

helpful, as the chronologies are primarily geared toward a description of the historical events.

Davis reveals his Roman Catholic background when he states that one of his sub-themes is to indicate "the growing authority of the Papacy within the developing structure of the Church" (p. 10). On the other hand, he also points out that the East had great difficulties with the Bishop of Rome's understanding of his authority, and he demonstrates this throughout the work.

One of the interesting features of this book is the author's frank admission that these seven ecumenical councils do not always fit the neat definition of an ecumenical council as understood by the Roman Catholic Code of Canon Law. (According to the Code an ecumenical council is defined as an assembly of bishops and other specified persons, convoked and presided over by the pope for the purpose of formulating decisions concerning Christian faith and discipline. Such decisions require papal confirmation [p. 323]). Rather, he admits, the councils were often called by the emperor, the papal legates did not always approve the actions in behalf of the pope, and some of the councils were designated ecumenical only by the action of subsequent ecumenical councils. In Davis' mind, this has greatly complicated the count of ecumenical councils.

The foregoing problem, however, should not stand as a barrier to recognizing these seven councils as ecumenical. In the interest of better relations with both Protestants and the Eastern Orthodox Church (who recognize only the seven councils), Davis calls upon the Roman Catholic Church to reconsider the whole question and to accept only the first seven councils as being truly ecumenical.

This book, despite its weaknesses, is well written and highly informative—especially in the area of the interrelationship of the history and theology of the first seven ecumenical councils. It aids readers not only in a better understanding of the councils, but also of their place in Christian history.

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Knight, George R. *From 1888 to Apostasy: The Case of A. T. Jones*. Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1987. 288 pp. \$16.95.

The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church observes a noteworthy anniversary in 1988: the centennial of the landmark Minneapolis General Conference. As part of the remembrance, the Review and Herald Publishing Association has issued three histories, of which George Knight's *From 1888 to Apostasy: The Case of A. T. Jones* is perhaps the most notable.

Knight has established himself through this and earlier writings as one of the SDA denomination's most judicious interpreters of its past.

From 1888 to Apostasy has the form of a conventional biography, but Knight uses Alonzo Trévier Jones's career as the occasion for analyzing a critical period of Adventist history. The issues with which the church contended at the turn of the century remain with it today—a reason why a close reading of this volume would well repay all who have an interest in that period of SDA history.

Jones took the SDA Church by storm in the late 1880s and 1890s. A whirlwind of energy, he became the denomination's greatest advocate of religious liberty in an age of disturbing threats to separation of church and state. He testified before Congressional committees on several occasions in defense of traditional separation. Jones's prominence also resided in a commanding platform presence and a persuasive editorial pen. Knight effectively conveys the sense of a man who both spoke and wrote with a conviction rooted in an absolute certitude of his rightness. His authority in the church was further enhanced by a series of important offices, including editorships of the *American Sentinel*, the *Signs of the Times*, and the *Review and Herald*; presidency of the SDA California Conference; and membership on the SDA General Conference Committee. Through a combination of charisma and editorial access to the Adventist public, Jones became one of the two or three most influential voices in the SDA Church in the 1890s.

But his was a troubled and a troubling influence. It was troubled because of an essential dogmatism and an inability to compromise that left him perpetually frustrated with the seemingly slow pace of change. It was troubling because his insistent advocacy of certain doctrinal positions and institutional arrangements set him squarely against other church leaders. In view of Jones's being impelled by a compulsive personality and impeded by inertial forces in the church, one might in retrospect see his "fall from grace" and ultimate alienation from the SDA denomination as inevitable. Though his career was marked by periodic confessions of pride and public reconciliation with his opponents, his good resolutions seemed quickly forgotten at subsequent contretemps.

Nevertheless, for a decade and a half beginning in 1888, Jones was at the center of the most momentous SDA Church debates of the age. The foremost of these followed Jones's alliance with E. J. Waggoner in their attempt to reinfuse righteousness by faith into Adventist theology. In four evocative chapters Knight provides a helpful review of events and attitudes surrounding the contentious Minneapolis General Conference of 1888. He applauds Jones for having championed a vital doctrinal insight, but faults him for a proclivity to publicly berate opponents to his message. The acerbic and uncompromising nature of Adventist theological debate up to the present may at least in part be seen as a legacy of the Minneapolis

Conference. More positively, of course, this Conference also laid the basis for a gospel-centered Adventism, which a century later is well established in theory even if not always in practice.

A second doctrinal dispute concerning the nature of Christ bore less pleasant fruit. Knight carefully examines Jones's accepting of the idea that Christ shared humanity's fallen nature. This meant, by extension, that all persons can come to experience the same holiness as Jesus through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Though Jones was not a part of the fanatical "Holy Flesh" movement in the 1890s, his preaching certainly encouraged the more extreme applications of holiness belief.

In the final third of the book Knight relates an additional church issue in which Jones became embroiled: administrative reorganization. The inadequacy of the growing SDA Church's institutional structure was painfully clear well before the turn of the century. Some means of decentralizing church administration was needed, but Jones insisted that a NT plan of organization denied virtually any hierarchical authority. His variety of "Christian anarchy" found surprising resonance among SDA leaders of the time (doubtless a reaction against the "kingly" powers at the General Conference headquarters in Battle Creek), but not to the degree Jones desired. Ellen White and A. G. Daniells prevailed at the crucial 1901 and 1903 General Conference sessions, reorganizing the church along the lines still in use today. Jones's unhappiness with the results of 1901 and 1903 (in particular the influence of the new president, A. G. Daniells) soon led him to ally with another notable dissident, John Harvey Kellogg, and took him out of the church.

In *From 1888 to Apostasy*, Knight assumes an Adventist readership and utilizes a devotional vocabulary. He seldom misses an opportunity to draw parallels between his story and the contemporary SDA Church. Still, there are two timely questions which Jones's career suggests but which the book does not address. First, How does a bureaucratic organization deal with nonconformity, especially when such behavior includes criticism of aspects of the organization? Knight's explanation of Jones's meteoric rise and fall resides chiefly in the man's personal qualities: multiple virtues ultimately undone by the vices of pride and stubbornness. But it is also illuminating to consider this cautionary tale from an institutional perspective. The question then becomes how a figure such as Jones ever gained the prominence he did, given his unconventional and abrasive ways. The answer may lie in part in the revival of primitive faith that occurred during the years following the Minneapolis Conference. Those years when the church felt the sting of intolerance and foresaw an imminent persecution, when the message of righteousness by faith lifted a burden of legalism from the hearts of many, and when the promise of an indwelling Spirit gained new currency, provided the religious atmosphere for Jones to acquire great authority. Truly a man for his time, he epitomized both the

sense of urgency and the sense of Christian freedom that Adventists experienced in the 1890s. Inevitably, though, an institution demands order; and with that imperative, Jones's star would fall.

The second question that could well have been addressed is, What was the political role of Ellen White in the SDA Church? This question relates to the first, because in fact she did exercise true charismatic leadership, not by virtue of personality but by her widely acknowledged prophetic gift. Of course, Ellen White is not the subject of Knight's study. But her place in the church of these years forms a natural extension to this book. Knight provides fascinating glimpses of White as one outside the formal circle of power, yet one whose counsel was by turn sought as a justification for a course of action, resisted if opposed to a group's wishes, or begrudgingly accepted. Certainly, Jones's own relationship to White revolved through all three types of response. What has been explored in part by George Knight, Jonathan Butler, Ron Graybill, and others should now lead to a systematic study of a prophet in a modernizing church.

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Land, Gary, ed. *Adventism in America*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986. ix + 301 pp. Paperback \$14.95.

From several perspectives *Adventism in America* represents a work that is both helpful and courageous: helpful in attempting a studied and balanced review of the whole of Adventism within 230 pages, and courageous in facing the criticism sure to follow as the narrative touches on many near-contemporary events whose movers and shapers are still living. In addition, an approach that relies on several authors for dealing with historical segments casts on the editor the almost intolerable responsibility for bringing harmony out of diversity in content selection, value choices, and style. In responding to this challenge, editor Land often distinguishes himself with success. Quite remarkably, he has all but eliminated the redundancy endemic to such projects.

In general, the authors—all Seventh-day Adventists of extensive professional experience in the church—have created a very readable tracing of the mainstream of Adventism. Aside from slightly sour notes in the preface, which criticize ecclesiastical protectiveness as having obstructed truthful historical self-examination (a premise that certainly will be challenged), the text responds to accepted norms of contemporary historical investigation. In most instances it is as nearly an objective perspective as can be expected of a self-examination. Without question the major readership will be Seventh-day Adventist, for the book is filled with discussions and allusions to persons and issues obscure to those outside Adventist circles.