

Koester correctly points out that everyone sees the miraculous “signs” in the Gospel from a different point of view. Characters in the Gospel respond positively to Jesus’ signs if they have already been brought to faith through the words from or about Jesus. It is the words that bring faith, not the “signs.” The signs can only confirm faith. Readers who live after the resurrection of Jesus cannot see the actions of the earthly Jesus. Yet they have what is essential. They have received the words from and about Jesus through the Gospel. They need not look elsewhere for wonders to believe in. John’s text has all the works and words that they need to come to faith.

For John, then, faith is the context in which genuine understanding develops. Those who show an initial trust in Jesus do not have all their questions answered at the outset. They come to understand Jesus as they follow him. So if faith is the context in which understanding develops, relationship with a Jesus we cannot see can begin in the absence of understanding. It is triggered by the words and works of Jesus and acted upon by his surrogate, the Holy Spirit. To those of a modernistic worldview, Koester’s outline of faith in John’s Gospel may seem naive in a scientific world. But a younger, postmodern generation will find the stories of the Gospel fertile ground for faith.

As one who has written a couple of books on the Gospel of John, I find Koester’s scholarship impeccable. As one who loves to blur the line between scholarship and popular devotional writing, I was deeply nourished by this book. For those who appreciate the combination of great scholarship and great writing, this book will be a challenging read but an extremely rewarding one.

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London, Samuel G., Jr. *Seventh-day Adventists and the Civil Rights Movement*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009. 192 pp. Hardcover, \$50.00.

*Seventh-day Adventists and the Civil Rights Movement* by Samuel London is a pioneering work in Adventist scholarship. It is the first study, that I am aware of, that provides an in-depth analysis of Seventh-day Adventist participation in the Civil Rights Movement. The writer explores how Adventist theology, especially its eschatological vision and ecclesiology, influenced the way its members responded to sociopolitical activism. He explains why the church leadership advocated nonparticipation, but why some members became involved anyway.

London points out that there is a dearth of literature that deals with Adventist political involvement; however, three works are worth mentioning that could be considered part of this dialogue: Holly Fishers, “Oakwood’s College Student Quest for Social Justice Before and During the Civil Rights Era” (*Journal of African History* 2003, 88); James Kyle Jr., “SDAs and the Civil Rights Movement: The First Decade” (unpublished, 1977); and Roger Dudley and Edwin Hernandez, “Citizens of Two Worlds: Religion and Politics among American Seventh-day Adventists” (Andrews University Press, 1992).

In chapter 1, London explores the roots of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and recounts the efforts of Ellen G. White (one of the cofounders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church) and her son to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the newly freed Black slaves living in the South.

Chapter 2 examines the key ideological and theological concepts that were used by White American Adventist leaders in the 1950s and 1960s to justify the nonparticipation of the church in the Civil Rights Movement and their justification for segregation within the denomination. This chapter also looks on the other side, by addressing the intellectual and theological justification for social activism by several prominent Black Adventist leaders.

Chapter 3 explores the emergence of African-American activism by highlighting the contributions of prominent Black Adventists like Matthew Strachan and Irene Morgan toward sociopolitical reform in the 1940s. The chapter also argues that a heightened sense of community consciousness motivated these Adventist activists to become involved in the struggle for greater equality and justice for Blacks.

Chapter 4 focuses on the involvement of Black Adventist lay persons in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, especially the contributions of Alfonso Green Jr., Terrance Roberts, and Frank Hale Jr. "in combating social injustice within the Seventh-day Adventist church and secular society." London demonstrates how factors such as community awareness gained from personal experience with racism, the example of Adventist pioneers, and Bible teachings on social justice played a key role in motivating these activists.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the sociopolitical activism of Black ministers from the South Central Conferences, in particular Charles E. Dudley Sr., Charles Joseph, and Earl Moore; and from the South Atlantic Conference and the General Conference, focusing on men such as Warren S. Banfield Jr., Franklin Hill II, and Edward Earl Cleveland. The narrative describes the efforts of these men to encourage their church to embrace the social changes sweeping the nation. The writer also pointed to the fact that these men faced stern opposition from some of the White Adventist leaders who were reluctant to adopt these changes.

The final chapter reexamines some of the critical issues raised in the book, including, for example, how community awareness motivated Adventists for social justice, the role of the Adventist pioneers, liberationist interpretations of the Bible, the role of Adventist eschatology and ecclesiology in impacting Adventist views of political involvement, and the role of Black Adventist activism.

London's book is an outstanding historical analysis of Seventh-day Adventists' views and behavior concerning a sociopolitical issue during one of the most tumultuous periods in the nation's history. The judgment of history on the leadership of the church in light of its behavior toward issues of social justice is not a favorable one. The Adventist Church's nonparticipatory stance may have arisen from a number of factors, including premillennialism, apocalyptic eschatology, sectarian ecclesiology, conservatism, and the all-consuming focus on evangelism. But these are not the only factors. Many of

the early Adventist pioneers exhibited many of these same values, yet they were not afraid to address the great social issue of their days. They spoke eloquently against slavery, although most were not true social activists. These early pioneers, such as Joseph Bates, J. N. Andrews, James and Ellen White, and John Loughborough, lambasted the United States for its involvement with the evil of slavery. They were not afraid to be out of step with American society. Socially and politically they would not be considered conservatives in their day. In spite of this countercultural beginning, however, how did the Adventist Church by the turn of the twentieth century find itself so unconcerned with sociopolitical issues and so politically conservative? London does not answer this critical question. This is the major weakness in his book. The author might have helped us to better understand the Adventist role in the Civil Rights Movement if he had explored the evolution of Adventist involvement with sociopolitical issues from the time of the pioneers (midnineteenth century) to the 1950s and 1960s and helped to explain how and why the church lost its way.

London's analysis shows a church leadership conservative in its political and social ideology and an organization practicing racism in many of its institutions. One of the most shameful revelations of this research was that, even after the United States' government had outlawed segregation, Adventists continued to practice racial segregation in their institutions. Instead of providing a moral example to the nation on equality and social justice, they allowed secular society to lead the way in this vital area. They were not apolitical, as they claimed, which is the reason they gave for their nonparticipation in the Civil Rights Movement. This was a racist denomination justifying its behavior based on the counsel given by E. G. White, which was ripped out of its original context to suit its purpose. Injustice and inequality were dressed up in the garb of piety and religiosity and presented to the people as if it were divine counsel. Black Adventists were systematically barred from Adventist hospitals, schools, and churches; and when they were admitted, were treated as second-class citizens. Several Black worshippers were barred from attending White churches and some were even threatened with death in God's house. The behavior of God's remnant people was shameful and disgraceful, and it begs the question, How did the church reconcile the claims of being "the chosen remnant" when its members were blatantly violating the most basic of Jesus' commandments: "then shall men know that you are my disciples when you have love for one another"?

*Seventh-day Adventists and the Civil Rights Movement* is an excellent book and highly recommended for those who have an interest in this area. It provides a good beginning and a window to explore further in an area of study that has been long neglected.

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Morgan, Douglas. *Lewis C. Sheafe: Apostle to Black America*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010. 448 pp. Hardcover, \$22.99.

Scholars of the African American experience in Adventism have long focused on Charles Kinney as the preeminent African American figure in the early