

EDITORIAL

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The term *church* is an ambiguous term and seems to have as many definitions as there are people contributing to the discussion. It does not help that the English word itself has different nuances that can refer to a physical building, a local congregation, or the institutional organization of a particular denomination. The examination of the term *church* throughout the centuries independent of its predecessors yields an impressive array of results. The church is known as a house church, church in hiding, social gathering, movement, institution, or specified by its denominational name. The last decades have added new identifiers to reflect recent developments and meanings as churches are described as seeker-oriented, purpose-driven, emergent churches, or megachurches.

People have additionally associated the term *church* with their own experiences or perception(s). Church is closely associated to corruption, power, oppression, exclusion, but is also connected to rebellion, redemption, community, belonging, spiritual care, outreach, and refuge. The former has primarily been in view, and often correctly so, for diverse people groups such as the Anabaptists to the *New Atheists*, while the latter is the experience of revivalists such as Methodists and modern refugees. Surprisingly, some groups, such as the Afro-American slaves of North America testify to both realities.

All these labels and names reveal that the single term for church, or its Greek precedent, *ekklesia*, has been given different meanings or has been implemented in different ways. Often the personal experience drives the meaning of the term, positively or negatively.

This edition of *JAAS* is dedicated to the topic of ecclesiology. This topic, especially in the Seventh-day Adventist tradition, has been somewhat neglected. Individual aspects of ecclesiology, such as the topic of *the remnant*, have been discussed at length in our tradition, but the overarching theme has not found as much significant resonance. Perhaps this might be traced back to the historical focus on the imminence of Jesus's return, and maybe even the early reluctance to form a denomination during the 1860s. The current state of the Seventh-day

Adventist denomination urges a new examination of this important topic. The growth of the denomination and shifts in demographics and urban living are practical issues that demand a response. This issue of *JAAS* does not attempt the herculean task of answering all of these practical challenges, but the articles explore a better understanding of the biblical and theological concept of church in order to lay a proper foundation for ecclesiology. Those interested in solving the practical questions are invited to contemplate the biblical and theological issues presented in this *JAAS* issue.

THE APOSTOLICITY OF THE CHURCH¹

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1. Introduction

The subject of the “apostolicity of the church” has not received much attention among Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) discussions on ecclesiology. As a general rule, SDAs tend to focus on more pressing and practical subjects rather than understanding the nature and mission of the church. It might seem that for SDAs, who came into existence after the 1844 Millerite revival, that this movement developed far too late to deal with the issue of the apostolicity of the church. However, a closer look at the issue reveals that this question is foundational for any discussion of ecclesiology and touches upon many other important theological issues. This article provides a brief overview of the issues involved in the question of the apostolicity of the church in different traditions, deals with the question of what the apostolicity of the church means from the SDA perspective, and finally examines foundational theological questions connected with it.² The issue of the apostolicity of the church is highly significant for the SDA understanding of the church (i.e., ecclesiology).

¹ This paper is adapted from a presentation at the EUD Bible conference in Cernica, Rumania, Sept. 5, 2012.

² According to the Roman Catholic scholar Herbert Vorgrimmler the apostolicity of the church designates that “the church, which exists today, despite its historical developments and changes, is identical in its substance with the church of the apostles. Together with the unity, the holiness and the catholicity of the church the Apostolicity [of the church] belongs to the identifying marks, according to which in classical theology the ‘true church’ of Jesus can be recognized.” Herbert Vorgrimmler, *Neues Theologisches Wörterbuch* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002), 56-57; my translation. The Roman Catholic theologian Ludwig Ott is convinced that “from all Christian confessions the Roman Catholic Church matches those four marks alone or at least in the best possible manner.” Ludwig Ott, *Grundriss der Dogmatik* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1957), 372; my translation.

2. Definition

The apostolicity of the church is one of four so called *notae*, or characteristic marks of the church:³ the unity, the holiness, the catholicity, and the apostolicity of the church. Thus, the apostolicity of the church is a substantive characteristic of the Christian faith, as can be seen in the references in the apostolic confession.⁴ Indeed, in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (AD 381) the church is called the “one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.”⁵

The term *apostolicity* is derived from the noun *apostle*. The original and most general meaning of the word *apostolic* is “to stand in connection with the apostles.”⁶ The decisive question is how this connection with the apostles is most appropriately understood: is this connection understood primarily in terms of an unbroken historical continuity that is derived from the first apostles and transmitted through a sacramental act of ordination? Or, is the connection with the apostles in terms of belief, i.e., is there a harmony with the apostles with regards to the biblical-apostolic content of our faith?⁷

3. The Meaning of Apostolicity in Different Ecclesiastical Traditions

Examining various church traditions reveals different understandings about what apostolicity means and what it entails. Orthodox churches understand the apostolicity of the church as an important and God-ordained mechanism by which the structure and teaching of the church is

³ Horst Georg Pöhlmann, *Abriss der Dogmatik* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1980), 287.

⁴ Cf. Sabine Pemsel-Maier, *Grundbegriffe der Dogmatik* (München: Don Bosco Verlag, 2003), 22.

⁵ As quoted in *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, eds. Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 672.

⁶ Hans Küng, *Die Kirche* (München: Pieper Verlag, 1980), 409; my translation.

⁷ Cf. Wilfried Härle, “Apostolizität,” in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz, Don S. Browning, Bernd Jakowski, Eberhard Jüngel, and vierte völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 1:654. Similarly also Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 491.

perpetuated.⁸ Eastern Orthodox churches understand apostolic succession as “the unbroken connection of a hierarchy with Christ and the Apostles through the Sacraments of holy Ordination.”⁹ In Eastern Orthodoxy bishops are sometimes referred to as “successors of the apostles.”¹⁰ Strict Orthodox ecclesiology and theology maintains that all legitimate bishops are properly successors of Peter. This also means that presbyters (or “priests”) are successors of the apostles. This implies a certain sacramental succession.

In a similar even more pointed manner, the Roman Catholic understanding of apostolicity is put forth. According to Roman Catholic theology the *magisterium*, the office of the bishop and the office of priests with their respective authorities are transmitted in an unbroken historic succession to their successors by means of laying on of hands. This historic succession (Lat. *successio*) warrants the identity of the Roman Catholic Church with its apostolic beginnings. Early on, this apostolic succession was also used to legitimize the leadership authority of the bishops, who are dependent upon the pope in Rome who sees himself as the successor of Peter. This perspective is maintained even in the Second Vatican Council,¹¹ which demonstrates that the Roman Catholic Church has not changed in its understanding and ecclesiastical claims even in recent times.

4. Apostolicity and Its Significance for Other Theological Questions

Protestant theologian Wilfried Härle points out in a remarkable article that the question of the apostolicity of the church opens up a number of significant theological questions and issues. He specifically lists five:

- ⁸ Cf. “Apostolic Succession,” in *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, ed. John Anthony McGuckin (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 1:40-43.
- ⁹ *Eastern Orthodox Catechism*, 197, p. 47, as quoted in Thomas C. Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, vol. 3 of *Systematic Theology* (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 2001), 358.
- ¹⁰ Cf. “Apostolic Succession,” in *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, ed. John Anthony McGuckin (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 1:40-43.
- ¹¹ Cf. DH 4119, 4144, 4207-4211; quoted in Härle, “Apostolizität,” 654. Cf. also LG 20; as quoted in Werner Löser, “Apostolic Succession,” in *Handbook of Catholic Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Beinert and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 27.

- (a) The relationship between the teaching of the church and divine revelation;
- (b) The relationship between Scripture and tradition;
- (c) The relationship between invisible and visible church;
- (d) The relationship between the priesthood of all believers and the ordained priesthood
- (e) As well as foundational questions that pertain to biblical authority and biblical interpretation.¹²

These questions are not the only ones that are related to this subject. However, this reveals why the apostolicity of the church has become *the* decisive question of ecclesiastical controversy among Christian confessions, as Otto Karrer has stated succinctly and pointedly in his article "Apostolizität" in the Roman Catholic Encyclopedia *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*.¹³

4.1. The Relationship between the Teaching of the Church and Divine Revelation

The concept of the apostolicity of the church or even an apostolic succession is not found in the NT or the rest of the Bible. This is even acknowledged by Roman Catholic scholars.¹⁴ Only after the death of the apostles towards the end of the first century or at the beginning of the second century some church fathers took recourse in the continuity with the apostles in their struggle against Schismatics and heretics. They did so in order to demonstrate their doctrinal orthodoxy.¹⁵

Hence, at the end of the first century Clement of Rome points to apostolic succession to argue against Schismatics.¹⁶ Similarly Papias refers to a line of church representatives who are significant for the church

¹² Härle, "Apostolizität," 1:654.

¹³ Otto Karrer, "Apostolizität der Kirche," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, ed. Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1957), 1:765.

¹⁴ Werner Löser, "Apostolicity of the Church," in *Handbook of Catholic Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Beinert and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza (New York: Crossroads, 1995), 25.

¹⁵ Philip J. Hefner, "The Church," in *Christian Dogmatics*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 2:210.

¹⁶ Justo L. Gonzales, *A History of Christian Thought* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), 1:147.

tradition as criterion for authentic preaching.¹⁷ Some years later Ignatius of Antioch upholds the authority of the bishops and elders as representatives of Christ and his apostles against heretics.¹⁸ While Ignatius makes reference to the bishops, he does not mention the issue of succession, which later in church history gained a great importance in the reasoning of the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁹ The first fully developed principle of apostolic succession does not appear until the church father Irenaeus.²⁰ In North Africa the church father Tertullian argues for similar ideas and coins the expression *Ordo Episcoporum* for the line of succession.²¹ The well-known and respected church historian Justo Gonzales correctly points out, however, that even during those early times Irenaeus and Tertullian did not understand apostolic succession as the only means to legitimize the office of a bishop. To the contrary, some bishops could claim such succession for themselves, but others could not. Yet even the later bishops and their churches were considered apostolic, because their faith was in harmony with the apostles.²²

The issue of the apostolicity of the church is firmly embedded in the confession of faith not until relatively late in the second ecumenical council of Constantinople (AD 381). The fact, that an apostolic succession is not found in the NT, raises important questions about the relationship between Scripture and tradition and the authority of proper biblical interpretation. Can the question of the apostolicity of the church be decided by Scripture alone? Or, is the larger testimony of later church tradition needed to decide this issue? Does Scripture remain its own expositor, even in this question, or does the church interpret Scripture for believers, and thus stand above Scripture? Is the Bible for SDAs indeed the final authority for faith, the highest norm (*norma normata*) that decides questions of faith or does later church tradition gain an equal standing for theology and theological identity?

¹⁷ Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 3.3.1 and *passim*; quoted in Wilhelm Breuning, "Apostolic Succession," in *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner (New York: Crossroads, 1991), 38.

¹⁸ Gonzales, *A History of Christian Thought*, 1:147.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 3.3.1 and *passim*; quoted in Breuning, "Apostolic Succession," 38.

²¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 4.5.2, quoted in Breuning, "Apostolic Succession," 38.

²² Gonzales, *A History of Christian Thought*, 1:148.

From their very beginning, SDAs claim that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the highest and final norm for faith and teaching so that everything else has to take the Holy Scripture as its decisive authority. This priority of Scripture still holds and is expressed in the slogan *solā scriptura*, which SDAs affirm in their apologies.²³ SDAs are convinced that later developments and traditions always have to be measured by the inspired text of Holy Scripture.

The apostolic testimony, as found in the Bible, gains an important role. The proclamation of the apostles, as found in the writings of the NT, SDAs believe, is the original, foundational, and normative testimony about Jesus Christ for all times. The Christian church is bound to this word, is called to be faithful to its testimony, and is to follow the example of the apostles.²⁴ The church always stands *under* the normative character of the biblical transmission of the apostolic teaching or the church forfeits its claim to be apostolic.

In as much as the apostles were the immediate and direct witnesses and messengers of the risen Lord Jesus Christ, and were called by Him, they are the normative apostles. No other apostles were called subsequently. There is no repetition or reinstatement of the apostolate, as found in the New Apostolic church, for instance. What remains in the Bible is the apostolic charge and the apostolic commission, to which all later disciples of Jesus are bound.²⁵ Only in obedience towards the biblical transmitted teaching and the example of the apostles can the church properly be called apostolic.

When apostolic succession is understood merely as historic succession, the church stands in danger of not being subject to the authority of the living word of God but sees itself under the authority of its Episcopal successors. This led the Roman Catholic Church to the point where it understands the church, represented by the *Magisterium* and the pope, to interpret the Bible for the layperson in an authoritative and binding manner. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) confirmed this understanding and expounded that the bishops, because of their divine appointment, took the place of the apostles as shepherds of the church. Thus, those who, according to Roman Catholic understanding, hear a

²³ As part of the great Protestant family, SDAs acknowledge the Bible, together with the Reformers of the 16th century, as *dux* (leader), *magistra* (teacher), *und* (and) *regina* (queen).

²⁴ Cf. Küng, *Die Kirche*, 420.

²⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 421.

Roman Catholic Bishop, hear Christ and those who reject a bishop, reject Christ.²⁶

Here the teaching *magisterium* of the church holds a position that was never intended by Jesus. For Jesus, Scripture was *the* decisive source and authoritative norm of faith. In his discourse and reasoning with others, Jesus often refers to Scripture: "Has not the Scripture said..." (John 7:42), or he used the phrase "it is written..." (John 6:45). Referring to Moses Jesus said, "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" (John 5:46-47; cf. 5:39). Similarly, Jesus referred to Scripture when Satan tempted him (Matt 4:4, 7, 10). In a similar manner, the apostles used the Scripture time and again to legitimize their faith. This constant reference to the Scriptures by the apostles and Jesus demonstrates that the Bible is the ultimate foundation of apostolic life and teaching.

A mere historical descent and succession or even a sacramental succession is not the decisive criteria for true faith. The apostle Paul points this out when he writes to the Christians in Rome, many of whom were of heathen descent, referring to "Abraham, who is the father of us all" (Rom 4:16). In Galatians he becomes even more explicit when he writes, "It is those *who are of faith* who are sons of Abraham" (Gal 3:7, emphasis added). For the apostle Paul, faith-relationship is more important than a direct biological-historical descent. Furthermore, he states, "if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise" (Gal 3:29). Hence, Paul writes to the gentile Christians in Galatia: "And you, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise" (Gal 4:28). Of course, the believers did not have a direct biological lineage to Isaac, and certainly there was no sacramental transmission between them. The connection is based on a faith-relationship, a spiritual harmony, and congruence with the biblical-apostolic faith.

Furthermore, if the question of apostolicity was merely fulfilled in historical succession, then the reality of unbelief, unfaithfulness, and the possibility of a spiritual deformation of the biblical truth are not serious concerns. The apostle Paul warns about this in Acts, where he writes specifically to the bishops as leaders of the church: "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with

²⁶ *Dogmatic Constitution of the Church*, chap. 3, "The Hierarchical Structure of the Church, with Special Reference to the Episcopate," sec. 20; quoted in J. Rodman Williams, *The Church, the Kingdom, and Last Things*, vol. 3 of *Renewal Theology* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1992), 37.

His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:28-29).

God through the Bible is the one who protects the church from the danger of heresy. Faithfulness to the word of God leads the church to become a holy church, which is another mark of the true church. As a result, it is imperative to take seriously the hermeneutical principle that the apostle Paul outlines in 1 Cor 4:6, calling the church to remain within the principles of scripture.

It is important to recognize that there is no other way to Jesus Christ, except through the words of the apostles and prophets. Without them there can be no apostolic church. Therefore, an authentic apostolic church is bound to the inspired words of the apostles, as they are faithfully transmitted in Holy Scripture.²⁷ In Eph 2:20, Paul writes that the church is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, where Christ Jesus is the cornerstone." This is significant, because from a biblical perspective the church is founded not just on the apostles and on Jesus Christ but also on the OT prophets. Any church that forgets the Hebrew Scriptures and the apostolic exposition of it cannot be properly called apostolic.²⁸

The apostle Paul portrays his apostolic office always in harmony with the pre-Pauline biblical tradition. In Gal 1:9 he writes, "If any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed" even if it would be an angel or he himself. Paul does not invent a new gospel. He preaches the everlasting gospel—a gospel that began already in the OT and was fully revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. From a biblical perspective, the word fixed in written form by the OT prophets and the NT apostles is the authentic norm and the apostolicity of the church.

The church consists of believers, who, through the ages, have come to know Jesus Christ, through the inspired words of the Bible. The church comprises of believers, who have entrusted their lives to Jesus Christ, have been transformed by God, and have experienced a radical new birth through the work of the Holy Spirit. The church is made up of believers, who have been called by God and have the prophetic word of Scripture to guide them (2 Pet 1:20f). The church can only be called apostolic if it is faithful to the prophetic-apostolic word of God. It is apostolic only, if it takes the Bible seriously and passes on biblical truth faithfully and if its members live the biblical truth accordingly.

²⁷ Cf. Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 355.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 352.

The task of the apostolic church, therefore, is not to improve the biblical message because in trying to do so, the message would irreparably be damaged. An apostolic church has to be faithful to all that the Bible teaches.²⁹ Such faithfulness also includes a sacred responsibility to give testimony about the faith that was entrusted to the believers once and for all. Therefore, the church is called “a pillar and support of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). What the first eyewitnesses saw and heard from Jesus Christ, they proclaimed so that even believers today can have fellowship with him (1 John 1:3). Hence, even those who have never seen Jesus can experience what the apostle Peter expresses in the following words: “and though you have not seen Him, yet you love Him” (1 Pet 1:8).

4.2. Apostolicity and Mission

When talking about the apostolicity of the church there is one aspect that often is easily overlooked. The original meaning of the word *apostellō* signifies a person who is being sent, a messenger of somebody else, who has sent him. An apostle is not a person who has appointed himself. He is not even appointed by the church, nor is he elected by the church into his office. Instead, he is sent by Christ.³⁰ His primary task is the proclamation of the gospel. Paul writes, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (1 Cor 1:17). Hence, an apostle is not to teach his own teachings but has to proclaim the message of him, who has sent him. This now better explains why Jesus Christ is called the “Apostle and High Priest” in Heb 3:1. Jesus is indeed the one, who is sent by God, to preach the gospel and to reveal the true character and nature of God. In this sense Jesus is the archetype—the role model—of every apostle.³¹ Jesus expands this appointment to all the disciples, to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, first to Israel and then to all the nations (Mark 3:13-19; Matt 10:1-42; 28:16-20).

To be an apostolic church, therefore, means: to be a missionary church, sent, and commissioned by God, proclaiming the everlasting gospel to every nation and all people so that the entire world is prepared for his soon coming. This message is for *all* people not just for secularized people or for people who have not yet heard the name of Jesus (Rom 15:20-21). It also has a restorative element that appeals to those who are familiar with

²⁹ Cf. *ibid.*

³⁰ Küng, *Die Kirche*, 416.

³¹ Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 350. Cf. also Williams, *The Church*, 35.

some biblical truth. In Acts 18:24-25, about Apollos is described as “an eloquent man, ... mighty in the Scriptures” who “had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus.” Yet Priscilla and Aquila, when they heard him, “took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26).

Moreover, the apostles did not simply preach the gospel but also disciplined, in other words, trained and taught the newly converted persons. In Acts 11:26, Paul remained in Antioch for one year and taught many. Additionally, the missionary mandate of Jesus and the apostles was accompanied by two phenomena: the prophetic gift among the believers of the early church and healing miracles reaching the believers and the larger community. In the context of an extended teaching of the church members, Acts 11:28 points out that the prophetic gift was present in the apostolic church as well. For example, Agabus (Acts 21:10) as well as the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9) prophesied. Thus, an apostolic church replete with all the spiritual gifts will also have the prophetic gift present.

Second, the apostolic church in NT times exhibited healings and signs that went along with the preaching of the gospel. The gospels present Jesus as heavily engaged in the healing and restoration of his fellow man (e.g., Mark 2:1-12). Jesus instructs his disciples to go out and also engage in healing (Matt 10:1.8) and the early church of Acts is characterized by a healing and restorative ministry as well (Acts 3:1-10; 6:1-6). Because the human person, biblically speaking, is a unity of body, soul, and mind, physical health has implications for one’s spiritual relationship with God.³²

³² Ellen White states, “The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way, for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God’s servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought. For this reason the Lord has marked out a way in which His people are to carry forward a work of physical healing, combined with the teaching of the Word. Sanitariums are to be established, and with these institutions are to be connected workers who will carry forward genuine medical missionary work. Thus a guarding influence is thrown around those who come to the sanitariums for treatment.” Ellen White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1958), 2:54.

4.3. Ordination

The issue of the apostolicity of the church also has implications for the transmission and commissioning of the pastoral ministry. Based on the concept of succession, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches and even some Protestant (state) churches endorse a sacramental understanding of ordination. Then, it becomes a sacramental passing on of the apostolic authority in an unbroken historical succession of the ecclesiastical office that entitles the recipient of the sacrament to perform spiritual things. Alternatively, ordination can also be viewed as the recognition of a spiritual calling that the church recognizes. The individual has demonstrated a visible faithfulness to the word of God. In its voted statements, the SDA Church does not support a sacramental understanding of ordination.³³

4.4. Apostolicity and the Visible Church

Härle points out that the question of the apostolicity of the church also touches on the issue of the visible or invisible church. The apostolic origin and the continuation of the missionary task include not only the preaching of the gospel and the teaching of the biblical message but also the act of baptism (Matt 28:19-20). Baptism is a visible sign of church membership. In all Christian churches, baptism signals the entry into the church. Since baptism is a visible entry sign into the church it implies that the church also is a visible entity, if it wants to be faithful to the commission of Jesus. Obedience and faithfulness towards the commandments of God always leads to a visibility of this faithfulness: "here are those who keep the commandments of God and who have the faith of Jesus" (Rev 14:12).

In reaction to the dominant (visible) Roman Catholic Church of his time, who had distorted much of biblical faith, Martin Luther and other Protestant Reformers before him (i.e., John Hus) emphasized an understanding of the church where personal faith is emphasized more than its visible body.³⁴ For Luther, the essential invisibility of the church is grounded in God's eternal predestination that includes all believers—from

³³ See Don F. Neufeld, ed., "Ordination," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 2nd rev. ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1996), 2:253-255.

³⁴ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700)*, vol. 4 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 173.

eternity—even those, who are not born yet and hence are invisible to the human eye.³⁵ Since God has predestined from eternity who will be saved and who will be lost, the elect are known only to God and are invisible to human beings.³⁶ The Bible, however, teaches that election has visible signs. The Bible never speaks about an invisible church.

At this point the divergence between the *universal* and the remnant church needs to be clarified. SDAs affirm in their Fundamental Belief number 13 that the “universal church” constitutes all who truly believe in Jesus Christ. Thus, SDAs acknowledge that there are genuine Christians in other churches, which means that they respect and love them. But in these last days, in a time of widespread apostasy, there will be a group of God’s people, called the remnant, who are faithful to his commandments and have the faith of Jesus (Rev 12:17; 14:12). This remnant church has a special commission and unique task: to prepare the world for the soon coming of Jesus. SDAs do not believe that only SDA believers will be saved but do believe that the SDA Church has an unique task and evangelizes to include all who wish to join it. In this sense, the SDA ecclesiology is unique in all of Protestantism and offers a universal alternative to the visible Roman Catholic Church.

5. Conclusion

The question of the apostolicity of the church is indeed a decisive mark of the true church. This issue has far reaching implications. The apostolicity of the church is, biblically speaking, not a historical succession in sacramental transmission. It is instead a spiritual succession in harmony with the words of the apostles. This idea is forcefully expressed by the apostle Paul in 1 Tim 6:3-5:

If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited *and* understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men.

³⁵ In this understanding of predestination, Luther was influenced by Augustine. Cf. *ibid.*

³⁶ See the discussion in Frank M. Hasel, “The Remnant in Contemporary Adventist Theology,” in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez (Silver Springs, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 175-179.

Then, the church is a living testimony as part of an honored and long historical tradition. God calls for a missionary church, following the commission of Jesus to go into all the world (*catholicos*) to preach the good news to all the inhabitants of the earth (*oikumene*). The church by the Spirit of God himself, grounded in the trustworthy word of God, the Bible. The word of God changes lives and brings harmony with the will of God. In this way the opportunity is given to witness what it truly means to be an apostolic church.

THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH AND ADVENTIST ECCLESIOLOGY

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1. Introduction

It is a historical fact that the word *catholic* is used in Christian creeds to describe the church.¹ It has been said that all the ancient creeds that embodied belief in Jesus Christ also included the confession of the catholicity of the church.² In spite of the frequency of the term's use, it is conceded that catholicity is notoriously difficult to define.³ The difficulty of definition has been compounded by the fragmentation of the Christian church. Since in the face of fragmentation separated churches asserted themselves against one another, it became difficult to define the term without prejudice. The result,

¹ A. M. Ramsey, "Catholicism," *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, 86-87. The list of creeds in which the word occurs along with the words one, holy, and apostolic include, in the East, the Creed of Cyril of Jerusalem, and the Creed of Epiphanius; and in the West the Creed of the Dacian Bishop of Remesiana. The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of AD 381 also expresses belief in the formula "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church."

² Lukas Vischer, Vitaly Borovoy, and Claude Welch, "The Meaning of Catholicity," *Ecumenical Review* 16 (1963): 26.

³ Steven R. Harmon, "Qualitative Catholicity in the Ignatian Correspondence—and the New Testament: The Fallacies of a Restorationist Hermeneutic," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 38 (2011): 35. Recognizing the various levels of meaning of the term *catholic* that need to be distinguished, Avery Dulles enumerates five usages: 1. the adjectival sense where catholic contrasts sectarian; 2. "universal as opposed to local or particular"; 3. "true or authentic as contrasted with false or heretical"; 4. the type of Christianity that attaches particular importance to visible continuity in space and time and visible mediation through social and institutional structures"; and 5. "the title of the church which, organized in the world as a society, is governed by the bishop of Rome." See Avery Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 185.

among Protestants, has been a negative attitude towards the development of the notion of the catholicity of the church. Consequently, the term became associated with the Roman Catholic Church in popular parlance.⁴ It has fallen on the ecumenical movement to refocus discussion on the idea of catholicity. Within ecumenical circles the difficulty of defining catholicity led to the use of other terms such as *ecumenical*, *universal*, or *true*, to characterize the rapprochement among different churches. At the same time, the ecumenical movement has provided a catalyst to consider new ways of confessing catholicity. By the middle of the last century it was remarked that

because “ecumenical” only brings out one dimension of the term “catholic” we may deplore the fact that it has been chosen to describe the modern attempts at reunion and unity. Some part of the responsibility must be attributed to the meaningless but passionate opposing of the terms “Catholic” and “Protestant.” But there are signs that as progress is made in these attempts the wider term “catholic” will fill out or burst through the narrower term “ecumenical.”⁵

For this reason it is said today that “the question of the meaning of the ‘catholicity of the church’ not only becomes the most vital problem for every Christian ecclesiology, but is also of basic importance in our inter-Christian ecumenical dialogue.”⁶

Although Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) are not official participants in the ecumenical movement, it is imperative not to think ecclesiology as if the movement does not exist. As Evangelicals and Roman Catholics re-formulate their thoughts on catholicity, what do SDAs have to say about these developments? At the least, SDAs need to be able to account for ways in which ecclesiology either intersects or departs from ecclesiological developments within the ecumenical movement. This paper reflects on new ways of thinking about the catholicity of the church and how SDA ecclesiology might relate to them. The discussion will be divided into three sections: catholicity *then* (before the ecumenical movement); catholicity *now* (since the ecumenical movement); and catholicity *now* as related between Roman Catholic and SDA ecclesiology.

⁴ Vischer, Borovoy, and Welch, “The Meaning of Catholicity,” 34.

⁵ Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation: Part 1*, vol. 4 of *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 703.

⁶ Vischer, Borovoy, and Welch, “The Meaning of Catholicity,” 26.

2. Catholicity *Then*

Although referring to references on catholicity before the ecumenical movement with the phrase “catholicity *then*,” the purpose is not to give the impression that there was any consensus of meaning during this period. Perhaps, as this paper tries to show, the common distinguishing feature about this particular notion during this period was that, however conceived, catholicity was seen as a *possession*; something to be possessed.

With regards to the meaning of catholicity, the Bible is not very helpful since it does not use the word in the theological sense.⁷ It is generally agreed that the earliest Christian use of the term is attested in Ignatius of Antioch’s letter to the Smyrneans.⁸ Dulles dismisses this usage in Ignatius as fleeting and hence unfruitful in the search for the meaning of the term, but Steve R. Harmon disagrees. In the latter’s view the phrase ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία in Smyrneans 8.2 has been etymologically and correctly translated in Bart Ehrman’s translation in the new LCL edition as “wherever Jesus Christ is, there also is the universal church.”⁹ The idea of the church as universal derives from this conclusion. That is, catholicity is a quantitative expression that encompasses the wholeness, totality, or universality of the church.¹⁰ Harmon argues that already in Ignatius there was a qualitative sense of the church.¹¹ In any case, by the time of Cyril of Jerusalem (middle of the fourth

⁷ Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church*, 13.

⁸ See for example *ibid.*, 14 and Vischer, Borovoy, and Welch, “The Meaning of Catholicity,” 26.

⁹ See Bart D. Ehrman, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers* (2 vols.; LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1:305, quoted in Harmon, “Qualitative Catholicity,” 36. The simple translation of the phrase as “the catholic church” is seen as transliterative.

¹⁰ Harmon, “Qualitative Catholicity,” 36.

¹¹ Harmon notes that “one paragraph prior to the description of the church as ‘catholic’ in *Smyrneans* 8, Ignatius warns the church at Smyrna regarding the doctrine and practice of the Docetists, ‘They abstain from the eucharist and prayer, since they do not confess that the eucharist is the flesh of our savior Jesus Christ, which suffered on behalf of our sins and which the Father raised in his kindness.’” *Ibid.*, 37. Furthermore, “Ignatius links the doctrinal errors of the Docetists, who lacked a truly embodied Christology, with their failures to embody the Christian way of life: ‘But take note of those who [are heterodox with reference to] the gracious gift of Jesus Christ that has come to us, and see how they are opposed to the mind of God. They have no interest in love, in the widow, the orphan, the oppressed, the one who is in chains or the one set free, the one who is hungry or the one who thirsts.’” *Ibid.* Harmon’s conclusion is that for Ignatius, qualitative catholicity is robustly incarnation and therefore sacramental and concerned with social justice. See *ibid.*

century) a more precise and comprehensive sense of the term including both quantitative and qualitative aspects seemed to be emerging. Cyril argues that

the Church is called Catholic because it is spread throughout the world, from end to end of the earth; also because it teaches universally and completely all the doctrines which [one] should know concerning things visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly; and also because it subjects to right worship all [hu]mankind, rulers and ruled, lettered and unlettered; further because it treats and heals universally every sort of sin committed by soul and body, and it possesses in itself every conceivable virtue, whether in deeds, words or in spiritual gifts of every kind.¹²

In the quotation above, Cyril provides five bases for the church's catholicity: it extends to the ends of the earth; teaches all necessary doctrines; brings all humans into subjection; treats and heals every kind of sin; and possesses every conceivable virtue. The Donatist controversy in North Africa during the fourth and fifth centuries brought about further developments in the notion of catholicity. The Donatists qualitatively identified catholicity with strict obedience to the commandments while the *orthodox*, such as Augustine, emphasized the communion and quantitative spread of the church over the whole world as essential to catholicity. Augustine in particular stressed the spirituality of the church's communion, which, he argued, is sealed by the sacrament of the Eucharist.¹³ Augustine's view on catholicity prevailed throughout the Middle Ages.

The failure of the Council of Florence (1431-1445) to unite the East and West, followed by the break-up of the Western church during the Reformation, created new challenges for the meaning of catholicity. On their part, the Orthodox churches argued and claimed catholicity qualitatively on the basis of their adherence to the fullness of the faith handed to them from the fathers. In the face of additional opposition from the Reformation, Roman Catholics, on their part, entrenched their views on catholicity in Augustine's quantitative position, thus insisting to be the true church by reason of their wider geographical extension. It was only a natural step for Roman Catholics, in the nineteenth century, to couple geographical extension with "a special concern for visible unity, understood as an adherence to the same set of doctrines, rites, and hierarchical leaders."¹⁴ On the part of

¹² See Bernard M. Peebles, ed., *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, vol. 2. of *The Fathers of the Church*, trans. Leo P. McCauley and Anthony A. Stephenson (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1970), 132.

¹³ Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church*, 14.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16. Dulles notes furthermore that "all four attributes or marks of the church [one, holy, catholic, and apostolic] tended to be reduced to apostolicity, in the sense

Protestants, many early Lutheran theologians claimed the title of catholicity for their church, depriving Rome of the title as they argued that the latter had introduced doctrinal innovations and thereby departed from catholicity. Thus while Roman Catholics emphasized *quantitative* catholicity Protestants stressed *qualitative* catholicity.

The nineteenth century saw other more divergent developments among both Roman Catholics and Protestants. Among Roman Catholics, the Romanticism of the early nineteenth century created a new enthusiasm for catholic tradition both in Germany (the Tuebingen School of Johann Sebastian Drey and Johann Adam Mohler) and Britain (the Oxford movement under John Keble, Edward Pusey, and John Henry Newman). Catholicity for these movements was more imaginative and liturgical, focusing on the life of grace in the church mediated through the church and its sacraments. On the Protestant side, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Enlightenment spawned liberal Protestantism. This movement saw Catholicism (comprising traditionalism, orthodoxy, ritualism, and monasticism) rather with suspicion, “a kind of original fall from grace which overtook the church in the course of its history.”¹⁵

What seems clear in this brief survey of the history of catholicity is that a term was born and developed out of contest for Christian identity. Harmon is therefore correct in arguing that even Ignatius’s quantitative use of catholicity does not exclude “a much more narrow meaning that increasingly became associated with the later patristic use of the Greek *καθολικός* and the Latin *catholicus* with reference to the pattern of faith and practice that distinguished early catholic Christianity from Docetism and eventually from Gnosticism, Marcionism, Arianism, Donatism, and all manner of other heresies and schisms.”¹⁶ In the context of conflict and separated communions, then, a community was/is either catholic or not, in the sense of *possession*.¹⁷ However catholic was defined, a faith community was either deemed to possess it or not. The notion of possession was/is also at the heart of the struggle over the marks of the “true church.”

Karl Barth’s discussion of catholicity in his *Dogmatics* clearly portrays it as a possession of the true church. First, he affirms that the adjective catholic means general and comprehensive; and speaks of an identity, continuity

of obedience to the bishops who were in union with the pope, and thus ultimately obedience to the pope himself as supreme vicar of Christ.” Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 17.

¹⁶ Harmon, “Qualitative Catholicity,” 37.

¹⁷ Vischer, Borovoy, and Welch, “The Meaning of Catholicity,” 25.

and universality, which is maintained in all differences. Applying catholicity to the church he observes, "It means that it *has* a character in virtue of which it is always and everywhere the same and always and everywhere recognizable in this sameness, to the preservation of which it is committed. In the character of this sameness it exists and shows itself to be the true church."¹⁸ For Barth, that church is true and catholic which explicitly seeks to confirm its identity in all its forms. In this sense, a "Church is catholic or it is not the Church."¹⁹ It was a great sign of weakness, in Barth's view, that Protestants surrendered the term to Romanists, while they themselves were described derogatively as a-catholics or schismatics, "as though a genuine church and theology could have any other tendency at all than one which is not merely 'catholicising' but seriously 'catholic!'"²⁰

Barth explains that the "catholic" essence of the church, which it seeks to maintain in all its forms, was first primarily understood in a *geographical* sense, namely, that the church was identical in all parts of the world where it exists. Out of this narrower sense has derived a broader sense in terms of the church's relationship to natural and socio-historical institutions such as race, culture, and classes. Here, catholicity of the church means that church cannot allow its conception of itself to be dictated by these realities. "Christians will always be Christians first," Barth observes, "and only then members of a specific culture or state or class or the like."²¹ Next, Barth describes an even broader sense of catholicity from the *temporal* perspective. The church is catholic in a temporal way when it maintains itself in the "identity of its essence even in the historical sequence of its forms."²² In other words, although the church is subject to continual change, it cannot become something other than itself. Barth's key point is that the church is catholic neither simply in its oldest or newest form, "but in every age, and in controversy with the spirit of the age, to ask concerning the form and doctrine and ministry which is in accordance with the unalterable essence of the church.... It means never to grow tired of returning not to the origin in time but to the origin in substance of the community."²³ Finally, Barth relates the principle of catholicity to *individual* believers, for whom catholicity will mean that their faith has its basis, norm, and limit in the Christian community and not

¹⁸ Barth, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, 701. Emphasis supplied.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 702.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 703.

²² *Ibid.*, 704.

²³ *Ibid.*, 705.

in them as individuals. He points out in particular that individuals' personal knowledge and confession ought to be coordinated with and subordinated to the knowledge and confession of the community.²⁴

It should be noted that consistent with Barth's Reformation heritage, the essence of the church for which catholicity is predicated is Jesus Christ. He observes,

And if in anything at all, then in this clear knowledge of its limit it will be catholic—in its satisfaction with Jesus Christ Himself, in the fact that it will not give to its activity any other character than that of a diaconate or witness in His service, that it will be zealous and loyal in this character, that it will not invest it with any kind of mysterious importance or magic or thaumaturgy or supernatural legality or authoritative claim, that, in the words of 1 Thess, 5[17], it will simply prove it by praying without ceasing. He, the living Son of God, is himself its identical and continuing and universal essence.... He is the source and norm of its identity: the *veritas catholica*.²⁵

3. Catholicity *Now*: A Roman Catholic Perspective

Social, cultural, and religious movements that arose in the wake of the Enlightenment have called into question several of the existing conceptualizations of the church's catholicity. Fidelity to the early church fathers came to be viewed as anachronistic, and the diversity, sheer spread, and international organization of various Christian communities in the world made the exclusive catholic claims of the Roman Catholic Church ring hollow. Meanwhile, the globalization of World Religions (Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.) and non-religious ideologies such as Marxism seemed to make Christian claims of hegemony sound paternalistic.²⁶ In this climate rethinking of catholicity seemed inevitable.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 712.

²⁶ We should observe with Herman Bavinck that "the Catholicity of the church that is confessed by all Christians presupposes the catholicity of the Christian religion. It is based on the conviction that Christianity is a world religion that should govern all people and sanctify all creatures irrespective of geography, nationality, place, and time." See Herman Bavinck, "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," *CTJ* 27 (1992): 221.

Both Roman Catholic and Protestant emphasize Christology in their understanding and rethinking of catholicity. On the Roman Catholic side, the focus is on ideas drawn from Dulles' *The Catholicity of the Church*. The word catholic may have been derived from the Greek adverbial phrase *Kath' holou*, and therefore probably means "wholeness."²⁷ From this viewpoint, Dulles sees the term *pleroma* in Col 2:9 as perhaps the nearest equivalent of what Christians call catholicity. He goes on to delineate four distinctive aspects of catholicity: 1. Catholicity from above, 2. Catholicity from below, 3. Catholicity in breadth, and 4. Catholicity in length.²⁸

3.1. Catholicity from Above: The Height of Catholicity

The *pleroma* of Christ means that he is the ultimate embodiment of the catholicity which the church reflects. Dulles reflects on the catholicity of Christ and its implications for the church under three aspects: (i) incarnationally, (ii) as head of creation, and (iii) as head of the church. Incarnationally, the church's catholicity, must be reflective of the fact that the divine word of God has entered into a kind of union with the cosmos. As head of creation, Dulles seeks to heal what he calls the "unfortunate cleavage" that was placed in the West between body and spirit, nature and person, and faith and reason. The incarnation should have a bearing not only on human destiny but on the larger universe of nature as well. Thus, Dulles is appreciative of the work of such Roman Catholic scholars as Maurice Blondel and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin who conclude that the existence and career of Christ "have constitutive and transformative importance for the entire universe, including both the material and spiritual realms."²⁹ Dulles goes so far as to endorse Teilhard's postulate of a third nature of Christ which he called cosmic, as well as his notion of "pleromatization" which signified "the completion received by the expanding universe as all things are brought into convergence by the Christic energies of love."³⁰ Reflecting on the meaning of Christ's headship of the church for its catholicity, Dulles explores Paul's metaphor of Christ as the head of the church which is his

²⁷ Ramsey, "Catholicism," 86-87.

²⁸ Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church*, 30-47.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 37. Dulles notes that the "'pan-Christic' universalism of Blondel and Teilhard de Chardin has, in some respects, become official Catholic teaching in Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World." *Ibid.*, 38.

body (Eph 5:22-24). "Because the head and the body make up one mystical person," Dulles remarks, "they prolong Christ's very self in space and time. By a kind of exchange of properties, similar between the human and divine natures in Christ, what belongs to the head can be predicated of the body, and vice versa."³¹ He uses the same imagery to call on churches involved in ecumenism to embark on the recovery of catholicity.

3.2. Catholicity from Below: The Depth of Catholicity

Dulles points out that the fullness or plenitude in Christ requires a corresponding anthropology that makes its possibility meaningful. He reiterates the Roman Catholic understanding that when the Holy Spirit enters the human realm, it penetrates not only the spiritual faculties of intellect and will but the person's whole being, including the sensory and bodily aspects.³² Therefore, Dulles' view is that God's redemptive action should be studied not merely from quasi-judicial categories such as justification and imputation but in the ontological categories of creation and re-creation. Here, Dulles joins those who criticize Luther for allegedly disparaging the natural because of his teaching on *total depravity*. He argues that while Roman Catholics initially responded to *Protestant exaggerations* by overemphasizing the continuity between the natural and unnatural, Roman Catholic theology preserves nature intact even as it underwent some impairment because of sin.

The positive appreciation of nature in Roman Catholic theology has had implications in several directions. First, "human reason, in the present state of fallen nature, retains its ability to establish the existence of God."³³ Second, the positive appraisal of nature means a reverence for the body, which is reflected in the liturgy of Catholicism which focuses not only on the ear but to all the senses.³⁴ Third, based on this reasoning there is a positive reception of Karl Rahner's idea that "every morally good act of man is, in the actual order of salvation, also a supernaturally salutary act."³⁵ The

³¹ Ibid., 41.

³² Ibid., 48.

³³ Ibid., 52.

³⁴ Ibid., 55.

³⁵ Ibid., 59.

presupposition for this view has to be the Roman Catholic idea that the offering of grace is universal.³⁶ Fourth, the theology of nature has also led to a positive appreciation of world religions. While leaving open the question of whether non-Christian religions contain revelation and are in themselves salvific, the Second Vatican Council was able to hold the following two principles in tension: (i) non-Christian faiths often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men and (ii) the church must always proclaim Christ as the one in whom the fullness of religious life is found.³⁷ Finally, since the whole creation comes under the concern of Christ's redemption, "the Church cannot simply abandon the world to its own devices or accept an unresolved dualism between the sacred and the secular."³⁸

In sum, the idea that humans and the creation are by nature constituted to participate in the plenitude of Christ represents what is called vertical catholicity.

3.3. Catholicity in Breadth: Mission and Communion

The church's catholicity in breadth reflects the fullness of Christ in its universal dimension as anticipated in Christ's ministry. While on the one hand the ministry seemed limited to the lost sheep of Israel (Matt 10:6; 15:24), its future expansiveness was already hinted at (Matt 8:10-12; 25:31-46; Luke 10:29-37). Dulles believes that the fourfold "all" in Matt 28:18-19 certifies the catholic character of the church's mission. Much of the NT evidences the intensification of the church's universalism after Christ (Gal 3:27-28; Col 3:10-11; Eph 2:14). In Dulles' view, missionary activity in the early modern period caused the Roman Catholic Church to "come to a deeper realization that the sphere of Christ's redemptive work is much wider than the church as a visible society."³⁹ Thus, it is in spreading her faith that the church *actualizes* her own catholicity. Dulles explains, "Constituted in the world as a sacrament, or efficacious sign, of God's universal redemptive will in Christ, the Church is driven by an inner dynamism to represent the whole of humanity as the recipient of redemption."⁴⁰

³⁶ Ibid., 58.

³⁷ Ibid., 60-61.

³⁸ Ibid., 64.

³⁹ Ibid., 73.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 74.

The question of inculturation has not been lost on Dulles in this rethinking. The implication, for him, is that it makes for openness to different spiritualities, different ways of thinking about the faith, different styles of worship, etc. as an expression of unity to be distinguished from uniformity. In this way, the Christian life is to be accommodated to the genius and richness of all nations, not only for the living, but also for “those who have passed into the life to come.”⁴¹

3.4. Catholicity in Length: Tradition and Development

Dulles recognizes that the historical continuity of the church is generally discussed under the notion of apostolicity, yet he is also aware of the concept of *catholicity in time* in Roman Catholic tradition. The concept appeals to him partly because of the correspondence between time and space. And in both cases his view is that between Pentecost and the parousia, the church is the symbolic center out of which the fullness of Christ spreads to all creation. Dulles weighs in on the debate regarding the condition of the church during this period. First, the church in history really participates in the grace of Christ. Christ’s *pleroma* inheres in the church “as something it can never lose,” according to the Second Vatican Council.⁴² It is a gift that is inseparable from the *being* of the church. Thus on the spectrum of the history of the church either (i) as a decline from original purity, (ii) as unbroken progress towards future fullness, (iii) as a perpetuation of an original endowment, Dulles grants that “Catholic Christianity is committed to a fundamental continuity. It holds that the Holy Spirit, having inspired the apostolic Scriptures, continues to be with the Church at every stage of her development preventing her from betraying the apostolic heritage.”⁴³

Dulles grants, however, that in the past Catholic theology had not easily come to terms with the realities of history and confused continuity with immutability just as they had universality with uniformity. In Dulles’ assessment, tradition today is a dynamic, progressive concept. From this perspective, catholicity is a heterogeneous unity; a unity in difference, implying that catholicity in time includes an element of discontinuity; calling for responsiveness to time and seasons, and thus bringing to expression the

⁴¹ Ibid., 84.

⁴² Thomas P. Rausch, *Catholicism in the Third Millennium*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003), 58.

⁴³ Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church*, 98.

catholic fullness of the church.⁴⁴ Dulles points out that catholicity in time and its implications for realizing the integral reality of Christianity undercuts Protestants' rallying cry of "Scripture alone."

After this brief overview of Roman Catholic rethinking of catholicity, it is possible to conclude that without setting aside the notion of catholicity as a *possession* of the church, a more dynamic notion of catholicity as a *task* seems to be taking root.

4. Catholicity Now: A Non-Roman Perspective

At the Faith and Order Conference of the World Council of Churches held in Montreal in 1963, Claude Welch provided some significant Protestant reflections on the catholicity of the church.⁴⁵ Welch recognized the paucity of reflection on catholicity among Protestants, and noted the polemic tenor in which the few extant reflections were cast. From the outset, then, he intended his thinking on catholicity to be free from the polemic heritage in which communions try to interpret it in a way that becomes their sole possession.

In Welch's view, the way forward to a rich and fruitful deliberation on catholicity is to think about it as an *image* which suggests, connotes, as well as denotes without being rigid and static, but dynamic and fluid. For him, this suggestion is not a retreat into vagueness, romanticism, or eclecticism, but rather a reflection of the way he sees the NT as witnessing to Jesus Christ as *the truth*, employing many images to communicate a phenomenon that transcends verbal formulation. To think of the catholicity of the church in this way is to think about the church's life as participation in Christ, who is the head of the church, through the Holy Spirit. From this perspective, catholicity is not a possession or quality. Rather, it is a *means* by which the church sees itself *in* the wholeness (*pleroma*) of God and of Jesus Christ.

Two clear consequences flow from Welch's suggestion. First, because the life of the church comes from the head, catholicity can be spoken of as a *gift* and not something to be generated or possessed by the community apart from Christ. The image of catholicity must refer less to something the church "is" than "to the reality of the Church as 'being-in-becoming,'" "a sense of continuous and free presence and working of Christ and the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 102.

⁴⁵ Vischer, Borovoy, and Welch, "The Meaning of Catholicity," 34-35.

Spirit.”⁴⁶ Second, since catholicity in Welch’s image is a continuous phenomenon, it indicates a task calling for expression and practice rather than a possession. Furthermore, Welch considers some key dimensions of meaning for catholicity, which his concept of image brings.

First, catholicity points to a wholeness of the *truth* in Christ, which is not to be confused with *qualitative* definitions of catholicity or with such other definitions as the *true church*. The authenticity or truth with which catholicity is rightly concerned is not best conceived of as true doctrine or fidelity in witness. Welch observes, “insofar as ‘catholic church’ means ‘true church’ it means the fullness of the truth in which the Church lives, the whole truth of Christ understood in movement from the centre outward and not as any limited arc on the circumference.”⁴⁷ Such catholic truth is less a totality of teaching than an invitation to express Jesus Christ as the one concrete truth in his wholeness. It is a wholeness that resists a single pattern of interpretation. It is a catholicity that views other traditions as not foreign once they are rooted in Christ. It is a “catholicity in method,” a mode of thinking that calls attention to God’s work as a whole in the past, present, and future, incorporating a variety of theological models and overcoming “apparent antinomies by renewing and deepening every thought in the wholeness of Christ.”⁴⁸

Second, catholicity as conceived by Welch intensifies the church’s understanding of mission. The incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ have such a depth of engagement and universal significance that catholicity cannot accept limitations of geography or distinctions of caste, class, or race as well as churchly imperialism. Here Welch comes close to the Roman Catholic position by suggesting that catholicity in the church is a reflex of the catholicity of God’s grace and truth in creation.

Third, the fullness of Christ makes any effort to establish marks of catholicity to be uncatholic. The fullness of Christ may be authentically expressed via unexpected media other than word and sacrament. Hence *catholic* is not to be prefaced by any denominational qualifier. All should gratefully acknowledge the ways in which the fullness of Christ is manifest in other Christian bodies.

Finally, since catholicity as a gift and task reaches every particular church everywhere, “every proclamation of the Word and celebration of the sacrament, every act of ministry and mercy in the name of Christ, every effort to manifest his creative and reconciling power, must be undertaken

⁴⁶ Ibid., 37.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 39.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 40.

as an act of and for and in the 'whole' Church."⁴⁹

Contemporary evangelical thinking on catholicity does not differ much in substance from Welch's view, except perhaps in its stronger emphasis on what one might call *gospel catholicity*. Mark Dever concludes in his brief essay on "A Catholic Church" observing, "The church's catholicity is rooted in and bounded by the gospel's catholicity. Anytime, anywhere, anyone can be forgiven his or her sins by faith alone in the one and only Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the true catholic doctrine of the true catholic church. If your church does not teach that, it is not catholic, no matter what's on the sign outside."⁵⁰ Dever grounds his argument mainly in his exegesis of Gal 3:26-29, noting it to be "the text that has within it the universal, or catholic, nature of the church."⁵¹ The implications of this gospel catholicity, which Dever draws, especially those of contra provincialism, contra sectarianism, and contra racism are not unlike the conclusions of both Dulles and Welch in their ecumenical import. He remarks,

[D]enominations, and those distinctives that separate us from other evangelicals, should never be allowed to become ultimate. Confessing that there is a catholic church does not mean that denominations are necessarily wrong. Insofar as they allow Christians in good conscience to work for the kingdom, and they do not breed an uncharitable and wrongly divisive spirit, they can be helpful.... But the recognition of what we hold in common among true, faithful Christians must always be valued more highly and held more deeply than that which divides us. The gospel is displayed in its essentials when our distinctives are relegated to important but nonessential status. Understanding the truly catholic nature of the true church works against our wrong-headed sectarianism.⁵²

5. Summary of Perspectives on *Catholicity Now*

Although Dulles and Welch approach the subject of catholicity differently, there is a great degree of similarity between their positions. Dulles' exploration of the *pleroma* of Christ through his incarnation, and his headship of

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁵⁰ Richard D. Phillips, Philip G. Ryken, and Mark E. Dever, *The Church: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2004), 92.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 89.

creation and the church bears a close resemblance to Welch's "master-image"⁵³ of catholicity. By bringing the *person* of Christ to the center of the discussion, Dulles and Welch seem to have managed to create a wide enough circumference, quantitatively and qualitatively, for the church that is able to accommodate competing and even potentially discordant voices. Furthermore, a key aspect to note in this formulation is what I call a *uni-focal or uni-directional catholicity* where the church has an integral identity as *one entity* during what Dulles calls the "pilgrim Church within historical time." Then, he asserts that

the Church at this stage [between Pentecost and the parousia] already participates in a real, definitive, though imperfect manner, in the fullness of God's gift in Christ; secondly, that this participation brings about a real continuity or communion between different generations of Christians; thirdly, that the different periods of the Church, notwithstanding this continuity, have their own distinctive character, so that the latter is able to complement and complete what has been initiated by the earlier.⁵⁴

Contemporary evangelical thinking on catholicity as represented by Dever's "gospel-centered" approach displays the same *uni-focal or uni-directional catholicity* noted immediately above. These formulations of catholicity are very appropriate to an ecumenical climate. They also demonstrate postmodern sensitivity. The issue that remains now is how to relate SDA ecclesiology to these developments.

6. SDA Ecclesiology and Catholicity

Now

SDA definition of the church as "the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour"⁵⁵ bears a close resemblance to Ignatius' definition of the church. Indeed, it is similar in essence to how Protestants in general define the church.⁵⁶ In contrast, however, SDAs go a step further

⁵³ Vischer, Borovoy, and Welch, "The Meaning of Catholicity," 35.

⁵⁴ Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church*, 92.

⁵⁵ See Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: An Exposition of the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 163. Recall Bart Ehrman's translation of Ignatius' phrase ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία in Smyrneans 8.2 as "wherever Jesus Christ is, there also is the universal church."

⁵⁶ See, for example, John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, *Protestant Christianity* (New

to make a distinction between a *universal church* and a *remnant church*. It is affirmed that “[t]he universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”⁵⁷ To the extent that SDAs identify themselves with the remnant while acknowledging the universal church, it may be said that SDA ecclesiology is characteristically remnant ecclesiology. It is clearly a bi-directional⁵⁸ ecclesiology, implying that SDAs may only speak of catholicity from a bi-directional perspective. The validity of this approach will be discussed later.

It would seem, however, that an ecclesiology such as remnant ecclesiology and its implications for catholicity is the kind of caveat that *catholicity now* wishes to deliver. A remnant ecclesiology could potentially come across as *uncatholic*, triumphalistic, and arrogant. Indeed, SDAs have been so accused. Yet, it is instructive to note that SDAs share some key concerns of ecclesiology and catholicity with contemporary thinking on the matter.

6.1. The Centrality of Christ

We have already noted that reflections on catholicity *now* focus on the person of Christ. For Dulles the *pleroma* of Christ means that he is the ultimate embodiment of catholicity, just as for Welch catholicity is a *means* by which the church sees itself *in* the wholeness (*pleroma*) of God and of Jesus Christ. Dever’s gospel-christocentric focus has been noted. SDAs would also say that “theologically speaking, Jesus Christ is the truest ‘remnant.’”⁵⁹ From these perspectives, it would seem that the concepts of catholicity and remnant should have a close relationship. Upon close investigation, however, a significant divergence becomes evident between contemporary views on the centrality of Christ in catholicity and the SDA placement of Christ at the center of the remnant.

From the Roman Catholic point of view, the centrality of Christ has ended up in a view of the church as a sacrament. This view was already

York: Macmillan, 1988), 42. They declared, “The church is the community or fellowship of believers, those who are committed to God in Christ and who live by God’s mercy and power.” Ibid.

⁵⁷ *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 181.

⁵⁸ See Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, “Concluding Essay: God’s End-Time Remnant and the Christian Church,” in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, vol. 1 of *Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2009), 217.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 202.

evident in Dulles' reflections on "catholicity from above." It has been said that one of the more durable achievements of the Second Vatican Council was its construal of the church as a sacrament. Christ's connection to the world is defined in sacramental terms through the church. Hence, the church is defined as a "sacrament – a sign and instrument, that is – of communion with God and of unity among all people."⁶⁰ We noted above that even Welch comes close to the Roman Catholic position by suggesting that catholicity of the church is a reflex of the catholicity of God's grace and truth in creation; Dever's views stand close to Welch's.

SDAs, on the other hand, identify Christ as the truest remnant not in sacramental terms, or even from a gospel interpreted christocentrism, but from a theological understanding of the remnant as the means of God's continuous plan of salvation.⁶¹ From its root meaning of "what is left of a community after it undergoes a catastrophe," the remnant motif became incorporated into salvation history as an expression of the future expectations of those who had faith in Yahweh.⁶² The remnant as the nucleus of God's true people became the means of God's redemptive work in the face of all manner of difficulties (1 Kgs 19:14; 2 Kgs 17:18; 25:11; Ezra 9:8; Isa 11:10-13; 65:8; Jer 31:7-9). It is in his position as God's ultimate *instrument* for the salvation of humankind that Christ stands at the watershed of God's redemptive activity. As one who remained absolutely loyal to God on earth, and paid the price for humanity's rebellion, and thereby preserved the human race, Christ has become the ultimate and truest remnant.

6.2. Catholicity as Continuity

Reflections on catholicity from all sides show the need to affirm the continuity of the church as the people of God. We have seen above the Roman Catholic view in Dulles's discussion of this issue under "catholicity in length" where he states that the unity of the church "as something she can

⁶⁰ Quoted in Nathan Mitchell, "Sacrament: More Than Meets the Eye," *Worship* 83 (2009): 350.

⁶¹ For a complete discussion of the concept of the remnant as the motif for addressing the question of life and death throughout the OT, see Rodriguez's *Toward a Theology of the Remnant*.

⁶² Lester V. Meyer, "Remnant," *ABD* 5:669, as quoted in Tarsee Li, "The Remnant in the Old Testament," in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant*, ed. Angel Manuel Rodriguez, vol. 1 of *Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2009), 23.

never lose.”⁶³ Here, as before, sacramentality guarantees continuity, except in this case Christ’s sacramental presence in the church is also guaranteed by the apostles and their successors, the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestant view of Welch, though fundamentally different from the Roman Catholic approach, guarantees continuity through the concept of “catholicity in method.” We may recall this idea as a mode of thinking that comprehends God’s work as incorporating a variety of theological models and overcoming “apparent antinomies by renewing and deepening every thought in the wholeness of Christ.”⁶⁴ In this way, the door of the potential for continuity among all expression of the church seems wide open. For Dever, the gospel is the key to the historical continuity and global solidarity of the church. For this reason, he chides Baptists’ congregational church polity.⁶⁵

The issue of continuity of the people of God is also critical to SDAs’ remnant ecclesiology. Indeed, for them, the remnant concept is *the principle* of continuity. The theological notion of the *faithful* remnant in particular addresses the continuity of God’s people in the Bible. In his tripartite typology of the remnant concept in biblical theology, Gerhard Hasel distinguished the faithful remnant as a group marked “by their genuine spirituality and true faith relationship with God; this remnant is the carrier of all divine election promises.”⁶⁶ Eugene Merrill’s observation summarizes the key point about the remnant as the principle of continuity:

It was a fact that the people of the Lord always tended to fall away from Him except for a small minority, the remnant, who would remain faithful to their covenant responsibilities. In other words, there was always an Israel within Israel, the true kernel surrounded by the husk of an external national entity. The saving purposes and promises of Yahweh could not, therefore, find fulfilment in the nation as such but only in that godly core that He preserved through the ages.⁶⁷

⁶³ Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church*, 94.

⁶⁴ Vischer, Borovoy, and Welch, “The Meaning of Catholicity,” 40.

⁶⁵ Phillips, Ryken, and Dever, *The Church*, 74-76.

⁶⁶ Gerhard Hasel, “Remnant,” *ISBE* 130.

⁶⁷ Eugene H. Merrill, “A Theology of Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther,” in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Chicago: Moody, 1991), p. 194, quoted in Li, “The Remnant in the Old Testament,” 30.

6.3. Qualitative Catholicity

An aspect of catholicity which seems to receive less and less attention is what used to be known as qualitative catholicity, which in the context of the Donatist controversy meant obedience to God's commandments. The idea was present in Cyril of Jerusalem with his comment on the church's teaching of all the doctrines which one ought to know concerning things visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly. We may also recall Harmon's insistence that Ignatius used catholicity qualitatively as a pattern for faith and practice that distinguished early *catholic* Christians from other religious groups. The idea was clearly present in the early Reformers who, contending that their own church was catholic because it "adhered to the doctrine of Scripture and to the common teaching of the Fathers of the ancient, undivided Church. They accused Rome of having introduced doctrinal innovations and of having departed from catholicity."⁶⁸ Today, qualitative catholicity is defined with no effort to exploit catholicity as a visible mark of the true church but rather as the quality by which the church expresses the fullness, integrity, and totality of life in Christ.⁶⁹

On this issue, the contribution of SDA remnant ecclesiology to a truly biblical concept of catholicity could be substantial. The remnant principle is capable of maintaining the historical continuity of the people of God while at the same time introducing necessary distinctions. The bi-directional nature of SDA catholicity comes to view here. The idea is already inherent in Christ's remark: "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also" (John 10:16). God's people in the last days are spread out in a "universal church" that goes beyond denominationalism, and which necessarily is invisible. In SDA understanding, an eschatological remnant (Rev 12:17) has been called out as God's visible means of bringing his people into one sheep pen.⁷⁰ God's people then, presently, exist bi-focally in a visible remnant and in an invisible universal church. SDA remnant ecclesiology, therefore, informs a bi-directional/bi-focal catholicity which is at the same time quantitative and qualitative.

⁶⁸ Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church*, 16.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷⁰ For a full discussion on the marks of the visible remnant and SDA appropriation of it, see chapters 5, 6, 8, and 11 of Rodriguez's *Toward a Theology of the Remnant*.

6.4. Quantitative Catholicity

Quantitative catholicity, Dulles' "catholicity in breadth" discussed previously, draws our attention to the mission and geographical aspects of catholicity. Remnant based catholicity along with contemporary thinking on catholicity emphasizes the elimination of distinctions of caste, class, or race. In Dulles' estimation this makes for openness to different spiritualities, different ways of thinking about the faith, different styles of worship, etc. The risk of syncretism is ever present in this approach. In any case, remnant based catholicity is intensely quantitative in these geographical respects. The mission of the remnant is portrayed with the image of an angel flying in mid-heaven with the eternal gospel directed to "those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people" (Rev 14:6). The heart of the gospel to be presented by the remnant, however, does not seem to be as concerned with socio-cultural issues, or even limited to issues of justification and sanctification, as important as they are, as it does with calling people's attention to obedience, fear of God, and true worship (Rev 14:7-14). From the viewpoint of mission, therefore, remnant based catholicity ties neatly together both quantitative and qualitative aspects of catholicity.

7. Conclusion

Thinking on the notion of the church's catholicity has evolved and developed since its initial attestation in Ignatius of Antioch. It seems that the concept has its roots in the wholeness (*pleroma*) which is found in Christ as it is reflected in the church. The development of the concept, therefore, represents the various dimensions in which this wholeness in Christ is expressed in and through the Christian church. It is perhaps helpful to say that all of these dimensions may be summed up from the two viewpoints of quantitative and qualitative catholicity. Recent ecumenical discussions appear to focus on quantitative aspects of catholicity, but a wholesome catholicity must incorporate qualitative concerns as well. It would seem that the *biblical* doctrine of the remnant seems even better suited to address the ecclesiological concerns of the *pleroma* of Christ than the *theological* doctrine of catholicity.

THE HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH

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The holiness of the church was affirmed by the Niceno Constantinopolitan Creed of AD 381 which in Greek reads: "Πιστεύω εἰς ἕνα Θεόν, Πατέρα ... Καὶ εἰς ἕνα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν ... Καὶ εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον ... Εἰς μίαν, Ἁγίαν, Καθολικὴν καὶ Ἀποστολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν," and in Latin: "Credo in unum Deum, Patrem ... Et in unum Dominum Iesum Christum, ... Et in Spiritum Sanctum ... Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam."¹ In English: "I believe in one God, the Father ... and in one Lord, Jesus Christ ... and in the Holy Spirit ... and (in) one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church." Karl Barth, following the Latin text, which lacks another preposition before "unam," pointed out that it is not possible to believe in the church in the same way as one believes in the Godhead. There must be a distinction between believing in God and believing (in) the church. The holiness of the church is not the same as the holiness of the Holy Spirit. One is original, the other one is derived.²

These four adjectives *one*, *holy*, *catholic*, and *apostolic* have been used throughout church history to point to the key marks (*notae*) of the church. Although the Roman Catholic Church appropriates these characteristics for herself,³ Protestants feel they describe more than the Roman Catholic

¹ "Nicene Creed," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene_Creed; see also Thomas C. Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, vol. 3 of *Systematic Theology* (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 2001), 316.

² Karl Barth, *Die Lehre von der Versöhnung*, vol IV/1 of *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik* (Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1953), 766-767.

³ John A. O'Brien, *Der Glaube der Millionen: Die Beweise der Katholischen Religion* (Aschaffenburg: Paul Pattloch Verlag, 1950), 32-39. See also Medard Kehl, "The One Church and the Many Churches," *TD* 49 (2002): 34. The August 6, 2000 Roman Catholic declaration *Dominus Iesus* stresses the uniqueness of the Catholic Church and "maintains that particular churches (above all the Reformation churches) are 'not churches in the proper sense' (*sensu proprio Ecclesiae non sunt*)."⁴ On another note but related to the holiness of the church, George H. Tavard, "Holy Church or Holy Writ: A Dilemma of the Fourteenth Century," *CH* 23 (1954): 195-206, discusses the

Church.⁴ S. J. Grenz mentions that “the major church traditions view these marks differently.”⁵ It is also discussed, if the term holy points to something holy or to the fellowship of the saints.⁶ This paper will take a look at the second characteristic only, the holiness of the church.

Although there are a number of so-called holiness churches in the tradition of Methodism, Pentecostalism, and the Charismatic Movement that at least partially stress “‘three works of grace’—conversion, entire sanctification and a ‘baptism in the Spirit’ with speaking in tongues,”⁷ this study will not venture into this area. Instead, it will take a look at how Scripture uses the terms *church* and *holy*, ask how the phrase *the holy*

“remarkable, if unfortunate, break with the hitherto conventional doctrine on Scripture and Church ... reading the written word of God goes no longer hand in hand with listening to the living voice of the Church, and the voice of the Church, rather than growing from the contents of Scripture, is superseded to them” (195-196).

- ⁴ Cf. James C. Goodloe IV, “The Church: One and Holy,” *ThTo* 66 (2009): 205-210; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 3:405-414. Protestants felt also that these marks may not be enough, because they could be outward signs only. Reinder Bruinsma, *The Body of Christ: A Biblical Understanding of the Church* (Hagerstown: Review & Herald, 2009), 70, points out that Protestants have added “the pure preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments in a biblical way, and in particular for John Calvin, a faithful application of church discipline.” He mentions that Charismatics have added the gifts of the Spirit, and “Adventists lay stress on the keeping of the divine commandments and faithfulness to the ‘testimony of Jesus’ (Rev 12:17).” He concludes: “One might, with some justification, argue that all these aspects are included in the apostolicity of the church, as they are included in the apostolic heritage found in the New Testament writings” (70).
- ⁵ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 468. He points, e.g., to apostolic succession.
- ⁶ Fritz Buri, Jan Milič Lochman, and Heinrich Ott, *Dogmatik im Dialog: Die Kirche und die letzten Dinge* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1973), 37.
- ⁷ Donald W. Dayton, “The Holiness and Pentecostal Churches: Emerging from Cultural Isolation,” *The Christian Century* (1979): 786. See Dale T. Irvin, “Holiness unto the Lord’: Toward a Holiness Christian Dialogue with Judaism,” *JES* 34 (1997): 13-37, in which the author argues that the “‘second blessing’ of sanctification, which proponents identify with the baptism of the Holy Spirit” empowers people to keep “the Law in considerably high regard” while not arguing “that its covenantal form has been superseded by the church.” (13). See also Melvin E. Dieter, “The Development of Nineteenth Century Holiness Theology,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 20.1 (1985): 61-77; John W. V. Smith, “Holiness and Unity,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 10 (1975): 24-37; and Gilbert W. Stafford, “The Faith and Order Movement: Holiness Church Participation,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 32.1 (1997): 145-156.

church should be understood, and study implications of the concept of the holiness of the church.

1. Biblical Vocabulary

1.1. Holiness

A number of words express holiness, for instance, the Hebrew *qadosh* and *qodesh*. In Greek, most frequently the adjective *hagios* (holy, set apart) appears in the NT, followed by the verb *hagiazō* (to sanctify, purify, treat as holy), and the noun *hagiasmos* (holiness, sanctification, consecration). There is another noun of the same word family, *hagiōsynē* (holiness, uprightness) which, however, is found quite seldom. The terms *hosios* (holy) and *hosiotēs* (holiness) belong to another word family. Finally, there is the related term *hagnos* (pure).⁸

Term in the NT	Frequency in the NT
<i>hagios</i>	233 times
<i>hagiazō</i>	28 times
<i>hagiasmos</i>	10 times
<i>hagiōsynē</i>	3 times
<i>hagnos</i>	8 times
<i>hosios</i>	8 times
<i>hosiotēs</i>	2 times

Table 1. Occurrences of the Greek *hagios*

Holiness describes the awe-inspiring nature of God and is applied to persons and things that belong to God and stand in a relationship with him. The terms deals with the process of setting apart from what is evil or negative and with dedication devotion, and consecration to what is good.⁹

⁸ For a listing of the respective vocabulary see also G. F. Hawthorne, "Holy, Holiness," in *DLNT*, ed. Ralph P. Martins and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 485.

⁹ See O. Procksch, "hágios," in *TDNT*, G. Kittel, G. Friedrich, and G. W. Bromiley, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 1:17; Ted Cabal, "Holy," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. C. Brand, et al. (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 772; Siegfried H. Horn, ed., "Holy," *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary* (Washington

Holiness refers to persons that are holy, to holy places, and to holy things. It is not linked with the term *church* but it doubtlessly points — among other things— to a holy church. Here are some of the usages:

(1) Holy Persons

- God is the Holy Father (John 17:11). He is holy and true (Rev 6:16), and his name is hallowed (Matt 6:9).
- Jesus is the Holy One (Mark 1:24). He is also the holy servant (Acts 4:27) and the unique high priest “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens” (Heb 7:26). He “became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor 1:30).
- The Holy Spirit carries the adjective *hagios* in his very name. He does the work of sanctification (1 Pet 1:2).
- Because God is holy, those associated with him are holy too. There are heavenly beings that are holy such as the holy angels (Mark 8:38).
- John the Baptist was a holy man (Mark 6:20).
- There are the holy prophets (Luke 1:70), the holy apostles (Eph 3:5), the holy brethren (Heb 3:1), holy men (2 Pet 1:18), and holy women (1 Pet 3:5).
- A bishop must be holy (Titus 1:8).
- Christians are the holy ones, in other words the saints (Rom 1:7).
- They are also a holy temple of God (1 Cor 3:17), a holy nation (1 Pet 2:9), a holy priesthood (1 Pet 2:5), and the holy city of Rev 11:2.

These last statements indicate that the people of God are a holy people. Therefore, the church is a holy church. She is holy because she is connected to God. This concept is clearly found in the OT. Having arrived at Mt. Sinai God declares that Israel as the covenant-keeping people is con-

DC: Review & Herald, 1979), 504. It is said that “Fundamentally, holiness is a cutting off or separation from what is unclean and a consecration to what is pure.” W.A. Elwell and P. W. Comfort, eds., “Holiness,” in *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), 608. Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles in the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, vol. 4 of *Conflict of the Ages Series* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), 51, writes: “Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love.”

sidered by him “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation/people” (Exod 19:6), God’s “treasured possession” (Exod 19:5). Because of its relationship to God Israel is holy. In Lev 11:44-45 and 19:2, again in the context of encountering divine law, God exhorts his people “to be holy as he, the Lord, is holy.” What is said to and about the covenant people of God in the OT is appropriated by Christ’s church in the NT. For instance, the above mentioned statements found in Exodus and Leviticus are used in 1 Peter to describe the new covenant people of God (see 1 Pet 2:9 and 1:16).¹⁰ Holiness and the people of God are associated throughout Scripture. To some extent holiness seems to be a relational concept and yet is not limited to this aspect.

(2) Holy Places

- Jerusalem is the holy city (Matt 4:5).
- The mountain of transfiguration was a holy mountain (2 Pet 1:18).
- The temple (*hieron*) was a holy place (Acts 21:28).
- The earthly sanctuary had a Holy Place (Heb 9:2) and a Most Holy Place (Heb 9:3).
- Moses stood on holy ground when he experiences the phenomenon of the burning bush (Acts 7:33).¹¹
- The presence of God transforms ordinary places into holy places.

(3) Holy Things

- Whatever is holy should not be given to dogs (Matt 7:6).
- There is the holy covenant (Luke 1:72).
- God made promises in the Holy Scriptures (Rom 1:2)
- The law/commandment is holy and good (Rom 7:12).
- Christians greeted each other with a holy kiss (Rom 16:16).
- Men should lift up holy hands in prayer (1Tim 2:8).

(4) Our Sanctification and the Call to Holiness

- The Father sanctifies Jesus’s disciples (John 17:17). Jesus gave himself to sanctify his church and present her without wrinkle, blameless, and holy (Eph 5:25-27).

¹⁰ 1 Peter 2:5 reflects the same idea by calling the new covenant believers, the church, a “holy priesthood,” thereby combining the two phrases of Exodus 19:6, “kingdom of priests” and “holy nation.”

¹¹ The place was holy due to the presence of the angel of the LORD/the LORD (Exod 3:5).

- Believers have been sanctified by the blood of Jesus (Heb 10:10).
- Still God's will is our sanctification (1 Thess 4:3) "without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14).

While sanctification is described as God's past, present, and future work on and in us, believers are not to be passive in this work. The divine indicative leads to a divine imperative. Thus, the believer is supposed to "share in his holiness" (Heb 12:10).

1.2. The Church

In secular Greek the term *ekklēsia* designated a gathering of people, for instance, the assembly of citizens as a political entity. In the Septuagint the word is most often employed as a translation of the Hebrew word *qahal*, "gathering," "congregation," or "assembly." In the NT it normally describes the group of those, who believe in Jesus Christ and accept him and his teachings.¹² They "are joined to the organization originated by Him"¹³ and are his disciples and followers, called to minister to each other and the world and to proclaim what he has commanded them (Matt 28:20).¹⁴ S. Horn notes that *ekklēsia* as it refers to the Christian church is used for "(1) a church meeting (1Cor 11:18), (2) the total number of Christians living in one place (1Cor 4:17), (3) the church universal (Matt 16:18)."¹⁵ It is the community of the Holy Spirit and the people of God.

Let us take a closer look at how the *ekklēsia*, the church, is described in the NT.

- (1) Frequently, *ekklēsia* refers to a local church such as the church in Jerusalem (Acts 11:22), the church in Antioch (Acts 13:1) or the church in Cenchrea (Rom 16:1). It could be a house church (Rom 16:5).

¹² Cf. Erwin Fahlbusch, "Church. Subject, Tasks, and Problems of Ecclesiology," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. E. Fahlbusch et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 1:477-478; and Jürgen Roloff, "Church. Historical Aspects," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, edited by E. Fahlbusch et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 1:481.

¹³ Siegfried H. Horn, ed., "Church," in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary* (Washington DC: Review & Herald, 1979), 224.

¹⁴ Cf. G. Gloege, "Gemeinde. Begrifflich," in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Kurt Galling (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1958), 2:1325-1329.

¹⁵ Horn, "Church," 224.

- (2) The plural is used to describe churches in a certain area, for instance, in Judea (1 Thess 2:14) or Galatia (1 Cor 16:1) or churches of a certain composition, for instance, the churches of the Gentiles (Rom 16:4).
- (3) However, churches of a certain area can also be portrayed as *the* church of this area, for instance, the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria (Acts 9:31) pointing already into the direction of a universal church.
- (4) Finally, the universal church is envisioned when Jesus talks about his church (Matt 16:18). The elders are to shepherd the church of God (Acts 20:28). Jesus is the head of the church that is his body (Eph 5:23).¹⁶ Undoubtedly, it is the universal church that the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed had in mind.
- (5) Although in the NT the adjective *holy* is not joined to the noun *church*, nevertheless the concept of the holiness of the church is found.¹⁷
 - The church is frequently called the church of God (1 Cor 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 12:28; 15:9; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:13; 1 Thess 2:14; 2 Thess 1:4). As the church of God she is not a human institution and is not owned by human benefactors. The church belongs to God,¹⁸ and as such she shares to some degree God's holiness.
 - The same is true when the church is called the body of Christ (Eph 4:12). The body metaphor may describe the entire church, including the head (1 Cor 12, especially verse 21). However, in Ephesians 4:15 and Colossians 1:18 the head is Christ, and the rest of the body represents the church. In this context the church is considered to be the body of Christ. The theme of holiness appears in Colossians 1:22 and the church as his (Christ's) body in Colossians 1:24.
 - The church in Corinth is addressed as "the church of God which is at Corinth ... those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling" (1 Cor 1:2). The word family *holy* appears twice in this text. Obviously, the "church" is the

¹⁶ See Ekkehardt Mueller, "God's Church and His Churches," unpublished paper, 2003.

¹⁷ A. S. Wood, "Holiness," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney and Moisés Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 3:189.

¹⁸ Cf. David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 27.

same entity as “those who have been sanctified.”¹⁹ That would mean that the holiness of the church is confirmed. “The change from the singular to the plural is noteworthy. The singular stresses the solidarity of the readers as one united corporate entity; the plural calls attention to the individual responsibility of each member to live out his or her consecrated status in Christ.”²⁰

- Phrases such as “the churches of the saints” (1 Cor 14:33),²¹ “the church of God ... with all the saints” (2 Cor 1:1) and the “saints” (Eph 1:1; Col 1:2) that are later identified as a church (Eph 1:22; Col 1:18) support the concept of the holiness of the church.
- According to Ephesians 5:25-27, Jesus sanctifies the church and presents her as holy. The church appears as bride or wife of Jesus. The passage seems to describe her present condition. She is holy.²²

¹⁹ See A. C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 76, who writes: “The plural form of the dative participle ἡγιασμένοις, to those sanctified, provides an exegetical gloss on the earlier singular form, to the church.”

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

²¹ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 27-28, suggests: “Designating them as ‘saints’ has at least four implications. First, they are ‘saints’ by God’s call ... the Corinthians already are ‘saints’ in the same way that Paul already is an apostle.... Second, belonging to the holy people of God qualifies them as saints set apart to serve God’s purposes, not their own. All Christians are equally holy so that none is to be regarded ‘saintlier’ ... than others. Third, they are called to a particular lifestyle and are bound by moral strictures and standards of behavior because God is holy.... Fourth, the term ‘saints’ has corporate significance.... They are not set apart from the world as lone saints but set apart with others as a community of saints with obligations to one another as well as to God. One of the hallmarks of holiness is wholeness, and Paul wants this church to be whole and without divisions to represent God’s holiness to the world.”

²² Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 377, states: “There are no grounds for deducing from the wording of this verse that Christ’s presentation of his pure bride to himself awaits the parousia, though many commentators have assumed this.... This ignores the fact that later in v 32 the ‘one flesh’ marriage union is applied to the present relationship between Christ and the Church and that throughout the passage the past and present relationship between Christ and his Church is the model for husbands and wives to follow in their marriages. Here, in line with this writer’s more realized eschatology, glory and holiness are seen as present attributes of the Church, and Christ’s activity of endowing the Church with these qualities is a present and continuing one.... After all, in 1:4 holiness and blamelessness, along with love, are present aspects of Christian existence.”

1.3. Summary

A study of the biblical material suggests that the concept of the holiness of the church is a biblical concept. While this concept applies to the universal church of God, it certainly is also applicable to local churches.²³ However, the emphasis is clearly on Christ's universal church. Hawthorne discusses the saints of the NT and states:

The most common term describing Christians is *hoi hagioi*, consistently translated 'saints'.... *Hagioi* (holy / saints) refers to persons who are holy because of God's gracious choice of them ... who have been oriented away from the world and turned toward God, and not primarily persons who are morally and ethically perfect. Yet moral and ethical meanings do inhere in this word.... Therefore they are persons who have been turned toward God and toward doing his will.²⁴

These persons form Christ's church. Fortunately, Hawthorne talks about the indicative and imperative and a conscious decision in doing the will of God. Otherwise his statement could be misunderstood in the sense that Christians would remain completely passive when it comes to sanctification. In any case, Christians have been sanctified—perfect tense—and yet they are also being sanctified or made holy—present tense (Heb 10:10,14). "Thus, paradoxically, holiness is both an established fact for Christians and at the same time a process. Christians are holy and are becoming holy."²⁵

2. The Dilemma of a Holy Church and a Community of Sinners

This raises some serious questions: Which one is the holy church of Christ? Can Christian denominations be counted as such? Can one single denomination claim to be this church? Is it reasonable to go so far as to conclude that outside of such a denomination salvation cannot be found?

How should one deal with the issue that the Christian church claims to be holy but oftentimes looks unholy, sinful, ugly, and maybe even evil? Even James calls the saints sinners and double-minded people (Jam 4:8). Secular persons and people of other world religions are appalled when

²³ Cf. Bruinsma, *The Body of Christ*, 61; who argues that the marks of the Christian church should also found in local churches.

²⁴ Hawthorne, "Holy, Holiness," 488.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

they are confronted with the scandals of Christianity: misuse of power, manipulation, political maneuvering, sexual abuse, greed, money laundry, etc. They define institutional Christianity “in terms of hypocrisy rather than in terms of holiness.”²⁶ And it is not only others that suffer from Christianity; it is also Christians themselves that suffer from the church. Is it possible for parts of the church of God to apostatize or is the holy church of God a holy church forever? These are some of the questions this study will seek to address.

2.1. The Church of Christ

The question which Christian community is the holy church of Christ is not a question raised in the NT. The NT authors did not witness a splintering of Christianity in numerous denominations, although most of them had to battle heresy and some secessionists. They laid down boundaries of what was unacceptable in teaching and life style.²⁷ Yet even churches with life style and doctrinal issues such as the church in Corinth were still considered true Christian communities, however, in need to correct their course. On the other hand, it seems that a split took place with the church of Thyatira in Rev 2. A remnant emerged from an apostate church.

So, what is the true church today? T. C. Oden points to a Lutheran distinction between “*die Kirche im eigentlichen and uneigentlichen Sinne* (the church properly speaking, and the church in a wider or improper, diffuse sense; Neve *Luth. Sym.*, p. 187). The church in its narrow definition is composed of those who truly believe, whose faith is active in love.” In a broader sense, it “includes all those baptized.”²⁸ But this is the church in its *uneigentlichen Sinn*.

Barth considers the Christian church as the assembly of those people who are willing to live under the divine judgment executed in Christ’s death and revealed in his resurrection from the dead.²⁹

²⁶ Bruinsma, *The Body of Christ*, 63.

²⁷ See, e.g., John in his epistles toward the end of the first century.

²⁸ Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 322.

²⁹ Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik: Ausgewählt und eingeleitet von Helmut Gollwitzer*, 2nd ed. (München: Siebenstern Taschenbuch Verlag, 1969), 221: “Die christliche Gemeinde, die sein Leib ist, weil und indem er ihr Haupt ist, ist aber die Versammlung derjenigen Menschen, ‘die durch ihn allen anderen zuvor jetzt schon zu einem Leben unter dem in seinem Tod vollzogenen und in seiner Auferstehung von den Toten offenbarten göttlichen Urteil willig and bereit gemacht sind.’”

The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) position is presented by Raoul Dederen: "According to the NT, the church is a society not of thinkers or workers, but of believers. 'Believers,' or 'those who believed,' is constantly used as a synonym for the members of the church." He also points to the importance of baptism, "a rite of faith and of confession." and the fact that "faith was no mere act of intellectual assent, but the symbol of an intimate union between the believer and Christ."³⁰

Bruinsma raises the question whether or not a third way may be possible:

There may well be a third way of approaching this matter. Denominations are structures in which the visible church exists. Some are closer to the ideal of the Apostles' Creed than others. Might one say that denominations can claim to be truly part of the church universal only as long as they are serious about maintaining these marks of the Christian church?³¹

Then he goes on to raise questions based on the assumption of a third alternative:

Where does one draw the line between what might be considered as bona fide Christian churches and what is definitely outside the realm? Can such churches as, for instance, the Unitarian Church (that denies the doctrine of the Trinity) and the Mormon Church (that has other holy writings in addition to the Bible), in which fundamental aspects of apostolic doctrine are denied, be considered as part of the invisible church? And are churches in which basic beliefs are in flux, or parachurch entities in which there is no administration of baptism or celebration of the Lord's Supper, be considered church in the full sense of the word?³²

The SDA Church has not defined its understanding of the universal church in these institutional terms. SDAs do not claim to be Christ's universal church, neither do they claim that other denominations are. SDA Fundamental Beliefs state:

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration

³⁰ Raoul Dederen, "The Church," *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown: Review & Herald, 2000), 561.

³¹ Bruinsma, *The Body of Christ*, 60-61.

³² *Ibid.*, 61. On page 154, he does not go to the third alternative but states: "God's church does not coincide with one particular denomination or religious tradition,"

of the Lord's Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel.³³

The remnant form an extra point in the Fundamental Beliefs: "The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."³⁴

The statement on relationships with other Christian churches and religious organizations of the *General Conference Working Policy* contains the following paragraph: "We recognize those agencies that lift up Christ before men as a part of the divine plan for evangelization of the world, and we hold in high esteem Christian men and women in other communions who are engaged in winning souls to Christ."³⁵

The universal church is broader than any denomination. It is visible and invisible insofar that it consists of those who believe in Jesus and follow him.³⁶ This study cannot discuss here the issue of visibility versus invisibility, but it may suffice to say that if membership in Christ's church depends on a personal decision of individuals, the universal church cannot simply be equated with an organized church of our days in which both saints and unconverted persons hold membership and in which not all true believers may be gathered yet.³⁷ Although the church as the assembly of followers of Christ has visible aspects, there is this invisible dimension.

The problem is heightened when apostasy among Christians is taken into consideration. Whereas, in the first century the universal church may have been quite visible, it is much more difficult and complex to recognize

³³ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 17th ed. (Silver Spring: Review and Herald, 2005), 13.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *General Conference Working Policy* (Silver Spring: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2002), policy No. 075.

³⁶ Dederen, "The Church," 546; states correctly: "The church, according to the NT, is not an invisible entity, nor a mental image.... At the same time the church can be described as having an invisible dimension."

³⁷ Some would claim that there is no invisibility of the church. The church is found where the Eucharist is celebrated in a certain way and with a certain theological understanding. However, such a view is forced to maintain a sacramental view of the Communion that comes quite close to the position of *ex opere operato*. It does not seem to do justice to the NT emphasis on the decision of individuals to accept Jesus and follow him nor the problem of apostasy within the church and even apostasy of churches and/or it has—at least to some extent—to separate the organizational structure of the church, which becomes the real church, from the members of the church.

it, for instance, during the Medieval Ages, that is, throughout large parts of church history.

2.2. Holy and Sinful

The dilemma and tension between the claim to holiness and the missing of the mark is reflected in the writings of numerous Christian theologians. M. E. Dever affirms:

The church is *holy* and is to be holy because God is holy.... The holiness of the church describes both God's declaration concerning his people and the Spirit's progressive work. After all, the church is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, and it is composed of saints set apart for God's special use.... So the church's holiness is fundamentally Christ's holiness; at the same time, Christ's holiness will be reflected in the church's holiness.³⁸

Then he adds: "In this present age the church will never attain ethical holiness perfectly.... The church is holy, then, in the sense that it is daily advancing and is not yet perfect."³⁹ T. C. Oden acknowledges: "As body of Christ, the church is necessarily holy, yet its holiness is enmeshed in continuing human imperfection and finitude until the end of history."⁴⁰ However, he continues to say:

The deeper irony is that the signs of sin that attach to the church are indirect evidences of its holiness. It could not be a holy church if it had clean hands, as if separated from its mission and task of saving sinners.... The church appearing to have no sin within its precincts is likely to be a church that has forsaken its mission.⁴¹

This statement may need further unpacking and clarification in order not to be misunderstood. In any case, his analogy between the sinless Christ and his mission and the sinful church and her mission does not sit well. But he is right in his assessment that the church is not only holy but also bears the signs of sin.

Commenting on the Second Vatican Council, A. Dulles points out that for Catholics "The church is most perfectly holy in Mary and the saints, who are intimately and abidingly united with God in heaven (LG 48). But

³⁸ Mark E. Dever, "The Doctrine of the Church," in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2007), 776.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 316.

⁴¹ Ibid., 318-319.

already here on earth 'the Church is adorned with true though imperfect holiness' (LG 48)."⁴² The Council does not mention sinfulness in regard to the church, although some Catholic theologians would allow for this. The members may be sinful, but the "church is entirely holy"⁴³

Several solutions have been suggested for the tension between a holy church and an imperfect church:

- (1) "Donatists as well as Gnostics, Novationists, Montanists, Cathari, and other sects solved the problem by claiming that they alone were holy while all others were not really members of the church. But 1 John 1:8 reminds one that the church which has no sin to confess simply does not exist."⁴⁴
- (2) "Others [among them the Roman Catholic Church] have claimed that the members are sinful but the church is holy. But the church does not exist in that abstract; it is sinful people who constitute the church."⁴⁵ The Roman Catholic position has been dealt with more extensively by Berkouwer. First he describes the Catholic view: "The holy Church no longer stood under judgment because of Christ's will in constituting the Church as an irrevocable given of salvation, and she would not be confronted in the future by judgment either."⁴⁶ Among others he quotes Y. Congar who stated that "There is no more sin in the Church than in Christ, of Whom she is the body; and she is His mystical personality."⁴⁷ Then he makes it clear that "sin in the Church is not separate from individual members."⁴⁸ Oftentimes, if not predominantly, Scripture has a corporate perspective and does not limit itself to an individual view. Therefore, the sin of individuals affects the church.⁴⁹
- (3) "Gnostics claimed that the body was sinful while the soul was holy. But biblical anthropology declares that it is the whole undivid-

⁴² Avery Dulles, "The Church as 'One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic,'" *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 23 (1999): 21.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ R. L. Omanson, "Church, The," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1984), 232.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See G. C. Berkouwer, *The Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 340.

⁴⁷ Quoted *ibid.*, 341.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 345.

⁴⁹ See, e.g., Achan in Joshua 7 and the immoral church member in 1 Corinthians 5.

ed human being who is sinful."⁵⁰ Scripture has a holistic perspective and does not separate the soul from the body.

- (4) S. Wood speaks about the eschatological dimension of the holiness of the church. The church will be holy one day in the future. But he warns that this concept should not be divorced from ethical behavior here and now.⁵¹
- (5) Furthermore, it is suggested that the church is holy objectively but not empirically.⁵² While this may have an element of truth, the church's holiness should shine as a light to the world. The objective dimension is not enough.
- (6) Holiness points to being set apart. It is a relational concept. The church is involved in a relationship with its Lord that differs from all other relationships.
- (7) Holiness is understood in an external, cultic sense. However, sanctification should include ethics and conduct.
- (8) It has already been pointed out that holiness may point to fellowship of holy things, for instance the Lord's Supper, and not to fellowship of the saints. However, this seems to be excluded by texts such as 1 Corinthians 1:2.

While Berkouwer mentioned the previous last four points used in church history to solve the tension between a holy and sinful church, he stressed especially that sanctification—clearly expressed in the NT—has to be taken seriously in Christianity today without falling into the trap of moralism or legalism. Holiness cannot just be interpreted as forensic justification but must play itself out in concrete conduct, in an attractive new life. He is strongly opposed to the notion of a mere objective holiness, because accepting such a solution could lead to the problem that holiness is no longer connected to Christian life in this aeon and to the attitude that personal sanctification does not matter.⁵³ Why would people join the church, if there were not some difference between believers and unbeliev-

⁵⁰ Omanson, "Church, The," 232.

⁵¹ Wood, "Holiness," 190.

⁵² R. L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Nelson, 1998), 842, proposes: "The church is definitively holy in an absolute sense in that it is 'in Christ.' It is progressively holy in a relative sense in that its sanctification is progressive, originating from the inner man and finding expression in the outer life. As Calvin remarks: 'The church is holy ... in the sense that it is daily advancing and is not yet perfect; it makes progress from day to day but has not yet reached its goal of holiness.'"

⁵³ Berkouwer, *The Church*, 316-325.

ers, if there were not some new quality of life, an admirable and fascinating conduct, an impressive bond of love between believers?⁵⁴

Omanson's solution to the problem is what Berkouwer had also mentioned: To be holy means to be separated from the profane and serve God.⁵⁵ It does not point to sinless perfection. Bruinsma holds: "Holiness, therefore, is primarily a matter not of moral distinction but rather of assignment to a particular purpose. And therefore the holiness of the church has first of all to do with the mission of the church."⁵⁶ However, he does not deny a moral dimension.⁵⁷ "An overemphasis on holiness, understood as absolute moral perfection, will almost certainly lead to fanaticism and sectarianism. An imbalance in the other direction will easily lead to worldliness and superficiality."⁵⁸

Berkouwer and Ryken take Luther's *simul justus et peccator* (at the same time righteous and sinner) and apply it to the church. Yet they differ somewhat. Dever stresses that the holiness of the church can only be discerned by faith. He bases his exposition on 1Cor 6:9-11, being washed, sanctified, and justified,⁵⁹ and comes to the conclusion: "God was calling them to become what they were in Christ, and this required the pursuit of holiness."⁶⁰

Being aware that the *simul justus et peccator* can be misunderstood as being purely external and not involving a change in humans, Berkouwer clarifies it saying:

Luther did not see sin as an 'undisputed reality governing the field,' but as 'sin that is assaulted and fought against.' The *simul* is not an equilibrium, an inevitable 'existential' of the Christian; rather, it is a 'formula of battle' along a way, in movement: a transition in which the

⁵⁴ Berkouwer, *The Church*, 322, states: "There is something undeniably impressive in the new life of sanctification, something radiating that automatically draws attention to itself (cf. Acts 5:13f.; I Pet. 3:2)."

⁵⁵ Omanson, "Church, The," 232.

⁵⁶ Bruinsma, *The Body of Christ*, 64.

⁵⁷ Similar Dederen, "The Church," 562-563.

⁵⁸ Bruinsma, *The Body of Christ*, 65.

⁵⁹ Philip G. Ryken, "A Holy Church: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11," in *The Church: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic*, ed. Richard D. Philipps, Philip G. Ryken, and Mark E. Dever, (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishers, 2004), 45-66.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 63.

glance is directed in humility to Christ and His saving, superior grace.⁶¹

“Orthodoxy and orthopraxy are inseparably connected.... Therefore, the *credo* is possible only in the context of struggle, prayer and nostalgia.” The *simul* in the church is a surprise and at the same time a challenge to accept “the commission which that surprise entails.”⁶²

Barth takes a different approach. He suggests that comprehending the holiness of the church is an act of revelation, a discovery which cannot be received independent of the Holy Spirit. Therefore it is not accessible to everyone. Barth underlines also the importance of the *credo*, faith.⁶³ “It is true: in her holiness she [the church] is and remains invisible to the world and without faith also to herself.”⁶⁴ The church cannot be holy without the living Lord and is always bound to and dependent on him. Without him her preaching deteriorates into a form of enlightening people, baptism and Lord’s Supper become religious rites only, her theology turns into a form of psychology, and her mission into a form of propaganda. Without him no institution, no good will, no technique can prevent her from slipping into the profane. Her holiness is a reflection of his holiness and a free gift of the Holy Spirit revealed to the believer.⁶⁵

While some of the suggested solutions must be excluded on NT grounds, others contain elements of truth, such as the concept of holiness as separation from what is opposed to God, the idea of holiness as a mystery, but also the aspect that holiness must itself play out in the life of the church, despite all imperfection. Therefore, none of the suggested solutions should permit believers to be content with the status quo. Instead God must be allowed to continuously sanctify believers and through them the church so that holiness does not remain a theoretical concept but becomes tangible.

2.3. Limitations of the Holy Church

The problem of the divine ideal and the earthly condition of the church is heightened when the problem of apostasy among Christians is taken into

⁶¹ Berkouwer, *The Church*, 347.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 356, 357.

⁶³ Barth, *Die Lehre von der Versöhnung*, 766-767.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 782.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 775.

consideration. One of the initial questions was: Is it possible for parts of the church of God to apostatize or is the holy church of God a holy church forever?

Barth is adamant: The church did not take on holiness on her own. So she cannot put it off. It is her destiny.⁶⁶ The church can fail and get lost. She can deny her Lord and apostatize. She can become disfigured and deformed, even sick. She has to stand the critique of her Lord and the oftentimes justified criticism of the world, but as the body of Christ she cannot die. She remains the *ecclesia semper reformanda*. Yet she is indestructible.⁶⁷

While according to the NT Christ's church will remain and will not be overpowered by the gates of Hades (Matt 16:18) but at one time will continue in the form of the gathering of the eschatological end time remnant, that does not mean that parts of this church may not turn into false churches. While Pannenberg laments the "scandal of divided Christendom" he admits that, "Some divisions are certainly necessary, i.e., in cases of apostasy from faith in Jesus Christ. Primitive Christianity had to separate itself from Judaizing and Gnostic errors, and the early church from Arianism."⁶⁸ So the crux is to decide what is heresy that would allow for a split in Christianity. Pannenberg asks if it is "the stubborn (*pertinax*) rejection of a truth that is part of the faith."⁶⁹ But he does not have a real answer, and so he opts for tolerance in cases of deviations "when there is a readiness to uphold and preserve the church's fellowship than when there is no such readiness and the deviation becomes a public scandal in the church."⁷⁰

J. C. Goodloe discusses Calvin's concern for the unity of the church and also his answer to the question when it is permissible or mandatory to leave a church. Indeed, Calvin and others withdrew from the dominant church and also provided reasons for their decision to leave what they no longer regarded as a church.

the true church is tied to the Word of God. When that Word and the Christian faith founded upon it are abandoned, there is no Christian church. Calvin has already pointed out that there are nonessential doctrines, on which disagreement should be allowed. Surely, however, the

⁶⁶ Ibid., 770. "Sie hat es sich nicht genommen, heilig zu sein: so kann sie diese ihre Bestimmung auch nicht abstreifen."

⁶⁷ Ibid., 770-771.

⁶⁸ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 411.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 412.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 415.

repudiation of the plain content of the Scriptures, the Word of God upon which all true doctrine rests, would involve nothing less than the rejection of the foundation of Christian faith, and therefore the rejection of Jesus Christ himself.... [S]uch a rejection of the Scriptures would form the basis for legitimate and necessary separation. Such a separation ... would not be schismatic. It would be, instead, an acknowledgment that a body which used to be part of the church of Jesus Christ was, by its own actions, no longer so.⁷¹

He goes on to say: "Again, simple immorality is not an excuse for leaving the church. If, however, that immorality were to be compounded by the church's declaring it not to be immorality, something different would have occurred. A line would have crossed."⁷²

SDAs take seriously the ecclesiological teachings and implications of the Apocalypse. The historical part of the book ends with Revelation 12-14. These three chapters contain a succinct description of the fate of the true church of Christ through human history with a specific focus on the very last period prior to Jesus' second coming. Revelation confirms that the true church exists as the people of the Lamb and that an apostate part of Christianity forms part of end time Babylon. Babylon is described as a religious power. Part of its OT allusions depict Babylon as a spiritual harlot comparable to Israel (Oholah) and Judah (Oholibah; Ezek 23) and a priest's daughter involved in fornication (Lev 21:9).⁷³ Undoubtedly, apostasy is possible. However, God's true and holy people will not disappear. It will survive till the end. But it looks as if in the last days of history the true church throughout the ages continues to exist in form of the end time remnant, also called the saints/the holy ones in Revelation 13:7,10 and 14:12. It is very clear that Revelation 13 and 14 focus on this largely visible end time remnant only, the descendant of the metaphorical woman, without any further reference to the woman itself. The end time remnant is the one that is confronted by evil powers and has to face economic boycott and possibly death before it experiences liberation and final victory.

However, Revelation does not deny that there are other faithful believers that belong to the church of God. They are described as still being

⁷¹ Goodloe IV, "The Church: One and Holy," 209.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 210.

⁷³ For more information on Babylon see Ekkehardt Mueller, *Der Erste und der Letzte: Studien zum Buch der Offenbarung*, Adventistica: Forschungen zur Geschichte und Theologie der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten, Schriftenreihe des Historischen Archivs der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten in Europa, ed. Daniel Heinz 11 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2011), 381-416.

in symbolic Babylon but are called to leave it (Rev 18:2-4). This message of separation points to the holiness theme, because to be holy means to be separated from what is not.⁷⁴ The remnant are called saints; the people coming out of Babylon are indirectly saints. Revelation 18:2-4 which immediately precedes the judgment of Babylon is to some extent parallel to the second and third angels' messages that the remnant proclaim.⁷⁵ Whereas the message of the second angel addresses the fall of Babylon (Rev 14:8) as does the message of Revelation 18:2, the message of the third angel describes the judgment on Babylon as does the rest of Revelation 18. This chapter is chronologically parallel to the judgment of Babylon in Revelation 14. Since there is only one group that is threatened with death and economic boycott, namely the remnant who do not worship the beast and its image and do not accept the mark of the beast, it must be assumed that the initial end time remnant and the people of God that will be leaving end time Babylon will form one group only that will suffer severe opposition and persecution.⁷⁶ From this perspective the woman as church of God will at the very end of time continue its existence in the form of the remnant only.⁷⁷ Rodríguez states:

the function of ... the end-time remnant, is to pull the universal church of Christ out of its invisibility before the final polarization of the human race at the close of the cosmic conflict.... It is God's intention to merge the universal church with the end-time eschatological faithful remnant. That remnant is already here as a historical phenomenon, but

⁷⁴ See Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 638. See also Rev 21:7-8 and 2 Cor 6:14-18.

⁷⁵ On the identity of the angels see Ekkehardt Mueller, "Mission in Revelation," unpublished paper, 2009.

⁷⁶ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 897, notes: "Charles regards the exhortation [of Rev 18:4] as out of place because all the faithful have already been put to death. But his view is based on a literalistic chronology of the Apocalypse, which is insensitive to a cyclic view of the book's structure."

⁷⁷ It seems that throughout human history the faithful remnant as a group of a larger whole became the *church* from which after a period of apostasy and spiritual decline a new remnant arose. The eight humans in Noah's ark were a remnant from which later Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Israel derived. When Jesus started his church, it began as a remnant movement incorporating Jews and Gentiles. The final remnant occurs in Revelation 12:17 and Revelation 13-14.

its fullness is coming into being ... at the moment when the rest of God's people will come out of Babylon.⁷⁸

These remnant-saints have specific characteristics that are listed in Revelation 12-14 in the following order:

- (1) Keeping the commandments of God (Rev 12:17; 14:12) including the Sabbath (Rev 14:7)
- (2) Having the testimony of Jesus, Scripture and genuine prophecy (Rev 12:17)
- (3) Exhibiting patience/perseverance (Rev 13:10; 14:12)
- (4) Having faith in/of Jesus, the incarnate Lord who died for humanity on the cross and rose from the dead, and his teachings (Rev 13:10; 14:12)
- (5) Refraining from false worship (Rev 14:4)⁷⁹
- (6) Following the Lamb, Jesus, wherever he goes, that is, in every aspect, as teacher and example (Rev 14:4)
- (7) Being ethically faithful/truthful and blameless (Rev 14:5)
- (8) Proclaiming the eternal gospel, the three angels' messages on a worldwide scale and gathering the faithful children of God (Rev 14:6-12)⁸⁰

These characteristics of the remnant should also be reflected by a holy church. It is hardly conceivable that God would use different sets of criteria to characterize his people. And these eight characteristics come close to the four that stress the oneness, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of the church, if unpacked. On the other hand, they serve as a means to determine what is heresy and what is not.

So, SDAs do not limit the concept of God's true church to their own denomination or church members nor do they automatically extend it to other Christian churches. God's true church consists of those individuals who truly believe in him. God knows them. SDAs, on the other hand, claim that they are God's special visible end time remnant of Revelation

⁷⁸ Angel Manuel Rodríguez, "Ecclesiology and Reorganization: The Oneness of the Church," unpublished paper (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 2006), 11, 13.

⁷⁹ A selection of principles for worship in Revelation see Ekkehardt Mueller, "Reflections on Worship in Revelation 4 and 5," *Reflections: The BRI Newsletter*, July 2012, 1-6. <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/BRI%20newsltr%207-12%20%28%2339%29.pdf>

⁸⁰ For further discussion see Ekkehardt Mueller, "The End Time Remnant in Revelation," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 11.1-2 (2000): 200; and Mueller, *Der Erste und der Letzte*, 373-376.

12:17 found also throughout Revelation 12-14 and being in opposition to the "Babylon" of Revelation 14-18.

3. Implications of the Holiness of the Church

The concept of the holiness of the church has implications for modern churches, local congregations, and individual Christians.

3.1. Holiness and Relationships

Unquestionably, holiness has to do with relationships. First, it describes the relationship to God. Second, it also has to do with relating to others.

3.1.1. Holiness and the Relationship to God

Holiness defines the relationship between God and humans in terms of what God has done and is doing for his elect and how they associate with him. It declares their status and points to God's continuous work on believers. They have been called with "a holy calling" (2 Tim 1:9) and are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). Together they are "growing into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph 2:21). This understanding leads Ariel C. Leder to note: "the relationship among the church, Christ, and the Holy Spirit is so intimate that the church itself is now, scandalously for the Jews and foolishly to the Greeks, the temple of God (1Cor. 3:17)."⁸¹ Further Scripture asserts that "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10) and have become "a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Pet 2:9). This holiness centers in Jesus' death and resurrection and leads to the parousia. "For by one offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified" (Heb 10:14). "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess 5:23). Yet this divine gift is not given to people without their consent. People have to accept it. The indicative "you are holy" is linked to the imperative "be holy"

⁸¹ Arie C. Leder, "Holy God, Holy People, Holy Worship," *Calvin Theological Journal* 43 (2008): 216.

(1 Pet 1:16). While God separates and liberates people from the realm of sin, they have to will this separation, remain separate, and rejoice that they have been “called ... out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9).

Barth has expressed this relationship when he wrote, Jesus is the Holy One not for himself but for the world and especially for his church, not being distanced but being in and with her. Therefore, the church is constantly confronted with Christ’s presence as the Holy One and placed in the sphere of his activity, is constantly alarmed by him, constantly asked if and how far she wants to correspond with the fact that she is his body and his earthly-historical form of existence.⁸²

3.1.2. *Holiness and the Relationship to Humans*

Holiness will also influence human relations. Holy conduct and godliness (2 Pet 3:11) will lead to courtesy, respect and love of as well as care for others. Jesus has especially emphasized that his followers will be discernable by mutual love (John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17). This can go so far as to lay down ones life for brothers and sisters (1 John 3:16). But love extends to also to the neighbor whoever that may be (Luke 10:27-28; Lev 19:18), even the enemy (Matt 5:44).

Bruinsma points to “full transparency and honesty” as well as to “a truly Christlike spirit of humility”⁸³ when SDAs communicate with other Christians. He adds: “God’s church has no room for triumphalism.”⁸⁴

Rodríguez takes the discussion to another level when he states:

One could even suggest that at the present time, the remnant is the visible church without being the totality of the expression of the church. This also means that the existence of this remnant is a reaffirmation of Christianity (the remnant people of God are part of something larger

⁸² Barth, *Die Lehre von der Versöhnung*, 782. The German version reads: “Nicht für sich, sondern für die Welt und zunächst für sie, seine Gemeinde ist Jesus Christus der Heilige, und er ist es nicht in irgendeiner Höhe und Ferne..., sondern ... in und an ihr selbst... Sie selbst ist also ... dauernd mit seiner Gegenwart als dem Heiligen konfrontiert und seiner Aktivität ausgesetzt, dauernd von ihm alarmiert, dauernd danach gefragt, ob und inwiefern sie ... dem entsprechen möchte, dass sie ja sein Leib seine irdisch-geschichtliche Existenzform ist.”

⁸³ Bruinsma, *The Body of Christ*, 155.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 156.

than themselves) and also a judgment against it in the sense that it finds in Christianity spiritual unfaithfulness. In other words, with respect to the Christian world, the remnant exists in the tension between a reaffirmation of it and calling it to repentance and reformation.⁸⁵

3.2. Holiness and Divine Teachings

While holiness is a reminder to take good care of our relationships, either with God or with fellow humans, it also affects how believers respond to biblical teachings. Holiness affects doctrine and lifestyle. Holy people that relate to a holy God are very much interested in what this God reveals about himself, about the plan of salvation, and divine realities. His teachings affect very much how people live their lives and how they relate to him. They want to know what the will of God is (Rom 7:12) and want to understand and experience truth (John 17:17). Divine teachings are beneficial and not a burden. They change lives for better. For instance, the doctrine of the non-immortality of the soul prevents believers from getting caught up in ancestor worship, spiritualism, and the belief in reincarnations, which at the same time tends to emphasize salvation by works and affects our understanding of God's character. A holy people cannot afford to neglect plain doctrines taught by the sovereign God in his word, Scripture.

3.3. Holiness and Ethics

It has been stressed repeatedly throughout this paper that holiness has ethical implications. It does not only describe the believer's status as a child of God but affects everyday life.⁸⁶ People are attracted to the God of the Bible when they see the positive lives of his followers. Thus ethics has to do with the divine law. The law has been called holy and good (Rom 7:12). Christianity is not a lofty philosophy that does not affect daily life. On the contrary it shapes very much how the believer lives and behaves. It has become fashionable to exclude lifestyle issues from theological and practical deliberations and leave it to the individual how he or she decides

⁸⁵ Angel M. Rodríguez, "Concluding Essay: God's End-Time Remnant and the Christian Church," in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez (Silver Springs, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 221.

⁸⁶ Cf. Bruinsma, *The Body of Christ*, 64.

on these issues. While it is true that Christians do not force upon others what to believe and how to make decisions, they know that the Bible contains clear and binding guidelines and accept them.

The “fine linen [of the bride of the Lamb] is the righteous acts of the saints” (Rev 19 :8). Believers are practicing hospitality “in a manner worthy of the saints” (Rom 16:2). “Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:9-11). “But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints” (Eph 5:3). Holy people refrain from getting involved with the deeds of the flesh (Gal 5:19-21). Instead their lives reflect the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22-23) and exemplify holy behavior “like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior” (1 Pet 1:15). “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way [at Christ’s second coming], what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness” (2 Pet 3:11). Scripture clearly talks about the normative value of the moral divine law and the need of obedience on the part of the followers of Christ (Rev 14:12).

Barth does not avoid the question of obedience,⁸⁷ and Dederen stresses the importance of ethical holiness. “The church is holy, set apart from the world, to refract the holiness of God and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit in a fallen world.... Christian holiness consists not merely in a status determined by one’s relation to Christ, but also in a consecration to God that finds expression in character and conduct.”⁸⁸ “Christians cannot be content with the knowledge that God wants them as citizens of His ‘holy nation,’ and will manifest in their daily lives the fruits of an ever closer relationship with their Lord.”⁸⁹

3.4. Holiness and Church Discipline

If the holiness of the church relates to biblical doctrines and an ethical life, church discipline (Matt 18:15-17) deals with the propagation of false doc-

⁸⁷ Barth, *Die Lehre von der Versöhnung*, 781 and 783.

⁸⁸ Dederen, “The Church,” 562-563.

⁸⁹ Bruinsma, *The Body of Christ*, 64

trines and a biblical unacceptable lifestyle.⁹⁰ While in 1 John and Revelation 2 false doctrines needed to be confronted and in some cases a separation of the church from the secessionists was necessary, in 1 Corinthians the saints needed to address the issue of incest within the church (1 Cor 5). Paul stated: “I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.... Remove the wicked man from among yourselves” (1 Cor 5:11, 13).

“When there are serious deviations from biblical doctrine and when serious offenses against God’s moral law are committed, the church cannot turn a blind eye but must deal with the issue.... After all, one of the ‘marks’ of the church is holiness.”⁹¹ However, church discipline has nothing to do with relating to a sinner or simply administering a case, instead of caring for a person. Berkouwer devotes an entire chapter to holiness and discipline. While he makes clear that “there can be no recognition of sin—nor any excuse of it”,⁹² he also warns against the dangers in discipline.

Correctly understood, church discipline is one of the last means to tell an erring brother or sister that his or her way is disastrous and the church would like them to be restored.⁹³

3.5. Holiness and Worship

The Book of Revelation clearly links holiness and worship. As the heavenly beings sing their triple “holy” (*agion*) to God (Rev 4:8) and all the heavenly beings join in divine worship, so the saints get involved in the worship of God the Father as Creator and the worship of Christ as Savior (Rev 5:13-14). Their prayers reach the throne of God (Rev 5:8; 8:3-5). This worship theme is also a central to Revelation 12-14. The message proclaimed by the remnant-saints calls for the worship of the only true God. But also in other parts of the NT is holiness and worship connected. In the Lord’s Prayer the church hallows God’s name (Matt 6:9). Men are to lift up holy hands in prayers of intercession and thanksgiving (1 Tim 2:1-8). Even, the Holy Spirit himself will intercede for the saints (Rom 8:27).

⁹⁰ See *ibid.*, 100.

⁹¹ Bruinsma, *The Body of Christ*, 101.

⁹² Berkouwer, *The Church*, 358.

⁹³ See *ibid.*, 104.

In an article, Leder has pointed out the importance of the holy worship of a holy God by a holy people, a dimension that has to be recovered in many congregations.⁹⁴ Discussing the New Jerusalem with “the clean inside, the unclean outside,” he notes: “Because God is holy, and the space where he dwells is holy, the worship taking place within that space must also be holy. No unclean things may participate.... Thus, the presence of a holy and dangerous God in the midst of an unclean people belongs to any study of holiness and worship.”⁹⁵ “The first accent is therefore on God’s act of holy-making, not on the people’s holy acts.”⁹⁶ “Because even our best works are stained by unrelenting uncleanness, God’s sole act of justification and sanctification are central to the cult,”⁹⁷ resulting in our gratitude. Yet “holy worship cannot be accomplished without the constant presence of the awesome language of holiness. Its vocabulary will describe our separation from the world, our defilement, and our cleansing.... Word and sacraments focus our attention on Christ our wholeness and the Spirit our Sanctifier.”⁹⁸

L. Gilkey has also commented on worship in the context of holiness: A church may be filled with creative ideas and overflowing with good works, but unless there is a sense of the presence of the holy there, of the presence of God ... it is doubtful whether what is there is religion. Worship is not centrally an experience of *ours*; it is meaningless to speak of a ‘worshipful experience’ as if the holy were compounded of a clever arrangement of various kinds of lighting, sober music, proper tones of voice, and the softness or hardness of the pews, all so manipulated as to create a certain experience in us. Such ‘client-centered’ worship does not extend beyond the ceiling of the sanctuary, for here, by finite media we seek to take the place of the holy, to create it synthetically.... But neither our manipulation nor the enjoyment are categories appropriate to worship.... Worship is a response to the presence of God, our reaction to the appearance of the holy ... to the tremendous, majestic, awesome power and goodness of God—that is the core of worship. Thus we bow, thus we adore, thus we surrender ourselves—thus we experience God.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Leder, “Holy God, Holy People, Holy Worship,” 222.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 226.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 229, 230.

⁹⁹ Langdon Gilkey, *How Can the Church Minister to the World without Losing Itself* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 107-108.

3.6. Holiness and Service/Mission

Finally, holiness is related to service and mission.¹⁰⁰ This is an important observation because holiness can easily be understood as quietism, something static. Or it can be taken as a personal experience only. Individuals are declared holy, and they are personally involved in a process of sanctification. But does this relate to others and how does it relate to them?

First Peter provides an answer: “You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5). “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9). These texts talk about a holy priesthood and a holy nation and they come in a certain context. Holiness is a calling to service.¹⁰¹

“It is the whole church in relationship to the world which is to exercise the tasks of priesthood.”¹⁰² Functions of this holy priesthood and holy nation are proclamation of the great deeds of God and offering of spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet 2:5). These sacrifices may include

that the body of priests recognizes its special responsibility for the world, particularly the responsibility of sharing the Gospel as a faithful witness (1 Pet 2:9; Rev 6:9; 20:4) and interceding for humanity with God. Berkouwer discusses the poles of proclamation or presence and proclamation or dialogue, suggesting that they do not exclude each other.¹⁰³

that this priesthood follows Christ’s example (1 Pet 2:21) by doing right and exhibiting excellent behavior (1 Pet 2:12, 15; 3:16); the result may be that others praise God (1 Pet 2:12).

that the members of this priesthood love Jesus (1 Pet 1:8) and others (1 Pet 1:22) and therefore are willing to serve each other (1 Pet 4:8-10); they help the needy, do good, and share their possessions (Heb 13:15-16; Phil 4:18).

¹⁰⁰ Wood, “Holiness,” 190, notes: “the positive aspect of being set aside for God to be utilized in his service prevails over any negative exclusivism.... The church as the body of CHRIST belongs to God and becomes the vehicle of his activity in the world.... In order to prove an effective instrument of the gospel, the church must be holy.”

¹⁰¹ See Dever, “The Doctrine of the Church,” 776-777; Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 317.

¹⁰² Omanson, “Church, The,” 233.

¹⁰³ See Berkouwer, *The Church*, 410-420.

that instead of returning evil for evil they bless, which would include forgiving others (1 Pet 3:9, 11), and seek peace (1 Pet 3:11).

4. Conclusion

The church of God is indeed a holy church.¹⁰⁴ The NT assumes this holiness of the church. But the community of believers also has a human side and does not always represent the holy God well. Therefore, “the holiness of the church, like its unity, is both a gift and a task,”¹⁰⁵ a present and a challenge. And this applies to the church as a whole as well as to local congregation and individuals.

This holiness of the church with its various aspects vis-à-vis the holiness of God may need to be rediscovered. The oftentimes superficial talk about the love of God may have partially eclipsed the concept of holiness. Oden suggests that only a few theologians of the 20th century have seriously discussed the holiness of the church. Most have neglected it.¹⁰⁶ “Faith in the holiness of the church does not imply that the church can rest easy in its proximate unholiness.”¹⁰⁷ “Those who having been made holy positionally in Christ are now called practically to walk in the way of holiness.”¹⁰⁸ Yet only if believers listen to and focus on the biblical testimony about the holiness of God himself can they be confident that the holiness of the believers and the church be re-experienced in practice.

¹⁰⁴ Wood, “Holiness,” 190, suggests that holiness defines the essence of the church and is not only “a secondary feature.”

¹⁰⁵ Dulles, “The Church as ‘One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic,’” 20.

¹⁰⁶ Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 320.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 321.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 317.

THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Theological Seminary, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies

"The Role of Women in Johannine Literature: An Exegetical Study"

Researcher: John Ekwenye, Ph.D., January 2014

Advisor: Alfredo Agustin Jr., Ph.D.

The role of women in Johannine literature appears to be unique in a number of ways. Firstly, in the Gospel of John, there is a different presentation accorded to women in comparison to the Synoptics. John gives a lengthy and a wider discussion on Jesus' encounter with women, which ranges from a longer passage to a whole chapter. Another significant point here is that John's accounts on women are unparalleled in the synoptics. Other evidences that cannot be ignored are that in his presentation of women, John depicts them in direct dialogue with Jesus. Secondly, in the Epistle of 2 John, the use of "woman" is no longer literal but symbolic in which sense the author likens the woman to a church. Thirdly, the book of Revelation presents women in a symbolic perspective whereby they represent the church, both false and righteous, and crowns their role as pointing to the city of the New Jerusalem.

There were four focus issues that not only informed the statement of the problem, but gave the study a technical framing as well. What are the roles of women in Johannine writings? How does John present women in his writings? What is his purpose in the way he presents them? Lastly, is there a continuous connection in the role of women in the way John presents them? In light of these issues, the study purposed to ascertain the role of women in John's writings with a view of identifying their participation in relation to the main themes of the literature under study. As such, specific passages were selected for study as outlined in the paper proper.

The flow of the study was such that Chapter 1 covered the introductory aspects of the study while Chapter 2 surveyed roles of women in various periods of human history spanning from ancient Mesopotamia down to the Greco-Roman era. The outcome of Chapter 2 indicated that women

participated in social, economic, religious, and leadership roles within the patriarchal framework which prevailed both in Ancient Near East and Israel. As this was the case in Mesopotamia and ancient Israel, women's roles diminished tremendously during late Judaism. The opposite was true with the coming of Jesus in the 1st century AD. While Chapter 3 dealt with the main study of the selected passages in Johannine writings, Chapter 4 covered the theological context of the study. Chapter 5 was the summary and conclusion of the findings.

From Johannine literature, there is a lot of information with regard to the role of women. Women play a unique role in that they set a paradigm of committed and faithful followers of Jesus. This in turn makes them Jesus' followers, witnesses, messengers, and active participants in His ministry. It is inescapable to note here too that women set a counterpoint to men in regard to their participation in the ministry of Jesus. Men are either passive or are portrayed as doubtful in their roles. Therefore, women's role in Johannine writings is both significant and unique as it enjoys the support of the said literature.

"Herbert E. Douglass' Understanding of the Identity and Character of the Last Generation in the Light of Ellen G. White's Writings: A Comparative Study"

Researcher: Paul Tanbaunaw, Ph.D., January 2014

Advisor: Kyung Ho Song, Ph.D.

This study seeks to find out the commonalities and differences between the last generation concept of Ellen G. White and that of Herbert E. Douglass. A section is devoted to trace the historical development of the last generation thought from its conception to the present among Adventism in order to give a background of the concept. Discussion of related doctrinal concepts is not exhaustive, but to show connection and their influence on understanding the last generation concept.

The methodology is descriptive-analysis. Descriptions of the views of pioneers including E. G. White are primarily based on available data from the 2008 version of the E. G. White published writings on CD, which contains most of the literary works of the early Adventist pioneers from the 19th century. All available sources from the Leslie Hardinge Library and the internet were utilized. Douglass' view is described and analysed

mainly based on available sources from his published works which include his articles in various journals and magazines of the Adventist denomination.

The plan of discussion in this study is organized in the following steps: Chapter 1 introduces the research which includes background of the study, the statement of the problem, purpose, significance, delimitations, methodology, and procedures. Chapter 2 traces the historical development of the last generation concept within Adventism. Chapter 3 delineates E. G. White's view of the last generation in relation to her theological overview and other related theological concepts. Chapter 4 presents Douglass' view of the last generation in relation to his theological overview and other theological concepts. Chapter 5 compares and analyses the 2 views. Chapter 6 provides the summary, conclusions, and recommendation for further studies.

Findings suggest that the last generation concept has been expressed variedly among Adventists since the conception of Adventism. Both Ellen G. White and Douglass's views of the last generation were informed by their other related theological concepts. Their views are significantly correlated as well as different. The same great controversy motif and God's law or His character as the heart of the cosmic conflict permeate almost all of their other doctrinal concepts. The questions raised by Satan in the controversy also shaped their understanding of the identity, character and role of the last generation in the final conflict. Their views are similar and at the same time uniquely different. In most cases, their views are very similar but there are also significant differences were also observed. Although the heart of the cosmic conflict is the same, due to their differences in understanding of some doctrinal truths and overall theological outlook, they are significantly different in interpreting the character and role of the last generation in the final cosmic conflict. There are different emphases on the identity of the last generation. The character of the last generation is more or less identical although motivation and emphases somewhat vary. The extent of the role of the last generation in the last cosmic conflict is significantly different. Whereas E. G. White considers it as supplementary and confirmatory, Douglass, on the other hand, sees it as complementary and integral part of the solution.

"The Inherited Deity of Christ: A Critical Analysis of the Christology Suggested by Adrian Ebens"

Researcher: Paul Bhaggien, Ph.D., February 2014

Advisor: Kyung Ho Song, Ph.D.

This study endeavors to systematically analyze the Christology suggested by Adrian Ebens. As such, it seeks to find out whether or not Ebens' Christology of the inherited deity of Christ, built around the concept of the literal sonship of Christ is theologically credible. In an effort to achieve this objective, this work first delves into a historical survey of divergent views on the deity of Christ prevalent within Christendom from the early periods of church history leading up to the present. After this the key determinants that have come to shape Ebens' Christology were delineated, systematized, and evaluated. Finally, the research focused on the task of theologically analyzing the key tenets of his Christology and thereupon drew conclusions from the findings of this study.

Chapters 1 and 2 set the stage for the study. The first chapter presented the problem that there is an incompatible difference between the Christology suggested by Adrian Ebens and that which is held by mainstream Seventh-day Adventist Church. As such, the study aimed at theologically analyzing the key determinants and tenets of Ebens' Christology. This quest commenced by painting the historical backdrop for the study in the second chapter through a presentation of anti-Trinitarian christological trends within the Christian Church through the centuries.

Chapter 3 delineated and defined the key determinants and tenets of Ebens' Christology. The study identified and classified these determinants under three subcategories: hermeneutical determinant, historical determinant, and theological and philosophical determinants. Some determining principles under the theological and philosophical category include Ebens' concepts of the absolute transcendence of God, distinctiveness of divine personalities, the great controversy, priority of relationships and Trinitarian delusions. The chapter also delineated and defined the key tenets of his Christology such as his concepts of the sonship identity of Christ, the origin and pre-existence of Christ, the inherited deity of Christ, the subordinate deity of Christ, and the venerability of Christ.

Chapters 4 and 5 analyzed the key determinants and tenets of Ebens' Christology respectively. The findings that emerged out of such an analysis and presented in Chapter 6 of this study suggest that Ebens' Christology, based on a literal understanding of the sonship of Christ seems to be

nothing more than an improved Arian position. Although his Christology seems to have the merit of salvaging Christ from a creaturely status, it does not go beyond assigning Christ a secondary status to that of the Father. And because such a position cannot be theologically sustained, it was concluded that Ebens' Christology of the inherited deity of Christ is largely suspect and therefore, untenable.

"An Analysis of Deuteronomy 6:4-5: Monotheism in Polytheistic Hindu Context"

Researcher: Nirobindu Das, Ph.D., February 2014

Advisor: Mathilde Frey, Ph.D.

This study seeks to explicate exegetically and theologically the meaning of the *Shema* in Deut 6:4-5 and its function within the monotheistic religion of Israel. It further seeks to demonstrate the relevance of the *Shema* within a polytheistic context with the intent of creating a dialogue that would eventually lead to a transformative encounter in favour of biblical monotheism.

Chapters 1 and 2 survey the relevant literature that was written on the *Shema*. Interpretations of the *Shema* hold to the absolute unity within the divine and God's exclusive claim to loyalty and obedience from His adherents. It also includes the relevant literature on Hindu polytheism.

Chapter 3 exegetes Deut 6:4-5 taking a closer look at key elements within the pericope primarily on the meaning of שמע, "to hear"; אֶחָד, "one"; אהב, "to love"; יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, "the Lord our God"; and יהוה אֶחָד, "the Lord is one." The appeal to love God is made through an awareness of God's uniqueness and the relationship He seeks with humanity. Love and obedience occur only within the construct of a trusting relationship between God and those who commit to Him. In this sense, the *Shema* does not merely speak of God's oneness but of the response that God's oneness generates from His devotees—unity and obedience.

Chapter 4 looks at biblical monotheism from the Mosaic period to the New Testament and also extending up to the modern and postmodern era. Chapter 5 surveys Hindu polytheism as it pertains to India. The distinctive features of Hindu polytheism are assessed so as to elucidate similarities and differences with biblical monotheism. The chapter provides principles derived from biblical monotheism to better aid in building con-

textual bridges resulting in the enculturation of monotheistic values within the polytheistic Hindu context.

The last chapter of this study summarizes and concludes with the findings of the *Shema* and synthesizes the findings of the meeting points of Hinduism with biblical understanding of the common points.

“An Investigation and Analysis of the Leadership of Lan Zhou Seventh-day Adventist Church from 1980-2010”

Researcher: Xiao Yan Zhang, D.Min., February 2014

Advisor: Young Soo Chung, D.Min.

There are about 400,000 Seventh-day Adventist Church members among 1.35 billion Chinese in mainland China. The Adventist membership in China is roughly only 0.03% of the Chinese population. Spreading the Adventist message in China is a great challenge for the Chinese church leaders and members at the present time.

Lan Zhou Seventh-day Adventist (LZSDA) Church is one of the largest Adventist Churches in mainland China in terms of membership. Since its founding days, LZSDA Church has formed leadership for its ministry to win souls and enrich the spiritual lives of its church members. The main purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the leadership in LZSDA Church from 1980-2010.

This project covered 3 types of church leadership introduced and developed gradually from the year 1980-2010: namely, the parenting leadership, the shepherd's council leadership, and the church board committee leadership. The study investigated and analyzed the role, goal, preparation, and influence of these church leadership styles in order to find the strengths and weaknesses of each church leadership style and suggests ways of making the current church leadership more effective.

To accomplish this, the leadership issue was addressed, biblical and theological bases were laid, the context of LZSDA Church was introduced, and an interview with a sample population of LZSDA Church participants was done. Those interviewed gave their perception on the effectiveness of the church leadership. Their responses, together with the observations and evaluation of the research study, were analyzed based on biblical principles. A list of suggestions is given to make current church leadership more effective.

The project narrative has demonstrated that the 3 leadership styles under study have affected positively the lives of the newcomers, church members, and church leaders. All who passed through any of these leadership styles had not failed to see changes in themselves and in those with whom they labored. The changes were manifested in a changed life or character of church members and leaders like having a meaningful prayer life, acquiring the habit of daily Bible reading, and witnessing baptism of the non-believers are more under the parenting and shepherd's council leadership styles. The changes were manifested in increased ministerial or management abilities and competence are more under the church board committee leadership. This study has also shown that from the perspectives of the role, goal, preparation, and influence of the church leadership, parenting leadership, and shepherd's council leadership are more equipped spiritually to lead LZSDA Church with more dominating influence on it and the church members than church board committee leadership.

"The Priestly Blessing: An Exegetical and Intertextual Study on Numbers 6:22-27"

Researcher: Rodolfo Segorbe Nach, Ph.D., March 2014

Advisor: Mathilde Frey, Ph.D.

Scholars have interpreted Num 6:22-27 twofold: (a) blessing is the manifestation of material benefits, and (b) blessing occurs within a personal and spiritual relationship with God, which however should result in material benefits. However, the question about blessing in terms of a divine-human relationship without material benefits bestowed upon humans has not been addressed.

In Chapters 2 and 3, this dissertation offers a detailed exegetical and intertextual study of the Hebrew text of Num 6:22-27 and considers the verb "to bless" in relation to each of the verbal expressions of the poetic section of the passage (vv. 24-26). The study shows that the verb בָּרַךְ, "to bless" is a verb of speech meaning "to speak well of or speak good to" someone or something; it entails a testimony of appreciation indicating a positive divine-human relationship even in the absence of material manifestations and benefits. Blessing in Num 6:22-27 is a speech-act process combining benediction and benefaction. The verb "to bless" not only

overshadows the entire pericope with its tripartite structure but it also relates to the other verbal expressions of the poetic section (vv. 24-26) in terms of amplification and intensification based on synonymous, semantic, and syntactic parallelism.

The intertextual study in this dissertation (see Chapter 3) shows that the Priestly Blessing is intricately related to the Sinaitic Covenant and to the sanctuary services, rites, festivals, and animal sacrificial system given to Israel to teach them God's plan of salvation. Each expression of the formula of blessing links with sanctuary language and speaks of its services expressing the concept of salvation.

Chapter 4 discusses the theological implications of the Priestly Blessing. The first implication is about God who dwells among His people and is at the center of Israel's physical and spiritual life. God is revealed to be the God who is faithful to His covenant, who dwells in the midst of His people through His presence in the sanctuary: He blesses, protects, forgives, reconciles and restores broken relationships, gives peace, and saves by His gracious and compassionate love. In conclusion, blessing in Num 6:22-27 is about God's saving acts of graciousness towards His people.

"Dimensions and Effectiveness of Leadership Empowerment as Perceived by Pastors of Central Luzon Conference of Seventh-day Adventist: Toward Developing a Model Program for Leadership Empowerment of Pastors"

Researcher: Eliezer L. Barrientos, D.Min., March 2014

Advisor: Youngsoo Chung, D.Min.

There are several dimensions involved in the empowerment of pastors. Thus this study was made primarily to explore those dimensions and measure their importance to pastors in relation to their leadership effectiveness as well as to measure the effectiveness of Central Luzon Conference (CLC) as an organization in implementing the dimensions. The instrument used in this study was self-constructed and their substances were taken from various literatures, observations, and interviews with selected pastors at CLC. The respondents in this study were 108, representing 81% of the total population of CLC pastors as of the time of the gathering of the data.

The study showed that CLC pastors generally perceived the dimensions of empowerment as “very highly important” to enhance their leadership potentials. Nevertheless, the general perceptions of the pastors with regard to the effectiveness of its implementations were generally less very highly effective. This result implies that there were disparities between the levels of importance to the actual effectiveness. With these results a program model called *Integrated Leadership Development Program for Pastors* or *ILDPP* was designed to minimize those discrepancies or if possible to eliminate them.

This program needs to be institutionalized and must be supported with policies. Therefore a course of action of the CLC Executive Committee to implement the program is important. Finally, it is recommended that *ILDPP* must be placed under the supervision of the Human Resource Department of CLC. In this case the role of the human resource director in full cooperation with the ministerial secretary is essential in the implementation of the program.

“Theological Implications on the Use of Wisdom Expressions in the Book of Daniel in the Light of Old Testament Wisdom Literature”

Researcher: Edward Eddie Moyo, Ph.D., May 2014

Advisor: Carlos Mora, Ph.D.

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, it seeks to augment the understanding of apocalypse through the investigation of the wisdom terms in the book of Daniel. Second, the study is an attempt to evaluate the theological implications of the wisdom terms in Daniel in the context of the Old Testament Wisdom literature (OTWL). The method preferred for this study is to utilize the text-centered approach. All the passages with wisdom terms in the book of Daniel are analyzed.

The significance of the inclusion of wisdom terms in the book of Daniel levels the ground upon which the message of apocalypse could easily be accessible to the Gentile world. As a way of contribution, the wisdom terms show that biblical apocalypse is a form of revelation from God. Wisdom terms here demonstrate that understanding of biblical apocalypse is caused by God. No one understands prophecies through their own wisdom. More importantly, the future is all about the Messiah, and the wisdom terms whose ultimate fulfillment is with Him play a vital role

in identifying the true Messiah and His character. In this regard, the wisdom terms in Daniel give a complete picture of the Messiah in both His roles as priest and king.

This study has also established that the book of Daniel as well makes a significant contribution to the OTWL. One of its main contributions is that while the OTWL focuses on the present while basing on the past, only the book of Daniel focuses on the future while including the past and present. As a whole, the wisdom terms complement the OTWL by including an eschatological thrust of wisdom whose focus is on understanding the prophecies.

One of the major contributions of this dissertation is that the wisdom terms in their contexts in Daniel demonstrate that prophecy is not a presentation of obscure figures and dates, but rather an impact on the individual lives of both believers and non-believers. While sin entered this earth through humanity's quest for wisdom, God in Daniel uses the desire for wisdom as a means of taking humanity back to Himself. Thus, the book of Daniel depicts the hopelessness of acquiring wisdom from sources other than the God of heaven.

"A Linguistic and Exegetical investigation of *tote* in the New Testament"

Researcher: Ndombo Guy Josia, M.A., June 2014

Advisor: Alfredo G. Agustin Jr., Ph.D.

The understanding of discourse markers, more than before, is nowadays considered as an important part of language studies. Discourse markers play important roles in the communication system as they coordinate the meaning of utterances. Understood from that perspective, the particle *τότε* takes a special significance in the study of some NT texts. Nevertheless, this Greek adverb has not been subject to a comprehensive study in the whole NT and its understanding has been limited to facts found in very few researches. It is therefore an attempt of this research to offer a comprehensive categorization of *τότε* in the NT.

In the process of achieving the goal of a successful analysis of *τότε* in the NT, a semantic study, comprising a diachronic and synchronic study, is offered in order to give a general understanding of this particle. From the synchronic study, general categories of *τότε* and their functions are

highlighted, setting the parameters for a subsequent pragmatic analysis of the various occurrences of *τότε* in the NT. It globally appears that *τότε* in the NT serves both as an adverb and as a conjunction. The adverbial usage exhibits temporal indexicality, anaphora, and (con)sequence. Con-junctive *τότε* is both sentence initial and clause initial. Narrative *τότε* is a peculiarity of some books and tends to be sentence initial.

“The Trisagion in Isaiah 6:3: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis”

Researcher: Benjamin McKenzie, M.A., June 2014

Advisor: Mathilde Frey, Ph.D..

Many studies have explored the theme of holiness, particularly in relation to God. While there are many passages in the Bible that contribute to the theology of God’s holiness, the *trisagion* in Isa 6:3 is a unique text. This thrice-repeated holy has resulted in diverse interpretations. A clearer understanding of this trisagion is the motivation for this study. This thesis investigates the historical context of Isa 6 and explores the literary features that appear in the passage to develop a better understanding of this trisagion.

Chapter 1 includes an introduction to the study and the methodology implemented. Chapter 2 reviews literature that is related to the trisagion, God’s holiness, and Isa 6. Chapter 3 investigates the authorship of the book of Isaiah, its historical setting, and its themes. Chapter 4 analyzes the literary structure of Isa 6, explores intertextuality and key words in the passage, examines triadic use within the passage, and explores the significance of the trisagion. Chapter 5 considers the theological implications of the study. Chapter 6 presents the overall results and provides recommendations for further study.

God’s holiness is unique. It transcends time, space, and man. The holiness of God is revealed through His salvific acts and is emphasized in contrast to man’s sinfulness. This superlative holiness is demonstrated in the thrice-repeated holy of the seraphim in Isa 6:3. God is not only holy, but has the ability to make others holy. This is a key concept of God’s holiness because He requires His people to be holy. This will be fulfilled through the acceptance of His holy seed and will be witnessed as His glory fills the earth.

CRITICAL BOOK REVIEWS

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Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists, by Gary Land, 2nd edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014. 380 pp. + 6 pp. chronology + 88 pp. Bibliography. ISBN 978-0-8010-3964-5. Hardcover, US\$110.00.

Gary Land has had a profound impact on Adventist historiography. Aside from his thirty years of teaching history at Andrews University, leadership in professional organizations, and prolific literary output, one of his lesser-known accomplishments bears mentioning. Land was one of three founding editors of *Adventist Heritage*, a journal that appeared in 1974 and ran up through 1998.

Land was a prolific author right up to his unfortunate passing on April 26, 2014. Several books appeared within weeks of his death: *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*, co-edited by Terrie Dopp Aamodt, Ronald Numbers, and Land, was published by Oxford University Press as well as Land's *Uriah Smith: Apologist and Biblical Commentator*. In October 2014 the second edition of *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists* came off the press. This last posthumous offering from Land is under review here.

The first edition of Land's *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists* was published in 2005, the 23rd volume in Rowman & Littlefield's series of Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements. Covering an impressive range of subjects from Taoism to Organized Labor to Utopianism, the object of the series is to "present essential information on a broad range of subjects," and to feature "entries [that] describe the main people, events, politics, social issues, institutions, and policies that make

the topic unique." As series editor Jon Woronoff wrote in his foreword, "it would be hard to think of anyone better placed [than Land] to produce a historical dictionary" of Seventh-day Adventists (p. xii).

The second edition of *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists* contains approximately 80 new entries and occasional edits to entries from the first edition. However, the reader should expect extensive overlap not only from the first edition of this volume, but from Land's *The A to Z of the Seventh-day Adventists*, which Scarecrow Press (a subsidiary of Rowman & Littlefield) published in 2009. Land also states that in preparing the *Historical Dictionary* he relied on the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*. For a reader on a budget who already owns one or both of Land's previous reference works and the 1996 SDA *Encyclopedia*, purchasing the second edition of *Historical Dictionary* for \$100 or more may be unnecessary.

Those looking for information on Adventism in Asia may be also disappointed with *Historical Dictionary*. Land admits that "at this point in time, North American and European names and institutions dominate the entries, but with dramatically changed membership patterns of the past half century, a work such as this written 50 years from now will show a much more international cast of characters" (p. xv). One has to wonder why the *present* volume doesn't reflect the changed membership patterns. This is one of its main shortcomings. As it stands, because of the same bias of the 1996 SDA *Encyclopedia* and Land's previous reference works, the "developing countries," whose members now comprise the vast majority of global Adventism, are not well-represented in any Adventist reference work. An additional shortcoming is the aforementioned reliance on the 1996 SDA *Encyclopedia*, which, as good as it is, was produced just before the revolution in Adventist historiography brought on by the Internet, the major membership and paradigm shift, and the coming of age of Adventist historiography (which Land was integral in ushering in).

Nevertheless, being one of the most recent (and only) reference works on Seventh-day Adventists, the *Historical Dictionary* is very welcome. The Chronology and Introduction provide a grounding in the basics of Adventist history to Adventist and non-Adventist alike. The 369 pages of entries treat on significant Seventh-day Adventist people, practices, themes, institutions, administrative structures, entities, and doctrines, as well as the history of the work in major countries. The mostly one to two paragraph articles are succinct and information-driven, with language that is non-Adventist friendly. The entries also steer clear of biases and controversies that historians often find themselves enmeshed in, simply stating the agreed-upon facts in neutral language. A testament to Land's life in Adventist historiography, this is a fine display of the vastness of his accumulated knowledge tempered by a matured and measured outlook. One should not expect, neither does Land claim, that *Historical Dictionary* is comprehensive.

As stated above, Land is concerned herewith the major and significant of Adventism, and although his inclusions are, of course, debatable, the range is impressive.

It is no secret that Seventh-day Adventists have always grappled with the way the public has perceived them. A concern of Adventists in this age of transparency and accountability is how to be open and honest about the past while still being sensitive to public perception. This series of historical dictionaries by Rowman & Littlefield has provided an opportunity for authors of diverse philosophical and religious persuasions to present their histories as they see fit, to speak instead of being spoken about. In writing this book, Gary Land does Adventism a service.

Benjamin Baker

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Methodism in the American Forest, by Russell E. Richey, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 230 pp. ISBN 9-780-1993-5962-2. Hardcover, US\$55.00.

Russell E. Richey is currently dean emeritus of Candler School of Theology and William R. Cannon Distinguished Professor of Church History Emeritus at Emory University. His eminent career is characterized by his passion and love for early Methodist history. Richey is a research fellow of the Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition, author of seven books on Methodism, and edited the *Methodist Review*. In addition to his many accomplishments, Richey is currently working on a new book, titled, *Methodists in America*, for Columbia University Press. His profound knowledge of early Methodist history and acute grasp of its spiritual ethos deeply characterizes the work herein reviewed: *Methodism in the American Forest*.

The purpose of *Methodism in the American Forest* is to offer “yet another look at Methodist ministry, its hallmark pattern of itinerancy, and ministerial dimensions of ecclesiology” (p. 10). Richey achieves this goal by focusing on Methodist preaching in sylvan settings. Though Methodist ministers usually preached in homes, chapels, or other buildings, the author demonstrates that the woodlands provided meaningful and significant spiritual experiences for many as they witnessed for Christ on America’s frontier (cf. p. 6). Since these experiences provided “theologically potent images of Methodism” (p. 28), Richey highlights some important aspects of the denomination’s early self-understanding.

The author's primary sources include the diaries and journals of preachers, biographies and autobiographies, and other early Methodist publications and official church documents. In addition, Richey carefully critiques secondary sources written by subsequent Methodist historians that provide an unbalanced perspective of the history of camp meetings. Finally, the author also interacts with current scholarship, noting some significant and recent studies that complement his thesis. The masterful use of all these sources reveals that the author is immensely steeped in and abundantly familiar with early Methodist culture and religious commitment.

Methodism in the American Forest is prefaced with an overview-styled introduction and contains five chapters. Richey also includes an appendix that chronicles, in timeline arrangement, John Wesley's "Preaching under Trees and in Groves." The book is thematically focused as a representative study. Richey establishes a firm chronological progression of early Methodist sylvan experiences in America, but is not exhaustive in his treatment. It should also be noted that this study is focused on the perspectives of Methodist ministers, rather than the lay people.

After introducing the topic and explaining the outline of his book, Richey provides, in chapter 1, the foundation for his argument—that "Methodists sacralized American woodlands ... as shady grove (nature's cathedral), as garden (Gethsemane where temptations might be fought and spiritual solace sought), and as wilderness (a challenge through and into which the Methodist 'gospel' must be taken)" (p. 7). The chapter is full of firsthand accounts of Methodist ministers that approached, or reacted to, the American forest in one (if not all) of the three categories mentioned.

The second chapter describes how sylvan experiences eventually developed into camp meetings. Richey argues that this "Methodist signature" was a transition out of the quarterly meetings and continued to evolve over time (cf. p. 7). A discussion of race relations during camp meetings before the Civil War brings this chapter to a close.

Chapter 3 is largely focused on theology and expounds upon the shady grove, garden, and wilderness theme that was introduced and explained in the first chapter. Since this chapter shifts from a historical to a theological discussion, Richey suggests that those disinterested in doctrinal discussions "can readily jump straight to the fourth chapter" (p. 7). If readers were to follow this suggestion, however, they would also miss the author's historical treatment of camp meetings in relation to Native Americans, which concludes chapter 3.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the evolution of camp meetings throughout the nineteenth-century. Richey categorizes these changes into "five related but distinguishable garden, grove, and wilderness projects," including: primitive, programmatic, perfectionist, popular and progressive (p. 123). Though five categories are introduced in this chapter, only the first

four are treated. The fifth and final chapter is focused on Richey's fifth category—progressive—and also serves as a conclusion to his book. With this chapter, *Methodism in the American Forest* is essentially brought to a close (with the exception of the appendix).

Richey takes a unique historiographical approach in this book by systematizing aspects of American Methodism in order to extract theological coherence from a practiced, or lived, theology and ecclesiology. In spite of challenges, Richey accomplishes this intimidating and daunting task with finesse and his work will undoubtedly provide a new standard for Methodist scholars and theologians seeking to harmonize their heritage with current religious practice. Though Richey achieves this feat, the book does have some distracting features, a few of which are offered here as representative examples. First, the five categories of Methodist camp meetings (primitive, programmatic, perfectionist, popular, and progressive) are introduced on page 123, but the discussion of the first category does not commence until page 138. Though the pages in between provide relevant information, it is necessary to return to page 123 to remember the significance of the word, "primitive," by the time one arrives to page 138ff.

A second distraction in this book relates to the way words and phrases are sometimes emphasized. In Richey's discussion of the five categories of camp meetings, he underscores only the second (programmatic) and fourth (popular) with bolded type (pp. 146, 156, cf. 160). One wonders why the first, third, and fifth categories did not receive the same emphasis. Third, it is also rather odd that only the second category is introduced with a number (i.e., "second"; p. 146), while the other four categories are not numbered in pages 138ff. Though these things are all minor, they do detract somewhat from the readability of Richey's book and could have been resolved without much effort.

Another curiosity is Richey's placement of the discussion on African Americans and Native Americans, which appear at the ends of chapters 2 and 3, respectively. It seems that since the book is written and organized thematically, these discussions could have been included together in a new chapter. A section devoted to female Methodists in American forests would also compliment such a chapter. Though Phoebe Palmer is generously discussed (see specifically pp. 151-156) the focus is on holiness, rather than gender in particular. It seems that a broader examination of women vis-à-vis Methodist camp meetings and sylvan experiences would have complimented Richey's book nicely.

One other aspect that could have been included relates to non-Methodist usage of America's woodlands in religious activities. Richey's study is focused on Methodists (as the title of his book clearly indicates), yet the significance of Methodism's sylvan experiences could only be enhanced by a brief evaluation of the broader religious context. Were Methodist's the

only religious body to regularly utilize America's forests within worship services? This seems unlikely, but if so, how did this style of worship impact other Christian denominations? For example, Richey explains that many Methodist's "conversion experiences and calls to ministry came as they prayed and meditated in the woods" (p. 38). Other ministers, such as the Baptist William Miller, also experienced a call to ministry after prayer and meditation in the woods (cf. David L. Rowe, *God's Strange Work: William Miller and the End of the World*, Library of Religious Biography, Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, and Allen C. Guelzo, eds. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008], 98). How did Miller's experience, and others like it, relate to Methodism? Or, are these experiences entirely unrelated? Perhaps early Americans in general found religious meaning and significance in the forests—a haven for spiritual devotion and prayer? Though it would not be necessary to give these questions lengthy consideration, at least some discussion may have been beneficial, as it would highlight the uniqueness and/or influence of Methodism.

In spite of a few distractions and suggested additions, it should be emphasized that Richey's book is highly recommended. It has an important focus—one with which all Christians can relate. It reminds the reader of an important aspect of early American religious life and offers principled lessons that remain valid today. Though times have changed, Richey has done a great service in highlighting the "theologically potent images" that early Methodists found in the American forest while journeying through "wilderness, grove, and garden" experiences.

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The Love of God: A Canonical Model, by John C. Peckham. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015. 295 pp. ISBN 978-0-8308-4079-3. Softcover, US\$32.00.

John C. Peckham (PhD, Andrews University) is an associate professor of theology and Christian philosophy at the Theological Seminary of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Peckham is author of *The Concept of Divine Love in the Context of the God-World Relationship* (Peter Lang, 2014) and several theological and philosophical articles in journals such as *Trinity Journal*, *Philosophia Christi*, *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, and *Themelios*.

This book is a summarized and re-organized version of his dissertation about divine love. Peckham evaluates two models of divine love in the context of the relationship between God and the world and proposes a third. The first model is grounded in classic theism, and he calls it tran-scendent-voluntarist. The second model is described as immanent-experientalist and comes from process panentheism. Using Scripture's canon as the foundation of his research, Peckham proposes what he calls the foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love. He focuses on five particular aspects in this evaluation: whether God's love is (1) volitional or essential, (2) disinterested or evaluative, (3) impassive or emotional, (4) unconditional or conditional, and (5) unilateral or reciprocal.

The book has nine chapters that can be divided in three sections: Three introductory chapters (first, historical; second, methodological; and third, regarding vocabulary), five chapters that analyze the five aspects of divine love (volitional, evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and reciprocal), and a final chapter about divine ontology. The book includes three indexes: by author, subject, and Scripture's references.

The historical review shows that the classic concept of love is the result of the ideas of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, Anders Nygren, and eventually systematized in the thought of Carl F. H. Henry. God is impassible and unaffected by the world. Divine love is sovereignly willed, unconditional, impassible, and unilateral. The opposite view, the immanent-experientalist model, comes from the panentheistic system of Charles Hartshorne. God includes the world via essential relationship, and, yet, is more than the world. Divine love is thereby essential to His existence, unconditional, relational, emotional, and supremely passible.

Peckham's methodology is introduced as a "canonical approach." Scripture in its final form is established as the foundational presupposition, including a high view of the process of revelation-inspiration. This approach considers the criteria of correspondence and coherence of the entire canon as a unified composition that includes human involvement and the context contained in the biblical record.

Peckham challenges the traditional distinction between *agape* and *eros*, in which *agape* corresponds to a kind of love which is unilateral beneficence, volitional, unconditional, unilateral, and impassible, whereas *eros* is egoistical and an inferior kind of love. The biblical evidence shows that both their Hebrew forerunner and the Greek words themselves are used interchangeably and overlap in meaning.

For Peckham, the Scriptures describe divine love as voluntary and not necessary or essential to God's being. However, divine love is not merely volitional or arbitrary because God has granted human freedom and therefore, includes other aspects of his love (evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and ideally reciprocal).

God's love is evaluative meaning that God can appraise, appreciate, and receive value from external agents. This does not mean He is ontologically deficient. Love is not pure altruism, because "appropriate self-love and self-interest that does not exclude other-interest" (p. 131). God has voluntarily bounded His happiness to that of His creatures. The evaluative aspect of divine love is also related to divine evaluation in judgment.

Peckham rejects impassibility by saying that the Bible depicts divine love as profoundly emotional, but not merely emotional. God is able to have affective responses to the external world. Biblical language about God's emotionality is interpreted analogically. Yet divine love is not merely emotional because such love acts in conjunction with its volitional and evaluative aspects. God's emotions are affected, but not determined, by external stimulus.

Peckham has coined the term "foreconditional" to express the idea that divine love is bestowed prior to any conditions and that some elements of God's love are unconditional, while others are conditioned to a response. Peckham differentiates between (1) God's subjective love, which expresses His unconditional and everlasting loving disposition of His character of love and (2) God's objective love, which is conditional with respect to divine evaluation and relationships because God expects a proper response to His love. In a corporate sense, divine love is unconditional because God will love and save some people and is conditional because those who will be loved and saved are those who will fulfill the conditions.

God's love is ideally reciprocal, yet asymmetrical. God desires and seeks to establish bilateral relationships with His creatures. This mutuality is part of the multilateral circle of love, which includes (1) love between the persons of the Trinity, (2) love from God to humans, (3) love from humans to God, and (4) love from believers to one another. These four are alike in nature, though not necessarily equal or symmetrical. Universally relational love is different than God's subjective love because it is bestowed foreconditionally. This kind of love can be forfeited if it is not reciprocated.

The author does not pretend to have a complete understanding of God's essence. Such a goal is beyond human cognizance. He posits that while intra-trinitarian love is essential to God, His love for His creatures is voluntary, and is not essential or necessary for His being. God is ontologically independent from the world and self-sufficient, but He "has voluntarily bound his own interests to the best interests of creatures" (p. 256). God's will is ontologically independent and significant because it is free. He also has given significant, albeit limited, freedom to His creatures. God is thereby not the only causal agent in the universe, and His ideal will is not always done. Peckham rejects divine impassibility. God's immutability is understood as God's changelessness of character rather than His inability to

experience history and respond to it. God is omnipotent—He does not require the use and exercise of power. He has voluntarily limited Himself by bestowing freedom of choice on other beings. Without that freedom, authentic love can not exist. Allowing evil is the result of human freedom, which in turn is the result of divine love for them.

There are many things to praise about this volume by Peckham. His methodology allows a biblical-grounded description of divine love. It is not only biblical theology, but a very systematization of the biblical idea of divine love. It is a conservative methodology, one that uses Scripture in its final form as the ultimate epistemological basis. The analogical interpretation of the language of God helps to reach an idea of divine love more coherent with the biblical content. There is no need of interpreting the Bible as an accommodative language thereby imposing preconceived presuppositions about the nature of God. The Bible must interpret itself.

The abundant bibliographical references and explanations are an example of well-grounded and quality research. The precise prose is structured and written in a way that is easy to follow. Peckham does not avoid deep philosophical debates. He offers an alternative, and necessary, explanation of the Biblical data about God that is different from both the impassible God of classical theism and avoids the impersonal God of liberal panentheism.

Peckham proposes a picture of God that is much closer to the active and personal God of the Bible. It is a balanced view that includes both His highest capacities as described in the Bible (sovereign, all-powerful, etc.) and those attributes that define His treatment with His creatures, highlighting His relational being. He interacts and lives day by day with His creatures. He shares emotions and argues with them. The final outcome is a beautiful picture of divine love.

The limitations of the book are imposed by the very nature of the topic, as recognized by the author. It is not possible to go beyond what is revealed about God and the way He loves us. Even so, Peckham presents a carefully reasoned ontological basis for his proposed model that is foundational for further developments in the study of the character of God, specifically the relationship between God's being or essence, His will, and His moral attributes. This is important to understand the role of God's character in divine providence or governance, and the place of divine love in the eschatological judgment. I highly recommend this book for anyone who wants to know more about God, His love, and how to have a closer relationship with Him.

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The Second Letter to the Corinthians, by Mark A. Seifrid. The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. xxxiv + 535 pp. ISBN 978-0-8028-3739-4. Hardcover, US\$50.00.

Mark Seifrid is a highly respected NT scholar who specializes in the Pauline epistles with a particular emphasis upon justification by faith. In this latest installment his Lutheran assumptions are easily discernible creating fresh biblical insights within a traditional Protestant framework.

The book gives a concise yet comprehensive introduction that is divided into four main sections. The first section connects the canonical Corinthian correspondence both historically and theologically. Seifrid next highlights the fact that 1 Corinthians best complements 2 Corinthians. The second section offers a brief introduction to Paul's opponents in Corinth. Seifrid examines this issue more specifically in his commentary of 2 Cor 3. The third section deals with the literary integrity of the letter. The author parts company with other significant commentators about the literary unity of the letter. "The incoherence or inconcinnity of arguments that one might find in the letter is more apparent than real" (p. xxx). The last section of the introduction summarizes the main theological approaches to the letter. Seifrid argues that the best way to understand 2 Corinthians is from an ecclesiological and missiological perspective of the apostle Paul.

Seifrid develops this ecclesiological and missiological approach as the main thrust of this volume. The commentary is organized into three basic sections. The first section (1:1-2:17) highlights the importance of the call and ministry of the apostle. The second section (3:1-7:16) expands both the experience and the practice of the apostolic mission. The final section (8:1-13:14) describes the spiritual characteristics, meekness, and simplicity of the true apostles.

Two main strengths distinguish this book from the majority of other commentaries on 2 Corinthians. The most obvious is the solid theological arguments that the author develops. He skillfully weaves both English and German sources, as well as a wide range of authors spanning from the early church to the present. He views the letter as a single literary and theological unit. A second and related strength of this commentary is that it emphasizes the Jewish background of Pauline thought and rhetoric. This particular idea, however, is not unique to Protestant theology in general as it has already been explored in the areas of the church and the new Israel, the importance of the gospel and the new covenant over the law, and the old covenant. Unfortunately, one could wish that the same theological emphasis could be better represented in some of the exegetical and textual analyses of the letter. Thus, this is a rich theological commentary that should be supplemented by other technical exegetical commentaries. The book will

be a valuable resource for theologians investigating particular biblical issues. It is an essential resource for any theological library.

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Accordance Review, version 11, by OakTree Software, Inc., 2014-2015. US\$49.90-59.90. Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries: Old Testament and Apocrypha US\$999.00 and New Testament US\$599.00.

In the fall of 2014 Oak Tree Software launched the newest update to their renowned Bible software. Accordance version 11 builds on the successful version 10 by adding helpful features to the existing program: Quick entry, info pane, increased customization, and user tools.

Accordance's software is well known for its speed, as well as user-friendly approach. Indeed the software exhibits a single entry pane that allows the user to search the selected database with ease. In contrast, the producers of other Bible software solutions have up to 13 different entry fields with varying search syntax and features. In version 11, Accordance expanded the single entry line to include a new feature labeled "quick entry." Similar to the search field found in a web search, the software offers the user a drop-down list of suggested entries based upon the typed letters. Despite the apparent similarity, the "quick entry" by Accordance is more powerful than that of other popular search engines due to the flex-search functionality, transferal of an English entry into Biblical languages, and suggestions for alternate spelling. Based on the flex search capability in Biblical databases, introduced in version 10, the software presents both the applicable Bible book and a list of relevant words after entering a few letters. This quick-entry feature is especially useful when searching for words in a Biblical language in a corresponding module. The software recognizes English letters and searches for the Greek/Hebrew/Aramaic equivalent. For example, the English entry of "mar" in the NA28 module results in the suggestion of the Bible book "Mark," as well as an exhaustive list of Greek words beginning with these letters along with a one or two word definition such as "Μάρθα Martha." Additionally, the suggestions of similar spelled words is particularly useful as users can easily misspell a word in a Biblical language if the transliteration of letters from English to the Biblical language is not fully memorized. Akin to searches on the web, the user can press "enter" or scroll to any item in the drop-down list using their mouse

or cursor at any given time. In summary, the “quick entry” feature is a tremendous addition and worth the price of the upgrade price by itself. After using the feature for a few days it is hard to imagine returning to a static entry bar. One suggestion to expand the usefulness of this “quick entry” field is to offer a text passage with a short description (e.g. “Mar 7:1-23 *Purity Conflict*”)—once the program recognizes that a numeral is entered after a reference to a Bible book. Not everyone would want such an option (advanced scholars vs. novices), but for some this could facilitate quick access to sections of scripture.

The new “info pane” is a parallel tab that gives instant access to your favorite resources. The pane has five expandable headings: “Commentaries, Cross-References, Topics, Parallel Passages, and Apparatus.” Each heading provides links to the user’s favorite resources in each category based on the top Bible verse. The text of each highlighted resource is displayed in the instant dialog box by hovering with the mouse pointer over the module thus giving immediate access to the content without having to open that resource. Alternatively, the resource can also be opened in a new window at the relevant location. While all the headings clearly identify the resource type, the “Topics” heading includes multiple subheadings: the theological topic, names, places, text, and atlas. Each of the items identified in the subheading links to the appropriate dictionary article or map location. Most importantly, the info pane only serves as the link between the text and the user-defined resource. The user specifies the preferred modules for each section and the order in which they appear. The importance of this cannot be overstated as the results of competitive software programs do not indicate where they receive their information or allow the user to define this feature. Prior to this info pane, users often had a cluttered workspace with several open parallel tabs or had to alternate between modules. This tool greatly simplifies the process of accessing top resources without taking up a lot of space. As a minor quibble, customization is still somewhat limited. The order of the headings cannot be changed. As a personal preference, the critical apparatus should be first rather than last in this list. Also, the number of commentaries that are initially displayed (a plus button can always expand the initial setting) can only be set to 2, 5, 10, 15, 20, etc. More customization in the info pane would make it an even more user-friendly resource. Additionally, this user for multiple reasons (customizable sizing/placement, keyboard shortcut, and seeing the text in context) would have preferred the info pane to be a tool much more like the “instant details” tool rather than a parallel text module.

Finally, a host of smaller features add improved searches, user notes, and organizational features. Accordance features three ways to search modules in the past. The default—and for many reasons preferable—search function is to query a single module at a time. The “amplify” button next

to a module in the library allows users to search a different module with a highlighted term using the simple click of a mouse button. Finally there is a "search all" entry, entitled "Research." This last function faces an impressive speed increase in version 11 by yielding almost instantaneous results without the need of lengthy indexing process as required by competitive software programs. The results can now be organized according to categories defined in the library catalog leading to a clear overview. User notes are expanded as well to include more customization, which includes adding pictures and hyperlinks. Finally, the library can now be organized according to Accordance's categories or personal preference. Either way, modules can be placed in personalized folders or subfolders, or moved from one category to the other. This allows users to customize the library according to his or her liking.

The *Anchor Yale Bible Commentary* module is a highly respected scholarly series that has produced some of the leading commentaries on various books; Jacob Milgrom's three volume *magnum opus* on Leviticus and Joel Marcus' two volume Mark commentary are just two of many. Serious scholars cannot ignore the contributions from this series, either because of their historic value (Raymond Brown's commentary on John) or their current superior standing (Craig R. Koester's Hebrew commentary). The Accordance module makes this resource easy to obtain, carry around, and integrate into the user's workflow. Additionally, it is not only significantly cheaper than the print version (with an estimated savings of around \$3,000) but also \$500 less than the comparable version offered by Logos software.

The commentary series is a solid module that builds on the same interface as other Accordance modules. This allows the user to open the module in a parallel tab scrolling alongside the biblical text or in an independent tab or window. The latter allows a browsing function as well as detailed search options. The user can navigate the module via a menu column that displays a structure of the individual books and detailed book sections following the table of contents. The module can also be searched by a variety of parameters: English, Greek, or Hebrew content, title, scripture reference, and page number just to name a few. Page breaks are easily recognizable making the process of referencing easy, even if the included bibliographic copy tool is not used. As with other modules, the module can be highlighted, sections copied and pasted into Word, user notes added, and many other features. In addition to the current volumes in the series, this module includes alternate volumes accessible as a secondary file. The newer commentaries, such as Joel Marcus' two-volume Mark commentary, are in the main file, while older versions, in this case C. S. Mann's Mark commentary, are in the secondary file. Both the availability of the older volumes and its place as a separate file are very helpful features. It isn't quite clear though why the OT commentaries in the *Anchor Yale Bible Commentary* series are

divided into four separate files (Gen-Deut, Josh-Esth, Job-Song, Isa-Mal). The NT on the other hand is a single file. Other commentary series are not divided in the same manner and are either a single OT-NT file (e.g. NAC) or one file for each testament (f.e. WBC-OT, WBC-NT). It is possible to combine them as "combined resources" in a parallel pane, but this requires several extra steps and only works in the parallel pane. Additionally, it is unfortunate that licensing problems between the publisher and the copyright holders (not OakTree software) prohibit the inclusion of Albright's Matthew as well as Craig R. Koester's new Revelation commentary at this time. It should be noted that all software distributors are affected by this situation.

Unrelated to the module itself, a personal wish is that the library books be accessible in a "reading mode," that is a page-by-page viewer much like an eBook or Kindle book, that facilitates *reading* rather than just *searching* a book. This would be especially interesting for the mobile Accordance app. The recent free app upgrade to version 2 is a vast improvement of an already stellar program that allows all modules to be accessed on- and offline with the same depth of search options.

In conclusion, the upgrade to version 11 is a must have enhancement for any Accordance user. This update once more underlines the leading position of Accordance among Bible software options. The *Anchor Yale Bible Commentary* series is a crucial resource for any serious scholar. Lay members and undergraduate students will find the *New American Commentary* or the *Pillar Commentary* series more accessible. Yet the portability, accessibility, and inexpensive price point make this an important and valuable addition to any scholar's library.

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Psalms, by Nancy DeClaisse-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner. NICOT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. 1073 pp. ISBN 978-0-8028-2493-6 Hardcover, US\$60.00.

This benchmark new commentary on the book of Psalms begins with an informative introduction and is divided into eight sections. The first section deals with the title, text, and translation of the Psalter. The authors have attempted to establish the text and offer a translation based on the critical edition of the Hebrew text of the psalms in the *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. In connection to this, the author's preference to transliterate the Hebrew

term *hesed* as a loanword is worth mentioning. The wide semantic range and the centrality of the word in the book of Psalms justify this option. The second section of the introduction addresses issues related to the authorship, superscriptions and date of the Psalter. The commentary presupposes the anonymity of the Psalms' authorship and considers the superscriptions as a later insertion. The third section is about Form Criticism and historical approaches to the interpretation of the Psalter. Here two broad approaches to form-critical interpretation of the Psalter are pointed out. The first approach, advocated by H. Gunkel and S. Mowinckel, aims at getting behind the text and uncover the original life settings. The second approach focuses on the forms themselves. C. Westermann and W. Brueggemann are representatives of the latter methodology. Having pointed out the strengths and weakness of both approaches, the authors of this commentary state that they share "more with the second form critical approach than the first" (p.18). Furthermore, the authors intend in their literary work to "interpret each psalm as a unique and particular prayer" while at the same time being "sensitive to the canonical story of the Psalter" (p. 8).

The fourth section of the introduction presents a concise summary on the topic of the canonical shape of the Psalter. Building on the work of B. S. Childs and J. A. Sanders, who put the spotlight on the final form of the OT texts, this commentary recognizes the shape of the Psalter in its canonical context. Hence, the authors depict the Psalter as a narration of the history of ancient Israel in five books from the reign of King David and King Solomon (Book One and Two, Ps 1-72), through the divided kingdom (Book Three, 73-89), and the struggle of the exile in Babylon (Book Four, 90- 106), up until the celebration of the return to Jerusalem and the establishment of a new Israel (Book Five, 107-150).

While discussing the poetry of the Psalter in the fifth section, the authors single out parallelism and evocative language as the two special features of Hebrew poetry and special focus is given to the later. The sixth section of the introduction deals with the themes and theology of the Psalter. As for the themes, it is noted here that the various forms-critical categories express the main themes of the Psalter. In regards to the theology of the Psalms, however, this commentary has taken the approach of understanding the theological witness of each psalm individually within the larger contexts of the Psalter's story. The last two sections of the introduction present an outline of the book of Psalms based on the perceived canonical shape of the Psalter and selected bibliography respectively.

In writing the body of this commentary, the three contributors fairly divided the Psalms among themselves. While each of the commentators has their own unique style, they follow an outline that has three parts in their treatment of each Psalm. The first part includes the translation of the Psalm and introductory information with regards to the text, genre, and structure.

The question about “the life in setting” of each psalm is always addressed with no specificity and great warning against any attempt to do so. This approach disregards the information given in some of the superscriptions. However, other scholars have noted the quick dismissal of the superscription as not authoritative needs reinvestigation.

The second part presents a brief interpretive comment on each stanza of the Psalm. The study of key words and poetic features play a significant role in the work of exposition presented. Besides this, the unity of each Psalm is accepted and even affirmed while recognizing the possibility of divergent views. Hence, the canonical reading of each Psalm in the context of the whole book is discussed extensively. In their exposition, the commentators also actively interact with the work of other scholars, in particular H. Kraus, M. Tate, and E. Gerstenberger. Furthermore, the interpretive part of the commentary attempts to throw light on the text from its Ancient Near Eastern background. However, the necessary caution that guards from falling into the pitfall of reading too much into this background information should be highlighted.

Each comment on the Psalms ends by drawing theological themes and points of application. Among the authors, Rolf Jacobs, wrote longer on themes and applications than the other two commentators. Here, New Testament Connections, and the relevance of the themes of the Psalms to today’s YHWH faith community are addressed. Nevertheless, as the thoughts on the application of the Psalms are majorly drawn from the North American context, one would wonder how this could be a reflection of the internationality that the commentary series claims.

Overall, this commentary is a welcome addition to the study of the Psalms. The condensed wealth of information, which is text-based and sensitive to the life of the believer, commends itself to scholars as well as for the uninitiated who would like to learn more.

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