

Andrews University Seminary Student Journal

Volume 3
Number 1 *Spring–Fall 2017*

Article 1

6-16-2019

Full Issue

Rodrigo Galiza
Andrews University, degaliza@andrews.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/aussj>

Recommended Citation

Galiza, Rodrigo (2019) "Full Issue," *Andrews University Seminary Student Journal*: Vol. 3 : No. 1 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/aussj/vol3/iss1/1>

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Andrews University Seminary Student Journal by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEMINARY STUDENT JOURNAL

Volume 3

Spring–Fall 2017

Numbers 1–2

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL ii

INVITED ARTICLE

SANOUBOU, BOUBAKAR. Being “In the World” But “Not of the World”:
A Reflection on John 17:14–18..... 1

ARTICLES

THEOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

IRIZARRY HAUSTED, IRIANN MARIE. Eternal Functional Subordination
in the Work of Wayne Grudem and Its Relationship to
Contemporary Adventism:..... 11

CHURCH HISTORY

GIBBS, NATHANIEL. Ellen G. White and Subordination within the Trinity 27

RASMUSSEN, THOMAS JOHN. A Tale of Two Books: The Relationship
Between John Harvey Kellogg’s *Living Temple* and Ellen G. White’s
Ministry of Healing 45

Copyrights @ 2017 held by authors

Online edition: ISSN 2376-063X

Print edition: ISSN 2376-0621

EDITORIAL

DENIS KAISER

Editor, Andrews University Seminary Student Journal

We are still behind with our publishing schedule and decided to publish the articles for the year 2017 in one bigger issue. The same will probably happen for the 2018 volume, until our publication is current again. We are thankful for the continuing article submissions and for the reviews of faculty members and doctoral students that ensure a high quality of the published material. The articles and the entire issue are accessible on <http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/aussj/>. As in the previous issues of the journal, this issue contains stimulating and thought provoking articles. We hope that they are beneficial to you.

The sponsoring faculty member for the present issue is Dr. Boubakar Sanou, Assistant Professor of World Mission and Leadership. Before joining the faculty of the Theological Seminary, he served as a pastor in his native country Burkina Faso for more than a decade. In his article, he offers a biblical and missiological reflection on the concept of being “in the world” but “not of the world” (John 17:14–18). Discussing Richard Niebuhr’s theological paradigms on culture, Dr. Sanou suggests a framework for how culture can be approached in mission and ministry.

A second article comes from Iriann Marie Irizarry Hausted, a Ph.D. student in Systematic Theology in the Theological Seminary at Andrews University. In her article, she explores the concept of the “eternal functional subordination” among the members of the Trinity in the writings of the Evangelical systematic theologian Wayne Grudem. She further notes the reception and rejection of Grudem’s ideas by Seventh-day Adventist scholars. She suggests that a proper understanding of the nature, arguments, context, and significance of the “eternal functional subordination” view among Evangelicals may help Adventist scholars better understand why some Adventists adopted that view.

The third article was written by Nathaniel Gibbs, another Ph.D. student in Systematic Theology in the Theological Seminary. Like the previous article, this one also addresses the subject of the Son’s subordination to the Father, albeit from a different perspective. Responding to writers who employ the writings of the early Adventist visionary Ellen G. White to support their subordinationist views, Gibbs shows that her earlier statements on the relation of Christ to the Father are ambiguous and her later statements stress the equality between them. Her writings can therefore not be utilized to support a one-way subordination.

The fourth article in this issue comes from Thomas John Rasmussen, a recent graduate from the M.Div. program at the Theological Seminary. During his course work, he compared *The Living Temple* (1903), by John Harvey Kellogg, with Ellen G. White’s *Ministry of Healing* (1905), and observed several striking thematic similarities between those two books. In this article, he makes his observations

available to a broader readership and shows that in her book Ellen White responded to some of Kellogg's panentheistic ideas without every directly addressing him. Thus, her book may still be appreciated by readers in modern time because the book is not only tied to a specific issue in Adventist history.

We hope that you will enjoy those articles and find them thought-provoking. We also hope that they inspire further study, prove beneficial to the readers of this issue, and encourage other graduate students to engage in scholarly writing too.

**BEING “IN THE WORLD” BUT
“NOT OF THE WORLD”:
A REFLECTION ON
JOHN 17:14–18**

BOUBAKAR SANOU
Assistant Professor of World Mission and Leadership
sanou@andrews.edu

Abstract

While there is an agreement that the fact of culture is common to all people, its relationship to theology, mission, and ministry remains an important discussion topic among theologians, missiologists, ministry professionals, and church members. This article is a biblical and missiological reflection on the concepts of being “in the World” but not “of the World” in John 17:14–18. In the process, Richard Niebuhr’s theological paradigms on culture are discussed and a biblical and missiological framework for approaching culture in mission and ministry is suggested.

Keywords: Culture, mission, ministry, incarnation.

Introduction

The topic of culture, especially the need for taking it into consideration in mission and ministry, triggers some uneasiness in some Christian circles. The “in the world” but “not of the world” concepts in John 17:14–18 constitute the basis of the recurrent dilemma involved in the discussion of Christians’ attitude to culture.¹ Because the followers of Christ are not of the world, many Christians have taken a negative attitude toward culture. But because believers are also reminded of the fact that they are in the world, some see the need for Christians to interact meaningfully with their culture. There is thus an ongoing conflict among Christians on what their attitude should be toward culture. In their struggle with the practical, everyday issues of life, Christians are confronted by the dilemma of how to be “in the world” but not “of the world.”² Therefore, an understanding of the role of culture and the Christian attitude toward it is of great importance both

¹Henry R. Van Til, *The Calvinistic Concept of Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 15.

²Craig A. Carter, *Rethinking Christ and Culture: A Post-Christendom Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 74.

in determining what the Bible says and in communicating the Bible's message in meaningful terms that are understandable by people in various cultural contexts.³

Culture is a multifaceted term difficult to exhaustively define. In the context of this article, culture refers to "an interrelated system of thought, belief, morality, ethical principles, social and family structures, and physical products developed by a group in order to organize life in ways which are understandable and workable so that they can survive, attain their valued goals, and successfully adapt to change in their environment."⁴ In other words, culture entails the entire way of life of a particular group of people with distinguishable characteristics that set them apart from other human communities. Because culture determines the rules according to which each component of society is to interact with others, anything that is altered in one part of a culture inevitably impacts other parts of that culture.

This article reviews Richard Niebuhr's theological paradigms on culture and then suggests a biblical and missiological framework for approaching culture in mission and ministry.

Richard Niebuhr on Culture

The relationship between theology and culture has been and still remains an important discussion topic among theologians. Although theologians agree that the fact of culture is common to all people, they differ in their understanding of what culture is and its relationship to theology. While some of them see culture "as a source separate from theology to which theology must be correlated," others approach culture "as a term internal to theology."⁵ This section discusses the relationship between theology and culture from Richard Niebuhr's perspective. Although Niebuhr's theological paradigms on culture have been heavily critiqued over the years, it is a fact that they have strongly influenced later theological developments on culture, and continue to do so to some degree even today. It is even appropriate to say that the theological world owes a great debt to Niebuhr's seminal work on culture as "perhaps no other book has dominated an entire theological conversation for so long"⁶ as his *Christ and Culture*. Thus, *Christ and Culture* serves as the launching point for my perspective on the interaction between Christianity and human culture.

³Eunice Okorochoa, "Cultural Issues and the Biblical Message," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1467.

⁴Donald Moorman, *Harvest Waiting* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1999), quoted in William W. Schumacher, "Theology for Culture: Confrontation, Context, and Creation," *Concordia Journal* 42, no. 3 (2016): 214.

⁵D. Stephen Long, *Theology and Culture: A Guide to the Discussion* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008), 53.

⁶John G. Stackhouse Jr., "In the World, but..." *Christianity Today*, April 22, 2002, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2002/april22/8.80.html> (accessed July 12, 2017).

In his book *Christ and Culture*, Niebuhr presents five paradigms as possible attitudes of Christians to culture: Christ against Culture, Christ of Culture, Christ above Culture, Christ and Culture in Paradox, and Christ the Transformer of Culture.⁷

The *Christ against Culture* position perceives an opposition between Christ and human culture. It stresses that “whatever may be the customs of the society in which the Christian lives, and whatever the human achievements it conserves, Christ is seen as opposed to them, so that he confronts men with the challenges of an ‘either-or’ decision.”⁸ In other words, the church must systematically confront its surrounding culture instead of seeking ways to be contextual in its witness to it. As such, true Christians must be very serious about holiness by withdrawing from the world into separate communities of believers.⁹ Thus, there seems to be a warfare or adversarial relationship between some Christians and their culture. For those who perceive in culture something inherently hostile to Christian living, culture is an enemy of the church that should be always confronted or shunned.¹⁰

Some of the early cross-cultural missionaries viewed the way of life of other cultural groups as wholly erroneous and at times even regarded it as their duty to indiscriminately wipe out these cultural groups’ religious and cultural practices and replace them with a Western transformed character.¹¹ The indiscriminate rejection of a people’s cultural practices either creates a void that is filled by imported practices leading to the gospel being misunderstood and rejected, or the old religious and cultural practices simply go underground.¹² Whenever cultural practices go underground, believers cognitively assent to orthodox Christian beliefs and join in the public denunciations of their “old” cultural forms, but

⁷Richard H. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951).

⁸Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 140.

⁹Thomas K. Johnson, “Christ and Culture,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 35 (2011): 4–7. He cites the Old Order Amish made up of descendants of Swiss and Alsatian Anabaptists of the 16th century as a contemporary example of the advocates for the “Christ against Culture” paradigm.

¹⁰Schumacher, “Theology for Culture,” 212.

¹¹Stefan Höschele, *Christian Remnant—African Folk Church: Seventh-day Adventism in Tanzania, 1903-1980* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2007), 262. This is not an attempt to discredit missionaries’ achievements. While their service is appreciated, it is also important to point out some of their mistakes so that we do not continue to repeat them today. See also Felix Chingota, “A Historical Account of the Attitude of Blantyre Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian towards Initiation Rites,” in *Rites of Passage in Contemporary Africa: Interaction between Christian and African Traditional Religions*, ed. James L. Cox (Cardiff, UK: Cardiff Academic Press, 1998), 147.

¹²Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1985), 184, 188.

privately retain their loyalty to them especially in times of serious crises.¹³ The indiscriminate rejection of other cultural ways of life was often rooted in some missionaries' ethnocentric tendency to associate the gospel with their own culture and, as a result, they judged all other cultural ways as bad. Against this ethnocentric attitude towards other cultures, William Schumacher argues that "the recognition that there are many cultures, and that all of us live and move within a cultural context, means that *none* of us sits on a supercultural or transcultural perch from which we can decisively evaluate cultures, arbitrate cultural differences, or define authoritatively what 'Christian culture' is supposed to look like."¹⁴ Although it is clear that Christ is against the evil elements of every culture and that the *Christ against Culture* paradigm can help identify and strongly object to features of cultures that are incompatible with biblical principles,¹⁵ its "call for separation [into holy communities] tends to minimize the potential influence that Christianity may have for good upon society."¹⁶ Besides, "if we understand 'culture' as the pervasive patterns of life and the assumptions and values that are implicitly shared by a community, one cannot really 'withdraw' from the culture one finds oneself in, any more than a fish can 'withdraw' from the water in which it swims."¹⁷

The advocates of the *Christ of Culture* position perceive God's total approval of human cultures through the incarnation of Jesus whereby he entered the history and the particularities of the Jewish culture.¹⁸ Here, the outright conflict between Christ and culture gives way to a harmony between the two.¹⁹ By perceiving Christ's incarnation as God's seal of approval of human cultures, the *Christ of Culture* position tends toward an indiscriminate accommodation of all cultural values as it often feels no great tension between the church and the secular world.²⁰ By doing so it "indirectly minimizes change in the lives of converts whereas the gospel challenges people individually and corporately to turn from their unbiblical practices."²¹ Thus, this paradigm opens the door to religious

¹³Jack Partain, "Christians and Their Ancestors: A Dilemma of African Theology," *Christian Century* 103, no. 36 (1986): 1067.

¹⁴Schumacher, "Theology for Culture," 217.

¹⁵Ibid., 213.

¹⁶Rick Allbee, "Christ Witnessing to Culture: Toward a New Paradigm between Christ and Culture," *Stone-Campbell Journal* 8, no. 1 (2005): 18.

¹⁷Schumacher, "Theology for Culture," 214.

¹⁸Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 41.

¹⁹Stackhouse, "In the World, but..."

²⁰Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2010), 161.

²¹Boubakar Sanou, "Religious Syncretism as a Worldwide Mission Challenge: A Biblical and Missiological Response," *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry* 8 (2013): 136.

syncretism—“the blending of different (sometimes contradictory) forms of religious beliefs and practices”²²—as Christians continue to maintain beliefs and practices that stand in conflict with the gospel. By making little distinction between Christ and human culture, this position also tends to drift towards humanism, animism, or whatever the prevailing view is in a given culture.²³ The advocates of the *Christ of Culture* position must not overlook the fact that although Christ was incarnated into human form and context, in his ministry he categorically condemned religious and cultural practices that were contrary to divine principles (e.g., Matt 5:31–32 and Matt 19:8–9; Matt 15:1–6).

The *Christ above Culture* paradigm seeks to stay away from both an uncritical accommodation to culture and a complete denial of the validity of culture in the process of gospel transmission. While it elevates and validates the positive dimensions of culture, it rejects the cultural values that are antagonistic to the gospel.²⁴ Nevertheless, this paradigm hardly acknowledges that even though God exists outside of human culture, the Scriptures reveal that “he is willing to enter human culture and work through it in order to engage in meaningful communication with humans.”²⁵

The *Christ and Culture in Paradox* position is that of the dualists. By making a sharp distinction between the secular and spiritual life, and between the reign of Christ and human culture,²⁶ this paradigm is unable to reach a meaningful synthesis of Christians’ attitude to culture.²⁷ It struggles with the acknowledgment that although the world is in a fallen state, God still “uses human culture as a vehicle for interacting with humans.”²⁸

Niebuhr’s last paradigm, *Christ the Transformer of Culture*, is cognizant of the fact that although all human cultures are corrupted by sin, no single culture is beyond the possibility of being renewed by the power of God. Because the gospel is about the promise of transformation, through conversion, human beings and their

²²Sanou, “Religious Syncretism as a Worldwide Mission Challenge,” 133.

²³Paul G. Schrottenboer, “Christ and Culture,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 22 (October 1998): 319.

²⁴Paul Louis Metzger, “Christ, Culture, and the Sermon on the Mount Community,” *Ex Auditu* 23 (2007): 35.

²⁵Glenn Rogers, *The Bible Culturally Speaking: The Role of Culture in the Production, Presentation and Interpretation of God’s Word* (Bedford, TX: Mission and Ministry Resources, 2004), 31. See also Boubakar Sanou, “Divine Revelation and Context: An Interplay of Influences,” *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 12, no. 1 (2016): 107–113.

²⁶Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 171.

²⁷Allbee, “Christ Witnessing to Culture,” 19.

²⁸Rogers, *The Bible Culturally Speaking*, 27.

cultures can move from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness.²⁹ Since culture is dynamic rather than static, all cultures can go through processes of change and transformation with their encounters with the gospel.

The above theological perspectives on culture portray culture in generalized terms as a monolith to which a Christian must take a single attitude. However, since cultures are plural and diverse, theological perspectives on culture should “in some sense be plural and diverse rather than monolithic and uniform across all times and places.”³⁰ Any of these positions on culture that Christians adopt will not only inform the way they perceive the world but also shape how they approach Christian witness. In other words, peoples’ approach to mission and ministry is shaped by their perspective on culture and their understanding of the interplay between the gospel and human culture.³¹

Towards a Biblical and Missiological Perspective on Culture

God works in a redemptive way within human culture. Jesus’ incarnation into the cultural life of first-century Palestine to communicate with people is a valuable indication that God is able to work through human culture to reach and interact with humans.³² From this perspective, God likely “views human culture [although tainted by sin] primarily as a vehicle to be used by him and his people for Christian purposes, rather than an enemy to be [always] combated or shunned.”³³ Also, because culture can be defined as “everything that people have, think, and do as members of a society,”³⁴ God’s command to humanity to have dominion over creation (Gen 1:26) could be interpreted to mean that he created them with a culture-producing capacity. In the process of taking dominion over creation, humans develop cultures and lifestyles specific to their contexts. Therefore, the “do not love the world or anything in the world” of 1 John 2:15–16 and “the whole world is under the control of the evil one” of 1 John 5:19 are not to be taken literally as a call to systematically reject culture but rather are to be approached as a call to refrain from participation with Satan and his human allies in their use of one’s culture. God’s true attitude toward culture is that he “seeks to

²⁹Bruce Guenther, “The ‘Enduring Problem’ of Christ and Culture,” *Direction* 34, no. 2 (2015): 217, 218.

³⁰Schumacher, “Theology for Culture,” 217.

³¹See Sanou, “Divine Revelation and Context,” 107–113.

³²Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 33.

³³Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis books, 2005), 81.

³⁴Gary Ferraro and Susan Andreatta, *Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective*, 9th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2012), 28.

cooperate with human beings in the use of their culture for his glory. *It is allegiance to the satanic use of that same culture that he stands against, not the culture itself*³⁵ (emphasis in the original). Although God is above culture as it is warped by the pervasive influence of human sinfulness, nevertheless “culture [like individual temperaments] is not in and of itself either an enemy or a friend to God or humans. It is, rather, something that is there to be used by personal beings such as humans, God, and Satan.”³⁶

The incarnation of Jesus can be viewed not only as a revelation of God to humanity but also as his “ultimate rebuke against the *secularization of culture*”³⁷ (emphasis in the original). However, this is not a call for an uncritical divinization of human culture.³⁸ It is important to state that every culture has positive elements that can be used by Christians as well as aspects which express the demonic and dehumanizing forces of evil that must be challenged.³⁹ That may be why Paul Hiebert maintains that the gospel can be adequately communicated in every cultural context enabling people to grow in faith within the context of their own culture without having to change cultures to become Christians.⁴⁰

The passages in 1 John 2:15–16 (“do not love the world or anything in the world”) and 1 John 5:19 (“the whole world is under the control of the evil one”) are not the only biblical references concerning the attitude of God or Christians toward “the world.” The Greek word *kosmos* for “world” used in 1 John 2:15–16 and 1 John 5:19 is also the word employed in John 3:16 in reference to the world as the object of God’s abundant love. *Kosmos* is also the word Jesus used in his intercessory prayer for his disciples in John 17:14–18:

I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

In this prayer, Jesus does not ask God to take his disciples out of their sinful context, but rather to protect them from the evil one as they remain and minister in that context. Although Jesus also prays for his disciples’ holiness (“Sanctify them by Your truth,” v. 17) and calls us to holiness and warns us not to be conformed to this world, he nevertheless wants his followers to be active in the world. “Probably Jesus recognized that the real problem with worldliness is not

³⁵Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 83.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 89.

³⁷Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions*, 179, 181.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 181.

³⁹Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 56.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 55.

something ‘out there in the world,’ but rather something deep inside ourselves—our own unbelief, pride and ingratitude toward God. All this could easily come along with us, if we try to withdraw from the world into holy communities.”⁴¹ Therefore, 1 John 2:15–16 and 1 John 5:19 should not be interpreted literally as a call to reject culture. Read together with John 3:16 and John 17:14–18, these texts are better understood as a call to live in real contact with culture without letting one’s identity, thoughts, priorities, feelings, and values be controlled by it. God not only redeems people from the godlessness of their cultures (1 Pet 1:18–19) when they accept Christ as their Savior, he also sends them back into the same godless cultures as light bearers to work with him for their cultures’ transformation. In other words, while we continue to be in contact with human culture,

our identity, thoughts, priorities, feelings, and values should be continually sanctified by the truth—the living Word of God. And as such sanctified people, Jesus sends us into the world in a way that is similar to how the Father sent Jesus into the world. We can probably summarize the central thrust of this biblical text [John 17:14–18] by saying: Jesus wants us to be in the world but not of the world for a very specific purpose: He has sent us into the world as hearers and bearers of the Word.⁴²

Conclusion

To a large extent, Christians’ attitude toward culture, especially in mission and ministry contexts, depends on their theological presupposition about culture and their understanding of how God revealed himself in the past and continues to do so in the context of human cultures. Being in a sin-tainted world neither invalidates Christian witness nor excuses Christians from fulfilling their God-given mission of participating in the redemption of fallen humanity. The Christian expectation of future glory and complete redemption has implications for believers’ attitude toward human cultures. The salt of the world metaphor (Matt 5:13) is an evangelistic call to intermingle with the world and transform it. As disciple-makers and ambassadors for Christ (Matt 28:18–20; 2 Cor 5:20) and salt and light of the world (Matt 5:13–16), it is not possible to visualize the Christian movement apart from human culture.⁴³ “Just as Jesus incarnated himself into Jewish culture, so his religion is to be incarnated into every culture.”⁴⁴

⁴¹Johnson, “Christ and Culture,” 5.

⁴²Ibid., 6 (emphasis in the original).

⁴³Van Til, *The Calvinistic Concept of Culture*, 17, 57.

⁴⁴Gorden R. Doss, “Shifting Worldviews in Encounter of African Traditional Religion and Christianity” (paper presented at the Fifth Annual Andrews University Seminary Scholarship Symposium, Berrien Springs, MI, February 2009), 1.

Because the Word of God is native to none of our cultures, no Christian should think about their culture as standard or normative and thus set it over or against other cultures. Rather, each Christian should view their culture as also fallen and need of redemption. Approaching the incarnation of Christ as a divine precedent of communication with humans, the church does not have to stand indiscriminately against human culture. Rather, acting as the salt and light of the world, the church can be a powerful change agent in God’s hands by being incarnational in its mission and ministry. The leavening influence of godly Christians who are model citizens can help transform their society a small step at a time (Matt 13:33).

ETERNAL FUNCTIONAL SUBORDINATION IN THE WORK OF WAYNE GRUDEM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO CONTEMPORARY ADVENTISM

IRIANN MARIE IRIZARRY HAUSTED
PhD Student in Systematic Theology
irizarry@andrews.edu

Abstract

This article explores the concept of an *eternal functional subordination* believed to be existing among the members of the Trinity as held by one of its main contemporary proponents, evangelical systematic theologian Wayne Grudem. Further, the article briefly explores the relationship of Adventist theology to Grudem's view, noting that some Adventist scholars seem to embrace Grudem's thought, while others reject it. The article suggests that understanding *eternal functional subordination* as a relevant trend within contemporary evangelicalism can facilitate ideas and context that are helpful in understanding the relationship of Adventist thinkers to such a view.

Keywords: trinity, subordination, evangelicalism, Adventism.

Introduction

The doctrine of the Trinity, regarded by many as the most foundational doctrine of Christianity, has been under theological development almost since Christianity's origins. Yet, in recent times, there has been a trend within evangelical Christianity—including Adventism—toward a belief in an *eternal functional subordination* (hereafter EFS)¹ existing among the members of the Trinity. This theological trend, which holds that the Son has been eternally subordinate to the Father (and the Spirit has been subordinate to both) stands in contrast with the

¹Grudem himself does not use the terminology eternal functional subordination; instead he uses the phrase economic subordination to refer to the same concept. I use the phrasing eternal functional subordination (EFS) to refer to his views because this is the phrasing more frequently used among theologians in general. A more recent term has surfaced for the same concept, namely, eternal relations of authority and submission (ERAS). Again, for the purposes of this paper I will retain the EFS terminology. Additionally, I want to clarify that the terms “function” and “role” seem to be virtually interchangeable in the work of the authors featured in this paper, and therefore I will also use them interchangeably as I discuss their work in this research.

belief that the three members of the Trinity serve limited functions in subordination to each other only temporarily for soteriological purposes. Recently, EFS has been discussed within evangelical theology mainly because of its application to gender roles. One of EFS' main contemporary voices is evangelical theologian Wayne Grudem, professor of theology and biblical studies at Phoenix Seminary, AZ.² Thus, the primary focus of this research is to present the basic tenets of EFS as they are proposed by Grudem. Because Grudem's EFS view has also marginally surfaced within Adventism, the secondary focus of this research is to briefly present how contemporary Adventist thinkers are relating to it. But let us first turn to Grudem.

*Wayne Grudem's Eternal Functional Subordination (EFS)*³

In a section of his well-known *Systematic Theology* entitled "All Analogies Have Shortcomings," Grudem states, "Scripture nowhere uses any analogies to teach the doctrine of the Trinity," and that "no analogy adequately teaches about the Trinity" since "all are misleading in significant ways."⁴ However, in spite of these precautionary statements, Grudem understands the Trinity largely through the Father-Son analogy. He defends this approach partly by arguing that "in the Bible a person's name is a description of his or her character" and that "likewise, the names of God in Scripture are various descriptions of his character."⁵ As he sees it, "the closest we come to an analogy [for the Trinity] is found in the titles "Father" and "Son" themselves, titles that clearly speak of distinct persons and of the close relationship that exists between them in a human family."⁶ Although Grudem acknowledges the distinction of persons as well as the relational closeness portrayed by the Father-Son analogy, he also goes on to argue that this

²For more information on Grudem, see www.waynegrudem.com. Although Grudem is an important representative, he is not the only one holding the views that will be expounded in this article. For an excellent survey and historical background of the key thinkers, issues, and controversies involved around EFS, see Millard J. Erickson, *Who's Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2009).

³Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 240–241. Although he has written elsewhere on the topic, I will mainly focus on Grudem's *Systematic Theology*, for two reasons: first, it is in this particular work that he has developed his view of EFS at greatest length. Second, *Systematic Theology* includes some chapters and sections where Grudem addresses his Trinitarian views somewhat in isolation from his views on gender roles, unlike most of his other works.

⁴*Ibid.*, 240–241.

⁵*Ibid.*, 157.

⁶*Ibid.*, 241.

analogy predominantly refers to distinctions in roles of authority and subordination.

Distinctions in Roles of Authority and Subordination

Grudem emphatically asserts that the three persons of the Trinity are fully divine and share all the attributes of God.⁷ And yet he believes that in order for the Trinity to be composed of three legitimate individual persons, there must be a distinction between the three in at least one other aspect.⁸ In identifying this necessary distinction, Grudem makes reference to the “different functions” of each person “both in creation and redemption.”⁹ In this regard he writes: “The only difference between them is the way they relate to each other and to the creation. The unique quality of the Father is the way he *relates as Father* to the Son and Holy Spirit. The unique quality of the Son is the way he *relates as Son*. And the unique quality of the Holy Spirit is the way he *relates as Spirit*.”¹⁰

Furthermore, according to Grudem, these relational distinctions between the members of the Trinity have to do specifically with authority and subordination. As he sees it, the role or function of God the Father is to “plan, and direct and send the Son and the Holy Spirit,” and the Son has “the role of obeying, going as

⁷Ibid., 248.

⁸See Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 248. In this regard, philosopher of religion Keith Yandell (Affiliate Professor of Philosophy at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL) has argued that Grudem’s eternal functional subordination presupposes the philosophical concept known as *indiscernibility of identicals*, which states that things that exactly resemble one another cannot be distinct. On a very informative debate at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS), Yandell suggests that in embracing this concept Grudem is departing from a philosophical assumption and imposing it on the biblical data. See Bruce Ware et al., “Do relations of authority and submission exist eternally among the Persons of the Godhead?” (Trinity Debates: January 1, 2008, <http://henrycenter.tiu.edu/resource/do-relations-of-authority-and-submission-exist-eternally-among-the-persons-of-the-godhead/>, accessed March 12, 2014). Further on, Yandell argues that the persons of the Trinity do not have to be necessarily different in roles (functions) or any other attribute in order to be distinguished as different persons, since “the fundamental difference could be in the bearers of the properties even if the bearers are identical in properties.” He also argues that, given the uniqueness of God, we need a concept different than the Greek philosophy concept of substance in order to define Him.

⁹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 248. He connects these to the “economy of the Trinity.”

¹⁰Ibid., 254. Grudem clarifies that we “should not think that the personal distinctions are any kind of additional attributes added on to the being of God.” Thus, when it comes to identifying a necessary distinguishing element among the persons of the Trinity, he argues that “the only way it seems possible to do this is to say that the distinction between the persons is not a difference in ‘being’ but a difference in ‘relationships.’” Ibid., 253.

the Father sends, and revealing God to us.” In short, the Father has “the role of commanding” and the son “the role of obeying.”¹¹ Thus, for Grudem, the Father-Son analogy suggests relations of authority and subordination among these divine beings. Although Grudem’s main focus is the Father-Son analogy, he also speaks briefly of the role of the Holy Spirit. About the Holy Spirit he writes:

We may say that the role of the Father in creation and redemption has been to plan and direct and send the Son and Holy Spirit. . . . The father directs and has authority over the son, and the son obeys and is responsive to the directions of the father. The Holy Spirit is obedient to the directives of both the Father and the Son.¹²

In this, Grudem identifies the role of the Holy Spirit by analogy and not by direct reference to specific Bible texts, unlike in his treatment of the Father and Son. He further explains it thus: “If the Son together with the Father sends the Spirit into the world, *by analogy* it would seem appropriate to say that this reflects eternal ordering of their relationships.¹³ He seems to be comfortable with this interpretive procedure, concluding that in their roles “the Father eternally is first, the Son second, and the Holy Spirit third.”¹⁴ Having argued for these Trinitarian roles, Grudem goes on to distinguish them from what he identifies as the ontological Trinity.

Role-Being Dichotomy

Grudem argues that while “the Son and Holy Spirit are equal in deity to God the Father,” they are still “subordinate in their roles”¹⁵ to the Father. The distinction of these concepts—“equal in deity” and “subordinate in roles”—calls for clarification. On one hand, Grudem identifies the Trinity’s divine being, nature or essence, as “ontological equality.”¹⁶ Thus he states, “it may be said that there are no differences in deity, attributes, or essential nature between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each person is fully God and has all the attributes of God.”¹⁷ Yet despite their “ontological equality,” Grudem still considers the roles of each member of the Trinity to be different in terms of subordination. For him, the members of the Trinity have “ontological equality but economic subordination”;

¹¹Ibid., 249.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., 246 (emphasis supplied).

¹⁴Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 214.

¹⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 249.

¹⁶Ibid., 251.

¹⁷Ibid., 250.

they are “equal in being but subordinate in role.”¹⁸ Therefore, Grudem argues that the differences that he attributes to the members of the Trinity are at the level of divine roles of subordination (functions) but not at the level of divine being (ontology).

Eternal Roles of Authority and Subordination

While most evangelical theologians would argue for a temporary or limited subordination of the Son for the purpose of fulfilling the plan of salvation, Grudem believes that Trinitarian roles of authority and subordination “are not temporary”¹⁹ but eternal, and that these govern “the different ways the three persons act as they relate to the world and . . . to each other for all eternity.”²⁰ He explains this in more detail as follows:

If we do not have economic subordination,²¹ then there is no inherent difference in the way the three persons relate to one another, and consequently we do not have the three distinct persons existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for all eternity. For example, if the Son is not eternally subordinate to the Father in role, then the Father is not eternally “Father” and the Son is not eternally “Son.” This would mean that the Trinity has not eternally existed.²²

Thus, Grudem argues that EFS is necessary in order for the very idea of the Trinity to be sustained, maintaining that the distinctions between Father, Son and Holy Spirit “are essential to the very nature of God himself, and they could not be otherwise.”²³

A presupposition undergirding Grudem’s view of EFS is “the immutability of God.”²⁴ In fact, he explicitly argues that eternal relationships of authority and submission within the Trinity can partly be concluded “from the unchangeableness of God.”²⁵ Grudem asserts that, since God is unchangeable, his

¹⁸Ibid., 251.

¹⁹Ibid., 249.

²⁰Ibid., 248.

²¹See footnote 1 of this article.

²²Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 251.

²³Ibid., 250.

²⁴Ibid. A short but informative section on this topic can be found also in Erickson, *Who’s Tampering with the Trinity?*, 46.

²⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 250. See “f. The Importance of God’s Unchangeableness,” *ibid.* 168. He defines the term thus: “We can define the unchangeableness of God as follows: God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations. This attribute of God is also called God’s immutability.” *Ibid.*, 163.

hierarchy in authority cannot change in the past, present or future: “God cannot be other than he is, for he is unchanging.”²⁶ He further explains it thus:

Before the Son came to earth, and even before the world was created, for all eternity the Father has been the Father, the Son has been the Son, and the Holy Spirit has been the Holy Spirit. These relationships are eternal, not something that occurred only in time If God now exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then he has always existed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.²⁷

Therefore, for Grudem, the relations of authority among the members of the Trinity are unchangeable, just as God is unchangeable. According to Grudem, some examples found in Scripture that speak to the unchangeable relationships among the members of the Trinity are the Father’s “initiatory act of choosing us ‘in’ the Son” prior to the foundation of the world (spoken of in Eph 1:3–4) the “foreknowledge of God the Father” (spoken of in 1 Pet 1:2) and that the Father “gave his only Son” and “sent the Son into the world” (spoken of in John 3:16 and Gal 4:4).²⁸ These biblical statements, according to Grudem, are among several that “indicate that there was a Father-Son relationship before Christ came into the world”²⁹ and that “the Son did not become the Son when the Father sent him into the world.”³⁰ Thus, Grudem aims to show how the Father has the highest authority among the Trinity since eternity.

The Trinity and the Human Family

Interestingly, relying mostly on apostolic teachings about male-female relationships, Grudem understands the eternal roles of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to have implications for the roles of men, women, and children in human families.³¹ Specifically, Grudem emphasizes that husbands and wives, like the

²⁶Ibid., 241.

²⁷Ibid., 250.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹See Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, chapter 22, “Man as Male and Female,” and chapter 47, “Church Government.” Apart from his *Systematic Theology*, Grudem has written extensively about roles of subordination within the Trinity in connection with gender roles. His most popular work in this regard is: *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of more than 100 Disputed Questions* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012). See also Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism*; Wayne Grudem, ed., *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002); Wayne Grudem, *Countering the Claims of Evangelical Feminism: Biblical Responses to the Key Questions* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Publishers, 2006); Wayne Grudem, “Foreword,” in Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women In the Church: A Biblical Study On The Role Of Women In The Church*

Trinity, are ontologically equal but have differences in roles: “Just as the Father and Son in the Trinity are equal in deity and equal in importance but different in roles, so the husband and wife in marriage are equal in human personhood and equal in importance but different in roles.”³²

Grudem’s parallel between the Trinity and the human family mainly addresses authority and submission relations between women and men, comparing them with those of the Son and the Father respectively. That is, calling for wives (counterparts of the Son) to be submissive to their husband’s authority (counterparts of the Father). Grudem also compares the role of children in the human family with the submissive role of the Holy Spirit. This is how he explains the whole equation:

The husband’s role is parallel to that of God the Father and the wife’s role is parallel to that of God the Son. Moreover, just as Father and Son are equal in deity and importance and personhood, so the husband and wife are equal in humanity and importance and personhood. And, although it is not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, the gift of children within marriage, coming from both the father and the mother, and subject to the authority of both father and mother, is analogous to the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Father and Son in the Trinity.³³

Thus, in the same way that members of the Trinity have equality in being but difference in roles, so do men, women, and children have equality in being but differing roles in the family.

Response to Criticism on Subordinationism

Lastly, in responding to criticism to his EFS views, Grudem has argued that it would be erroneous to call him a *subordinationist*.³⁴ Subordinationism, he says, refers to a heretical concept that entails “the Son being inferior or ‘subordinate’ *in being* to God the Father.”³⁵ Appealing to his dichotomous view on eternal roles (function) and divine being (ontology), he states that “the heresy of subordinationism . . . should be clearly distinguished from the orthodox doctrine that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in *role or function*.”³⁶ Having

(Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1987). Other similar resources can be found on his webpage www.waynegrudem.com.

³²Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 207.

³³Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 257.

³⁴Ibid., 243–245.

³⁵Ibid., 244 (emphasis supplied).

³⁶Ibid., 244 n. 27 (emphasis supplied).

looked at Grudem's EFS,³⁷ let us briefly explore how Adventist theologians have related to this view.

³⁷At the Evangelical Theological Society held in San Antonio, TX on November 15, 2016, Wayne Grudem presented "Why a Denial of the Son's Eternal Submission Threatens Both the Trinity and the Bible" (<http://www.waynegrudem.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ETS-Presentation-on-Trinity-11-15-16.pdf>), accessed October 18, 2018. This presentation came partly as a response to evangelicals who accused Grudem of unorthodoxy given his views on EFS. See Grudem's account of it in "Whose Position on the Trinity is Really New?" (<https://cbmw.org/public-square/whose-position-on-the-trinity-is-really-new/>), accessed October 18, 2018. In his presentation at the Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting, Grudem made an effort to demonstrate that his position is orthodox, partly by emphasizing how his views on EFS rely on creedal statements. He had, to an extent, referred to creedal statements in the past (see, for instance, Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 251), but his current view includes some changes in his argumentation, specifically in how he now understands the concept of the eternal generation of the Son as evidence for the Son's "eternal submission." (Grudem, "Why a Denial of the Son's Eternal Submission Threatens Both the Trinity and the Bible," 1). In his ETS presentation, he claimed: "I am now willing to affirm the 'eternal generation of the Son,' based on John 1:14, 18, etc., as something mysterious, not implying creation of the Son ('begotten not made'), and somehow analogous to a human father-son relationship." Further, he said that while he used to understand 'monogenēs' to mean "unique, one of a kind," he is now convinced that the term is better translated as "only begotten" (Grudem, "Why a Denial of the Son's Eternal Submission Threatens Both the Trinity and the Bible," 1). From this he concluded that "if monogenēs means 'only begotten' then there is some kind of eternal ordering of subsistence that makes auth/submission appropriate." This is different from his previously published position since he is now considering whether or not eternal submission is actually "necessary to the nature of God," and he goes as far as claiming that "the economic Trinity reveals the ontological Trinity." This argument is nuanced by his clarification that "relationships between three Persons in eternity" are "largely a matter of deep mystery" (Grudem, "Why a Denial of the Son's Eternal Submission Threatens Both the Trinity and the Bible," 3). Given his appeal to the element of mystery, it is unclear whether or not he believes that submission within the Trinity is in being (ontological) and not just in role (functional). However, that is certainly what his presentation seems to point to. Yet, beyond his ETS presentation outline, there is no other available publication that elaborates on the matter in enough detail that allows readers to make any definitive claims. Therefore, this article will not incorporate these new developments beyond this brief footnote provided for the benefit of the reader. Ultimately, these recent developments should not affect the analysis of Grudem's previously published views as they relate to Seventh-day Adventism for the purposes of this article.

*Adventist Relationship to Grudem's EFS*³⁸

Grudem's EFS view has incited plentiful discussion in the evangelical world at large,³⁹ both in academic and non-academic circles, and Adventism has not been an exception. Although interaction with Grudem's work within Adventism has tended to focus on gender issues related to ordination to the pastoral ministry,⁴⁰ some Adventist thinkers have interacted more directly with his EFS views in respect to the doctrine of the Trinity in particular. In this regard, Adventist sympathies to EFS seem to be somewhat divided, with a minority of Adventist thinkers embracing Grudem's EFS, or a nuanced version of it, and a majority of Adventist thinkers rejecting it.⁴¹ Let us now turn to the main statements or arguments of Adventist thinkers as they agree or disagree with EFS.

³⁸Because this is an ongoing discussion, what follows might not be a complete survey on the topic. Yet, I believe the sources that I will provide here are representative of the arguments involved in the discussion and therefore can be useful in showing the relationship of Adventist thinkers to Grudem's EFS views. For a brief but informative survey on the topic of the Trinity in general within Adventism, see Denis Fortin, "God, the Trinity, and Adventism: An Introduction to the Issues," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17, no. 1 (2006): 4–10; and Merlin D. Burt, "History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on the Trinity," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17, no. 1 (2006): 125–139. For a more recent overview and discussion on issues specifically related to EFS from an Adventist perspective see Matthew L. Tinkham, Jr., "Neo-subordinationism: The Alien Argumentation in the Gender Debate," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 55, no. 2 (2017): 237–290.

³⁹See n. 2 of this article.

⁴⁰See 2013–14 General Conference Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC) resources at <https://www.adventistarchives.org/gc-tosc>. Examples of Adventist authors of that study committee who sympathetically quote Grudem in regards to gender issues and distinction of ontology and roles while not specifically connecting the arguments to the Trinity are: Laurel Damsteegt, "Women of the Old Testament: Women of Influence" (Theology of Ordination Committee, July 2013), and Paul S. Ratsara and Daniel K. Bediako, "Man and Woman in Genesis 1-3: Ontological Equality and Role Differentiation" (Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division and Valley View University, Ghana respectively, Theology of Ordination Study Committee, July 23, 2013). An earlier reference is Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things: A Response To Women In Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer, (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventists Affirm, 2000), as well as Bacchiocchi, *Women In the Church*, which features a foreword by Grudem himself.

⁴¹For now, my main basis for stating this is that official statements of beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church on the Trinity do not presently feature EFS in any prominent role nor in a favorable light. See, for example, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: An Exposition of the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, 2nd ed. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2005). Thus, for the moment, I stand in affirming that EFS is not a majority view within Adventism.

Embrace of EFS

First, let us survey some representative examples of Adventist thinkers who are sympathetic to EFS. In “Biblical Hermeneutics and Headship in First Corinthians,”⁴² Edwin Reynolds, religion professor at Southern Adventist University, states that it is “God the Father, from whom derives all properly constituted and delegated authority.”⁴³ He argues that relations of authority and submission “between Christ and His Father” do “extend from eternity past to eternity future” and that these are not “in conflict with full ontological equality.”⁴⁴ According to Reynolds, role relationships among the members of the Trinity are not in conflict with ontological equality because the eternal headship of the Father and eternal submission of the Son are both “grounded in differences in function rather than in essence.”⁴⁵

Stephen P. Bohr, evangelist and president of the evangelism ministry *Secrets Unsealed*, offers a similar argument in “Issues Relating to the Ordination of Women with Special Emphasis on 1 Peter 2:9, 10 and Galatians 3:28.”⁴⁶ In a section entitled “The Godhead Model,” Bohr argues that “the Father and the Son are one and ontologically equal and yet have different roles, with the Son being subject to His Father’s authority.” Although he does not in this paper explicitly identify the biblical texts that undergird his view, Bohr believes that “there is significant evidence in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy that Jesus has been, is now, and will ever be equal to His Father. And yet there is also persuasive evidence that Jesus has been, is now, and will be subject to His Father’s authority.”⁴⁷

There are a few other thinkers who could be considered to hold a nuanced version of EFS. John W. Peters, a minister in the Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, is one such example. In his earlier statements on the subject of subordination (c. 2014), Peters language sounds very similar to Grudem’s. For example, in “Restoration of the Image of God: Headship and Submission,”⁴⁸ Peters writes:

⁴²Edwin Reynolds, “Biblical Hermeneutics and Headship in First Corinthians” (Theology of Ordination Committee, July, 2013).

⁴³*Ibid.*, 44.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 23.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 44.

⁴⁶Stephen P. Bohr, “Issues Relating to the Ordination of Women with Special Emphasis on 1 Peter 2:9, 10 and Galatians 3:28” (Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Senior Pastor Fresno Central Church, President *Secrets Unsealed*, July 23, 2013).

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 34–35.

⁴⁸John W. Peters, “Restoration of the Image of God: Headship and Submission” (Pennsylvania Conference Theology of Ordination Study Committee, January, 2014).

In eternity past, prior to the foundation of the world, the Son was subject to the Father; in the Creation the Son was subject to the Father; following the incarnation the Son was subject to the Father; from His ascension, the Son has been subject to the Father, sitting at His right hand; today, as He intercedes for us, the Son is subject to the Father; and when death is destroyed, the Son will be eternally subject to the Father. . . . The principle of headship/submission is manifested also in the relation of the Holy Spirit with the Son and the Father. The Son is subject to the Father and the Holy Spirit is subject to the Son.⁴⁹

Peters continues to argue that “since God never changes,”⁵⁰ these “authority-obedience” roles among the members of the Trinity are “fixed,” “mandatory,” and exist “throughout eternity”⁵¹ (that is, “eternity past” and “eternity future”⁵²). Like Grudem, Peters argues for this eternal “authority-obedience relationship,” while also affirming the “equality of being” of the members of the Trinity.⁵³ However, Peters’ statements on the topic have evolved slightly over time. In an undated open letter that appeared at some point after 2014,⁵⁴ Peters appears to modify his claims about the past eternity of the Son’s subordination, allowing that the Son may have become subordinate to the Father at “some point in eternity past, prior to the creation of the universe.” But in spite of these clarifications, Peters still seems to subscribe to some mode of EFS in that he believes the subordination of the Son has existed since prior to the creation of the universe, and in that he affirms an indefinite future eternal subordination. In the same open letter, Peters writes that since “ontological equality (equality of

⁴⁹Ibid., 56–57.

⁵⁰Ibid., 57.

⁵¹Ibid., 53–54, 57.

⁵²Ibid., 55.

⁵³Ibid., 54. See details in sections entitled “God is the Head of Christ—Eternity Past” and “God is the Head of Christ—Eternity Future” (55). Peters also notes: “Although it might be assumed that the Son took on the ‘role of Son’ at the incarnation or at some point in eternity past . . . the distinction in names, ‘Father’ and ‘Son,’ has always existed, implying role differentiation. Christ has always been the eternal, self-existent Son” (52). He also states: “Christ never has changed His position, or role, or office in relation to the Father. The term “role” underscores the fact that it is a relationship willingly entered into by the Son from before the beginning of creation with respect to the Father, and thus it is not permanent in the sense of somehow being inherent in the Son’s being” (53).

⁵⁴John W. Peters, “Response to Rodríguez’s Critique on Headship,” <http://www.womenordination.com/free-resources/articles-and-documents/id/1772/response-to-rodriguez-s-critique-on-headship-by-john-w-peters#sthash.03Io9UUW.dpuf>, accessed October, 2016. Peters is responding to Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, “Evaluation of the Arguments Used by Those Who Oppose the Ordination of Women to the Ministry” (Theology of Ordination Study Committee, January, 2014).

being) and functional submission . . . constitutes the image of God from the standpoint of the created universe,” it follows that “the Son will continue in that functional role of submission into the indefinite eternity future.” Ultimately, his letter appeals to mystery, stating that “arguing about the eternal nature of the Trinity is fruitless, since the nature of the infinite God is beyond our comprehension and forever will be.”⁵⁵

Similarly, in “Adam, Where Are You? On Gender Relations,”⁵⁶ Ingo Sorke, who, at the time of writing that paper, was theology professor at Southwestern Adventist University, argues that “the Godhead functions in a (ontological) personal equality” that is also a “hierarchical, functional subordination” in which “the Son submits to the Father, the Holy Spirit submits to the Son.”⁵⁷ In terms of the duration of this hierarchical, functional subordination, he maintains that “whether this subordination is eternal or just incarnational is immaterial.”⁵⁸ Sorke’s reasoning gives the impression that he is not sure whether EFS is the correct view, and that he does not think it is a question of significance, while at the same time leaving the door open to the possibility of eternal submission.

Although somewhat brief, the examples referred in this section could serve as representative of Adventist thinkers who seem to argue for the validity of Grudem’s EFS views, although perhaps in nuanced form.

Rejection of EFS

I will now present some representative examples of Adventist thinkers who reject EFS. In *The Trinity: Understanding God's Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships*, co-authors Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John W. Reeve, all former or current professors at Andrews University, provide a straightforward statement in regards to EFS. They write:

We find no convincing biblical evidence that Christ’s subordination has been for all eternity. His subordination was only temporary. Furthermore, the scriptural evidence is that the subordination of Christ to the Father and the Holy Spirit to both the Father and the Son is merely for the practical purposes of creation and redemption among those otherwise equal in their shared divine nature.⁵⁹

⁵⁵Peters, “Response to Rodriguez.”

⁵⁶Ingo Sorke, “Adam, Where Are You? On Gender Relations” (Joshua, TX, Theology of Ordination Committee, July, 2013).

⁵⁷Ibid., 24. According to Sorke, this refers to “functional subordination rather than ontological denigration.”

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹ Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John W. Reeve, *The Trinity: Understanding God's Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 275–277. Although in this work there is the concession that “quite possibly the fact

Norman R. Gulley, retired research professor of systematic theology at Southern Adventist University, also addresses the matter in his *Systematic Theology: God As Trinity*.⁶⁰ Gulley maintains that issues related to EFS “would have never been raised if theologians had rejected the Greek view that God is timeless.”⁶¹ The view that God is timeless does not allow for the possibility of change within the persons of the Trinity, but according to Gulley, this view must be rejected on the grounds that the Bible teaches that there is indeed change within the Trinity. In this regard, he argues that “the incarnation brought a change to the second Person of the Godhead,” but that “any attempt to read this incarnational reality into time before His incarnation isn’t logical.” Gulley also questions EFS’ usage of the Father-Son analogy in order to establish the ontology of the persons. In this regard he states that the “Father-Son relationship” is not “an actual ontological reality, for even Christ is addressed as the “Everlasting Father” (Isa 9:6b).” He argues as well that “the fact that Scripture says that the Father gave his Son in the incarnation . . . has no relevance to the two beings related as Father and Son from eternity.”⁶² Additionally, Gulley critiques EFS’ selection of authority as the primary element to be taken into account in Trinitarian relations, and instead calls for a prioritizing of “eternal reciprocal love” as the main aspect.⁶³

In a similar fashion, Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, retired director of the Biblical Research Institute, rejects EFS. In “Evaluation of the Arguments Used by Those Opposing the Ordination of Women to the Ministry,”⁶⁴ Rodríguez states that EFS

of Christ’s subordination to the leadership of the Father may suggest some clues about leadership roles in the church and the family,” they also suggest “that the Trinity provides no compelling clues, one way or another, when it comes to the issue of what sort of leadership roles each gender should receive in the church. We must decide the issue on other biblical principles.” Whidden, Moon, and Reeve, *The Trinity*, 244.

⁶⁰Norman Gulley, *Systematic Theology: God as Trinity*, vol. 2 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2011).

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 130.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 122. Gulley adds, “Why would this subordination of function be eternal when the plan of salvation, for which it is needed, is but a mere moment in future endless eternity?”

⁶³*Ibid.*, 142 n. 3. Gulley further develops this point as follows: “Grudem focuses on the way the Persons of the Trinity relate to each other through different roles. By contrast, I believe that the Persons of the Trinity relate to each other through their eternal reciprocal love in their inner history. There is a big difference between these two views of the Trinity. The latter view does not need the eternal subordination in which the Father has commanding authority over the Son and Spirit. Such a hierarchical relationship seems to exclude the reciprocal love relations they have with each other. Granted there was a temporary role that each Person of the Trinity took, but this came out of the context of their unchanging mutual love.” Gulley, *Systematic Theology*, 2:142.

⁶⁴Rodríguez, “Evaluation of the Arguments.”

“redefines the Biblical doctrine of God”⁶⁵ in the sense that, among other things, it introduces a false dichotomy between nature and function (role and being).⁶⁶ He rejects this distinction because:

the concept of an eternal headship within the Godhead is incompatible with the distinction between equality of nature and functional differentiation within the Trinity. If the Son had been eternally under subjection to the Father, then this is what defined Him; this is who He is. . . . He would have always existed in subordination to the Father. . . . There is no dichotomy here. . . . An eternal submission is not something a person does but the eternal state of that person. Therefore submission, function, and being cannot be separated from each other.⁶⁷

Rodríguez also considers the implications of EFS for the atonement and its portrayal of God’s self-sacrificing love, specifically in relation to the sacrifice of the Son.⁶⁸ He believes that the relationship that exists among the members of the Trinity is “an eternal, loving relationship,” not an eternal relationship of authority and submission,⁶⁹ and that “at the core of the atonement is the love of God manifested in self-sacrificing and disinterested divine salvific actions toward sinners.”⁷⁰ Proponents of EFS might argue that this submission was eternally voluntary, which would seemingly allow for divine self-sacrificing love in freedom, but Rodríguez sees such an argument as “a logical inconsistency,” given that for him “‘voluntary’ means that up to a particular moment in eternity the Son was not under submission to the Father.” In other words, he claims that “the eternal headship of the Father could imply that the sacrifice of the Son was the result of an order given by the Father to Him to save us; the assignment of a function.” Thus he concludes that a voluntary subordination “could not have been eternal” and thus “headship within the Godhead cannot be eternal.”⁷¹ Ultimately, Rodríguez explicitly states that proponents of EFS engage in “serious deviation from Adventist theology and doctrine” and that this theological trend presents “serious implications . . . for our body of beliefs.”⁷²

⁶⁵Ibid., 10.

⁶⁶See Rodríguez, “Evaluation of the Arguments,” 11.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., 11–12. See also Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, “A Question of Sonship,” *Biblical Research Institute* (<https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/godgodhead-jesus-christ/question-sonship>), accessed October, 2016.

⁶⁹Rodríguez, “A Question of Sonship.”

⁷⁰Rodríguez, “Evaluation of the Arguments,” 11–12.

⁷¹Ibid., 12.

⁷²Ibid., 10.

Lastly, in “God in Three Persons: Blessed Trinity,”⁷³ Jo Ann Davidson, professor of systematic theology at Andrews University, states that “the three divine persons are equal but not identical,” allowing for the possibility of distinction among them.⁷⁴ Yet she denies that references in the Bible to the Trinitarian names “Father” and “Son” imply any eternal roles of subordination. She writes: “there is no hierarchy or subordination suggested by an unchangeable order in the presentation of their names.”⁷⁵

Summary and Conclusions

As one of the main contemporary proponents of EFS, Wayne Grudem argues that eternal roles of authority and subordination are necessary for the Trinity to exist as such. Although he sees these roles as eternal and necessary, Grudem distinguishes these functional roles from the Trinity’s equality in being (ontology), thus advocating for an eternal role-being dichotomy. Grudem places the Father as the highest authority, with the Son being submissive to the Father and the Holy Spirit being submissive to both the Father and the Son. He also adds the particularity that the relationships between persons of the Trinity have implications for members of human families, specifically in the roles that husbands and wives should play with respect to one another. Grudem’s understanding of the immutability of God is foundational to his EFS view, which he considers orthodox.

Adventist thinkers have engaged directly or indirectly with Grudem’s views of EFS. Some embrace Grudem’s perspective, at least in its broad outlines. They generally accept Grudem’s views of the eternal nature of roles of authority and subordination as well as his perspective on the differentiation between eternal roles and equality in being (ontology). Some others hold to nuanced versions of these views or at least leave the door open to them. On the other hand, those Adventist thinkers who reject Grudem’s EFS views deny the eternal nature of relations of authority and subordination among the members of the Trinity, and they question the validity of the eternal role-being dichotomous thinking. Furthermore, instead of interpreting the Father-Son analogy with a focus on relations of authority and subordination, they focus on eternal loving relationships. Thus, Adventists thinkers featured in this paper, all influential in their own sphere, represent two different lines of thought present in Adventism.

⁷³JoAnn Davidson, “God in Three Persons: Blessed Trinity,” 2013 (<https://www.adventist.org/en/beliefs/god/trinity/article/go/-/god-in-three-persons/>), accessed October, 2018. This is one of two articles that accompanies the Fundamental Doctrine of the Trinity on JoAnn Davidson, “God in Three Persons: Blessed Trinity,” *Seventh-day Adventist Church*, 2013 (www.adventist.org), accessed October, 2018.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

This certainly presents Adventism with a call to resolution in regards to such a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith.

In closing, understanding Grudem's EFS view has served two purposes: first, that of better understanding a relevant trend within Evangelicalism, and second, that of facilitating ideas and context that are helpful in understanding the relationship of Adventist thinkers to views such as his.

ELLEN G. WHITE AND SUBORDINATION WITHIN THE TRINITY

NATHANIEL GIBBS
PhD Student in Systematic Theology
gibbsn@andrews.edu

Abstract

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been engaged in a debate about the role of women in ministry, especially as it pertains to ordination. Some involved in this debate have used the doctrine of the Trinity to support their understanding of the different gender roles. In particular, opponents of women's ordination frequently argue that Jesus was subordinate to the Father, and that the relationship between Jesus and the Father serves as a model of the subordination of women to men. Many who make this argument have turned to the writings of Ellen White and have attempted to support their view of subordination within the Trinity from her writings. This paper argues, however, that Ellen White understood her role as being to confirm doctrines that have been established through study of the Bible—meaning that subordination within the Trinity, if it exists, should be established from the Bible, not White's writings. Secondly, this paper argues that White herself did not actually hold a subordinationist view. Her earlier statements on the relation of Christ to the Father are ambiguous. But after Adventist believers came to embrace the doctrine of the Trinity in the 1890s, Ellen White became more explicit on the topic, and she began to stress the equality of the divine persons rather than hierarchy within the Trinity. In sum, a one-way subordination cannot be proven in the writings of Ellen White and therefore such statements should not be used as confirmatory evidence of that position.

Keywords: Trinity, subordinationism, equalitarianism, Ellen White, ordination, Christology.

Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is currently engaged in a debate about the role of women in ministry, especially as it pertains to ordination. While engaging in discussion about this debate, I have encountered some who have used the doctrine of the Trinity to support their understanding of the different roles in gender. Specifically, the eternal subordination of Jesus to the Father is put forward as a model of the subordination of women to men. Many of those who hold to the eternal subordination of Jesus, and who use this subordination to substantiate their view on how ministry should be practiced, have turned to the writings of

Ellen White and have attempted to prove a subordination within the Trinity with her writings. But did Ellen White actually believe in subordination within the Trinity?

Before getting into Ellen White and whether she supports subordinationism, some background: There are two views among scholars regarding the nature of the relationships between members of the Trinity. While there is general agreement that Jesus existed in a position of subordination to the Father at least for some period of time, the disagreement centers on whether this submission has existed from eternity or was merely temporary. Wayne Grudem, a proponent of the former view notes that the terminology that he uses to state his position on subordinationism of the Trinity is “eternal submission of the Son,” “eternal authority of the Father,” or “eternal subordination of the Son to the Father.”¹ Those who hold this position claim that they do not believe in an ontological subordinationism, but rather a functional one; not by nature but by role. Consequently, this allows them to not view themselves as embracing the ancient heresies of Arianism.²

The other position, which is called equalitarianism, holds the view that the submission of the Son was only temporary. The submission of the Son occurred only because He was on a special mission to save humanity by becoming incarnate.³ Those who take this position sometimes suggest that the subordinationist position represents a version of the ancient heresy of Arianism.⁴ Others such as D. Glenn Butner Jr. claim that subordinationism is more a problem of Tritheism rather than Arianism because it means that Jesus and the Father have two different wills.⁵ Both Arianism and Tritheism have serious problems when taking everything into consideration that Scripture explains on the subject of the relationship between the Father and the Son.

Due to the limited scope of this paper, the arguments for or the accusations against subordinationism will not be addressed biblically, theologically, or logically.

¹Wayne Grudem, “Biblical Evidence for the Eternal Submission of the Son to the Father,” in *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives on the Equality of God the Father and God the Son*, eds. Dennis W. Jowers and H. Wayne House (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 224.

²Arianism suggests that Jesus was created by God, has no divine nature, and has an origin in time. “Son of God” is merely a special title that was awarded to him as the highest of all creatures.

³Millard J. Erickson, *Who’s Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2009), 55, 80–81.

⁴Kevin Giles, “Defining the Error Called Subordinationism,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (2015): 208, 220–4.

⁵D. Glenn Butner Jr., “Eternal Functional Subordination and the Problem of the Divine Will,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 58, no. 1 (2015): 132–8, 149.

There have already been other analyses addressing this issue.⁶ The purpose of this paper is to examine whether or not Ellen White supported subordinationism within the Trinity in her writings, particularly in her book *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1. To that end, this analysis will first explain two methodological principles for reading Ellen White. The first methodological principle is that Ellen White's role was primarily to confirm doctrine (not establish it), and the second principle is that she developed her thought over time by continued Bible study and revelation. After discussing these methodological principles, we will then move to examining two specific sections of *Spiritual Gifts* that are particularly insightful for understanding Ellen White's views of subordination—namely, her discussion of the fall of Satan, and her discussion of the planning of salvation.

Confirmation of Doctrine

The first methodological principle to be explained is that White's role, historically, was to confirm doctrines already established from the Bible. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has always taken the stand that the Bible is to be its only creed. Therefore, any doctrinal statements of the church need to come from the Bible alone.⁷ All of the key doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist church were accepted by Bible study first, and Ellen White's visions were used only to confirm and clarify the doctrines.⁸ In fact, when describing how early Adventist believers established the denomination's doctrines in the mid and late 1840s, Ellen White minimized her own role, testifying that "during this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life."⁹ According to this testimony, she was not able to contribute to the Bible studies that were formational for early Seventh-day Adventist theology.¹⁰

⁶Erickson, *Who's Tampering with the Trinity?*; Matthew L. Tinkham Jr., "Neo-Subordinationism: The Alien Argumentation in the Gender Debate," *Andrens University Seminary Studies* 55, no. 2 (2017): 237–90.

⁷General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010), 156.

⁸Denis Fortin, "Ellen White and the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines," in *Understanding Ellen White: The Life and Work of the Most Influential Voice in Adventist History*, ed. Merlin D. Burt (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015), 109–13.

⁹Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 207.

¹⁰It appears God providentially guided the church this way in order to provide the foundation of the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be based on the Bible and not on the writings of Ellen G. White.

During these Bible studies, sometimes the early Adventist believers would be stymied in their ability to progress forward. It was then that White says the following: “I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passage we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. Thus, light was given that helped us understand the scriptures.”¹¹ Therefore, it was only after thoroughly examining the Scriptures that the gift of prophecy would be given to help the early Adventist believers progress in their Bible study. White was very clear about the purpose of her writings. She said,

The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man’s duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God’s word; yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the *Testimonies* simplified the great truths already given and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse.¹²

Ellen White clearly thought that her writings were not to be giving new light. They were only clarifying principles already contained in the Bible. That is why God only gave her visions after the Bible was thoroughly examined. He wanted the Seventh-day Adventist church to have its doctrines based solely on the Bible.

The development of Adventist doctrine on the Trinity followed the same pattern established with respect to previous doctrine: Adventist believers first came to belief in the Trinity following extensive Bible study, and then Ellen White confirmed the doctrine. Many of the early pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist church were Arian or semi-Arian. Joseph Bates and James White brought semi-Arianism with them from their Christian Connexion past.¹³ This belief continued to be the dominant one until the General Conference of 1888.¹⁴ After the 1888 conference, which had taken a clear stand in favor of righteousness by faith, the

¹¹Ibid., 206–207.

¹²Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 605.

¹³Unlike Arianism, Semi-Arianism suggests that Jesus is a divine rather than a created being. He emanated or came forth from God at some point in the eternal past. Special emphasis is laid on his begottenness so that he has all the divine attributes of the Father. The title “Son of God” is not understood as a mere title or linked to the incarnation but it is seen as a reference to the Son’s origin in his preexistence. Unlike the eternal generation of the Son in the classical doctrine of the Trinity, Semi-Arians believe that origin to have occurred in time, not in timelessness / the eternal present. Besides the denial of a coeternity between the Father and the Son, Semi-Arians generally affirm a one-sided hierarchical relationship between the Father and the Son.

¹⁴Jerry Moon, “The Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 1: Historical Overview,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 41, no. 1 (2003): 114.

denomination began to place a new emphasis on the centrality of Christ. W. W. Prescott led the way in this change. While in Australia, he started to study more fully about who Jesus Christ is. Gilbert M. Valentine suggests that it was after Prescott shared his new insights with ministers that the doctrine of the Trinity came to be taught more openly in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹⁵

Ellen White's confirmation of the doctrine of the Trinity came in the form of her 1898 book, *Desire of Ages*. This book, written after the studies of W. W. Prescott, is the key place where Ellen White makes explicit statements about the Trinity. There are no previous places in her writings where the Trinity, as the Seventh-day Adventist church understands it today, is denounced as being wrong. However, it was only after serious Bible study from other church leaders that God used Ellen White to confirm that in Jesus is "life, original, unborrowed, underived," and that He is equal to the "I Am."¹⁶ Not only did she speak of Jesus as equal in being to Father, but in the same pages of *The Desire of Ages*, she also stated that the Holy Spirit is the "third person of the Godhead."¹⁷ Here, Ellen White began to teach the concept of the Trinity explicitly. Once again, she confirmed that theological concept after it had been thoroughly studied in the Bible by others.

This is important because, in the same way White had been used in the past to confirm doctrine, she was also used in this way with regard to the Trinity. This means that her statements about the Trinity were unclear before the 1890s. Not that there were no statements about the Trinity, but they were not explicitly definitive. However, it should be clearly noted that her statements about the Trinity did not teach an openly Arian position (even though that was the dominant teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist church at that time).¹⁸ This is significant because some try to use these more ambiguous statements to push their theological position on the Trinity. As it will be demonstrated, these earlier statements are ambiguous because the church had not thoroughly studied the meaning of the Trinity as a doctrine from the Bible.

After White confirmed the Trinity doctrine, it still took several decades for that doctrine to receive official acceptance. The earliest inclusion of the trinity as a Seventh-day Adventist fundamental belief came in 1913, though it was not formally accepted at that time by the General Conference.¹⁹ It was again listed as a

¹⁵Gilbert M. Valentine, "Learning and Unlearning: A Context for Important Developments in the Seventh-day Adventist Understanding of the Trinity, 1888-1898," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 55, no. 2 (2017): 213–36.

¹⁶Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1940), 24, 530.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 671.

¹⁸Moon, "The Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 1," 114.

¹⁹[F. M. Wilcox], "The Message for Today," *Review and Herald*, October 9, 1913, 21.

belief in 1931 in the *SDA Year Book*.²⁰ But a statement of Trinitarian belief was not officially voted by the denomination until the General Conference session of 1946.²¹ Jerry Moon states that this is “the first official endorsement of a trinitarian view by the church.”²² On that account, Ellen White’s writings confirmed the doctrine in the 1890s. However, not until 1946 was there an official acceptance of the Trinitarian view as voted by a General Conference session. The statement that was made in the 1980 General Conference session was just a revision of the 1946 statement.²³

Growth in Understanding

The first methodological principle—that Ellen White was a confirmer rather than an originator of doctrine—has been discussed; now we will examine the other principle, which is that Ellen White’s thought developed over time and that she grew in her own understanding of Scripture.²⁴

The idea of prophets growing in their understanding of divine revelation is not a new one. Moses grew in his understanding of administration as he faced challenges in leading Israel after leaving Egypt. Daniel himself did not understand one of his own visions. Jonah was rebellious against a vision. Nathan needed to be corrected. Peter was rebuked by Paul, even after receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Therefore, it should not be a big surprise that Ellen White also grew in her understanding of Scripture, theology, and mission even while receiving visions.

It is a popular opinion to believe that the older the vision, the more accurate it has to be.²⁵ First, if that were true, why would Ellen White continue to receive visions and dreams all of her life?²⁶ If the early visions were the only ones that were needed, then why did God give her new visions? Also, there were occasions

²⁰H. E. Rogers, comp., *1931 Year Book of Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1931), 377.

²¹L. K. Dickson, J. I. Robison, and T. J. Michael, “Proceedings of the General Conference: Fifteenth Meeting,” *Review and Herald*, June 14, 1946, 197.

²²Moon, “The Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 1,” 122.

²³*Ibid.*, 122–5.

²⁴Alberto R. Timm, “Humanity of the Prophets,” in Burt, *Understanding Ellen White*, 98–100.

²⁵This does not mean that the older visions were not correct but that newer revelation is more extensive, provides more insight, and gives a fuller picture. It also should be stated that the newer the vision, the more accurate it is.

²⁶Timm, “Humanity of the Prophets,” 101–3.

when a first vision on a given topic was misinterpreted or misunderstood.²⁷ This was what happened with a vision about the Sabbath in 1847.²⁸ Ellen White and Joseph Bates wrongly understood that the vision was teaching that the Sabbath should be kept from 6 p.m. on Friday to 6 p.m. on Saturday. After J. N. Andrews studied the matter in the Bible in 1855, he was able to show clearly that the Sabbath should be kept from sundown to sundown. Everyone accepted the new position, except for two people—Joseph Bates and Ellen White. It was not until three days after Andrews' presentation of his findings that Ellen White received a vision confirming that the study of Andrews was correct. She and Joseph Bates were wrong in their understanding of the first vision. This wrong teaching of the time of the Sabbath had by this point influenced Adventist practice for about nine years.²⁹

This clearly shows that it is an inadequate position to teach that the early writings of Ellen White are purer or that the early understanding of the Seventh-day Church is more correct. The church would need to return to keeping the Sabbath from 6 p.m. to 6 p.m. if that were so. Therefore, we must compare all that Ellen White has to say on a subject and not just take her earliest statements as if they eclipse the later ones.³⁰ In view of this, it is actually better to read how a position developed in her writings in chronological order to see if or how she corrected or clarified a doctrine.

Now when it comes to the doctrine of the Trinity, the same can be said. It is not her earliest statements that are the clearest. It is actually the later ones. This is because it was not until the 1890s where some of the scholars of the church were led to study out the Trinity.³¹ Therefore, it was not until the 1890s and later that Ellen White had her clearest insights about the Trinity to confirm what had been clarified from study of the Bible. One must also be careful with the earlier statements, not because they are wrong, but because they are obscure and thus can easily be misinterpreted with one's own theological position. One needs to look at the development of her statements on the Trinity to see her trajectory as she grew in understanding, as truth was revealed to her, to see if she indeed held to a subordinationist view of the Trinity.

²⁷Herbert Douglass, "Ellen White as God's Spokesperson," in Burt, *Understanding Ellen White*, 88–90.

²⁸This does not mean that she was wrong with her Trinitarian statements nor that she had an incorrect view of the Trinity. However, it needs to be noted in a few cases that she has been corrected, in a subsequent vision, about misunderstanding a vision. This piece of evidence is being used to debunk the idea that older equates with a higher quality of revelation and inspiration.

²⁹Douglass, "Ellen White as God's Spokesperson," 88–90.

³⁰George R. Knight, "How to Read Ellen White's Writings," in Burt, *Understanding Ellen White*, 72–73.

³¹Valentine, "Learning and Unlearning," 213–36.

The Fall of Satan and Subordination

Proponents of subordination within the Trinity frequently appeal to Ellen White's description of the fall of Satan in *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, published in 1858. There White says the following:

The Lord has shown me that Satan was once an honored angel in heaven, next to Jesus Christ. His countenance was mild, expressive of happiness like the other angels. His forehead was high and broad, and showed great intelligence. His form was perfect. He had a noble, majestic bearing. And I saw that when God said to his Son, Let us make man in our image, Satan was jealous of Jesus. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man. He was filled with envy, jealousy and hatred. He wished to be the highest in heaven, next to God, and receive the highest honors. Until this time all heaven was in order, harmony and perfect subjection to the government of God.³²

White says Satan was an angel next in position to Jesus. But Satan was jealous, and he desired to be the highest in all of heaven, next to God Himself. What is assumed in this quote is a chain of positions that proceeds as follows: The Father, then Jesus, then Lucifer. However, Satan's perspective is that being next to Jesus in position was not satisfactory enough. He desired to vault over Jesus to be next to God. Satan's jealous perspective does not necessarily warrant Jesus being next in position to the Father, although from the isolated statement above such a reading is possible. In the next paragraph, White continues explaining what happened during the fall of Satan by stating:

It was the highest sin to rebel against the order and will of God. All heaven seemed in commotion. The angels were marshaled in companies with a commanding angel at their head. All the angels were astir. Satan was insinuating against the government of God, ambitious to exalt himself, and unwilling to submit to the authority of Jesus. Some of the angels sympathized with Satan in his rebellion, and others strongly contended for the honor and wisdom of God in giving authority to his Son. And there was contention with the angels. Satan and his affected ones, who were striving to reform the government of God, wished to look into his unsearchable wisdom to ascertain his purpose in exalting Jesus, and endowing him with such unlimited power and command. They rebelled against the authority of the Son of God, and all the angels were summoned to appear before the Father, to have their cases decided. And it was decided that Satan should be expelled from heaven, and that the angels, all who joined with Satan in the rebellion, should be turned out with him. Then there was war in heaven. Angels were engaged in the battle; Satan wished to conquer the Son of God, and those who were submissive to his will. But the good and true angels prevailed, and Satan, with his followers, was driven from heaven.³³

³²Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (Battle Creek, MI: James White, 1858), 17–18.

³³Ibid.

White makes two imprecise statements in this quote: that God gave authority to Jesus, and God exalted Jesus by endowing Him with unlimited power and command. What makes the previous statements indefinite are their lack of mentioning why and when this bestowal of authority, power, and command took place. Basically, there is insufficient context to determine exactly what Ellen White meant by these statements. More information is needed in order to decipher the relationship between the Father and the Son from the passage about the fall of Satan as found in *Spiritual Gifts*.

Therefore, the problem with this account in *Spiritual Gifts*, is that it is brief and ambiguous. Because of its brevity and obscure nature, one can read into it the theology one already possesses. Thus, this passage can be contorted as “proof” for subordinationism, anti-Trinitarianism, or equalitarianism. Instead of twisting the passage in order to correspond with one’s viewpoint, examining White’s parallel statements is the appropriate next task.

A more expanded version of the account was produced by White in the *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, which was published in 1870. Ellen White presents some added detail in the account of the fall by saying that

Satan in Heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to God’s dear Son. His countenance, like those of the other angels, was mild and expressive of happiness. His forehead was high and broad, showing a powerful intellect. His form was perfect; his bearing noble and majestic. A special light beamed in his countenance, and shone around him brighter and more beautiful than around the other angels; yet Jesus, God’s dear Son, had the pre-eminence over all the angelic host. He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Satan was envious of Christ, and gradually assumed command which devolved on Christ alone.³⁴

Notice White increases important details in the account, thus making it more coherent. She states that “Jesus ... had pre-eminence over all the angelic host,” and “He was one with the Father before the angels were created.”³⁵ So even though White says Satan was next in position to Jesus in Heaven, these new additional details construct a picture of the Father and Son being one, with Satan next in position to them and then all the other angels following. She continues with the following:

The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon his Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ, his Son, should be equal with himself; so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was

³⁴Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1 (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1870), 17.

³⁵Ibid.

as his own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son he had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was his Son to work in union with himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. His Son would carry out his will and his purposes, but would do nothing of himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in him.³⁶

White again, like in *Spiritual Gifts*, mentions that the angels were to appear before the Father, but this time she further explains that the Son is on the throne with the Father. She indicates that the Father made it clear that the Son was equal with Himself, and that wherever the Son's presence was, the Father's presence was there also. The Son was to be in charge of the angels and the Father's will was to be carried out by the Son. Thus, White is teaching here the equality of the Son with the Father. Again, what was imprecise in *Spiritual Gifts* was given more precision in *Spirit of Prophecy*.

Another additional piece is mentioned in the account in *Spirit of Prophecy* that was not brought up in *Spiritual Gifts*. It is what the loyal angels said when they tried to reason with Satan:

They clearly set forth that Jesus was the Son of God, existing with him before the angels were created; and that he had ever stood at the right hand of God, and his mild, loving authority had not heretofore been questioned; and that he had given no commands but what it was joy for the heavenly host to execute. They urged that Christ's receiving special honor from the Father, in the presence of the angels, did not detract from the honor that he had heretofore received.³⁷

The loyal angels, by saying this, made it clear that the Father was only stating what was always true. What could have been suggested from the *Spiritual Gifts* account of the fall of Satan was that the Son was given honor for the first time in the Father's decree, but the words from the angels in the *Spirit of Prophecy* account make it clear that it was Satan who claimed that the Son had only been recently exalted, instead of always being in that position.

Yet another parallel account of the fall of Satan can be found in White's *Patriarchs and Prophets*, first published in 1890. This account is actually the most expanded and clear statement on Satan's fall. Here White goes into detail (unmentioned in the other accounts) about what led to the fall of Satan:

Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. The Scripture says, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Ezekiel 28:17. "Thou hast said in thine heart, ...I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.... I will be like the Most High." Isaiah 14:13, 14. Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored

³⁶Ibid., 17–18.

³⁷Ibid., 19–20.

above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.³⁸

White suggests that it was a slow process that led to Lucifer's self-exaltation. She then proceeds to suggest that Lucifer's desire for the glory and position of the Christ was actually an attack on the glory and power of God Himself: "To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels. To this object he was about to bend the energies of that master mind, which, next to Christ's, was first among the hosts of God."³⁹ Here Lucifer's mind is said to be next to Christ's in the context of being among the hosts of God. This might refer to the role that Christ assumed as being the archangel. It appears that Christ always assumes the mediator role, for the Trinity, by assuming a form of the group with whom He is mediating. First, it was with the angels and then it was with humanity.⁴⁰ This embodiment of angelic nature in order to fulfill the mediator role in the plan of salvation could explain why Lucifer was surprised that Jesus, who in his view was supposedly just one of the angels, received equal status with the Father. This is the confusion that God was trying to address when Satan fell. God therefore called a gathering of the angels to sort this out. This will be shown further below.

In all three of the accounts we have been discussing, White mentions this gathering of the angels, which occurred in order to decree the position of the Son in the universe. The *Patriarchs and Prophets* account gives more detail than the other two versions mentioned previously. This is what White says:

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng—"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11.), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ was still to

³⁸Ellen G. White, *Patriarch and Prophets* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1890), 35.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 36.

⁴⁰In the Bible this angelic form is called the Angel of YHWH. In some of the accounts the Angel of YHWH is worshipped. Worshipping an angel is something that Revelation 22:8 declares is forbidden by God. Biblically, only God can be worshipped.

exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love.⁴¹

White points out that the purpose of the summons is to set out the true position of the Son. She says that Christ shared the throne, and she adds that the glory of God encircled them both. This statement is ambiguous and can be read in different ways. Several details seem to imply that Christ and the Father are both eternal and self-existent. The account goes so far as to say that homage was to be given not just to the Father but to the Son also—which means that the Son was not just to be obeyed, but also worshipped. This is something only allowed to happen to the divine. Granted, the account makes clear that the Son would not seek His own glory, but would exalt His Father's glory. This would be expected because it is the nature of the selfless character of God to always be seeking the other's glory.

The description in *Patriarchs and Prophets* continues by describing Satan's anger that Christ was exalted as the "Son of God as equal with the Father."⁴² This means that Father presented Jesus not as lower, but as equal with the Father. In fact, White says that "there had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer's envy and misrepresentation and his claims to equality with Christ had made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God; but this had been the same from the beginning."⁴³ The only reason the Father said what He said was because of Satan's accusations, not because there was any change in the order of heaven. Therefore, Jesus was not suddenly given a change of status; He was always equal in authority and power with the Father.

The first account of the fall of Satan (in *Spiritual Gifts*) did not have the same amount of detail as what is found in *Spirit of Prophecy* and *Patriarchs and Prophets*. If one just reads *Spiritual Gifts* alone, one could be led to think that Jesus was given His exalted position just before Satan's disgruntled complaints. However, each time White published an account of the fall, she gave added detail. Based on her later accounts, it is impossible to conclude that the exaltation of Christ was something that occurred during Lucifer's lifetime; according to these later accounts, Jesus had always held that exalted status. Thus, the added details in White's later accounts help readers understand the earlier accounts. All of what she writes on a topic should be taken into account when trying to understand what she intended to communicate.

⁴¹White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 36.

⁴²Ibid., 37.

⁴³Ibid., 38.

Subordination in the Planning of Salvation

A second account from *Spiritual Gifts* that sometimes arises in discussions concerning subordination in the Trinity is the account of the planning of salvation. The principle of examining all that Ellen White wrote regarding a particular subject can aid readers in understanding this account as well. Although White writes about this event in multiple places, the account in *Spiritual Gifts* is the first account she wrote on the subject. She states that Jesus was filled with sorrow and sympathy for fallen humans and that He took the initiative to approach the Father and converse about the plan of salvation. But the Father was resistant, and the Son had to approach three times to plead for his proposal, each time being “shut in by the glorious light”, before the Father agreed to the Son’s plan.⁴⁴ This account can be interpreted in two ways. First, one can see it as Jesus needing the Father’s permission to perform His role in the plan of salvation. Second, one can see Jesus as being the initiator of the plan of salvation and the Father struggling to go along with the plan.

The second time White mentions that same scene, it is a word for word copy of the original statement with changes only in the punctuation.⁴⁵ Commenting on this section of *Spirit of Prophecy*, Woodrow Whidden says, “In these pages Ellen G. White makes it very clear that it was the Son who initiated the key move by the Godhead in spontaneously offering Himself up to the Father to come to this sin-cursed world to endure terrible temptations and to die an atoning, sacrificial death for the sinful human race.”⁴⁶ Whidden may be correct in his assessment of White’s early statement about Jesus being the initiator. One could argue that, yes, He initiated it, but He was still seeking permission from the Father. From the two statements alone, it cannot be determined if Jesus is seeking permission from a superior or encouraging an equal. Whidden goes on to state that “the Son offered Himself up to the Father, not because the Father demanded that He do it (as His ‘subordinate’) but that The Son made the offer to do so according to His own divine initiative.”⁴⁷ One can also see that the Father was not commanding the Son in White’s account, but, again, it does not necessarily show if Jesus is asking for permission or encouraging an equal. However, Whidden’s idea of initiation of the Son is important because it helps us see that Jesus was not being commanded to do something and thus submitting to the Father’s plan. Of course this was not a surprise to the Father or the Son since they designed the plan from eternity.

⁴⁴White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 1:22.

⁴⁵White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 1:45.

⁴⁶Woodrow W. Whidden, “Core Theological Convictions that Vindicate the Ministry of Women,” *Adventist Today*, <https://atoday.org/core-theological-convictions-that-vindicate-the-ministry-of-women-in-our-church/> (accessed February 27, 2019).

⁴⁷Ibid.

However, when it was necessary to be implemented it was still a real emotional struggle to give over His only begotten Son.

Later, both *Spiritual Gifts* and *Spirit of Prophecy* mention that in order to accept the plan of salvation, it was “a struggle with the God of Heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give his beloved Son to die for them.”⁴⁸ This is an important piece of information because it makes it evident that the plan of salvation was not something that the Father was ready to accept emotionally immediately after it was presented by His Son. It is also clear that it was not a command initiated by the Father for the Son to accept as a subordinate. The language here makes it more difficult for one to say that the Son was seeking permission, even if it does not completely rule out that possibility. The statement seems more consistent with the Son encouraging an equal, especially given that the plan was laid before the foundation of the Earth. However, these passages taken alone can be read both ways if one only reads it in isolation of what the rest of scripture and Ellen White says on the subject.

What does it mean that the passage can be read both ways? Let us start by saying that asking someone to do something or be a part of something in no way implies submission. A lieutenant may ask a subordinate to do something; a lieutenant may ask another lieutenant to do something; or a subordinate may ask a lieutenant to do something. Therefore, asking does not necessarily imply that the inquiring person is a subordinate. An individual can just as easily ask something of a subordinate or an equal as he can of a superior. In order to see if White’s account is implying subordination or equality, one would have to look for something more than a simple statement that Jesus asked the Father for counsel about the plan of salvation.

There appears to be a connection of these accounts with the Gospel accounts of the garden of Gethsemane. In both accounts of the meeting about the plan of salvation, it took the Son three attempts in order for the Father to proceed with the plan. Correspondingly, in the garden of Gethsemane, Christ pleaded three times for the Father to let the cup pass from Him. In a reversal of roles of what took place in heaven, it is now the Son struggling with the Father. This struggle was over following through with the plan that Jesus Himself initiated after sin and both planned before the foundation of the world. Therefore, in reality, because of these statements, it is actually the Son being subordinate to His own initiative, planned by both from eternity, via the Father rather than Jesus being subordinate to the Father alone. Later, White gave these words when referring to the planning of salvation in *The Desire of Ages*:

This was a voluntary sacrifice. Jesus might have remained at the Father’s side. He might have retained the glory of heaven, and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the scepter into the Father’s hands, and to step down from the

⁴⁸White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 1:26; White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 1:48.

throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted, and life to the perishing.⁴⁹

It is clear that Jesus was the one to volunteer His sacrifice in the plan of salvation. It ended up being accepted because of the love of the Father. However, clearly it should not be assumed that Jesus submitted to a command by His Father. It might not be clear whether Jesus was getting permission or persuading an equal, but clearly the Son was the one to initiate the sacrifice of His own life, and the Father capitulated after an emotional struggle because He loved the world so much. God's foreknowledge of events does not lessen the emotional force He experiences while He undergoes such events.⁵⁰

Jesus Shows the Father

As mentioned before, it was after further Bible study in the 1890s that White penned her clearest statements about the Trinity. One of the books that lays out her Trinitarian views most clearly is *The Desire of Ages*. The book is a theological commentary on the life of Christ and the Gospels. If White embraced the subordination of the Son to the Father, then that belief should be clearly evident in the *Desire of Ages*.

However, right from the beginning of the book, White stated that “‘The light of the knowledge of the glory of God’ is seen ‘in the face of Jesus Christ.’ From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father.”⁵¹ She makes clear from the start that the Father is one with Jesus. She continues to say that He came for the purpose of showing forth the glory of the Father, that he was to reveal what God was like, that the law of the universe is selflessness and its source is the heart of God.⁵² It is this law of selflessness or love that Christ elucidates. Ellen White further states in *The Desire of Ages*:

All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of

⁴⁹White, *The Desire of Ages*, 22.

⁵⁰People still experience emotions when listening or reading a story, or watching a television show or movie the second or more times, even though they know what is going to happen. The movies *Titanic* and *Avatar* are examples that people can watch a movie over and over again a still feel it every time. Reading the Bible can happen repeatedly and still bring about emotional responses. Foreknowledge does not negate emotional responses.

⁵¹White, *The Desire of Ages*, 19.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 19.

beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.⁵³

This shows that the Son, in subjecting Himself to the Father, is but showing the character of the great Giver. The character of God, both Father and Son, is love. Thus, self-seeking and self-glorifying are not in harmony with the character of either. Jesus does not seek His own glory, but neither does the Father. They are always glorifying the other; they are completely other-centered; they are the quintessential givers of the universe (alongside the Spirit, who self-sacrifices to the extent of almost completely losing His own identity in exalting the Father and the Son).⁵⁴ Misunderstandings of the Trinity can occur if Their other-centered, self-sacrificing character is not considered.

As was stated earlier, it was the purpose of the Father to have His Son demonstrate to humanity what He is like—completely selfless. In commenting on the Apostle Philip’s misunderstanding about seeing the Father, White says, “Christ had not ceased to be God when He became man. Though He had humbled Himself to humanity, the Godhead was still His own. Christ alone could represent the Father to humanity, and this representation the disciples had been privileged to behold for over three years.”⁵⁵ It was humbling to take on the nature of man, but this did not make Jesus any less divine. In fact, by emptying, subjecting, and submitting Himself, Jesus was manifesting the nature of love, which is selflessness.

In fact, what Jesus did by lowering Himself was declare that it was what the Father would do if their positions were switched. Notice what White says in reference to the status and work of Jesus, in comparison to the Father: “Jesus claimed equal rights with God in doing a work equally sacred, and of the same character with that which engaged the Father in heaven.”⁵⁶ The work that He did was equal to and of the same character of what the Father did. They were both doing a work that embodied the character of love. They were both giving everything they had to save humanity.

⁵³Ibid., 21.

⁵⁴White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 1:17–23, 45–53. An example of this is in White’s account of the fall of Lucifer and the meeting about the plan of Salvation. The Holy Spirit is absent in these accounts. The Holy Spirit is so focused on exalting the other two that Lucifer is not jealous of Him and He is not even mentioned by White as being in the meeting about salvation. Just because He is missing in the accounts does not mean He does not exist. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 671. White shows He does exist by stating He is “the Third Person of the Godhead.”

⁵⁵White, *The Desire of Ages*, 635.

⁵⁶Ibid., 207.

Conclusion

First, we sought to lay out the issue of subordinationism, especially as it stands in comparison to equalitarianism in the very heart of the Trinity. Next, we explored Ellen White's role in the matter of formulating doctrine or giving new light. It was demonstrated that she had a confirmatory role when the doctrines of the church were formed. She continued in this role even when the doctrine of the Trinity was starting to be explicitly adopted by Adventists in the 1890s. Ellen White did not see herself as giving "new light", and her writings should not be used to establish new light today. Therefore, subordinationism in the Trinity should be proven first by the Bible, and the writings of Ellen White should only be used as were always intended, in a confirmatory function. This paper then demonstrated that Ellen White's early statements on the role of Christ are ambiguous and can be read as supporting either a subordinationist perspective or an equalitarian perspective. However, Adventist believers came to accept the doctrine of the Trinity in the 1890s, and White's writings after this period stress the equality of the members of the Trinity, rather than a hierarchical order among them. Therefore, Ellen White should not be used as an ultimate authority in formulating a doctrine of subordinationism within the Trinity, because that is not the function of her writings, nor is there solid evidence that she herself held such a position.

**A TALE OF TWO BOOKS:
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOHN HARVEY KELLOGG'S
LIVING TEMPLE AND ELLEN G. WHITE'S *MINISTRY OF
HEALING*¹**

THOMAS JOHN RASMUSSEN
MDiv
thomas.rasmussen@adventist.dk

Abstract

In contemporary society John H. Kellogg is more known for his medical inventions, than he is for the book *The Living Temple*, which was published in 1903. However, within Adventism the name Kellogg denotes crisis and controversy. The thesis of this paper is that Ellen White responded to the Kellogg's publication in three ways: personally—to John Kellogg; prophetically—to the Seventh-day Adventist Church; and publicly—with the book *The Ministry of Healing*, which was published two years later in 1905. It is the public response that is of primary interest to this paper. Ellen White wrote many personal letters to Kellogg leading up to and following, his publication. She wrote letters of concern and warning to parents, ministers, teachers, and church leaders. In none of her letters did she hold back. It was important that members knew what the theories in Kellogg's book represented, and why it could be so damaging to the mission of the Church. Kellogg is not mentioned in *The Ministry of Healing*, although his pantheistic theories are directly addressed. His book is not mentioned, but when you compare her book to his, it is evident that she is responding. For example, he begins with "The Mystery of Life," she begins with "The True Medical Missionary." The fact that Kellogg had been the leader in the medical field among Seventh-day Adventists, and the degree of the controversy, gives credibility to the assertion that she would be concerned enough to respond, and that her response would concern medical mission work. By analyzing her responses, what can we learn from how she publicly dealt with Kellogg's book?

Keywords: John Harvey Kellogg, Ellen G. White, leadership, crisis, Living Temple, healing, health, public, spirituality, pantheism, panentheism, Jesus Christ.

¹I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Denis Kaiser under whose mentorship this article was written. His encouragement and assistance has helped me to improve the present research and make it publishable. I would also like to thank Dr. John Reeve, and Dr. Stan Patterson for providing valuable feedback. Lastly, I am indebted to my cousin, Dr. Mark Brown, DDS who expressed similar thoughts on this issue during a vacation in California, and encouraged me to pursue the idea.

Introduction

The controversy surrounding John Harvey Kellogg has been well documented and is in many ways “old news.” In a recent doctoral dissertation by Zorislav Plantak, the conflict between Kellogg and church leaders, especially Arthur G. Daniells, is analyzed and discussed. However, Plantak’s emphasis is not on Ellen G. White’s theological response to Kellogg, rather he takes note of her intermediary role in the conflict.² In a journal article from 2014, Ángel Manuel Rodríguez writes on the “theological and practical significance of health reform in the writings of Ellen G. White,” but not with reference to the Kellogg controversy.³ Other works on Kellogg provide helpful insight into his personality, and the setting and issues surrounding the two publications, but they do not offer an analysis of the various ways in which White responded.⁴

As with all controversy, conflict is inevitable, if any resolution is to be made. This was also the case with the Kellogg Crisis, one of the greatest theological controversies within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the first fifty years of the denomination’s existence. Of course, it should be noted that the theological controversy did not take place in a vacuum. Only a year before John Harvey Kellogg published his book *The Living Temple* in 1903, the Battle Creek Sanitarium had burned to the ground, and it was part of his plan to raise money for new buildings with this publication.⁵ Thus, he was also personally invested in this endeavor.

²Zorislav Plantak, “Ethical Analysis of Abuses of Power in Christian Leadership: A Case Study Of ‘Kingly Power’ in the Seventh-day Adventist Church” (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2017), 116–118.

³Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, “The Theological and Practical Significance of Health Reform in the Writings of Health Reform in the Writings of Ellen G. White,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 25, no. 2 (2014): 132–157. Further, two later articles by Warren A. Shipton deal with Ellen White on health issues, and while he does refer to John Harvey Kellogg, it is in relationship to certain health issues, not to the publications dealt with in this presentation. See Warren A. Shipton, “Ellen White, Health, and the Third Angel’s Message: Part 1—Improving Health through Reducing Transmissible Diseases,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 28, no. 1 (2017): 61–91; Warren A. Shipton, “Ellen White, Health, and the Third Angel’s Message: Part 2—Minimizing Non-Communicable Diseases,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 28, no. 2 (2017): 139–169.

⁴See Richard W. Schwarz, *John Harvey Kellogg, M.D.: Pioneering Health Reformer* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2006); Brian C. Wilson, *Dr. John Harvey Kellogg and the Religion of Biologic Living* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014); and, of course, Howard Markel, *The Kelloggs: The Battling Brothers of Battle Creek* (New York: Vintage Books, 2018).

⁵Plantak, “Ethical Analysis of Abuses of Power in Christian Leadership,” 163–164.

John Skrzypaszek points out that “the publishing of *The Living Temple* was a capstone which precipitated the final stage in the Kellogg drama. Those parts of the book which dealt with human physiology were of no concern. It was the introductory chapter, which expressed his theological reflections, that triggered reactionary responses.”⁶ One of these reactionary writers was Ellen G. White, but how did she respond? My thesis is that she responded in three ways: personally, prophetically, and publicly.⁷ The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how the publication of *The Ministry of Healing* in 1905 served as a public response to the pantheistic theories in Kellogg’s book, without directly referencing his work.⁸

Background: Before the Books

At the outset, it is important to note that Ellen White wrote many letters to John H. Kellogg prior to his publication of *The Living Temple* in 1903. As early as 1886, even before she travelled to Australia, she encouraged Kellogg to stay close to Christ. In one of her letters, she even begins with the words, “Jesus loves you.”⁹ Later, in 1892, she wrote, “God is very near you in your work, angels are close in attendance; then let not any feelings or any words or works of human beings overwhelm you.”¹⁰ It is evident throughout her letters that she is full of compassion, and longs for Kellogg to know and accept God’s love for him. However, in this letter she also warned Kellogg about “erroneous views of science” that others had followed, and expressed her disapproval of employing those “who are not believers in present truth.”¹¹ In 1897 Kellogg presented his views publicly in a series of ministers-meetings,¹² and by 1898 Ellen White appealed to him with these words, “Brother John Kellogg, my mother-heart goes out toward you with weeping, for by symbols I am warned that you are in danger.

⁶John Skrzypaszek, “John Harvey Kellogg’s Concept of the Godhead,” in *Biblical and Theological Studies on the Trinity*, eds. Paul Petersen and Robert K. McIver (Hindmarsh, Australia: ATF Theology, 2014), 208.

⁷Due to space limitations and intended audience of this article, it will be a representative sampling of statements from Ellen White concerning *The Living Temple* that will be presented.

⁸It is in no way my intention to propose that Ellen White’s major publication on health, *Ministry of Healing*, only seeks to accomplish one purpose, i.e. a response to John Harvey Kellogg, yet it is this response, which is the focus of this article.

⁹Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, 16 July 1886, Lt 8, 1886, Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD (hereafter EGWE).

¹⁰Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, 5 April 1892, Lt 18, 1892, EGWE.

¹¹White to Kellogg, 5 April 1892.

¹²Cory Wetterlin, “Ellen G. White’s Understanding of Indwelling of the Holy Spirit: A Chronological Study,” *Andrews University Seminary Student Journal* 1, no. 2 (2015): 49.

Satan is making masterly efforts to cause your feet to slide, but God's eye is upon you."¹³ In the years, which followed she reproved him in earnest, and in 1900 she wrote, "The work that is coming from your hands is not pure and sanctified."¹⁴ Then, in 1903, John Kellogg published his book *The Living Temple*.

The Living Temple

To better understand Ellen White's responses to Kellogg's book, some of his ideas must first be presented. In the preface, he expresses the hope that this work "may serve as a beacon light to some who are seeking a better way of life."¹⁵ In the first three sections of the book, he presents the foundational theories for the health principles and guidance that follow.¹⁶ It is interesting to observe that after Kellogg introduces his pantheistic views of God in nature, he immediately answers the objection that some might say this negates the personality of God. Subsequently, he affirms his belief in a personal God, but goes on to describe the concept of "God as All-Energy."¹⁷ He even states, "there must be something more tangible, more restricted, upon which to center the mind in worship. It is for this reason that Christ came to us in the image of God's personality."¹⁸ It is as if he claims that the concept of a personal God is necessary for the sake of human comprehension, but it is not the best representation of the essence of God's being.¹⁹

¹³Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, 29 December 1898, Lt 132, 1898, EGWE.

¹⁴Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, 21 January 1900, Lt 177, 1900, EGWE.

¹⁵John Harvey Kellogg, *The Living Temple* (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health Publishing Company, 1903), 5.

¹⁶Kellogg, *The Living Temple*, 17–77. A few statements will serve as examples of his view of God, as it is beyond the scope of this article to treat Kellogg's position in depth. Rather, it is to demonstrate how Ellen White responds. Kellogg writes, "We recognize one common Life, - a kindred force which springs in every limb that leaps and moves." Kellogg, *The Living Temple*, 15. "In the growth and habits of plants, also, there is abundant evidence of the presence of this universal Intelligence." Kellogg, *The Living Temple*, 20. "God is the explanation of nature, - not a God outside of nature, but in nature, manifesting himself through and in all the objects, [...] Where's God's Spirit is at work, where God's power is manifested, God himself is actually and truly present." Kellogg, *The Living Temple*, 28.

¹⁷Ibid., 29.

¹⁸Ibid., 30.

¹⁹Kaiser describes how Ellen White disagreed with Kellogg's views: "She argued that he would depersonalize God, while she was concerned with the personality of the divine persons. Although he was employing some of her language in describing God, it only veiled his own very different concept." Denis Kaiser, "The Reception of Ellen G. White's Trinitarian Statements by Her Contemporaries (1897-1915)," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 50, no. 1 (2012): 25–38.

One last example, to demonstrate Kellogg's theological understanding of God in nature is found in the third section, where he asserts, "The light which comes from the sun is energy, - not simply sun energy, but divine energy. The great apostle enunciated this basic, physiological, and theological fact when he wrote, 'God is light.' 1 John 1:5."²⁰ It is perhaps statements such as this one that made Kellogg's contemporaries describe his views not as pantheistic, but pantheistic.²¹

In my opinion, his views as a foundation for health principles, serve as a clear contrast to those of Ellen White later published in *The Ministry of Healing*. However, before her public response is analyzed it is relevant to present a brief sketch of how she responds privately—to Kellogg, and prophetically—to the Church.

A Personal Response: To John H. Kellogg

After the publication of *The Living Temple*, Ellen White continued to write Kellogg, and directly addressed the theories put forward in his book. "*The Living Temple* contains the alpha of a train of heresies."²² She also stated, "When you wrote that book you were not under the inspiration of God."²³ But although, she rebuked his work, she pleaded with him to come to Christ. She was still concerned for his salvation. Nonetheless, she did not withhold anything of what God instructed her to say. She plainly told Kellogg whose influence had directed him in this project. One of the most direct statements in her letters to Kellogg was the year after his publication about what took place at the GC session in 1903. She wrote, "At one time it was presented to me that evil angels clothed with beautiful garments were escorting you from place to place, and inspiring you to speak words of boasting which were offensive to God."²⁴ It must have been difficult for both Kellogg, and Ellen White considering their relationship preceding the controversy. Conflict is never easy, especially because it is not *just* about the argument, it is also about the person. A pertinent statement was made in a letter to Kellogg marked "not sent" from 1903. Referring to his book she wrote, "If ever there was a time when the writings of every author needed to be criticized, it is now."²⁵ It is evident that she

²⁰Kellogg, *The Living Temple*, 64.

²¹Wetterlin notes: "While most at the time considered Kellogg to be a pantheist rather than a panentheist, Kellogg's view is more in line with the panentheism, which is developed by John Cobb." See Wetterlin, "Ellen G. White's Understanding of Indwelling of the Holy Spirit: A Chronological Study," 38.

²²Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, 26 November 1903, Lt 265, 1903, EGWE.

²³Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, 20 November 1903, Lt 253, 1903, EGWE.

²⁴Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, 27 July 1904, Lt 257, 1904, EGWE.

²⁵Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, 16 October 1903, Lt 232, 1903, EGWE.

felt strongly about what Kellogg had written, and the influence it might have. Thus, she did not restrict her response to her personal letters. She also wrote prophetically, and exerted her influence as best she could within the Church.

A Prophetic Response: To the Church

When I choose to call Ellen White's response to the Church prophetic, it is not meant to negate the personal response, or the public. Neither is it meant to imply any predictive element, but it signals how she exerted her role in her messages of warning and concern to people in the Church after the publication of *The Living Temple*. In 1904 she warned parents not to send their children to Battle Creek to study, and in this context, she wrote, "Years ago I did not think that they would meet these errors right in the sanitariums; but when *Living Temple* came out, and some of our ministers told me that there was in it nothing but what I had been teaching all my life, I saw how great the danger was."²⁶ This statement demonstrates the centrality of the publication, and the necessity of speaking out, because Kellogg's theories were evidently not exclusive to him. But also, that it was not possible for everyone to distinguish between his presentation of God, and her own teachings. Even the same year that Kellogg's book was published, Ellen White wrote from her home in California addressing Seventh-day Adventist physicians and ministers. The full writing was published three years later, in 1906:

God has permitted the presentation of the combination of good and evil in "Living Temple" to be made to reveal the danger threatening us. [...] We must now lift our voices in warning. Will our people acknowledge God as the supreme Ruler, or will they choose the misleading arguments and views that, when fully developed, make Him, in the minds of those who accept them, as nothingness? [...] The sentiments in "Living Temple" regarding the personality of God have been received even by men who have had a long experience in the truth. [...] Those doctrines, followed to their logical conclusion, sweep away the whole Christian economy. They estimate as nothing the light that Christ came from heaven to give John to give to His people.²⁷

These statements directly reference *The Living Temple*, and Ellen White stressed what Kellogg's theories did to the personality of God. What he put forward was not a minor deviance from majority held positions of doctrine, or policy. She viewed it as dangerous, and something she was responsible to refute and challenge. It is also noteworthy how she refers to "the light that Christ came from heaven to give John," thus interpreting the personality of God, and the concept of light differently than what Kellogg wrote. As has been described, she did this in letters to Kellogg. She wrote to the Church, also to its leaders and expressed how

²⁶Ellen G. White, "The Foundation of Our Faith," 18 May 1904, Ms 46, 1904, EGWE.

²⁷Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church Containing Messages of Warning and Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists* (n.p.: n.p., 1906), 36–37. The original letter was sent in October 1903.

important it was to deal wisely with the controversy surrounding Kellogg.²⁸ Yet, there was one avenue left. Kellogg's views had been published in a book. They were now public. Two years after the publication of *The Living Temple*, Ellen White also published a book, *The Ministry of Healing*.

A Public Response: The Ministry of Healing

It may seem odd to refer to *The Ministry of Healing* as a public response, when everything previously referenced is also public. But whereas it is possible to dispute whether Ellen White's letters were intended for public viewing, her books were published and distributed to a much wider audience, even during her own life time. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that her publications subsequently following Kellogg's book, would be reactionary in nature. However, when asked to explain the theories of *The Living Temple*, "I reply, 'They are unexplainable.' The sentiments expressed do not give a true knowledge of God."²⁹ So, instead of explaining it, she did something more profound. She presented "a true knowledge of God." She wrote a book, where the first nearly 100 pages were about the person of Jesus Christ, and how he interacted with people, when He came to this earth.³⁰ She even entitled the first major section of the book "The True Medical Missionary." The fact that Kellogg had been the leader in the medical field among Seventh-day Adventists, and the degree of the controversy, makes it plausible that we should expect Ellen White to describe what she does. Also, it should not be shocking that her response would concern medical mission work.

In *The Ministry of Healing*, the person of Christ is not an aspect of God that she simply tries to justify. The person of Christ and His love for humanity is the centrality of what she wants people to understand. "Christ came to the earth and stood before the children of men with the hoarded love of eternity, and this is the treasure that, through our connection with Him, we are to receive, to reveal, and to impart."³¹ She had also written, referring to *The Living Temple*, "We need not the mysticism that is in this book." But there was no question how much she believed people need Christ. She had made this appeal to Kellogg as well, as mentioned earlier.

²⁸Ellen G. White to A. G. Daniells and his fellow workers, 12 April 1903, Lt 49, 1903, EGWE.

²⁹Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 202. The article in this publication appeared for the first time in Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church Containing Letters to Physicians and Ministers Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists* (n.p: n.p, 1904), 51–59.

³⁰Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (1905; reprint; Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2012), 16–107.

³¹White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 37.

Another surprise in what she had written, and what I am suggesting, is the following statement:

About the time that *Living Temple* was published, there passed before me in the night season, representations indicating that some danger was approaching, and that I must prepare for it by writing out the things God had revealed to me regarding the foundation principles of our faith. A copy of *Living Temple* was sent me, but it remained in my library, unread.³²

Therefore, to claim that *The Ministry of Healing* is a response to *The Living Temple* seems absurd, considering that Ellen White did not read it, before she wrote what God had revealed to her. But given that these things are spiritual, could it be that God had given her a response, even before she read Kellogg's book?

She was reluctant to respond, but circumstances changed, when it began circulating that her writings were in harmony with what was presented in Kellogg's book. She was heartbroken, and wrote of her decision to respond with the testimonies: "I hesitated and delayed about the sending out of that which the Spirit of the Lord impelled me to write. I did not want to be compelled to present the misleading influence of these sophistries. But in the providence of God, the errors that have been coming in must be met."³³ They were, on several fronts. And while she responded with her letters, personally and prophetically, Kellogg's view of God was challenged again, but in a different way with her book.

In the beautiful description of the life of Christ, she wrote the following, "The Saviour's life on earth was a life of communion with nature and with God. In this communion He revealed for us the secret of a life of power."³⁴ She did not describe God as nature, or God in nature. She described Christ in communion "with nature and with God." And she returned to this thought much later in the book with the section "The Essential Knowledge." In those chapters Kellogg's theories were directly refuted, but without mentioning his name, or his book. She wrote how "the sunlight, and the flowers in their delicate beauty, point to their Creator."³⁵ In the subsection entitled "Nature Is Not God" she wrote, "God's handiwork in nature is not God Himself in nature."³⁶ Further, she wrote, "The work of creation cannot be explained by science. What science can explain the mystery of life?"³⁷ "The Mystery of Life" is the title of the first chapter of *The Living Temple*. She wrote, "In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God."³⁸ And again, in contrast to Kellogg's *Universal Intelligence* she

³²White, *Selected Messages*, 1:202.

³³Ibid., 1:205.

³⁴White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 51.

³⁵Ibid., 411.

³⁶Ibid., 413.

³⁷Ibid., 414.

³⁸Ibid., 415.

wrote, “It is not by inherent power that year after year the earth yields its bounties and continues its march around the sun.”³⁹ She also wrote:

Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know. In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things testify to His power, His wisdom, His love. Yet not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality of God as it was revealed in Christ. God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God.⁴⁰

Finally, she wrote directly about pantheistic theories, but this was not in the first sections of the book, and it was not even in the first part of the section that more directly deals with Kellogg’s theories. She presented first “a better knowledge,” before disputing what she considered false.

Today there are coming into educational institutions and into the churches everywhere spiritualistic teachings that undermine faith in God and in His word. The theory that God is an essence pervading all nature is received by many who profess to believe the Scriptures; but, however beautifully clothed, this theory is a most dangerous deception.⁴¹

If she had begun *The Ministry of Healing* by responding to *The Living Temple*, then that is what the book would have been about. It would have been an argument, and it might have limited her book merely as a contribution to a controversy more than 100 years ago. Instead, in *The Ministry of Healing*, it is still possible to find exactly that, healing in Christ. Her public “response” did something that the other responses did not. It presented a better view of God that is not dependent on any knowledge of the Kellogg crisis. And it is still relevant whenever similar thoughts are represented today.

Conclusion

In Ellen White’s responses to Kellogg, and his theories hopefully there are lessons of leadership for us today. She responded personally, prophetically, and publicly. How do we respond, when controversy arises? She responded in every way she could, but she also followed Christ’s counsel, when He said, “See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent

³⁹Ibid., 416.

⁴⁰Ibid., 419.

⁴¹Ibid., 428. Another direct statement against Kellogg’s theories is found toward the bottom of the same page: “The spiritualistic theories concerning God make His grace of no effect. If God is an essence pervading all nature, then He dwells in all men; and in order to attain holiness, man has only to develop the power within him.”

as doves.” (Matt 10:16). She did not write that *The Ministry of Healing* was a response to *The Living Temple*, but given the evidence presented, I think it is fair to say that it also served this purpose. And because, it was an indirect response packaged into a better description, it still serves this purpose. Moreover, it demonstrates that by examining the historical context of one of Ellen White’s major publications, it may be possible to discover more than what is explicitly stated. When it is no longer possible to ask the author what motivated them to write what they did, all that is left is to dig into history, examine the context, and weigh the evidence. In this case, reading *The Ministry of Healing* is not about finding counter arguments to *The Living Temple*. It is about coming to Christ as the True Medical Missionary.

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEMINARY STUDENT JOURNAL

The Journal of the Doctoral Student Club
of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary of Andrews University
4145 East Campus Circle Drive, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104-1550, U.S.A.

Editor: Denis Kaiser
Associate Editor: Iriann Marie Irizarry Hausted
Managing Editor: Rodrigo de Galiza Barbosa
Associate Managing Editor: Flavio Prestes III

Executive Board: Jiří Moskala, Dean of the Seminary; Alayne Thorpe, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies & Research; Tom Shepherd, Director of the PhD in Religion and ThD Programs; Gerardo Oudri, President of the Doctoral Student Club; Denis Kaiser, Editor of AUSSJ; John W. Reeve, Editor of AUSS; Jo Ann Davidson; Roy Gane; Wagner Kuhn; Terry Robertson.

Communications: E-Mail: denis@andrews.edu
Web: <http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/aussj/>

The *Andrews University Seminary Student Journal (AUSSJ)*, established in 2014, is an online, open access, multi-disciplinary, peer-reviewed journal that is led, edited, and reviewed by a team of doctoral students and faculty members of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. The purpose of the journal is to disseminate scholarly contributions of graduate students. Submissions may be made in the area of Systematic Theology, Philosophy, Ethics, Hebrew Bible, Jewish Studies, New Testament, Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Church History, Applied Theology, Mission, and Religious Education.

The opinions expressed in articles, book reviews, etc., are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the editors or of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS AND REVIEWERS

AUSSJ publishes research articles and brief notes on the following topics: Systematic Theology, Philosophy, Ethics, Hebrew Bible, Jewish Studies, New Testament, Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Church History, Applied Theology, Mission, and Religious Education.

The focus of the journal, as that of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, where *AUSSJ* is based, is biblical. A high regard for Scripture, along with elevated standards of research, characterizes the choice of articles. *AUSSJ* accepts articles written by authors of different faith persuasions, as long as this focus is taken into account.

AUSSJ is a refereed journal. Thus each article is read by two scholars who are competent in the area treated in the article. *AUSSJ* editors refer helpful referee comments to the author to facilitate the process of any necessary rewriting. After revising the manuscript, the author may resubmit the article. Revised manuscripts should be accompanied by a cover letter detailing the changes requested and the action taken (or the author's argument for retaining the original text). To maintain objectivity, the author's name is deleted from the manuscript copies sent to the referee, and the referees' names are deleted from any comments furnished to the author. A final decision on whether or not the article will be published in *AUSSJ* is made by the editors.

AUSSJ accepts articles written in English. Articles submitted to *AUSSJ* must conform to acceptable English language standards. American spelling and punctuation will be used in editing. Authors are asked to use inclusive gender language, such as "humanity" rather than "mankind," "person" or "human being" rather than "man."

For general style matters, *AUSSJ* uses Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), and subsequent editions. Scholarly abbreviations and biblical issues not covered in Turabian follow *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical and Related Disciplines*, 2nd ed. (Billie Jean Collins et al. [Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014]). For spelling, authors may refer to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (Springfield, MA: G. and C. Merriam, 1986).

AUSSJ prefers articles of 10–25 pages, including footnotes. The main text is to be double-spaced (single space for footnotes and indented quotations). Longer articles may occasionally be accepted, if they are particularly significant and space is available in the journal (it is recommended that authors query the editor for such articles). When the editors deem that an article needs to be substantially shortened, they will return the manuscript to the author with instructions regarding the areas needing attention.

AUSSJ reserves the right to make necessary modifications to articles that have been submitted in order to comply with the journal's content and style. Authors of articles edited for publication will receive a set of first page proofs. Authors will carefully review the article, compare it to the original draft, note any corrections on the manuscript, and provide a cover letter detailing the changes and corrections made. *AUSSJ* asks that articles be reviewed in a prompt and timely manner.

Articles may be submitted through the *AUSSJ* website or alternatively by email (see the editor's email). *AUSSJ* will accept articles prepared in Microsoft Word.

Manuscripts should be double-spaced (single space for footnotes and indented quotations), have one-inch margins, and be left-justified. Excessive formatting should be avoided, with only block quotations, tables, figures, headings, and subheadings included. Tabs, rather than single spacing or first-line indentation should be used. Tables should be formed using standardized table templates provided in the author's word-processing software. The motto for formatting is, Keep it simple!

Quotations longer than five lines are to be indented and double-spaced. Spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and abbreviations must be reproduced exactly as in the original and care should be taken to preserve the original author's intent.

All biblical, classical, and patristic literature, Dead Sea Scrolls and related texts, Targumic material, Mishnaic and Rabbinic literature, Nag Hammadi Tractates, and journals, periodicals, and major reference works should follow the *SBL Handbook of Style* 8.2–8.4. For biblical references, no period is used following the abbreviations; a colon is used between chapter and verse. Biblical references should be placed in parentheses in the text of the article, rather than in footnotes (see *SBL Handbook of Style*). Citations of classical and patristic literature should follow the *SBL Handbook of Style*. The following abbreviations should be used in parenthetical or footnote references. The terms should be spelled out when they occur in the text.

Abbreviation

chs).	chapter(s)
col(s).	column(s)
frg(s).	fragment(s)
n(n).	note(s)
pl(s).	plate(s)
v(v).	verse(s)

See *SBL Handbook of Style* 7.1–7.4. Page numbers included in footnotes should be all-inclusive, e.g., 110–111, 234–239 rather than 110-11 or 234–39. When a note of comment includes a bibliographic reference, this reference should be set in parentheses at the end of the comment. For instance: “But C. C. Torrey thinks that the name Cyrus has been interpolated in Isa 45:1” (“The Messiah Son of Ephraim,” *JBL* [1947]: 253).

Greek and Hebrew fonts are generally preferred rather than transliteration. Transliteration should be used primarily for ancient nonbiblical languages. Due to the problem of font compatibility, *AUSSJ* accepts only BibleWorks or SBL fonts. SBL provides free downloadable fonts at its website: <http://www.sbl-site.org/e-resources.html>. BibleWorks may be purchased from <http://www.bibleworks.com>. Before submitting Greek and Hebrew in other fonts or transliteration, please query the editor for directions.