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ABSTRACT

CONNECTING DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING WITH ADVENTIST
DOCTRINES THROUGH CHRISTOCENTRIC PREACHING
AT THE KINGSBORO TEMPLE SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

Donnett Mia Blake

Adviser: Kenley Hall

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: CONNECTING DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING WITH ADVENTIST
DOCTRINES THROUGH CHRISTOCENTRIC PREACHING
AT THE KINGSBORO TEMPLE SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

Name of researcher: Donnett Mia Blake

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Kenly Hall, DMin

Date completed: May 2015

Problem

Kingsboro Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church was an active congregation; however, there was a disconnect between spirituality and the knowledge of and commitment to the distinct Adventist fundamental doctrines. Many viewed the distinct doctrines of Adventism as irrelevant to the Christian experience and daily lifestyle choices, resulting in a nonchalant attitude to the distinctiveness of the Adventist message and the purpose and mission of the church.

Method

The purpose of this dissertation project was to develop and preach a series of Christocentric doctrinal sermons that would impact spiritual growth, doctrinal knowledge, and foster personal evangelism at Kingsboro Temple. Based on a study from the Old and New Testaments, the writings of Ellen G. White (1827-1915), and theological and ministry literature, information regarding the biblical and Christocentric nature of doctrines and their relevancy were produced. From these materials, one introductory and seven doctrinal sermons were developed and preached at Kingsboro Temple. A survey was developed and administered before and after the sermons were preached. The same volunteer sample group participated in the pre- and post-survey: Forty-four participated in the pre-survey and 37 of the 44 participated in the post-survey. The surveys were then analyzed to evaluate the impact of the sermon series regarding the project's goals.

Results

The findings of the pre- and post-surveys revealed the positive impact of the sermon series on members, who became more knowledgeable of the Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, their biblical and Christocentric nature, their relevance, etc. The positive and visible changes in lifestyle choices of some members and positive feedback also suggest the success of the series and other ministries. However, there were some negative feedback and the findings also revealed room for improvement.

Conclusion

While there has been a move for some time in Christianity towards viewing doctrine as irrelevant, this dissertation project presents the biblical and theological evidence for the Christocentric nature of doctrine and their necessity and relevance to the Christian life. The findings of the pre- and post-surveys at Kingsboro Temple demonstrate that preaching Christocentric doctrinal sermons can have a positive impact on helping members understand doctrines, their true nature, and their relevancy to daily Christian living and the church's message and mission, which will in turn inspire personal evangelism. It will be a challenge for the Adventist Church in the future if there is continued neglect of Christocentric doctrinal preaching.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

CONNECTING DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING WITH ADVENTIST
DOCTRINES THROUGH CHRISTOCENTRIC PREACHING
AT THE KINGSBORO TEMPLE SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

A Project Document
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Donnett Mia Blake

May 2015

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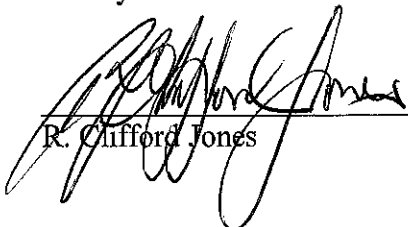
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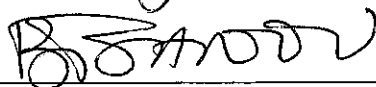
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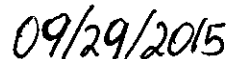
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

On February 10, 2007 I was assigned as an associate pastor at the Kingsboro Temple of Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church, Brooklyn, NY. At the time Kingsboro Temple was a very active and growing congregation. However, pastoral observation suggested a disconnect between spirituality and knowledge of and commitment to the distinct Adventist fundamental doctrines among its members. This project document will utilize the terms doctrine, beliefs, and teachings interchangeable. Many viewed the distinct doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as irrelevant to their Christian experience and daily lifestyle choices and had increasingly adopted a nonchalant attitude to the distinctiveness of Adventism. There were at least two major contributing factors to this problem: (a) many of the congregants regarded the distinct teachings of Adventism as unrelated to the core of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, whether founded or unfounded, connecting doctrinal teachings with legalism and (b) the pervasive impact of popular trends of Evangelicalism on members. Unfortunately, the approach to preaching at that time had not been very successful in halting or reversing those trends.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop, deliver, and evaluate a series of Christocentric doctrinal sermons at the Kingsboro Temple that focused on seven of the 28

Fundamental Beliefs taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and, through the administration of a survey before and after the series, to evaluate the effectiveness of the sermon series to discover if and how the series contributes to (a) an understanding that the doctrines are biblical teachings and Christocentric, (b) a deeper knowledge of Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, (c) the relevancy of the Fundamental Beliefs and their impact on daily lifestyle choices, and (d) an awareness of the message and mission of the Adventist Church.

Justification

Kingsboro Temple fostered a strong charismatic and celebration-type worship service. Despite the church's numerical growth, there was limited growth in the knowledge of the major doctrines of the Adventist Church along with minimal significant practical lifestyle changes that aligned with Adventist doctrines. A large number of the membership had grown dependent on music to create spiritual transformation in their lives and some had withdrawn from publicly living and sharing their faith. Consequently, there was declined spirituality within the church and the church had an inadequate view of its mission and purpose for existence. Thus, there was a need (a) to balance the charismatic integrity with doctrinal authenticity, (b) to preach Christ-centered doctrinal messages that would impact the spiritual growth of members and fostered personal evangelism, and (c) to encourage members to have a deeper understanding of and a greater appreciation for the distinct truths of Adventism and the purpose and mission of the church.

Expectations

The following were the expectations and goals for the project. There were five goals related to the Kingsboro Temple Church:

1. This project will help train and educate the members of the Kingsboro Temple Church regarding the biblical foundations of doctrines.
2. This project will provide awareness of the Christocentric nature of doctrines.
3. This project will provide a deeper understanding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's 28 Fundamental Beliefs.
4. This project will produce a lasting impact on the lives of the members as their understanding deepens regarding the importance and relevancy of the doctrines in general and especially to daily Christian living.
5. This project will advance the church's mission in the surrounding community of the Kingsboro Temple Church.

My hope is that this project document will become a useful tool for helping other church leaders and myself:

1. This project manuscript will provide biblical and scholarly arguments along with comments made by Ellen White for the Christocentric nature of doctrines and their relevancy to Christian life.
2. This project manuscript will provide strategies and an outline of the project at Kingsboro Temple to aid and encourage other pastors to lead their members to effective daily Christian living and genuine spiritual experience.

3. This project will help me as a preacher develop new and effective methods of preaching Adventist doctrines in a Christ-centered manner, which creates positive changes in the lives of believers.

4. This project will enhance my ability to effectively preach challenging subject matter.

Limitations

There were 44 participants in the pre-survey and 37 in the post-survey. The size of the group therefore, reflects a small representation of the entire spectrum of doctrinal knowledge of the members of this church. The gender representation was unbalanced: females made up more than 2/3 of the sample size.

Method

The primary goal of the project was to address the disconnect between spirituality and doctrinal knowledge and evangelism in Kingsboro Temple through a series of Christocentric doctrinal presentations. The process involved many steps. First, I did research and prepared a paper on the Fundamental Beliefs and their biblical and Christocentric nature. Second, in consultation with a colleague, Pastor James Yansen, I decided to focus on seven specific doctrines in the series due to time limitation. Third, a survey was needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the sermon series and after research and consultation a short-answer type questionnaire was developed. Fourth, with consultation, other materials and venues were developed to supplement the doctrinal series and help facilitate the church's doctrinal education: (a) bulletin inserts on the nine Fundamental Beliefs, (b) a weekly Sabbath afternoon Bible Classes on the 28 Fundamental Beliefs using *In His Steps* led by pastors and elders, and (c) a five-minute

“Discover My Foundation” segments. Fifth, the pre-survey was administered for two Sabbaths before the series began. Sixth, the sermons were carefully researched and developed on a weekly basis using various resources and preached on eight Sabbaths during the months of July, August, and November of 2010. Lastly, the post-survey was administered after the series for three Sabbaths and comparison was made to the pre-survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the preaching series with future recommendations.

The project was recorded in this project document, comprising of six chapters. Chapter 1 is a brief introduction with an outline of the problem addressed in this project, a statement of purpose, the justification for the study, a list of the project’s goals, and the methodological process followed. Chapter 2 is a discussion of the biblical and theological foundation for Christocentric doctrinal preaching from the Bible and the writings of Ellen White. Chapter 3 is a review of the most current literature on the necessity of Christocentric doctrines in the church, the relevancy and role of doctrines in the church and the life of believers, and principles and strategies for doctrinal preaching. Chapter 4 gives a brief profile of Kingsboro Temple, shows the approach taken for planning and developing an appreciation for Adventist doctrines through Christocentric doctrinal preaching, and the and implementation of the approach—a sermon series. Chapter 5 discusses the survey: research and design, administration and participation, and the findings and analysis. Chapter 6 is a summary of the overall project, with observations and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR CHRISTOCENTRIC DOCTRINES, THEIR ROLE IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER, AND THEIR PREACHING

Introduction

It happened in the chilly winter of 2007 just a few weeks after my first pastoral assignment. The Seventh-day Adventist church was packed with mourners for the funeral of a beloved member who had died unexpectedly. As the tributes were given several members mentioned that the beloved departed sister was now looking down on us from heaven. What caused me great concern was the resounding “Amen” that seemed to come from the body of believers. As time went by further interaction with many of the believers indicated that something like a defoliation of the doctrines had taken place. The rich foliage of the Seventh-day Adventist doctrines seems to have disappeared from the church.

Regrettably, *doctrines* seem to have fallen victim to a vicious culture of pessimism and irrelevancy. One of the most often heard complaints regarding doctrinal preaching is that it is not relevant. I recall a few years ago, while I was preaching a series on the doctrines, a very well-intended Adventist ask me, after about the fourth sermon, “How many more are you going to preach?” followed by “Don’t get me wrong the sermons are great, but more doctrines?” The question itself would not have meant anything except it was accompanied by that non-verbal expression, “I am tired of

doctrinal sermons.” In my very short years of pastoral ministry I have heard one too many ministers lament that preaching doctrine is not relevant or practical in this postmodern culture of ours. However, Scripture shows that doctrine has been and will always be relevant to the church and in the life of the believer.

This chapter will consider the theological foundation of doctrine, the Christocentric nature of doctrines, their role in the life of the believer, and their preaching. To effectively accomplish this task, the chapter will first examine the semantic range of Hebrew and Greek terms translated as ‘doctrine’ in the Old and New Testaments. The next section will look at the Christocentric nature of teachings throughout both Testaments of the Bible. The next section will examine the role doctrines play in the life of the believer from both the Old and New Testaments. The final section will address Christocentric doctrinal preaching in the Bible, how Christ was the central focus of biblical preaching by the prophets and apostles and Christ Himself.

Due to the theological nature of this chapter, the Bible is the main resource. However, given the significance of the writings of Ellen White (1827-1915) within the Adventist Church, a brief study from her writings on the concept of doctrine, their Christocentric nature, their role in the believer’s life, and their preaching will be included. Ellen White was one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church after the Great Disappointment of 1844 and is considered a prophet by Adventist. She wrote prolifically and many of her writings were published during and after her lifetime, and are still being published today.

The Christocentric Nature of Biblical Doctrines

Defining the Term *Doctrine*

The word doctrine, which is derived from the Latin *docere*, meaning “to teach,” does not relate exclusively to Christianity (Swaim, 1967, p. 27). In defining the word doctrine as used in English translations of the Bible, Nixon (1996) points out two things: (a) in the Old Testament the word is used mainly as a translation of the Hebrew word *leqakh*, meaning “what is received,” and (b) in the New Testament two Greek words are connected forming the single word *didaskalia*, meaning both “the act and the content of teaching” (p. 280). While this is useful, to truly understand what biblical doctrine is one must examine the Old Testament and New Testament as a whole. This section will flesh out the concept of doctrines as presented in the Old Testament, New Testament, and the writings of Ellen White.

Doctrine in the Old Testament

The KJV only uses the word *doctrine* in the Old Testament six times (Deut 32:2; Job 11:4; Prov 4:2; Isa 28:9; 29:24; Jer 10:8). Four of the six occurrences are translations of the Hebrew word *leqakh* (Job 11:4; Prov 4:2; Isa 29:2; Jer 10:8). The NKJ translates only these four instances of *leqakh* as “doctrine” and the ESV only in Job 11:4 while the term “doctrine” never appears in NASB Old Testament. Nixon (1996) states the term *leqakh* means “what is received” (p. 280). *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (HALOT) defines *leqakh* as “teaching,” “instruction,” and “insight” (Ludwig & Baumgartner, 2002).

There are two other Hebrew terms translated as “doctrine” in the KJV: *mûsar* and *shemu‘ah*. Gesenius and Tregelles (2003, p. 457) and Holladay and Köhler (2000, p. 186)

define *mûsar* as “correction,” “chastisement,” “discipline,” “education,” “instruction,” “warning,” and “reminder” (Ps 50:17; Prov 1:2; 4:13; 6:23; 13:24; 15:33; 23:23; Isa 26:16; Ezek 5:15). The other term *shemu‘ah* (interestingly comes from *sham‘a*, meaning ‘to hear’) Holladay and Köhler (2000, p. 375) define as “news,” “report,” and “revelation” (1 Kgs 2:28; 1 Sam 2:24; Dan 11:44; Isa 28:9; 53:1) and Gesenius and Tregelles (2003, pp. 833–834) as “instruction,” “teaching,” and “doctrine” (Isa 28:9). These three terms are used in connection to the term *torah* in the Hebrew Old Testament and can refer to doctrine or something being taught or a message being heard—note especially *shemu‘ah* being linked with *yrh* as in Isaiah 28:9.

The Hebrew verb *yrh*, which only appears in the *hifil* stem, is defined by HALOT as “to instruct, teaching”; “to teach someone something”; appearing particularly with “special objects” (statues, the Torah, judgments/ordinances, lies); and appearing regarding “cultic or technical matters in general”; or appearing when “the instruction is mentioned in a clause” (Ludwig & Baumgartner, 2002). The Hebrew noun *torah* is derived from the verb *yrh* and means “direction, instruction” translated in the Septuagint (LXX) as *nomos* (“law”). It is also used in Mishnaic Hebrew as “law, scroll of the law, holy scripture” (Ludwig & Baumgartner, 2002). Occurring 216 times, *torah* conveys the idea of a body of revealed teaching rendered as ‘law’ (Nixon, 1996, p. 280). The word’s usage does not pertain exclusively to God’s law as seen in Jeremiah 18:18 and Proverbs 1:8 referring to laws given by men. When used in reference to God’s law, the word *torah* is translated into English in multiple ways, for example, “to teach” (Ps 119), “Law of God” (Exod 12:49), “the book of the Law” (Josh 1:8; 8:34; cf. 2 Kgs 22:8, 11; Neh 8:3), and “instructions” or contents of the laws or simply “law” (Deut 17:11; Neh 12:44; 2 Kgs

10:3, Lev 6:2; cf. 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 22:8). In Leviticus 10:11 *yrh* is used to define the priestly duties to teach the people the statutes of the Lord. *Torah* was seen as rules or divine instructions (Hos 4:6; cf. Isa 5:24; 30:9; Hos 8:1, 12) that were “basic to Israel’s cultural and national identity” as seen in Deuteronomy 4:5, 6, 8 (Achteimeier, 1985 p. 1083; Unterman, 2011 p. 1060).

The following are several terms used in the Hebrew Old Testament in connection with *torah*: *din*, “judgment” (Deut 17:8); *tzedakah*, “righteousness, justice” (Gen 15:6; cf. 18:19; Deut 1:16, 16:18, 20); *davar*, “word” (Exod 20:1; cf. 12:24; 16:16, 32); *mishmeret*, “observance” (Gen 26:5; Lev 8:35); *mitzvah*, “commandment(s)” (Exod 24:12; cf. Num 36:13); *torah*, *mishpat*, and *hok*, “rule, commandment, and judgment” (Ezek 44:24; cf. Job 8:3); ‘*edut* and ‘*ot*, “sign, commandment, testimonies, statutes, judgments” (Exod 13:9, 16; 31:17; Deut 4:45). These terms, while not identical, interchangeably overlap in meaning (Chinitz, 2005, pp. 113-117). In Deuteronomy 30:10 Moses commanded the people’s obedience to the *mitzvah* (“commandments”) written in the *cepher torah* (“book of the law”). The term *mitzvah* is often translated as “commandments” or “precept” as in Nehemiah 9:14; Daniel 9:5 (Strong, 2001; see NKJV). Doctrines were very much present during the Old Testament experience of God’s people. To them were given a body of teachings or doctrines as guidance for daily living (Exod 20). It is clear from Joshua 1:8 that their prosperity and success were linked to careful observation and obedience of all the teachings given them.

Doctrine in the New Testament

There are six cognate terms in the Greek New Testament related to *doctrines*. The following definitions are taken from T. Friberg and B. Friberg (1994), *Analytical Greek New Testament*.

1. *didaktiko* (adj.) “skillful in teaching, able to teach”
2. *didaktos* (adj.) “taught; (1) of persons *instructed, taught* (JN 6.45; (2) of words *imparted, learned, taught* (1C 2.13a)”
3. *didaskalia* (noun) “active *instruction, act of teaching* (RO 1:7); (2) passive *what is taught, teaching, doctrine* (EP 4.14)”
4. *didaskalos* (noun) “teacher”
5. *didaskō* (verb) “*teach, instruct* (MT 4.23); passive *be taught, learn* (GA 1.12)”
6. *didachē* (noun) “(1) active, as an activity *teaching, instruction* (1C 14.6); (2) passive *what is taught, teaching, doctrine* (JN 7.16)”

Note that all terms are related to ‘instruct’ and ‘teaching.’ Likewise, Louw and Nida’s (1996) description: The terms *didachē* and *didaskalia* (derivatives of *didaskō*) mean the content of what is “taught, doctrine, or teaching” (p. 414). *Didaskalia* is used of the Pharisees’ teaching (Matt 15:9; Mark 7:7) and mostly concentrated in the Pastoral Epistles while *didachē* is used to describe Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 7:28 and throughout the New Testament (Nixon, 1996, p. 280). The New Testament makes reference to three types of doctrines: (a) the doctrine of men (Mark 7:7; John 7:17; Col 2:22), (b) the doctrine of devil (1 Tim 4:1), and (c) the doctrine of God (John 7:17; 2 John 9). Thus, it is imperative to give attention to what doctrine we believe and teach.

Jesus taught (*edidaske*) in the synagogue and “the people were astonished at His doctrine [*didachē*]” (Mark 1:21-22 KJV; cf. Matt 7:28; 22:23; Luke 6:6; John 7:6). Jesus’ teachings/doctrines were founded in the Old Testament as a whole. In His teachings Jesus alluded to every section of the Old Testament treating them as doctrine, such as, in Matt. 5:21, the Sermon on the Mount, He referenced Exodus 20:13 (cf. Deut 5:17); in Matthew 22:36-40 (cf. Mark 12:30) He quoted Deuteronomy 6:5 pointing out that all the *nomos* (law) is summed up in the commandment to love; in Mark 7:6-9 He condemned the doctrine of the Pharisees using Isaiah 29:13; and in John 10:34 He quoted Psalm 82:6, calling it part of the *nomos* (law).

The formulation of Christian doctrine appeared after Pentecost (Acts 2:42) as the instruction for those who had responded to the apostles’ preaching (Nixon, 1996, p. 280). The fellowship and spiritual union of the apostles and the early church were in part based upon doctrine: “They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42 KJV). In preaching the doctrine of Salvation, Peter declared to the people that there is no other way of salvation except through Jesus (Acts 4:12). The apostle Paul in many of his letters, whether to individuals or to a body of believers, devoted a considerable amount of time to both the theory and practical application of doctrines (Rom 16:17-18; 1 Tim 4:6-7; 6:3; 2 Tim 1:3; 4:3; Titus 1:9). He taught that “true doctrine is essential for Christian growth (Eph 4:11–16; 1 Tim 4:6; 6:3; Titus 1:9) and that false doctrine destroys the church (Eph 4:14; 2 Tim 4:3)” (Youngblood, Bruce, & Harrison, 1995). First Timothy 4:16: “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” This verse affirms that doctrine is set forth as the foundation upon which

the Christian life is to be lived, and advocates the necessity of the church in giving diligent heed to biblical doctrine. To deviate from sound doctrine would inevitably influence the end result of life here on earth and the life to come. Thus, in the Old and New Testament doctrine is the biblical teachings, instructions, and laws from God given throughout His entire Word, the Bible.

Ellen White on the Concept of *Doctrine*

“In seeking to cast contempt upon the divine statutes, Satan has perverted the doctrines of the Bible, and errors have thus become incorporated into the faith of thousands who profess to believe the Scriptures (E. G. White, 1888, p. 582).

Ellen White believed that doctrines were “the very pillars of the Christian faith” (1888, p. 583). These pillars were “the truths that have made us as a people what we are, leading us on step by step” (E. G. White, 1905, para. 22), and within these truths are “many doctrines” (E. G. White, 1958, p. 87). For her, some of these doctrines were Creation, the Fall of Humanity, and the Atonement (E. G. White, 1888, p. 583).

Damsteegt (1991) observed that, when Ellen White spoke of “truth,” she was referring to the divine word of God (p. 77). He further noted that she believed it was detrimental to tamper with the pillars of the Christian faith. For White these pillars were “landmarks” that if removed would disrupt the very foundation of the church and lead to a disastrous end (p. 86). Landmarks were doctrines such as the Sanctuary, the Sabbath and “nonimmortality of the wicked” (E. G. White, 1946a, p. 30).

Ellen White conceived that doctrines, along with the system of religious principles, should be the foundation and framework of Christian living (1997, p. 30).

Gordon (n.d.) states that Ellen White affirmed the Bible as the revealer of doctrines (p.

3). Ellen White spoke of law, doctrine, and truth interchangeably (1888, pp. 582-585) and referred to the instructions of Paul and the teaching of John as doctrine (1911, pp. 300, 569). She was convinced that doctrine is crucial for the spiritual maturity of God's people (1991, p. 325). She viewed doctrine as a necessity in the preparation to survive in the "last days" (1920, p. 100). Timm (2014) notes that she laid "a *solid doctrinal-lifestyle platform*, based on the principle of 'the Bible only' as the standard of all doctrines" (sec. "Formation of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines and Lifestyle," para. 2, emphasis original).

Christ is the Center of Biblical Doctrines

Christ, like the Bible, carries the title of "the Word" (John 1:1) and He is the indispensable center of the biblical Word's doctrine. All of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, points to Christ and finds fulfillment in Him. Christ Himself declared to the Jews that the Scriptures they studied testify of Him (John 5:39). It was the same Scriptures that Jesus used to open to His disciples' understanding of the Messiah following His resurrection:

Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27 KJV)

Christ is the Center of Doctrines in the Old Testament

The revelation of Christ is not as distinct or obvious in the Old Testament as seen in the New Testament, yet without a doubt Christ is the center of Old Testament teaching. When He told the Jews in John 5:39 that Scriptures testify of Him and opened the understanding of the disciples regarding His mission on the road to Emmaus in Luke

24:25-27, He was speaking of the Old Testament. For at that time, the New Testament Scripture had not been written. Many Old Testament teachings point to Christ. The following are a few examples of that which testifies to Christ and will be discussed briefly in this section: Christ's roles, such as, Creator, Redeemer, Seed, Messiah, the Angel of the LORD, and the Branch, and His antitypical cultic ministerial work symbolized in the Old Testament priesthood, sacrificial system, and festivals.

Christ the Creator and Redeemer

The Old Testament begins with the words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1 KJV). This statement was foundational to the faith of Old Testament saints, for the one who created the world out of nothing was able to recreate and redeem what sin had de-created (Ps 51:10; Isa 65). Old Testament believers, as seen in Isaiah 43:15 and 44:24 (cf. Ruth 4:10; Lev 25:23-28, 48), knew that the Creator was also the *ga'al*, a Hebrew term meaning "to redeem" or "redeemer" (Strong, 2009, p. 25). The term is often used in reference to God as one who redeems His people (e.g., Isa 43:1-3). Deuteronomy 6:4 states "The Lord our God is one Lord" (KJV). New Testament writers confirm that both Creator and Redeemer are the same person (John 1:1-14; Col 1:12-17; Heb 1:1-3). Redemption was the theme of Old Testament teachings, as seen in the stories of Adam and Eve (Gen 3:15-21), Noah (9:9-11), Abram (12:1-3), and Israel (Exod 3:8). The fact that the story of Redemption is central to Old Testament teachings means the one who redeems (Redeemer) was also central. Christ Himself declared, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10b KJV).

Christ the Seed

Throughout the Old Testament and beginning in Genesis 3:15 a solid messianic foundation is laid. Genesis 3:15 states: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (NKJ). The Hebrew term *zera’* meaning “seed” can also be rendered “offspring.” As used here it “is the antecedent of a singular pronoun, *hu*, which is the subject of a singular verb, *yěsûpêkâ* (‘he will bruise you’); and the antecedent of the singular pronominal suffix on *těsûpennû* (‘you will bruise him’)” (Collins, 1997, p. 142). The tense being singular suggests that the woman’s *seed* is an individual and therefore assumes that a particular seed (singular) of the woman would do battle with the seed (singular) of the serpent. However, the woman’s Seed would bruise the serpent’s (your) head, and the serpent (you) would bruise the heel of the woman’s Seed. The bruising takes place between the Seed of the woman and the serpent, not the serpent’s seed.

Old Testament teachings were centered on the person referred to as the *zera’* or Seed of Genesis 3:15. Adam was told, “in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die” (Gen 2:16-17 KJV). Instead, he lived because of the promised Seed who would one day *yiqtol*, which means “crush” or “compress” with violence the enemy’s head (Gen 3:15) (Heiser & Setterholm, 2013). Beginning with Adam and Eve, Old Testament saints rested their faith on this promised Seed. Many hoped the promised Seed would find fulfillment in their offspring, such as, Eve at the birth of Cain: “Later, Adam had sexual relations with his wife Eve. She became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, ‘I have given birth to a male child—the LORD’” (Gen 4:1 ISV).

The Hebrew verb *qnh*, translated “possessed” ([Prov] 8:22), is the same as the one referring to the “birth” of Eve’s firstborn, which was interpreted by Eve as the

extraordinary birth of YHWH, the Lord, as the following literal translation suggests: “I have gotten [*qnh*] . . . the Lord (Gen. 4:1). The Hebrew syntax indeed gives “the Lord” as the direct complement object of the verb *qnh*. Eve’s exclamation did not imply that she had created YHWH but that she thought YHWH had incarnated Himself in this first human newborn. (Doukhan, 2014, chpt. 4, “The Urgency of Wisdom”)

Lamech had a similar expectation at the birth of Noah when he declared, “Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands” (Gen 5:29 ESV).

The promise to Abram that all the families of the earth would be blessed finds fulfillment in the Seed, who is Christ (Gen 12:1-3; 22:18; cf. Gal 3:8, 16). Galatians 3:16 states: “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ” (JNV). Also the lawgiver of Gen 49:10 (cf. Num 24:17; Isa 33:22), the promised destruction of Israel’s enemies (Num 24:15-19), and the promised Prophet of Deut 18:15-18 (cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37) all find fulfillment in the Seed—Christ. According to Cole (2000) the scepter in Genesis 49:10 signifies a royal ruler and denotes authority and power, which would be fulfilled in Christ.

Christ the Messiah

Christ and *Messiah* are synonymous terms. The Hebrew *mashiyakh*, “Messiah” (e.g., Dan 9:25-26) and the Greek *Christos*, “Christ” (e.g., Matt 2:4; Mark 8:29; Luke 4:41; John 1:41; 4:25; Acts 2:30) can both be translated in English as “anointed one,” and in John 1:41 and 4:25 the Messiah is the Christ. Mathews (2005) states that the *lawgiver* is Christ/Messiah. In 1 Samuel 2:10, 35, He is both the Anointed One and the Priest. The word *mashiyakh* (“anointed”) used here also means Messiah. In the Psalms, He will be rejected, betrayed, crucified, resurrected, conqueror, and sit as King (Pss 2; 16; 22; 69;

72; 110; 118). In Isaiah the Messiah would be born of a virgin (7:14; cf. Matt 1:22-23); a great light for the Gentiles (Isa 9:1-6; cf. Matt 4:12-16); the suffering servant who dies for the ungodly (Isa 53); and the Messiah who heals, delivers, and saves (61:1; cf. Luke 4:18). Daniel 9:25-26 predicted the *mashiyakh*'s (Messiah's) death while Micah 5 forecast the place of His birth (cf. Luke 2:4) and Zechariah 6; 9; and 13 tells of His reign, triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and death.

Christ the Angel of the LORD

Another Christocentric Old Testament teaching is revealed in the Angel of the Lord concept. The Hebrew terms *mal'ak 'elohim* ('Angel of God') and *mal'ak yhwh* ('Angel of the LORD') were often used in reference to the appearance of Christ (e.g., Gen 16:7; 21:17; cf. Gen 16:13; 22:11, 12, 15-18; 31:11-13; Num 22). The appearance of the Angel of Lord in several Old Testament texts was more than just a mere angel but a divine being. This is seen in the promise to bless Abraham (Gen 22:15-18), the encounter with Moses as *Elohim* in the burning bush (Exod 3:2-6; cf. Isa 9:6), the blessing pronounced on Hagar (Gen 16:7-11), the acceptance of sacrifice and worship (Judg 2:21; 13:2-25), and in Numbers 22 the Angel of the LORD spoke to Balaam as God using first person pronouns: "And the Angel of the LORD said to him, 'Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because *your* way is perverse before Me'" (v. 32 KJV).

Christ the Branch

Isaiah 11:1 speaks of the Branch that grows out of the root of Jesse and grew up to be a defender of the people. The Hebrew term *natsar* ("to keep") is the root from which *netser* ("shoot" or "sprout") comes (Strong, 2001). The term refers to Christ (cf.

Rom 15:12) as the shoot that developed from of the root of Jesse, meaning the “royal line of David” (Elwell & Beitzel, 1988, p. 377). Jeremiah 23:5-6 and 33:15-16 speak of the righteous reign of the Branch, who is also called “the LORD our Righteousness,” as one who would save and destroy. Mentioning this Branch, Malachi 4:2-3 also use a similar term, “Sun of Righteous,” to speak of one who would arise to heal and destroy (cf. Zach 3:8; 6:12-13).

Christ the High Priest and in the order of Melchizedek

Christ was also revealed in the Aaronic high priestly ministry in the high priests duties interceding and making atonement for the sins of the nation (Lev 16); in his life particularly when ministering in a sinless/consecrated fashion (Exod 30:30; Lev 16:3, 32) and in his dress (Exod 28:4, cf. Lev 8:7-9; 16:4). The Old Testament mysterious Melchizedek of Gen 14:18-20 prefigures Christ as High Priest. The word *malkiy-tsedeq* (Melchizedek) means “king of righteousness” (Elwell, & Beitzel, 1988, p. 1433), his priestly origin is distinct from the Aaronic priesthood (Biblical Studies Press, 2006, “Notes for Gen 14:18”), and has an everlasting role—all like Christ. Psalm 110:1, 4 (cf. Heb 1:3; 7:3, 11, 17) speak “of the eternal order of Melchizedek and the sitting down of the Son at God’s right hand” (Hughes & Laney, 2001, p. 660).

Christ the Antitype for the sacrificial system

The sanctuary and sacrificial system also have at their center Christ. These systems dealt with salvation or forgiveness of sin. The Old Testament teaches that “the soul who sins shall die” (Ezek 18:4, 20) and there is no forgiveness for sin without the shedding of blood (Lev 17:11; cf. Heb 9:22). The idea of sin being *forgiven, blotted out*,

washed, and *covered* are used in Old Testament teachings (see Pss 32; 51). The need for forgiveness of sin laid the basis for the sacrificial system, which required the death of an animal and the offering of its blood by the ministration of a high priest. All this was done through the sanctuary service (Lev 1-6; 16; Num 19). Isaiah 53 forecast the suffering servant (Christ) as a lamb offered for the sins of mankind (cf. Heb 2:17-18). The sin offering, trespass offering, meal offering, peace offering, burnt offering among other rituals were all central to Old Testament teachings, required by God and pointed to the person and work of Christ.

The Hebrew word *zavakh* ('sacrifice') is first seen in Genesis 31:54, "and Jacob offered a *sacrifice* in the hill country and called his kinsmen to eat" (ESV, italic added). However, the action of God's covering Adam and Eve with garments of skin (Gen 3:21) as well the offerings of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:3-4) suggest the shedding of blood and a sacrificial theology (Swann, 2012, 2013, 2014). Central to the sacrificial system is the forgiveness and removal of sin, which were achieved by shedding the blood of a spotless animal (Lev 17:11). However, the blood of animals could not forgive nor remove sin (Heb 10:4). Thus, the sacrificial system points to the Messiah (Christ) who would be crushed for the iniquities of all and bore the sins of many (Isa 53:4-12; cf. John 1:36).

Christ's Ministry as antitype for the biblical festivals

The sanctuary's calendar included feast days, which pointed to Christ's ministry. One festival was the Day of Atonement. Here the high priest exchanged his garments of beauty for a linen coat in order to remove sins from the sanctuary by using two goats, one for the LORD and the other for *aza'zel* (Lev 16:8, 10, 26), which Holladay and Köhler (2000, p. 269) term "a desert demon" but was traditionally referred to as the *scapegoat*.

The LORD's goat was killed for a sin offering and its blood sprinkled around the Mercy Seat. Then the sins were symbolically transferred to the goat of *aza'zel* (Lev 16), who was then banished. All this points to the Messiah who would come in a lowly form and bear the iniquity of all (Isa 53:2-10; cf. 2 Cor 5:21). Many other Old Testament festivals were Christocentric. Among them was Passover (*pesakh*), which comes from the Hebrew word *pasakh* ('to pass over') and signified the diversion of God's wrath and deliverance from bondage (Exod 12:13, 27). The blood of an innocent spotless lamb was shed and none of its bones were to be broken (Exod 12:46; cf. Ps 34:20; John 19:36). This pointed to Christ as the ultimate Passover Lamb (cf. 1 Cor 5:7). Following was the Feast of the Unleavened Bread (Exod 12:15-20; Lev 23:6; Deut 16:3). For seven days nothing with leaven was eaten. Seven signifying completeness and unleavened meaning truth and sincerity (1 Cor 5:7-8) were symbolic of the life lived by those partaking of the Passover—Christ. The Feasts of the First Fruits and Weeks (Pentecost) (Lev 23:5-11, 16; Deut 16:10, 16) also point to the perfect Christ representing His life and resurrection from the dead (Acts 2; 1 Cor 15:20). These as well as many other numerous examples record the divine Word, Christ, in the Word of God, the Bible.

Christ is the Center of Doctrines in the New Testament

All of the examples of Christocentric teachings in the Old Testament (above) are supported and ratified in the New Testament as well. Likewise, the examples of Christological teachings in the New Testament all find their origin in Old Testament teachings. The revelation of the incarnated Jesus Christ is more explicit in the New Testament, which opens with the words, "The book of the generation [*genesis*] of Jesus Christ" (Matt 1:1 KJV), and, therefore, leaves no doubt that Christ is central to New

Testament teachings. The Greek *Christos* ('Christ') is a translation of the Hebrew word *mashiyakh* (Messiah), and is used as the proper name for Jesus as in Matt 27:17 (Louw & Nida, 1996, p. 831; cf. Matt 1:16; John 1:41; 4:25). The title Christ is used over 500 times in the New Testament, along with other titles in reference to Jesus. Many Old Testament teachings are further expanded in the New Testament. The following are discussed below: Christ's roles, such as, Creator, Redeemer, High Priest, Lamb, Son of God, Shepherd, Bread from Heaven, and Cornerstone—along with the phrases "in Christ" and "the Gospel of Christ."

Christ the Creator and Redeemer

John's gospel begins with an allusion to Genesis 1:1:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made . . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:1-3, 14 ESV; cf. Col. 1:16-17a; Heb 1:2b)

The word *creation* belongs to the Greek word family of *ktisis* ("creation"), *ktisma*

("creature" or "what is created"), and *ktizo* ("to create") (Mueller, 2004, p. 49). In

Revelation 3:14 Jesus is the *archē* ('the first cause') of the *ktisis* ('creation') of God.

Romans 11:36 (cf. 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 1:10) shows Jesus as agent of Creation. Ephesians 3:9

(cf. Col 1:16–17) states God *ktizō* ('created') all things by Jesus Christ. John's gospel states everything *ginomai* ('came into existence') by Christ.

New Testament Scripture not only placed Christ central to the doctrine of Creation, but also to Redemption, and even assumed redemption as a New Creation by a completely new act of God through Christ, "if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creation" (2 Cor 5:17 NKJV; cf. Gal 6:15; Eph 2:10; 4:24). Redemption takes place because of the

death of Christ. According to Grassmick (1985, p. 153), New Testament writers use several terms in reference to Christ's act of redemption:

1. Christ *agorazō/exagorazō* ("to buy/buy out") from the curse of the law, Gal 3:13; cf. 4:5; 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23; 2 Pet 2:1; Rev 5:9; 14:3, 4.

2. Christ *lytron/lytroomai/lytrōsis* ("ransomed, paid the price to set free") by giving His life Matt. 20:28; cf. Mark 10:45 Luke 1:68; 24:21; Titus 2:14; Heb 9:12.

3. Christ *apolytrōsis* ("to buy back or set free by paying a ransom price") by His blood, 1 Cor 1:30; cf. Eph 1:7; Col. 1:14.

Romans 5:10-11 (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-20; Eph 2:16; Col 1:20) shares that Christ performed the ministry of *katallassō* ("reconciliation") and Heb 2:17 (cf. 1 John 2:2; 4:10) states He became the merciful and faithful *archiereus* ("high priest") to *hilaskomai* ("make reconciliation") for the sins of the people (KJV).

Christ the High Priest and Lamb (of God)

In the New Testament Jesus is both High Priest and Lamb (of God). Hebrews 4:14 (cf. 2:17; 3:1; 4:15; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1) calls Jesus *archiereus megas* ("great high priest" or 'most important priest'). Being the divine high priest, He perfectly represents humanity before God (Rom 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2) and made atonement for sin by offering Himself as the sacrificial lamb (Heb 2:17; 8:3; 9:7, 11-12; 13:11-13). John 1:29 (cf. v. 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 13:8) affirms that Christ is *amnos tou theou* ('the Lamb of God') that *airō* ('takes/carries away') the sins of the world. First Corinthians 5:7 (cf. Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7) states He is our *pascha* ('Passover'), which is a specially selected lamb killed and eaten during the festival commemorating the departure of Israel from Egypt (Louw & Nida, 1996, p. 41). Jesus replaces the sacrificial lamb whose blood

was shed to take/carry away sins in the Jewish sacrificial system. In Revelation the term *arnion* ('lamb') is used about 30 times. The lamb standing as if it had been slain is being worshipped (5:6, 8, 12, 13).

Christ the Son of God

The book of Mark begins, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1 KJV). Louw and Nida translate *tou euaggeliou Iēsou Christou* as "the beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ" (1996, p. 654), and states that *uios tou theou* literally means "son of God" and is a title that applies to Jesus (p. 140). The term Son of God is used more than 50 times in the New Testament. An angel announced Him as the Son of God (Luke 1:35) and others used the term in acknowledgment of His deity (Matt 14:33; Mark 15:39; John 1:34, 49; 11:27). Unclean/demonic spirits confessed Him as the Son of God (Mark 1:24; 3:11; 5:7). Jesus also used the term to refer to Himself (e.g., John 5:25; 9:35). Twice a voice from heaven acknowledged Him as "My beloved son" (Matt 3:17; 17:5; cf. Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 9:35). Peter confessed Him to be the Son of the living God (Matt.16:16; cf. John 6:69); and 1 John 5:5 (cf. vv. 10, 12-13) stressed salvation is linked to belief on the Son of God. Another term used in reference to Jesus is *monogenēs uios*. KJV, NKJV, and NASB render *monogenēs* as "only begotten" (John 3:16, 18; cf. 1:18; 1 John 4:9).

Christ the Shepherd

Rooted in Old Testament imagery, Shepherd language is used to describe Jesus' death (Matt 26:31; Mark 14:27), and His ministry and work (Matt 9:36; 18:12-14; 25:31-46; Mark 6:34). He is called the *kalos poimēn*, 'the Good Shepherd,' (John 10:11-16);

megas poimēn, ‘the great shepherd’ of the sheep (Heb 13:20); *poimēn*, ‘shepherd’ and guardian of our souls (1 Pet 2:25); and *archipoimēn*, ‘the chief shepherd’ (1 Pet 5:4).

Christ the Bread From Heaven

Manna (Hebrew *man*) appears in Exodus 16:4 as bread from heaven to meet the physical hunger of the people (cf. Ps 78:24; Neh 9:15). In John’s gospel Jesus declared Himself the true Bread from Heaven with reference to the wilderness manna. Freely given without price and coming down from heaven, Old Testament manna foreshadows the Christ who would come down from heaven to meet the spiritual hunger of mankind without price—the Bread of Heaven (see John 6:32-38, 49-51).

Christ the Cornerstone

In Matthew 21:42 and Luke 4:18 (cf. Ps 118:22; Isa 61:6; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:27) Jesus pointed to Himself as the fulfillment of prophecy (Crawford, 1919, p. 78). The occurrence of *akrogōviaios* and *kephalē gōvias* (“cornerstone, important stone”) in the New Testament refers only to Christ (Louw & Nida 1996, p. 87). Acts 4:10–12 (cf. Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:6) presents Christ, the cornerstone/chief stone, as the most essential of the construction stone in the building. The stone (*lithos*) and the cornerstone (*akrogōniaion*) are one and the same (Arichea & Nida, 1980, p. 59). The stone was *eklektos* (‘chosen’) by God and was *entimos* (‘of high valuable, precious’) to him and was *apodokimazō* (‘rejected’) by the builders (1 Pet 2:4, 7; Luke 9:22).

“In Christ”

The emphasis of New Testament doctrine on *Christ* can be seen clearly in the phrase “in Christ” (or its equivalent) which is used numerous times in the New

Testament, mostly in the Pauline writings at least 146 times (Kendall, 1996 p.144). In Acts 24:24 Paul spoke “concerning the faith in Christ”—the message he preached. For him the whole Christian experience happens in Christ: e.g., redemption “is in Christ” (Rom 3:24), we are “alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (6:11), eternal life is “in Christ” (6:23), “there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ” (8:1), nothing is “able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ” (8:39), “We . . . are one body in Christ” (12:5), we “are sanctified in Christ” (1 Cor 1:2), we “are wise in Christ” (4:10), we fall “asleep in Christ” (15:18), “we have hope in Christ” (v. 19), “in Christ shall all be made alive” (v. 22), we “triumph in Christ” (2 Cor 2:14), and we are forgiven in Christ (Eph 4:32). All that God had done, is doing, and will do with and for mankind are carried out in Christ, by Christ and through Christ.

The Gospel of Christ

Mark 1:1-2 begins with the words “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God: As it is written in the prophets . . .” (cf. Mal. 3:1; Matt. 11:10; Luke 7:27). The phrase *tou euangeliou Iēsou Christou* can be translated as “the gospel which Jesus brings” or “the gospel about Jesus Christ” (Biblical Studies Press, 2006, “Notes for Mark 1”). The term *euangelion* (‘good news’) simply means Mark is writing about the Good News about Jesus Christ. It is this Good News that Paul stated he’s not ashamed of (Rom 1:16) and that he fully preached the Gospel of Christ (15:19). Paul admonished us to be careful not to hinder the Gospel of Christ (1 Cor 9:12), to live in subjection to the Gospel of Christ (2 Cor 9:13), and to conform our conduct to the Gospel of Christ (Phil 1:27)—for there is no other Gospel (Gal 1:7).

Ellen White on Christocentric Doctrines

Due to the dominant role Ellen White played in Adventism through her writings this section will take a very brief look at Christ-centered doctrines in her writings.

According to Ellen White, doctrines are not detached items with little meanings but are united by golden threads that formed a complete whole, with Christ as the living center (1986b, p. 87). She asserted that Jesus is the living center of everything and must therefore be the center of every sermon (1946b, p. 186). Her observation that the Bible—from Genesis to Revelation—to be rightly understood and appreciated, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary affirms that the cross is central to doctrines (1901a, p. 315). The plan of redemption, she stated, is the central theme of the Bible around which every other theme is clustered (1952b, p. 125). For her “Christ is the center of all true doctrine” (1990a, p. 261), and therefore every true doctrine must have Christ at its center (1901b, p. 54).

Ellen White further admonished that in every sermon and Bible study “Thus saith the Lord” must be central to “the faith and doctrines” we present (1946b, p. 153) for the great central interest is Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1897, p. 17). Christ, she ascertained, is the “chain upon which the jewels of doctrine are linked” (1893b, para. 1). Thus, biblical teachings (doctrine) in both the Old Testament and New Testament are centered in Christ, and Ellen White’s writings support this Christocentric view of doctrine.

The Role of Doctrines in the Life of the Believer: Hear, Believe, Do

Paul, in counsel to Timothy, admonished him to give careful attention to both his life and doctrine, for in so doing not only will he save himself but others also (1 Tim 4:16). Romans 10:17 affirms “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (ESV). Furthermore, Hebrews 11:6 states, “Without faith it is impossible to please him [God],” and James 1:22 says, “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only” (ESV). Christians please God by having faith in Him by being hearers and doers of the Word. On this basis the Christian life and biblical teachings are inseparable. This section will examine briefly the role of doctrines in the life of the believer in both the Old and New Testaments with brief reflections from Ellen White writings.

Old Testament on the Role of Doctrines in the Life of the Believer

Scripture tells us “to obey” or “to hear” (*shemoa*) is better than sacrifice (1 Sam 15:22) and the righteous lives by faith (Hab 2:4; cf. Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38) Ezekiel 18:21-22 (cf. 2 Chr 7:14) asserts,

If a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live. (KJV)

Faithfulness to God finds expression in obedience to the *torah* (Thompson, 1996, p. 273). Throughout the Hebrew Old Testament, God’s people were constantly called upon to *shema* (‘to hear’), a Hebrew term that carries a deeper meaning than ‘hear’ suggests. It carries the sense of action on, or compliance to, what is heard. The term describes hearing and its effect, such as, taking heed, being obedient, doing what is

asked, paying attention, responding with the total being to what is heard (McMickle, 2008, p. 60; Elwell & Comfort, 2001, p. 1190).

Throughout the Old Testament, God's people were consistently called to hear, do, obey, observe, or listen, as in Leviticus 19:37 (KJV): "Therefore shall ye observe (*shamar*) all my statutes, and all my judgments (*misphat*), and do them" (cf. 18:4; 20:8; 22:31; Deut 5:1). Blessings were linked to obedience to the commands of God, such as, Genesis 22:18: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed (*shama'ta*) my voice" (KJV; cf. Deut 8:1; 11:22, 27, 28; 28:1-14). In Exodus 19:5, "If ye will obey my voice indeed (*shama'*), and keep (*shamar*) my covenant," they would be God's peculiar treasure above all people. They would live and dwell in safety if they keep (*shamar*) the ordinance/judgments (*mishmereth / mishpat*) (Lev 22:9; 25:18; cf. 18:5; Deut 32:46-47; Jos 1:7). It was for their good, righteousness, prosperity, etc. if they hear/obey the *mitzvah* ('law') (Deut 6:25; 29:9). To not *shama'* ('hear') would lead to being cursed, idolatry, God's anger being against them, and losing their blessings (Deut 28; cf. 30:17; Josh 2:19; Jer 9:13; 11:6-14). Biblical doctrines/teachings then are the means by which the believer grows to spiritual maturity.

New Testament on the Role of Doctrines in the Life of the Believer

The teachings of the New Testament serve as a means of instructions for believers on how to live. Jesus and James had a lot to say about not just being hearers of the teachings but doers also as seen in the following passages:

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came,

and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.” And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. (Matt 7:24-29 ESV)

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. (Jas 1:22-23 ESV)

Both passages emphasize the importance of acting on what is heard. The Word demands that one must act. “Doers of the word,” therefore, mean those who practice, obey, live by, and act on the Word (Loh & Hatton, 1997, p. 47). Hearing and doing are therefore important to Christian living. The Greek term *akouō* meaning ‘to hear’ (which is related to the English word *acoustic*) conveys the idea of paying attention, belief, response (Matt 18:15), obey, listen, and conform (Matt 17:5; cf. Acts 2:37; 18:8; 19:5; Swanson, 1997). Hearing leads to conversion (Matt 13:15, cf. Mark 4:12; Acts 28:26-27), and those who hear and keep the teachings are blessed (Mark 11:8; cf. Matt 10:14; 17:5, Jas 1:25), but those who do not hear are not of God (John 8:41-47) and will be destroyed (Acts 3:22-23). Christ cautioned His hearers to take heed to “what” they hear (Mark 4:24; Heb 2:1) and “how” they hear (Luke 8:18).

The Greek terms *poieō* translated “to do, to act, to carry out, to accomplish, to perform, doing, performance” (Louw & Nida, 1996, p. 511) and *tēreō* translated “keep on, continue in a state, guard, keep watch over, obey, observe” (Swanson, 1997, loc. cit.) are used by New Testament writers to express the role of doctrine in the believer’s life. In Matt 25:31-46 (cf. John 5:29) Jesus, using the parable of the sheep and goats, makes clear that being saved is linked to doing while James 2:20, 26 takes it further by stating that faith without works is dead. Paul points out that it is not the *akroatai* (‘hearers’) of the *nomos* (‘law’) who are righteous in God’s sight, but rather those who are *poiētai* (‘doers’)

the law (Rom 2:13; cf. Matt 7:24; James 1:25). Those who are in relationship with Jesus will *poieō* ('do') God's will (Matt 12:50; cf. Mark 3:35). Those who love God will *tēreō* ('keep watch over, obey, observe') His *logos* ('word') (John 14:23; cf. 15:14; 1 John 2:3). Those who do not *tēreō* ('keep') His word do not love him and are liars (John 14:24; 1 John 2:4; cf. Luke 6:46).

Jesus warned the disciples not to follow the practices of the Pharisees for they do not *poieō* ('do') what they say (Matt 23:3). In Luke He implies that we should not call Him Lord if we do not practice/do what he says (Luke 6:46). *Mē hypakouousi* ('those who did not obey') the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be punished with everlasting destruction (2 Thess 1:8-9; cf. 3:14) while God is praised for those who *hypakouō* ("obeyed") the *didachē* ("doctrine") that was taught (Rom 6:17). Finally, blessed are those *akouō* and *tēreō* the *logos* and *poieō* His commandments, for they shall have right to the tree of life, and enter through the gates into the city of God (Rev 1:3; 22:14).

Ellen White on the Role of Doctrines in the Life of the Believer

In 1893 in *The Youth Instructor*, Ellen White penned words that are applicable today as well to all believers:

Let every youth remember that it is one thing to acknowledge the truth of the doctrines of the Bible, and it is another thing to let them control the practical life, and have the living, working principles of truth fashioning the thoughts and actions, that the soul may be pure as God is pure. For as God is perfect in his sphere, so man is to be perfect in his sphere. Let the youth be fully determined to bring sound doctrine into actual contact with souls for whom Christ died, that it may produce sound practice. Then you will be doers of the words of Christ. (1893a, para. 6)

Believing that biblical doctrines should control and shape our lives and actions, Ellen White affirmed that the Word of God should be the rule of our faith and practice, for by such we are to be judged (1882, p. 78) and implied that "religious principles and

doctrines . . . should form the foundation and framework of social life” (1917, p. 624 para. 2). In speaking about doctrine, Ellen White suggested, “It was his [Jesus’] design that his disciples should take the plain, unadulterated truth for the guide of their life” (1896, para. 7). Thus, Christ is not only the center of all doctrines but our example on how to follow them. He and the biblical writers taught that biblical teachings (doctrine) are not a set of principles and theological tenants to believe, but the Word of God which all believers must live by—for even the demons believe (Jas 2:19).

Christocentric Doctrinal Preaching

New Testament Scripture makes it clear that “there is no other name [Jesus Christ] under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12 NKJ). Peter preached that they were commanded by Christ “to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead” and all the prophets bear witness of Him that “everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10:42-43 ESV). Paul proclaimed the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to all who believes (Rom 1:16). Scripture dictates that Christ must be the central focus of every doctrinal discourse.

For “everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Rom 10:13-17 ESV; cf. Isa 52:7; 53:1; Joel 2:32)

It is belief in Christ alone that mankind must be saved (Acts 4:12; cf. Joel 2:32; Matt 1:21; Acts 2:21) but mankind will not believe in one of whom they have never heard, but how will they hear without someone preaching? Christ-centered doctrinal preaching must

be done for the salvation of mankind. According to Hamilton (1992, pp. 10-11; cf. Gesenius & Tregelles 2003, p. 525) there are several words used in reference to preaching in Scripture: the dominant word in the Hebrew Old Testament is *naba'* ('to prophesy') and in the Greek New Testament the words are *kerussō* ('to proclaim'), *euaggelizō* ('to declare good news'), *kataggellō* ('to tell thoroughly'), and *didaskō* ('to teach'). It has been established that doctrines are biblical teachings; therefore, Christocentric doctrinal preaching is prophesying, proclaiming, declaring, or teaching biblical doctrines/teachings with a Christ centered focus. This section will address Christocentric doctrinal preaching in the Old and New Testaments and finish with comments from the writings of Ellen White.

Christocentric Doctrinal Preaching in the Old Testament

According to John 1:45 (cf. Heb 4:2), Moses and the prophets proclaimed the Gospel. Deuteronomy is a series of sermons preached by Moses (Peterson, 2005; cf. J. E. Smith, 1993; Carson, France, Motyer, & Wenham, 1994, p. 46). The Scripture does not specifically say Moses preached; however, it does say Moses *dabar* ('speak, talk, declare') to the people. Deuteronomy 1:3 states that He "spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them" (KJV). He declared unto the people the *torah* and spoke to them of the testimonies, statutes, and judgment (Deut 1:5; 4:44-45; 5:1). He spoke to them of the first advent (18:15-19; cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37) and declared that he will *qara'* ('to proclaim') the name of the LORD. Old Testament prophets also prophesied/preached Christocentric doctrinal messages, as seen with Isaiah, who declared he was anointed to *basar* ('to preach') good tidings and to *qara'* ('to proclaim') liberty and the acceptable year of the Lord (61:1; cf. Luke 4:18).

Isaiah and others prophets preached the doctrine of Christ's birth, life, work, and death (7:14; 9:6-7; 35:3-6; 40:3; 53; Mic 5:2; Mal 3:1). Old Testament prophets, such as, Jeremiah and Jonah preached the doctrine of repentance (Jer 3:12; John. 3:2; 7:2; 19:2). Ezekiel also *naba'* ('to prophesy') of coming judgment and pointed to Him who is to come (21:8-9, 25-27; cf. Gen 49:10).

Christocentric Doctrinal Preaching in the New Testament

The mandate given by the apostle Paul is *kēryssō logos* ('to preach the Word'). Swanson (1997) observed that the term *kēryssō* means "to preach," "proclaim with the goal to persuade," "urge," and "warn to comply" as used in Mark 16:15, 20; Romans 10:14; 1 Peter 3:19. As mentioned before there are various terms used in reference to preaching in the New Testament. D. Estes states the term *logos* ('word') has three primary usage in the New Testament:

1. Standard meaning designates a word, speech or the act of speaking (Acts 7:22).
2. Special meaning refers to the special revelation of God to people (Mark 7:13).
3. Unique meaning personifies the revelation of God as Jesus the Messiah (John 1:14). (cited in Barry et al, 2012-2014)

Jesus, His disciples, and Paul preached the *logos* (Mark 2:2; Acts 8:4, 25; 15:35-36; cf. Acts 13:5; 14:25).

John the Baptist *kēryssō* ('preach') the doctrines of Repentance, Baptism, the First Advent of the Christ (Matt 3:1-2, 11; Mark 1:4, 7-8; cf. Luke 3:3, 16; Acts 10:37), and Redemption through Christ (John 1:29, 36; cf. Isa 53:7; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5:6). After John was imprisoned "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15 NKJ). Jesus began His ministry by

kēryssōn (‘preaching’) the doctrines of Repentance and the nearness and Good News/Gospel of Kingdom of Heaven/God (Matt 4:17, 23; cf. 11:1; Mark 1:14-15, 38-39; Luke 4:44; 8:1; Acts 1:3). In Luke 4:18 Jesus declared He was anointed *evangelizeesthai* (‘to preach the gospel/good news’) and He went about *didaskōn* (‘teaching’) and *kēryssōn* (‘preaching’) in their synagogues (Matt 4:23; 9:35; cf. Mark 1:21; 6:2; Luke 4:15; 20:1) and by the seaside (Mark 2:13; 4:1; Luke 5:3) and the people were *astonished* at the doctrines He taught (Mark 1:22; cf. Matt 7:28; 22:23; Mark 11:18; Luke 4:32). In Mark 2:2 He *laleō* (‘preached’) the word unto them. The term is associated with *kataggellō*, meaning “to preach, show, declare, teach, speak of” (Strong, 2001). His teaching and preaching were clearly Christocentric (John 8; 9:35-39; 14; 15; 16; cf. Matt 12:32-39; Mark 8:31; 9:31, 41; Luke 4:18; 13:24-30). After His resurrection, He explained what was written in all the Scriptures, from Moses to the prophets, about Himself (Luke 24:27, 44).

Christ ordained His disciples and commanded/sent them to preach, and they went about and preached Jesus (Mark 3:14; 16:15, 20; 6:12; cf. Matt 10:7; Luke 10:9; 9:2; Acts 8:4; 10:42). Like John and Jesus, they preached repentance (Mark 6:12). They preached the word of the Lord/of God/the Gospel (Luke 9:6; Acts 8:4, 25; cf. 11:19; 13:5; 14:25; 15:35-36; 16:6). “And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Act 5:42 ESV).

The apostle Paul’s preaching was uniquely Christocentric. For him, every act of God in mankind’s behalf is “in Christ” or its equivalent (e.g., Rom 8:1; 1 Cor 1:2, 4; 15:22; 2 Cor 5:19; Gal 2:17; Eph 1:3-7; Col 1:16). Throughout his preaching Paul made it clear that Christ is the central focus, he resolved “to know nothing . . . except Jesus Christ

and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2 ESV). He “did not shrink from declaring the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27 ESV; cf. 2:23; Heb 6:17) for obligation was laid on him to preach (1 Cor 9:16; cf. 2 Cor 2:12; Eph 3:8) and thereby he fully preached the Gospel of Christ (Rom 15:19b). He preached that Christ is the Son of God (Acts 9:20; cf. 19:13; 1 Tim 3:16; 2 Cor 1:19; 4:5). He preached the kingdom of God, teaching the things concerning Christ (Acts 20:25; 28:31). He preached “how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again” (1 Cor 15:3-4; cf. 5:7; 11:23; 1 Thess 1:10; 4:14) by Him we are justified, saved, and therefore we shall live (2 Cor 13:4; Gal 2:17), and one day we must all appear “before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor 5:10 KJV). Paul admonished us to proclaim that which is befitting “sound doctrine” (Tit 2:1). Rightly so for it is through the folly of what we preach that God saves sinners. We must “preach Christ crucified, . . . Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1:23-24). From John the Baptist to John the Revelator, Christ was the center of doctrinal preaching. Day (2009) wrote:

They did not stop preaching Jesus as the Christ (Acts 5:42); God has made this Jesus both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36); Philip preached Christ in (Acts 8:5, 35); Saul confounded the Jews by proving that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 9:22); Paul testified that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:5); Apollos demonstrated that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:28); this Jesus is the Christ (Acts 17:3); if Christ is preached as raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:12); to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8); some preach Christ from envy and strife (Phil. 1:15); these preach Christ out of contention (Phil. 1:17); Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice (Phil. 1:18); we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord (2 Cor. 4:5); him we proclaim (Col. 1:28).

Ellen White on Christocentric Doctrinal Preaching

Jesus is the living center of everything and therefore Christ must be highlighted in every sermon; His preciousness, mercy, and glory should be the focus, for Christ formed

within is “the hope of glory” (Col 1:27). Ellen White pointed out that Christ was sent from heaven to redeem humanity and He taught the doctrines that God gave Him to teach. The truths He proclaimed, as found in both the Old and New Testaments, we are to proclaim today (1986a, pp. 158, 160). She believed that “in presenting the doctrines of your faith, use the persuasive arguments of the Word of God” (1946b, p. 399).

In speaking of the apostles’ preaching, Ellen White noted that the disciples boldly preached Christ, His work, mission, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, amidst deep prejudice and confused ideas with regards to Christ (1911, p. 78) and Paul and Barnabas taught “the doctrine of Christ with great power and eloquence” (1883, p. 55). Ellen White believed that “the exaltation of Christ is the great truth that all who labor in word and doctrine are to reveal” (1990b, p. 295). “The theme that attracts the heart of the sinner is Christ, and Him crucified” (1976, p. 99). Therefore, Christ must be the central focus of our presentations “to the hungering multitudes, and the light of His love will win men from darkness to light, from transgression to obedience and true holiness” (1976, p. 99).

Conclusion

From Genesis to Revelation there is one continuous drama of Redemption: paradise lost to paradise regained—Creation to the consummation of all things. There is one central theme, the person of Jesus Christ, even though implicitly in the Old Testament (Luke 24:27). In the Old Testament Christ is anticipated; in the New Testament He is realized (Matt 5:17–18). There is one message: Humankind’s problem is sin, and the solution is salvation through Christ (Mark 10:45; Luke 19:10) (Geisler, 1999, p. 94).

The English word *doctrine* means teaching. The Christian concept of doctrine comes from its biblical use: mainly from the Hebrew term *leqakh* (“what is received, teachings, instructions”) and from the Greek term *didaskalia* (“the act and/or the content of teaching”). There are several other Hebrew and Greek terms associated with these terms that also support the fact that doctrines are biblical instructions, teachings, and law. Ellen White viewed doctrines as teachings of the Bible and foundational to the church.

Throughout the Scripture, Christ is the central focus and, while less obvious in the Old Testament than in the New Testament, all doctrinal teachings point to Christ (see John 5:39; Luke 24:25-27). In the Old Testament many teachings centered on Christ, for example, the Messiah, the Seed, the sacrificial system, etc. The New Testament is the teaching of Christ. There are over 500 usage of the title *Christ*, with numerous other titles in reference to Christ. The gospels of Christ tell the story of His incarnated ministry on earth. They center on Christ as well as the Pauline writings, the General Epistles, and the Book of Revelation, which is the revelation of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:1). The writings of Ellen White also clearly noted that Christ is the center of all biblical teachings.

The whole Scripture is clear that biblical teachings/doctrine plays a crucial role in the life of the believer. Doctrines demand that God’s people not only hear but also obey or act on what is heard—for only the doers of the word will be made righteous and grow to spiritual maturity. Furthermore, in order to enter the city of God and have a right to the tree of life one must hear, keep, and do the teachings of God (Rev 1:3; 22:14). In the writings of Ellen White it is also seen that doctrines must shape the life and actions of the Christian or, in others words, doctrines are the rule of our faith and practice by which we shall also be judged.

It is very clear that salvation is only through the person of Christ alone, therefore, all doctrines center on Him. Beginning in the Old Testament and through the New Testament, the prophets and the apostles among the many other teachers and preachers proclaimed Christ. Moses spoke to the people all the teachings, such as, the *torah*, testimonies, the statutes, and judgments of God. The prophets also heralded His birth and ministry and death. From John the Baptist to that last apostle, Christ was the central focus of their preaching. Even Jesus, preaching was centered in Himself, the Son of Man. Ellen White admonished that Christ must be emphasized in every sermon because He is the hope of glory.

The great mission of the church is to bring glory to God through the proclamation of the Gospel and the saving of sinners. All Scripture reflects Christ and His teachings for humanity. Every Bible believing preacher has a God-given responsibility to make clear the Christocentric biblical teachings as the very essence of true faith and holy living. Jesus declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” and then He prayed, “Sanctify them by Your truth; Your word is truth” (John 14:6; 17:17 KJV). It is in this *truth* that the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are grounded. Christ has asked us to be not only hearers but also doers of the His Word. Thus, due to the fact that biblical doctrines are directly linked to our salvation, a proper understanding of the doctrines is extremely relevant to our faith and practice. Thus, there must be Christocentric doctrinal preaching in our pulpits!

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE CONTRIBUTING UNDERSTANDING ON CHRISTOCENTRIC DOCTRINES, THEIR RELEVANCE IN THE ADVENTIST CHURCH, AND THEIR PREACHING

Introduction

There are some today who believe and even argue that doctrinal preaching is irrelevant in this postmodern society. Speaking on doctrines, Hefling (1984) concludes that the contents of the Bible no longer occupy the unique place they once held (p. 139). Kaufman (1971) came to a similar determination. Kaufman contends, “The Bible no longer has unique authority for Western man. It has become a great but archaic monument in our midst. It is a reminder of where we once were—but no longer are” (p. 96). While these writers may be somewhat overstating the issue, since of course, the Bible still holds the highest authority among many of God’s people, their observations are significant because the biblical doctrines of denominations are too frequently in question as to their relevancy. Ryrie (2005) notes that no Christian would want to charge the Bible with being irrelevant. Yet there are those who view the doctrines—which are biblical—as irrelevant and impractical. To do so, Ryrie believes, is to assume that the Bible itself is irrelevant and impractical (pp. 2-3). Jamieson (2013) proclaims that doctrine is for life and is not a set of abstract facts, but a road map that shows us who we are, where we are, and where we are going (p. 13). It seems evident from these writers that, while doctrines may be in question as to relevancy, they are foundational to the

survival of the church. If this is so, then it is imperative that, if the church is to survive, the fundamental teachings must be kept before the church through preaching.

This chapter will review current literature relating to Christ-centered doctrinal preaching that impacts the daily lives of church members. To be able to do this, the chapter first addresses the meaning of *church* and *doctrine* and the necessity of Christocentric doctrines to Christian churches. Second, literature commenting on the relevancy and roles of doctrines in the lives of believers and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular is examined. Third, literature relating to the need for Christocentric doctrinal preaching along with principles and strategies for preaching is discussed. In closing concluding remarks are made with some suggestions for areas of further research.

The Necessity of Christocentric Doctrines in the Church

The section discusses literature related to the terms *church* and *doctrines* and the need for Christ-centered doctrines.

Defining Church

Tidwell (1985) contended that having a proper understanding of “what is a church” is vital for a church to maximize and fulfill its mission (p. 59). To faithfully address the necessity of preaching Christocentric doctrines in the *church* it is essential to establish what is the church or who is the church. This section will review materials pertaining to: (a) church in the Old and New Testaments, (b) current Christian use of the term church, and (c) Christ as the center of the church.

Church in the Old and New Testaments

Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary equates “congregation” with *church*.

According to this Bible dictionary, the word “congregation” used in the English Old Testament comes from several Hebrew words that convey the idea of “an appointed meeting” or “an assembly called together.” The concept of congregation is defined as pointing to Israel, a people appointed to be God’s covenant people. Referencing Exodus 12:6, where the words “whole assembly of the congregation of Israel” are inscribed, they contend that Israel as a nation was a congregation, which means Israel was the church of the Old Testament (Youngblood, Bruce, & Harrison, 1995). Elwell and Beitzel (1988) and Manser (2009) agree with this idea by noting that Israel was the *congregation* when they gathered for the reading of the Law as in Deuteronomy 4:10 or in response to God’s call to worship as in Psalm 107:32 (Elwell & Beitzel, 1988, p. 507; Manser, 2009). Lange, Schaff, Fay, and Bliss (2008), picking up on the concept of Israel being the church, noted that “the incorporation of Ruth, the Moabitess, into the church of the Old Testament, may be regarded as an intimation of the future call of the Gentiles to the gospel salvation” (p. 3).

In the New Testament, Elwell and Beitzel (1988) state that the term *church*, which appears twice in Matthew and several times in Acts, refers to a “group or assembly of persons called together for a particular purpose.” Elwell and Comfort (2001) expand this further suggesting that such a gathering is not confined to religious purpose but also a political crowd or simply a social gathering as seen in Acts 19:32, 39, 41. However, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* views the term coming from two Greek

words—*ekklesia* and *synagoge*—as representing both the Christian church (*ekklesia*) and the Jewish synagogue (*synagoge*) (Youngblood, Bruce, & Harrison, 1995).

Chan (2004) states that the church is the living body of Christ (p. 75).

Unfortunately, he did not include biblical evidence to support his statements. The church is also described as “the body of Christ” by Ward (2011, p. 168). Nesson (2012) explains that one of the primary metaphors for the church in the New Testament is “Body of Christ” (p. 43).

The *church* of both Old and New Testaments is seen as a gathering or assembling of people. Today, the overwhelming idea is that church is a building or a meeting place, or as Bruinsma states a place we “go” (2009, p. 15). That idea gains support from Ward, whose work, *Liquid Church*, was reviewed by Burrill. Ward, according to Burrill, envisions church as “retreat center, a Christian shop, a music group” (2003, p. 344).

The concept of church being a place or building is subtly conveyed by Pierce (2007). In attempting to clarify this concept of church, he notes that if one should say church is a building, a religion, or a denomination such answers would be “partially correct” (p. 72). Tidwell (1985) believes such a concept is incorrect (p. 60), and is strongly supported by Bradley (2013) who opposes the idea that the church is a place. Bradley argues that the “body” as used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 is not a place but a living organism (p. 237). However, it is the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists that defines church in the “28 Fundamental Beliefs” as “the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour” (2013, p. 6). Edwards (2013) stands in solidarity with his bold statement, “the church is a people” (p. 10).

Christ is the Center of the Church

If the church is the body of Christ (His people), then it becomes imperative that a new way of thinking be developed in regards to the church being a living, breathing organism of which Christ is the head (Bradley, 2013, p. 237). Canale (2013) addresses the church's connection to Christ when he wrote that the church (a) originated from Old Testament times in the fulfillment of God's covenant promise of Genesis 3:15; 12:3, which are messianic prophecies; (b) emerged in New Testament times in the revelation of Jesus's life and death (Matt 16:16-18; John 14:8-10); and (c) today is the historical-spiritual community that gathers around, coheres in, stands on, and testifies about Jesus (pp. 131-132). Thus, the church is the followers of Christ, not a building.

Tornbury (2003) affirms (a) Christ is the head of the church, (b) He is the dynamic source of energy that infuses life into the church, and (c) He maintains the existence of the church (p. 112). The biblical writer in Matthew 16:18 confirmed that Christ is not only the head of the church but the very foundation upon which it is built. Sloyan (2008) adds to this head and foundation idea by placing Jesus at the center of church (p. 1). According to these sources, Jesus is the head, the foundation, and the center of the church.

Pastors must be aware of the fact that there are biblical and contemporary usages of the concept church and try to educate their congregations to the biblical understanding of the concept, keeping in the forefront that Christ is the center. Furthermore, if Jesus is the central figure of the church, He is the center of every doctrine.

Defining Doctrine

Doctrine is a seemingly *legalistic* word that does not appeal to many people, especially when it is connected to preaching (George, 1992, p. 93). *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* defines doctrine as “a body of beliefs about God, humankind, Christ, the church, and other related concepts considered authoritative and thus worthy of acceptance by all members of the community of faith” (Youngblood, Bruce, & Harrison, 1995). This definition assumes that doctrine relates only to the spiritual world. The word doctrine, which is derived from the Latin *docere*, meaning “to teach,” does not relate exclusively to Christianity. The word is used in the secular world as well (Swaim, 1967, p. 27). This thought is supported by Miley, in his 19th-century *Systematic Theology*, where he wrote, “Any principle or law reached and verified through a proper induction is a doctrine, whether in science, philosophy, or theology” (1892, p. 5). However, for the purpose of this study, literature defining doctrine from a biblical point will be presented.

Doctrine in the Old and New Testaments

“Doctrine is grounded in Scripture” (Manser, 2009, p. 8234). Doctrines are the simple truths of the Bible, which underline 2 Tim 3:16a, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine” (see chap. 2 for further details).

In defining the word doctrine used in English translations of the Bible, Nixon (1996) points out two things: (a) in the Old Testament the word is used mainly as a translation of the Hebrew word *leqakh*, meaning “what is received,” and (b) in the New Testament it is two Greek words connected forming the single word *didaskalia*, meaning both “the act and the content of teaching” (p. 280). Both the Old and New Testaments refer to doctrine as instructions or teachings necessary for spiritual growth,

as in Prov 4:1-2 and Acts 2:42. Several others, such as, Manser (2009) and Mohler (2003), add credence to Nixon's idea of doctrine as being a body of teaching used as a standard of belief (Mohler (2003, p. 436). However, Manser widens the definition by adding that *doctrine* is central to the Christian faith for it maintains the "integrity of Christianity by distinguishing it from non-Christian beliefs" (2009, p. 8234). Doctrine simply is the teaching of scriptural truth.

Christ as the Center of all Doctrine

The Old Testament begins with these words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). John's New Testament gospel begins with an allusion to Gen 1: John 1:1-3 states,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Verse 14 records, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." It is on this premise that Wilcox (1926) contended that Christ is the very God Himself who is both Creator and Redeemer, and therefore the central theme of doctrine (p. 17). Taking it a step further, Farley (2009) points out that the message of the cross "is the heart, soul, and center of Christian faith and practice" (p. 17). While Farley uses the word "cross" and not "Christ" to define the center of Christianity, it is no secret that the message of the cross is Jesus and Him crucified, as he points out later "Christ is to us just what his cross is" (p. 22). What Farley needs to make clear is that the only reason that the cross is the center of Christianity is because Jesus is the center of the cross. Every doctrine finds its roots in these two doctrines: Creation and Redemption (Salvation). Jesus, therefore, is at the

center of the doctrines of the church: Creator and Redeemer, (for further biblical support see chap. 2).

On June 18, 1862, Charles Spurgeon delivered a sermon in which he used a string of metaphors to display the connection between Christ and doctrines. One metaphor he utilized was that the doctrines are a throne upon which King Jesus sits—and the King, not the throne, is the center of attention. Yet, if there is no throne, on what will the King sit and, if there is no king to sit on the throne, what good does the throne serve (Spurgeon, 1977, p. 339)? Since Christ and doctrines are united together, what should be the role of doctrines in the church?

Relevancy and Role of Doctrines in the Church and the Life of the Believer

The Question of Doctrinal Relevancy

The 20th and 21st centuries have seen an attack on the relevancy of doctrines in the church. Kaufman (1971) expressed that the church is in the midst of a painful struggle to discover her proper identity and mission within this chaotic age (p. 96). In 1980 Conner asserted that there is a great attack on sound doctrine, evidence in the fact that churches are turning away from doctrinal matters to social gospel with doctrine becoming obsolete (p. 4). MacArthur (1994) is concerned that the modern church can no longer define their identity in terms of doctrines because the movement has become fragmented doctrinally. He offers a solution: return to our common doctrinal roots (pp. 153-154).

Conder (2006) does not agree with MacArthur, instead he believes that the culture has changed and therefore the message also has changed and will continue to change. He sees no reason to lament, but rather this should be reason for excitement (p. 53), for after all the church as it now exists is still a viable and fruitful expression of the Christian

community (p. 28). However, the Barna Group (2009) indicates that many of those who consider themselves Christians live by beliefs that conflict with biblical doctrines and instead live by a combination of beliefs gathered from different faith perspectives. (This can be caused by relativism in postmodernity). Canale (2012) notes that the church has failed to maintain focus on its essential doctrines. He referenced the work of Johnson (“Joyriding on the Downgrade at Breakneck Speed” in *Reforming or Conforming?*) to highlight that the reason for this failure is due to a deep-seated attitude of doctrinal indifference that stems from the church’s embrace of cultural diversity (p. 57).

Ryrie (2005) reminds his readers that the Bible claims for itself,

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching (very doctrinal), for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness (very relevant); so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (very practical) (2 Tim 3:16–17). (p. 3)

He particularizes even further that the word *adequate* is defined as “proficient and able to meet all demands which are placed upon one’s life” (p. 3). The basis of Ryrie’s comment suggests that doctrines are neither irrelevant nor impractical.

There are many factors, which have led to the crisis regarding doctrinal relevancy, such as: emphasis on social gospel or cultural diversity, our changing world, and relativism and inclusiveness of postmodernity. Since doctrines are biblical and Christ-centered, if the doctrines are irrelevant, so is Christ. Christ is the center of the church; thus, the church itself to be relevant must preach and teach Christocentric doctrines.

Factors Affecting the Relevancy of Doctrines in the Adventist Church

In order to have an adequate understanding of 21st century Adventists’ beliefs attention must be given to its origin and development, which dates back to the 19th

century (Patrick, 2010, pp. 272-288). Adventism started in the mid-19th century in the United States, this section will be limited mainly to historical circumstances and events in the United States and other Western cultures although many of these issues are global. Due to space and time, the material will be limited to a few important factors, which have affected Adventist views on doctrines and their relevancy.

Nineteenth Century: Fundamental Beliefs in Early Adventism

Writers have noted the following areas which have affected Adventist views on the Fundamental Beliefs and doctrine in general which took place in the 19th-century: (a) denominational backgrounds of the founders, (b) Fundamental Beliefs vs. creeds, (c) the role of Ellen White in the formation of the Fundamental Beliefs, and (d) the 1888 Crisis.

According to Schwarz (1979) Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal development was overshadowed with suspicion, due to the 1844 disappointment (p. 165). Pioneers of Adventism, while they were all premillennialists, differ widely in their theological and denominational backgrounds. Their theological backgrounds were very diverse: Trinitarians, Arminians, and Calvinists (“Questions on Doctrine,” pp. 29-30). James White and Joseph Bates were from the Christian Connection while Ellen White was Methodist (Knight, 2000, pp. 30, 31). The Christian Connection was very anti-creed and anti-Catholic. This was a big part of our early views on doctrines and taking the Bible alone. They debated against and resisted the will to adopt a formal creed. However, by the end of 1848 they agreed upon and accepted basic biblical teachings regarded as the “pillars of their faith” (Schwarz, 1979, p. 165; cf. Letter, 1942, p.1). At that time, it was out of such united study that the fundamental doctrines were discovered (Letter, 1942, p. 1).

While Burt (2003) observed that doctrines, such as, the Sabbath, Sanctuary, and Spirit of Prophecy, were among the foundational elements in the formation of Adventism (pp. 130-131), Schwarz (1979) quickly points out that there was much doctrinal debate, divide, and disagreement (pp. 53-70). Silva (2010) noted that these proposed statements, known as “A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists,” was published in *Signs of the Times*, June 4, 1874 (pp. 14-16).

While the early Adventist church was studying to form sound Fundamental Beliefs, one debate centered on the role of Ellen White, one of the denomination’s founders and considered a prophet. Many today attribute the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s beliefs to Ellen White. The White Estate has felt the need to produce material clarifying Ellen White’s role. The materials give evidence that the doctrines came about through careful study of Scripture, and were not imposed by Ellen White. However, she played a vital role in confirming what was already revealed through biblical studies (“Relationship to Development of Doctrine,” n.d., p. 34; cf. Letter, 1942, pp. 1). Gordon (n.d., pp. 1-8) writes that while White was very active in development and organization of the church, she was not an active participant in the development of doctrines. Fagal, also working for the White Estate referenced the work of Arthur White, which clarified that Ellen White’s role was not to bring new doctrine. However, if after earnest study from the Bible the pioneers could not agree or find the solution, Ellen White would receive a vision that pointed the way in which they might find the answer (Fagal, 2001). A year later responding to another question, Fagal (2002) wrote, “Once again we see that the doctrine did not come through the visions of Mrs. White, but from Bible study.”

One of the main crises regarding doctrine happened at the 1888 General Conference Session. Moore (1980) documented that Adventism was facing what he calls “the greatest crisis” in its history that threatens the church’s unity and existence (pp. 3-4). Schwarz (1979) confirms the deep divide as a result of the presentation of a new doctrine, *righteousness by faith* by Waggoner and Jones. Challenged to look beyond good works for salvation many of the early pioneers vehemently opposed the idea that salvation was not of works. “For many that year was the beginning of a ‘period of darkness’” in Adventism (p. 190).

Twentieth to Twenty-First Centuries: Doctrinal Relevancy Crisis

In the 19th century, James White stated that the features of religious faith that distinguished Sabbath keeping Adventists were unpopular, and much prejudice exists in the religious world against many of “our opinions of Bible truth” (1972, p. iii). Unfortunately prejudice still exist and comes from some inside the church itself. Silva agrees with Schwarz (1979, p. 183) that, while history was made when the 25 statements officially became the *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists* in 1872 (Silva, 2010, pp. 14-16), the inescapable fact remains, there was a great doctrinal divide on many of the beliefs. The years following saw increased doctrinal debates that threatened to destroy the system and even led to some falling away and/or termination of membership, and the development of *Questions on Doctrines* (Schwarz, 1979). Fortin (2006) and Patrick (2010) agree that the doctrinal debate is still on going, wrote Fortin, “A hundred years ago, our own Adventist denomination was shaken by a pantheistic controversy. Yet today questions persist, and there is a resurgence of anti-Trinitarian views among Adventists” (2006, p. 9). In the 21st century tensions in Adventism remains real (p. 285).

This section presents a number of issues suggested in literature that have affected Adventist views on the reliability of church doctrines in the 20th and 21st centuries: (a) the question of the infallibility of the Bible and Ellen White, (b) worship style debates, (c) the Ford Crisis, and (d) Creation vs. evolution.

Higher Criticism began to have effect on Adventism in the 20th century as the infallibility of the Bible and Ellen White came into question. Hasel (2013) noted that throughout the centuries the Holy Scripture was accepted as God's written Word of truth. However, a change has taken place, according to Canale (2014), a new view of Scripture has displaced the authority of the Bible and have made the words of Scripture the words of human beings and therefore of tradition (sec. "The Eclipse of Scripture" para. 3). For times like these Ellen White (1888) warned, "God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms" (p. 595). Knight (2000) observed that since the "1950s Adventism might best be thought of as being in constant theological tension" (p. 159). Patrick (2010) in speaking of the Spirit of prophecy wrote, "This fundamental, in constant focus since December 1844, entered a new phase of debate fifty-five years after Ellen White's death [1915]" (p. 285). Later during the Ford Crisis there was much discussion and debates as to the fallibility of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy ("How Firm Our Foundation," 1980).

As popular music started to permeate the American church in the 1960s and 1970, great debate over proper worship style ensued. Price (2005) observed that the Australian Adventist Church began to experience a notable change in its worship style by the late 1980s. This alleged change, he refers to as *celebration movement* (p. 24), creates the assumption that the Fundamental Beliefs are irrelevant and impractical and thereby

impedes growth (pp. 24, 27). While popular music may impact worship styles, it does not make doctrines irrelevant or impractical. A doctrinally sound church can also be a musically gifted church. Just as one can choose a music style, one can choose to take or leave the doctrines of the church.

It was the debate over doctrines that led to the Ford Crisis in 1980. In the mid-1970s Ford began to challenge the Adventist understanding of righteousness by faith, justification, and sanctification, leading to his rejection of the Adventist doctrine of the Investigative Judgment (the Sanctuary doctrine). In an interview with Ford (1999) by *Adventist Today*, it was called a divisive debate over the definition of the Gospel, which led to a minister's termination, and created a ripple effect and deepened the doctrinal divide. However, Ballis (1999) calls it a time of "failed expectations, loss of commitment and the erosion of faith" (p. 1). He further noted that the internal schism provoked by Ford's teaching and defrocking led to the greatest falling away among Adventists than any other time in the church's history (pp. 2-5). Price (2005), however, stated that while many left, many also, at the encouragement of Ford, stayed in order to use their influence to change the system (p. 27). The fact that there was such a polarizing debate over church doctrines within the leadership caused many laypeople to question how reliable the Fundamental Beliefs are.

Since the mid-20th century the Creation vs. evolution debate has raged in Adventism with much debate in the 21st century as it has been alleged that some Adventist colleges have begun to teach evolution (Wilson, 2014). "At the Annual Council in 2001 the General Conference Executive Committee organized a series of conferences on faith and science during the years 2002-2004" to help address this issue (Pfandl, n.d.,

p. 1). While some feels that the doctrine of Creation being called into question may cause the church to experience conflicting speculations, Pfandl (n.d.) thinks that it is not just about Creation but theistic evolution that has compounded the issue and if left unchecked places the church in danger of losing its biblical Sabbath foundation and assurance of salvation (p. 3). Regarding the NCC Constituency Meeting of 2010, Bonnie Dwyer (2010) noted that the 6th Fundamental Belief is sparking much debate; passionate speeches are being ignited regarding the need for language change from vagueness to specificity as is in Genesis.

While Adventist profess to believe in Present Truth (God will continuously shed new theological light), the debate and polarization over Adventism beliefs and doctrines listed above and more (e.g., women's ordination) have shaken the confidence of members in the reliability of church doctrines. Also the political, cultural, and philosophical changes that affect Christianity in general affect the Adventist Church as well. Knight (2000) makes a frightening indictment when he dirges that "across time" the Adventist Church has focused on the edges of its theology rather than on its center (p. 204). Since Knight uses the term "theology" to mean *doctrine* (p. 203), he is claiming that the church has not focused on the center of the doctrines—which is Jesus.

The Role of Doctrines in the Church and the Life of the Believer

Since the relevancy of church doctrine is under attack, their role must be determined in order to establish if they are still relevant. Conner (1980) tells us that the purpose or role of doctrine is to set forth in a systematic order the things which are most believed among true believers. He contends that doctrine is to instruct believers that they may know the certainty of truth, and to encourage them to contend for the faith (p. 4).

Well, that may be true but one could easily argue that the church does not necessarily need doctrine to encourage members to contend for the faith. Mohler (2003), however, seems to think that it does stating that doctrine serves a vital and necessary role within the life of the church (p. 436). Mohler is asserting that the church cannot and will not survive without doctrines. Manser (2009) backs up Mohler's claim giving more detail which focuses on the purpose of doctrine: (a) "leads to repentance, 2 Tim 2:25"; (b) "leads to salvation, 1 Tim 4:16"; (c) "is necessary for Christian maturity and effective service, 2 Tim 3:16-17"; (d) "makes possible a defense of the faith, 1 Pet 3:15-16"; (e) "leads to enrichment and blessing, Duet 32:1-4"; and (f) "leads to perfection, Col 1:28" (p. 8236). While his list is not comprehensive, Manser is not far off base regarding the role doctrine plays in the life of the church. Both agree that the role of doctrine in the church is significantly important. To further solidify their argument, Ryrie (2005) expresses, "Doctrine serves as the foundation for the Christian life and the motivation for Christian activity" (p. 7). This suggests that doctrine serve as the foundation for the Christian life and the motivation for Christian activity. MacArthur (1994) gives validity to the argument when he coined "sound doctrine is the litmus test of authentic faith" (p. 153).

Packer said, "There can be no spiritual health without doctrinal knowledge" (cited in Morgan, 2000, p. 239). Manser (2009) takes it further by saying: doctrine is of central importance because it equips the people of God for effective and faithful service in the world (p. 8234). Easley (2002) picks up on the same theme when he emphasizes that sound doctrine is the necessary foundation for everything worthwhile in the life of a congregation or an individual (p. 339). Strong statement indeed, but he does not stop there, a couple pages later he makes the claim that, because God spreads His kingdom

through the church, it is important for local churches to maintain sound doctrine (p. 341). Easley is not only in agreement with Packer and Manser that the absence of doctrinal knowledge adversely affects the Christian life and motivations for Christian activity, he raises the bar much higher by claiming that the role of doctrine affects the Kingdom of God (Easley, 2002, p. 339). Easley is suggesting that doctrine is directly related to the building up or the tearing down of God's kingdom.

Jamieson (2013), whose passion for church doctrine comes through every paragraph, gives support to Easley's claim. Jamieson's argument is that doctrine, and not just doctrine, but sound doctrine, is for *life*, the *life* of the church (p. 11). He goes on to say that doctrine is a road map given by God, for living the Christian life (p. 17), and leads to holiness, love, unity, worship and witness (pp. 47-108). He wittingly declares that witnessing is evangelism, and to do away with doctrine is to do away with the Gospel and evangelism—for doctrine is the content of our witness (p. 96). This is the strongest argument against the claim of doctrine being irrelevant in today's culture. The author is saying that doctrine is the witness through evangelism by which the church builds the Kingdom of God, so in essence doctrine is directly related to the growth of God's kingdom.

Jamieson (2013) asserts that the role of doctrine, like a road map, provides direction to a particular destination, and the destination is holiness, love, faith, worship, and witness. There has to be more to the role of doctrine than a road map that leads to Christian growth, for while it is crucially central that the role of doctrine is to get us to a spiritual destination, there has to be something more. According to McGlasson (2013) the role of church doctrine is to point to "the one true subject matter of Scripture, and that is

Jesus” (p. 10). The statement is particularly appreciated, because the only way the church can reach its destination of love and holiness, worship and witness is through Jesus, who is the center of every biblical doctrine. He goes even further to say that Jesus is the one standard for understanding doctrine, the one standard by which the Christian life is measured, the one standard by which the church turns to speech and action (pp. 11-12). McGlasson, in referencing Calvin, further affirms that the role of doctrine is to lead the believer to a fresh encounter with the living truth of the Bible (p. 10). Manser (2009) reminds us that doctrine, being grounded in Scripture, aims to maintain the integrity of Christianity by distinguishing it from non-Christian beliefs and is of central importance in Christian preaching and teaching (p. 8234). However, Condor (2006) feels otherwise, he argues against the doctrines being a dominant aspect of the church, stating it breeds dishonesty and creates division (pp.144-154). The above writers have much positive to say on the role of doctrines, except Condor (2006) who finds them obsolete (p. 53).

The Role of Doctrines in the Adventist Church

When one considers the church’s introductory statements to the 28 Fundamental Beliefs—“Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. . . . These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church’s understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture” (GCSDA, 2013, title page, para. 1)—the question must be asked, what is the role of the Fundamental Beliefs in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word *fundamental* as a central or primary rule or principle that serves as a foundation or core (Soanes & Stevenson, 2004, “Fundamental”), while the *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* defines *belief* as a conviction

based on testimony that someone or something is true and reliable (Elwell & Comfort, 2001, p. 157). Putting them together, fundamental belief is a foundational principle/conviction that is true and/or reliable. Donkor (2005), in speaking specifically of Seventh-day Adventists, notes the Fundamental Beliefs are a set of teachings that define and set the church apart from other churches. He further remarked that the beliefs are similar to *creed* (pp. 93-113).

The word *creed* comes from the Latin word *credo* (“I believe”) and refers to a statement of foundational beliefs (Cross & Livingstone, 2005, p. 433). However, the pioneers made every effort to distance themselves from associating with that connotation (Donkor, 2005, pp. 93-107). While Adventists have been careful and deliberate in their avoidance of the terms *creed* and *doctrine*, it remains that *fundamental beliefs*, *doctrine* (see p. 6), and *creed* are of similar definition.

Principles and Strategies for Preaching Doctrinal Sermons

As discussed above Christ is the center of the church and of the biblical doctrines; thus, the church (God’s people) must be aware of Christocentric doctrines. This section presents literature on (a) the need for doctrinal Christocentric preaching along with (b) principles for preaching and (c) strategies for preparing sermons that help the church become more knowledgeable of its fundamental doctrines which in return will impact the everyday lives of its members.

The Need for Christocentric Doctrinal Preaching

McMickle (2008) postulates, when he states living in an age marked by unfamiliarity with biblical content, it is likely that many churchgoers have little or no

familiarity with the basic doctrinal and theological beliefs of the Christian faith (p. 18). MacArthur (1994) in lamenting the lack of sound doctrine and biblical truth within Evangelical pulpits noted that preachers are woefully ill equipped to preach doctrine and Scripture (p. 155). The question must be asked: How can Christ be preached without being doctrinal and how can doctrine be preached without being Christocentric? Addressing these questions, Greidanus (2004) unequivocally declares it is crucial that Jesus Christ be preached explicitly in every sermon, adding that preaching Christ is not just preaching the person and work of Christ but also the preaching of Christ. To fortify his assertion, he points to Paul's claim in 1 Corinthians 2:2, "I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (p. 6). Throughout the article Greidanus lists several reasons why every sermon should be Christocentric (pp. 3-13).

Carl (1984) asks the question, "How do we preach Christ with the help of Christian doctrines?" (p. 23). The question assumes that Christ is separate from biblical doctrines. If we view the doctrines as separate from Christ, then we have a good reason to view the doctrines as irrelevant. Wilcox (1926) makes the case against such a notion by declaring that Christian doctrine is a living thing, a thrill (*excited*) with life, a dynamic thing that quivers with the omnipotence of God (p. 5). Christ cannot be separated from the doctrines—for doctrine is about Christ. Christ is the center of every biblical doctrine. Christ is not preached with the help of doctrines, rather preachers should preach Christocentric doctrines.

Howard A. Peth (2002) sheds some light on this. The life of Christ, he maintains, was measured by the Old Testament Scriptures. His supporting argument is that, when Jesus encountered His disciples on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection, "He

expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27) (Peth, 2002, p. 182). If all Scripture points to Christ, then Christ is the center of Scripture (Luke 24:27; John 5:39). Since all Scripture is useful for doctrines and teachings (2 Tim 3:16), then Christ is the center of all the doctrines and teachings of the church. Therefore, must not preachers preach the doctrines of the church? And must not the doctrines be Christocentric?

Doctrines are still a vital part of the church; thus, in this age of questioning the relevance of doctrines, the return to doctrinal roots is done through Christocentric doctrinal preaching that shields against doctrinal fragmentation. The most viable way to do so is to identify principles and strategies of preaching that aide pastors in preaching Christocentric sermons which will help the church develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of its doctrinal beliefs and thereby impact and influence daily living.

Principles of Preaching

Ryrie (2005) is certainly correct when he points out that we must not think that studying and preaching doctrines exempt us from the misuse of principles just because the material is doctrinal (p. 60). If the daily lifestyle of the church is going to be impacted through doctrinal preaching, then the guiding principles of presenting those doctrines must be simple and easily applicable through time and culture, for as Bisagno (2002) indicates, “principles are universally applicable” (p. 4).

This section will look at a list of suggested principles for preaching doctrinal sermons that impact and influence daily living found in preaching literature accompanied with support from biblical authors.

Preaching Should be Biblically Based

A key principle Ryrie (2005) noted is that preachers should not make the facts in a text teach something that is in reality not in the text, as this would result in failure to communicate the underlying doctrinal truths (p. 60). From the essence of Ryrie's comment one gathers that there is a danger of preachers not being true to the biblical text, which would then result in unfaithful communication of doctrines. For this reason it is imperative for the church to develop an experiential knowledge of its fundamental doctrines.

In Craddock's lecture (1982), he averred that preachers have a threefold responsibility in presenting the Word of God, which are Translation, Interpretation and Appropriation. He identified and set forth three principles by which this threefold responsibility must be carried out: (a) "Principle of Clarity, where the word becomes self-evident; (b) the "Principle of Harmony," where truth accords with truth and Scripture interprets Scripture; and (c) the "Principle of Finality," where Jesus is the Christ—the central and final and supreme revelation of God to the world (pp. 1-39).

Harrison (2012) joins Craddock in affirming the necessity of biblically based doctrinal preaching. He identified an effective principle used by Chrysostom and Augustine that he termed "Letting Scripture Speak" (pp. 66-76). He noted these preachers allowed Scripture to speak and entered into conversation with the listener and through their preaching Scripture became personal and irresistibly impacting. Jackman (2008) states that, if preachers are "to prove to be sufficient" (p. 9), they need to understand and embrace the following strategy: preach the word, and engage the word (pp. 9-17). The idea conveyed by these writers is that in doctrinal preaching the Bible (not the preacher's

words) must shape the Christian culture because the preacher's words last for five minutes, but Scripture endures forever, as stated in Isa 40:8b, "but the word of our God stands forever" (NET), and 1 Pet 1:25, "the word of the Lord endures forever" (KJV).

Preaching Should be Christocentric

Jones (2012) declares that preaching is an "intensely theological enterprise" in which Father, Son, and Spirit are the dominant and central force (p. 9). Williams (1997) in agreement declares preaching is not an arrangement of ideas, but is centered in the understanding of who Christ is (p. 68). Doctrinal preaching must be formed on the life, teaching, and person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peppler (n.d.) identifies what he calls Christocentric principle. This, he explained, is the interpretation of Scripture on the primary basis of who Jesus is and what he did (p. 117- 135). Chapell (2013) quickly points out that Christocentric preaching is not making Christ appear in every passage of Scripture, but to highlight how every passage of Scripture in some way contributes to the abounding grace of God through the person and work of Jesus (p. xiii).

Some would use Paul's comment, "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2 ESV) to justify a Jesus only focus sermon. Christocentric is God-centered. Greidanus (1970) giving voice to this, cautioned against confining or narrowing Christocentric to an issue of "Jesuscentric" (p. 224). Greidanus clarifies that Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:2 was not avoiding theocentric but avoiding human methods of skills and oratory in preaching (pp. 224-225). However, Greidanus does believe that theocentric preaching is still inadequate without Christocentric preaching. Giving validity to the discussion, Fowler (2006) commented on another Pauline statement from Galatians 1. He noted that Paul's declaration that the Gospel he preached was of

divine origin, because God through a revelation of Jesus gave it to him personally, therefore, his preaching is centered on the subject, object, content, and source of God's revelation which is Jesus (p. 45). Jesus in John 5:39 points to Himself as the one of whom Scripture testifies.

To preach doctrine is to preach Christ, Christ-centered preaching is simply Bible preaching with Christ central in every subject. Stressing the necessity of Christocentric preaching, Greidanus (2004) observed that every religion has a different path to heaven yet the Bible is clear there is only one way, and that is through Jesus Christ. Many people will perish if they do not hear about Jesus Christ. So it becomes crucial that Jesus Christ be preached explicitly in every sermon (pp. 3-4). For Craddock (1982), Christocentric preaching is what he calls "the Principle of Finality," which affirms that Jesus is the Christ, the central and final and supreme revelation of God to the world (pp. 1-39).

Preaching Should be Geared to the Audience

In his book, *Preaching*, Craddock (1985) is strongly convicted that the interaction between the preacher and the audience is of fundamental importance. He believes that the preacher's connection with the audience is a vital element in effective preaching (pp. 22-23). This is similar to what Jackman (2008) calls "love the Listener" (p. 15). The idea here is that it is the preacher's person and speech that influence the audience; therefore, to impact the audience through doctrinal preaching, the listeners must know they are loved by the one who preaches (p. 16).

Erickson and Heflin (1997) take the conversation a bit higher in their work *Old Wine in New Wineskins: Doctrinal Preaching in a Changing World*. One means of ensuring preaching-audience-gearred sermons is to first assess the needs of the

congregation in order to plan intelligently the sermons to be presented (p. 244). There is strong support for this idea among several writers, two of whom are Graham M. Johnson and Timothy Sensing. Johnson (2010) challenged the preacher to don the garb of a missionary. This he explained by saying that the culture in which the preacher preaches should be approached in a similar manner that missionaries approach a foreign culture (an exhaustive study of the culture is done) (p. 10). Sensing (1996) affirms that doctrine is not taught for the sake of mental knowledge but for the sake of experiential knowledge. For that to happen, the preacher needs to study the congregation (pp. 209-210). Farley (2009) drives home this thought even further when he asks the preacher “Who is the audience in today’s church?” He makes it clear that one of the first steps in correctly appropriating the message is to know the audience (p. 15). Without a doubt, if doctrinal preaching ought to regain its relevancy in the 21st century, it must be audience oriented, as Sandwell (2012) concludes preaching must be audience-centered if it is to impact and transform lives (p. 81). Jesus’ preaching was geared toward His audience. When He spoke to some church leaders His message was different, as in Matthew 23:23, from when he spoke to the common people and the disciples, as in Matthew 9, so also should today’s preaching be geared toward the audience.

Preaching Should Offer Real Spiritual Food

Jesus in his doctrinal discourse said of Himself, “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35). After feeding the people with physical bread Jesus pointed them to the spiritual bread, He cautioned the people not to spend their days seeking only physical food but seek for the spiritual food that endures unto everlasting life (6:5-35). Peter echoes Jesus in pointing his audience to the importance of spiritual food (1 Pet 2:2). Gibson (2012)

following in the same order acknowledges that preaching needs to feed the heart and mind of the listeners and that kind of preaching cannot be produced impulsively any more than ripe grain can be produced from empty ground (p. 29). Ellen White carried the argument even further by stating, “If you would meet God in peace, feed His flock now with spiritual food; for every child has the possibility of attaining unto eternal life. Children and youth are God’s peculiar treasure” (1952, p. 280).

Preaching Should Challenge the Audience

Augustine stated that preaching is to explain, edify, and persuade (cited in Gibson, 2012, p. 16). Preaching elicits response, as with Peter in Acts 2 after he preached, the people asked what should they do. Peter’s preaching challenged his audience to a lifestyle change (Erickson & Heflin, 1997, p. 62). Smith (2008) verbalizes the undeniable truth that preaching must be more than just information about God: preaching must create transformation in the life of the hearers (p. 56). As a matter of fact, Maddix and Thompson (2012) join voice with Smith and affirm that doctrinal preaching must not only inform but must also form, transform, and shape the perspectives and lives of the church (pp. 82, 85). The following statement brilliantly framed by Packer (1994) gives credence to the argument that preaching must impact the daily life of the church.

Being a Christian is a blend of doctrine, experience, and practice. Head, heart, and legs are all involved. Doctrine and experience without practice would turn me into a knowledgeable spiritual paralytic; experience and practice without doctrine would leave me a restless spiritual sleepwalker. If Christ is to be formed in me, doctrine, experience, and practice must all be there together. (p. 126)

With this in mind Satterlee (2008) challenges the preacher to trust God to act in and through preaching exercise (p. 270).

To insure that preaching is Christocentric and doctrinal, the five principles of preaching and the strategies for preparing sermons must be kept in mind. The following questions should be asked regarding every sermon to confirm that the principles are being followed: (a) Is it Biblical? (b) Is it Christocentric? (c) Is it appropriate for my audience? (d) Is it real spiritual food? and (e) Will it inspire and challenge the hearers to spiritual maturity? Next the strategies for preparing sermons are discussed.

Strategies for Preparing Sermons

Preaching is an art that fascinates when experienced (Jones, 2012, p. 7) for this reason preaching—especially doctrinal preaching—requires serious intentional planning. In order to effectively incorporate the principles discussed above, effective and intentional planning and preparation are necessary. This section will be limited to only a few practical strategies for preaching effective sermons suggested in preaching literature that can be applied across time and culture. Strategies in three areas will be discussed: (a) planning, (b) writing, and (c) preaching.

Planning: Congregation Needs Assessment, Preaching Calendar, and Sermon Series

Erickson and Heflin (1997) point out one of the best ways to begin the planning stage is to assess the needs of the congregation. The reasoning is that knowing the needs at the time of preaching will help insure more relevant sermons (p. 244). They further noted that having a preaching calendar lends itself to successful doctrinal preaching (p. 249). Back in the 1950s Jones wrote that long term planning with the first step being making a preaching calendar is one of the best strategies for preaching sermon series. For Jones, this gives the preacher the benefit of knowing what to preach, when to preach, and

how to preach (1956, pp. 242-252). Erickson and Heflin (1997) call this idea “analyzing one’s preaching distribution” (p. 247). The intention is for the preacher to keep a record of all the doctrines he/she preached so as not to become fixated on some doctrines while neglecting others. Picking up on that same idea, Carl (1984) adds that doctrinal preaching is more effective when done according to the calendar year, in other words, use the calendar year to determine what doctrine to preach through the year (p. 73). In that he finds support from York and Decker (2003), who say because doctrinal preaching takes time and effort, to succeed, deliberate planning of a preaching calendar is required. In favor of the preaching calendar Robinson (1993) adds that it “doesn’t have to confine us . . . we can always change our preaching plans” (p. 125).

Writing: Clear Points and Outlines

In order to communicate effectively with the audience clear points must be made. An effective way to do this is outlining. Craddock in his 1981 lecture, “The Bible in the Pulpit of the Christian Church,” asserted that sermon outlines possessed visibility, memorability, and portability (1982, p. 7). For Craddock, a sermon outline is one of those universal principles that make the structure of the sermon very visible and gives a sense of certainty and ownership in the sermon. Agreeing is Greidanus (1999) who notes that the best way to outline a sermon is to first outline the text: “read and reread the text” (p. 282) and then ask questions of the text and seek the answers from the text (p. 283). A rather interesting text, *Principle Preaching: How to Create and Deliver Sermons for Life Application*, written by John R. Bisagno (2002), appears like the ideal material to consult for this section. He noted that a key principle in ensuring that the hearers not only remember what is heard but also apply what is heard to daily living is using “outlines”

and/or “points.” However, Bisagno is unsure of his suggestions for while he stressed that the hearer has an instant connection and virtually never forgets what is heard when an outline is utilized, he admits that outlines or points are soon forgotten (p. 3).

Preaching: Clarity and Delivery

It is Ilja van Roon (2011) who picks up on the idea of clarity as a matter of utter importance. Preaching must accurately describe what matters most in a simple and compelling way so that others can act on it. However, while both Craddock (1982) and Roon (2011) see this matter of clarity as a means of making plain that which is being communicated, Smith (2008) sees clarity in terms of speed, what he calls “go slow,” meaning that the preacher needs to be deliberate in his or her delivery (p. 42).

The compilation book *Delivering the Word: Preaching and Exegesis in the Western Christian Tradition* looks at the way various preachers from different periods of the Church’s history made their sermons come alive impacting and influencing their audience for change (Lyons & Sandwell, 2012). In this work Winter (2012) looks at the apostle Paul, whom he observed effectively communicated simple clear messages from difficult texts by using contrast or what he calls “arguing from the lesser to the greater” (p. 32). On the matter of delivery, Turner (1995) advises the use of movement during preaching to keep the attention of the audience actively working (p. 90). These writers view clarity as a necessity for helping the hearers to both understand and act on what is heard.

Many have written on practical strategies for preparing, writing, and preaching sermons. Due to limited space and time, only a few have been presented above. However,

the above principles and strategies can help guild a pastor into writing Christocentric doctrinal sermons.

Conclusion

As the literature suggests, the church (the people of God) cannot and will not survive without knowledge of Christocentric biblical doctrines and since the relevancy of doctrines are being questioned, persuasive Christocentric doctrinal preaching is a necessity. The church must be challenged, empowered, and stimulated to spiritual maturity through persuasive Christocentric doctrinal preaching. This is the only way to ensure the church and its preaching is relevant, since the doctrines are relevant. To insure that preaching is Christocentric and doctrinal, the five principles of preaching and the strategies for planning, writing, and preaching must be kept in mind.

Due to limited space and time, this chapter was only able to touch the surface on a number of issues that need further research. More research needs to be done on the meaning of church in both the Old Testament and New Testament from a theological and exegetical view. Another area of current debate within the church that seriously needs to be researched is that of women's ordination. In general there is a need for research to be conducted in the Adventist Church on the factors affecting the apathy many members have towards doctrines. There is room for further research to be done on the strategies of preparing sermons. Only a limited number of strategies have been presented from the literature and more research and practical advice can be given in the area of planning, writing, and preaching sermons. The next chapter will look at ways to help the church develop an appreciation for doctrines through Christocentric doctrinal preaching.

CHAPTER 4

AN APPROACH FOR DEVELOPING AN APPRECIATION FOR ADVENTIST DOCTRINES THROUGH CHRISTO-CENTRIC DOCTRINAL PREACHING IN KINGSBORO TEMPLE SDA CHURCH

Introduction

There is no doubt that there are many factors, such as, changing culture, religious plurality, and clergy intellectualism, that have created a hostile environment to Christocentric doctrinal preaching. Understanding that we are living in a time period that presents a challenge to doctrinal preaching, it is of utmost importance that doctrinal preaching not only be consistently proclaimed, but must be Christocentric—impacting and influencing the daily life of the church. To accomplish this effectively, practical Christocentric doctrinal messages must be developed and presented.

Certainly the role of the Fundamental Beliefs is to shape the life of the church in holiness and love leading to godly maturity; to motivate Christian activities, such as, worship and witnessing; and to guide the church in its conduct of ministry thus expanding the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, above all, the role of the Fundamental Beliefs is to point both saint and sinner to Jesus, our Savior—the one true subject of the Beliefs.

This chapter is broken up into five parts. First is the “Introduction.” Section two gives an overview of the Kingsboro Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church in which I serve as an associate pastor. The material presented includes a brief history of the church, basic demographics, and the spiritual life and ministry of the church. Section three

presents the planning and preparation that went into developing an approach in Kingsboro Temple that would bring about a better appreciation and understanding of Adventist Fundamental Beliefs. The next section describes the implementation of the approach at Kingsboro Temple in 2010–2011, which included a doctrinal sermon series and weekly Bible classes. Last is the “Conclusion” with summary and observations.

Profile of Kingsboro Temple SDA Church

A Brief History of Kingsboro Temple SDA Church

Kingsboro Temple is one of the 179 churches in the Northeastern Conference of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. The genesis of Kingsboro Temple can be traced back to September 7, 1991 when the first Sabbath celebration took place in the Gershwin Theater of Brooklyn College, New York. At the culmination of the four-week borough-wide evangelistic meeting lead by Pastor Charles D. Brooks (*Breath of Life*) a total of 288 persons were baptized, 67 of which went on to form what later became Kingsboro Temple (Kingsboro Temple SDA, 2009).

Kingsboro Temple is located at 415 7th Street, Brooklyn, New York in Park Slope, a neighborhood in the western section of Brooklyn and New York City’s most populous borough. Characterized by its many historic buildings, Park Slope has a population of about 76,000 (AreaVibes, n.d.). While there are various denominations in the community, Kingsboro Temple is the only Seventh-day Adventists church there.

Current Demographics of the Congregation

The Kingsboro Temple is a very active and growing congregation with a membership of approximately 1,008 as of December 2014. Kingsboro is a rather youthful

church in terms of its membership. A 2008 survey revealed that approximately 80% of the membership is in the 16–50 years old age group and that females outnumber males by at least 20%. There were a comparably high number of females participating in church leadership roles: 50% of the Elders Board was female (Vision Committee, 2008). To date the church demographics remain similar to that of 2008, with five female elders and seven male elders. Kingsboro Temple is the first church in the Northeastern Conference to have a female First Elder and a female pastor.



Figure 1. *Kingsboro Temple of Seventh-day Adventists*

The Spiritual Life of the Church and its Ministries

Kingsboro Temple is a unique congregation in terms of its worship style.

Since its inception the church has fostered a strong charismatic and celebration-type worship service. Music is the key attraction to Kingsboro. There are five praise teams, officially known as “Temple Praise,” and three very active and professionally organized choirs. The nontraditional approach to worship greatly impacts the weekly attendance

positively, resulting in membership increase, largely among the young adults. While the church has seen a consistent increase in its membership through the years, it has also seen minimal significant practical lifestyle changes that align with the distinct fundamental teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A large number of the membership has grown increasingly dependent on music to create spiritual transformation in their lives. Many view the distinct doctrines of Seventh-day Adventism as irrelevant to their Christian experience and daily lifestyle choices and have increasingly adopted a nonchalant attitude to the distinctiveness of Christian living. This resulted in declined spirituality within the church. Consequently, the church does not have a strong sense of its mission and purpose.

While Kingsboro Temple does not have a consistent outreach ministry that impacts the surrounding community, it has a great in-reach ministry. The church is very active catering to the needs of the members through various enrichment programs and retreats. To foster unity and collaboration and eliminate duplicate programs and activities there are five core areas of ministries: Mission Ministry, Operations Ministry, Relationship Enhancement, Sacred Ministry, and Spiritual Formation. Each core area consists of several ministries working together to plan, implement, and execute various programs and activities.

Although the church is increasing in membership, there is need for the members to deepen their understanding of and have greater appreciation for the distinct truths of Adventism. There is need for Christ-centered doctrinal messages that will impact the spiritual growth and daily lives of members and foster both corporate and personal evangelism.

Planning of the Approach for Developing an Appreciation for Adventist Doctrines

Leadership Planning of Doctrinal Sermon Series

During the summer of 2007 I became deeply aware that there was a lack of knowledge and appreciation of the Fundamental Beliefs among the membership. The awareness became pressing as I noticed the inconsistencies of daily lifestyle and as I communicate with some of the members. My heart was burdened regarding the spiritual growth and maturity of the church. As we crossed into 2008, I began to sense the need to dialogue with the church regarding the simple truths of Adventism. Many of my sermons became focused on daily living the doctrinal truths of Scripture. As I wrestled intensely in prayer on how to further impact the congregation, in late July I sought the counsel of my senior pastor, Dr. Ainsworth Joseph, regarding the direction to go in my doctoral studies. It was out of this conversation that the idea for this project was born to help members gain a life changing Christocentric knowledge and appreciation of Adventist doctrines through a planned preaching series, Bible classes, and other avenues of discussion.

I began dialoguing with the elders and finally wrote a letter to the church board requesting approval to move forward with this project. With the approval of the board and the blessing of the senior pastor, I set out to do further research on the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. One of the first steps taken was teaching the Fundamental Beliefs through Bible class (an Sabbath afternoon class). Dr. Joseph, senior pastor, suggested the material used for the study, the booklet *In His Steps* (an outline of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs). The personal ministry (PM) director, Elder Veronica Farrell was instrumental in purchasing the booklet through the PM department. Elder Farrell did the scheduling of

the elders and pastors for teaching this class. It has always been Kingsboro's practice for the First Elder to set such a schedule.

Preparing for the Doctrinal Sermon Series

During the research process I realized that it would be difficult to effectively present all 28 Fundamental Beliefs in the time period allotted. In consultation with a colleague, Pastor James Yansen, as to what would be most beneficial to include in this study, it was concluded that certain core doctrines and doctrines unique to Adventism should be chosen. With further conversation, study, and prayer certain doctrines emerged as *The 7 S's*: (a) Salvation, (b) the Sabbath, (c) the Spirit of Prophecy, (d) Systematic Benevolence, (e) the State of the Dead, (f) the Sanctuary, and (g) the Second Coming. Thereby these doctrines were chosen.

In the end it was decided that the series would be preached on eight Sabbaths beginning in July 2010. The first sermon would introduce the topic and present the relevance of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs and our need as Adventist to know and apply them. The following seven sermons would cover one of the 7 S's from a Christocentric perspective and the importance of applying them to our Christian walk. While the sermon series would not cover all of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs, the Bible class would provide a forum for teaching all 28 Beliefs.

The ideal would be to preach all eight sermons in eight consecutive weeks. However, due to the nature of the church's calendar it was rather difficult to do so. To best accommodate the series the first six sermons were preached during consecutive weeks and the other two were preached consecutively two months later. See Table 1 below for the sermon series schedule.

Table 1

Fundamental Belief Sermon Series Schedule

No.	Title	Doctrine	Date
1	“Let’s Go Shopping”	Introduction	July 17, 2010
2	“God: The Biggest Loser”	Salvation	July 24, 2010
3	“What’s So Scared about the Sabbath?”	Sabbath	July 31, 2010
4	“The Message, the Method, and the Messenger”	Spirit of Prophecy	Aug. 7, 2010
5	“Paycheck”	Stewardship	Aug. 14, 2010
6	“Dead or Alive?”	State of the Dead	Aug. 21, 2010
7	“God’s Laundry Room”	Sanctuary	Nov. 6, 2010
8	“Hold That Fast”	Second Coming	Nov. 13, 2010

Seven doctrinal sermons were prepared and presented over a period of seven weeks. Each doctrine was carefully researched from a Christocentric prospective, using numerous resources, such as, logos, Seventh-day Adventist commentaries, the writings of Ellen White, “The 28 Fundamental Beliefs,” Hebrew and Greek lexicons, etc. Each sermon was researched with the idea that all of the doctrines are centered on Christ. During the research process it became clear that the Fundamental Beliefs have their origin in the book of Genesis and are centered in the Promised Seed of Genesis 3:15. I hoped more study in this area could have been done but limited time prevented an exhaustive and systematic research that could have been more beneficial to this project. Further study is needed and should be done that could be very beneficial to the impact of doctrinal preaching in the future.

The sermons were topical in nature and deductive in structure. Topical sermons were preached in order to highlight and show how the doctrines flow through Scripture,

from Genesis through Revelation. Since the doctrines were the main subject of the sermon series it was necessary to expound several passages of Scripture relating to each doctrine so as to reinforce the idea that doctrines are biblically based, Christocentric in nature and relevant.

The reason for using the deductive structure was to emphasize the major ideas of each doctrine upfront and then develop those ideas by drawing out the implications on daily lifestyle living. Preaching deductive sermons also allows for more directness and clarity.

Advertising the sermon series was done by talking to the members in groups and individually, announcements from the front encouraging participation on previous Sabbath mornings, and during the introductory sermon. There were many members who expressed excitement about what was about to happen and wanted to be a part of the process, while others did not seem to have much interest.

Design a Weekly Summary of Fundamental Beliefs

To have the church become more acquainted with the doctrines, during the research process I decided to create short summaries of the chosen doctrines to insert in the bulletin each Sabbath during series. On the Sabbath that a certain doctrine was being preached a summary of that particular doctrine would be inserted into the bulletin. On the first Sabbath, when the introductory sermon would be preached, an insert with a brief summary of all 28 Fundamental Beliefs was provided. The summary information was mostly gathered from the book, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* (MASDA, 1988). Summaries vary in length, from a quarter to half a page.

Implementation of the Approach for Developing an Appreciations for Adventist Doctrines

Preaching the Sermon Series

In 2010 the eight-part 7Ss sermon series was preached on eight Sabbath covering July 17 to August 21 and November 6 and 13. I researched, prepared, and presented all the sermons. The preparation process was very time consuming and required more time than I anticipated. More than 40 hours per week was allotted to this task. I felt that the sermons were not as refined and Christocentric as they could have been had the research process and time been more accommodating. During the research and preparation, I became keenly aware of the importance and foundational nature of Genesis 1–3 to biblical teachings. My study inspired and encouraged me to preach more from the Old Testament and I received much positive feedback from members who said that the series helped them better understand the doctrines and see them in a new light.

The first sermon was an introduction to gain excitement for the doctrinal sermons and to show the relevancy of doctrines for every believer. The 7Ss doctrinal sermons were presented highlighting the fact that the Fundamental Beliefs are biblically based, centered in Christ, and have their roots in the book of Genesis. Therefore, the Fundamental Beliefs are crucial to the maturity, ministry, and mission of the church. A brief synopsis of each sermon is given below highlighting the main theological points.

Introduction: “Let’s Go Shopping”

The sermon series began on July 17, 2010 with the introductory sermon “Let’s Go Shopping.” The idea was to both get the attention of and convey to the congregation that in the world of shopping the customer browses goods or services available from many stores with the intent of purchasing a suitable selection from a reliable store. If the

consumer does not know what is a suitable selection and why it is suitable and what store is trustworthy to offer that selection, then the consumer runs the risk of purchasing from an unreliable store what is unsuitable and even detrimental to the consumer's health. Therefore, it is pertinent, as Seventh-day Adventists, to know what we believe and why we believe what we believe so as to make right choices crucial to our spiritual health. The introductory sermon invited the members to go shopping with me during the series by exploring some of the church's fundamental doctrines.

Salvation: "God: The Biggest Loser"

The second sermon, first doctrinal sermon, was preached on July 24, 2010, expounding on the doctrine of Salvation. Utilizing language from a popular TV show, "Biggest Loser," I demonstrated that in the Fall God has been the biggest loser: He lost His perfect Creation and his face-to-face relationship with His children whom He loves, and He grieves for His dying children. In God's first communication with humans after we sinned He not only pronounced a curse (Gen 3:14–19), He announced the promise Savior—the Seed, Christ (v. 15). *Through Christ* the plan of salvation is the way by which God, the Creator, can be reconciled to His lost Creation (Heb 8; Col 1:16–20; Rev 13:8). God wants to regain what He has lost, so although Scripture makes it clear that sin brings death (Rom 6:23; cf. Deut 24:16; 2 Kgs 14:6; 2 Chr 25:4; Rom 5:15; Jam 1:15), God made provision to satisfy justice and mercy in Christ and save repentant sinners bestowing on them eternal life (John 3:16; 1 John 1:9).

Sabbath: "What's So Scared About the Sabbath?"

On July 31, 2010 the third sermon was preaching on to doctrine of the Sabbath. The main emphasis of this sermon was that the Sabbath is about a holy God in a holy

time making a holy people through the blood of Christ Jesus. Today, many associate the Sabbath with work—what we can and cannot do. However, the Sabbath was never about work: six days are for working but the Sabbath is for rest—“in it you shall do no work” (Exod 20:8–11, esp. v. 9; cf. 16:23–26; 31:14–16; Lev 23:3; Deut 5:12–15). Before sin entered the world, the seventh day was blessed and set apart as a memorial of a completed Creation (Gen 2:1–3). God had declared His Creation was not only complete but “very good,” and humans, who were made “in His image,” were part of this good/perfect Creation (1:26–31). After the Fall Sabbath rest is not just rest from work, but also rest from sin (Heb 4:1–11). The Sabbath is about God’s provision *through Christ* to restore humans into His image. The Sabbath is about the salvation and sanctification of God’s people through Christ: God designed from the beginning that the Sabbath would be a sign of His sanctifying work in our lives (Exod 31:13–14).

Spirit of Prophecy: “The Message, the Method, and the Messenger”

The fourth sermon was presented on August 7, 2010 on the doctrine of the Spirit of Prophecy. This sermon examined the need for the gift of prophecy since sin has severed our face-to-face communication with God (Isa 59:2). While God’s redemptive plan through Christ, the Seed, would one day restore that communion (Gen 3:15; Col 1:19–20; Rev 21–22), He has spoken since the Fall to humanity through prophets and through His incarnated Son, Christ (Heb 1:1–4; cf. Amos 3:7), whom Moses called a Prophet (Deut 18:15–18). Prophets are God’s messengers and His method of communicating. The message is redemption through Christ, and the prophets longed to know more of Christ and were led by His Spirit (1 Pet 1:10–11). Chosen from diverse

backgrounds, they all had one thing in common, the call of God to proclaim the judgment by Christ and redemption through Christ.

Stewardship: “Paycheck”

On August 14, 2010 the doctrine of Stewardship was presented in the fifth sermon. Stewardship is not so much about time, talent, treasure, and temple, stewardship is about redemption through Christ Jesus. Every principle that God has given for humans to live by is about humanity’s redemption through Christ. Humans were created by Love in love for relationship, with the freedom of choice to trust one’s Creator (Gen 2–3). When humanity sinned, trust was broken and, therefore, the relationship between God and humans was broken (Gen 3:8). Stewardship is about trust, and trust is about relationship (Matt 5:24–34). Christ’s death is to restore the broken relationship between God and humanity. Stewardship is about restoring trust through Christ that leads to a restored relationship in Christ. Even at Creation before sin God asked humans to be faithful stewards with what He had given them (Gen 2:15), today we trust Christ by being and doing all He asks of us and one day He will give us a paycheck—eternal life. When He returns, we will have our reward and live Him forever (Isa 62:11; Matt 5:10; 6:1–6; John 14:1–3; Rev 22:12).

State of the Dead: “Dead or Alive?”

The sixth sermon was preached on August 21, 2010 on the doctrine of the State of the Dead. Since some members struggled with the state of the dead, I wanted to clarify what happens to people when they pass away: Are they dead or alive? Many Christians believe in the immortality of the soul, but the father of lies was lying when he told Eve that breaking God’s command would not lead to death (Gen 2:17–7; 3:1–5). The Bible

portrays death as an unconscious sleep—even for the righteous—from which we rise only through the power of Christ (e.g., Ps 30:4; Eccl 9:5; Matt 9:18–26; John 11). Adam was formed from the dust and it was only when God breathed into him the breath of life that he became a living soul (2:7) and when God removes the breath of life we are a dead lump of clay again (Ps 104:29–30). But we can praise God that through Christ we can live again at the Resurrection when He comes and not be conquered by death for Christ will in the end destroy death and the father of lies (Gen 3:15; John 6:39–40; 11:23–26; Rom 5:10–21; 1 Cor 15:54–56; Rev 1:18; 20:14).

Sanctuary: “God’s Laundry Room”

After almost a three-month break in the doctrinal series due to the nature of the church calendar the seventh sermon was preached on November 6, 2010 on the doctrine of the Sanctuary. The focus of this sermon was Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary typified in the yearly Day of Atonement (Lev 16). Using a metaphor, the sanctuary is God’s laundry room where Christ washes the sins of mankind with the detergent of His blood. The earthly sanctuary was symbolically defiled through daily sacrifices for sin and impurities (Lev 1–6; 16), as the heavenly sanctuary was defiled through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross for our confessed sins. Once a year on the Day of Atonement all Israel would meet as proscribed in Lev 16 and the high priest, a symbol of Christ, would utilize two goats in a ritual to cleanse the earthy sanctuary of accumulated sins (v. 10). The blood of the LORD’s goat, a symbol of Christ, was used to remove the sins from the sanctuary (vv. 15–19). Then the sins were confessed onto the scapegoat (*aza’zel*’s goat) which then was banished into a desolate place (vv. 20–22). So in the heavenly sanctuary, our sins are forgiven but remain upon the books of heaven until our High Priest, Christ Himself,

atones for our sins by His own blood and cleanses the heavenly sanctuary, removing them forever by placing them upon Satan who is banished into the lake of fire (see Gen 3:15; Lev. 16; Heb 8:1–6; Rev 20).

Second Coming: “Hold That Fast”

The eighth sermon was on the doctrine of the Second Coming and was presented on November 13, 2010. This final sermon was meant to encourage believers to hold fast and not give up. While we many have many troubles and trials at this time, God through Christ is restoring His lost Creation. The great desire of the heart of Christ is not only to save us but to once and for all, finally, and completely do away with sin forever (Heb 9:26–28). Just as in the beginning we were His perfect Creation with access to the tree of life (Gen 1–3), in the New Heaven and New Earth, Creation will be made new with the tree of life (Rev 21–22). It is at Christ’s coming that we will be changed to be again in the image of God as at Eden unmarred by sin (1 Cor 15; 1 John 3:2). Jesus’s first advent was fulfilled as it was predicted; thus, we are sure He will come again! He pleads with us, as in Rev 3:11: “Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown” (NKJ). Christ is not willing that any of us be lost (Luke 12:40; Rev 3:11; 2 Pet 3:9). The signs of the end as seen in Matthew 24 are being fulfilled. Revelation 14 must be proclaimed with urgency for the same Jesus who cried from the hills of Calvary “It is finished!” is soon to cry from the steps of glory “It is finished”: “He who is unjust, let him be unjust still, . . . he who is righteous, let him be righteous still” (John 19:30; Rev 22:11 NKJ). This is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax we have waited for!

Bulletin Inserts on the Fundamental Beliefs

On the first Sabbath of the preaching series a copy of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs was placed in the church bulletin, all attendees who received a bulletin received a copy of all 28 Fundamental Beliefs. The entire congregation was informed from the pulpit that a copy was inserted in their bulletin for a keepsake. They were encouraged to study and become acquainted with these doctrinal statements. During the doctrinal sermons, the prepared summary of the doctrine preached on that week appeared in the bulletin.

Engaging the Kingsboro Temple SDA Church in Doctrinal Dialogue

Weekly Bible Class

For the church to develop a greater appreciation for the doctrines, it must be engaged in doctrinal dialogue. Therefore, during the regularly scheduled weekly Sabbath afternoon Bible class (3:00 PM), for 28 weeks the Fundamental Beliefs became the focal lessons. During this time the booklet *In His Steps* (an outline of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs) was utilized. Every member attending the Bible class was given *In His Steps*, compliments of the church. The pastors and the elders rotated weekly in conducting the Bible class. The Bible class was opened to the entire church for this doctrinal study. The participation varies from week to week; however, there were consistent attendees, and many stated that the information presented was instrumental in impacting their knowledge and understanding of the Fundamental Beliefs. While I was not present at every class taught by other leaders, those I attended were somewhat lacking in Christocentric nature.

Pre- and Post- Survey

A survey was administered to the church one week before and after the sermon series (discussed in detail in chapter 5). While the main purpose of the surveys was to compare and contrast the participants' knowledge and understanding of the doctrines before and after the presentations, the pre- and post-surveys were beneficial tools in aiding dialog between members and church leaders and self-reflection.

1. The pre-survey helped make members aware of the upcoming doctrinal sermon series and started them thinking about how relevant their doctrinal beliefs were to their daily lives.

2. The pre-survey helped church leadership know what areas members were struggling with in regards to doctrinal knowledge and how relevant they believed doctrines were. Thus, the pre-survey was a useful aid in sermon preparation.

3. The post-survey allowed members who had taken both surveys to notice how their thinking and understanding had grown spiritually during the sermon series and Bible classes regarding their doctrinal beliefs and their relevance to daily life.

4. The post-survey helped church leadership evaluate the sermon series and Bible classes and learn what was affective, and in what areas the church still needed to grow.

Participated in Different Sabbath School Classes

One method of impacting the church's knowledge regarding the Fundamental Beliefs was to share in various Sabbath School classes: children, youth, and adults. The Sabbath School lessons became a tool to engage in conversation regarding the daily application of the weekly lessons. I would seek to dialogue from a doctrinal view, and,

since the third quarter Sabbath School lesson of 2010 dealt with Redemption, I sought to highlight the doctrine of Salvation.

Implement and Conduct a Five Minute “Discover My Foundation” Segment Each Sabbath

By listening to the many discussions in the Sabbath School classes, I became intensely aware of the need for a more intentional teaching of the biblical doctrines. I coined the term “Discover My Foundation” as a way to engage short conversational dialogue with members. For a short period on Sabbath following the lunch hour the survey participants would dialogue regarding the sermon preached. It was a means to clarify or ask questions regarding any of the foundational doctrines. Due to many unforeseen issues these segments were not consistently carried out during the sermon series. However, when it was done, the interest of those involved was aroused and the time would last longer than intended. It became a means whereby the participant felt free to express their knowledge of the doctrines. This was one of the most effective parts of the process because it gave the participants the freedom to express themselves, ask questions, and share their knowledge of doctrines. Had it been consistent, I have no doubt that the participants would have gained a greater knowledge and understanding of the foundational doctrines of Scripture and this would have deeply impacted their daily living positively.

Informal Feedback on the Doctrinal Sermon Series

Most of the members who interacted with me after each presentation openly stated that (a) they had learned new things regarding the doctrines, (b) they had a clearer

understand of the doctrines, (c) they better understood the importance of doctrines, and (d) they would endeavor to make changes in their daily living. There were some who had questions and during lunch period we would sit as a group and dialogue, asking and answering questions arising from the presentations. While there was much positive feedback, there was also some negative feedback. There were members who felt that preaching doctrines is unnecessary. One member asked me after the fifth week, “How many more doctrines are you going to preach? When are you going to preach something else?” The question may be due to the fact that doctrinal preaching in any form makes some members uncomfortable because the word ‘doctrine’ to them suggest ‘legalism.’

Conclusion

Kingsboro Temple of Seventh-day Adventists located in an affluent community has a great potential to impact its community. While the church is a very active and numerically growing congregation, there is need for growth in the areas of spiritual maturity and mission. A limited knowledge of the church’s fundamental doctrines has impacted the mission and spiritual maturity. There is a continual need for practical Christocentric doctrinal messages that positively impact the daily lives of the members.

Both the sermon series and Bible class presentations captured the attention and impacted the lives of many within the congregation. Many people stated that their knowledge and understanding of the doctrines were impacted positively and some requested more presentations relating to the doctrines that were not preached. Both members and visitors approached me requesting the release of the sermon CDs for purchase for their own personal library and to send to friends and family. Due to the nature of the project I had requested that sermon series not be made public for sale or

distribution. While there were many positive reactions to the series, there was some negative feedback. Some felt that I needed to preach more “love” rather than “doctrines.” It was voiced that doctrines are too “legalistic” and turn people away from the church.

Following the presentations marked spiritual growth and changes were evident among many of the members and in the church at large. Notably changes were seen in increased financial giving and a decrease in various departmental meetings during Sabbath hours. Most importantly lifestyle changes were evident from week to week, but not as consistent as I would hope. I believe, if doctrinal sermons are properly researched and prepared in a Christocentric manner, positive impact would be made in the life of the Church and its mission spiritually and physically. The following chapter (5) will discuss the results of the pre- and post-surveys and its findings concerning the sermon series.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION OF PRE- AND POST- SURVEYS OF KINGSBORO TEMPLE MEMBERS

Introduction

Kingsboro Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church is a very active and growing congregation. However, there was a disconnect between spirituality and doctrinal knowledge and evangelism. To address this issue, I decided to preach a series of Christocentric doctrinal messages that would teach biblical teachings, impact spiritual growth, and foster personal evangelism. To accomplish this task several goals were set.

1. Participants would understand that the doctrines are biblical teachings.
2. Participants would perceive that all the doctrines are centered in Christ.
3. Participants would have a deeper knowledge of Adventist Fundamental Beliefs.
4. Participants would see the relevancy of the Fundamental Beliefs and want them to have an impact on their daily lifestyle choices.
5. Participants would be aware of the Adventist message and mission, inspiring them to engage in evangelism.

The survey was administered to evaluate the effectiveness of reaching these goals.

This chapter describes (a) the process followed in the design, the content, and the type of survey; (b) how the survey was administered and who participated; and (c) the

findings and analysis of the pre- and post-surveys (d) with a “Conclusion” that discusses whether the goals for the series were reached.

Survey Research and Design

This section discusses the development of the survey, which was a challenge. Deciding on the nature and number of questions, whether it would be qualitative or quantitative, and subjective or objective required much prayer and research. In August 2009 I began the process by reviewing different types of surveys used in similar projects, asking questions, and seeking the advice of many colleagues, friends, and professors. After many discussions and suggestions, I decided to explore an idea suggested by one of my professors, Dr. M. Sahlin, and develop an instrument that would evaluate the growth in knowledge of participants who would attend the Christocentric doctrinal sermon series by means of a pre- and post-survey. The instrument would be a subjective short-answer type questionnaire rather than multiple-choice, true or false, or scale questionnaire that would allow some participants to simply guess between the answers supplied. The purpose was to challenge the participants to critically think about each question and freely express their level of knowledge.

With the assistance of one of the elders, Kay Edwards, and the advice of the senior pastor, Dr. A. E. Joseph, the questionnaire was developed and vetted. The instrument consists of 23 short-answer questions regarding the 28 Fundamental Beliefs in general with specific questions on the seven doctrines which would be covered in the series: Salvation, Sabbath, Spirit of Prophecy, Systematic Benevolence, State of the Dead, Sanctuary, and the Second Coming. A checklist for scoring purposes based on the seven doctrinal statements was also developed to score each question regarding degree of

accuracy. An identical survey was given for the pre- and post-surveys to measure the effectiveness of the sermon series, as well as the other means of teaching the Fundamental Beliefs during this period: Bible Classes, participating in Sabbath School classes, bulletin inserts on the Beliefs, and “Discover My Foundation” segments.

Survey Administration and Participation

This section describes how the pre- and post-surveys were administered as well as the demographics of the participants and how they were chosen. On June 5, 2010 I began publicizing from the pulpit the sermon series and the need for participation in the survey. The congregation was informed about the nature of the survey and the need to have participants across all age groups (from 18 and above), genders, and number of years as Seventh-day Adventist. Interested participants were asked to meet with me the following Sabbath afternoon in the church sanctuary at 4:00 pm. Fifty-six people met with me and additional information was shared on the nature of the project and the intent of the survey. They were informed of what would be required, such as, commitment to the process, signing of a consent form, availability for both the pre- and post-surveys, being present for all sermon presentations, and awareness and attention to handouts that would be placed in the weekly bulletins. Questions were raised as to the use of names on the survey, what if they miss a Sabbath during the sermon presentations, the length of the entire process, and time and venue for doing the survey. The questions were addressed. Regarding missed sermon presentation, participants were informed that they would need to notify myself and obtain a CD copy of the sermon and listen to it. It was paramount that all participants listen to the whole sermon series since the survey was designed to measure the series' effectiveness.

Many expressed a desire to participate, while others stated they would be unable to due to the fact that most of the sermons were scheduled to be preached during the summer months, which is a high vacation time for many members. During the weeks of June 19–26th participants signed an “Informed Consent Form” created by Andrews University and modified to reflect the title of the study and the names of the investigator and research chair. Elder Kay Edwards and I administered both the consent form and the survey. All the participants were members of Kingsboro Temple and vary in the number of years they had been Seventh-day Adventist. Of the 56 who signed consent forms, 44 took part in the pre-survey and, of the 44 in the pre-survey, 37 took part in the post-survey. Thus, both the pre- and post-surveys were filled out by the same participants minus the seven who filled out the pre-survey but were unable to fill out the post-survey in the allotted time.

Administration of the pre-survey was done on July 3 at 3:00 pm in the sanctuary. However, not all of the participants were available on that date; therefore, a second administration was done on July 10. Thus, the 44 pre-surveys were completed before the introductory sermon, “Let’s Go Shopping,” was preached.

With the exception of five people, all the participants were able to be in attendance for all the sermon presentations. The eight-sermon series was preached for eight Sabbaths from July 17 to August 21, 2010 and November 6 and 13, 2010. An audio copy was made available to those who missed sermons.

Administration of the post-survey was done for three Sabbaths in a row from November 27th through December 10th. Seven participants were unable to attend any of the post-survey sessions; thus, the post-survey participation was 37 instead of 44.

Demographics information was collected on participants in the pre- and post-surveys, which dealt with gender, age group, and how long they had been Seventh-day Adventists. The gender representation was unbalanced: females made up about 2/3 or more of the sample size. Of the 44 participants in the pre-survey, 32 marked female, nine marked male, and three did not indicate gender. Of the 37 participants in the post-survey, 23 marked female, nine marked male, and five did not indicate gender. Male participation remained consistent in both surveys while there was a decrease in the female participation.

Participants had to be over 18 to participate. See Table 1 regarding the age of participants. Note that three participants in the pre-survey and two in the post-survey did not indicate their age or how long they had been Seventh-day Adventist. The largest age group of participants was the 36–55 age group at 31.8% for the pre-survey and 37.8% of the post-survey participants representing 14 people in both surveys. Those who were under 35 years old found it the hardest to attend the post-survey due to the holiday season and account for the seven-person loss in participation. The post-survey had one participant in the 76 and above group. Variation in the age groups could be related to participants having a birthday between surveys, since there was an almost four-month lapse between the pre- and post-surveys. Regarding how long participants were Seventh-day Adventist see Table 2. Significantly, over 50% of the participants have been Adventist for over 20 years.

Table 2

Comparison of age of the Participants in the Pre- and Post-Surveys

Age Groups	Pre-Survey Participants (44)		Post-Survey Participants (37)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
19-25	6	13.6%	4	10.8%
26-35	13	29.5%	8	21.6%
36-55	14	31.8%	14	37.8%
56-75	8	18.2%	8	21.6%
76 and older	0	0.0%	1	2.7%
Not indicated	3	6.8%	2	5.4%

Table 3

Comparison of how Many Years Participants Have Been Seventh-day Adventist in the Pre- and Post-Surveys

Years SDA	Pre-Survey Participants (44)		Post-Survey Participants (37)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
5 or less	6	14%	4	11%
6-10	4	9%	5	14%
11-20	7	16%	5	14%
21-30	10	22%	8	22%
31-40	8	18%	7	19%
More than 40	6	14%	6	16%
Not indicated	3	7%	2	5%

Survey Findings and Analysis

This section explains the analysis and findings of the pre- and post-surveys. Since the survey was a subjective short-answer questionnaire, the responses needed to be recorded/formatted in a way in which responses on both administrations of the survey could be compared and analyzed. Recording the data: I began by reading through all the surveys, taking note of all the answers given. I then did a second reading, this time reading through all the replies given for each question, for example, I went through all 44 replies to question 1 of the pre-surveys together, then move to all the replies to question 2. While reading through I made a list of all different answers given for each question. Then I created a list by grouping all answers that reflect the same idea to make a reflective summary category. Some answers are verbatim while many are synthesized summaries that reflect like answers. Once all 44 pre-surveys were done, I then examined the list and refined it for less redundancy. I then read through all the questions on the post-surveys. Then I began comparing answers on both surveys by linking similar responses on the post-survey with the pre-survey. Since participants were informed to write “Don’t Know” or to not respond if they did not know the answer to a question, in most Tables “Don’t Know” and “No Response” are tallied together. If there were responses on the post-survey that were different from those on the pre-survey, new categories were added. After completing the response list for each question, I tallied how many people wrote each response or did not respond. This information was placed in a Table(s) for each question for easy analysis: Responses and the number of participants for each response along with what percentage they represented was entered into each Table. Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Comparing data: Once the Tables were made, the responses on the pre-survey were compared to the post-survey regarding each question to discover where changes had occurred. Then thought was given to see what could have caused changes, such as, the way questions were worded, information presented through the sermon series, Bible Class, bulletin handouts, etc. Based on the analysis the effectiveness of the sermon series was evaluated: Several things were highlighted. While the series was effective in positively impacting the knowledge of the participants, there are several issues that negatively impact this project. These will be discussed in the final chapter. Below are the findings and analysis of each question—the Tables appear at the end of each section.

Questions on the Fundamental Beliefs

In the Doctrines Section of the survey (questions 1–7), there appears to be an increase and more precision of correct answers as the participants' knowledge of the subject increased.

1. *What is a Doctrine?* See Table 3. In the pre-survey “Beliefs or List of Beliefs” was the number 1 answer—most likely due to the fact that we call our doctrines Fundamental Beliefs and question 2, which they could see, called them “doctrinal beliefs.” In the post-survey “Teaching(s)” emerged as the number 1 answer, which was the focus of the sermon to show that doctrines are biblical teachings. Note that the first three answers in the Table are common ways to relate to the term *doctrine* while the last two, which are less accurate, are not mentioned in the post-survey.

2. *How many doctrinal beliefs does the Seventh-day Adventist Church have?* See Table 4. Question 2 also shows a significant increase in correct answers. In the pre-survey, 1/3 of the participants did not know how many Fundamental Beliefs the Seventh-

day Adventist Church has. However, in the post-survey all the participants knew the correct number. In pre-survey eight (18%) wrote that there were 27 Fundamental Beliefs unaware of the recent adoption of the 28th Belief in 2005.

3. How relevant are these doctrinal beliefs to your faith and practice? See Table 5. The increased percentage in the post-survey regarding relevancy reflects that the sermons impacted the participants' knowledge and understanding of the doctrinal beliefs and their relevancy to their faith and practice. For example in the pre-survey a participant who stated the beliefs are "Very Relevant" also did not have a clear answer to What is a doctrine? Nor did the participant know the correct number of Fundamental Beliefs. However, in the post-survey all the participants responded more accurately in general.

4. In what ways do the doctrines influence the way you live for Christ on a daily basis? See Table 6. Just as there was an increase in the post-survey in how relevant participants found the doctrines, there was an increase in how much they saw the doctrines influencing their daily lives. Note the great increase in "Guides My Daily Life Choices" from 25% to 70%.

5. Do you believe that Christ is at the center of the fundamental doctrinal beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? If so, why? If not, why not? See Tables 7–9.

Question 5 shows an increase in overall precision of answers; the post-survey shows that all of the participants believe the doctrines are biblically based with Christ at the center. In the If so, why? section only 35 answered in the pre-survey while all but one gave a reason in post-survey. Unfortunately, most of those "Not Sure" or "No" in the pre-survey have been Adventist for more than 10 years.

6. Do Seventh-day Adventists hold any doctrinal beliefs in common with other Christian denominations? If so, identify those doctrines that Seventh-day Adventists hold in common with other Christian denominations. See Table 10–11. Regarding questions 6 and 7, the issue of whether each Seventh-day Adventist doctrine is held by another Christian denomination was not specifically discussed in the sermon series. The overall responses reveal that sermons needed to be more specific and more teaching is needed in relations to doctrinal dissonance and commonality with other denominations. In question 6a there was an increase in affirmative answers: only two participants on the post-survey did not answer “Yes” while in the pre-survey there were nine. However, in 6b where participants were to list shared doctrines, 12 in the pre- and post-survey wrote “Don’t Know” or did not respond. Fewer individual doctrines were listed on the post-survey though three new doctrines were listed. The most significant increase on the post-survey was with “Baptism,” “the Seconding Coming of Christ,” “the Trinity,” and “Creation.”

7. Identify those doctrinal beliefs that are unique to Seventh-day Adventists as a Christian denomination. See Table 12. Our most unique doctrine is the Sanctuary, which was preached. The series had a positive impact: In the post-survey there was a significant increase in those who wrote “Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary” (pre-survey 6, post-survey 21) and “Investigative Judgment” (pre-survey 3, post-survey 15). Only one participant on the post-survey listed “Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary” as a doctrine shared with another denomination (see Table 11). However, another unique doctrine, the Spirit of Prophecy (the prophet Ellen White) was discussed in the series but there was a significant decrease on the post-survey.

No doubt the sermon series positively impacted the knowledge of the participants. Everyone knew the correct number of doctrines in the post-survey compared with only 66% in the pre-survey and in the post-survey more connected *doctrine* with biblical teachings (pre-survey 7%, post-survey 62%). All the participants now believe that Christ is central to the doctrines (pre-survey 84%, post-survey 100%) and most feel they influence daily lifestyle choices (pre-survey 11%, post-survey 70%). Interestingly, most of the replies to question 7 were connected to the 7 S's of the sermon series: Sixty-seven of 88 (76%) replies listed on the pre-survey and 90 of 107 (84%) on the post-survey. This may be due to the familiarity of these terms in Adventism or the Bible Classes led by different church leaders. The listing of some doctrines that Adventist share with other denominations is likely due to ignorance on what each Christian denomination teaches and ambiguity regarding what was meant by "unique."

Table 4

Responses to Question 1: What is a Doctrine?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Beliefs or List of Beliefs	(21) 48%	(9) 24%
Principles / Guidelines / Laws / Rule / Standards	(16) 36%	(5) 14%
Teaching(s)	(3) 7%	(23) 62%
Belief in Organized System and Organization	(2) 5%	
Religion	(2) 5%	

Table 5

Responses to Question 2: How Many Doctrinal Beliefs Does the Seventh-day Adventist Church Have?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
28	(29) 66%	(37) 100%
27	(8) 18%	
29	(2) 5%	
26	(1) 2%	
10	(1) 2%	
7	(1) 2%	
Don't Know/ No Response	(2) 5%	

Table 6

Responses to Question 3: How Relevant are These Doctrinal Beliefs to Your Faith and Practice?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Very Relevant / Extremely Important	(26) 59%	(27) 73%
Relevant / Important	(6) 14%	(9) 24%
Guidelines for Living	(6) 14%	(1) 3%
Help Church Function	(2) 5%	
Not Practiced / Not Relevant	(2) 5%	
Not Familiar with / Don't Know	(2) 5%	

Table 7

Responses to Question 4: In What Ways do the Doctrines Influence the way you Live for Christ on a Daily Basis?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Guides My Daily Life Choices	(11) 25%	(26) 70%
Influence Behavior	(10) 22%	(4) 11%
Impact Relationship with Christ and Others	(7) 16%	(2) 5%
Influence Faith/Beliefs	(5) 11%	(4) 11%
Does Not Influence	(4) 9%	(1) 3%
Don't Know / No Response	(7) 16%	

Table 8

Responses to Question 5a: Do you Believe That Christ is at the Center of the Fundamental Doctrinal Beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Yes	(37) 84%	(37) 100%
Not Sure	(6) 14%	
No	(1) 2%	

Table 9

Responses to Question 5b: If so, why?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Scripturally Based	(12) 27%	(18) 49%
Proclaim Jesus	(10) 23%	(12) 32%
Reason for Christianity	(6) 14%	(6) 16%
Christ Keeps the Church Together	(5) 11%	
It's God's Law	(2) 5%	

Table 10

Responses to Question 5c: If not, why not?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
People Are Selfish	(1) 2%	

Table 11

Responses to Question 6a: Do Seventh-Day Adventists Hold any Doctrinal Beliefs in Common With Other Christian Denominations?

Do SDA's Hold any Doctrinal Beliefs in Common with Other Christian Denominations?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Yes	(34) 77%	(35) 95%
No	(3) 7%	
Not Sure / Don't Know / No Response	(7) 16%	(2) 5%

Table 12

Responses to Question 6b: If So, Identify Those Doctrines which Seventh-Day Adventists Hold in Common With Other Christian Denominations.

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
The Trinity	(13) 30%	(18) 49%
Second Coming of Christ	(9) 20%	(13) 35%
Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus	(8) 18%	(6) 16%
Sabbath	(7) 16%	(9) 24%
Baptism	(5) 11%	(11) 30%
State of Dead/Resurrection	(4) 9%	(4) 11%
Word of God	(4) 9%	(4) 11%
Experience of Salvation	(4) 9%	(2) 5%
God the Son	(3) 7%	
Health Guidelines (No Smoking, Drinking, Recreational Drugs)	(3) 7%	
Stewardship	(3) 7%	
God the Holy Spirit	(2) 5%	(2) 5%
Heaven	(2) 5%	
Lord's Supper	(2) 5%	(2) 5%
Creation	(1) 2%	(5) 14%
God the Father	(1) 2%	
Marriage	(1) 2%	
There is a Higher Being	(1) 2%	
Nature of Man		(3) 8%
Prophecy		(1) 3%
Christ Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary		(1) 3%
Don't Know	(3) 7%	(1) 3%
No Response	(9) 20%	(11) 30%

Table 13

Responses to Question 7: Identify Those Doctrinal Beliefs that are Unique to Seventh-day Adventists as a Christian Denomination

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Sabbath	(25) 57%	(21) 57%
State of Dead/Resurrection	(14) 32%	(21) 57%
Second Coming of Christ	(10) 23%	(11) 30%
Remnant and its Mission	(7) 16%	(8) 22%
Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary	(6) 14%	(21) 57%
Health Guidelines (No Smoking, Drinking, Recreational Drugs)	(6) 14%	(5) 14%
Gift of Prophecy / Ellen White	(5) 11%	
The Trinity	(5) 11%	
Experience of Salvation	(4) 9%	
Investigative Judgment	(3) 7%	(15) 41%
Baptism	(2) 5%	
Millennium	(1) 2%	(2) 5%
Lord's Supper	(1) 2%	(1) 3%
Great Controversy	67/88	(1) 3%
Stewardship	90/107	(1) 3%
Don't Know	(2) 5%	(1) 3%
No Response	(4) 9%	

Questions on the Sabbath

This section deals with questions relating to the Fundamental Belief of the Sabbath (questions 8–10).

8. *Do you believe the Seventh-day Sabbath is the only true day of worship for the people of God? If so, why? If not, why not?* See Tables 13–15. There was a significant increase regarding Sabbath being the only true day of worship from 89% on the pre-survey to 100% of the post-survey. On the pre-survey five people said “No” but only three gave reasons why not, while 39 said “Yes” on pre-survey and 38 gave a reason. In post-survey everyone marked “Yes” and gave a reason, the greater increase being it is “Scripturally Based”: 55% to 84%. Those who stated Sabbath was not the only day of worship aged between 26–55 and range between six to 40 years as Seventh-day Adventist.

9. *In what ways does your belief in the Seventh-day Sabbath influence your daily relationship with Jesus?* See Table 16. There was an increase in the connection between Sabbath and daily living. The number of participants listing the Sabbath as “Daily Helps me try to Live in Harmony With God” on the post-survey nearly doubled, while significantly less people listed “More Consistent With Devotions Time” on the post-survey.

10. *Is keeping the seventh-day Sabbath essential for relationship with Jesus? If so, why? If not, why not?* See Tables 17–19. A significantly higher percentage answered “Yes” on the post-survey. The number indicating the reason being “Obedience” and “Time with Jesus” remained the same for both surveys; however, those stating the reason as “Demonstrates Love” increased from 7% to 30%.

It is clear that after the sermon series more participants believed that the Sabbath is the only true day of worship (pre-survey 89, post-survey 100%); furthermore, the Sabbath is essential for one's relationship with Jesus (pre-survey 75%, post-survey 92%) and influences that relationship daily (pre-survey 84%, post-survey 92%).

Table 14

Responses to Question 8a: Do you Believe the Seventh-day Sabbath is the Only True day of Worship for the People of God?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Yes	(39) 89%	(37) 100%
No	(5) 11%	

Table 15

Responses to Question 8b: If yes, why?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Scripturally Based	(24) 55%	(31) 84%
God Made It Holy	(8) 18%	(4) 11%
God Never Changed It	(3) 7%	
Shows God as the Creator	(2) 5%	(2) 5%
God's Sign	(1) 2%	

Table 16

Responses to Question 8c: If not, why not?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
There is no Special day of Worship	(2) 5%	
Some True Believers Think it is Okay to Worship on Another day	(1) 2%	

Table 17

Responses to Question 9: In What Ways Does Your Belief in the Seventh-day Sabbath Influence Your Daily Relationship With Jesus?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Daily Helps me try to Live in Harmony With God	(10) 23%	(17) 46%
Reminds me I am a Witness	(6) 14%	(3) 8%
Gives me Hope and Trust in God	(6) 14%	(2) 5%
Impacts how I Worship	(5) 11%	(7) 19%
More Consistent With Devotional Time	(5) 11%	
Reminds me of God's Creative Powers	(3) 7%	(2) 5%
Makes me Grateful to God	(2) 5%	(2) 5%
No Influence		(1) 3%
Don't Know / No Response	(7) 16%	(3) 8%

Table 18

Responses to Question 10a: Is Keeping the Seventh-day Sabbath Essential for a Relationship With Jesus?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Yes	(33) 75%	(34) 92%
No	(10) 23%	(3) 8%
Don't Know / No Response	(1) 2%	

Table 19

Responses to Question 10b: If so, why?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Obedience	(13) 30%	(13) 35%
Time With Jesus	(8) 18%	(8) 22%
Demonstrates Love	(3) 7%	(11) 30%
Encouragement	(3) 7%	
Show God as the Creator	(2) 5%	(1) 3%
Jesus Kept it	(2) 5%	
Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath	(1) 2%	

Table 20

<i>Responses to Question 10c: If not, why not?</i>		
Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
As Long as Jesus is in the Heart one is Saved	(3) 7%	
Not Necessary for a Relationship With God	(2) 5%	(1) 3%
Not Convicted	(1) 2%	
Tradition	(1) 2%	

Questions on the Authority of the Bible and Ellen White

This section deals with questions relating to the Fundamental Belief of the Word of God and the Gift of Prophecy (questions 11–13)

11. Regarding the inspiration of the Bible, why do Seventh-day Adventists teach that the Bible is the written Word of God, and the only infallible authority for faith and practice? See Table 20. On the pre-survey 11 did not know or respond to the question while on the post-survey only four. The post-survey had an increase in “The Bible is Inspired by the Word of God” from the pre-survey 16 to the post-survey 23. In correlation, the number decreased from seven in the pre-survey to one in the post survey of those who said “The Bible is the Standard by which all Things are Judged.” This can be attributed to the fact that the presentation focused solely on inspiration rather than the standard by which things are judged.

12. Do you believe that the writings of Ellen G. White are an authority for the Seventh-day Adventist Church today? If so, why? If not, why not? See Tables 21–23. The post-survey reveals a more favorable view and clearer understanding of the inspiration of Ellen White. Those who did not think that Ellen White’s writings are an authority, did not know, or did not response decreased from 17 to five. Regarding If not, why not? the main

reasons given (and the only two listed on the post-survey) were “The Bible is the Only Authority” and “Her Writings are an Influence/Guide.” These answers do not debate the role of her writings in Adventism.

13. How do the writings of Ellen White impact your relationship with Christ on a daily basis? See Table 24. Of those that felt an impact, over half listed “Gives a Better Understanding of the Bible and Insight” in the pre- and post-surveys, and “Faithful in my Relationship to Christ” increased from two to six participants. In the pre-survey 14 answered “It Doesn’t” which significantly decreased on the post-survey to three; however, a new answer appeared on the post-survey given by four, “Haven’t Read Much of Her Writings.” This reveals that a large number of those who say her Writings do not impact their lives are among those who have not read her writings. Those who stated that the writings of Ellen White do not impact their relationship with Christ on a daily basis have been Seventh-day Adventist for more than 20 years. This suggests that those who are recent Seventh-day Adventist have a greater appreciation and/or knowledge of the Spirit of Prophecy than those who have been in the message for a longer period. The variation of answers on the post-survey shows weakness in the overall presentation of the subject.

The study reveals that there is uncertainty within the church regarding the reason Adventist teach the Bible as the sole infallible authority of faith and the writings of Ellen White. The sermons series and Bible Classes have helped participants understand that the Bible is inspired by God and teaches that it is an infallible authority and people were more accepting of Ellen White’s writings as an authority or guide for the church. The main reasons given why her writings are not an authority were that “The Bible is the

Only Authority” and “Her Writings are an Influence/Guide”; these responses could stem simply from the wording of question 11 to our teaching of them as a Lesser Light. Thus, it is hard to determine if “The Bible is the Only Authority” is a negative response.

Table 21

Responses to Question 11: Regarding the Inspiration of the Bible, Why do Seventh-Day Adventists Teach That the Bible is the Written Word of God and the Only Infallible Authority for Faith and Practice?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
The Bible is Inspired by the Word of God	(16) 36%	(23) 62%
The Bible is the Standard by Which all Things are Judged	(7) 16%	(1) 3%
The Bible States Infallibility / the Bible is Truth / Biblically Based	(6) 14%	(6) 16%
Jesus has Authority and is our Leader	(2) 5%	
So People do not Think we are Followers of EGW Instead of the Bible	(2) 5%	(1) 3%
Because SDAs do not Want People to be Deceived by Other Writings		(1) 3%
The Bible Could not be Made by man Because it has no Mistakes		(1) 3%
Don't Know / No Response	(11) 25%	(4) 11%

Table 22

Responses to Question 12a: Do you Believe That the Writings of Ellen G. White are an Authority for the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Today?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Yes	(27) 61%	(32) 86%
No	(11) 25%	(3) 8%
Don't Know / No Response	(6) 14%	(2) 5%

Table 23

Responses to Question 12b: If So, Why?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Inspired by God/Holy Spirit	(10) 23%	(19) 51%
Scriptural	(6) 14%	(12) 32%
Proven True	(3) 7%	(1) 3%
Sign of the Remnant Church	(3) 7%	
She Is an End-Time Prophet	(2) 5%	(2) 5%
Inspires Growth	(2) 5%	
All Doctrines are Authority	(1) 2%	
Founder of the Church	(1) 2%	

Table 24

Responses to Question 12c: If not, why not?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
The Bible is the Only Authority	(7) 16%	(1) 3%
Her Writings are an Influence/Guide	(1) 2%	(2) 5%
Only Adventist Believe in Her Writings	(1) 2%	
She Was Fallible	(1) 2%	
Her Writings are Secondary to the Bible	(1) 2%	

Table 25

Responses to Question 13: How do the Writings of Ellen White Impact Your Relationship with Christ on a Daily Basis?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Gives a Better Understand of the Bible and Insight	(20) 45%	(19) 51%
Gives Encouragement and Security	(3) 7%	(1) 3%
Faithful in my Relationship to Christ	(2) 5%	(6) 16%
Makes me Want to Learn More about Him	(2) 5%	
Diet, Hygiene, Children, etc.	(1) 2%	
Signs of the End		(2) 5%
Not Sure	(2) 5%	(2) 5%
Haven't Read Much of her Writings		(4) 11%
It Doesn't	(14) 32%	(3) 8%

Questions on Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

This section deals with questions relating to the Fundamental Belief of the Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary (questions 14–15).

14. How does the thought that there is a sanctuary in heaven where the pre-Advent judgment began in 1844 influence the lifestyle choices you make? See Table 25.

Question 14 shows a significant increase in the Investigatory Judgment's influence on lifestyle choices. The two key areas of increase are: "Try to Live Better While I Prepare to Meet God" and "Christ is Interceding on my Behalf." Positively, there was a decrease

in negative answers: (a) while the pre-survey had two write “Living in Fear,” no one recorded this on the post-survey; (b) on the pre-survey nine wrote “No Affect,” on the post-survey two; and (c) in the post-survey all participants wrote an answer versus the three in the pre-survey who did not know or did not respond.

15. Does belief in the doctrine of Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary impact your relationship with Jesus? If so, how? See Table 26–27. There was a significant increase in “Yes” (pre-survey 77%, post-survey 95%). In the If so, How? the number 1 answer in both surveys was “Reassuring that Jesus is Interceding for me” (pre-survey 20%, post-survey 51%). However, the number 2 answer had a significant change. In the pre-survey 18% wrote “God Desires to Save me,” but none wrote this on the post-survey. In the post-survey, “Live Better and Please God” had a significant increase from 5% to 38%. This change in the number 2 response is due to the emphasis of the series on doctrines impacting our daily life. “Don’t Know / No Response” decrease from 30% to 5%.

The series presentation on the Sanctuary significantly impacted knowledge, and influenced lifestyle choices of the participants. The decrease of fear (pre-survey 5%, post-survey 0%) and no affect/no response (pre-survey 27%, post-survey 5%) show that knowledge was impacted positively, and participants are influenced to live better while preparing to meet God (pre-survey 41%, post-survey 73%). Participants are now more aware of how the Sanctuary impacts their relationship with Christ, as seen in the decrease of those who didn’t know or did not respond (pre-survey 13%, post-survey 5%) and increase of those who say it helps them to live better and please God (pre-survey 5%, post-survey 38%).

Table 26

Responses to Question 14: How Does the Thought that There is a Sanctuary in Heaven Where the Pre-Advent Judgment Began in 1844 Influence the Lifestyle Choices you Make?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Try to Live Better While I Prepare to Meet God	(18) 41%	(27) 73%
It Tells us we are in the Last Stages	(4) 9%	
Christ is Interceding on my Behalf	(3) 7%	(6) 16%
Confessing my Sins	(2) 5%	
Living in Fear	(2) 5%	
Trust God	(2) 5%	
Helps me Know Jesus Notices me	(1) 2%	
God's Promise of Eternal Life		(2) 5%
No Affect	(9) 20%	(2) 5%
Don't Know / No Response	(3) 7%	

Table 27

Responses to Question 15a: Does Belief in the Doctrine of Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary Impact Your Relationship With Jesus?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Yes	(34) 77%	(35) 95%
No	(4) 9%	(1) 3%
Don't Know / No Response	(6) 14%	(1) 3%

Table 28

Responses to Question 15b: If So, How?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Reassuring that Jesus is Interceding for me	(9) 20%	(19) 51%
God Desires to Save me	(8) 18%	
Commit to God	(4) 9%	(1) 3%
Prepares me for the End of Time	(3) 7%	
Live Better and Please God	(2) 5%	(14) 38%
Love Jesus More	(2) 5%	
Provides Better Understanding	(2) 5%	
Impacts What I do	(1) 2%	(1) 3%
Don't Know / No Response	(13) 30%	(2) 5%

Questions on the Second Coming of Christ

This section deals with questions relating to the Fundamental Belief of the Second Coming of Christ (questions 16–17).

16. What impact does the idea of the near and literal Second Coming of Christ have on the way you live and the decisions you make each day? See Table 28. There is a vast increase regarding relevance of the literal Second Coming as it impacts daily life. Participants who wrote “Daily Live in Readiness and Make Better Choices” increased from 14 on the pre-survey to 32 on the post-survey; thus, most other answers significantly decreased and no one on the post-survey stated “No Impact.”

17. Does the view of a literal, personal, visible, and universal Second Coming of Jesus impact your day-to-day choices of entertainment, career, etc.? If so, how? See Tables 29–30. There was relatively less change on this question since 82% in the pre-survey wrote “Yes” although there was a decrease in those who stated “Somewhat” (pre-survey 2, post-survey 0) and “No” (pre-survey 4, post-survey 2). Thus, 89% in the post-survey answered “Yes.” The number 1 reason stated for how they were impacted was “Lifestyle Choices” (pre-survey 39%, post-survey 59%).

The sermon series made participants more aware of the relevance of the literal Second Coming of Christ and its impacts on daily living in readiness and making better choices (pre-survey 32%, post-survey 86%), and decreased the unawareness and uncertainty as seen in no impact and “*Don’t Know / No Response*” (pre-survey 12%, post-survey 5%). The percentage that did not know how the view of the Second Coming impact their day-to-day decreased also (pre-survey 14%, post-survey 5%).

Table 29

Responses to Question 16: What Impact Does the Idea of the Near and Literal Second Coming of Christ Have on the way you Live and the Decisions you Make Each day?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Daily Live in Readiness and Make Better Choices	(14) 32%	(32) 86%
Greatly Impacts	(9) 20%	(1) 3%
Closer Relationship with God	(7) 16%	
Gives me Hope	(4) 9%	
Confess my Sins	(2) 5%	
Prayerful and Study	(2) 5%	
Share Your Faith	(1) 2%	(2) 5%
No Impact	(2) 5%	
Don't Know / No Response	(3) 7%	(2) 5%

Table 30

Responses to Question 17a: Does the View of a Literal, Personal, Visible, and Universal Second Coming of Jesus Impact Your day-to-day Choices of Entertainment, Career, etc.?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Yes	(36) 82%	(33) 89%
Somewhat	(2) 5%	
No	(4) 9%	(2) 5%
Don't Know / No Response	(2) 5%	(2) 5%

Table 31

Responses to Question 17b: If so, how?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Lifestyle Choices (Places I go, Things I do, Career)	(17) 39%	(22) 59%
Pleasing Jesus	(12) 27%	(6) 16%
Daily Preparation	(6) 14%	(1) 3%
Motivates me to do Ministry	(2) 5%	(3) 8%
Everything I do is Recorded in Heaven	(1) 2%	
We Shall all see Him		(2) 5%
I Want to be Saved		(1) 3%
Don't Know / No Response	(6) 14%	(2) 5%

Questions on Stewardship

This section deals with questions relating to the Fundamental Belief of Stewardship addressed in the sermon on Systematic Benevolence (questions 18–19).

18. In what ways has your belief in faithful stewardship impacted your day-to-day choices, e.g., career, finances, use of skills, health choices, etc.? See Table 31. In the post-survey more participants recorded a positive impact, and there was a significant switch between the first two responses: “Better Management in Lifestyle Choices” was first in the pre-survey with 41% and second in the post-survey 32% while “God First: Being Faithful/Trustful” was second in the pre-survey, 11%, and first in the post-survey, 46%. Thus, there was a shift from having made better day-to-day lifestyle choices (personal benefit) to our need to trust in God (benefiting our relationship with God).

19. Do you believe that faithful stewardship is crucial for Salvation? If so, why? If not, why not? See Tables 32–34. There was an increase in “Yes” answers. Significantly, as question 18 displayed a move towards trust in God, so did question 19. If so, why? answers with a decrease in the replies “Obedience to God” and “God Said to do it.”

The effectiveness of the sermon on Systematic Benevolence can be seen in the shift in both question 18 and 19 towards having more faith and trust in God, connecting the Belief of Stewardship to our relationship with God and reliance on Him.

Table 32

Responses to Question 18: In What Ways has Your Belief in Faithful Stewardship Impacted Your day-to-day Choices, e.g., Career, Finances, use of Skills, Health Choices, etc.?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Better Management in Lifestyle Choices (Finances, Time, Talents, Diet)	(18) 41%	(12) 32%
God First: Being Faithful/Trustful / Trust God with all my Needs	(11) 25%	(17) 46%
Ministry / Gives Back to Others	(4) 9%	(4) 11%
Worship / Sabbath	(1) 2%	
Still Learning in This Area	(1) 2%	
Not Much		(1) 3%
No Impact	(6) 14%	(3) 8%
Don't Know / No Response	(3) 7%	

Table 33

Responses to Question 19a: Do you Believe That Faithful Stewardship is Crucial for Salvation?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Yes	(39) 89%	(35) 95%
No	(3) 7%	(2) 5%
Don't Know / No Response	(2) 5%	

Table 34

Responses to Question 19b: If so, why?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Trust in God / Faithfulness to God	(14) 32%	(20) 54%
Obedience to God	(9) 20%	(7) 19%
God Said to do it	(6) 14%	
It is a Salvation Issue	(4) 9%	(3) 8%
A Guide for Living/Making Choices	(2) 5%	(3) 8%
Show Love to God		(1) 3%

Table 35

Responses to Question 19c: If not, why not?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Everything Belongs to God	(1) 2%	

Questions on the State of the Dead

This section deals with questions relating to the Fundamental Belief of the State of the Dead (questions 20–21).

20. Do you believe that when a person dies all his/her thoughts perish and he/she knows nothing? See Table 35. There was no significant change between the surveys since all but one answered “Yes” on both surveys. This is likely due to the popularity in Adventism of Ecclesiastes 9:5: “For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten” (KJV).

21. How does the belief that death is an unconscious sleep affect how you live in relationship with Jesus each day? See Table 36. There is a significant increase, over double, for the impact to “Live Every Day in Readiness/to the Fullest.” There is also an increased focus on death being a temporary sleep. While seven participants in the pre-survey declared “No Affect,” only one participant stated this on the post-survey. It was not too surprising that in the pre-survey some of the impacts listed could be considered negative: “Scared,” “Once Dead Fate is Sealed,” “Knowing you Will be Judged,” and “Time is Short.” These four types of responses were absent on the post-survey, except for “Once Dead Fate is Sealed” which went from four to one. Of significance, however, is the fact that some of the answers do not directly answer the question but rather deal with

the judgment or fear of the judgment. This reveals weakness in the presentation of the message or the wording of the question.

The survey revealed that most participants had some understanding of the State of the Dead. All but one showed awareness of Ecclesiastes 9:5 in the pre-survey. The positive effect of the presentations can be best seen in the increase in those who want to live every day in readiness with Jesus (pre-survey 22%, post-survey 65%) and the decrease of answers related to fear and being judged. Although judgment should not be viewed in a negative light, many Adventists do. A similar pattern was seen regarding question 14–15 (Tables 25–27) on Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary (the Investigatory Judgment): a decrease in “Living in Fear” and “No Affect.” While two participants mentioned fear regarding both Beliefs on the pre-survey, no one recorded fear on the post-surveys.

Questions on the Church and Remnant and its Mission

This section deals with questions relating to the Fundamental Beliefs of the Church and Remnant and Its Mission (questions 22–23). Regarding these two Fundamental Beliefs, there were no in-depth presentations or specific sermons on these doctrines. However, mention was made during the series to Matthew 28:19–20 (the Great Commission) and Revelation 14 (the Three Angels’ Message and the Second Coming of Christ) and they were covered in the Fundamental Beliefs Bible Classes.

22. What is the Reason for the Church’s Existence? See Table 37. Significant increase: The purpose of the church is “To Preach the Gospel / Make Disciples” increased from 55% to 73%. Displaying awareness of the Great Commission which is well-known in Christianity:

Table 36

Responses to Question 20: Do You Believe That When a Person Dies all his/her Thoughts Perish and he/she Knows Nothing?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Yes	(43) 98%	(37) 100%
No		
Don't Know / No Response	(1) 2%	

Table 37

Responses to Question 21: How Does the Belief That Death is an Unconscious Sleep Affect how you Live in Relationship With Jesus Each day?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Live Every day in Readiness/to the Fullest	(10) 22%	(24) 65%
Not Afraid of Death, Christ is Coming Back	(5) 11%	(1) 3%
Once Dead Fate is Sealed	(4) 9%	(1) 3%
Brings Joy / Give Peace	(3) 7%	(1) 3%
Dead are Asleep / Know Nothing / Resting	(2) 5%	(5) 14%
Can and Should do Better	(2) 5%	
Scared	(2) 5%	
Trust God	(2) 5%	
Knowing you Will be Judged	(1) 2%	
Time is Short	(1) 2%	
No Affect	(7) 16%	(1) 3%
Don't Know /No Response	(5) 11%	(4) 11%

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matt 28:19–20 KJV)

Also related to evangelism, “To Show God’s Love and Guide Lost to Christ” slightly increased (pre-survey 5%, post-survey 8%). Thus, responses related to evangelism increased from 60% to 81%. There was a notable decrease in the number 2 response, “To Praise / Worship / Fellowship,” which dealt with activities with other Christians (pre-survey 27 %, post-survey 14%). Those giving this response many have interpreted *church* as a building or based their answer of the second angel’s message of Revelation 14:6–7

(see discussion on question 22). It is significant to note, two people that gave answers in the pre-survey did not respond or put didn't know on the post-survey.

23. *What is the Special Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?* See Table 38. Historically and today, the Three Angels' Message and the Second Coming of Christ (both highlighted in Rev 14) have been foundational to Adventist identity, preaching, and the Fundamental Beliefs of Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary (sermon 7), the Second Coming of Christ (sermon 8), and the Remnant and its Mission. Thus, it was of no surprise that responses connected with Revelation 14 were number 1 on both surveys. Three responses on the pre-survey were connected with Revelation 14: "Three Angels' Message / Second Coming of Jesus," "To Warn the World," and "To Worship God," accounting for 73%. After the series and during the Bible Classes, Revelation 14 responses increased and became more focused with only the number 1 response, "To Preach the Three Angels' Message / Second Coming of Jesus" appearing in the post-survey with 95%.

Before the sermon series over half of the participants were aware of the connection between the Great Commission (Matt 28:19–20) and the church's mission (pre-survey 55%) and that the preaching of the Three Angels' Message and Second Coming of Jesus (Rev 14) is the special mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (73%). The sermon series along with the Bible Classes did increase awareness to 73% and 95% respectively.

Table 38

Responses to Question 22: What is the Reason for the Church's Existence?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
To Preach the Gospel / Make Disciples	(24) 55%	(27) 73%
To Praise / Worship / Fellowship	(12) 27%	(5) 14%
To Strengthen and Prepare Each Other for Christ Return	(3) 7%	
To Show God's Love / Refuge for Sinners	(2) 5%	(3) 8%
To Offer Instruction, Reproof, and Correction	(2) 5%	
Restore Eden	(1) 2%	
Don't Know / No Response		(2) 5%

Table 39

Responses to Question 23: What is the Special Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Answer	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
To Preach the Three Angels' Message / Second Coming of Jesus	(30) 68%	(35) 95%
To Share God's Love With Sinners	(4) 9%	
To Lead Others to Christ	(3) 7%	
To Be a House of Praise that Encourages Spiritual Growth	(3) 7%	(1) 3%
To Go to Heaven	(1) 2%	
To Warn the World	(1) 2%	
To Worship God	(1) 2%	
Don't Know / No Response	(1) 2%	(1) 3%

Conclusion

The findings revealed that the sermon series (with the aid of the Bible Classes, participating in Sabbath School classes, bulletin inserts on the Beliefs, and the "Discover My Foundation" segments) was effective in reaching the following goals.

1. *Participants would understand that the doctrines are biblical teachings.*

Question 1 revealed an increased percentage in the post-survey of participants who

identified doctrine as biblical teaching(s). Also responses to questions 5, 8, and 11 reveal the participants' increased awareness of the necessity of biblically founded doctrines.

2. Participants would perceive that all the doctrines are centered in Christ. In many ways this was accomplished as question 5 on the post-survey shows that all of the participants believe that the doctrines are biblically based with Christ at the center. Regarding why they believe so, the majority felt the doctrines are both scripturally based and proclaim Christ.

3. Participants would have a deeper knowledge of Adventist Fundamental Beliefs. In question 2 all the participants knew the correct number of Fundamental Beliefs in the post-survey. The post-survey as a whole revealed that after the sermon series in general people had a better understanding of the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and their relevance for faith and practice.

4. Participants would see the relevancy of the Fundamental Beliefs and want them to have an impact on their daily lifestyle choices. Questions 3, 4, 9, 13–19 reflect that the sermons impacted the participants' knowledge and understanding of the doctrinal beliefs and their relevancy to their daily faith, practice, and lifestyle choices. For example questions 16 and 17 shows the participants saw an increase in the doctrines influencing their daily lifestyle choices. The number 1 reasons stated for how their view of the Second Coming influenced their relationship with Christ were “Lifestyle Choices” and “Daily Live in Readiness and Make Better Choices.” Since this church struggled with Christian lifestyle choices, the doctrinal sermon presentations emphasized this area and was so dominantly presented that sermons on Sanctuary and Second Coming left participants focusing more on making better day-to-day lifestyle choices rather than

having a better relationship with Christ. However, the sermon on Systematic Benevolence highlighted our relationship with God (trust and faith) compared to blind obedience, echoed in the post-survey responses.

5. Participants would be aware of the Adventist message and mission, inspiring them to engage in evangelism. Participants became more deeply knowledgeable of the mission the Christianity and of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Questions 22 and 23 reveal that, after the sermon series and other presentations, there was a greater awareness among the group of the Great Commission (Matt 28:19–20), the Three Angels’ Message (Rev 14) and Second Coming of Jesus, which emphasis our need to evangelize preparing the world to meet their returning Savior.

The findings of the pre- and post-survey reveal the positive impact of the sermon series on members—becoming more knowledgeable of the Fundamental Beliefs, their biblical and Christocentric nature, relevance, etc. Also positive feedback (though there was some negative) and a visible change in lifestyle of some members suggest the success of the series and other ministries. The following chapter discusses further conclusions of the project as a whole, room for improvement, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The research in this project demonstrates that doctrines are not only relevant to the life of the church but are also Christocentric in nature. It further describes a new way of preparing and presenting doctrinal messages that connect daily Christian living with Adventist doctrines through Christocentric preaching. The approach presented here shows encouraging results regarding the impact of Christocentric doctrinal preaching on church members' doctrinal knowledge, daily lifestyle choices, and awareness of the church's mission and purpose—personal evangelism.

Chapter 2 provided the biblical support that doctrines are biblical teachings and were very much part of the daily experiences of God's people both in Old and New Testament times. In the English Old Testament, Hebrew words *leqakh*, meaning “what is received,” and *torah* meaning “direction or instruction” are translated as “doctrine.” *Torah* translated in the Septuagint (LXX) as *nomos* (law) is also used in connection with several other Hebrew terms that are translated as “commandment,” “judgment,” “observance,” “righteousness,” “rule,” “statute,” and “teaching.” In the New Testament the word “doctrine” stems from the Greek word, *didaskalia*, meaning “the content and the act of what is taught.” Jesus in His ministry taught doctrines (Matt 7:28; 22:33; Mark 1:21–22; 4:2; 7:7 John 7:16), the disciples taught doctrines, the early church followed

doctrines (Acts 2:42; 5:28; 17:19), and Paul encouraged to church to take heed of, and continue in, the doctrines (1 Tim 4:6, 13, 16; Tit 2:1, 7). Ellen White also believed that doctrines were “the very pillars of the Christian faith” (1888, p. 582).

Both Old Testament and New Testament speak of Christ as the indispensable center of biblical doctrines. All of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, points to and finds fulfillment in Him (Luke 24:25–27; John 5:39). Doctrines therefore, play a crucial role in the life of the believer. God gave His people doctrines by which to live (Exod 20), and, if they listen, give diligence to, obey, and be careful about these teachings, they would be blessed, prosperous and successful (Deut 28; Josh 1:7–8).

Chapter 3 presented a literature review on the relevancy and role of Christocentric doctrines to the church and Adventism today and principles and strategies for preaching. The *Church* is a community of believers whose faith is centered in Christ and His saving act of salvation. Based on the biblical evidence, scholars presented Christ as the center of both the church and doctrines, which are defined as biblical teachings. There is great concern that the Church is moving away from its doctrinal roots towards a social gospel. Doctrinal debate among church leaders and the fact that many Christians live by beliefs gathered from different faith perspectives that conflict with biblical doctrines are among the reasons why doctrines are viewed as irrelevant. To view doctrines as irrelevant is to view Christ, the center of doctrine, as irrelevant and thus the church is irrelevant. Christocentric doctrines are necessary for the church because they instruct believers in the truth, lead to repentance and salvation, encourage believers to contend for the faith which is in Christ Jesus and prepares the church for the glorious blessings of eternal life. The following principles of effective preaching were suggested: preaching should be

biblically based, Christocentric, geared to the audience, offer spiritual food, and challenge the audience. Also, to successfully preach doctrines, sermons must be well planned, written, and delivered.

Chapter 4 gave an overview of Kingsboro Temple Church and the planning, preparation, and delivery of a doctrinal sermon series (outlined in Chapter 1). As I prepared the biblical study for the doctrines to be presented, I noticed that they are not only centered in Christ but in the first chapters of Genesis (chpts. 1-3). I also discovered that engaging the church in doctrinal dialogue through the series and multiple venues aided the learning and incorporation process. Other discoveries, observations, and conclusion regarding the preparation and presentation of the series are discussed in the next two sections below.

Chapter 5 discussed the research, design, administration, participation, findings and analysis of the survey. The findings of the subjective short-answer type questionnaire revealed that there was an increase among the participants who (a) understood that the doctrines are biblical teachings, (b) the doctrines are centered in Christ, (c) the doctrines are relevant and should impact their daily lifestyle choices, and (d) have a greater awareness of the Adventist message and mission of the church. Many among the body of believers expressed great appreciation for the series and requested additional series.

While the feedback overall was positive there was a small percentage of negative findings and feedback. The findings show that some responses did not directly answer some of the questions but shifted focus, some questions had no response and some still remained unsure or don't know. This reveals weakness in the presentation of the message or the wording of some questions. Some of the members expressed that doctrines are

legalistic and tend to discourage church growth; therefore, love should be preached rather than doctrines.

Observations and Recommendations

Observations

Through this project I have gained a deeper appreciation for the church and its doctrines. I discovered that many of the members have a great desire to learn and grow and is very open to Christocentric doctrinal preaching. The “Discover My Foundation” segment (an informal question and answer time with the speaker) was a great way of engaging the membership in short dialogue regarding the doctrines. This was one of the most effective aspects of the processes because it gave the participants the freedom to express themselves, ask questions, and explore their knowledge of the doctrines. If this segment was consistently done on a weekly basis during the sermon presentations, a greater impact would have been made on the membership.

I believe the church can grow both numerically and spiritually from Christocentric doctrinal preaching when rightly done. I gained insights on how to better research, prepare, and present doctrinal sermons in a Christocentric manner. I also became more aware of some of my own shortcomings regarding the church and its doctrines. The project made me realize that, while there are many written materials on doctrines in general, there is limited material on the Christocentric nature of each of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. There is also need for more materials on the principles and the strategies for preparing and presenting Christocentric doctrinal sermons. There is need for the church to become more educated regarding the role of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs in both the life of the church and the individual member.

In hindsight there are some things that could have been done differently that would have made the project more effective, such as, all the sermons and inserts should have been developed before the first sermon was preached. This would have allowed for better alignment and cohesion of the sermon materials and a smoother presentation. Developing the sermons over a longer period of time would have helped the sermons be more in-depth and provide a border area of study on each doctrine. More attention should have been given to the Christocentric nature of the doctrines thereby allowing all the presentations to be more Christocentric. The timing of a series needs to be well coordinated with the members' schedules. A series should be scheduled in a way that will allow the largest participation. Consideration must be made for young churches, like, Kingsboro Temple, that have students and other members traveling during holidays and summer months.

Regarding the survey: the formatting should have been change. The questions were not evenly distributed among the seven doctrines presented and many of the questions needed to be worded differently and more specific, allowing for less interpretation. Also more theologians should have been consulted to give suggestions and feedback on the instrument before it was administered. The size of the group was a small representative of the entire spectrum of doctrinal knowledge of the members of this church and one can only speculate as to the level of doctrinal knowledge of those who chose not to participate. If the size of the group did not decrease by seven for the post-survey, the final outcome of the survey findings may have been different.

The project was effective in heightening the awareness of the members of Kingsboro Temple regarding the Christocentric nature and relevancy of doctrines.

Members gained a deeper understanding of and a greater appreciation for the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Fundamental Beliefs.

While most of the expectations of the project were met, for the doctrines to have a lasting impact on the lives of the members and to empower the church to advance their mission in the surrounding community, Christocentric doctrinal preaching must be intentionally scheduled and carried out as part of the church's yearly preaching calendar. This will ensure continued growth in knowledge and understanding of the importance and relevancy of the distinctive doctrines of Adventism and their impact on daily Christian living.

Future Recommendations

Some recommendations for presenting doctrines to the church and having the church become more acquainted with the 28 Fundamental Beliefs are as follows: (a) Consistently preach Christocentric doctrinal sermons that will inspire and challenge the hearers to spiritual maturity. (b) On a weekly basis insert a summary of one of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs in the bulletin. (c) Implement Discover My Foundation segments engaging doctrinal dialogue with members on a regular bases. (d) Introduce and teach the 28 Fundamental Beliefs during a weekly Bible class. (e) Great emphasis should be placed on the biblical, Christocentric nature and relevancy of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs.

This project provides biblical and scholarly arguments, along with comments from the writings of Ellen White, for the Christocentric nature of doctrines and their relevancy to Christian life that can be used as a resource by other pastors. The project further provides principles and strategies for preparing and presenting Christocentric doctrinal messages. Through this project, I have not only acquired new and effective

means of preaching Adventist doctrines in a Christ-centered manner to positively impact the daily lifestyle choices of believers, but my abilities have been enhanced regarding preaching on challenging subject matter in general.

There needs to be more research on the Christocentric nature of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs and what specific impact these doctrines have on the life of the believer and the mission of the church.

More Adventist studies should be done on the meaning of *church* in both the Old Testament and New Testament from a theological and exegetical view that is readily accessible to both clergy and laity, and especially on the current debate within the church, women's ordination. In general there is need for further research in the Adventist Church regarding the factors related to the apathy many members have towards doctrines. There is also a need for further research to be done on the strategies of planning, preparing, and preaching doctrinal Christocentric sermons.

Conclusions

While there were many positive reactions to the series, there was some negative feedback. Some felt there needed to be more preaching on "love" rather than "doctrines" for doctrines are "too legalistic" and "turn people away from the church." The literature review shows that this problem is not unique to Kingsboro Temple it affects all Christianity: Many are questioning the relevancy of Christian doctrines. Within Christianity there are those who believe and even argue that doctrinal preaching is irrelevant in this postmodern society. Over three decades ago Conner (1980) observed that churches were turning away from doctrinal matters to social gospel with doctrine becoming obsolete. While there are debates regarding the relevancy of doctrine, the

Scripture is clear that doctrines are simply biblical teachings. Both the Old Testament and New Testament unapologetically affirm the relevancy of doctrines. God's people were given doctrines as guidance for daily living. Joshua 1:8 states that prosperity and success were linked to careful observation and obedience of all the teachings given by God to His people. It is clearly stated in 2 Timothy 3:16 (KJV): "All scripture is inspired of God and profitable for doctrine." Jesus Himself was a teacher of doctrines, and people were even amazed by His doctrines (e.g., Mark 1:21–22 KJV). The apostles and the early church's fellowship and spiritual union were based upon doctrine (Acts 2:42 KJV). Not only did the apostle Paul taught that true doctrine is essential for Christian growth but also that false doctrine is destructive to church growth (Eph 4:11–16; 1 Tim 4:6; 6:3; 2 Tim 4:3).

Ellen White also affirmed the relevancy of doctrines. She stated that the enemy, in a desire to cast contempt upon the doctrines, has perverted biblical doctrines, leading many believers of Scripture to have their faith mixed with error (1888, p. 582). She further observed that doctrines are "the very pillars of the Christian faith" (p. 583). These pillars were "the truths that have made us as a people what we are, leading us on step by step" (1946, p. 29) and within these truths are "many doctrines" (1964, p. 208).

Packer is cited in Morgan (2000) as saying "There can be no spiritual health without doctrinal knowledge" (p. 239). Doctrines are not a set of abstract facts birthed in the minds on humans, but rather biblical teachings inspired by God and centered in Christ. The doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are biblically based, and according to 2 Timothy 3:16a, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine" (KJV). If doctrines are viewed as irrelevant, then Christ is irrelevant, and if Christ is irrelevant, the church is irrelevant, for the church is the body of

Christ. Christ is always relevant; therefore, the church is relevant and, to continue to be relevant, the church must preach and teach Christocentric doctrines.

The methods of teaching doctrine utilized in this project (such as, the sermon series, Bible class, bulletin inserts, the “Discover My Foundation” segments) created a deeper appreciation for Adventist doctrines within the Kingsboro Temple congregation. The survey findings revealed that Kingsboro Temple became more knowledgeable of the biblical and Christocentric nature of the Fundamental Beliefs and also of their relevance. The doctrinal sermons, especially those on the Sanctuary and Stewardship, positively influenced the membership lifestyle choices. Many of the members expressed appreciation for the information shared during the sermons, stated that their knowledge and understanding of the doctrines were significantly impacted, and requested more presentations on the doctrines that were not preached. There were notable changes that were visible after the project presentation, such as, increased financial giving.

This study shows there is a challenge for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the future if we do not take seriously the need to educate the church regarding the Christocentric nature and relevancy of the church’s doctrinal beliefs. If the church is to effectively accomplish its mission of the preaching of the Three Angel’s Message and lead this dying world to the Living Christ, then there is need for more Christocentric doctrinal preaching connecting to daily living.

APPENDIX A

SERMON OUTLINES

Sermon 1

Title: “*God: The Biggest Loser*”

Doctrine: *The Plan of Salvation*

Main Idea: God has been the biggest loser in the Fall of Humanity. He lost His perfect Creation and His face-to-face relationship with His beloved children, for whom He grieves. However, through the life, ministry, and death of Jesus Christ, the plan of salvation is the way by which God, the Creator, reconciles His lost Creation and children back to Himself.

Introduction

- A.** Reflections on the TV show, “The Biggest Loser”
- B.** Theories of Salvation
- C.** The Gift of Salvation that God offers us in Jesus Christ

Body

- A. Creation’s Crown, Paradise Lost**
 - a. The meaning and significance of creation (Gen 1; 2)
 - b. The Fall and its far-reaching implications (Gen 3:1-10; Ezek 18:20a; Rom 6:23a)

- i. Transgenerational retribution (Deut 24:16; 2 Kgs 14:6; 2 Chr 25:4)
- ii. Sin and desire (Jam 1:14-15)
- iii. The necessity of God's gift through Jesus Christ (Rom 5:15)

B. The Exquisite, Fragrant, Fadeless Blessing in the Midst of the Curse

- a. The implications of the *proto-euangelion* in the context of the curse (Gen 3:14-19)
- b. Jesus Christ is the Gospel (Gal 3:13-14; 4:4-5; Col 1:13-14; Phil 2:7-8)
 - i. Christ our High Priest and Mediator (Heb 8)
 - ii. Reconciliation through Christ (Col 1:16–20)
 - iii. Christ our Substitute and Savior (Rev 13:8; Isa 53)

C. Creation Recreated! Paradise Restored!

- a. The implications of being in Christ (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 2:20)
- b. Salvation by grace through faith (Heb 11:6; Eph 2:8-9)
- c. The extent of God's love (Rom 5:7-11; John 3:16)
- d. Receiving God's offer of grace (1 John 1:9)

Conclusion

A. Summary of the plan of salvation

B. Steps to experiencing salvation

Appeal

A. Call to surrender all to Jesus Christ, God's gift for our salvation

B. Call to embrace the fullness of the gospel

Sermon 2

Title: “*What’s So Sacred about the Sabbath?*”

Doctrine: *The Sabbath*

Main Idea: The Sabbath is about a holy God in a holy time making a holy people through the blood of Christ Jesus.

Introduction

- A. Story entitled “The proof is in the \$10, 000 check”
- B. What is the Sabbath?

Body

A. Memorial of a Completed Creation: Which day is it?

- a. Institution of the Sabbath (Gen 1:26–31; 2:1–3)
- b. The seventh-day is the Sabbath (Matt 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 23:53-56; 24:1)
 - i. God’s immutability (Mal 3:6)

B. To Work or Not to Work: Keeping the Sabbath Holy

- a. Does God need to rest? (Pss 121:4; Isa 40:28)
- b. What does it mean to keep the Sabbath holy? (Exod 20:8–11; 16:23–26; 31:15; Lev 23:3; Deut 5:12–15)
- c. Is God’s Law immutable? (Matt 5:17-19)
- d. Is the Ten Commandments still relevant? (Jam 2:10)

C. A Holy God in a Holy Time, Recreating a Holy People Through the Blood of Christ Jesus

- a. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-28)
- b. The Sabbath and the Book of Life (Rev 13:8)
- c. The Sabbath as a sign of covenant and sanctification (Exod 19:6; 31:12–17; Ezek. 20:12)
- d. The Sabbath as rest in Christ’s finished work (Heb 4:1-11)
- e. The Sabbath as an expression of Love for Jesus Christ (John 14:15)
- f. The perpetuity of the Sabbath (Isa 66:23)

Conclusion

- A.** The Sabbath as a memorial of creation and redemption
- B.** The Sabbath in the shadow of the Cross
- C.** Christ as Lord of the Sabbath
- D.** Story about the blessings of true Sabbath Keeping

Appeal

- A.** Call to surrender to the Lord of the Sabbath
- B.** Call to keep the Sabbath holy in the light of Calvary

Sermon 3

Title: *“The Message, The Method, and The Messenger”*

Doctrine: *The Spirit of Prophecy*

Main Idea: While God’s redemptive plan through Christ, the Seed, will ultimately restore face-to-face communion between God and His children, since the Fall of humanity, God has spoken to his children through prophets and Jesus Christ. Prophets are God’s messengers and method of communicating the message of redemption with fallen humanity.

Introduction

- A. Sin affected, interrupted, and broke communion between God and His children
(Gen 1; 2; 3:8; Isa 59:2)
- B. God still desires to communicate with His people

Body

- A. **The Method: A New Way of Communicating with a Lost World**
 - a. The initiation of the Spirit of Prophecy (Gen 20:7; Jude 14; Heb 1:1-4)
 - b. Prophets Divinely inspired (2 Pet 1:21; Num 12:6)
- B. **The Messenger: Organs of God and Channels of Communication for the Redemption of a Lost World**
 - a. Divine revelation through prophets (Amos 3:7, 8)
 - b. Prophets are intermediaries between God and His people (Deut 18:15-18; Acts 7:37-38)

- c. God guides His people through His true prophets (Hos 12:13)
 - i. Dangers of false prophets (Num 22:6-24:24; 2 Pet 2:15-16; Rev. 2:14)
 - ii. The purpose of the Spirit of Prophecy (2 Pet 1:21; Eph 2:20; 4:12-13: 1 Cor 12:4-11)

C. The Message: Communion Restored, Redemption Established

- a. Christ as the ultimate expression and manifestation of the Spirit of Prophecy (Gen 3:15; Heb 1:1–4; Col 1:19–20)
- b. Christ: the ultimate message of the Spirit of Prophecy (1 Pet 1:10–11; John 3:16)
- c. The Spirit of Prophecy and God’s Last-day people (Rev 13; 12:17; 19:10, 19)
- d. The blessings of heeding the instructions of God’s messengers (2 Chr 20:20)
- e. Restoration of communion with Christ (Rev 21; 22)

Conclusion

- A.** The Fall of humanity ruptured communion and communication between God and his people
- B.** Through Jesus Christ, God restores communion with His people
- C.** Until ultimate restoration of communion, God used human messengers (prophets) to reveal Himself, communicate his will, and give guidance to His people
- D.** The Spirit of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of God’s Last-day people

Appeal

- A.** Call to embrace the Spirit of Prophecy in all of its facets

Sermon 4

Title: “*Paycheck*”

Doctrine: *Stewardship*

Main Idea/Thesis: Stewardship is not so much about time, talent, treasure, and temple, stewardship is about redemption through Christ Jesus.

Introduction

- A. Popular views about stewardship
- B. Work hard and be damned; accept a gift and be delivered

Body

A. Created by Love in Love for Love with Freedom to Trust or Distrust

- a. Created in the image of a loving Creator (Gen 1:26-28; 2:15)
 - i. Dominion
 - ii. Stewards of creation
- b. Violation of the covenant and its implications (Gen 3:1-13; Matt 5:24-34)

B. Time, Talent, Treasure, and Temple: It's all about Redemption Through Christ

- a. Christ owns it all (Ps 24:1; Ps 50:12)
- b. True treasures in Heaven (Matt 6:19-21)
- c. The dangers of Me and I (Isa 44:13-14)
- d. Christ restores and redeems (Gen 3:15; Gal 4:4-6)

- e. Stewardship equals total surrender to Jesus Christ (1 Cor 6:15-20)

C. Paycheck! Gift of a lifetime

- a. God's rewards for faithfulness (Isa 62:11; Matt 5:10; 6:1-6; John 14:1-3; Rev 22:1-2, 12)

Conclusion

- A. The connections of stewardship to the plan of salvation
- B. Stewardship in the shadow of the Cross
- C. Christ's gift and rewards

Appeal

- A. Call to accept God's gift of grace through Christ
- B. Call to faithfulness in stewardship in all of its facets

Sermon 5

Title: *“Dead or Alive”*

Doctrine: *The State of the Dead*

Main Idea: The Bible portrays death as an unconscious sleep—even for the righteous—from which we rise only through the power of Christ.

Introduction

- A. Story of the frightened ghost
- B. That ugly confusing event
- C. Popular views of death

Body

A. Christ: The Bridge Between a Dead Lump of Clay and a Living Soul

- a. Living souls (Gen 2:7; 2:16-17)
- b. The impact of sin and the reality of death (Gen 3:1-5, 15, 19)
- c. Death and the soul (Pss 146:4; Eccl 12:7; Rev 13:8)

B. The End of Existence or Transition to Another Dimension?

- a. What happens at death? (Eccl 3:19; 9:5-6, 10; Pss 6:5; 30:9; 104:29–30; 146:4)
- b. Immortality of the soul and Spiritism (1 Sam 28; Lev 19:31; Duet 18:10-12)
- c. Sin and death (Gen 3:4; Ezek 18:20; Rom 6:23; 1Tim 6:16)

C. Celebration Time: Death is Conquered

- a. Christ's power over death (Matt 9:18-26; John 11)
- b. Christ is the resurrection and the life (Pss 30:4; John 6:39-40; 11:23-26)
- c. Christ's victory over death and its implications (Rom 5:10-21; 1 Cor 15:54-56; John 5:28-29; Dan 12:2; Rev 1:18; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Rev 20:14; 22:1-2)

Conclusion

- A.** Sin and death
- B.** The state of the dead
- C.** Death in the shadow of the Cross
- D.** The resurrection of the dead

Appeal

- A.** Call to surrender to Jesus Christ, the life giver
- B.** Call to live for Jesus Christ

Sermon 6

Title: “*God’s Laundry Room*”

Doctrine: *The Sanctuary*

Main Idea: Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary was typified in ancient Israel’s yearly Day of Atonement. To use a metaphor, the sanctuary is God’s laundry room where Christ washes the sins of mankind with the detergent of His blood.

Introduction

- A. Laundry room and laundry detergents
- B. Cleansing power of forgiveness (Ps 51:2)

Body

A. Leaves Just Won’t Make you Clean

- a. The Fall of humanity and its implications (Gen 2:16-17; 3; Ezek 18:20; Rom 3:23; Rev 3:18)

B. Symbols and Cymbals, Goats and Go-betweens

- a. Earth sanctuary as pattern of the Heavenly (Exod 25:8-9, 40; 1 Kgs 8:27; Heb 8:5; 9)
- b. The Earthly sanctuary and its services (Exod 35-40; Lev 1-6)
- c. The Day of Atonement (Lev 16)

C. Heaven’s Laundry Room

- a. The antitypical Day of Atonement: Cleansing the Sanctuary (Rev 11:19; Lev 16; 23:27; Heb 4:14-16; 8:1-6; 9:22-24; Dan 7:10; 8:14; Rev 20; 22:11; 14:6-7)
- b. The cleansing power of Christ's blood (1 John 1:7; Isa 1:18)

Conclusion

- A. The impact and implications of sin
- B. The earthly sanctuary and its services as shadows of the Heavenly sanctuary and its services
- C. God's response to the problem of sin: Cleansing of the Sanctuary

Appeal

- A. Call to accept God's plan cleansing from sin
- B. Call to surrender to Jesus Christ our Mediator
- C. Call to accept forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ

Sermon 7

Title: *“Hold That Fast”*

Doctrine: *The Second Coming of Christ*

Main Idea: While we are faced with many troubles and trials at this time, God, through Christ is restoring His lost Creation. At Christ’s Second Coming God will restore His creation and His image in us as in Eden unmarred by sin.

Introduction

- A. The midnight thief

Body

A. Where is the Promise of His Coming? Morning Will Come but Midnight Comes First

- a. The necessity and promise of Christ’s Second Coming (Rev 6-19; Heb 9:26-28; Joel 2:1-3)
- b. The purpose of Christ’s Second Coming (Pss 50:3-5; Matt 24; Rev 14)

B. Caught off Guard or Caught Guarding?

- a. Readiness for Christ’s return (Luke 12:40; Rev 3:11)
- b. The certainty of Christ’s return (2 Pet 3:4, 9; John 14:1-3; 17:24; 2 Pet 1:16-19)

C. Hold that (Promise) Fast! For the Promise is Sure

- a. God's faithfulness through the ages (Gen 3:15; Isa 11:1; 7:14; Mic 5:2; Isa 9:1-2; 53:9; Zech 9:9; 11:12-13; 13:7; John 19:30)
- b. The surety of God's promises (1 Cor 15; 1 John 3:2; Rev 3:11; 16:17; 21; 22)

Conclusion

- A.** The promise of Christ's soon return
- B.** The certainty of Christ's soon return
- C.** Readiness for Christ's soon return

Appeal

- A.** Call to be ready for Christ's soon coming
- B.** Call to hold fast to God's promises relating to Christ's return

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