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EDITORIAL

DENIS KAISER

Editor, Andrews University Seminary Student Journal

We are one and a half years behind our publishing schedule, but we are grateful that we can present to you here the combined issue for the year 2018. We want to thank the authors, the reviewers, the copy editor, and the editorial team for their service in making this current issue a reality and for ensuring the high quality of the published material. The articles and the entire issue are accessible on <http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/aussj/>. We hope that this issue, and its articles, are beneficial to you.

The invited article in this issue comes from Dr. David A. Williams, Assistant Professor of Worship and Sacred Music. In his study of the Eucharist as sacrifice in the writings of the church fathers of the first and second centuries, he focused specifically on martyrdom as sacrifice, the transition from the Old Testament concept of sacrifice to the spiritual sacrifice of the believer, the Eucharist as a business transaction, and the priesthood in relation to the Eucharist. He concluded that whereas the early church moved away from the Bible in its primary teachings of the Eucharist, it maintained a biblical notion of the spiritual sacrifice of the worshiper, a notion that is found nowhere in Adventist literature. Often, it is easier to reject a given practice completely, with all its ideas, than to dissect the different elements and decide what to keep and what to discard.

The next article comes from David J. Hamstra, a ThD student in Theological and Historical Studies. In his article, he addresses the question of whether or not contemporaries of Jesus may have been sufficiently capable of recognizing him as the prophetically foretold Messiah. Based on Melchizedek (11Q13) and the writings of Josephus, he shows that the interpretation of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24–27 led to a climate of messianic expectation among certain sectors of first-century Jewish society, suggesting that this biblical prophecy was, in principle, intelligible to first-century Jews.

A third article comes from Michael F. Younker, PhD, graduate of the Theological Seminary and currently a historical research specialist at the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research. A few years ago, the Seventh-day Adventist Church discussed the subject of ordination and whether divisions should be permitted to decide, for their territory, if women could be ordained as pastors. The Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC), which studied the biblical, theological, and historical arguments, and their ramifications, did not arrive at a unified position. Based on different supportive arguments, three different positions emerged as a result. In his article, Younker addresses the interpretation of Genesis 4:7 and its relationship to Genesis 3:16 as advocated by the members of Position 1. He shows how the interpretation by TOSC Position 1 contradicts the content and context of Genesis 4:7, as well as

Ellen G. White's understanding of that passage. His article is intended as a basis for dialogue and an attempt to avoid continuous unpleasant confrontations.

The following article is from Eric A. Louw, an MDiv student with an emphasis in Systematic Theology. Surveying the historical sources concerning the 1901 reorganization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Louw focuses primarily on how and why union conferences were created and what their relationship was to the General Conference. His research led him to four conclusions: first, the establishment of union conferences addressed the needs of local fields; second, the establishment of union conferences attempted to minimize the limitations and abuse of the centralized decision-making of a few church leaders, enabling the church to reach the world more effectively; third, there was a clear intention to maintain accountability of union conferences to the General Conference on matters of policy; and fourth, the autonomy of union conferences was built on a relationship of bilateral trust. The findings of this research may have implications for those involved in the current tensions over authority, leadership, and organization in the church.

The last article of this issue comes from Christopher R. Mwashinga, a PhD candidate in Systematic Theology. In his article, he discusses the missional efficiency of the three initial mission strategies—establishing educational institutions, medical facilities, and publishing houses—of Adventist missionaries in East Africa from 1903 to 1953. His research leads to the conclusion that the dedication and sacrifice of those foreign missionaries and native African believers, coupled with clear mission strategies, facilitated the training of local missionaries, the spreading of Christian literature, and the conversion of new believers. As a result, this led to a rapid growth of Seventh-day Adventism in East Africa during the period under study.

This issue will be the last one under my supervision. The journal began as a student-led endeavor to mentor doctoral students in writing academic articles, reviewing manuscripts, and gaining an experience in the different stages of editorial work. The ultimate goal of the journal was that doctoral students would apply those skills and talents as they continued to write, review, and edit in their careers as professors and teachers. Three years ago, in early 2017, the journal underwent some major changes. As three members of the editorial team completed their studies or resigned due to time constraints and so forth, I was hired as a faculty member in the Theological Seminary. To ensure the future of the journal, I decided to stay on the team and mentor the next generation of doctoral students in the editorial team. After three years, they are getting closer to the completion of their doctoral studies, and it is wise at this point to add new members to the editorial team in order to train them, enabling a smooth transition. Iriann Irizarry Hausted, our associate editor, has received a dissertation grant that will allow her to complete her dissertation in the next year. We want to thank her for her outstanding service to the journal in the last year and wish her many blessings for her future career and service. We also want to thank the Jíří

Moskala, Dean of the Seminary; Alayne Thorpe (and before her Christon Arthur), Dean of the School of Graduate Studies & Research; and John W. Reeve (and before him Tom Shepherd), Director of the PhD in Religion and ThD programs for their support. Without them, this journal would never have seen the light of day and would not have continued until now. I wish the journal a bright future, that it may continue to serve students as a tool to sharpen their skills and serve readers as a stimulating and thought-provoking resource.

**EUCHARIST AS SACRIFICE: A STUDY INTO THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUCHARIST AS
A SACRIFICE OF THE BELIEVER
IN THE FIRST AND SECOND
CENTURIES**

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Abstract

The sacrifice of the believer at the Eucharist can nowhere be found in the Adventist understanding of the Lord's Supper. However, Adventists may find value in reexamining the early church's teachings on sacrifice. While the early church deviated from Scripture in its primary teachings on the Eucharist, they maintained the scriptural notion of the spiritual sacrifice of the worshiper—something Adventists would do well to practice. This article examines the liturgical orders and teachings of the apostolic fathers, apologists, and early liturgical orders of the first and second centuries. The author considers four major issues relating to the Eucharist as sacrifice: first, martyrdom as sacrifice in the first century; second, the transition from the Old Testament concept of sacrifice to the spiritual sacrifice of the believer; third, the Eucharist as a business transaction; and fourth, the priesthood at the Eucharist.

Keywords: Eucharist, sacrifice, martyrdom, Lord's Supper, worship, offering, priesthood, spiritual, do ut des, quid pro quo.

Introduction

The sacrifice of the believer at the Eucharist can nowhere be found in the Adventist understanding of the Lord's Supper. In the Adventist exposition of fundamental beliefs, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, the Communion Service is described as a Eucharist, "a reference to the thanksgiving and blessing aspect of the service."¹ The only mention of sacrifice

¹*Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* (Washington, DC: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), 198. Nowhere in Scripture is the term "Eucharist" used in conjunction with the Lord's Supper though the verb "to give thanks" is utilized in the institution narratives (Matt 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:17, 19; 1 Cor 11:24). Jerome Kodell, *The Eucharist in the New Testament* (Collegetown, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 11; Robert Cabić, *The Church*

appears as a memorial of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.² In contrast, early Christians spoke of the Eucharist as a sacrifice of the believer though this has often been the subject of controversy.³ Maxwell Johnson,⁴ an Evangelical Lutheran pastor and professor of liturgical studies at the University of Notre Dame, adamantly defends the concept of the Eucharist as a sacrifice:

It is important to underscore that the eucharist in the first three centuries was certainly widely understood theologically as the church's "sacrifice"; thus, the burden of proof to the contrary has always been (and remains) on those who wish somehow to deny this interpretation and who seek to avoid using sacrificial terminology altogether in their eucharistic practice and theology.⁵

If Johnson is correct, then Adventism must answer for a missing doctrine of the Eucharist as sacrifice.

Adventists have been swift to dismiss the views of the apostolic fathers, apologists, and early liturgical orders of worship, given their abandonment of fundamental truths, such as the Sabbath.⁶ As C. Mervyn Maxwell famously said, "The speed with which the early Christians tobogganed into apostasy takes one's

at Prayer, vol. 2, *The Eucharist* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1986), 10; Andrew B. McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 33.

²*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 200. See also Herbert Kiesler, "The Ordinances: Baptism, Footwashing, and Lord's Supper," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2000), 595–604.

³Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 1, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 146; Christopher A. Hall, *Worshipping with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 51. Central to the controversy has been that "Roman Catholics and Protestants have divided over the question of whether the eucharist is primarily a sacrifice or a meal" (Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1997], 17). Royden Yerkes argued that the Christian sacred meal was "sacred" because of the adjoining notion of sacrifice, which means "to make a thing sacred" or "to do a sacred act" (*Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religions and Early Judaism* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952], 25–26).

⁴I had the privilege of studying with Max during my Master of Sacred Music degree at Notre Dame from 2008–2010. He was a wonderful instructor, and I credit my interest in liturgical studies to him.

⁵Maxwell E. Johnson, "The Apostolic Tradition," in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, ed. Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 59.

⁶Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977).

breath away.”⁷ While this may be so, Adventist scholarship may find value in reexamining the early church’s teachings on sacrifice. I posit the thesis that the early church deviated from Scripture primarily in its teachings on the Eucharist. However, they maintained the scriptural notion of the spiritual sacrifice of the worshiper, something Adventists would do well to practice. This study invites Adventists and other Christians to examine to what extent the conception of sacrifice should be believed and practiced in worship, specifically at the remembrance of the Lord’s Supper.

In this article, I examine the liturgical orders and teachings of the apostolic fathers, apologists, and early liturgical orders of the first and second centuries in order to trace the development of the doctrine of sacrifice at the Eucharist.⁸ As early as the second century, the early church began to embrace a complex view of the Eucharist. In this paper, I will consider four major issues as it relates to the Eucharist as sacrifice: first, the rise of martyrdom as a type of sacrifice in the first century; second, the transition from the Jewish Old Testament concept of sacrifices to the spiritual sacrifice of the believer, culminating in sacrifice at the Eucharist; third, the Eucharist as a business transaction; and fourth, the priesthood at the Eucharist.

Martyrdom as Sacrifice

Christian martyrdom influenced the early church’s understanding of sacrifice. The Greek word *μαρτυρέω* (*martyréō*) shifted in meaning from “to be a witness” or “to bear witness” to that of “dying for the faith.”⁹ By the second century, particularly in Asia Minor, the concept of *martyréō* became more closely attributed with the latter understanding. Within the wider context of “witness,” accounts of dying for the faith first appeared in 2 Maccabees 7, with stories of Jewish martyrs. The earliest Christian martyr is Stephen, whose stoning is reported in Acts 7. Johannine writings, particularly Revelation, with its expressions such as “martyred” saints, contributed to the notion of “dying for the faith.” Beginning with the blame against Christians for the burning of Rome by Nero in AD 64, the persecution of Christians would be commonplace for the next two and a half

⁷“Change of the Sabbath,” in *History of Sabbath and Sunday* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1973), 3.

⁸Most scholars include in their studies the teachings of the church fathers in the third and fourth centuries. In addition, this study will focus on the English translation texts of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (ANF), without addressing issues of authorship, unity, transmission, or redaction, except for Ignatius of Antioch. Only the short forms of Ignatius’s epistles will be considered.

⁹Hermann Strathmann, “*Martyréō*,” *TDNT*, 4:474–514.

centuries.¹⁰ While the persecution suffered by Christians has been greatly exaggerated, it must have reached a point in which all Christians believed their own personal suffering could be imminent.¹¹

The primary point of contention between Christians and Rome was the Christians' steadfast opposition to the mandates of worship to the pagan gods.¹² Tradition's record of the martyrdom of Justin (AD 165) combines the witness at death with sacrifice:

Rusticus the prefect said, "Unless ye obey, ye shall be mercilessly punished."

Justin said, "Through prayer we can be saved on account of our Lord Jesus Christ, even when we have been punished, because this shall become to us salvation and confidence at the more fearful and universal judgment-seat of our Lord and Savior."

Thus also said the other martyrs: "Do what you will, for we are Christians, and do not sacrifice to idols."

Rusticus the prefect pronounced sentence, saying, "Let those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods and to yield to the command of the emperor be scourged, and led away to suffer the punishment of decapitation, according to the laws."

The holy martyrs having glorified God, and having gone forth to the accustomed place, were beheaded, and perfected their testimony in the confession of the Saviour.¹³

The Christians refused to sacrifice to the pagan gods, yet later Christians would interpret their impending death as a sacrifice to the living God.

Possibly the earliest development of martyr theology may be seen in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch (ca. AD 35–117). In his *Epistle to the Ephesians*, he pleaded with the Ephesian Christians to pray that he would live to be devoured by the beasts of the arena, "so by martyrdom I may indeed become the disciple of

¹⁰Roland H. Bainton gives a broad perspective on the factors that not only led to the blame cast upon Christians but also to the growth of Christian persecution in *Christianity*, 1st Mariner Books ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 54–58. Richard P. McBrien gives a valuable timeline on the history of saints and martyrs in *Lives of the Saints: From Mary and St. Francis of Assisi to John XXIII and Mother Teresa* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 2001), xiii–xiv. Finally, Richard M. Price connects the persecution of the early Christians to the development of the martyr cult in "Martyrdom and the Cult of the Saints," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 808–825.

¹¹Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100–400)* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 29–30, and 134n13.

¹²Price, "Martyrdom and the Cult of the Saints," 809.

¹³*Mart. Just.* 4–5 (ANF 1:306).

Him ‘who gave Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.’¹⁴ From this passage it may be seen that Ignatius considered martyrdom to be a high spiritual calling. His prayer is reminiscent of Paul in Ephesians 5:1–2. Ignatius considered martyrdom to be true discipleship, following in the likeness of Christ. He similarly wrote in his *Epistle to the Romans*, “Pray, then, do not seek to confer any greater favour upon me than that I be sacrificed to God, while the altar is still prepared.”¹⁵ In another *Epistle*, he declared, “I am the wheat of God, and let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of God . . . [that] I may be found a sacrifice,”¹⁶ again reminiscent of Paul in 2 Timothy 4:6. Given Ignatius’s use of eucharistic language elsewhere (cf. *Phil.* 4), it would be remiss not to perceive the connection he made between martyrdom, sacrifice, and the Eucharist.

The later account regarding the martyrdom of Polycarp (ca. AD 155) has similar theological attributes. In the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, Polycarp’s prayer is recorded: “May I be accepted this day before Thee as a fat and acceptable sacrifice, according as Thou, the ever-truthful God, hast fore-ordained, hast revealed beforehand to me, and now hast fulfilled.”¹⁷

As Christians bore witness of their faith in death, the semantic range of “martyr” narrowed toward “dying for the faith.” Early Christian martyrdom increasingly came to be understood as a sacrifice, one which might possibly effect salvation. Clear allusions to the Eucharist were also made. These accounts reveal a significant shift from the scriptural meaning of “bearing witness” to the death of the Christian at the hand of persecution as sacrifice. It is this theological and political milieu, in which is couched the transition from the Old Testament sacrificial system to the early Christian concept of spiritual sacrifice, to which we will now turn.

From Spiritual Sacrifice to Eucharist

The development of the theology of spiritual sacrifice came as the result of many factors. “Major conflicts—with the Jews, with gnostic brands of Christian faith, and with secular authorities—forced the [Christian] movement to define itself, especially in the latter half of the second century.”¹⁸ Part of this self-identification is revealed in the doctrines of sacrifice and the Eucharist. In this section, we will

¹⁴Ign. *Eph.* 1 (*ANF* 1:49).

¹⁵Ign. *Rom.* 2 (*ANF* 1:74).

¹⁶Ign. *Rom.* 4 (*ANF* 1:75).

¹⁷Mart. Pol. 14 (*ANF* 1:42).

¹⁸John Baldovin, “Christian Worship to the Eve of the Reformation,” in *The Making of Jewish and Christian Worship*, ed. Paul F. Bradshaw and Lawrence A. Hoffman (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 157.

consider three areas in which the concept of sacrifice developed: (1) spiritual sacrifice, (2) polemical writings, and (3) the sacrifice of the Eucharist.

Spiritual Sacrifice

The use of sacrificial language as a spiritual act of worship by the believer has well-founded roots in both the Old Testament and New Testament. Such texts are David's prayer of repentance, stating "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit"¹⁹ in Psalm 51:17; Paul on the "living sacrifice" in Romans 12:1 (ESV); the "sacrifice of praise" in Hebrews 13:15; and "the living stones/holy priesthood/spiritual sacrifices" mentioned in 1 Peter 2:5. It was upon these and similar texts that the early church fathers based their understanding of Christian sacrifice, and ultimately their understanding of worship.

Among the writings of the first and second centuries, very little exists on the subject of sacrifice that is not in response to Judaism. It is valuable to recognize that the early Christians understood sacrifice apart from Judaism, but this may only be observed in the writings of Clement of Rome (d. AD 99). It is not insignificant that he was chronologically the earliest of all the fathers considered in this study. In his *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (ca. AD 96), Clement rooted his concept of sacrifice in Old Testament imagery: Cain and Abel (chap. 4),²⁰ Abraham and Isaac (chaps. 10, 31),²¹ and David's confession (chap. 18).²² The first two may be understood as physical sacrifices, but all reveal an interwoven spiritual thread. When compared with chapter 52, Clement considered confession as a sacrifice of praise, saying, "The Lord, brethren, stands in need of nothing; and He desires nothing of any one, except that confession be made to Him."²³ He then cites several psalms, including "offer unto God the sacrifice of praise" (Ps 50:14 [49:14 LXX]) and "the sacrifice of God is a broken spirit" (Ps 51:17).

Polemical Writings

As already seen in Clement's writing, early Christians believed in a spiritual sacrifice above and beyond the physical sacrifices of the Old Testament sacrificial system. What began as an evangelistic message of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament sacrifices in the sermon of Peter in Acts 2 swelled into an anti-Judaic polemic by the early Christians in the second century.

¹⁹Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from biblical sources in this article are from the NASB.

²⁰1 Clem. 4 (ANF 1:6).

²¹1 Clem. 10, 31 (ANF 1:7–8, 13).

²²1 Clem. 18 (ANF 1:10).

²³1 Clem. 52 (ANF 1:19).

In his *Epistle*, Barnabas (ca. AD 70–131) wrote with an eschatological motivation toward Jewish sacrifice. Because the antichrist was at hand, it was imperative to not fall into error as the Jews had done.²⁴ Such statements have been labeled as “anti-Jewish.”²⁵ Barnabas viewed the Old Testament liturgical system (i.e., sacrifices, Sabbaths, etc.) as abolished so that “the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is without the yoke of necessity, might have a human oblation.”²⁶ In the same chapter, he argued further that God had not wanted sacrifices but for the Israelites to love their neighbors. Barnabas concluded that Christians, since they possess true understanding, should approach God with true sacrifice: “A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; a smell of sweet savour to the Lord is a heart that glorifieth Him that made it.”²⁷

The primary corpus of polemical writing on Christian sacrifice in contrast with Jewish sacrifice may be found in the writings of the martyr Justin (ca. AD 110–165). Robert Daly argued that Justin was not necessarily anti-Judaic but rather anti-Judaic-sacrifice.²⁸ Justin took issue with the material sacrifices of the Jews, saying, “God does not need the material offerings which men can give,”²⁹ and “He has no need of streams of blood and libations and incense.”³⁰ Justin argued that God had been “gracious towards the Gentiles also; and our sacrifices He esteems more grateful than yours.”³¹

Writing late in the second century (ca. AD 177), Athenagoras of Athens not only criticized the countless bloody sacrifices of Judaism as Justin had but went further, seeing greater virtue in the “bloodless” Christian sacrifice:

And first, as to our not sacrificing: the Framer and Father of this universe does not need blood, nor the odour of burnt-offerings, nor the fragrance of flowers and incense, forasmuch as He is Himself perfect fragrance, needing nothing either within or without; but the noblest sacrifice to Him is for us to know who stretched out and vaulted the heavens. . . . And what have I to do with holocausts, which God does not stand in need of?—though indeed it does behove us to offer a bloodless sacrifice and “the service of our reason” [Rom 12:1].³²

²⁴Barn. 4 (ANF 1:138–139).

²⁵Robert J. Daly, *The Origins of the Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1978), 110.

²⁶Barn. 2 (ANF 1:138).

²⁷Ibid. While the first phrase is a quote from Ps 51:17, the second line is not.

²⁸Daly, *Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice*, 87.

²⁹Justin, *1 Apol.* 10 (ANF 1:165).

³⁰Justin, *1 Apol.* 13 (ANF 1:166).

³¹Justin, *Dial.* 29 (ANF 1:208).

³²Athenagoras, *Plea* 13 (ANF 2:134–135).

Whereas Paul had implied a Christian corollary to the slaughtered Old Testament sacrifice—a living sacrifice—Athenagoras heightened the contrast with his terminology “bloodless.” Thus, Athenagoras put forth a bloodless Christian sacrifice over and against the bloody Judaic sacrifice. His citation of Romans 12:1 suggests that he viewed this bloodless sacrifice as a spiritual sacrifice. Roberts, Donaldson, and Coxe, editors and translators of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, defined a “pure *minbah*” (Mal. 1:11) as the “unbloody sacrifice of the Jews.”³³ *Minbah* may be translated as “offering” or “grain offering.” One may logically connect this with the Eucharist.

Irenaeus (AD 120–202) presented the most comprehensive understanding of the Christian spiritual sacrifice in contrast with the sacrifice of the Old Testament:

God stood in no need of their slavish obedience . . . [for] “God does not desire whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices, but He will have His voice to be hearkened to. Behold, a ready obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” [1 Sam 15:22]. . . rejecting, indeed, those things by which sinners imagined they could propitiate God, and showing that He does Himself stand in need of nothing. . . He continues, exhorting them to what pertained to salvation: “Wash you, make you clean, take away wickedness from your hearts from before mine eyes: cease from your evil ways, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; and come, let us reason together, saith the Lord.”³⁴

For Irenaeus, God had instituted the sacrifices as the means by which to draw his people toward himself. He desired their obedience; he desired what mattered most, their salvation. Living in salvation meant living a life that was a sacrifice, in praise to God and in service to the world.

Sacrifice of the Eucharist

Justin Martyr’s most significant statement on sacrifice can be found in his *Dialogue with Trypho a Jew*, in which he tied together elements of anti-Judaic-sacrifice, spiritual sacrifice, and the Eucharist, in which God calls their prayers sacrifices:

God, anticipating all the sacrifices which we offer through this name, and which Jesus the Christ enjoined us to offer, i.e., in the Eucharist of the bread and the cup, and which are presented by Christians in all places throughout the world, bears witness that they are well-pleasing to Him. But He utterly rejects those presented by you and by those priests of yours. . . . For such alone Christians have undertaken to offer, and in the remembrance effected by their solid and liquid

³³Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria* (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1885) 135n4).

³⁴Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.17.1 (*ANF* 1:482–483).

food, whereby the suffering of the Son of God which He endured is brought to mind.³⁵

The “sacrifices which we offer” were not an abstract but a concrete action. Justin not only claimed that Jesus Christ commanded these sacrifices but also that the sacrifice itself was the giving of the Eucharist.³⁶ Earlier in the *Dialogue with Trypho*, while commenting on Malachi 1:10–12, Justin articulated that the Judaic sacrifices were antitypical of the Eucharist:

And the offering of fine flour . . . was a type of the bread of the Eucharist, the celebration of which our Lord Jesus Christ prescribed, in remembrance of the suffering which He endured on behalf of those who are purified in soul from all iniquity.³⁷

From these sources, Daly has concluded that for Justin, “Christian sacrifice is the Eucharist.”³⁸ But what precisely is this sacrifice of the Eucharist? Justin said that Christian sacrifices at the Eucharist are the “prayers and giving of thanks,” for when they are “offered by worthy men, [they] are the only perfect and well-pleasing sacrifices to God.”³⁹ This led Daly to interpret the entire ritual itself as a spiritual sacrifice.⁴⁰ With this theological context in mind, the liturgy of the Eucharist helped to reinforce the notion of the entire ritual as sacrifice:

When the Jewish liturgical context of this sacrificial language could no longer be taken for granted among Christian hearers and readers, the Christian liturgies were already using similar language about the offering of the prayers, the gifts, and the lives of the worshipers, and probably also about the offering of the sacrifice of the Mass, so that the sacrificial interpretation of the death of Christ never lacked a liturgical frame of reference.⁴¹

Similarly, Paul Bradshaw asserts, “The fact that the worshippers themselves brought the bread and wine with them from their homes to be used in the Eucharist (just as they had earlier contributed the food and drink for the full eucharistic meal) would have further encouraged the idea that these elements formed the substance of the sacrifice.” Over time, the spiritualization of the sacrifice of the Eucharist came to mean a physical offering, as signified by the ritual actions of those gathered in worship.

³⁵Justin, *Dial.* 117 (ANF 1:257).

³⁶Daly, *Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice*, 89–90. The “whole transaction” was the sacrifice (Everett Ferguson, *The Early Church at Work and Worship*, vol. 3, *Worship, Eucharist, Music, and Gregory of Nyssa* [Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017], 19).

³⁷Justin, *Dial.* 41 (ANF 1:215).

³⁸Daly, *Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice*, 90.

³⁹Justin, *Dial.* 117 (ANF 1:257).

⁴⁰Daly, *Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice*, 90.

⁴¹Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, 146–147.

Maxwell Johnson sees Daly's interpretation of a spiritual sacrifice at the Eucharist as pushing too far. Rather, Johnson supports the findings of Kenneth Stevenson. In *Eucharist and Offering*, Stevenson suggested eucharistic sacrifice could include not only the "self-offering of the community" and "the gifts" of bread and cup, but even "the entire eucharistic rite itself as that which is offered in thanksgiving for God's gift of salvation."⁴² However, Everett Ferguson disagrees, saying, "It is not clear that the bringing of the gifts (by the people?) was understood as a sacrificial act."⁴³ From the context of Justin's writing, both may be correct. Justin anticipated "all the sacrifices" to be included in the offering of "the Eucharist of the bread and the cup." Justin may have understood the action of the bread and cup to represent a spiritual thanksgiving within a physical ritual action.

The earliest church order from the early second century, *The Lord's Teaching through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations* (ca. AD 115–130), commonly referred to by its Greek transliteration, *Didache*, taught several key nuances for understanding the Eucharist:

But every Lord's [Day?]⁴⁴ do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. But let no one that is at variance with his fellow come together with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be profaned.⁴⁵

Both the breaking of bread and thanksgiving constitute the sacrifice. Confession precedes *sacrifice* (Matt 5:23–24), making the sacrifice pure (Mal 1:11).

Irenaeus's writings on the Eucharist are some of the most controversial, for he presented ideas leading to "real presence." Daly suggested this physical realism was due to Irenaeus's strong concern against Gnosticism.⁴⁶ A fundamental dualism articulates his view of the supper:

Then, again, how can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood, goes to corruption, and does not partake of life? Let them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the things just mentioned. But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion. For we offer to Him His own, announcing

⁴²Johnson, "The Apostolic Tradition," 59; Kenneth Stevenson, *Eucharist and Offering* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1986), 3–4.

⁴³Ferguson, *The Early Church at Work and Worship*, 27.

⁴⁴See the following articles for discussion of the Lord's Day. Traditional readings of the text have inserted "day" though the original Greek does not include the term. Ranko Stefanovic, "'The Lord's Day' of Revelation 1:10 in the Current Debate," *AUSS* 49, no. 2 (2011): 261–284; Fritz Guy, "The Lord's Day in the Letter of Ignatius to the Magnesians," *AUSS* 2, no. 1 (1964): 1–17.

⁴⁵Did. 14 (*ANF* 7:381).

⁴⁶Daly, *Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice*, 94.

consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.⁴⁷

Liturgical practice influenced belief. “The Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion.”⁴⁸ As we have seen in the writings of Justin, the act of bringing bread and wine to the gathering constituted physical sacrifice. For Irenaeus, the experience of the eucharistic liturgy’s prayers and offerings affirmed for him a solemn mystery of heavenly realities.

He spoke of a change that occurs in the bread during the prayer, probably a prayer of thanksgiving. “When it receives the invocation of God,”⁴⁹ the bread is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist. His two realities seem to indicate not a physical change but a metaphysical change. He saw the earthly bread as heavenly food. He believed that our earthly bodies encountered heavenly realities.

Pelikan believed the apostolic fathers understood the Eucharist as the “real presence,” as indicated by Irenaeus’s phrase, “no common bread.” Pelikan thought that these early thinkers did not have “adequate concepts” to “formulate a doctrine of real presence” even though this view was “already believed by the church.”⁵⁰ I disagree with Pelikan. I do not think we can fully say Irenaeus taught transubstantiation. We can say that his teachings moved in that direction and would become the basis of thought for later theologians.

Was “real presence” the concept Justin understood when he stated that the offering of the Eucharist as sacrifice was a “remembrance effected by their solid and liquid food”?⁵¹ Justin argued for some type of change to take place at the Eucharist:

For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood

⁴⁷Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.18.5 (*ANF* 1:486).

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹The invoking (or Gk. *Epiklesis*) developed into a core component of the eucharistic prayers of the early church. Paul F. Bradshaw, *Early Christian Worship: A Basic Introduction to Ideas and Practice*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 49–55; Hall, *Worshiping with the Church Fathers*, 67; Daniel Sheerin, “Eucharistic Liturgy,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, 716.

⁵⁰Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, 168.

⁵¹Justin, *Dial.* 117 (*ANF* 1:257); cf. Justin, *Dial.* 41 (*ANF* 1:215).

and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.⁵²

Christopher Hall reads Justin as teaching a sacramental realism, employing graphic language.⁵³ At the “prayer of His word,” the food *is* or *becomes* the flesh and blood of Jesus. Justin likens the change to Christ’s change at the incarnation, brought about by the Word of God. The believer’s flesh and blood are transmuted, or changed, by that same Word of God. Is this transformation of flesh and blood a type of theosis—a divinization? Or should the reading of the text be more figurative or spiritual? If the latter, should not the type of change in the gathered community not influence the type of change taking place in the Eucharist itself? That is, if the change in the worshiping community is spiritual, why must a literal, physical change be applied to the eucharistic elements? Does change take place in the mind or in a dualistic heavenly reality? Justin and Irenaeus did not have the nuanced theological language of later scholars, but I am not sure that they would have agreed with them either. I see in both apologists a move toward the later views. However, it is important to treat these texts as having a bit more openness in meaning than has been claimed in the past. Caution is given to those who bring an anachronistic reading to the writings of Justin and even Irenaeus. We should “see things their way.”⁵⁴

A Business Transaction

Protestants have historically viewed the Eucharist as sacrifice as a type of *do ut des*, a business transaction whereby something is given by one party so that something may be received in return. The dominant view of pagan religion was “I give in order that you may give to me.”⁵⁵ This type of transaction inspired the Lutheran critique of the Mass as a sacrifice of human hands.⁵⁶

⁵²Justin, *1 Apol.* 66 (ANF 1:185).

⁵³Hall, *Worshiping with the Church Fathers*, 57.

⁵⁴Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. 1, *Regarding Method* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3; Alister Chapman, John Coffey, and Brad S. Gregory, eds., *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 2.

⁵⁵Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 180. However, some classical Greek playwrights rejected *do ut des*, saying that God has need of nothing. Ferguson, *The Early Church at Work and Worship*, 1.

⁵⁶In 1520, Martin Luther published his treatise, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. Even still, Luther never abolished the term “sacrifice” from his theology but nuanced it as a spiritual sacrifice of the believer. James F. White, *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1989), 36–39.

This kind of exchange also appears manipulative toward God, though Frank Senn sees this as missing the point.⁵⁷ In the ancient world, communal meals, such as the Passover, were “communion-sacrifices.” “Part of what was offered was returned to those who had offered it to be eaten by them, so that in effect they shared a sacred meal with God as a sign of his acceptance of them through the sacrificial act.”⁵⁸ Senn views the Eucharist as phenomenologically both a sacred meal and a sacrifice because the “bread and wine are offered, consecrated, and eaten and drunk with the understanding that the communicants enter into fellowship with the One who is both priest and victim. Put another way, sacrifice has served as a metaphor describing communion with Christ, who is our Passover sacrifice.”⁵⁹ The early Christians’ offering was a “reminder” of “Christ’s offering on the cross,” a celebration “when his followers gather[ed] round that table.”⁶⁰

Among early Christians, the communal meal typified unity between the participants and with God: “Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf” (1 Cor 10:16–17 NIV). The liturgical significance of offering a sacrifice at the Eucharist became heightened when the worshipers ceased receiving communion.⁶¹ Not receiving the bread and wine but only offering it stressed the *do ut des* relationship. Bradshaw views this as a fading away from the biblical model.⁶²

Irenaeus’s teaching on nourishment points to a business transaction. Speaking of Christ’s words at the supper, he says, “He has acknowledged the cup (which is a part of the creation) as His own blood, from which He bedews our blood; and the bread (also a part of the creation) He has established as His own body, from which He gives increase to our bodies.”⁶³ His vocabulary is reminiscent of Christ’s language in John 6, equating the cup with Christ’s blood. This teaching is clarified in the *Fragments of the Lost Writings of Irenaeus*, in which he wrote,

And therefore the oblation of the Eucharist is not a carnal one, but a spiritual; and in this respect it is pure. For we make an oblation to God of the bread and the cup

⁵⁷Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 17.

⁵⁸Bradshaw, *Early Christian Worship*, 62.

⁵⁹Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 17.

⁶⁰Kenneth Stevenson, *The First Rites: Worship in the Early Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1989), 56.

⁶¹Bradshaw, *Early Christian Worship*, 62.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.2.2 (ANF 1:528).

of blessing, giving Him thanks in that He has commanded the earth to bring forth these fruits for our nourishment.”⁶⁴

The nourishment provided by the Eucharist comes from God—it is the fruit of “His own gifts in the New Testament.”⁶⁵ As a meal, the Eucharist provides physical nourishment. As a sacred meal, it provides spiritual nourishment.⁶⁶ Could Irenaeus possibly mean what Ignatius more explicitly said much earlier, that the breaking of bread is “the medicine of immortality.”⁶⁷ If the Eucharist’s nourishment provides salvation, is this sacrifice not a type of *do ut des*?

Early Christians viewed their worship, particularly the eucharistic sacrifice, as “superior” to the surrounding pagan and Jewish cultural practices. They “could reject sacrificial imagery and ideas in relation to gentile religion and idolatry but still see their meal as fulfillment of the offerings once made at the Jerusalem temple.”⁶⁸ Ironically, the anti-Jewish polemic led the Christians to practice their spirituality in a way that led to the same pitfall. As the Jewish liturgical system of sacrifice pointed forward to Christ’s sacrifice by faith, the Christian liturgy of the Eucharist pointed backward to Christ’s sacrifice. Both religious systems ultimately ended up viewing the sacrifices as their own in order to gain salvation, resulting in a business transaction.

Sacrifice of the Priesthood

At last, let us consider the early Christian teachings connecting the Eucharist as a sacrifice with the priesthood. The development of the doctrine of the Eucharist as sacrifice and the doctrine of ordination mutually influenced each other.⁶⁹ Where there is sacrifice, there necessitates a priesthood.

Ignatius linked the believers’ communion with Christ and the Father to the bishop. In his *Epistle to the Magnesians*, he urged the believers to do nothing “without the bishop and presbyters.”⁷⁰ He affixed this solidarity with the Eucharist in his *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, saying, “Take ye heed, then, to have but one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to the unity of His blood; one altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants: that so, whatsoever ye do, ye may do it according to

⁶⁴Irenaeus, Frag. 37 (ANF 1:574).

⁶⁵Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.17.5 (ANF 1:484)

⁶⁶Hall, *Worshiping with the Church Fathers*, 58.

⁶⁷Ign. *Eph.* 20 (ANF 1:57).

⁶⁸McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship*, 54.

⁶⁹Kiesler, “The Ordinances,” 601.

⁷⁰Ign. *Magn.* 7 (ANF 1:62).

God.”⁷¹ The liturgical primacy of the bishop is evident. He also possessed spiritual authority: “Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it.”⁷² Justin required a “president” or presider for the Eucharist:

There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen.⁷³

Who was the president?⁷⁴ Justin calls not for a bishop or priest but a president—one who presides. This could simply be a pragmatic rubric.

However, if the Eucharist is the believer’s sacrifice, why could not the priesthood of all believers accomplish this action? Justin was indeed favorable to the idea of the universal priesthood. “We are the true high priestly race of God, as even God Himself bears witness, saying that in every place among the Gentiles sacrifices are presented to Him well-pleasing and pure. Now God receives sacrifices from no one, except through His priests.”⁷⁵ Could this be what Justin meant when he spoke of God not needing “streams of blood and libations and incense”? “We offer thanks by invocations and hymns. . . . We reasonably worship him.”⁷⁶ Sacrifice belonged to the priesthood of the church, “not to the ordained ministry of the church.”⁷⁷ Irenaeus likewise supported the theology of the priesthood of all believers. “For all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank. And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually.”⁷⁸

The ecclesiology of the first and second centuries was not set. A high ecclesiology was made manifest in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch, while Justin and Irenaeus exhibited a low ecclesiology. Ignatius placed more authority in bishops than is observed in Scripture. Importantly, the significant New Testament ecclesiology of the priesthood of all believers survived at least until the third century.

⁷¹Ign. *Phil.* 4 (*ANF* 1:81).

⁷²Ign. *Smyrn.* 8 (*ANF* 1:89–90).

⁷³Justin, *1 Apol.* 65 (*ANF* 1:185).

⁷⁴Daly, *Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice*, 90.

⁷⁵Justin, *Dial.* 116 (*ANF* 1:257).

⁷⁶Justin, *1 Apol.* 13 (*ANF* 1:166).

⁷⁷Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, 25.

⁷⁸Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.8.3 (*ANF* 1:471).

Conclusion

A variety of beliefs existed in the late first and second centuries regarding Christian sacrifice. Persecution led to a theology of martyrdom, which was divergent and evolved from Scripture. In an attempt to push against Judaism, pagan persecution, and Gnosticism, the early church fathers' theology and praxis consequently developed toward an extreme position. These factors led early Christians to transfer their developing beliefs of spiritual sacrifice to the Eucharist. This led some early Christians to treat the Eucharist as a type of business transaction. Some, such as Ignatius, required the Eucharist to be celebrated under the authority of a bishop, but others continued to embrace the biblical doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.

Christians need to take seriously the terminology of sacrifice. And yet, "Christian worship is not sacrifice."⁷⁹ Not in the literal cultic sense. There are no animal killings. Even Christ's death on the cross was a public execution. Gordon Lathrop argues that precisely because sacrifice is the "wrong word" for Christian worship, we should more heartily embrace the metaphor. Only when we lean into the wrongness of the word sacrifice can Christian worship present the necessary challenge to die to self, a living sacrifice.

When Protestants call a collection of money that is now mostly used for church maintenance—and not for the poor—and offering, when they make of this collection a ceremony, replete with processions and elevations, they inevitably malform Christian liturgical meaning. When Roman parishes call their presider a priest, praying for him with the prescribed words, "may the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands," they easily miss the critical wrongness of these words. Indeed, the words of that particular text seem intended to avoid any metaphorical character that lingers in the offering terminology of the Roman canon and to say directly that Christians do give offerings to God. In both Roman and Protestant cases, the unbroken cultic language serves to reinforce the cultural status quo. The essential message is a familiar one: you get what you pay for.⁸⁰

Seventh-day Adventists need to carefully critique their liturgical practices. Why are we so cautious about calling the Eucharist a sacrifice while our traditional churches continue to bring a physical sacrifice in the weekly offerings of money for church building maintenance? We have not as a church adequately reflected on the liturgical theology manifest in our services.

I adamantly disagree with the theologies and practices that point toward a do ut des business transaction. Calling the Lord's Supper a sacrifice can easily prompt a quid pro quo mentality. As Martin Pröbstle states, "If we lose sight of the fact that sacrifices express a spiritual relationship between God and us and that they all

⁷⁹Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 140.

⁸⁰Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 155.

point to a much greater sacrifice, Jesus Christ, we could easily mistake the sacrificial ritual for an automatic apparatus for making atonement.”⁸¹ Adventist communion practices, however, often lack a strong sense of eucharist, or thanksgiving. Moreover, the sacrifice of Christian worship is imperative for continued renewal and revival in the churches.

The Bible presents a holistic worldview of worship and liturgy essential to understanding the sacrifice of the church. Earthly corporate worship corresponds to the liturgy of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.⁸² “Acceptable worship in all its dimensions can only be offered through Christ, by God’s enabling.”⁸³ Christ, our High Priest, leads the worship of the royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:9). The priesthood of all believers has cultic activity in liturgy,⁸⁴ not for salvation but as worship. God wants one’s whole being, not liturgy or worship separately. God saves his people so that they may “offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” as worship (1 Pet 2:5). The sacrifice God wants is “a broken spirit and a contrite heart” (Ps 51:17). In worship, we offer God our attitude, our lives, our all.

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.⁸⁵

⁸¹Martin Pröbstle, *The Sanctuary*, Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide (Silver Spring, MD: Office of the Adult Bible Study Guide of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2013), 26.

⁸²“Now the main point in what has been said *is this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister [*leitourgos*] in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. . . . But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry [*leitourgias*], by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises” (Heb 8:1–2, 6).

⁸³David G. Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1992), 246. “An engagement with God through Christ is now the only way to offer the worship that is due to him” (Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 187).

⁸⁴Hermann Strathmann insisted that the term *leitourgeo* must not be understood in the cultic liturgical sense, for never in the New Testament is the cultic liturgy used in connection with early Christian leaders, such as apostles, teachers, prophets, presbyters, bishops, etc. Hermann Strathmann, “Leitourgeō,” *TDNT*, 4:228. He is incorrect in this, for it is also used in Acts 13:2, a worship service of church leaders. Strathmann missed the point. We do have liturgy in the performance of ritual action in worship. Strathmann did not utilize the systematic theology that allowed him to conceptualize Christ’s liturgy corresponding to the liturgy of the royal priesthood.

⁸⁵Rom 12:1–2; cf. Rom 14:17–18.

This is sacrifice. God wants the human will. He wants one's life as a sacrifice, as an attitude of praise, doing good, and sharing with others: "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased" (Heb 13:15–16).⁸⁶

⁸⁶The church's "mission is to render highest honor to God by exercising the priesthood of continual praise. It is in this high sense that we must hear the word *liturgy* and not in the narrow concept of an order of service" (Richard Paquier, *Dynamics of Worship: Foundations and Uses of Liturgy* [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1967], 56). "For the New Testament believers the priestly cultus had reached its end with the sacrifice and ascension of Christ, and they proclaimed in the gospel the *leitourgia* which took place on Calvary's cross and continues in Christ's heavenly ministry. The new community, the church, consists of priests who have access to God by faith in Christ, and a High Priest who is performing the *leitourgia* (ministry of service) before God on behalf of His people" (C. Raymond Holmes, *Sing a New Song: Worship Renewal for Adventists Today* [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1984], 13; Peter Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus*, trans. M. H. Bertram [Saint Louis, MO: Concordia, 1968], 14–15).

THE SEVENTY-WEEKS PROPHECY OF DANIEL 9:24–27 AND FIRST-CENTURY AD JEWISH MESSIANIC EXPECTATION

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Abstract

For Christians who interpret the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24–27 by correlating the coming of the messiah with the arrival of Jesus Christ, the question of whether Jesus could have been identified as the predicted messiah at the time of fulfillment is theologically significant given biblical claims of prophetic intelligibility. There is a consensus among scholars affirming the view that interpretation of the seventy-weeks prophecy led to a climate of messianic expectation among certain sectors of first-century Jewish society. This position is supported by the explicit connection of the seventy weeks to the anticipated arrival of a messiah in Melchizedek (11Q13). Josephus provides an independent line of circumstantial evidence that dates this expectation to the first century. This warrants the theological conclusion that the prophecy was, in principle, intelligible to those among whom it was fulfilled.

Keywords: Adventism, messianism, sabbatical chronology, Second Temple literature.

Introduction

In Seventh-day Adventism, Daniel 9:24–27 is interpreted as a messianic time-prophecy via chronological calculations that correlate the coming of the Anointed One in the sixty-ninth week to the baptism of Jesus Christ. From time to time, Adventist scholars have taken an interest in identifying similar, or parallel, interpretations in the reception of this prophetic passage.¹ This establishes that

¹For Adventist commentary on the reception history of the seventy weeks, see LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation*, vol. 1, *Early Church Exposition, Subsequent Deflections, and Medieval Revival* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1950), 193; William R. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, Rev. ed., Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 1 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 105–110; and Jacques B. Doukhan, *On the Way to Emmaus: Five Major Prophecies Explained* (Clarksville, MD: Messianic Jewish Publishers, 2012), 182–183.

their view is not idiosyncratic but rather stands within a tradition of Jewish and Christian interpretation.

However, for Christians who interpret the seventy weeks of Daniel as a prediction of the first advent of Jesus Christ,² a question of prophetic intelligibility remains to be answered: At the time when the messianic prediction was believed to be fulfilled, could contemporaries have been able to identify the Messiah as the one predicted by the seventy weeks? For a prophecy that is unintelligible to those among whom it is fulfilled is arguably not a prophecy in the biblical tradition (Deut 18:22; Amos 3:7; and esp. Dan 12:4).³

Toward answering this question, the purpose of this paper is to investigate how the interpretation and calculation of the seventy-weeks prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27 influenced the development of messianic expectation in first-century (AD) Judaism. Research into interpretations of the seventy weeks in extant Second Temple literature yields general precedents for interpreting the prophecy as a messianic prediction. When combined with a record of first-century, time-based messianic expectation, these constitute both direct and circumstantial evidence that it would have been possible for Jesus's contemporaries to interpret events in his life as a fulfillment of Daniel's seventy-weeks prophecy.

The influence of Daniel looms large in sectarian first-century Judaism. Daniel is one of the books most alluded to in the New Testament⁴ and the ninth most copied book found at Qumran.⁵ In lieu of an exhaustive survey of the primary literature, this research will use secondary sources as a guide to the Second Temple literature available in critical editions. These secondary sources have been selected for their focus on Second Temple messianism and the reception of Daniel 9:24–27.

The majority of the secondary sources cited in this research hold to a late date for the book of Daniel, which pushes the date of its completion as far as the latter half of the first century BC. Joseph A. Fitzmyer observed that this causes problems for determining whether Daniel or the Septuagint comes first in the development of the messianic idea. On the other hand, he dates the Similitudes of

²See, e.g., Peter J. Gentry, "Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the New Exodus," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 14, no. 1 (2010): 26–44.

³Stephen R. Miller takes Daniel 12:4 to mean that "as the time of fulfillment draws nearer, the 'wise' will seek to comprehend these prophecies more precisely, and God will grant understanding ('knowledge') to them" (*Daniel*, NAC 18 [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998], 321).

⁴Craig A. Evans, "Daniel in the New Testament: Visions of God's Kingdom," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, VTSup 83 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 2:490.

⁵Peter W. Flint, "The Daniel Tradition at Qumran," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, 2:328.

1 Enoch “to the period after the final redaction of the book of Daniel.”⁶ Also in Fitzmyer’s view, interpretive decisions reflected in the translation of the Septuagint do not bear on the question of how Daniel 9:24–27 was interpreted in the rest of extant Second Temple literature. Based on those determinations, this study will take as given that, regardless of how early or late one dates Daniel, Daniel dates early relative to the Second Temple literature surveyed in this study.⁷

Survey of Secondary Sources

In 1997, John J. Collins wrote that the consensus of “the late 1980’s,” “which held that messianism was not an essential or even important part of Judaism around the turn of the era,” had been challenged by “the release of the unpublished [Dead Sea] Scrolls in 1991.”⁸ Yet as far back as 1981, Roger T. Beckwith asserted that

there is strong evidence to show that the Essenes, the Pharisees, and the Zealots all thought that they could date, at least approximately, the time when the Son of David would come, and that in each case their calculations were based upon Daniel’s prophecy of the 70 weeks (Dan. 9, 24-27), understood as 70 weeks of years.⁹

In addition, by 1980, Beckwith had attempted to reconstruct the Essene calculation of the seventieth week when “the Messiahs were to be manifested,” finding that it “would begin between 10 and 6 B.C. and would end between 3 B.C.

⁶Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The One Who Is to Come* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 56–57, 84.

⁷This dates Daniel earlier than the earliest form of the Aramaic Levi Document (third or early second century BC), which was not under consideration by Fitzmyer. However, the conclusions of this research can still hold if one dates Daniel later than the Aramaic Levi Document, because its jubilees were likely added later (see n31 for further discussion).

⁸John J. Collins, “Jesus, Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Qumran-Messianism*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Gerbern S. Oegema (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 102, 106. Cf. J. H. Charlesworth, “From Messianology to Christology: Some Caveats and Perspectives,” in *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, ed. Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, and Ernest S. Frerichs (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 251. See also James H. Charlesworth, “From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth et al. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992), 35.

⁹Roger T. Beckwith, “Daniel 9 and the Date of Messiah’s Coming in Essene, Hellenistic, Pharisaic, Zealot and Early Christian Computation,” *RevQ* 10, no. 4 (1981): 521.

and 2 A.D.” Beckwith concluded that this Essene chronology “gives a reason why Messianic expectation was strong at the time of Jesus’s birth.”¹⁰

Beckwith’s main sources for this conclusion are Jubilees, the Testament of Levi, Josephus, Seder Olam Rabbah, and certain Qumranic texts, including Melchizedek.¹¹ Analysis of this documentary evidence relative to the research question will follow, but for the purposes of this survey, suffice it to note that N. T. Wright has found Beckwith’s conclusions sufficiently persuasive so as to base his theological system on them. The reconstructed, first-century Jewish worldview that informs Wright’s reading of the New Testament is built around a collective, if not pervasive, Second Temple Jewish consciousness of Jewish exile having been extended past Babylonian captivity, along with the expectation that this extended exile would end when the seventy weeks of years were fulfilled and the Messiah appeared.¹² That the critics of Wright’s reconstruction find the general outline of Beckwith’s interpretation uncontroversial is indicative of the soundness of Beckwith’s thesis, even as Wright bemoans the lack of “recognition” that it has received.¹³

William R. Shea’s contemporaneous treatment of the major sources found in Beckwith’s early work on this subject concluded that these sources “reinforce the general idea that the period of time between the end of the first century B.C. and the beginning of the first century A.D. was, indeed, a time when the Messiah was expected.”¹⁴ Yet, in writing an Adventist apology, Shea’s brief survey was entirely focused on bolstering a “year-day principle” for interpreting time-prophecy. He

¹⁰Roger T. Beckwith, “The Significance of the Calendar for Interpreting Essene Chronology and Eschatology,” *RevQ* 10, no. 2 (1980): 180. For the purposes of this research, messianic expectation includes any expectation of a Jesus-like Christ figure. For the research question, it is irrelevant whether two messiahs were expected or one since, regardless, the prophecy would have been intelligible at the time of its fulfillment with sufficient determinacy to identify Jesus as *a* Christ, if not *the* Christ, at which point further theological development could have taken place.

¹¹See Beckwith’s major update to “Daniel 9” published as “The Year of the Messiah: Jewish and Early Christian Chronologies, and their Eschatological Consequences,” in *Calendar and Chronology, Jewish and Christian: Biblical, Intertestamental and Patristic Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 215–275.

¹²N. T. Wright, “Yet the Son Will Rise Again: Reflections on the Exile and Restoration in Second Temple Judaism, Jesus, Paul, and the Church Today,” in *Exile: A Conversation with N. T. Wright*, ed. James M. Scott (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 22–30.

¹³*Ibid.*, 26. See, e.g., Jörn Kiefer, “Not All Gloom and Doom: Positive Interpretations of Exile and Diaspora in the Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism,” in *Exile: A Conversation with N. T. Wright*, 130–131; and Robert Kugler, “Continuing Exile Among the People of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Nuancing N. T. Wright’s Hypothesis,” in *Exile: A Conversation with N. T. Wright*, 165–170.

¹⁴Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, 108–109.

argued for this principle based on Second Temple and early rabbinic Jewish interpretation of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24–27 as weeks of years.¹⁵ Shea did not explore the historical development of expectation nor the implications of such expectation for validating the prophecy itself.

By contrast, in *One Who Is to Come*, Joseph Fitzmyer traces the development of the messianic idea in Judaism and early Christianity, arguing for its inception in Daniel 9:24–27. Whether that text plays an incipient role or a pivotal role,¹⁶ Fitzmyer’s work is significant in that his treatment of the primary sources foregrounds the messianic significance of Melchizedek on account of its reference to the seventy-weeks prophecy. In Fitzmyer’s exhaustive survey of the Second Temple literature, Melchizedek is the only source that explicitly combines apparently messianic language with an allusion to the seventy-weeks prophecy.

Finally, Lester Grabbe, writing in the decade following Beckwith’s initial publication on the subject, yet seemingly unaware of, or independent of, Beckwith’s work, found that the “70-weeks prophecy—in whatever form—served as a basis for apocalyptic speculation for two centuries until the fall of the Temple in [AD] 70.”¹⁷ Surveying the same sources as mentioned above, Grabbe links the Damascus Document’s anticipation of a “Teacher of Righteousness” to the seventy weeks.¹⁸ While acknowledging our historical ignorance of the textual sources for any possible religious motivations for Jewish first-century revolts, Grabbe finds hints that Daniel 9:24–27 may have been in the background of Josephus’s description of the final days of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.¹⁹

Ben Zion Wacholder is the author of the earliest secondary source consulted in this research. In 1975 he attempted to correlate the dates of messianic figures to sabbatical years, including John the Baptist, Jesus, and Bar Kochba.²⁰ Taking the

¹⁵In Hebrew usage, the time periods that the concept of a week organizes into cycles of seven can be either days (as in the English usage) or years. The latter type of week can be referred to as a “week of years” (Lev 25:8) or a sabbatical cycle. Seven weeks of years is a jubilee cycle (Lev 25:10). In this research, “sabbatical chronology” refers to the periodization of history, including predicted events, according to sabbatical and jubilee cycles.

¹⁶“Despite the best efforts of Joseph Fitzmyer, messianic expectation cannot be reduced to the use and interpretation of the word משיח (John J. Collins, *Scriptures and Sectarianism: Essays on the Dead Sea Scrolls* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014], 101).

¹⁷Lester L. Grabbe, “The Seventy-Weeks Prophecy (Daniel 9:24–27) in Early Jewish Interpretation,” in *The Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Shemaryahu Talmon (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 611.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 601–602.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 605.

²⁰Ben Zion Wacholder, “Chronomessianism: The Timing of Messianic Movements and the Calendar of Sabbatical Cycles,” *HUCA* 46 (1975): 201–218.

seventy weeks to coincide with sabbatical cycles, this is circumstantial evidence for the seventy-weeks prophecy's influence on messianic expectation.²¹ Although an examination of the coherence of Wacholder's chronology is beyond the scope of this research, note that Wacholder's chronology is one year off from Zuckermann's "standard" chronology and has come under critique.²²

The preceding survey reveals that a consensus currently exists among contemporary scholarship regarding the interpretation of the seventy-weeks prophecy leading to a climate of messianic expectation among certain sectors of first-century Jewish society. The scholars discussed in this survey assemble the evidence in various ways, but all arrive at similar conclusions. What remains for this research is to investigate their primary sources to determine the strength of the evidence for the consensus position.

Survey of Primary Literature

The following evaluation of the primary sources will proceed from (1) those that provide circumstantial evidence for the consensus view that the seventy-weeks prophecy influenced first-century Jewish messianic expectation to (2) those that provide unambiguous support for the consensus view. A major cluster of circumstantial evidence is represented most comprehensively in Jubilees but also includes the Apocalypse of Weeks (1 Enoch 93; 4Q247), the Animal Apocalypse (1 Enoch 85–90), and the Damascus Document.²³ These sources develop, to a greater or lesser extent, a chronology that periodizes history according to seven-

²¹Cf. Devorah Dimant, "The Seventy Weeks Chronology (Dan 9:24–27) in the Light of New Qumranic Texts," in *The Book of Daniel in Light of New Findings*, ed. A. S. van der Woude (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1993), 57–76. Dimant argues for a universal sabbatical chronology of history that lies behind Daniel's seventy weeks and is expressed in other texts such as Jubilees and the Apocalypse of Weeks.

²²Gentry, "Daniel's Seventy Weeks," 37. See *ibid.*, 37n28, where on this point Gentry follows the critique of independent researcher and Adventist apologist Bob Pickle, "Daniel 9's Seventy Weeks and the Sabbatical Cycle: When Were the Sabbatical Years?" *Pickle Publishing*, 2007, accessed March 20, 2020, <http://www.pickle-publishing.com/papers/sabbatical-years.htm>.

²³On the Damascus Document, see Ben Zion Wacholder's reconstruction and translation of 4Q268 1, 1–5 in *The New Damascus Document: The Midrash on the Eschatological Torah of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Reconstruction, Translation, and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 24–27: "1:1 [As for the Divisions of the] Eschatological [Epochs]: Surely they will occur (as was presaged) [according to all (the number of) its days and a]ll 1:2 [(the number of) the cycles of] [its festivals,] when its beginning (was) and ending (will occur); for [(God)] has fore[told the fir]st 1:3 [as well as the latter things and] what will transpire thereafter in them (the Divisions of the Eschatological Epochs), since H[e has set up Sabbaths and His covenantal festi]vals 1:4 [for eternity (and) since one may neith]er advance [nor post]pone th[eir] festivals, [their months or 1:5 their Sabb[aths]]."

year cycles.²⁴

In the Animal Apocalypse, which recapitulates the story of God’s people from creation in the figures of animals, the period of time between exile and the Maccabean revolt (1 Enoch 89:59–90:25) is governed by seventy shepherds, each having an “appointed time” (89:64). The Apocalypse of Weeks briefly covers the same narrative but periodized as a series of seven weeks. Both apocalypses conclude with the ushering in of a more ideal era, when it can be said that “the Lord of the sheep rejoiced” over the animals (90:38) and when “there shall be elected the elect ones of righteousness from the eternal plant of righteousness, to whom shall be given sevenfold instruction concerning all his flock” (93:10), respectively.

Seder Olam Rabbah is a post-Second Temple sabbatical chronology that builds on this tradition in response to Christian chronology.²⁵ The book’s commentary on Daniel interprets the seventy weeks as referring to “70 sabbatical periods from the destruction of the first Temple to the destruction of the second Temple” (chap. 28).²⁶ Of course, this interpretation leaves “167 years of Jewish history . . . unaccounted for,” but the rationale for this chronology is explained based on purported biblical examples of countdowns to destruction commencing with prior destructions.²⁷

Based solely on the intertextual evidence, it is indeterminable whether all these chronological similarities reflect an influence on, or a common source between, the aforementioned sources and Daniel 9:24–27. But hypothesizing a common source goes beyond the existing documentary evidence. Regardless, the fact remains that the concept of historical periodization necessary to calculate the seventy weeks as ending in the first century AD was available at that time, for it is well represented in the available contemporary literature. Accordingly, the Apocryphon of Jeremiah implicitly calculates the seventy weeks as weeks of

²⁴For further examples offered in the course of arguing for Daniel’s influence on Jubilees, see James M. Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven: The Restoration of Sacred Time and Sacred Space in the Book of Jubilees* (Leiden: Brill: 2005), 93–192.

²⁵Heinrich W. Guggenheimer, *Seder Olam: The Rabbinic View of Biblical Chronology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), xii.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 242.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 244. Chapter 28 of Seder Olam Rabbah concludes, “And why does the Scripture say 70 weeks? That the Divine decree was before the 70 years. Similarly, it says (*Gen. 6:3*): ‘his days shall be 120 years.’ And it says (*Gen. 7:3*): ‘In year 600 of Noah’s life.’ It is impossible to say so; but the Divine decree was issued 120 years before. Similarly, it says (*Is. 7:8*): ‘In another 65 years, Ephraim will no longer be a people.’ That was in year four of Ahaz. It is impossible to say so, but the Divine decree was issued in the time of Amos, two years before the earthquake, as it is said (*Amos 7:11*): ‘So said Amos, Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will certainly be exiled from its land’” (*ibid.*, 242–243).

years.²⁸ It prophesies a remnant who will survive a crisis of faithfulness in the “seventh jubilee” (4Q390 1, 7–12).²⁹

This sabbatical chronology, attributed to “the book of Enoch” (Testament of Levi 16:1),³⁰ was applied in the Testament of Levi to “the seventy weeks” (71:1) between exile (chaps. 14–15) and the coming of a priesthood that would “be wholly true to the Lord” (17:2). There is no calculation of the time of this priest figure’s coming. While these passages in their Greek final form reflect Christian emendation, they are based on an earlier Jewish text, the Aramaic Levi Document, extant only in fragments.³¹ Beckwith finds that it is plausible to synchronize the seven priest-jubilees in Testament of Levi 17 with the Essene sabbatical chronology by taking them to be a postexilic succession running concurrently with the seventy weeks.³² Beckwith thus dates the arrival of the Essene priestly messiah between 10 BC and AD 2. However, the textual evidence that something similar to Testament of Levi 17 was a part of the Aramaic Levi Document is inconclusive and does not witness to the sabbatical chronology in its specifics.³³

²⁸Grabbe, “Seventy-Weeks Prophecy,” 601–602.

²⁹See also 4Q385a 45, 3–4; 4Q387a 3 II, 3–4.

³⁰Testament of Levi 14.1 cites the same source, possibly a reference to 1 Enoch.

³¹“In previous generations it has been called *Aramaic Testament of Levi* or *Aramaic Levi*.” Jonas C. Greenfield, Michael E. Stone, and Esther Eshel, *The Aramaic Levi Document: Edition, Translation, Commentary*, SVTP 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1. Testament of Levi 18, which describes the priest figure, “is perhaps unmatched for its attribution of superlatives to a human figure.” Thus, it is commonly held that the complete text, extant only in Greek, has been “shaped” into “a testament of [Christian] christological import” by “compressing and omitting some of its sections and creating/adding others” (George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2005], 308). Its “oldest Greek witness” has been dated to the tenth century (H. W. Hollander and M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary*, SVTP 6 [Leiden: Brill: 1985], 14. But the earliest form of the Aramaic Levi Document likely dates to the third or early second century BC, making it “one of the most ancient Pseudepigrapha” (Greenfield, Stone, and Eshel, *The Aramaic Levi Document*, 20).

³²Beckwith, *Calendar and Chronology*, 228–234. This research will follow the convention of identifying the Qumran community as Essene without implying a position on the Qumran-Essene hypothesis, to which the research question is indifferent.

³³Beckwith, *Calendar and Chronology*, 228 (responding to Hollander and de Jonge, *Twelve Patriarchs*, 175) assumes the originality of the priest figure in Testament of Levi 18 based on research by Emile Puech arguing that Qumran fragments dating to ca. 100 BC are related to the Testament of Levi. Emile Puech, “Fragments d’un apocryphe de Lévi et le personnage eschatologique: 4QTestLévi^{c-d}(?) et 4QAJa,” in *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid 18–21 March, 1991*, ed. Julio Trebolle Barrera and Luis Vegas Montaner, STDJ 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 2:449–501. The fragments Puech tentatively titled 4QTestLévi^{c-d} were originally published as

Essene messianic expectation is extensively documented; notably in the Messianic Apocalypse, which predicts that “[the heav]ens and the earth will listen to his anointed one” and that the Lord “will honor the pious upon the throne of an eternal kingdom, freeing prisoners, giving sight to the blind, straightening out the twis[t]ed” (4Q521 2 II, 1, 7–8).³⁴ In the explanation Josephus gave for a group who perished in the destruction of the Second Temple (AD 70), there is evidence beyond the Essene community for first-century messianic expectation based on the seventy weeks.³⁵ He attributed their last stand to their belief in a time-prophecy predicting the arrival of a messianic figure: “But what more than all else incited them to the war was an ambiguous oracle, likewise found in their sacred scriptures, to the effect that at that time one from their country would become ruler of the world.”³⁶ Josephus rejoined that, in fact, this predicted ruler was Vespasian.³⁷

Jewish Messianic expectation is also evident at the end of the first century in 4 Ezra 12:31–32 and 13:1–56, in which an eschatological “Son” does battle with the nations.³⁸ This figure is possibly connected to the seventy weeks in 2 Baruch, in which a messiah arrives to usher in the eschaton subsequent to tribulations that occur during the “weeks of seven weeks” (28:2).³⁹

4QApocryphon of Levi (4Q540–541). In private correspondence with the relevant parties, Robert A. Kugler reports that “Malik agrees with Puech that 4Q540 bears some resemblance to *Testament of Levi* 17, but he rejects the association of 4Q541 with *Testament of Levi* 18” (*From Patriarch to Priest: The Levi-Priestly Tradition from Aramaic Levi to Testament of Levi*, EJL 9 [Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1996], 51). See Puech’s sabbatical reconstruction of 4Q540 I, 2 in *Qumrân Grotte 4.XVII: Textes araméens, première part, 4Q520–4Q549*, DJD 31 (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 2001), 220. And cf. its absence in Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 2:1079. Kugler (*From Patriarch to Priest*, 51) found the evidence linking 4Q540 to Testament of Levi 17 “intriguing,” while Greenfield, Stone, and Eshel found it “not convincing” (*The Aramaic Levi Document*, 31). Neither included the jubilees of Testament of Levi 17 in their reconstructions of the Aramaic Levi Document. “In the final analysis, it is necessary to treat Original Testament of Levi 17–18 as creations of the document’s author, even if they have antecedents in older, unknown texts.” Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest*, 198.

³⁴For a complete overview of the sources, see Fitzmyer, *The One Who Is to Come*, 88–111.

³⁵Grabbe, “Seventy-Weeks Prophecy,” 606–608.

³⁶*J.W.* 6.5.4 §312 [Thackeray, LCL].

³⁷*J.W.* 6.5.4 §313 [Thackeray, LCL].

³⁸B. M. Metzger, “The Fourth Book of Ezra (Late First Century A.D.) with the Four Additional Chapters: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009), 520.

³⁹Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven*, 97; Fitzmyer, *The One Who Is to Come*, 122–124.

Essene messianic expectation and Daniel 9:24–27 converge explicitly in Melchizedek (11Q13), which predicts an eschatological jubilee in association with a Melchizedek figure: “And this [will] [happen] in the first week of the jubilee (that occurs) after [the] ni[ne] jubilees. And the D[ay of Atonement] i[s] the e[nd of] the tenth [ju]bilee.”⁴⁰

This jubilee is dated to the arrival of the “messenger” of Isaiah 52:7 who is identified with the “anointed of the spir[it]” (i.e. messiah) prophesied by “Dan[iel].”⁴¹ According to the editors of the critical edition, “The reading דןיאל [Dan[iel]] strongly suggests that the remainder of the line quotes part of Dan 9:25 or 26. The clause in Dan 9:25 עד משיח נגיד שבעים שבועה [until an anointed, a prince, it is seven weeks] seems quite appropriate and fits very well in the remaining space.”⁴²

Thus, “11QMelchizedek represents an eschatological text that interprets the restoration of Israel in Isa 61:1–3 within the framework of a sabbatical chronology that understands the 70 weeks of years in Daniel 9 in terms of jubilee years in Leviticus 25.”⁴³ Beckwith inferred that the messiah of Melchizedek was anticipated between 10 BC and AD 2, if the Essene chronology he reconstructs in Testament of Levi 17 is operating in the background of Melchizedek.⁴⁴ But this reconstruction must now be regarded as speculative.

Conclusion

The scholarly consensus that the interpretation of Daniel 9:24–27 resulted in first-century messianic expectation is supported by several independent lines of circumstantial evidence connecting the seventy-weeks prophecy and Jewish messianic expectation. It is also supported by the explicit link between the seventy weeks and the anticipated arrival of a messiah in Melchizedek. Josephus provides an independent line of circumstantial evidence that dates this expectation to the first century. Taken together, these provide sufficient evidence from Second Temple literature to warrant the theological conclusion that the seventy-weeks prophecy was intelligible, in principle, to those among whom it was fulfilled.

As Beckwith well notes, “This is a conclusion of importance for the study of the New Testament, since it gives a reason why Messianic expectation was strong

⁴⁰11Q13 II, 7-8 in DJD 23, 229.

⁴¹11Q13 II, 18 in DJD 23, 230.

⁴²Florentino García Martínez, Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, and Adam S. van der Woude, eds., *Qumran Cave 11.II: 11Q2–18, 11Q20–30*, DJD 23 (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1998), 232, translations from 229, 230 supplied in brackets.

⁴³Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven*, 96.

⁴⁴*Calendar and Chronology*, 232. See footnote 33 on the question of whether the Testament of Levi chronology is Essene.

at the time of Jesus's birth."⁴⁵ "Of course, contemporary Jewish writers had other religious concerns as well. But the popular expectation is very evident in the background of the Gospels."⁴⁶

Finally, of interest for further research by Adventist apologists may be Beckwith's observation that there is a numerical identity (three and a half) and thematic similarity ("Gentile possession of Jerusalem") in the final half-week of Daniel 9:27 and the forty-two months of Revelation 11:2. This could open up another line of argumentation for the interpretation of the 1,260 days as 1,260 years (year-days). For, as he argues, the time, times, and half a time in Revelation can be said to expand the final half-week of the seventy weeks into a subsequent, longer time period in the same way that the seventy weeks expand the seventy years of Jeremiah 29:10.⁴⁷ To wit, the week of years concept implied by seventy years (Jer 29:10) is the hermeneutical key by which the subsequent period can be calculated as seventy weeks of years (Dan 9:24). By the same recursive logic, does not the year-day concept implied by dividing the final week of the seventy weeks of years into two, three-and-a-half-day periods, *mutatis mutandis*, imply that the subsequent, numerically identical three-and-a-half-year period (Dan 7:25; Rev 11:2–3, 12:6, 14, and 13:5) should be calculated as consisting of a year for each day? Exegetes willing to bracket common assumptions about the historical context and dating of Daniel 7 in order to take a text-oriented approach could develop this interpretation.

⁴⁵Ibid., 232.

⁴⁶*Calendar and Chronology*, 232n24.

⁴⁷Ibid., 308–309.

**THE CONTRADICTORY INTERPRETATIONS OF
GENESIS 4:7—ELLEN G. WHITE VERSUS THE
THEOLOGY OF ORDINATION STUDY
COMMITTEE POSITION 1**

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Abstract

Reflecting a widespread tension throughout the world of biblical interpretation, Ellen G. White and the Theology of Ordination Study Committee Position 1 (TOSC1) propose contradictory interpretations of Genesis 4:7. Given the content of Genesis 4:7, which addresses issues relating to psychology and authority, which are often connected with Genesis 3:16 and gender, and its use by the TOSC1, the promotion of the TOSC1 interpretation of Genesis 4:7 within Seventh-day Adventist circles as well as broader Christianity will encourage further unpleasant confrontations concerning the issues related to the psychology of gender and authority in Scripture.

Keywords: psychology, gender, ordination, Cain, Abel, Adam, Eve, sin.

Introduction

Two of the more discussed and complex verses in Scripture are found in Genesis 4:7 and Genesis 3:16. In a popular modern English (NASB) rendering of them,

“If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.” (Gen 4:7)

To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.” (Gen 3:16)

The purpose of this study is not to break down all of the controverted interpretive and linguistic features of these two biblical verses (which are much debated), aside from noting that most scholars identify two of the key terms in

these passages as “desire” (*#šúqâ*) and “rule/master” (*māšal*). Rather, the purpose of this study is to shed some light on the significance of the biblical psychology of gender¹ revealed through these two passages in the light of the interpretations given to them by Ellen G. White and the recent Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC) papers published between 2012 and 2015 for the benefit of the General Conference delegates and lay members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.² Specifically, this article will point out a contradiction between White’s writings and the views shared in all of the published positions by the members of

¹Secular psychology is the science of behavior and mind, including conscious and unconscious phenomena, as well as feelings and thoughts. As a social science, it seeks to classify individuals into groups by establishing general patterns and principles describing the diversity of humanity. In such a task, certain “more functioning,” “less functioning,” exceptional, and abnormal behavioral and thought patterns may be identified, alongside a wide range of normative or typical patterns. To give an example of a normative issue of relevance to this study, secular psychology has determined that a majority of people are heterosexual in their orientation and behavior, with a minority expressing alternative sexual orientations. The question a biblical theologian and psychologist might ask, then, is this—does Scripture proscribe, predict, or expect heterosexual orientations to be “typical”? If it does, then Scripture provides data concerning this psychological question. As such, then, “biblical psychology” refers to the notion that Scripture provides data explaining or affirming certain ideal, normative, or abnormal features about the human mind, in either a sinless or sinful condition. For example, the supposition that men and women think “differently,” or that typically (or normatively) males and females are attracted to each other and not to their own gender, are questions that a psychology of Scripture might address. Other possible psychological features that theoretically could appear in Scripture might relate to basic personality distinctions—introversion or extroversion, etc. As will be discussed in the present study, the question will be raised whether or not Scripture provides specific data relating to whether or not men or women are more psychologically prone to a sinful propensity for the desire to lead or control other people, particularly their spouses.

²It should be briefly noted that the purpose of the TOSC, created by the administrators of the church, was to gather scholars and other influential figures together to determine the current perspectives held throughout the Adventist world, and to produce papers that could be used as resources for the delegates (and lay members) to consider prior to voting on a policy proposal related to the ordination of women under regional (divisional) jurisdiction in 2015. The TOSC was not to be considered a body with “power to act,” nor should its opinions be considered as anything other than those of its individual members. That is, whether a delegate supported or opposed the vote on the ordination of women should not be interpreted to mean that a delegate adhered to the specific biblical interpretation of a given paper within the TOSC.

the TOSC adhering to Position 1 (TOSC1),³ which opposes the ordination of women, concerning their exegesis of Genesis 4:7 and its relationship to Genesis 3:16.

However, despite the focus of the TOSC upon the issue of ordination, this article is not addressing ordination per se nor the issue of gender roles in ministry. Instead, this article is merely pointing out (1) a significant shortcoming in the scholarly rigor of a majority of the TOSC members who commented on these passages and (2) the potential implications of their interpretation. Notably, most of these scholars would normally acknowledge an awareness of White's commentary on a Scriptural passage, and they have not hesitated to cite her for support on other occasions where appropriate, in harmony with the Adventist Church's official position on her writings.⁴ Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the issue of the psychology of gender revealed in these two passages is of consequence in itself, even aside from the issues of ordination and gender roles,

³Specifically, the TOSC formed three major Positions. Position 1 opposed the ordination of women for positions of authority within the church, deeming it unbiblical, from their perspective. Position 2 interpreted Scripture as supporting the ordination of women to all ministry roles within the church. Position 3 emphasized that Scripture seems to indicate general or preferred natural gender roles that encourage male leadership but that in certain missional contexts and situations, it is acceptable for women to be ordained to leading positions of ministry.

⁴Seventh-day Adventists teach that "the Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. Her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the church. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested" ("Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists," Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2016, accessed July 11, 2018, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/sdafundamentalbeliefs>). Unfortunately, left implicit in such a statement is the possibility that her writings may (1) correct a widely accepted non-Adventist understanding of Scripture, or (2) provide clarity to an otherwise ambiguous passage. In either case, it is difficult to reconcile her submissive status to Scripture with her prophetic authority. This tension has not been "resolved" within Adventist scholarship. As such, it must be made clear that while White's writings are not to simply override or supersede Scripture's teachings, nor form the basis of doctrine, they do, nevertheless, at times offer what she herself claimed to be inspired insights upon difficult passages that Adventists take seriously as they conduct their exegetical studies—it may be that further study of the biblical languages and their historical contexts may affirm her interpretation. Yet, if not, in any case, it has been the general assumption that such controverted instances do not concern core or fundamental teachings that are not perhaps demonstrable through other passages of Scripture, that is, through a *tota Scriptura*. Rather, her own testimony always remained that "the Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony" (Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* [Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1958], 1:416).

and thus the issue of psychology addressed herein is worth discussing on its own merits if a common future understanding and harmony is to be hoped for within Adventism, let alone Christianity, concerning the issues pertaining to gender within the church context and society. It is also worth noting that the view of those adhering to TOSC1 on these passages is shared by many other scholars outside Seventh-day Adventist circles, and the relationship between the two verses has encouraged a complex variety of interpretations not shared in this article. However, below I will focus especially on describing the positions advanced in the TOSC papers and White's writings. In addition to focusing on issues relating to the psychology of gender and authority, I will also include a few further thoughts within the Adventist context concerning some broader theological issues relating to White's views on these passages.

The TOSC1's Understanding of Genesis 3:16 and 4:7

In the final *TOSC Report*⁵ issued after the June 2014 meetings, the authors for the section on Position 1 state,

Once [Adam and Eve's] relationship was broken and distorted by sin, it was necessary for God to enforce Adam's role by way of command. The principle itself had not changed, but the woman must now accept his "rule over" her (Gen 3:16), although *her new sin-borne desire was to rule over him (note the similar meaning of the terms in the close parallel a few verses later, in Gen 4:7)*. The change was . . . in moving from a harmonious, willing cooperation with Adam's leadership to a different relationship that would include tension within the human family between the two genders. As a result, harmony could only be preserved by the (now unnatural) submission of the woman to the man.⁶

The above commentary references an earlier TOSC paper by Paul Ratsara and Daniel Bediako, delivered July 2013—*Man and Woman in Genesis 1–3: Ontological Equality and Role Differentiation*.⁷ Ratsara and Bediako state the following as their interpretation of Genesis 3:16 and Genesis 4:7:

⁵*General Conference Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC) Report* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2014), accessed July 11, 2018, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/final-tosc-report.pdf>.

⁶*TOSC Report*, 43 (emphasis supplied).

⁷Paul S. Ratsara and Daniel K. Bediako, "Man and Woman in Genesis 1-3: Ontological Equality and Role Differentiation," Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, July 23, 2013, accessed July 11, 2018, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/man-and-woman-in-genesis-one-thru-three.pdf>. Note especially 39–42, 45n148. See also Bediako's further affirmation of this work in Daniel K. Bediako and Josiah B. Andor, "The Desire of the Woman: Genesis 3:16 Revisited," in *Journal of AILAS African Theological Association* 8, no. 1 (2018): 1–13.

The close proximity between 3:16 and 4:7 is reason enough to carefully compare the two passages. As in 3:16, 4:7 presents a tension between *ʔšūqâ* and *māšal* with striking structural similarity:

3:16 And against (*ʔel*) your man [is] your desire (*ʔšūqâ*); but he must rule (*māšal*) over you

4:7 And against (*ʔel*) you [is] its desire (*ʔšūqâ*); but you must rule (*māšal*) over it

In 4:7 sin’s “desire” (*ʔšūqâ*) and Cain’s “rule” (*māšal*) occur in a context where sin seeks to overpower Cain, but Cain is encouraged to rule over it. The woman’s “desire” (*ʔšūqâ*) and man’s “rule” (*māšal*) in 3:16 occur in a similar context where the woman’s desire is to have mastery over the man.⁸

One can plainly see here that Ratsara and Bediako are seeking to harmonize the parallels between the two passages, and juxtaposing Adam and Cain, respectively, against Eve and “sin,” placing Eve and her desire in a negative or unfavorable position.

Noteworthy is that Ratsara and Bediako’s view of July 2013 was generally shared, with some nuance, by Ingo Sorke in his July 2013 paper, *Adam, Where Are You? On Gender Relations*, as he focuses more on the “rule” than “desire.”⁹ There Sorke asserted,

In Gen 4:7, however, the use of the term [*māšal*] points to a more defined function: “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, *but you should rule over it.*” Here [*māšal*] “to rule over,” to dominate is a necessity for spiritual survival. It is in no way abusive or oppressive; in fact, to “rule over” is essential in mastering sin. In fact, Genesis 3:16 and Genesis 4:7 bear striking similarity:

Gen 3:16 וְאֵל-אִשְׁרָהּ תִּשְׁוָקָתָהּ וְהָיָא יְמִשְׁלֶיךָ

Your desire will be for your husband, and he should/will rule over you.

Gen 4:7 וְאֵלֶיךָ תִּשְׁוָקָתוֹ וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל-בּוֹ

Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.

Sin must be ruled over, or sin will rule over a person. *Thus the meaning of [māšal] in Genesis 3:16 is a male-focused domination as a guard against the desire for future disobedience*

⁸Ratsara and Bediako, “Man and Woman in Genesis 1-3,” 41.

⁹Ingo Sorke, “Adam, Where Are You? On Gender Relations,” Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, July 2013, 26, accessed July 11, 2018, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/adam,-where-are-you.pdf> (note also 23n86, where Sorke references the very article by Ellen White in the *Bible Echo* that will later contradict his own position taken on page 26 of his article, as will be discussed below).

and *sin*: the man's responsibility to guard against disobedience is renewed. The issue is not male dictatorial dominance but leadership-driven deliverance.¹⁰

Here Sorke endorses the same view as shared by Ratsara and Bediako concerning the meaning of *māšal*.

Ratsara, Bediako, and Sorke's interpretation was later concurred with in John W. Peters's January 2014 paper, *Restoration of the Image of God: Headship and Submission*.¹¹ Peters, citing Ratsara and Bediako,¹² similarly suggests that

strong evidence has been set forth that ʔšūqâ (desire) with the preposition 'el should be translated as "desire against" rather than "desire for" (with a different preposition 'al) as in Song of Solomon 7:10 [in which ʔšūqâ (desire) also appears with the preposition 'al, meaning for, "I am my beloved's, And his desire is for me"]. Thus the Fall did not bring about headship in marriage. The Fall brought about a distortion of previous roles, not the introduction of new roles. The distortion was that Eve would now rebel against her husband's authority, and Adam could misuse that authority to rule forcefully and even harshly over Eve. [In other words,] the woman's desire for mastery [over the man] is reversed by the authority bestowed on the man to "rule."¹³

Again, as can be seen here, Peters accepts Ratsara and Bediako's interpretation of Genesis 3:16 and Genesis 4:7, while further articulating its psychological implications for men and women as he sees them.

A detailed study of the TOSC papers reveals that the above interpretation of Genesis 3:16 and Genesis 4:7 is the only published, and thus certainly dominant, position existing amongst those adhering to Position 1. Yet, its influence extends beyond the individual official TOSC papers or the TOSC1 summary. For example, the above interpretation of Genesis 3:16 and Genesis 4:7 is also clearly articulated in the January 2014 document, *Evaluation of Egalitarian Papers*,¹⁴ authored by Gerhard Pfandl and cosigned by Daniel Bediako, Steven Bohr, Laurel and Gerard Damsteegt, Jerry Moon, Paul Ratsara, Ed Reynolds, Ingo Sorke, and Clinton Wahlen:

The Hebrew word *ʔshuqab* appears three times in the OT (Gen 3:16; 4:7; Song 7:11). In Genesis 4:7 God says to Cain, "And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire [*ʔshuqab*] is for you, but you must rule [*masbal*]

¹⁰Sorke, "Adam, Where Are You?," 26 (emphasis supplied).

¹¹John W. Peters, "Restoration of the Image of God: Headship and Submission," Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, January 2014, accessed July 11, 2018, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/restoration-of-the-image-of-god-headship-and-submission-john-peters.pdf>. Note especially 22n73–75.

¹²Peters, "Restoration of the Image of God," 22n74.

¹³Peters, "Restoration of the Image of God," 22n73 (emphasis supplied).

¹⁴Gerhard Pfandl et al., "Evaluation of Egalitarian Papers," Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2014, accessed July 11, 2018, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/evaluation-of-egalitarian-papers.pdf>.

over it” (Gen 4:7 ESV). Sin will seek to rule over Cain, but Cain is encouraged to rule over it. The woman’s “desire” (*f.sbuqab*) and man’s “rule” (*masha*) in 3:16 occur in a similar context. But now it is *the woman who desires to have mastery over the man*, a path which she had taken by having the man eat of the fruit, with devastating results. Adam was rebuked for having listened to the voice of his wife (3:17). *Eve is now told that although she may seek mastery over her husband, he is to rule over her*. Yet, this ruling is not to be a dictatorial rule of force, but a rule of love and care for the woman. Paul seems to have understood Genesis 3:16 in this way (1 Tim 2:13, 14). *There is no reason to go outside of the early chapters of Genesis to a much later and very different context such as the Song of Solomon for an understanding of f.sbuqab when Genesis itself is so clear*.

While 3:16 is directed at Eve, the same desire by some women to dominate men is seen more generally in the way they relate to male-based authority in the church (cf. 1 Tim 2:11-15), which is an extension of the family. This means that woman’s desire and man’s rule cannot be restricted to the marriage context alone.¹⁵

Once more, it appears clear that Pfandl et al. agreed with Ratsara and Bediako’s interpretation; although their original 2013 paper is not cited here, both of them also cosigned this document, and here they further explain the implications of the text as they see it, including its potential psychological implications for men and women, as Peters had also shared.

However, even the above works do not exhaust the extensive recent published attention addressing Genesis 3:16 and Genesis 4:7 by those adhering to the TOSC1 interpretation. Ratsara and Bediako’s view also appears cited favorably within an appeal organized by Gerard Damsteegt alongside various other individuals,¹⁶ representing the apparent broadest uncritical acceptance of this interpretation with many signatories, in response to an Andrews University

¹⁵Pfandl et al., “Evaluation of Egalitarian Papers,” 7 (emphasis supplied).

¹⁶“An Open Appeal from Faculty, Alumni, Students, and Friends of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary To Faculty of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary regarding the Recent Statement on the Unique Headship of Christ in the Church,” *Adventist Review*, October 2014, 6, accessed July 11, 2018, https://www.adventistreview.org/assets/public/news/2014-10/242011032-Appeal-to-the-Seminary-Faculty_1_.pdf. The signatories listed are as follows: Steven Bohr, Thomas R. Cusaack, Laurel Damsteegt, P. Gerard Damsteegt, Jay Gallimore, Michael Hasel, C. Raymond Holmes, James Howard, Don Macintosh, Phil Mills, Leroy Moore, Kevin Paulson, John W. Peters, Gerhard Pfandl, Eugene W. Prewitt, George Reid, Edwin E. Reynolds, Daniel Scarone, Dolores E. Slikkers, Ingo Sorke, Steve Toscano, Mario Veloso, Karl Wilcox, Robert Wilcox, and Dojcin Zivadinovic. Evidently, none of these individuals noticed or disagreed with Ratsara and Bediako’s interpretation of Gen 3:16 and Gen 4:7, such that the substance of the document was changed. Rather, notably, the appeal had only one academic footnote, and it referenced Ratsara and Bediako’s July 2013 paper affirmatively.

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary statement on headship.¹⁷ Further still, two other TOSC1 advocates, Clinton Wahlen and his wife Gina, in their recent book *Women's Ordination: Does it Matter?*,¹⁸ and David C. Read, in his positive review of the Wahlen's book,¹⁹ endorse the basic position outlined by Ratsara and Bediako.

What is remarkable about the above situation is that in no instance in any of the above works is Ellen White's interpretation of Genesis 4:7 mentioned even though she did offer an explicit interpretation on multiple occasions. Given that, to my knowledge, most of the above authors and signatories would esteem her opinion worthy of consideration, it is remarkable that over the few years that the TOSC discussion took place, White's clear interpretation was not explored nor incorporated into their scholarly interpretation of Genesis 4:7, which surely does have implications, as they all observed, for Genesis 3:16.

Contrary to the comment in Pfandl et al.'s interpretation, as will be presented below, it seems that Genesis 4 is *not* so clear. The negative understanding, and its psychological implications, that so many leaders of the TOSC1 have expressed concerning *ʿšūqâ* and its relationship to *māʿal* in Genesis 3:16 is not conclusive if Genesis 4:7 is cited for support, as all of the above papers have done, and Ellen White's writings are consulted and regarded with respect. Below I will share White's interpretation of Genesis 4:7 and also elaborate briefly on her interpretation's significance for both a biblical psychology of gender as well as for some additional broader theological issues.

¹⁷“On the Unique Headship of Christ in the Church: A Statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary” Andrews University, September 2014, accessed July 11, 2018, https://www.andrews.edu/sem/about/statements/9-19-14-updated_web_version-unique_headship_of_christ_final.pdf.

¹⁸Clinton Wahlen and Gina Wahlen, *Women's Ordination: Does It Matter?* (Silver Spring, MD: Bright Shores, 2015), 65. Endorsements of the book are penned by George W. Reid, Gerhard Pfandl, Sikhu Hlatshwayo, Ingo Sorke, and Shelley Quinn. The Wahlen's explain, “After the Fall, there would be a power struggle. God tells Eve that her desire will now be “toward” (*ʿel*) her husband (vs. 16). The Hebrew preposition *ʿel* can be translated either positively (‘for’) or negatively (‘against’). When it describes an action ‘of a hostile character,’ it should be translated ‘against.’ This meaning makes more sense in view of Genesis 4:7, which uses nearly the same wording. In that verse, God warns that sin’s desire would be to control Cain, but that he must rule over it. Similarly, in 3:16, God warns Eve that now, because of sin, ‘your desire will be against your husband’ (vs. 16). She will want to dominate and control him (as happened already in her urging him to eat the forbidden fruit)” (ibid).

¹⁹David Read, “Why Women’s Ordination Matters,” review of *Women's Ordination: Does It Matter?* by Clinton Wahlen and Gina Wahlen, *Advocate*, June 14, 2015, accessed July 11, 2018, <http://advocate.com/articles/2015/6/14/why-womens-ordination-matters>.

Ellen G. White's Understanding of Genesis 4:7

In contrast to the interpretive translation found in most popular Bible versions today, Ellen White does not support a rendering of Genesis 4:7b along the following lines: “Sin is crouching at the door; and its [sin’s] desire is for you, but you must master it [sin].” In such an interpretive translation, especially when contrasted with Genesis 3:16 as noted above, the “desire” is the action of some *metaphorical beast of sin or some spiritual influence of sin*, and our rule over sin, like Cain’s, should be the same as a man’s rule over his wife. Such a juxtaposition places Eve in an unfavorable pairing with “sin,” suggesting some rather negative psychological implications for women and gender relations—are women truly *specifically* suffering under either a curse or fallen sinful condition that makes them somehow more naturally rebellious against the wishes of their husbands in a differentiated way from how all sinful humans prefer self-interest over caring for another person?

It so happens that White directly addressed and interpreted Genesis 4:7 (interestingly using her King James translation, which in this instance happens to preserve some subtle Hebrew gender cues absent in most modern English translations²⁰) on multiple occasions, with several other comments elsewhere supporting her alternative view. For example, in an article entitled “Abel’s ‘More Excellent Sacrifice,’” printed in the *Signs of the Times* in Australia, White wrote,

When Cain saw that his offering was rejected, he was angry with the Lord and with Abel; he was angry that God did not accept man’s substitute in place of the sacrifice divinely ordained, and angry with his brother for choosing to obey God instead of joining in rebellion against Him. Notwithstanding Cain’s disregard of the divine command, God did not leave him to himself; but He condescended to reason with the man who had shown himself so unreasonable. And the Lord said unto Cain, “Why art thou wrath? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.” Genesis 4:6, 7. The choice lay with Cain himself. If he would trust to the merits of the promised Saviour, and would obey God’s requirements, he would enjoy His favour. But should he persist in unbelief and transgression, he would have no ground for complaint because he was rejected by the Lord.

Abel’s offering had been accepted; but this was because he had done in every particular as God required him to do. *If Cain would correct his error, he would not be deprived of his birthright: Abel would not only love him as his brother, but, as the younger, would*

²⁰For a technical discussion and interpretation of the Hebrew that supports White’s overall interpretation, see Joachim Azevedo, “At the Door of Paradise: A Contextual Interpretation of Gen 4:7,” *BN 100* (1999): 45–59.

*be subject to him. Thus the Lord declared to Cain, "Unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."*²¹

Here one can see that White is clearly juxtapositioning Cain with Abel, not Cain with "sin" as a metaphorical beast or spiritual influence. Interestingly, this passage from White also appears in the 1896 edition of the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*,²² although it is absent from the earlier and more widely reprinted 1890 edition of the same general book.²³

As can be seen above, White observes that the masculine pronoun "his" in English matches best with Abel as the antecedent, not a "beast of sin." Although she probably was not aware of it, the Hebrew noun for "sin" (*khata'ab* or *khatta't*, which means sin or sin/purification offering) here is feminine, and the suffix for "desire" is masculine, and thus in this instance the King James rendering using a masculine pronoun is a legitimate translation although not a common one today. Importantly, however, White did not share her above interpretation on merely one occasion. White had earlier written an article entitled "Cain and Abel Tested," in *The Signs of the Times*:

The Lord was not ignorant of the feelings of resentment cherished by Cain; but he would have Cain reflect upon his course, and, becoming convinced of his sin, repent, and set his feet in the path of obedience. There was no cause for his wrathful feelings toward either his brother or his God; it was his own disregard of the plainly expressed will of God that had led to the rejection of his offering. Through his angel messenger, God said to this rebellious, stubborn man: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." "If thou doest well"—not having your own way, but obeying God's commandments, coming to him with the blood of the slain victim, thus showing faith in the promised Redeemer, who, in the fullness of time, would make an atonement for guilty man, that he might not perish, but have eternal life.

"And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." Abel's offering had been accepted; but this was because Abel had done in every particular as God

²¹Ellen G. White, "Abel's 'Excellent Sacrifice,'" *Signs of the Times [Australia]*, April 8, 1912, 230 (emphasis supplied).

²²Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets, or the Great Conflict Between Good and Evil as Illustrated in The Lives of Holy Men of Old* (London, UK: International Tract Society, 1896), 59–60. This edition, absent from the popular Ellen G. White Research CD-ROM available from the Ellen G. White Estate, is available for free online in PDF form at books.google.com, accessed July 11, 2018, <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=UI0xAQAAMAAJ&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA25>.

²³The edition that one is most likely to see in book form today is a reprint of Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets: The Conflict of the Ages Illustrated in the Lives of Holy Men of Old* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1890, 1913). This version excludes White's more detailed comments on Cain and Abel, as seen above in the later revision.

required him to do. *This would not rob Cain of his birthright. Abel would love him as his brother, and as the younger, be subject to him.*²⁴

As can be seen clearly here, White sees the angel's message to Cain in connection with the issue of Cain's status as the firstborn possessing a birthright. It seems this is at least partially the reason Cain is frustrated that Abel is not following his lead. Yet the angel admonishes, if Cain will do what is correct, then Abel will willingly submit to Cain's brotherly leadership.

The above two instances of White's interpretation may be the clearest, but they are not exhaustive of the times she expressed her understanding of Genesis 4:7. Even earlier, suggesting a consistent viewpoint throughout her life, White commented on the context of Genesis 4:7 in her book *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 3, sharing that "Cain being the eldest, would not listen to his brother,"²⁵ and accordingly, after Cain experienced the rejection of his sacrifice,

the angel inquires of him the reason of his anger, and informs him that if he does well, and follows the directions God has given, he will accept him and respect his offering. But if he will not humbly submit to God's arrangements, and believe and obey him, he cannot accept his offering. The angel tells Cain that it was no injustice on the part of God, or partiality shown to Abel; but that it was on account of his own sin, and disobedience of God's express command, why he could not respect his offering—and *if he would do well he would be accepted of God, and his brother should listen to him, and he should take the lead, because he was the eldest.*²⁶

Although White does not quote Genesis 4:7 on this occasion, merely alluding to it, as can be seen, she still clearly and consistently held to an interpretation of Genesis 4:7 that placed the relational tension of "desire and rule" between Cain and Abel, not Cain and "sin."

Given the obvious textual parallels between Genesis 4:7 and Genesis 3:16, there is clearly more to be said concerning Genesis 4:7 and its connection with Genesis 3:16, as noted so often above by the TOSC1 advocates. In a contrast that cannot but serve as a critical insight into White's understanding of Genesis 4:7 and its psychological implications for Genesis 3:16, note the following wording in two passages from White:

Cain invites Abel to walk with him in the fields, and he there gives utterance to his unbelief and his murmuring against God. He claims that he was doing well in presenting his offering; and the more he talks against God, and impeaches his justice and mercy in rejecting his own offering and accepting that of his brother Abel, the more bitter are his feelings of anger and resentment.

²⁴Ellen G. White, "Cain and Abel Tested," *Signs of the Times*, December 16, 1886, 753 (emphasis supplied).

²⁵Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864), 3:48.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 48–49 (emphasis supplied).

Abel defends the goodness and impartiality of God, and places before Cain the simple reason why God did not accept his offering.

The fact that Abel ventured to disagree with him and even went so far as to point out his errors, astonished Cain. It was a new experience; for Abel had hitherto submitted to the judgment of his elder brother; and Cain was enraged to the highest degree that Abel did not sympathize with him in his disaffection. Abel would *yield* when *conscience* was not concerned; but when the course of the God of Heaven was brought in question, and Cain spoke derisively of the sacrifice of faith, Abel was courageous to defend the truth.²⁷

Now notice White's words in a personal letter she wrote to Mary Loughborough concerning her public behavior toward her husband John in 1861:

I wish in all sisterly and motherly kindness to kindly warn you upon another point. I have often noticed before others a manner you have in speaking to John in rather a dictating manner, the tone of your voice sounding impatient. Mary, others notice this and have spoken of it to me. It hurts your influence.

We women must remember that God has placed us subject to the husband. He is the head and our judgment and views and reasonings must agree with his if possible. If not, the preference in God's Word is given to the husband where it is not a matter of *conscience*. We must *yield* to the head. I have said more perhaps upon this point than necessary. Please watch this point.²⁸

There are many conclusions and further questions one might draw from the above insights from White. I will not pursue them all here, except to note that both wives and younger brothers are to be more willing to "yield" except in cases of "conscience." As such, in any case, White did clearly view the psychological dynamics between husbands and wives as parallel in some way to the psychological dynamics of older and younger brothers. Noting that Ratsara and Bediako helpfully observed that the preposition 'el precedes the object of the "desire" in both 4:7 and 3:16, and then noting that White considers the "desire" a *positive* thing in 4:7, indeed it could be considered a reward to Cain for doing the right thing that Abel will desire, or return again with his love toward him, hints that both desires should be read *positively*, not negatively as Ratsara and Bediako unfortunately concluded.

What is clear from White's collective interpretation of both passages is that God did not uniquely place women under some unique psychological curse wherein they would suffer some gender specific negative "desire," making them "subject" to men in some unique way as women, as is asserted in the TOSC1 papers. This is because identical language is used for both passages. The curse upon the woman's "desire" uses the same language as that which describes Abel's

²⁷White, "Cain and Abel Tested," 753 (emphasis supplied).

²⁸Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), 6:126 (emphasis supplied).

“desire” in a *positive* way. How the husband’s headship in marriage and the birthright of the firstborn son relate precisely, and the potential changes that the Fall may have wrought upon both these institutions, are matters for another study. That these two narratives and their parallel wording (noted by all scholars) ties them so closely together does invite further research down some interpretive lines that the TOSC1 members have not thus far pursued.

Unfortunately, the TOSC1 interpretation of Genesis 4:7, alongside its implications for Genesis 3:16, is incompatible with White’s view, and encourages a disharmony between the genders above and beyond the natural disharmony that sin creates between people of all genders, relations, and ages, as is brought out forcefully by the narrative of Cain and Abel. The negative juxtaposition of sin desiring to rule Cain and Eve desiring to rule Adam has serious implications for how we understand human psychology, which is manifested in innumerable subtle ways within various human cultures. It should not need a plain explanation, but I will offer one for clarity’s sake. In cultures where male domination over (and possibly abuse against) women is common and condoned, the last thing men (let alone Christian men) need to hear is that their wives are suffering under some specific condition (either a natural sinful one, or worse, a divine curse) inspiring them with a desire to rebel against their husbands. The notion that husbands should stand vigilantly prepared to put their wives in their “proper place” when they inevitably rebel, given that they can hardly resist instigating such rebellions, is in itself a very problematic supposition, even an evil idea. It encourages the notion that any desire of a woman to lead in *any* way in a context involving men is sinful, in a way *distinctly unique to women*, which is an incredible argument that short-circuits any serious discussion about the nature and presence of sinfulness in men and women, as well as the leadership abilities of women in general, including Ellen White. Rather, White offered the following counsel to such dictatorial men: “Never utter the word that the husband is the head of the wife.”²⁹

²⁹Ellen G. White, *Adventist Home* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1952), 117. The seriousness of the situation is illustrated, in part, through White’s comment that “when God made man He made him rule over the earth and all living creatures. So long as Adam remained loyal to Heaven, all nature was in *subjection* to him. But when he rebelled against the divine law, the inferior creatures were in rebellion against his rule” (White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 59), and thus no longer in any willing subjection; man’s rule over the animals must now be imposed. Thus the TOSC1 view (unintentionally) virtually places Eve in the same position as the animals—in peaceful subjection before the Fall but in rebellion after the Fall, when man’s headship must be imposed. Such a comparison is a logical outgrowth of the TOSC1 position that places Eve in a negative conceptual relationship to sin. This view is, in fact, dangerous because it contrasts Eve not only with sin but also with the position of animals, lowering the dignity of her humanity. Furthermore, because within the TOSC1 view Eve is placed in subjection before *and* after the Fall, this makes her position comparatively *worse* than the animals after the Fall since she is now both in a divinely

Of course, it should be pointed out that not all of the negative implications of the TOSC1 position were necessarily intended by the various advocates of the TOSC1, such as in the papers by authors not cited. Some may have simply not thought it through completely nor considered precisely how their stance *might* be understood by others. In any case, this study shows the significance of such considerations and why one must be careful to consider of what implications may follow from one's conclusions.

*Ellen G. White's Understanding of Eve's
Curse and Gender Equality*

The subjects of gender distinctions and roles in marriage, the church, and society are very complicated matters that this paper is not specifically addressing. Yet there is one additional point that must be mentioned here on the timing, nature, and purpose of the "subjection" that Eve was placed under at the time of God's curse upon her in Genesis 3:16 in connection with the view advanced about this by advocates of the TOSC1. Given that Eve's subjection is proximally and thematically related to Genesis 4:7, and it also contradicts a specific interpretation given to it by White, it is worth addressing briefly.

In the highly influential TOSC1 paper by Ratsara and Bediako, the following quote from White is given:

In the creation God had made her the equal of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God—in harmony with His great law of love—they would ever have been in harmony with each other; but sin had brought discord, and now their union could be maintained and harmony preserved only by submission on the part of the one or the other. Eve had been the first in transgression; and she had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion, contrary to the divine direction. It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned, and she was now placed in subjection to her husband.³⁰

This quote is interpreted by Ratsara and Bediako to mean that during the curse of Genesis 3:16, God "now . . . placed" Eve "in subjection," in other words, God *returned* Eve to a position of subjection. In Ratsara and Bediako's words, "before the entrance of sin, there was no need for the woman's subjection to be imposed" because it occurred naturally, but after the Fall, "[to impose subjection upon Eve] was the only way for the divinely-instituted creation order to be maintained," thus Eve "was now placed in subjection."³¹ This reading, however, appears clearly incompatible with White's other statement on this narrative, demonstrating a

imposed subjection *and* is cursed with a female-specific desire to rebel, making her psychological condition unenviably pitiable.

³⁰White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890), 58.

³¹Ratsara and Bediako, "Man and Woman in Genesis 1-3," 43.

consistent disengagement between the TOSC1 and White's view on the pertinent passages in Genesis.

While there may be some ambiguity to White's commentary on Genesis 3:16 in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, her interpretation of Genesis 3:16 in *Testimonies*, volume 3, is quite clear.

When God created Eve, He designed that she should possess neither inferiority nor superiority to the man, but that in all things she should be his equal. The holy pair were to have no interest independent of each other; and yet each had an individuality in thinking and acting. But after Eve's sin, as she was first in the transgression, the Lord told her that Adam should rule over her. She was to be in subjection to her husband, and this was a part of the curse.³²

In other words, White's interpretation of Genesis 3:16 is actually very direct and to the point. Eve was an equal of Adam's *before* the Fall, but in some mysterious manner made unequal or inferior to him *after* the Fall, in a way that seems to parallel Abel's relationship to Cain, which also takes place in a post-Fall context. In any case, Eve's subjection is not delineated in some gender specific way in the biblical text, insofar as Abel is subjected to Cain with identical language—in both cases, their close matrimonial-familial relational connection seems to be of greater importance than any psychological principle concerning gender. Yet the point at present is that the TOSC1 view, wherein Eve was *returned* to subjection through the words, "he shall rule over you," is incompatible with White's interpretation of Genesis 3:16, and the TOSC1 error is a compounded one that includes a contradiction with White's interpretation of Genesis 4:7.

Other SDA and TOSC Interpretations of Genesis 4:7

As can be seen above, the TOSC1 advocates frequently opined upon their interpretation of Genesis 4:7 and its potential application to Genesis 3:16. However, the TOSC1 advocates were not the only ones to offer commentary on Genesis 4:7 within the TOSC. In this section, I will highlight the other two TOSC documents or papers to offer an interpretation of Genesis 4:7, and then I will briefly highlight one much earlier but well-known work from M. L. Andreasen, which appears to have set the popular but unfortunate precedent for ignoring White's interpretation within the Adventist context.

The first example would be from the Trans-European Division's Biblical Research Institute document, "The Mission of God through the Ministry of the Church: A Biblical Theology of Ordination—With Particular Attention to the

³²Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 3:484.

Ordination of Women” (2013),³³ which was submitted to the TOSC. Unfortunately, Bertil Wiklander et al. also somehow overlooked Ellen White’s interpretation.³⁴ Their suggestion is that the “sin/serpent ‘desires to have Cain’, but he must ‘take charge of the sin/serpent by offering a right sacrifice.’”³⁵ While this is a popular interpretation, and similar to the one advanced by advocates of TOSC1 even though Wiklander applies his understanding of it differently, it is still incompatible with White’s view and lacks the positive undertones that White’s view encourages concerning how Cain and Abel’s relationship could have been restored to harmony within the context of a fallen world.

However, the TOSC paper by Position 2 advocate Richard M. Davidson, who supports the ordination of women, provides a breath of fresh air for this study. He remarkably represents the *only* TOSC member who acknowledges and utilizes an awareness of White’s interpretation of Genesis 4:7, including a more likely application of its meaning for Genesis 3:16. Davidson’s paper, “Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors? Old Testament Considerations,”³⁶ offers a penetrating review of the literature and interpretations for Genesis 4:7 and Genesis 3:16. For his interpretation of Genesis 4:7, Davidson, concurring with fellow Adventist scholars Joachim Azevedo, and also more recently, Jacques Doukhan, suggests that the best translation of Genesis 4:7 would be, “a purification-offering [a male sacrificial animal] lies down at the door [of the Garden], and to you will be his [Abel’s] desire and you will rule [again as the firstborn] over him [your brother].”³⁷

³³Bertil Wiklander et al., “The Mission of God through the Ministry of the Church: A Biblical Theology of Ordination—With Particular Attention to the Ordination of Women,” Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, November 2013, accessed July 11, 2018, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/trans-european-division-brc-report.pdf>. The following individuals also contributed significantly to the document: Audrey Andersson, Jan Barna, Daniel Duda, Raafat Kamal, Janos Kovacs-Biro, Laurence Turner, and Cedric Vine. Unfortunately, it seems that none of these individuals were aware of White’s interpretation of Gen 4:7.

³⁴Wiklander et al., “The Mission of God through the Ministry of the Church,” 200–201.

³⁵Wiklander et al., “The Mission of God through the Ministry of the Church,” 201.

³⁶Richard M. Davidson, “Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors? Old Testament Considerations,” Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, July 2013, accessed July 11, 2018, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/should-women-be-ordained-as-pastors.pdf>. Note esp. 74n100, 75n117, 76n129, 77n130. Davidson does not cite White in this paper, but he has long been aware of White’s interpretation and has noted her contribution elsewhere, such as in Richard M. Davidson, “Shame and Honor in the Beginning: A Study of Genesis 4,” in *Shame & Honor: Presenting Biblical Themes in Shame & Honor Contexts*, ed. Bruce L. Bauer (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, 2014), 43–76.

³⁷See Azevedo, “At the Door of Paradise,” 45–59, 59; and also Davidson, “Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors?,” 76n129. For another recent treatment of this passage that generally concurs with Azevedo, see Jacques B. Doukhan, *Genesis*, Seventh-day

This view is very much in harmony with White's overall commentary on the relevant passages, as will be seen below. Concerning Genesis 3:16, Davidson draws the logical conclusion that God *blessed/cursed* women with a loving desire *for* (possibly including, though not necessarily exclusively, sexual desire) their husbands *in spite of sin* while placing women under their husbands to preserve harmony in a world where many kinds of minor disagreements beyond moral issues would exist.³⁸ This interpretation also concurs with White's understanding that Eve's punishment would still serve as a blessing to them both if followed.³⁹ In other words, Eve was cursed into a position of subordination in Genesis 3:16, but God still intended this new situation, which resulted in the headship of the husband, to result in a blessing to them both if both the husband and wife would first submit to God.

At the same time, however, it must also be observed that certain authority or governance privileges, in the matrimonial-familial context or other secular/civic contexts, are not necessarily fully equivalent to spiritual or "religious authority,"⁴⁰

Adventist International Bible Commentary (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2016), 103–107, 119–121. Here Doukhan has shifted his view of the Hebrew in such a way as to be more in harmony with White, in contrast to his earlier article "The Subordination of Women Revisited: A Contextual and Intertextual Exegesis of Genesis 3:16," in *Meeting with God on the Mountains: Essays in Honor of Richard M. Davidson*, ed. Jiří Moskala (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 2016), 7–20.

³⁸Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 13–80, esp. 55–80.

³⁹"It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned, and she was now placed in subjection to her husband. Had the principles joined in the law of God been cherished by the fallen race, this sentence, though growing out of the results of sin, would have proved a blessing to them; but man's abuse of the supremacy thus given him has too often rendered the lot of woman very bitter and made her life a burden" (White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* [1890], 58–59).

⁴⁰Ellen White makes plain in her account of the rebellion of Korah that the priestly office and authority were to be distinguished from civil authority. That is, the Hebrew people in the wilderness were a theocratic or "religious state," led by Moses as their civil administrator, while Aaron and his house received what had formerly belonged to the firstborn son of every family after Abraham—namely, the responsibility of the priesthood. Both types of offices, the chief administrators and the high priest and other priests, were further distinguished from the prophetic office, which had its own authority and which had been demonstrated by Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, the latter two of which also had some civil authority. Previously, Abraham had held both the priestly and civil administrative offices together, but under the new nation of Israel, they were to be divided. Notably, while God recognized that there must be a position for human administration and judgments, God ideally intended no kingly office to be held at the human level of civic authority. Why this is interesting is because White does refer to husbands and wives as kings and queens, creating a contrast between the family and the religious nation. The complex division of authority God intended within the nation was

especially after Christ's time on earth. The roles of judge/ruler, prophet, priest, bishop/minister, elder, and husband are not synonymous or identical, and without any question, women occupied at least two of the above positions. That is to say, it is problematic to derive any rigid application from the above to contemporary ministry contexts.

The last interpretation by an Adventist that I wish to briefly note is from M. L. Andreasen. In his book, *The Sanctuary Service*, Andreasen suggests, in what would be a long-lasting interpretation within Adventist circles, that "sin" desires us as it did Cain, and we must "rule over it"⁴¹ as Cain was admonished to do. Why this particular interpretation, which is somewhat reflected in the TOSC1, is problematic, especially in relationship to some of the more negative aspects of last generation theology and perfectionism that Andreasen encouraged, I will briefly expound on below because they directly contrast with White's more extended interpretation of Genesis 4:7.

Genesis 4:7 and Righteousness by Faith

The message of Genesis 4:1–16, as White understands it, offers more theological significance and is worthy of greater consideration than it seems most of her readers have previously observed. Below I will share some additional poignant quotations from White to further flesh out the context surrounding Genesis 4:7, as shared above, that supports the general interpretations of Azevedo, Davidson, and Doukhan.

Put briefly, already within a context of sin, the message to Cain that Abel would desire, or simply return toward, a position of loving and listening to Cain is a message of *reward* to Cain. It is the angel's method of encouraging Cain to do the right thing. If Cain did what was *right*, Abel would be of a mind (psychologically)

seen repeatedly throughout the Old and New Testaments. Of course, Christ occupies the only true union of these three authoritative spheres. What remains unclear is how these three spheres or offices continue in the New Testament era within the church. Arguably, the minister or "bishop" occupies none of them exclusively as they are understood in the Old Testament. That is, because there are no systematic meritorious rituals performed and we reject sacramentalism, it would seem there is also no true civil authority over members by any religious leaders in our secular context. The prophetic gift is determined by God alone, and clearly women can be chosen for this. Conversely, while the husband is granted certain limited matrimonial-familial authority over the wife, this does not necessarily entail any broader limitations of women in civil offices nor any specific spiritual, religious, or prophetic authority over women by virtue of gender. See the comments in White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890), 141, 382, 395–396, 603–606; White, *Adventist Home*, 115–118; and Ellen G. White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1989), 27–31.

⁴¹M. L. Andreasen, *The Sanctuary Service*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1947), 15–16.

to naturally follow his elder brother Cain's lead and listen to him with brotherly love. If Cain would *not* do what was right, he would lose his natural psychologically conditioned leadership privileges as the firstborn—his little brother would no longer look up to him. But more can be said concerning the context of Genesis 4:7 that White brings to light.

There is a deeper layer to the elder brother versus younger brother dynamic at work here in White's understanding of this passage. Interestingly, she provides direct insight into the object of Cain's selfish pride—a lack of willingness to be dependent *upon Abel*. White penned,

The Lord gave Cain and Abel directions regarding the sacrifice they were to bring Him. Abel, a keeper of sheep, obeyed the Lord's command, and brought a lamb as his offering. This lamb, as it was slain, represented the Lamb of God, who was to be slain for the sins of the world. Cain brought as an offering the fruit of the ground, his own produce. *He was not willing to be dependent on Abel for an offering. He would not go to him for a lamb.* He thought his own works perfect, and these he presented to God.⁴²

Here it is clear that White does see significance in the occupations of Cain and Abel. Only the younger brother, Abel, was able to provide a lamb for Cain. And this *dependence* upon his younger brother Abel stoked the flames of hatred as much as did the fact that Abel would not follow Cain, the elder brother's, example.

This was not the only time White offered such an interpretation of Cain's need. About a year later, she again wrote,

Cain knew that God desired him to bring a lamb without blemish. But he was a tiller of the ground, and he did not wish to *add to his offering a lamb of his brother's flock*. . . . [Cain] was angry that the offering of Abel, his younger brother, had been accepted, while his had been rejected. He was angry with Abel for maintaining that God is just.⁴³

One can see here that White again clearly interprets Genesis 4 in such a way to include Abel's occupation as a shepherd of sheep as significant. Cain had no lamb to offer without asking Abel for one.

The above passages are perhaps more clearly understood if the ambiguous meaning of "sin" is interpreted, as Azevedo, Davidson, and Doukhan suggest, as "sin/purification-offering."⁴⁴ Thus the key point in the angel's message to Cain was that Abel's lamb offering was at the door or "gate of Paradise" awaiting his

⁴²Ellen G. White, "The True and the False," *Signs of the Times*, March 21, 1900, 178 (emphasis supplied).

⁴³Ellen G. White, "The Love that is of God," *Signs of the Times*, December 25, 1901, 818 (emphasis supplied).

⁴⁴Davidson, "Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors?," 76n129.

use of it if Cain would but submit to Abel's counsel.⁴⁵ That is, in the light of White's commentary and a careful analysis of the Hebrew and overall context, it should be considered possible that Genesis 4:7 is indeed best understood as follows: "If you do well Cain, will you not be lifted up? As you have not done well, fix the problem with the sacrificial lamb purification-offering that Abel has brought for you that is lying there stretched out by the door to Eden. Remember, after you correct your mistake Abel's desire will return to being for you as the older brother, and then you will again rule Abel as the eldest."⁴⁶

In any case, the above interpretation by White matters because it alters our theology, our psychology of gender and leadership, as well as our understanding of the nature of sin.⁴⁷ In other words, put simply, *we cannot rule over sin*. We submit to Christ, who takes away our sin, so we can rule over self through sanctified self-control. God wants to return us to a state of sanctified self-control. In the Genesis 4:7 context, Cain's ability to resist and avoid sin depended on his submission to and use of Abel's lamb offering (representing Christ), not any assertion of self over "sin" that would lead to ruling sin in any manner. Indeed, I have no idea what this would actually mean, taken literally, especially if applied to the context of Genesis 3:16 as so many have done.

To more clearly explain the above, it is necessary to return to the implications that an interpretation of Genesis 4:7 has upon Genesis 3:16, which will provide some poignant reminders of why interpreting Genesis 4:7 correctly should modify our understanding of the nature of sin as well as any biblical psychology of gender concerning the use of "desire" in Genesis 3:16. To put it plainly, ruling sin like men rule their wives is a *very* poor juxtaposition, the opposite of Christ's sacrificial headship over the church. This is because trying to "rule" a present and active sin or temptation, just as Eve was surely present and active in Adam's life, is like trying to control how often one steals—such as only on Tuesdays or when one does not think they will get caught. Given the active context of sin in Cain's life

⁴⁵"At the cherubim-guarded gate of Paradise the glory of God was revealed, and hither came the first worshippers. Here their altars were reared, and their offerings presented. It was here that Cain and Abel had brought their sacrifices, and God had condescended to communicate with them" (White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* [1890], 83–84).

⁴⁶I acknowledge the above rendering is disputable. Here I offer yet another alternative translation of Gen 4:7 that still better fits the Hebrew: "If you do well Cain, will you not be lifted up? Because you have not done well, the [inert and incomplete, i.e. *sinful*] sin-offering that [God's gaze rejected] is lying there stretched out by the door to Eden. Yet if you correct your mistake, then afterward Abel's desire will be for you, and you will then rule Abel again."

⁴⁷See the analysis of Gen 3:16 and Gen 4:7 by Michael F. Younker, "Rethinking Eve's Curse: The Biblical Psychology Behind the Gender Wars," *The Compass Magazine*, July 8, 2015, accessed July 11, 2018, <https://thecompassmagazine.com/blog/the-biblical-psychology-behind-the-gender-wars>.

(his deficient sacrifice and feelings of resentment and jealousy), the above analogy may be all too apropos. We do not want to rule over continuous feelings of resentment and jealousy; we want to *rid* ourselves of these feelings—the question is, how?

To rule over something assumes its *presence* and *activity*. Recall that Cain's only recorded sin in Genesis 4 was his neglect of an acknowledgment for the need of Christ—he was too proud to need anyone else (Christ or his brother). However, the actual Hebrew text points toward a very different theological point, alluded to above, that highlights sanctification by faith and its immediate and continuing effects upon our behavior. Thus, the very popular but likely mistranslation of the Hebrew in Genesis 4:7 may have contributed greatly to unfortunate views of perfectionism throughout Christian history, including aspects of the work of Andreasen. However, I believe Ellen White understood it best when she wrote,

The time has come when it is for our eternal interest to believe in Christ. 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' He is 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' He says, 'I will write My law in their hearts.' In those who come to Him in faith He will create a divine principle of holiness which will rule in the soul, enlightening the understanding and captivating the affections.⁴⁸

Christ desires that through him we rule ourselves by becoming free from sin, not rule sin. The issue here is not whether or not we can be obedient—it is the method and person through which we can be obedient and be regarded as such.

Although a direct link between Genesis 4:7 and Genesis 3:16 is not made by White and must remain tentative, were they to be compared in light of her interpretations of both verses above, it would appear that, within the context of a fallen world, *if* a husband follows the Lord and *depends upon* and highly regards his wife, God assures him that his wife who *also* submits to God will *also* lovingly submit to her husband over lesser matters in our messy sinful world. However, if the husband does not follow God's counsel, he cannot expect that his wife will or should willingly yield her judgment to him, particularly over that which relates to spiritual or moral matters where conscience is concerned. Furthermore, any extended application of these principles, from within the matrimonial-familial context of husbands and wives and siblings, to beyond, such as in the church, must be advanced cautiously and are not directly warranted from the context of these passages alone.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Ellen G. White, "The Touch of Faith," *Signs of the Times*, October 25, 1899, 691.

⁴⁹The context of this study warrants one additional specific comment. TOSC1 supporter Edwin Reynolds quotes Samuele Bacchiocchi to claim that "the writings of Paul do not assert the subordination of all females to all males but the subordination of females under their proper heads. In the home, the proper head is the husband or father. . . . In the church family, the proper head is not all males but the appointed male leadership of

*Additional Thoughts concerning Ellen G. White
on Genesis 3:16 and 4:7 within the Context of the TOSC*

The Bible does not provide gender specific psychological insights on Genesis 3:16 if one compares it to Genesis 4:7, as many scholars have done. Importantly, although any references to church leadership are absent from these verses, it is also clear that the psychology implied behind the phrases “desiring after” and

the elder or elders, who serve in the *role of father* to the entire church, both male and female (see 1 Tim 3:2-5)” (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], 98, quoted in Edwin Reynolds, “Biblical Hermeneutics and Headship in First Corinthians,” Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, July 2013, 32n73 [emphasis supplied], accessed July 11, 2018, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/biblical-hermeneutics-and-headship-in-first-corinthians.pdf>).

However, this again appears to contradict Ellen White concerning the use and role of the concept of “father” in the church. She shared, “The oft-repeated ‘rabbi’ was very acceptable to the ear, but Jesus warned his disciples against this. He said to them: ‘But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.’

“By these words Christ meant that no man is to place his spiritual interest under another, as a child is guided and directed by his earthly father. This spirit, whenever encouraged, has led to a desire for ecclesiastical superiority, and has always resulted in the injury of those who have been trusted, and addressed as ‘father.’ It confuses the sense of the sacredness of the prerogatives of God” (Ellen G. White, “Denouncing the Pharisees,” *Review and Herald*, February 22, 1898, 117). Elsewhere White again affirmed, “Jesus also revealed their vanity in loving to be called of men Rabbi, meaning master. He declared that such a title did not belong to men, but only to Christ. Priests, scribes and rulers, expounders of the law and administrators of it, were all brethren, children of one God. Jesus would impress upon the minds of the people that they were to give no man a title of honor, indicating that he had any control of their conscience or faith” (Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy* [Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1878], 3:60). White’s point is clear—no man serves in the role of a “father” to the church in any sense corresponding to the true concept of what a father is, spiritually, to a child. “Let each member of the church be a living, active agent for God, both in the church and out of it. We must all be educated to be independent, not helpless and useless. Let it be seen that Christ, not the minister, is the head of the church” (Ellen G. White, “The Most Effective Agent for God,” *Signs of the Times*, January 27, 1890, 50). As such, the special role of the biological father and mother to their children is not simply “spiritually” reproduced in the church; rather, there *is* a distinct spiritual headship of the father in relation to the mother and their children that is unique to the family and not reproduced in the church. Thus, if there *is* a unique fatherhood within the family that is *not* in the church, then it is not clear in what sense the three types of authority that exist in the Old Testament or New Testament—civil administration (or kingly), priest/bishop, and prophetic—relate to fatherhood and headship. It may be that fatherhood has nothing to do with any of them directly.

“being ruled over” cannot be used to preclude various leadership possibilities because both Cain and Abel were offering sacrifices and serving as their own priests.⁵⁰ One must ask, would Abel, desiring his elder brother Cain’s familial leadership, have been ineligible for ordination or spiritual leadership because he was younger and ruled by Cain? In like manner, what role does the wife have spiritually in relation to her husband? Clearly, it seems the true spiritual leadership rested with the younger brother Abel in the account given in Genesis 4. Thus, a husband’s headship or the firstborn’s privileges (the status of firstborn could hold certain conditional spiritual blessings in the Old Testament but was primarily a temporal blessing in the eyes of many of its recipients; e.g., Esau and Jacob) primarily reflect general psychology under a condition of fallenness, not gender-based curses or sinful predispositions or the ability to offer sacrifices. Thus, the passages of Genesis 4:7 and Genesis 3:16 do reveal insights concerning general psychology within the context of sin but not about gender per se and its relationship to church leadership or ordination. Again, one must look elsewhere for such insights.

What remains unresolved concerns the ability of the TOSC1 to either incorporate or satisfactorily explain away White’s interpretation of both Genesis 4:7 or 3:16—indeed, they seem unaware of her interpretations. Concerning the latter, recall that White understood that

when God created Eve, He designed that she should possess neither inferiority nor superiority to the man, but that in all things she should be his equal. The holy pair were to have no interest independent of each other; and yet each had an individuality in thinking and acting. But after Eve’s sin, as she was first in the transgression, the Lord told her that Adam should rule over her. She was to be in subjection to her husband, and this was a part of the curse. In many cases the curse has made the lot of woman very grievous and her life a burden. The superiority which God has given man he has abused in many respects by exercising arbitrary power. Infinite wisdom devised the plan of redemption, which places the race on a second probation by giving them another trial.⁵¹

From this passage and its context, it appears clear, while not *necessarily* excluding limited gender role differences, that Genesis 3:16’s “rule over” was not designed to *return* Eve to any *inferior* role she occupied after her sin but to *place her*

⁵⁰Interesting, White affirms that Abel was serving as a “priest,” notwithstanding Adam’s role as the priest of the original family. “Here were the representatives of the two great classes. Abel as priest offered in solemn faith his sacrifice. Cain was willing to offer the fruit of his ground, but refused to connect with his offering the blood of beasts. His heart refused to show his repentance for sin and his faith in a Saviour by offering the blood of beasts. He refused to acknowledge his need of a Redeemer. This to his proud heart was dependence and humiliation” (Ellen White, “Redemption—No. 2,” *Review and Herald*, March 3, 1874, 91).

⁵¹White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 3:484.

for the first time under a curse of subjection, one that included some sort of *inferiority*, which would require a *blessing* to survive—a loving desire *for* her husband. Furthermore, White’s intriguing final comment that the race has been placed on a second probation may indicate that there is a better solution to seek in their second trial beyond hierarchical superiority and inferiority, a pathway beyond these distinctions on the way toward the Edenic ideal of a more truly harmonious and cooperative marriage that helps sanctify both marriage partners.

Additionally, thus far, no one in the TOSC has fully explained the significance of the manner in which Adam attained a *superior* status relative to Eve from their prior positions that is analogous to the way Cain was superior to Abel as the firstborn and what sin might have to do with these developments. Specifically, the TOSC1 view,⁵² in this case advanced most pointedly by Ratsara and Bediako, distorts the nature of the curse upon Eve and the role that superiority and subjection assume within it, placing their theoretical harmony between the genders upon what seems to be an untenable trajectory that contradicts the writings of Ellen White.

Conclusion

The texts in question, Genesis 4:7 in particular and its relationship to Genesis 3:16, have historically encouraged a diversity of interpretations. Within the Seventh-day Adventist context, this diversity remains evident, including within the recent TOSC studies that included a focus on the concepts of authority and gender. The Seventh-day Adventist Church and its theologians have historically given close attention to the writings of Ellen G. White. Unfortunately, as this study has revealed, in the recent TOSC papers, this attention to her writings was, without any explanation, generally absent (with the notable exception of Richard Davidson’s work) concerning the texts in question. The consequences of this oversight are significant beyond even the TOSC’s primary focus on the subjects of authority and gender because the biblical psychology of gender that our church promotes implicitly or explicitly is significantly impacted by how one interprets Genesis 4:7 and its relationship to Genesis 3:16. As has been shared in this study, the TOSC1 group has advanced a negative and possibly antagonistic interpretation of Genesis 4:7 and applied this to their interpretation of Genesis 3:16. Whether their interpretation is correct or not (and this study has provided references to biblical scholars and their linguistic studies that argue it is not), what cannot be

⁵²Yet even beyond the TOSC1, a number of other conservative Adventist scholars whose views sympathize with the TOSC1 have overlooked White’s detailed commentary on Gen 4:7 and 3:16 and its full significance. For example, see Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Courage: Taking a Stand on a Defining Issue: Women’s Ordination* (Ann Arbor, MI: EAGLESONline, 2015), 62; and Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Study on the Role of Women in the Church* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1995), 81–82.

disputed is that the interpretation of the texts by TOSC1 is clearly incompatible with White's interpretation of Genesis 4:7 in particular, but also Genesis 3:16. Within the Adventist context, this is significant—As such I also offered some additional reflections on the potential theological insights that might be derived from a further study of White's writings and Scripture. In any case, given the implications of one's interpretation of these passages, it is clear that the biblical testimony concerning the psychological nature of women, their role in the family, their ministry for the church, and their place in society will remain unclear so long as the issues within the passages above remain either unresolved or obscured.

The ultimate purpose of this study is to hopefully draw our collective attention, both biblical scholars and all Seventh-day Adventists, to a greater awareness of the significance of the texts in question, as well as our historic interpretations of them, especially in relation to the writings of Ellen White. Through a renewed focus on these important passages of Scripture, it is hoped that we can proceed forward toward a better and clearer understanding of these passages and, thus, a more fully sound and biblical understanding of just what the Scriptures do teach about the psychology of gender, the effects of sin, and the nature of authority and ministry that corresponds to them.

A REVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE UNION CONFERENCE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AND INTER-STRUCTURAL ACCOUNTABILITY

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Abstract

Over the last few years, a debate regarding the inter-structural relationship of each level of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has grown to the point where it can be polarizing, regardless of which side of the debate one is on. This tension has likely come about, at least in part, as a response to the ongoing gender role debate, which has given rise to the emergence of an “us vs. them” mentality between those who agree and disagree with the decisions of the General Conference Sessions and its Executive Committee. This paper looks at some of the historical data related to the 1901 reorganization in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This may help alleviate some of this “us vs. them” tension by familiarizing each side with some of the lesser-known historical details so that continued dialogue includes a more complete, common understanding. It evaluates the historical roots from which the Seventh-day Adventist Church developed union conferences, why union conferences were needed, and how they related to the General Conference shortly after their formation. A few discoveries are made: (1) The Seventh-day Adventist Church was a pioneer in the way that union conferences were organized to address the needs of local fields; (2) the reorganization was necessary in order to reach the world more effectively by minimizing the obstacles caused by the limitations and abuse of the centralized decision-making of a few leaders; (3) there appears to have been clear intention that union conferences would remain accountable to the General Conference on matters of policy; and (4) union conference autonomy was built on a foundation of bilateral trust, which was necessary to press forward in the mission of the church. How these discoveries specifically apply to more recent debates are left to the discretion of the reader, though pertinent questions for further evaluation and study are suggested.

Keywords: structure, Seventh-day Adventists, church, authority, union, General Conference, leadership, accountability, Adventist, reorganization.

Introduction

One of the biggest shifts in the organizational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church came with the introduction of union conferences in the

early 1900s. This paper looks at where the ideas for their implementation in the SDA Church emerged from, why they were needed, and what their inter-structural relationship was to the General Conference (GC) in terms of administration and accountability. These questions are important because the way people understand the answers to them in history will inform their perspective on how each level of organization relates to one another today. The need for understanding inter-structural relationships arises out of more recent debates that have resulted from the question of ordaining women in the SDA Church.¹ If there is a sufficient degree of inter-structural independence administratively and union conferences are primarily accountable to their local constituencies on matters of policy, then it follows that they would have enough autonomy to make decisions that might diverge from other levels of the SDA organization without recourse. If, on the other hand, the union conferences are inter-structurally accountable to other levels of the SDA church structure, then to diverge in practice on certain matters of policy would likewise be significant. While the purpose of this paper is not to suggest what should or should not be, this overview of some of the historical data can help add valuable insight into the ongoing discussion.

Origin of Union Conferences

External Influences

The three SDA church founders had religious backgrounds primarily from the Christian Connexion and Methodist Episcopal churches. The Christian Connexion emerged around 1800 as a part of the restorationism movement.² They were not officially organized though they had a publication that somewhat unified them. Their only creed was that they had no creed besides the Bible alone.³ The two SDA founders from this movement were James White and Joseph Bates. Methodism was founded by John Wesley in the early 1700s, and the SDA founder from this denomination was Ellen White. The suggestion may arise that in addition to these two religious streams, there was influence through others who joined the SDA Church as it progressed. There was some Seventh Day Baptist (SDB) influence through Rachel Oaks and Baptist influence through J. H.

¹In the United States, the Pacific and Columbia Union Conferences have decided to ordain women. In Europe, some conferences have decided to forgo ordination altogether in favor of commissioning both men and women. In each of these cases, the intent is to practice gender inclusiveness in the credentialing process, regardless of the distinction effectively retained during the 2015 General Conference Session where a recommendation to allow divisions to decide whether or not to ordain women was voted down.

²George R. Knight, "Christian Connexion," in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., ed. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2014), 702.

³Merlin D. Burt, "Development of SDA Theology" (lecture, Andrews Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, MI, February 14, 2018).

Waggoner. Oaks only officially joined the SDA Church during the last year of her life, so her influence was not significant to the structure of the church.⁴ J. H. Waggoner died in 1889, limiting his potential influence on church structure.⁵

Among those alive during the 1901 GC Session, there were only one or two individuals who might have imported ideas from another church structure. One of them was W. A. Spicer, who was the son of an SDB minister.⁶ He became an Adventist at nine years of age, however, so it is doubtful that he inherited much knowledge of the SDB church structure. S. N. Haskell converted to Adventism at nineteen years of age, but he was formerly a Congregationalist.⁷ A. T. Jones studied himself into Adventism while in the army and was baptized during the 1870s.⁸ No records indicating any prior religious affiliation could be found for him. A. G. Daniells's mother, Mary Daniells, was a devout Methodist. When she became an Adventist, he followed her in baptism at the age of ten.⁹ O. A. Olsen, W. W. Prescott, and E. J. Waggoner were all second-generation Adventists. Lastly, Uriah Smith's religious background is somewhat unclear though it is likely that his parents may have been Baptist before joining the Millerite movement. At the age of twelve, Uriah was "baptized by an Adventist elder early in the summer of 1844."¹⁰ It was not until 1852, however, that he decided to join the Adventist movement.¹¹

With this context in mind, where might we expect to find the kind of influence needed to spark the idea for the union conference model in 1901? Since the Christian Connexion Church had no official organization and is still a Congregational church today (known as the United Church of Christ), it is obvious that searching there will likely yield little fruit.¹² In contrast, Seventh Day

⁴Merlin D. Burt, "Oaks-Preston, Rachel (Harris) (1809–1868)," in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, 481.

⁵Denis Fortin, "Waggoner, Joseph Harvey," in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, 537.

⁶Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1961–1962), 2:29.

⁷*Ibid.*, 1:217.

⁸Gerald Wheeler, *A. T. Jones: Point Man on Adventism's Charismatic Frontier*, Adventist Pioneer Series (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2011), 17–18.

⁹Ben McArthur, *A. G. Daniells: Shaper of Twentieth-Century Adventism*, Adventist Pioneer Series (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015), 20.

¹⁰Gary Land, *Uriah Smith: Apologist and Biblical Commentator*, Adventist Pioneer Series (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2014), 19.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 23.

¹²The Christian Connexion was one of the Congregational streams that came to comprise the General Convention of the Christian Church, according to John Von Rohr, *The Shaping of American Congregationalism, 1620-1957* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1992), 390–91. For a simple chronology tracing Congregationalism to the General Convention of

Baptists established a general conference in the United States in 1802.¹³ They functioned with a high degree of autonomy, with each congregation being independently incorporated and holding the title to its own property. SDB churches were free to write their own covenant statement, constitution, and bylaws.¹⁴ Ordination, budget, worship, hymnbooks, selection of pastors and so forth were historically coordinated by the local church as well.¹⁵ Over time, there were efforts to bring about some degree of cohesiveness through the formation of associations and societies. Associations were proposed in 1834 so that churches could appoint delegates to their General Conference. The purpose of this was to offset the cost of having to send delegates from every local church, while still being represented in some way.¹⁶ Every association remained completely autonomous, and many churches simply chose not to become members of an association, preferring direct representation.¹⁷ For those who were even more hesitant to join an association, societies arose with voluntary membership open to individuals from any or no denomination. Whereas associations of churches required consensus before acting, societies were often comprised of people with common interests who paid dues to be members. This in turn funded the activities of the society. Most of the work accomplished by the SDB Church since its foundation has been done through these societies.¹⁸ We know that Adventists were likely well aware of the structure of the SDB Church because Adventist leaders including W. W. Prescott, J. N. Andrews, Uriah Smith, D. M. Canright, and James White attended their General Conferences during the 1870s. James White even gave an address on the relations of the two denominations at their 1876 General Conference.¹⁹ No consolidation resulted between the Seventh Day Baptists and Adventists due to opposite views on important doctrines.²⁰ By 1901, their General Conference voted an amendment to double the number of delegates appointed by the churches, demonstrating an ongoing, almost congregational

the Christian Church, which eventually became the United Church of Christ, see also J. William T. Youngs, *Denominations in America*, vol. 4, *The Congregationalists* (New York: Greenwood, 1990), 341.

¹³Don A. Sanford, *A Choosing People: The History of Seventh Day Baptists* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992), 136.

¹⁴Don A. Sanford, *Greater Than Its Parts: A Study of Seventh Day Baptist Organization and Polity* (Janesville, WI: Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society, 1994), 4.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁶Sanford, *A Choosing People*, 159–160.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 171–172.

¹⁹*Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America* (Plainfield, NJ: American Sabbath Tract Society, 1910), 1:200–205.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 1:206.

autonomy between churches, associations, and societies represented at their General Conferences.²¹ To the present day, these organizational dynamics persist, as articulated in their manual of procedures with its heavy emphasis on the autonomy of local churches.²² The SDB church structure provides almost no comparison to what we see in the 1901 restructuring of the SDA Church.

Methodism, on the other hand, holds more promise for this study, but resources describing their organizational structure in the early 1900s are few and far between. In spite of this, the literature that is available demonstrates that there are some similarities to the SDA church structure. According to Nolan B. Harmon, a “Joint Commission on Union” outlined all duties of the Methodist General Conference and its authority to define and fix the powers and duties of annual conferences, mission conferences, missions, districts, quarterly conferences, and church conferences.²³ In spite of the similarity in terms, this Joint Commission on Union bears no resemblance to the union conferences familiar to Seventh-day Adventists, and the correlation is likely incidental at best. This does not mean that no equivalent was ever formed by Methodism since they did eventually form groups of conferences into the equivalent of what we know today as union conferences. These were also organized by geographic region in what was called the jurisdictional plan. In this case, however, we also know that their structural plans as an organization would have had no influence on Seventh-day Adventism because Methodism only initiated them in 1911. This came an entire decade later than union conferences in the SDA structure.²⁴ Where we can draw helpful (though admittedly nonconclusive) insight is from the understanding Methodists had regarding their inter-structural accountability dynamics. It is helpful to be aware of the broader evangelical understanding of a structure so similar to ours even though it came a decade later since it is indicative of the general thought of those times. Describing the relationship between the jurisdictional conferences and their General Conference, Harmon writes,

That of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with Bishop Earl Cranston at the head, suggested that there be five ecclesiastical jurisdictions with the Negro membership of the church in one of these; that each jurisdiction be allowed to nominate (not elect) its pro rata representation in the Board of Bishops; that it should suggest legislative action, and manage its own affairs in all matters not entrusted to the General Conference. The General Conference, keeping its supremacy, was to

²¹*Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, 1:233b.

²²“Seventh Day Baptist Manual of Procedures 2015,” *Seventh Day Baptist General Conference of USA and Canada*, 2015, D-2, accessed April 8, 2020, <http://seventhdaybaptist.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/SDB-Manual-of-Procedures-2015.pdf>.

²³Nolan B. Harmon, *The Organization of the Methodist Church: Historic Development and Present Working Structure*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Methodist Publishing House, 1962), 107.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 168.

manage all matters for the Jurisdictional Conferences, and bishops were to be bishops of, and for, the entire connection. Significantly enough, it was also recommended that there “shall be a Judicial Council elected from the jurisdictions and having all appellate power.” The proposed council could, however, be reversed by a two-thirds vote of the Annual Conferences.²⁵

Two points are worth emphasizing here: first, it is clear that the Methodist General Conference retained supremacy even with the establishment of a jurisdictional structure; second, any decisions made by the Judicial Council elected from the jurisdictions could be reversed by their Annual Conference. Although jurisdictions were intended to help the church operate more effectively in managing the administration of work in their respective localities (including the electing of bishops), it is clear they were still accountable to the Methodist General Conference. This General Conference would still make laws and govern church-wide matters as the sovereign power in their organizational structure.²⁶ Even though this information may be valuable to show a trend in thought within Evangelical Christianity in the early 1900s, the specific structural developments in the Methodist Episcopal Church come too late to have had a direct influence on the organizational restructuring in the SDA Church.

From the denominations considered, it would appear that there was little or no clear external influence on SDA union organization. In fact, it is worth noting that the 1901 GC Session minutes do not refer to any other denomination in relation to the discussions held on organizational restructuring.

Internal Influences

Since it seems that there was no outside denominational influence on the union conference idea, the search must turn elsewhere for further insight. Fortunately, there are several sources that talk about where these ideas arose. According to Jerry A. Moon, W. C. White was the first to start talking about a “district” plan.²⁷ Furthermore, Moon states that according to Gilbert M. Valentine, W. C. White was also the primary “architect of the Union Conference” rather than A. G. Daniells.²⁸

²⁵Harmon, *The Organization of the Methodist Church*, 168–169.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 172.

²⁷Jerry A. Moon, *W. C. White and Ellen G. White: The Relationship between the Prophet and Her Son*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 19 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1993), 183.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 186. See also Gilbert M. Valentine, “A. G. Daniells, Administrator, and the Development of Conference Organization in Australia,” in *Symposium on Adventist History in the South Pacific, 1885-1918*, ed. Arthur J. Ferch (Wahroonga, NSW, Australia: South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, 1986), 79.

Where did W. C. White get this idea? According to R. Schwarz and F. Greenleaf, S. N. Haskell spent some time in Europe and helped facilitate a meeting for leaders from the various regions of the field. This meeting became an annual occurrence, and a basic organizational structure began to emerge based on the needs present. Ellen White and W. C. White were able to see how this structure was coming together when they attended in 1885 and 1886.²⁹ Their visits initially planted the seed that would bear fruit over time as the increasing need arose for a far more efficient means of administration in each part of the rapidly expanding mission field.

In 1893, President O. A. Olsen suggested setting up an administrative organization to work between the layers then in existence (local conferences, missions, and other organizations) and the GC. This further set the stage for the 1901 union conference plan, according to Arthur L. White.³⁰ During 1894, the first Australian camp meeting took place. This was not just a regular camp meeting, however, since it came to serve a similar purpose as the meetings in Europe in the 1880s. Forty delegates attended from throughout Australia. This meeting formed what came to be known as “the first intermediate entity, the Australasian Union Conference.”³¹ As a reflection back to this time, A. G. Daniells would later explain in 1913 that it “was for the purpose of . . . dealing authoritatively, administratively, with South Pacific Ocean questions, Australian problems, so that any conference might get this word from a center of authority right there.”³² This union conference would come to be the key model for the 1901 reorganization.³³

The Rationale for and Implementation of Union Conferences

By the end of the year 1900, the SDA Church had expanded to 75,767 members from 3,500 members in 1863, which is the earliest year for which we have membership records.³⁴ For some time, the centralization of leadership in such a

²⁹Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2000), 252.

³⁰Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Australian Years, 1891-1900* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1981), 4:61.

³¹Schwarz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers*, 253.

³²“Conference Proceedings - Thirteenth Meeting,” *The General Conference Bulletin Thirty-Eighth Session* 7, no. 7 (May 23, 1913): 108, accessed April 8, 2020, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/GCSessionBulletins/GCB1913-07.pdf>.

³³Schwarz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers*, 255.

³⁴“Church Membership,” Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2016, accessed April 8, 2020, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/church-membership>.

rapidly expanding church had been a growing challenge, so when Ellen White shared her thoughts at the 1901 GC Session, Ben McArthur writes that she advocated for shared leadership. She stressed, “There are to be more than one or two or three men to consider the whole vast field.”³⁵ Moon notes that she did not want to prescribe exactly how this needed to be done.³⁶ As McArthur explains, Daniells then took over from there and suggested the appointment of a general committee that could look at what would need to be changed in conference procedures to bring about a model such as had been so successful in Australia.³⁷

It is worth noting the context that led to this point. There were at least two primary challenges hindering the work of the SDA Church at this time. The first was consistent poor decision-making by relatively few individuals at the GC. One such individual was the president of the GC, Elder Olsen, in 1891. Concerning him, Ellen White wrote that God did not sanction his methods and plans and that he was wrong to make positions appear to be the voice of God through the GC when they were arrived at through the decisions of only a few.³⁸ By 1895, she said, “There is no voice from God through that body that is reliable.”³⁹ In 1909, she clarified such statements by explaining that she only claimed the GC was not the voice of God when only a few men were behind the decisions made. She went on to affirm that “God has ordained that the representatives of his church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority.”⁴⁰ This is worth noting because it demonstrates an intentional differentiation between the decisions of two or three GC workers and the GC Session with its broader representation.

The second problem was keeping up with organizational needs, given the work’s rapid expansion. In a 2017 article explaining the historical need for the unions, David Trim writes that with the GC trying to provide administration for eighty-seven subordinate bodies around the world by 1901, members were increasingly frustrated and the mission was being impeded. As an example of this, Trim shares how A. G. Daniells and others in Australia met with great frustration over the amount of time it took to correspond with the GC headquarters to get matters settled, sometimes as long as nine months.⁴¹ Taking the gospel to the

³⁵McArthur, *A. G. Daniells*, 99.

³⁶Moon, *W. C. White and Ellen G. White*, 269.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 99–100.

³⁸Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), 17:167.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 17:178.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 17:215.

⁴¹David Trim, “Unions and the General Conference in Historical Perspective,” *General Conference Executive Committee Newsletter*, August 2017, 2, accessed April 8, 2020,

world demanded the church do a better job. The only way to make that happen would be to rewrite how the organization functioned. This would allow for more rapid expansion and mission growth. At the same time, expanding and reorganizing the decision-making bodies would prevent a small group of leaders at the GC headquarters from processing and making decisions over matters they often lacked sufficient context to understand.

Reporting on the proceedings at the 1901 GC Session, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* quotes A. G. Daniells expressing his vision of what the reorganization could do to solve the ongoing challenges:

If Union Conferences are organized, a thousand details will be taken from the General Conference Committee, and placed in the hands of the local men, where they belong. They do not belong to the General Conference. . . . Why, my friends, unless God helps us break up this condition and work as we never have before, it will take a millennium to carry this message to the world. We have not begun yet, with the greater nations of the world.

My idea is that the General Conference Committee should leave the details of the affairs of America in the hands of the Union Conferences. They should deal only with the questions that are general, and that refer to the whole world. Of course America is a part of it, a little bit of it, and must have a little attention from this General Conference, but the world must have the attention of this Conference Committee.⁴²

In line with this idea, the general committee suggested by A. G. Daniells came to be known as the “Committee on Counsel.” Their task was to figure out a way to bring the various lines of work together through a restructuring that resulted in the union conferences we know today. According to Arthur White, the model whereby they incorporated the various lines of work was known as the Robinson plan, based on what A. T. Robinson had done toward organizing the work in Africa.⁴³ Some of the lines of work that were incorporated into departments under the union conferences included the medical ministry, Sabbath School, and tract and missionary efforts.

Barry D. Oliver explains that even though Ellen White was very intentional about the need for decentralization, “she was careful, however, to stress that decentralization did not mean anarchy. Her calls for representation and

<https://executivecommittee.adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/ECN-August-2017.pdf>. See also “Conference Proceedings - Thirteenth Meeting,” 108.

⁴²A. G. Daniells, “Notes from General Conference,” *Review and Herald*, April 30, 1901, 8.

⁴³Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years, 1900-1905* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1981), 5:84–85.

decentralization were tempered by the need for unity in the church."⁴⁴ The GC, therefore, called for the various international organizations that had worked independently to become a part of the GC as well, including the Sabbath School Association, Religious Liberty Association, and Foreign Mission Board, among others. Each major organization would be represented on the GC committee.⁴⁵ The result was an expansion of the GC committee from thirteen people in 1889⁴⁶ to twenty-five after the reorganization.⁴⁷ This immediately broadened representation and further helped solve the centralized decision-making problem. These plans were so successful that by the end of Daniells's first term, Valentine notes that "he had organized thirteen union conferences, three union missions, and reorganized twenty-three local conferences."⁴⁸

Historical Inter-Structural Accountability

Initial Inter-Structural Trust

The late Gerry Chudleigh argued for the idea that "unions and conferences were autonomous" upon their establishment.⁴⁹ This idea is reaffirmed by George Knight, who cites Chudleigh as his source.⁵⁰ In particular, Chudleigh argued that the unions "were *created* to act as firewalls between the GC and the conferences, making 'dictation' impossible."⁵¹ This claim has the potential to be misleading if it

⁴⁴Barry D. Oliver, *SDA Organizational Structure: Past, Present and Future*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 15 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1996), 168.

⁴⁵White, *Ellen G. White*, 5:91.

⁴⁶Ted N. C. Wilson, "Fearless in God's Name," *General Conference Executive Committee Newsletter*, October 2018, 4, accessed April 8, 2020, <https://executivecommittee.adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ECN-October-2018.pdf>.

⁴⁷"Summary of Proceedings of General Conference," *The General Conference Bulletin Thirty-Fourth Session* 4, no. 2 (1901): 501, accessed April 8, 2020, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/GCSessionBulletins/GCB1901-02.pdf>.

⁴⁸Gilbert M. Valentine, *The Prophet and the Presidents: Ellen G. White and the Processes of Change, 1887-1913: A Study of Ellen White's Influence on the Administrative Leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2011), 218.

⁴⁹Gerry Chudleigh, *Who Runs the Church? Understanding the Unity, Structure and Authority of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (2013), 18, accessed April 8, 2020, https://session.adventistfaith.org/uploaded_assets/454468.

⁵⁰George R. Knight, "Catholic or Adventist: The Ongoing Struggle Over Authority + 9.5 Theses," *Spectrum* 45, nos. 2-3 (2017), accessed April 8, 2020, <https://spectrummagazine.org/article/2017/10/02/catholic-or-adventist-ongoing-struggle-over-authority-95-theses>.

⁵¹Chudleigh, *Who Runs the Church?*, 18 (emphasis added).

is not framed in the proper context. The context Chudleigh gives is that the member delegates (constituency) of each entity were and are responsible for the election of their respective leaders. He further explains that union conferences had their own constitution and bylaws and possessed the autonomy necessary to oversee work relevant to their fields. While these points are true, they were not without exception, as one might suppose based on this “firewall” idea.

Union conferences were established with a large measure of trust because, as will be seen in the sections to follow, it was understood by both sides that they were naturally subject to GC decisions in relation to any general matters that were brought to a vote in GC Session. This trust relationship developed both ways. The GC entrusted the administration of the work in each geographical region to each respective union conference. The rest of the church, in turn, trusted that the GC would “deal only with the questions that are general, and that refer to the whole world,” as Daniells envisioned at the 1901 GC Session.⁵² Because the SDA Church had (for the most part) always operated on a basis of trust, it was only natural for the GC Session to assume that all constituents would comply with any corporate decisions. Similarly, it was natural for all constituents to assume that the GC would carry out its responsibilities as articulated by GC Session and GC Executive Committee decisions. Stanley Patterson explains that “because the SDA system is built on relationships, trust, free association, and a common mission, we have survived for 150 years without enforcement.”⁵³ Enforcement typically comes when mutual trust begins to crumble. One could also argue that it was because the ultimate motivation for the reorganization was to enable more effective worldwide mission that trust was a crucial component. This is because the work of spreading the gospel to the world is more than an organization can accomplish merely by managing employees. Volunteers were necessary, and that inherently required trust. The SDA Church as a whole was not yet at a place in history where it seemed necessary to consider what might happen with breaches in trust at any level. Breaches in trust, if any of its entities should choose to set sail in winds contrary to the rest of the organization, were simply not yet precedented when union conferences were formed. At that time, they were far more concerned about the miscommunications, misunderstandings, and lack of familiarity those at the GC had with the local needs of the work in distant fields. As such, the 1901 changes in structure were designed to keep mission at the forefront. Trust alone did not mean full union conference independence and autonomy, however, as will be shown. Perhaps the practical questions to ask here are: How and where has trust been broken, and how can each side work to reestablish it?

⁵²Daniells, “Notes from General Conference,” 8.

⁵³Stanley E. Patterson, interview by author, October 28, 2018.

Initial Inter-Structural Accountability

It is important to recognize the broader context and intentions clearly discernable from that time. Just as a new vehicle's manual might not speak to the specifically nuanced details of how to relate to a variety of unexpected scenarios (i.e., repeatedly bumping your head on the door frame as you enter it), only basic general expectations were in place, without detailed outlines in the policies of the church at this time.⁵⁴ It would be natural to expect that policy would be updated to accommodate future conditions that challenged or otherwise differed from the intent originally inherent in this restructuring.

There are several lines of evidence that describe the general tenor of understanding when the structural reorganization took place in 1901. First, the October 2018 edition of the GC Executive Committee (GCEC) newsletter claims that "each union president became an *ex officio* member of the GC Executive Committee. The GC Executive Committee's authority was increased, and the Union Conferences were given some operational autonomy, although *the unions were subordinate to the General Conference Executive Committee—the body that created them.*"⁵⁵ This newsletter was released with the intention of clarifying this point so as to demonstrate that the structural hierarchy had been in place all along. Unfortunately, a citation was not provided for this statement, so some searching through the GC Session Bulletin records is necessary to evaluate whether or not each part of it is true.

The 1901 GC Session Bulletin appears to substantiate these points. A brief summary of the GC Session actions recorded by it are as follows: (1) The union conferences were formed by the endorsement and request of the GC; (2) each union conference president was to be elected as a member of the GCEC, and any changes of district territorial lines were to be referred to the committee on constitutions and plans, which the GC Session had also organized; and (3) union conferences were to forward the balance of any income in tithes that they did not find necessary for their own administration so that it could be used to maintain the work of the GC and also to be redistributed to weaker church entities.⁵⁶ These three points seem to indicate that the October 2018 GCEC newsletter is not far off, depending on how one understands these actions. Additional perspective is also available from the union conference side of the reorganization.

⁵⁴This claim is easily demonstrated by comparing the 63-page first edition of the *GC Working Policy* with more recent editions. See *Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1926).

⁵⁵Wilson, "Fearless in God's Name," 5 (emphasis added).

⁵⁶"Summary of Proceedings of General Conference," 501.

One of the six unions formed within the United States in 1901, the Pacific Union Conference, was proactive about publishing a weekly paper called the *Pacific Union Recorder* right from the beginning of their operation. A brief survey of discussion related to authority and accountability in the issues they released within the first few months paints a clear picture as to how they viewed their relationship with the GC. The first issue that was published states that, while modified, the GC “still continues the center and principal factor in this great work of God on earth.”⁵⁷ The next sentence refers to the unorganized fields as being a large part of the GC’s responsibility. To be fair, though, what the “principal factor” means here is not clearly defined. In the fourth issue, a report is given on the division of the California Conference to form a new Southern California Conference. Interestingly, the constitution for the Southern California Conference clearly stated that no amendment to the constitution could be made that conflicted with the Pacific Union Conference or General Conference constitutions.⁵⁸ On a question regarding how to manage and spend Sabbath School offering, issue 10 goes as far as to suggest that churches avoid reallocation of the Sabbath School offerings in order to be in harmony with GC plans even though they technically had the right to reallocate it.⁵⁹ Issue 16 refers to the GC Committee as having accepted “the highest responsibilities of the denomination, to see that every feature of the Lord’s work is carried out by those to whom the work pertains.”⁶⁰ Finally, issue 17 contains a statement in the “President’s Address” section in which W. T. Knox refers to a decision made “with the understanding that the General Conference would *permit* the second tithe from the conferences within our borders to be used.”⁶¹

As can be seen, the Pacific Union Conference viewed their autonomy as only extending to the point that the unique needs of their mission fields did not run into conflict with the GC constitution. Further, they desired to be in harmony with specific GC plans even when it came at a financial inconvenience in some cases, as the Sabbath School offering decision demonstrates. This clearly suggests that they understood *themselves* to be subordinate to the decisions of GC Sessions and even the plans of the GC between sessions. The thought that union conferences were so autonomous as to be either solely or primarily responsible to

⁵⁷W. T. Knox, “Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,” *Pacific Union Recorder*, August 1, 1901, 3.

⁵⁸C. A. Pedicord, “The Southern California Conference,” *Pacific Union Recorder*, September 12, 1901, 4 (emphasis added).

⁵⁹C. R. K., “Query Corner,” *Pacific Union Recorder*, December 5, 1901, 8.

⁶⁰A. G. Daniells, “Personal Responsibility in the Sale of ‘Christ’s Object Lessons,’” *Pacific Union Recorder*, March 13, 1902, 14.

⁶¹W. T. Knox, “President’s Address,” *Pacific Union Recorder*, March 27, 1902, 1 (emphasis added).

their constituencies rather than the GCEC and GC Sessions (in matters voted by either body) appears to lack supporting evidence here, especially on matters that were general and related to the whole world, as Daniells envisioned.⁶² The evidence at this point in history appears to suggest inter-structural accountability. This should be unsurprising. After all, it was the GC Session that authorized the existence of union conferences, including their boundaries and even policies on surplus income. Such a context simply would not be expected if they were autonomous and independent in a broader sense. At the same time, since GC decision-making was expanded to include voice and vote from these unions on the GCEC and at GC Sessions, this helped further decentralize GC decision-making.

Inter-Structural Relations in Working Policy

In 1922, the GC established a “Committee on Constitution and Working Policy,” not to create new methods but to gather the actions that had been taken into a format that could be more easily accessible.⁶³ This came to be known as the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*, hereafter referred to as the *GC Working Policy*. The very first edition of this *GC Working Policy* was published in 1926. Since then, it is updated after each GC Session to remain current on the policies that are voted there. Although this first edition came a decade after Ellen White’s death in 1915, a consistent continuation of thought from the evidence already evaluated appears to be present and reaffirmed, especially considering the Southern California Conference constitution, which did not allow for deviation from the Pacific Union Conference or the GC constitutions in 1901, as already seen.

In the section entitled “General and Divisional Relationships,” the nature of the relationship between the GC and the rest of the church is described as follows:

The General Conference is not something apart from the churches and conferences and union organizations, but is the sum of all these, the uniting of all the parts for unity and co-operation in doing the work which Christ instituted His church to accomplish. The administrative authority of the General Conference is therefore the authority of the entire church joining together by this form of organization for the doing of the gospel work and the maintaining of the unity of faith in all the world.⁶⁴

⁶²A. G. Daniells, “Notes from General Conference,” 8.

⁶³W. A. Spicer, “Proceedings from General Conference,” *Review and Herald*, June 10, 1926, 2.

⁶⁴*Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* (1926), 17.

The verbiage of this statement is helpful because it indicates that the representative system established by incorporating churches, conferences, and unions into the overall GC structure made it authoritative in those actions which furthered its goals. There was no separation considered possible between organizational levels beyond the understanding that each organizational level was primarily responsible to administer to the missional and operational needs of its respective field. Further, we see that the GC was seen as an administrative authority though local matters would obviously be handled locally wherever there was not a conflict between collective GC Session votes and local activities. Since some matters are significant enough to have worldwide effects throughout the church, it follows logically that such questions would appropriately fall under the purview of the GC Session so that the sum of its entities could work together to determine the way forward.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to discover where the idea of geographically organized union conference structures originated in the SDA Church. It has been shown that the idea can be traced to organizational meetings that occurred in Europe, along with the Australasian Union Conference, established several years before. Geographically organized groupings of multi-church collaboration were not unknown to evangelical Christianity, as seen in SDB societies, though full autonomy was maintained by self-governing churches. Furthermore, the Methodist Church developed a very similar structure to the SDA Church in 1911.

Some of the challenges necessitating the 1901 organization were discussed, including the challenge of too few leaders being responsible for too broad a field, along with the problem of distance and communication speed frustrating the work. With the expansion of the GC to include more ex officio members on its Executive Committee, the reason Ellen White had said it was not the voice of God was addressed, at least as long as decision-making continued to remain more broadly representative and free from manipulation. Lastly, evidence for the inter-structural accountability of union conferences to the GC has been evaluated from the perspective of the GC, the 1901 GC Session Bulletins, and early Pacific Union Conference publications. Since their very inception, the union conferences appear to have been representative, interconnected parts of the church as the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27; Col 1:18). It seems clear that the relationship of trust established at that point in time included a mutual understanding that, while the union conferences were in charge of the specific, administrative details pertinent to their local efforts, as defined by their constituencies, this was not without inter-structural accountability to the GC. Similarly, the rest of the church trusted the GC to fulfill its role of carrying out its responsibilities over general, church-wide matters as articulated by GC Session and GCEC decisions while leaving specific, administrative matters to the union conferences. In so doing, the SDA Church

could maximize its ability to reach the world with the message of the gospel and Christ's soon return. So long as both sides pursued that mission without going beyond their purview, that trust continued.

Going forward, several questions in need of further evaluation and study are: (1) How should union conferences relate to matters that they and other constituents of the GC contribute voice and vote on? (2) Should union conferences be expected to prioritize uniform practice when votes that affect the church as a whole differ from their own ideals? (3) Should they prioritize their own field in divergence from representative decision-making as they see fit? (4) What implications might such actions have on trust, church structure, and practice in the future? (5) How might the GC balance their responsibility to uphold GC Session and GCEC decisions while recognizing that bilateral trust is crucial to ongoing unity in the church? How these questions are answered will no doubt have a significant and lasting impact on church unity and the continued mission of the SDA Church.

ADVENTISM IN EAST AFRICA: WERE THE INITIAL MISSION STRATEGIES EFFECTIVE?

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Abstract

The Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) is one of the fastest-growing Christian denominations in the world. Studies show that the SDA Church in Africa in general and East Africa in particular has recorded tremendous growth since it was introduced in the region in the early 1900s. This article surveys the first fifty years of the beginning and development of the SDA Church in East African (1903–1953). It focuses on the three initial mission strategies employed by early Adventist missionaries to East Africa, including education, medical care, and publishing work. Early Adventist missionaries to East Africa established educational and medical institutions alongside publishing houses to reach indigenous people in the region. These entities, which were strategically scattered throughout the region, provided education, medical services, and Christian literature to the local populations. By using church membership growth as an evaluative criterion, the article concludes that the three mission strategies were effective in fulfilling the goal of Christian world mission, which is to make disciples of all nations and win converts to Christianity. The article reveals that dedication and hard work on the part of the Adventist missionaries and native Africans, coupled with clear mission strategies, facilitated the rapid growth of Adventism in East Africa in the first fifty years.

Keywords: Adventism, mission strategies, East Africa, education, publishing work, medical work, membership growth.

Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church is one of the fastest-growing Christian denominations in the world. According to *Christianity Today*, “in 2014, for the 10th year in a row, more than 1 million people became Adventists, hitting a record 18.1 million members.”¹ This report also reveals that the SDA Church has become the

¹Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra, “The Season of Adventists,” *Christianity Today*, January/February 2015, 18. The membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide reached 21 million in 2018. “Seventh-day Adventist World Church Statistics 2016, 2017,” Adventist.org, August 27, 2018, accessed August 5, 2019,

fifth largest Christian communion worldwide, next only to Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox, Anglicanism, and the Assemblies of God.² This phenomenon is clearly reflected in the steady growth of the SDA Church in East Africa.³

After 116 years of presence in the region, the SDA Church has claimed a membership of over 1,878,976.⁴ The church has established congregations in most parts of the region and is still growing faster than many other Christian denominations. It has churches, large and small, on both the mainland and the Indian Ocean islands, including Zanzibar, Pemba, Mafia, Kilwa, and Mombasa.

The church has made a tremendous contribution to the development and welfare of the people of East Africa. Currently there are four universities⁵ and scores of secondary and primary schools operated by Adventists. Adventists also run hospitals, dental clinics, dispensaries, three publishing houses (one in each country),⁶ several TV and FM radio stations, and the Adventist World Radio (AWR) studios.⁷ Adventists are also active in development and relief programs through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).⁸ Indeed, the

<https://www.adventist.org/en/information/statistics/article/go/-/seventh-day-adventist-world-church-statistics-2016-2017/>.

²Zylstra, “The Season of Adventists,” 18.

³In a narrower sense, East Africa refers to the countries of Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. However, in a broader sense, Eastern Africa may include countries such as Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, and even Somalia. For a fuller description of these territories, see Robert M. Maxon, *East Africa: An Introductory History*, Rev. ed., (Morgantown: West Virginia University, 1994), 1. In this work, East Africa should be understood in the primary sense of the three countries—Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda.

⁴*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2018), accessed December 21, 2019, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/2018.pdf>.

⁵Each of the East African countries has an Adventist university. Altogether, there are four universities: the University of Arusha (Tanzania); the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (Kenya); Bugema University (Uganda); and the Adventist University of Africa, which is also located in Kenya. For statistics of other institutions mentioned in the text, see *ibid.*

⁶As this study reveals, the Adventist Church operates a relatively large school network in the region.

⁷For the history and effectiveness of the work of AWR in Tanzania, see Desrene L. Vernon, “A Historical Analysis of Adventist World Radio’s Impact in the East Central Africa Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: A Case Study of Tanzania” (PhD diss., Howard University, 2011).

⁸ADRA is an international development and relief agency that responds to disaster and also helps with development projects on behalf of the SDA Church. In November 1956 the Adventist Church founded SAWS (Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Service) and changed its name to ADRA in 1984. This agency became operational in East Africa much later. For example, it began work in Tanzania in 1988. See Stefan Höschele, *Centennial*

success of the SDA mission in the region is fascinating. But when and how did the work of the SDA Church begin and develop in East Africa? Were the initial mission strategies effective? In this article, I seek to answer these two questions by giving an overview of the beginning and expansion of the SDA Church in Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. I also employ church membership growth as an evaluative tool to determine the effectiveness of the three initial mission strategies employed by the church—namely, education, medical care, and publishing work. This research approaches the three East African countries of Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda together as a region.⁹ In this article, I confine myself to the first fifty years of the Adventist presence in the region—1903 to 1953.

The Beginning (1903–1906)

The beginning of the twentieth century saw the opening of a new chapter in the history of Adventist foreign missions. With the presence of Adventist missions in East Africa, the Adventist world church began to talk, write, and read about East Africa as a new mission field. The SDA Church was a newcomer as a Christian denomination in the region. However, it was not the first attempt by Adventists to open work on the continent of Africa. Adventist presence could be traced in other parts of the continent even before the arrival of the missionaries in East Africa. In South Africa, there were Adventists as early as 1878.¹⁰ Malawi saw Adventists as early as 1893,¹¹ while Ghana and Zimbabwe had an Adventist presence as early as 1894.¹² East Africa seems to have been the next region to be entered systematically by the Adventists.

Album of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tanzania: Pictures from Our History, 1903–2003 (Arusha: Tanzania Union of Seventh-day Adventists, 2003), 54.

⁹Most research on the rise and development of the Adventist mission in East Africa tends to look at individual countries in isolation. Some dissertations and book-length materials that have been published on this subject tend to follow the same approach. See for example, *Religion and Social Change* (Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press, 1993), by Nehemiah M. Nyaundi, which looks at the SDA Church from a sociological standpoint. His study does not deal with the church in East Africa as a whole, but Kenya in particular. Another major study is Stefan Höschele, *Christian Remnant—African Folk Church: Seventh-day Adventism in Tanzania, 1903–1980* (Boston: Brill, 2007). Other works in this category include Nathaniel M. Walemba, “Approach to Holistic Ministry in a Seventh-day Adventist Urban Church in Uganda” (DMin diss., Andrews University, 1988). In this work, Walemba gives a background of how the Adventist mission work was established in Uganda. See also Gershom N. Amayo, “A History of the Adventist Christian Education in Kenya: Illustrated in the Light of its Impact on the Africans’ Social, Economic, Religious, and Political Development, 1906–1963” (PhD diss., Howard University, 1973).

¹⁰*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. “South Africa.”

¹¹*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. “Malawi.”

¹²*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. “Rhodesia.”

While the first Adventist missionaries to Zimbabwe, Ghana, and Malawi were of English-speaking heritage, those who came to East Africa first were not. The two young Adventists who answered the call to take the message to East Africa were J. Ehlers and A. C. Enns, both Germans. They were sent to Tanganyika (German East Africa) by the German Union Conference. They left Germany on October 22, 1903, and reached Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika, on November 12. They walked from Dar es Salaam all the way to the Pare Mountains, where they arrived before November 25.¹³ On their arrival, they found out that there was no Adventist mission in the entire East African territory. They were the first Adventist missionaries ever to set foot in East Africa. Enns and Ehlers established their first mission station at Myamba-Giti, which they called “Friedenstal” (the Valley of Peace).¹⁴

Three years after they had opened their first mission station in Tanganyika, another set of Adventist missionaries arrived in the neighboring country of Kenya (British East Africa). These two were neither German nor British, but they spoke English; one, Arthur Asa Granville Carscallen, was Canadian-born, and the other, Peter Nyambo, was Malawian-born. The two missionaries to Kenya were sent there by the British Union Conference. They left Hamburg, Germany, on October 1, 1906, and reached Mombasa, Kenya, three weeks later.¹⁵ Instead of landing at Mombasa Port in Kenya, they decided to proceed to Tanganyika, where they could meet the German missionaries who had been there since 1903. They spent some time together, and after a short stay, Carscallen and Nyambo sailed back to Mombasa in the company of A. C. Enns.¹⁶ After their arrival in Kenya, the next step was to establish a mission station.

It appears that the timing was good for them to open the first Adventist mission station in British East Africa. The so-called Kenya-Uganda Railway had already reached Kisumu, on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria, about five years earlier (1901). This meant that transportation had gotten better, and the railroad would support the expansion of the Adventist missionary enterprise in Kenya particularly and British East Africa generally. So the choice of their first mission station was crucial if the Adventist work was to be successful not only in Kenya but also in the entire territory. The two missionaries chose Gendia strategically as the site of their first mission station, which they opened on November 27, 1906.¹⁷

¹³L. R. Conradi, “Latest News from German East Africa,” *Review and Herald*, January 21, 1904, 15–16.

¹⁴Höschele, *Christian Remnant*, 53–54.

¹⁵Nehemiah M. Nyaundi, *Seventh-day Adventism in Gusii* (Kendu Bay: Africa Herald, 1997), 22.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 21–22.

¹⁷See Nyaundi, *Seventh-day Adventism in Gusii*, 23, and Abraham C. Enns, “German East Africa,” *Review and Herald*, March 25, 1909, 14–15.

In the space of three years, two of the East African counties had been reached by Adventists, at least initially. But there was a third country that needed the message of the soon coming Savior as well: Uganda.

While it took only three years for the Adventists to open their mission in Kenya, Uganda had to wait twenty more years before its first Adventist mission opened at Nchwanga in 1926. It is likely that the many years of war complicated the situation so much that the church focused on saving and restoring the existing missions in Tanganyika and Kenya before they could send missionaries to a new country. Whatever the case, it seems that Uganda had to wait for at least two decades to receive the first Adventist missionaries.

When the fullness of time finally arrived in 1926, Spencer G. Maxwell, a British missionary who was working in the Pare Mountains at the time, was sent to Uganda along with two Pare missionary teachers—Petero Risase and Anderea Mweta from Tanganyika.¹⁸ A third Tanganyikan missionary, Furaha Msangi, joined them later. The establishment of the Adventist mission in Uganda in 1926 completed the dream of starting initial missions in all the three East African countries; the focus now turned to expanding the Adventist influence and presence to the rest of the region.

Expansion of Mission Work (1907–1953)

As we have seen, the initial mission stations had been established in Tanganyika (German East Africa), Kenya (British East Africa), and Uganda by the end of 1926. The next challenge was to expand Adventist influence and mission to the rest of the East African territory. This would take several mission approaches and emphases. The expansion of the SDA mission in East Africa can be traced in at least five major areas: mission stations, education, medical work, publishing work, and membership growth. I will now survey these five areas.

Mission Stations

As we have seen above, the German missionaries in Tanganyika opened their first mission at Giti-Myamba in the Pare Mountains in 1903. Four months later, they were joined by four other German missionaries—Christoph Wunderlich, August Langholf, Frieda Breitling, and Rosa Ehlers. Their leader, Ludwig Richard Conradi, accompanied them because he wanted to assess the development of the mission project in German East Africa that he had initiated. This group of missionaries was followed by Bruno Ohme and his wife Helene, as well as Ernest Kotz, in the month of May 1905.¹⁹ With the coming of additional missionaries,

¹⁸*Seventh Day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. “Uganda”; S. G. Maxwell, *I Loved Africa* (n.p: n.p, 1976), 92.

¹⁹Höschele, *Christian Remnant*, 54.

the idea of expanding the Adventist mission activities became more feasible. After the initial station at Mamba-Giti, they started three more stations in the Pare Mountains—Kihurio, Suji, and Vunta—so that by the end of 1906, they had four stations. However, they were not satisfied with that success. They needed to cover more ground and reach more people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Four years had passed, and their missionary activities were still concentrated only in the South Pare area. In 1907, Ernest Kotz was sent to Lake Victoria to survey the whole region. The result of this exploratory trip to the region was the opening of a string of mission stations. The first mission center was Busegwe, which was opened in 1909; the second was Bwasi, to be followed by Majita and Ikizu in 1910. Nyabange and Iramba were started in 1911. After that were Utimbaru, Itilima, and Bupandagila in 1912. These were followed by Sizaki, Shirati, Kanadi, and Mwagala, all of which were opened in 1913.²⁰ In the short space of ten years, since Ehlers and Enns set foot on Tanganyikan soil, at least sixteen mission stations had been started in the country—four in the Pare Mountains and twelve around Lake Victoria.²¹ It should also be mentioned here that by 1953, SDA mission stations were scattered over almost all of the country. For example, Adventists opened stations in the Mbeya region in 1938, which included Masoko, Tukuyu, Tenende, Izumbwe, and Kyela. Heri mission station was founded in Kigoma in the 1940s. In the northeastern regions, a mission station was opened among the Iraqw people in 1945,²² and the Adventist message was introduced to the people of Bukoba in 1950.²³

²⁰See K. B. Elineema, *Historia ya Kanisa la Waadventista Wasabato Tanzania, 1903–1993* (Dar es Salaam: printed by the author, 1993), 51–52; and Höschele, *Christian Remnant*, 106.

²¹Even though by 1913 there was this much Adventist presence in Tanganyika, it is interesting to note that the British Foreign Office did not include the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the list of Christian missions operational in Tanganyika by 1920. In the spring of 1917, as the First World War was coming to an end, as part of the preparation for the work of the Peace Conference, the British Foreign Office prepared a series of “Handbooks” to furnish the British delegates with the needed information to help them make informed decisions at the conference. This included geographical, economic, historical, social, religious, and political information. In the religious section, a number of Christian missions, both Catholic and Protestant, are listed, which include German Evangelical, Moravian, and Lutheran Societies, and the University Mission of Central Africa. Others listed were the Algerian “White Fathers,” the so called “Black Fathers,” and the Bavarian Benedictines. See *Tanganyika (German East Africa)* (London: H. M Stationery Office, 1920), 37.

²²For a detailed treatment of the establishment of Adventist mission stations in these areas, see Höschele, *Christian Remnant*, 178–197.

²³A man called Agustino Kamuzora, who was baptized at Ikizu Training School, returned home to his family in Bukoba town. He introduced the Adventist message to his family, and they started holding worship services in his house until an SDA company was

In Kenya, the work grew very rapidly as well. After the first mission station was started at Gendia in 1906, it took only eight years before there were seven mission stations in British East Africa. Most of these stations were located around the Lake Victoria area. The six other stations were Wire Hill, Karungu, Rusinga, Kisii, Kaniadodo, and Kamagambo.²⁴ The first mission station outside the Lake Victoria area was opened in 1929.²⁵ The establishment of this station at Karura in Nairobi was an important development toward the expansion of Adventist mission work in Kenya because of the centrality of its position. What was experienced in Tanganyika and Kenya, in terms of establishing mission stations, was also experienced in Uganda after the work had started there.

As previously observed, the Adventist mission work in Uganda began twenty-three years after the work in Tanganyika and twenty years after that in Kenya. After the work began in Uganda in 1926, it took only a few years for them to realize a substantial growth in the number of mission stations. By 1933, there were already three mission stations in Uganda alone. Nchwanga station, which was opened in 1926, was followed by Kakoro station in 1934 in the Eastern Province. Other stations followed, including Ishaka in the early 1940s, Katikamu in 1946, and Ruwenzori in 1948.²⁶

In the first fifty years—1903 to 1953—alone, Adventist mission stations had been planted in most parts of East Africa. The growth of the work led to the organization of the Tanganyika mission in 1933.²⁷ Kenya became part of the East African Combined mission as early as 1921, and in 1938 there were already five field missions, which together formed the East African Union Mission under the leadership of Spencer G. Maxwell.²⁸ Uganda missions, though latecomers in the process of evangelization by Adventists in East Africa, also grew rapidly, so that by 1943 Uganda was returned to “field” status, with G. A. Lewis as president.²⁹ The three countries continued to be under one administrative organization—the

established there in 1950. Elisha A. Okeyo, *Kanisa Safarini Tanzania: Historia ya Kanisa la Waadventista wa Sabato Tanzania 1903-2013* (n.p.: Tanzania Adventist Press, 2014), 44–45.

²⁴Nyaundi, *Seventh-day Adventism in Gusii*, 28.

²⁵Before 1930, not much work had been done outside the Lake Victoria area. However, in 1933, the Karura station was opened near Nairobi. This was an important development as far as the expansion of the Adventist mission in British East Africa was concerned. See *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. “Kenya.”

²⁶*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. “Uganda.”

²⁷*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. “Tanzania.”

²⁸For detailed information on the growth of the work in Kenya and the need for several organizations and reorganizations until the 1960s, see *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1966 ed., s.v. “Kenya.”

²⁹See *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. “Uganda.” In the earlier organization, Uganda was part of the East African Union.

East African Union—until 1960, when Tanganyika was organized as a separate union.³⁰

Education

One of the effective methods Adventists used to gain more converts and strengthen the faith of believers was education. Seventh-day Adventist missionaries to East Africa established a school network that encircled most of the region. They established schools in each of the three countries. Here I will investigate the expansion of their educational system in Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda. The extent of the expansion of their education network within a relatively short period of time is amazing.

German Adventist missionaries to Tanganyika opened their first school only one year after their arrival in the Pare Mountains.³¹ As many more German missionaries came to join them in this new mission field, more schools were established in various parts of the country. When World War I began in 1914, there were at least thirty-four Adventist schools in operation, both in the Pare Mountains and in the Victoria-Nyanza missions in Tanganyika.³² The number of schools established in the first eleven years of the Adventist presence in Tanganyika reveals that Adventist missionaries used education as one of their major mission approaches.

After World War I in 1918, most German missionaries were returned to Germany. The Germans had lost the war, and Tanganyika was mandated by the League of Nations as a British trustee. All the Adventist schools that had been established by the German missionaries in Tanganyika were closed. In 1921, Spencer A. Maxwell, a British missionary who had been working in Gendia, Kenya (British East Africa), was sent to continue the Adventist work in the Pare Mountains. He was the first British Adventist missionary in the area and the first

³⁰It is important to note here that while East Africa became a union in 1921, it went through several reorganizations and was put under different divisions as often as the world church saw fit. However, the countries stayed together until 1960, when Tanganyika was made a separate union, leaving Kenya and Uganda under the East African Union. See *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. “Trans-Africa Division.” For a detailed report of the first executive committee of the Tanganyika Union Mission, which started its work officially on June 15, 1960, see Okeyo, *Kanisa Safarini Tanzania*, 92.

³¹See Enns, “German East Africa,” 16; and Elineema, *Historia*, 36–38. Elineema shows that between 1904 and 1910, at least five schools were established in the Pare Mountains: the first school was opened at Giti in 1904, then Kihurio (1904), Lugulu (1909), Kiranga (1910), and Mpinji (1910).

³²William A. Spicer, *Our Story of Missions for Colleges & Academies* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1921), 234–235.

post-World War I white Adventist missionary to be sent there.³³ When he arrived in the Pare Mountains, he found most Adventist day schools in bad shape. School buildings had fallen into ruin, and the difficult years of war had left most teachers behind the standards, as Maxwell reported in November of that year. Since education was an important method of mission, he made sure that nearly all the mountain schools reopened before the end of that year.³⁴ Under the British and German missionaries, many more schools were opened so that by 1963, there were at least seventy-six Adventist schools in Tanganyika alone.³⁵

In Kenya, the missionaries also took education seriously as part of their mission activities. As early as 1909, only three years after the Adventist missionaries arrived in British East Africa, there was a report that two schools had already been established in Kenya.³⁶ It is important to note here that A. A. Carscallen was the first missionary who studied the language of the Luo people and was able to reduce it to writing. This development made it possible for the Luo people of Kenya to read and write in their own language. He prepared a Dholuo grammar book to facilitate learning.³⁷

It is interesting to note that the British East African government did not establish a department of education until 1911. This is to say that for the first five years that the Adventist missionaries were operating in Kenya, the British government in the country was not participating in the process of educating the people.³⁸

The Adventist missionaries started Kamagambo School in 1913 under the able leadership of Carscallen. The school grew over the years until there was a high school and even a teacher training college right on the same compound.³⁹ In only

³³For more details on how he was called and sent to the Pare Mountains, see Maxwell, *I Loved Africa*, 56–72.

³⁴See Spencer A. Maxwell, “More News from Tanganyika,” *Missionary Worker*, November 16, 1921, 1–2; Höschele, *Christian Remnant*, 128. Höschele observes that primary education, even in the British missionary era, “remained the crucial missionary method” of Adventists.

³⁵Höschele, *Christian Remnant*, 387.

³⁶Hellen B. Carscallen, “Life among the Kavirondos,” *Review and Herald*, November 4, 1909, 23–24.

³⁷A. A. Carscallen, “The Need among the Kavirondo People,” *Review and Herald*, February 11, 1909, 13–14.

³⁸For a more detailed account of this development, see Amayo, “A History of the Adventist Education in Kenya,” 78.

³⁹For a more detailed history of Kamagambo High School and Teacher Training College, see *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. “Kamagambo Secondary School and Teachers’ College.”

one section of Kenya, known as Kisii, there were about seven Adventist schools started between 1912 and 1927.⁴⁰

In Uganda, schools were also established quite early after the first Adventist missionaries arrived there in 1926. By 1947, Nchwanga Training School had been established to take care of students from all over the country. The school was incorporated into Bugema Training School in the following year. In 1948, a two-year junior ministerial course began, to be followed by a two-year post-grade-six teachers' course.⁴¹

By 1953, Adventists in East Africa had opened many elementary schools and had at least three junior colleges—Ikizu in Tanzania, Kamagambo in Kenya, and Bugema in Uganda—offering various courses. With these three institutions, the church was able to train its own ministers to lead the churches and prepare educators to teach in the many Adventist schools scattered all over East Africa. This education also meant that some Adventists were educated and competent enough to train in the medical field and work at Adventist hospitals and dispensaries.

Medical Work

Adventist mission and medical work have always been identified together in East Africa. Wherever the Adventist missionaries opened new stations, they also thought of establishing health facilities to help alleviate pain and cure disease among the African people. So when did the Adventist medical work begin, and how did it grow? In answering these questions, as with the others, it is logical to begin with Tanganyika, the first East African country to be entered by Adventists.

Adventist medical work in East Africa started in Tanganyika. Only one year after the first school was opened at Myamba-Giti in 1904, Ernst Kotz opened the first dispensary at Kihurio, a short distance away from Myamba-Giti. In 1906, A. C. Enns, who was a trained nurse, opened another dispensary at Suji station, which became the second Adventist dispensary in East Africa.⁴² The number of Adventist dispensaries increased to at least six by 1937.⁴³

The SDA commitment to medical work as an approach to mission led Adventists to build a hospital in Kigoma in the western part of Tanganyika. The construction of Heri Hospital, a seventy-bed health facility, started in 1947, and it

⁴⁰See Nyaundi, *Seventh-day Adventism in Gusii*, 59.

⁴¹*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. "Bugema Adventist College."

⁴²See Elineema, *Historia*, 47.

⁴³G. A. Ellingworth, "Mission Work in Tanganyika," *Review and Herald*, March 11, 1937, 11. In this article, Ellingworth, who was at the time in charge of Adventist mission work in Tanganyika, said that there were six dispensaries, one in each of the existing mission stations.

opened its doors for service in June 1953.⁴⁴ From the very beginning of the Adventist missionary activities in Tanzania, medical work was emphasized as part of the mission enterprise in the country.⁴⁵

In Kenya, Adventist missionaries were quick to realize the potential of medical ministry in evangelizing the indigenous people in various parts of the country. However, it took about sixteen years before the first missionary doctor arrived in Kenya. The arrival of Dr. G. A. S. Madgwick and his wife in March of 1921 marked the beginning of the Adventist medical work in Kenya. No sooner had they arrived in British East Africa than they started planning and fundraising for the establishment of an Adventist hospital in the country.⁴⁶

In 1925, a 133-bed hospital was opened near Kendu Bay in Kenya. The hospital, which began as Kenya Hospital, was renamed Kendu Hospital afterward.⁴⁷ The establishment of this hospital and other Adventist health centers all over the country played an important role in spreading the Adventist message to the Kenyan people. The Adventist missionary work in Kenya under the leadership of Dr. Madgwick, three Scandinavian nurses, and several Kenyan dressers and helpers seems to have been so successful that it drew the attention of the colonial government in Kenya. One report published in 1938 on general progress and development in the colony of Kenya included a very positive statement on the Adventist medical work: “The efficiency of the medical work of the Seventh-day Adventists is beyond all question.”⁴⁸

In Uganda, the Adventist medical work began only three years after the first Adventist missionaries started their mission station at Nchwanga in 1926. The first report on the presence of Adventist medical work in Uganda was published in 1929. In his article, missionary S. G. Maxwell observes that there were many prejudices held against the Adventists by other Christian missions and the local people. According to this article, no amount of preaching would change the negative impressions some people had, “but the ministry of love” and “the

⁴⁴*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1966 ed., s.v. “Heri Hospital.” It is recorded that in 1949, while the construction of this hospital was underway, a clinic was opened to take care of the sick in the area. So while the hospital opened officially in 1953, the actual health care in the area began when the clinic opened in 1949.

⁴⁵Elineema, *Historia*, 47; Ellingworth, “Mission Work in Tanganyika,” 11–12. Both Elineema and Ellingworth give a picture of what was happening at the dispensaries and the kinds of services people received. While Elineema tells stories of the early years of Adventist medical work in Tanganyika—namely, before World War I—Ellingworth describes what was happening in the second half of the 1930s.

⁴⁶George A. S. Madgwick, “Expansion of Medical Work in Kenya Colony,” *Missionary Worker*, August 8, 1924, 4–5.

⁴⁷*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. “Kendu Hospital.”

⁴⁸W. G. Turner, “Medical Work in East Africa,” *Review and Herald*, June 30, 1938, 20.

medical work is proving itself the right arm of the message.”⁴⁹ As the Adventist missionary work grew in Uganda, the medical work did also. Most field missions performed medical work on the dispensary level. The Ishaka Hospital—an eighty-bed general hospital, situated forty miles from Mbarara—opened in 1950.⁵⁰

By 1953, East Africa had three general hospitals: Heri (Tanzania), Kendu (Kenya), and Ishaka (Uganda) The medical work was also supported by the presence of many Adventist dispensaries scattered throughout the region. As a mission strategy, medical work was able to open doors in the face of prejudice and remove several obstacles to the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ by Adventists in the entire East African territory. This fact was also stated in a report that was given in a medical departmental meeting at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in the 1920s.⁵¹

Publishing Work

The history of the Adventist mission in East Africa would be incomplete without the publishing arm of its mission strategy to reach local populations. Adventist missionaries in East Africa saw this need; that is why very early in their work, they employed publishing ministry as part of their mission strategy in the region. The work of translating and publishing Adventist materials in the region began very early: German missionaries in Tanganyika began doing so almost immediately after they opened the first mission station in the country. The arrival of a language-gifted, eighteen-year-old German missionary, Ernst Kotz, in April of 1904 started a long tradition of translation and publication of Christian materials by Adventists.

Kotz embarked on the Asu language in July 1905, just a few months after he first set foot in the region.⁵² He translated the New Testament into Chasu, the language of south Pare, and prepared a hymnbook and a grammar in the same language. However, these works were not printed as soon as people would have wanted because at that time Adventist missionaries in Tanganyika did not have a printing press; most of their books were published and printed by the Adventist

⁴⁹S. G. Maxwell, “Medical Work Opens Doors in Uganda,” *Missionary Worker*, February 22, 1929, 1. In this report, Maxwell shows that Dr. Andersen of the Nchwanga mission attended to about 1,000 patients a day and that his practice extended about fifty miles from the mission.

⁵⁰*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. “Ishaka Hospital” and “Uganda.”

⁵¹W. H. Branson, “Our Medical Work in Africa,” *Review and Herald*, November 25, 1926, 10–12. Even though the report referred to in this article does not mention East Africa in particular, there is no doubt that the author had East Africa in mind as well. He mentions Dr. G. A. Madgwick, who was still in charge of the Adventist medical work in Kenya at the time.

⁵²See Höschele, *Christian Remnant*, 83.

Publishing House in Hamburg, Germany.⁵³ Tanganyika would not have an Adventist printing press until the early 1970s.⁵⁴

Even though Kenya was the second country to be entered by Adventist missionaries in East Africa, it was the first to have a printing press. The publishing work in Kenya began in 1913, when Asa Carscallen's translation of the Gospel of Matthew was published in England. After the success of his translation and publication of his first work in Luo, Carscallen put a lot of effort into making sure that the mission in Kenya had a printing press at the head office in Gendia. The year 1914 witnessed the arrival of printing machines from England. Mr. L. E. A. Lane, who had a knowledge of printing, trained three local individuals, and the printing work started in Kenya.⁵⁵ This simple printing press was the forerunner of the famous Africa Herald Publishing House.⁵⁶ Before the establishment of the publishing house in Tanganyika in the early 1970s and the one in Uganda,⁵⁷ Africa Herald Publishing House was responsible for printing much of the Adventist material in several East African languages, including Luganda, Kiswahili, Luo, and Kikuyu. English materials were also printed by this publishing house.

Having discussed the implementation of the three initial missionary strategies employed by Adventists in East Africa, and since the ultimate goal of any Christian mission organization is to win souls to Christ, at this juncture we need to ask this evaluative question: were those missionary strategies effective in reaching the African populations and winning converts to Jesus Christ? To answer this question, we must now turn to Adventist membership growth during the first fifty years of Adventist presence in East Africa.

Membership Growth

The combination of the three major missionary methods used by Adventists to propagate their message in East Africa—education, medical work, and publishing work—proved to be very effective, and the fruits of their labor were found throughout the region. The membership of the church grew slowly but steadily. The first baptism in Tanganyika took place in April 1908; six individuals were baptized. Their baptism was reported in the official general paper of the SDA world church to be read by all. The report mentions that mission schools played a

⁵³Höschele, *Christian Remnant*, 84.

⁵⁴Tanzania Adventist Publishing House has a history that dates back to 1969, when it started as the Voice of Prophecy Printing Press.

⁵⁵See Nyaundi, *Seventh-day Adventism in Gusii*, 167.

⁵⁶See *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. "Africa Herald Publishing House."

⁵⁷The Upper Nile Press in Uganda is a young printing press compared to Tanzania Adventist Publishing House or Africa Herald Publishing House, which have been in business for a long time.

role in their conversion. The article reads in part, “Our missionaries came; they settled among these heathen people, they opened schools, they taught them the gospel; they labored to sow the seed, watering it with their own tears, trusting God to give the increase.”⁵⁸ This baptism was followed by several others so that by the beginning of World War I in 1914, there were 477 members both in Pare and around the Lake Victoria area in Tanganyika. Even after the Great War, at least 310 members remained faithful to the Lord and the teachings of the SDA Church.⁵⁹

In Kenya, the first baptism was realized after five years of work. The first ten persons from the Luo tribe were baptized on May 21, 1911. It took eleven more years for the first two individuals from a different tribe, the Kisii tribe, to be baptized.⁶⁰ Seven years later, there were four organized churches in Kisiland alone, with a membership of 313. There were eighty-six bush schools in operation, with an enrollment of 3,286 students, and forty-two Sabbath Schools, with an average total of 3,080 attendees.⁶¹

In the case of Uganda, the first baptism there took place in 1928. This was exactly two years after Uganda was officially entered by Adventist missionaries in 1926. From Nchwanga, where the first baptism took place, Adventists expanded their work to other parts of the country, making disciples and baptizing them; by 1953 there were at least 1,790 Adventists in Uganda alone. This number brought the Adventist church membership in East Africa to 27,893 by the end of 1953.⁶²

Conclusion

This article set out to investigate and provide answers for two questions: (1) When and how did the work of the SDA Church begin and develop in East Africa? (2) Were the initial mission strategies employed by Adventist missionaries effective? This brief survey of the first fifty years of SDA missionary activities in East Africa has revealed that the Adventist Church started small but grew up very rapidly. The three mission strategies the early Adventist missionaries employed in their work proved to be effective in establishing mission stations and winning people to Jesus Christ. A closer look at the development of the Adventist work in the East African region in the first fifty years gives a hint as to why the church recorded such a big success. This study establishes that there were at least three reasons for

⁵⁸Guy Dail, “First Fruits from German East Africa,” *Review and Herald*, June 4, 1908, 13–14.

⁵⁹Höschele, *Centennial Album*, 20.

⁶⁰*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., s.v. “Kenya.”

⁶¹E. A. Beavon, “The Gospel in Kisii,” *Review and Herald*, August 15, 1929, 14–15.

⁶²See H. W. KLASER, ed., *Yearbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1953), 181.

that success: dedication and hard work, clear mission strategies, and the receptiveness of the people.

First, the dedication of Adventist missionaries—both foreign and early native Africans—to spreading the good news of salvation was an important factor. Their dedication and love for the Lord and the people they labored to lead to Christ were extraordinary. Second, for any missionary enterprise to be successful, the mission methods employed must be simple and well defined. In this study, we have seen that Adventist missionaries in East Africa employed education, medical care, and publishing strategies to reach people. These clear and well-defined approaches proved to be effective throughout the region. Third, this brief study has clearly demonstrated that Africans were receptive to the Adventist message of hope. For the people of the world to accept and embrace the message of the soon returning Savior, Adventist workers must dedicate their lives fully to the Lord and use mission approaches that are simple, well defined, and relevant to the times and needs of the people they intend to reach.

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Abbreviations

ch(s).	chapter(s)
col(s).	column(s)
frag(s).	fragment(s)
n(n).	note(s)
p(p).	page(s)
pl(s).	plate(s)
v(v).	verse(s)

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