

Even though this book introduces numerous methodologies and precisely explains theories which are normally new ground for the biblical scholar, the book proves to be extremely readable and one soon gets the feeling that one is uncovering a treasure trove of new tools. The volume is highly didactic with its well-designed layout, and numerous insets and text-boxes which highlight information or provide background and definition of technical terms. Each chapter ends with several thought provoking questions. Matthews uses numerous OT examples to illustrate the various methodologies, but it would have perhaps even been more useful to see a particular biblical section interpreted using several of the methodologies, in order to see how the text itself could benefit and not simply serve as an example. Given the number of new concepts and methodologies introduced, more help could be given to a biblical exegete on how to match a method for a biblical text in order to gain the most insight. Perhaps something like this could have been included in a final chapter as one is left with the feeling that the volume ends rather abruptly without connections being drawn between the different chapters. A few other small features could also add to the value of the book, such as, area subheadings in the bibliography. While the list of abbreviations shows an impressive use of journals from the area of biblical studies, no journals from any of the other fields are included. This would have been helpful to biblical scholars interested in digging deeper into a new field. The volume aims at the "serious student of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament who is willing to stretch beyond traditional exegetical methods" (p. x). This groundbreaking book is a wonderful addition to interdisciplinary exegetical analysis. While this book will be of tremendous use in the classroom it can also be used in private study. After having read this volume one will not be able to look at OT conversations in the same way knowing that there is so much "more than meets the ear."

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*E. J. Waggoner: From the Physician of Good News to the Agent of Division*, by Woodrow W. Whidden II. Hagerstown: Review & Herald, 2008. Pp. 401. ISBN 978-08-280-1982-8. Hardcover. US\$ 22.99.

This work was planned as part of a Review and Herald series by different authors on important figures of Adventist history. There is a work on James White, a co-founder of the church, entitled *Innovator and Overcomer of Difficulties*. Another, on Joseph Bates, is titled *The True Founder of Seventh-day Adventism*, considering the man who brought James and Ellen G. White, and the entire circle of believers in the 1844 message, to the Sabbath truth

and a clear understanding of the three angels' message. W. W. Prescott is a *Forgotten Giant of Adventism's Second Generation*, and John H. Kellogg, a *Pioneering Health Reformer*, but also a serious threat to the unity of the church during his last years.

Thanks to Whidden we now have a work on Ellet J. Waggoner, who also started as a medical missionary and finally associated himself with the same Dr. Kellogg in his divisive enterprise. But this is not the way in which we want to remember Waggoner.

Ellet Waggoner trained as a physician, but his most important healing performance was not medical but theological. Adventism in the late 1800 was ailing with legalism and Arianism. When Adventists tried to shake the Christian world free from the Sunday tradition they took the side of the often scorned Decalogue with such vigor that they sounded Pharisaical. In 1888 Ellet Waggoner, editor of *Signs of the Times*, together with Alonzo T. Jones, helped to bring the church back to the New Testament emphasis on righteousness by faith. The support of Ellen White was the key factor in this restoration, as it was later in helping the church to overcome Arianism, which denied Christ's full divinity. Waggoner was never fully cured from Arianism, but he did improve, and Alonzo T. Jones became fully Trinitarian.

After 1888 Waggoner helped Ellen White and Alonzo Jones in preaching tours which spread the message of righteousness by faith among the rank and file of the church and its ministers in spite of entrenched opposition from some church administrators. In 1892 Waggoner was sent to England as editor of the local church paper, and he became the first president of the South England Conference ten years later. But then he requested a change of career and became a theology teacher.

At this point standard biographical information on Waggoner becomes puzzling. Against the counsel of E. G. White, Waggoner became in 1904 a teacher in a Battle Creek College resurrected by Kellogg, in opposition to the church leadership, after the faculty and students of that College had been moved from Battle Creek to Berrien Springs in 1902 (Emmanuel Missionary College, today Andrews University). Then, at the end of 1905 Waggoner's wife divorced him for adultery. She immediately married another man, and Waggoner had to leave the Adventist ministry.

In his book Whidden illuminates these strange events with both an in-depth biography and a penetrating analysis of Waggoners' thought and pilgrimage through truth and then theological deviations.

The "Early Years" section, covering the family of Ellet's parents, his birth, infancy, youth and education, quickly establishes the acumen of Whidden as a biographer. Even though little (such as letters from this pe-

riod) is extant in the way of direct documents on Ellet and his family, Whidden is able to reconstruct in detail a very complete picture through public records and recollections of descendants, correcting in the process points such as the School of Medicine which graduated Ellet, which is not Bellevue but Long Island, New York, a fruit of persistent investigation (pp. 40, 41).

The second part, on the 1888 General Conference session, describes the formation of the theological crisis of the church, the work of Waggoner in the General Conference session and its aftermath, and his theological thought at the time. This is a terrain so often trodden that it is difficult to blaze a new trail. However, the theological analysis of Whidden makes the study relevant to current theological discussion. For example, Whidden shows that, in spite of superficial similarities, the early Waggoner cannot be cited as a precedent of the "universal legal justification" position. He maintained that faith is a prerequisite of forgiveness (p. 75).

The third part, on the British years (1892–1903), describes the pernicious effects of new theological orientations in Waggoner's thought. Here the analysis is particularly illuminating. Whidden is able to put a finger on the ulcer which slowly permeated the thought of Waggoner and led to his decline. While in 1888 Waggoner had emphasized the objective action of salvation by God—what he did for us by means of his Son in Calvary—in the 1890s he started to move in the direction of a subjective salvation, i.e., what God is accomplishing in me through his Spirit, namely, the Christ living in me. In this way, human accomplishments—the fibers of human devising which had been brushed away from the robe of Christ's righteousness in 1888—returned by the back door under the guise of sanctification and perfection. By the early 1900s Waggoner was moving in the direction of positing a final perfect generation of Christians who will complete the work initiated by Christ on Calvary by showing the falsehood of the accusations of Satan.

A particular point in the system of ideas of Waggoner is very telling in this regard. Waggoner, with A. T. Jones, inaugurated in the early 1890s a new way to speak of the human nature of Christ. While J. N. Andrews had carefully distinguished in the pages of the *Review* between our sinful flesh and the mere likeness of a sinful flesh in Christ—a biblical distinction made by Paul in Romans—and specifically denied any sinful propensity in Christ, the new theologians stated both that there was no difference in the sinfulness of our flesh and Christ's flesh, and also that Jesus had our evil propensities. Never mind that this forced Waggoner to explain the actual sinlessness of the life of Christ through the virtues of his "miraculous birth," thus erasing with the elbow what he was writing with his hand (pp. 265, 266). Waggoner liked the sound of the phrase "Christ's sinful flesh" because he

wanted, through the idea of a mystical reproduction of Christ's experience in our own lives, to preach a sinlessness attained in the present.

This ran counter to the clear presentation by E. G. White of sanctification as a work never finished in our lifetime. Indeed, E. G. White specifically warned Waggoner that his new presentation of sanctification constituted an "alpha of deception" that would later lead to lethal practical consequences. She had seen among Millerites around 1844, and later in Indiana, defenders of the idea of a "holy flesh" in this life which was supposed to make one ready for translation at the Second Coming in contrast with a lower standard for being resurrected. She knew the outcome: holy fleshers became blind to the very real evidence of continuing sinfulness in their flesh. Whidden shows that E. G. White warned Waggoner that the result of this blindness would be "free-lovism," which actually transpired in his life. In spite of these warnings, he could not see the sinful side of the "spiritual affinity" he felt for a woman who was not his wife.

Adultery was not the only result of his mystical leanings. Together with A. T. Jones, Waggoner fought for a concept of the church which had no place for structures such as a president. In England he wanted a constitution to be approved which would have done away with any fundamental statement of beliefs and placed each member directly under the direction of the Holy Spirit. These ideas suited the thoughts of Kellogg in his struggle against the GC president at the time.

Finally, we have the account of "The Years of Decline" (1904-1916). Readers would be interested to know what happened during these years. The work of Whidden, carefully done through years of research, will no doubt remain a standard for future studies on the life of Waggoner and other figures of the past, especially in its balance between theological analysis and careful biographical investigation. But more importantly, it may help to lead us away from theological theories with pernicious effects. The author is to be commended for this comprehensive approach to events in Seventh-day Adventist denominational history.

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