

discussion about tradition, human reason, and experience as theological sources. Nevertheless, this fails to take into consideration that the Bible has its own philosophical assumptions. These assumptions sometimes contradict the approach taken by some of the theologians mentioned by Veene-man (cf. Roger E. Olson's *The Essentials of Christian Thought* or John C. Peckham's *The Love of God*).

Regarding the layout, the book is legible. The chapters are balanced in size and the transition between them is smoothed by short paragraphs. There are some minor drawbacks. For example, on page 97, the author ends a paragraph announcing a summation of Grenz's hermeneutical position, but a whole subchapter on Kevin Vanhoozer follows. Also, it would have been helpful if a subtitle for liberation theology had been used on page 111.

*Introducing Theological Method* covers an important gap in the current literature on theological methodology. Offering a succinct and clear description of contemporary theology, the book is of real help to students interested in theological methodology. Also, it can be used as a textbook by professors introducing Christian theology to their students. It needs to be supplemented with a reading of primary sources (the suggested reading list for students is helpful here) and with a historical perspective on theological method (see, for example, the succinct guide of Paul L. Allen on theological method).

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*Women's Ordination: Does It Matter?*, by Clinton Wahlen and Gina Wahlen. Silver Springs, MD: Bright Shores. 2015. 208 pp. Paperback, US\$ 15.99.

The main contributor to this book, Clinton Wahlen, is currently associate director of *Biblical Research Institute* at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GCSDA). Together with his wife, Gina, he wrote this book in the context of a debate taking place within Adventism regarding women's ordination. The book was published just before the quinquennial session of GCSDA and offers an argument against women's ordination. Wahlen was part of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC), for which he had several contributions. Among these is a paper on 1 Tim 3:2 which constitutes the central argument for this book.

Organized in eleven chapters and six appendices, the book starts with the hermeneutical dilemma regarding ordination facing the Adventist

Church (chapter 1). After establishing that ordination is a biblical concept, introduced by Jesus Christ himself (chapter 2), the Wahlers review several notable women from the Bible in order to emphasize that neither of them had a real leadership position (chapter 3). The authors then address the "husband of one wife" present in 1 Tim 3:2, 12 and Titus 1:6 (chapter 4). They argue that the language in these texts is gender-exclusive, revealing an universal principle of male leadership both in the home and in the church. The next short chapter tackles the question of women keeping silence in the church. The conclusion is that, unless there is an authoritative teaching, women can be involved in the teaching ministry of the church. Chapter 6 presents what the authors call "male spiritual leadership", basing it upon an interpretation of Gen 1-3. They see a creation order wherein Adam exercised "unselfish leadership and Eve providing help and encouragement" (p. 66).

The next two chapters explore the relation between Ellen G. White and women's involvement in ministry. Recognizing White's role in promoting women's involvement in ministry and fair payment (p. 81), the authors conclude that White did not "call for ordaining women as elders or ordained ministers," and that she did not explicitly forbid it either. Nevertheless, in the authors' perception, "it seems clear that she [White] did not envision it" (p. 106). In chapter 9, the Acts 15 council is presented as a model for a decision-taking ecclesiastical process wherein Scripture rather than culture is followed. As a result of this council, a sole standard based on Scripture was established, both for gentile and Christian Jews. Chapter 10 concludes the argument with a summary of the argumentation presented in the book (p. 122-124) followed by an appeal for the reader to maintain a biblical hermeneutic and to reject women's ordination. The last chapter of the book addresses several questions, grouped into (1) general questions (13 questions [q.]); (2) questions about specific passages (15 q.); (3) questions about interpretation (9 q.); theological questions concerning (4) the OT (6 q.) and (5) the NT (4 q.); (6) questions about White (5 q.); (7) questions about Seventh-day Adventist history (4 q.); and questions about practical issues (8 q.). The appendices include details about (1) the key biblical passages in discussion (English translations of 1 Tim 3:2 and a comparison between 1 Timothy and Titus), (2) White's credentials and women functioning as licensed Adventist ministers, and (3) some TOSC documents and reflections from Clinton Wahlen's perspective.

The book is intended to reach a wider audience, being made available freely online in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Apart from some minor typographical errors, the argument of the book is easy to follow. There is a positive tone when talking about women's involvement in the ministry of the church apart from the ordained positions. Nevertheless, the book has several drawbacks when it comes to the accuracy of its argumentation.

First, the fundamental assumption of the book, that male leadership is part of the creation order, is debated in Adventist theology. Presenting just one hermeneutical version of the debate while lumping together others' arguments leaves the impression that this is the majority's option rather than *an option* among several others. Second, in chapter 2, when the authors ask whether ordination is biblical, they borrow meaning from the later concept of ordination when discussing Mark 3:13–14 (p. 20). In order to support their understanding of the disciples as being "ordained," the authors quote several passages from White's writings (p. 21), using them to support the idea that Jesus ordained his disciples. The reader thus feels that the title of the chapter is inappropriate ("Is Ordination Biblical?").

Third, the argument that Paul uses a gender-exclusive language in 1 Tim 3:2 appears to ignore the emphasis on the character of the elder/deacon in 1 Tim 3. The authors avoid confronting this argument, choosing to conflate marital faithfulness into polygamy and argue mainly against polygamy (pp. 43–44). Fourth, the reading of Gen 1–3 reflects rather a reading of the authors' presuppositions than the text itself. As an example, Clinton Wahlen argues that the fact that Eve was created as a helper (Heb. *'ezer*) for Adam indicates male leadership. He recognizes that the term itself does not qualify the status of the one giving help. Nevertheless, in all the human contexts wherein *'ezer* is used, "the status of the one being helped is greater" (p. 63). But this is a selective reading of the biblical passages. Although dealing with human relations, the term *'ezer* appears in a military context and in a negative light (Isa 30:5; Ezek 12:14; Dan 11:34). If the relation between a man and a woman is described in terms of headship–submission, the military connotations cannot be avoided. One needs to take into account the other eleven occurrences wherein *'ezer* appears within the personal relation between humans and God (Exod 18:4; Deut 33:7, 29; Hos 13:9; Pss 20:2; 70:5; 89:19; 121:1–2; 124:8; 146:5). These rather have a personal and a positive connotation, similar to the usage in Gen 2. Read through the lenses of headship–submission, this implies that the status of the helper is greater than the one helped. Given that this does not fit the headship presupposition, this option is eliminated. Nevertheless, this does not do justice to the principle of *tota Scriptura*, thus going against the intended hermeneutical method.

Fifth, there is no developed argument for the extension of the male leadership from house to church. The fact that Paul uses the analogy of marriage to talk about the relation between Christ and the church (p. 58) is not a reason for supporting the authority of the male as head of the women in the church. Sixth, when dealing with a contentious passage from White's writings, Clinton Wahlen asserts that this passage does not have to do with the ordination of women. Their ministry is part-time ("some of their time"), as part of the lay efforts to contribute to the church's mission. In addition,

he reads this passage as indicating that women have a ministry different from what the church is already doing (“[t]his is another means of strengthening and building up the church”). He also cautiously states that appointing women to serve in this manner does not involve holding an office within the church. Rather, women are encouraged to collaborate with the minister or other church elders in their work (“In some cases they will need to counsel with the church officers or the minister” pp. 72–73). Nevertheless, from the same opposing perspective, Jerry Moon disagrees with Clinton Wahlen, stating that the passage quoted above indicates White’s approval of women’s ordination as deaconesses. One cannot but agree with Moon’s assessment that White uses an unambiguous language.

Seventh, the authors state that the reason for the decline of women’s involvement in the church subsided after 1930s because of the Great Depression. Given that women’s involvement was at the highest level of leadership in Adventism, the sudden decrease cannot have its sole reason in the Great Depression. Rather, as Nicholas Miller indicates, the fundamentalist culture of the 1930s–1950s “marginalized women in Adventism.” Therefore, women’s elimination from leadership structures was not an accident but a planned process.

The book can be recommended for reading as an example of how those who oppose women’s ordination build their argument. While confessing to use the grammatical-historical approach, this interpretation appears to be rather literalistic. This reading should be supplemented with other writings, both from the opponents’ and the proponents’ sides. Some of these resources are found online, on the [adventistarchives.org](http://adventistarchives.org) site, TOSC section.

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