodom. Yet, Lot's wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt (v. 26), and Lot's daughters gave birth to sons fathered by Lot (vv. 30-38)."[72]

The Pre-exilic Israelite Community. The most important occurrences of the remnant motif in the pre-exilic Israelite community, for this study, are found in the account of Elijah's persecution by Jezebel (1 Kgs 19) and in the prophetic writings.

Promoting a profound apostasy in Israel, Jezebel executed the prophets of the LORD" (1 Kgs 18:4) and "sought to make the cult of Baal the official religion of the court,"[73] with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah, who were eating at her table (1 Kgs 18:19). In this context, Elijah complained to Yahweh: "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left [*niph'al* form of *ytr*]; and they seek my life, to take it away" (1 Kgs 19:10, 14).[74] However, according to Yahweh, Elijah is not the only remnant: "Yet I will leave [*hiph'il* form of *š'r*] 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him" (1 Kgs 19:18).

G. Hasel indicated that "for the first time in the history of Israel [there is a . . .] promise of a future remnant that constitutes the kernel of a new Israel."[75] In that sense, there is a clear emphasis on the faithfulness of the remnant. "It is a remnant of believers, a group faithful to Yahweh, which represents the true Israel of God and maintains its existence," instead of "an historical remnant securing the future existence of the people."[76] Furthermore, this situation also indicates that in cases

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69. Hasel, *The Remnant*, 145.
70. Hasel, *The Remnant*, 157.
71. As G. Hasel summed up, "there will be no remnant without God's grace just as little as there will be a remnant without man's return to God." Hasel, *The Remnant*, 206.
72. Li, "The Remnant in the Old Testament," 28-29.
73. Hasel, *The Remnant*, 163.
74. As G. Hasel pointed out, Elijah was "the only surviving prophet of Yahweh, who publicly stood up for Yahweh at the time when the life of each prophet of Yahweh was threatened. One hundred prophets of Yahweh had gone into hiding when Jezebel cut off the lives of the prophets of Yahweh [cf. 1 Kgs 18:4]." Hasel, *The Remnant*, 164. In this context, Elijah stated: "I alone am left [*niph'al* form of *ytr*] a prophet of the LORD, but Baal's prophets are 450 men" (1 Kgs 18:22).
75. Hasel, *The Remnant*, 172.
76. Hasel, *TDOT*, 11:563.

of deep apostasy, in which the faithful remnant is threatened, the invisibility of the remnant is strongly increased due to the necessity "to hide from the public eye. In those cases the emphasis seems to be placed on the individual rather than on the community."[77]

Nevertheless, even when there is not an extreme situation as in the case of Elijah, the faithful "invisible" (in the sense that they are occasionally apart from the visible remnant community) individual remnant cannot be overlooked. In effect, W. Brueggeman recalled the captive "little girl" who "waited on Naaman's wife" (2 Kgs 5:2-3), identifying her as "the Israelite remnant in Syrian society."[78] Despite all the "circumstance of her captivity and subservience, she is deliberately, resolvedly, unashamedly an Israelite," keeping her faith and "identity in an environment not hospitable to such faith and identity."[79]

The remnant motif is remarkably developed in the prophetic books. In fact, the connection between the notion of faithful remnant and eschatology (the Day of Yahweh) is first made by Amos.[80] The series of oracles against the nations (cf. 1:3-3:15) culminates in the pronunciation of judgment upon Israel. On the "dark" day of Yahweh (5:18-20) only a faithful remnant, "the remnant [derivative noun of *š'r*] of Joseph," will be spared (5:14-15).[81] In addition, "Amos sees the remnant not so much as an entity of national dimensions but as an entity of religious importance and destination," since he "enlarged the remnant motif to include also the 'remnant of Edom' [9:12] . . . as a recipient of the outstanding promise of the David tradition."[82]

In his turn, Isaiah is the first to speak of an eschatological "holy" remnant (4:2-3) or the "holy seed" (6:13), purified after Yahweh's cleansing judgment upon the nation (cf. 1:21-26).[83] Moreover, he mentions the gathering of "the remnant of His people" who is left over in various foreign nations (11:10-16) – referring to Israelites (cf. v. 12), and indicates that "the eschatological hope includes a remnant

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77. Li, "The Remnant in the Old Testament," 27.

78. Walter Brueggemann, "A Brief Moment for a One-Person Remnant (2 Kings 5:2-3)," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 31 (2001): 58. He highlighted that "her performance [in the biblical narrative] was so brief and so insignificant as almost not to be noticed, unless one is on the alert for a 'remnant' of Israel" ibid., 53.

79. Brueggemann, "A Brief Moment," 53, 57.

80. Whereas "in the Elijah tradition . . . the remnant is an entity that is already present," in Amos it "is an entity of eschatological expectation. Thus in Amos we encounter for the first time a connection of the remnant motif with eschatology." Hasel, *The Remnant*, 205.

81. This idea was against the popular identification of Israel (as a whole) as "the remnant of the nations to whom salvation would be granted on the Day of Yahweh when those around them would be destroyed." Hasel, *The Remnant*, 204.

82. Hasel, *The Remnant*, 394. "By 'remnant of Edom' the prophet refers to that part of Edom which is still independent, which is still to be 'possessed by the booth of David.' The 'remnant of Edom' as much as the other nations must again be brought under the rule of David [cf. Amos 9:11-12]." Ibid., p. 214.

83. Hasel, *The Remnant*, 395, 401. The purified remnant reveals "the vital link between judgment and salvation." Ibid., 253. The remnant terminology appears twice in 4:2-3: "the survivors [derivative noun of *plṭ*] of Israel" (v. 2) and "who is left [*niphʿal* form of *š'r*] in Zion" (v. 3).

of the non-Israelites, 'the survivors of the nations' (45:20) who recognize Yahweh as the true God."[84]

Further, Micah connected the remnant of Israel with the Messiah (5:2-5), and other prophets used the remnant terminology to emphasize the eschatological salvation in the context of the Day of Yahweh (cf. Joel 2:32 [3:5 MT]; Obad 1:17; Dan 12:1).

The Post-Exilic Community. As L. Meyer pointed out, "the returned exiles of the Persian period" are portrayed in the OT "as a remnant left by Yahweh's favor, in spite of sins that merited total destruction"[85] (cf. Ezra 1:4; 9:8, 13-15; Zech 2:7 [2:11 MT]). However, "the post-exilic community is more than just an historical remnant;[86] it is also a faithful remnant" (cf. Jer 31:7-9; Ezra 1:2-5; Hag 1:12-14).

> The returnees are the ones who were moved by God's Spirit to return and rebuild God's temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:5), i.e., not all returned but only a remnant. In their work of rebuilding, they were encouraged by God's prophets (Ezra 5:1-2) and received God's blessing (Hag 2:19). Moreover, the genealogical lists establish a linkage between God's promises to Abraham and the post-exilic community (e.g., Ezra 2:1-70; 8:1-14; Neh 7:5-65; 1 Chron 1-9).[87]

The main contribution of the post-exilic writings for the development of the remnant motif is related to the distinction between faithful and eschatological remnant. T. Li argued that "the pre-exilic prophets did not always clearly distinguish between the faithful remnant who would return from captivity and the eschatological remnant." In order to support this argument, he mentioned Isa 11:6-13, which mixes promises of eschatological restoration (vv. 6-9) and promises of the return of the captives (vv. 10-13). In this sense, "the post-exilic experience of the Jewish people helped to further refine this important Old Testament motif by highlighting more clearly the distinction between the faithful and the eschatological remnants."[88]

There are some evidences that indicate that the post-exilic community did not consider itself as the final eschatological remnant, even though the post-exilic prophets regarded their community as the historical and faithful remnant.[89] J. McConville suggested that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah "express deep dissatisfaction with the exiles' situation under Persian rule, that the situation is perceived as leaving room for a future fulfillment of the most glorious prophecies of

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84. Hasel, *ISBE*, 4:133. The translation of Isaiah 45:20 is from Hasel. The remnant terminology occurs 4 times in 11:10-16, specifically in vv. 11 and 16 (verbal form and derivative noun of *š'r*). Furthermore, the remnant terminology in 45:20 is a derivative noun of *plṭ*. Commenting on this passage, Hasel added that it "does not refer to Israelites who have escaped from the nations but to an eschatological remnant of the pagan nations that worship idols, who have escaped Yahweh's judgment. These survivors of the nations are offered salvation. . . . They are to turn to Yahweh, the only God (v. 22), for only in Yahweh are righteousness and strength (v. 24). Here the remnant concept becomes universalistic, transcending nationalistic particularism." Hasel, *TDOT*, 11:565.

85. Lester V. Meyer, "Remnant," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (*ABD*) (ed. David Noel Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:670.

86. Li, "The Remnant in the Old Testament," 35.

87. Li, "The Remnant in the Old Testament," 36.

88. Li, "The Remnant in the Old Testament," 34-35.

89. Li, "The Remnant in the Old Testament," 37.

Israel's salvation."[90] Following that idea, he stipulated three lines of evidence: (1) dissatisfaction with the Persian overlordship (probably implied in Ezra 4:6-23; 6:22);[91] (2) dissatisfaction with the temple/worship, implied in the deep lamentation of the elders when the foundation of the new temple was laid (Ezra 3:11-13); and mainly, (3) the problem with mixed marriages (Ezra 9-10; Neh 13), which was "an obstacle to the enjoyment of a right relationship with Yahweh."[92]

As T. Li concluded, in view of those problems, the post-exilic community could not identify itself as the eschatological remnant, since "a faithful remnant community could contain unfaithful individuals, whereas the eschatological remnant would be composed only of faithful individuals." Therefore, Zechariah pointed to the future and eschatological remnant (8:3-8; 11-12) in the context of the judgment of the Day of Yahweh (13:8; 14:1-15). He also included the remnant of other nations (14:6) among the Israelites who would worship the Lord (8:22-23), "thus hinting at the fact that the eschatological remnant will include individuals from outside the nation of Israel."[93]

The Remnant Motif in the NT

The remnant terminology in the NT comprises a few basic terms in comparison to OT terminology. Overall, the remnant specific vocabulary includes the derivatives of the adjective *loipos* (for the *rest*) and the noun *leimma* (for *remnant*).[94] Keeping in mind that "even in the absence of remnant terminology a remnant theology may still be present,"[95] our study of the remnant motif in the NT will focus more on the concept of remnant rather than its terminology. In this way, this investigation will be divided in three parts: (1) the remnant in the Gospels; (2) the remnant in Paul; and (3) the remnant in the book of Revelation.

The Remnant in the Gospels. According to G. Hasel, "though the noun 'remnant' is absent from the Gospels, the concept has a prominent place."[96] Actually, the remnant theme is implied even in the work of John the Baptist, especially due to the visible differentiation between those who "were being were being baptized . . . as they confessed their sins" (Matt 3:6), and those who were not bearing fruits worthy of repentance (v. 8). As "an eschatological prophet of repentance,"[97] John also announced the imminent judgment, namely the baptism of fire, which would separate the wheat from the chaff (vv. 11-12). Obviously, the notion of remnant is assumed in the metaphor of the wheat.

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90. J. Gordon McConville, "Ezra-Nehemiah and the Fulfillment of Prophecy," *Vetus Testamentum* 36 (1986): 223.

91. "Although the book opens with Cyrus's decree, which includes an ascription of praise to Yahweh, there are also hints that Persian overlordship was a serious burden." McConville, "Ezra-Nehemiah," 208.

92. McConville, "Ezra-Nehemiah," 208-211. J. McConville also suggests that "the simple fact that both books end with the need to deal with the problem" of mixed marriages indicates that this problem was not completely solved with the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. Ibid., 211.

93. Li, "The Remnant in the Old Testament," 37-38.

94. See Hasel, *IDBS*, 735.

95. Clinton Wahlen, "The Remnant in the Gospels," in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, ed. Angel M. Rodriguez (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 62-63.

96. Hasel, *ISBE*, 4:134. See also Ben F. Meyer, "Jesus and the Remnant of Israel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84.2 (1965): 123-130.

97. E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 92.

In regard to the remnant motif in Jesus' message, Clinton Wahlen delineated four important types of remnant imagery in Jesus' teachings: (1) the seed imagery; (2) the planting imagery; (3) the shepherd imagery; and (4) the quantifying terminology. First, using the seed imagery, Jesus contrasted two groups in the parable of the Wheat and Tares (Matt 13:24-30; 36-43). In the interpretation of the parable, He indicated that the good seeds "are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one" (v. 38). However they will be separated only "at the end of the age" (v. 40). Second, in the context of the planting imagery, Jesus stated, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted" (15:13). "Similar language is found in a remnant context of Jeremiah (24:6-7), the larger context of which also contrasts 'good figs' with 'bad figs,' [cf. Jer 24:8] referring to two groups of people in Judah."[98] Third, in the shepherd imagery Jesus identified himself as a shepherd (Matt 25:32; 26:31; John 10:11, 14, 16), and described the disciples as the sheep (Matt 26:31; Luke 12:32). Further, He emphasizes the gathering of the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10:6; 15:24), "evoking a remnant image familiar from such Old Testament remnant passages as Jer 23:2-3 and Zeph 3:19-20." In addition, "Jesus' mention of 'other sheep' which are 'not of this fold' (John 10:16) points to an expansive notion of the remnant, drawing on prior prophetic hopes for the inclusion of Gentiles in the future kingdom (e.g., Isa 49:6; 56:6-8)." Nevertheless, He also used the shepherd imagery in the context of the final judgment: when "all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats" (Matt 25:32). Fourth, in His quantifying terminology, "Jesus refers to His followers with a variety of terms that suggest a small group. He refers to the 'few' . . . who find the way to life (Matt 7:14; cf. Luke 13:3) and affirms that, though 'many' are called 'few' . . . are chosen/elect (Matt 22:14)."[99]

On the whole, the remnant theme in the Gospels is discussed in terms of the eschatological judgment. In fact, there are here two significant implications for our study: (1) On the one hand, many groups are clearly identifiable in this discussion, such as the disciples as the sheep (Matt 26:31; Luke 12:32); the Pharisees as the plant which the Father did not plant (cf. Matt 15:12-14); and the Gentiles as "the other sheep" which are not of this fold (John 10:16). Actually, some ideas mentioned here seem to operate as visible marks of the true believers; for instance, baptism, confession of sins, fruits of repentance, and the idea of good figs in contrast to the bad ones. (2) On the other hand, it seems clear that the eschatological remnant will be completely identifiable only at the final judgment, since the separation between true and false believers is a divine task.

The Remnant in Paul. As L. Meyer indicated, "the most explicit NT references to the remnant are in Romans 9-11."[100] In those chapters, Paul dealt with the condition of Israel in the New Testament. In order to affirm that the word of God

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98. Wahlen, "The Remnant in the Gospels," 74.
99. Wahlen, "The Remnant in the Gospels," 74-75.
100. Meyer, *ABD*, 5:671. See Rom 9:27 (*hupoleimma*); 11:5 (*leimma*). The Greek text used in this paper is *The Greek New Testament* (*UBS4*) 4th rev. ed.; Kurt Aland, Barbara Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini and Bruce M. Metzger (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 2001).

has not failed (Rom 9:6), and that "God has not rejected His people" (11:1-2), he appealed to the OT concept of remnant, particularly Isaiah's prophecies (9:27, 29) and the persecution of Elijah (11:2-5).

Assuming the notion of faithful remnant, Paul distinguished the faithful Israel from the biological Israel:[101] "For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants [*seed*]. . . . It is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants [*seed*]" (9:6-8).

In this sense, he cited Isa 10:22-23: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be like the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved" (Rom 9:27). He also quoted Isa 1:9: "Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity [*seed*], we would have become like Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah" (Rom 9:29).[102] Therefore, the use of remnant language in this context "presupposes that there has been a judgment, a division in Israel precipitated by the Christ event."[103] It implies that only "those Jews who accept this gospel constitute the remnant."[104] Moreover, in fulfillment of the OT promises concerning the inclusion of other nations, Paul "expanded the covenantal remnant of the faithful Jews by also calling the Gentiles (Rom 3:29-30; 9:24; 10:10-13; Gal 3:28-29)."[105]

In addition, he mentioned how Elijah pleaded with God against Israel—"they have killed your prophets, they have torn down your altars, and I alone am left"—and how God responded, "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal" (Rom 11:2-4). Paul's conclusion is that, in the same way, "there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice" (v. 5). In fact, two points are emphasized here: (1) "a part of Israel was apostate" and (2) "God had chosen a remnant." Therefore, in this sense, "all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:26), since the faithful remnant "will stand as the ultimate witness to the covenant faithfulness of God."[106]

Overall, some ideas about the visibility/invisibility of the remnant can be seen in this Pauline discussion. On the one hand, he challenged the notion of visible (biological) Israel, opposing the concepts of *children of the flesh* and *children of the promise*, which allowed him to include the Gentiles in his conception of remnant. On the other hand, Paul was not speaking here about an *invisible*

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101. Cf. Leslie N. Pollard, "The Remnant in Pauline Thought," in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, ed. Angel M. Rodriguez (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 77. George Eldon Ladd remarks that "the prophets saw Israel as a whole as rebellious and disobedient and therefore destined to suffer the divine judgment. Still there remained within the faithless nation a remnant of believers who were the object of God's care. Here in the believing remnant was the true people of God." George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament,* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 106.

102. Thomas R. Schreiner commented that "Israel was no better than Sodom and Gomorrah and deserved the same fate as they. Nonetheless, this was not the fate of all of Israel, because the Lord 'had left' . . . a 'seed.' . . . As we saw in the exposition of 9:6-9, the term *sperma* refers to Israelites who are truly the children of Abraham, the genuine children of God. . . . It is merely another way of describing the remnant of verse 27." Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 534.

103. Pollard, "The Remnant in Pauline Thought," 82.

104. Meyer, *ABD*, 5:671.

105. Pollard, "The Remnant in Pauline Thought," 79-80.

106. Pollard, "The Remnant in Pauline Thought," 83-84.

remnant. His letter addressed a concrete church at Rome (Rom 1:7), comprising visible Jews and Gentiles members, and he used the concrete imagery of the olive tree, the branches which were broken off, the wild olive branches which were grafted (cf. Rom 11:17-24), insofar as he intended to represent specific groups of people.

The Remnant in Revelation. Generally speaking, the book of Revelation presents the remnant concept in its faithful and eschatological sense. Whereas the eschatological remnant designates those who will be saved at the Second Coming of Christ, the faithful remnant broadly points to God's people before the final judgment at that time. However, John also depicts the faithful remnant in a narrow sense, namely, the prophetic end-time faithful remnant (cf. Rev 12-14).

In a broad sense, the faithful remnant is discussed mainly in the letters to the seven churches (Rev 2:1-3:22). Each letter contains a promise of final reward "to him who overcomes" (cf. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). As Richard P. Lehmann highlights, the overcomer is "is by definition a remnant, considering that not everyone is victorious and that only the conquerors will benefit from the promises."[107] On the one hand, the idea of invisibility of the remnant is emphasized, since "the promise is not offered to the church as a whole but to him/her (singular) who . . . is victorious by living according to the warning given to the church. The call is clearly given on a personal and individual basis." On the other hand, the visibility of the remnant is stressed by the fact that "the remnant is not made up of faithful ones who simply escaped the apostasy of the world. They are also those located within the Christian church who embraced the words of Christ in the midst of Christian apostasy."[108]

In a narrow sense, the prophetic end-time faithful remnant is described in Rev 12-14, particularly in 12:17: "So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children [*seed*],who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus." As a matter of fact, several characteristics are mentioned in the description of the end-time faithful remnant, which strongly emphasize its visibility: (1) the time sequence, (2) the Commandments of God, (3) the gift of prophecy, and (4) the specific message.[109]

First, according to Rev 12:6, 14-17, the end-time faithful remnant appears after the 1, 260 years that the woman was hidden in the wilderness, that is, after

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107. Richard P. Lehmann, "The Remnant in the Book of Revelation," in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective,* ed. Angel M. Rodriguez (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 90. Obviously, the book of Revelation emphasizes that this victory is achieved by the "blood of the Lamb" (7:14; 12:11). For further information about the concept of overcomer, see Kenneth A. Strand, "'Overcomer': A Study in the Macrodynamic of Theme Development in the Book of Revelation," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 28 (1990): 237-254.

108. Lehmann, "The Remnant in the Book of Revelation," 90. Following this tension (visible/invisible), "the messages to the seven churches reveal that Christ focuses His attention upon all of His church, faithful or not. It is implied that in the church are both faithful and unfaithful persons (cf. Matt 13:24-30). However, salvation is not obtained corporately because it is not the result of belonging to a given community." Ibid., 91.

109. Cf. Ekkehardt Müller, "The End Time Remnant in Revelation," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 11.1-2 (2000): 202; Gerhard Pfandl, "Identifying Marks of the End-Time Remnant in the Book of Revelation," in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, ed. Angel M. Rodriguez (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 140.

A.D. 1798.[110]   Second, the end-time faithful remnant keeps God's Command-ments (Rev 12:17; 14:12, including the Sabbath commandment (Exod 20:8-11).[111] Third, the comparison of Rev 12:17; 14:17; 19:10; 22:9-10 indicates that the end-time faithful remnant possesses the gift of prophecy.[112]   Fourth, the end-time faithful remnant is characterized by proclaiming the three angel's messages of Rev 14:6-12 around the world, which includes the biblical understanding of the Sabbath commandment and the judgment of God.[113]

In this sense, "the end-time remnant is a divine project in progress and will reach its ultimate expression shortly before the end of the cosmic conflict. Through their mission, God is reaching out to His people around the world, gathering the fullness of His remnant (Rev 14:6), and calling God's people to come out of Bab-ylon (18:4)."[114]   Indeed, this "ultimate expression" or "fullness of His remnant" points to the eschatological remnant, the fully visible remnant. In its turn, the end-time faithful remnant is primarily (keeping in mind its visible marks), but not completely, visible, since it is not yet the eschatological remnant.

In short, the study of the remnant motif in the OT reveals that the faithful remnant community is generally clearly identifiable; however, those communities often included members who were not completely faithful. It implies that the rem-nant is primarily, but not fully, visible. Exceptionally, when the faithful remnant is in some way threatened, its invisibility increases significantly. Nevertheless, even in normal circumstances, faithful individuals who are occasionally apart from the

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110. As Gerhard Pfandl summarized, "using the historicist method of interpretation, Seventh-day Adventists believe that the 1260 prophetic days refer to the period of papal supremacy from the sixth to the end of the eighteenth century (A.D. 538-1798), during which many of God's people were op-pressed, persecuted and killed. In Rev 12:17, after the fulfillment of the prophetic period of 1260 days, i.e., in the nineteenth century Satan is described as directing his attack at the remnant of the woman's seed–the end-time remnant people of God." Pfandl, "Identifying Marks of the End-Time Remnant in the Book of Revelation," 139. Cf. William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 360; Alberto Timm, "Miniature Symbolization and the Year-Day Principle of Prophetic Interpretation," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 42 (2004): 149-167; William Shea, "Time Prophecies of Daniel 12 and Revelation 12-13," in *Symposium on Revelation: Book I* (ed. Frank B. Holbrook; Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 67-110; Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Ber-rien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), 395.

111. See Pfandl, "Identifying Marks of the End-Time Remnant in the Book of Revelation," 140-141; Johannes Kovar, "The Remnant and God's Commandments: Revelation 12:17," in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, ed. Angel M. Rodriguez (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 113-126; Mathilde Frey, "Sabbath Theology in the Book of Revelation," in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, ed. Angel M. Rodriguez (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 127-137.

112. "The spirit of prophecy, which energizes the remnant of the seed of the woman, is connected to the revelation of the true God as given in His Word, and is not only a manifestation of the spirit of prophecy in their midst. . . . This total reliance on Scripture allows the remnant to use it to identify the manifestation of the prophetic gift in their midst. Consequently, the Adventist Church has recog-nized that the ministry of Ellen G. White is a manifestation of the gift of prophecy." Lehmann, "The Remnant in the Book of Revelation," 104. Cf. Müller, "The End Time Remnant in Revelation," 202; Pfandl, "Identifying Marks of the End-Time Remnant in the Book of Revelation," 141-150.

113. Cf. LaRondelle, "The Remnant and the Three Angel's Message," 872-880; Lehmann, "The Remnant in the Book of Revelation," 104; Pfandl, "Identifying Marks of the End-Time Remnant in the Book of Revelation," 157; Müller, "The End Time Remnant in Revelation," 202-203.

114. Angel M. Rodriguez, "Concluding Essay: God's End-Time Remnant and the Christian Church," in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, ed. Angel M. Rodriguez (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 225.

visible remnant community (invisible in this sense) cannot be overlooked. In addition, OT prophets highlighted the holiness of the eschatological remnant, which included a remnant of the non-Israelites.

Likewise, in the NT the remnant is discussed in its faithful and eschatological forms. In the Gospels, the remnant is prominently described in its eschatological form, which will be fully identifiable at the final judgment, since the separation between true and false believers is a divine task. Similarly, Paul challenged the notion of visible (biological) remnant of Israel, which allowed him to include the Gentiles. However, those teachings (from the Gospels and from Paul) were addressed to concrete and identifiable individuals and communities, and they assume visible marks of the true believers. Particularly in the book of Revelation, there is an end-time faithful remnant with visible marks and a special mission. In fact, the faithful remnant is a project in process, whereas the eschatological remnant is its final form. It implies that the eschatological remnant is the fully visible remnant, and the faithful remnant is primarily, but not fully, a visible remnant.

Conclusions and Implications for the Adventist Understanding of the Remnant Church

Taking into account the ideas explored in this study, it is possible to conclude that, although the Protestant idea of visible/invisible church is originally based on the Augustinian concept of predestination, this idea is correct in stressing the tension between "the church as God sees it" (invisible) and "the church as humans see it" (visible). Indeed, the central point of this tension is the proper relationship of ecclesiology and soteriology. When a full visibility of the church is affirmed (outside the church there is no salvation), the main implication is that unfaithful individuals in the church will be saved. On the other hand, to focus on the invisible church means to disregard all the biblical teaching about the community of the body of Christ and the mission of the church. Therefore, the more appropriate solution seems to be a tension between the visible and invisible church.

The biblical description of the faithful remnant appears to imply this tension of visibility and invisibility. Overall, the faithful remnant is depicted as a visible community. However, considering that the conception of remnant is directly connected with the notion of judgment and salvation, to affirm that the remnant is completely visible means to assume that unfaithful members of this community will be saved, and that some faithful individuals who are not part of this community will be lost. Nonetheless, such division will be made by God in the final judgment: the visible eschatological remnant. Biblical data seems to suggest that the faithful remnant is basically visible in terms of community, leaving some room for invisibility in terms of individuals.

The association of the idea of remnant with soteriology, from the perspective of a Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology, is not an easy task.[115] One attempt to overcome this difficulty is to consider that the universal church (faithful Christians in general) is the invisible aspect of the church of Christ, whereas the end-time

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115. See, for example, the unclear position of *Questions on Doctrine*. Knight, *QOD*, 159-165.

remnant (Adventism) is its visible aspect, since "God is actively involved in the salvation of people outside the remnant. His people are larger than the remnant."[116] However, the understanding of Seventh-day Adventism as the full visible remnant brings soteriological problems associated with the idea of visible church. In addition, the Bible generally discusses the remnant in the context of salvation, and the OT remnant terminology is applied to faithful individuals from other nations.

In light of this complexity, I would suggest that the visibility-invisibility tension should be applied also to the concept of remnant, because the distinction between faithful (visible/invisible) and eschatological (visible) remnant is better than the differentiation between universal church (invisible) and remnant (visible). In this case, the Adventist movement would be seen predominantly as a faithful visible remnant community, while there is some room for invisibility in terms of individuals inside and outside this community, since the fully visible people of God will be the eschatological remnant. Nevertheless, this proposal is somewhat different from the traditional Protestant concept of visible/invisible church. Taking into account that this traditional concept is related to the notion of predestination, the visibility/invisibility of the church tends to be considered in a static manner, which emphasizes the difference between God's and human perspective. In contrast to that, the proposal of a visible-invisible remnant church in this study is not understood statically, but from the perspective of a process in history, something that is in movement. Certainly, there is still an important difference between God's and human perspective, but this is not the primary basis for the tension of visibility/invisibility of the remnant church. Rather, this tension is significantly related to the fact that the remnant is a community that is being dynamically formed in history, and it will end up as a fully visible eschatological remnant at the end of this history.

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116. Rodriguez, "Concluding Essay," 216 n. 43. For further information about this explanation of universal church (invisible) and remnant (visible), see ibid., 217-224.