

priorities established for life in Sabbath observance, while chapter four describes the Sabbath as a covenant bond. Chapter five traces the redemptive purpose of the Sabbath in both Old and New Testaments, dealing particularly with Jesus' Sabbath miracles and activities with His disciples. Chapter six is full of practical suggestions on Sabbath activity, and the closing chapter serves as a concluding summary.

The rest of the book contains a brief summary of Bacchiocchi's published dissertation, 56 pages of footnotes, an impressive bibliography of over 100 relevant books and a table of contents. Though its size may be a bit overwhelming to the casual reader, those willing to read something a bit difficult can gain much from this outstanding work.

Brunt's book, on the other hand, is short and easy to read. This ease should not be allowed to obscure the significant and scholarly contribution it makes to Sabbath literature. In fact, Brunt gently introduces the reader to some of the terms of biblical scholarship not familiar to readers of Seventh-day Adventist publications. For example, on page 28 he explains the word "chiasm" to his readers. On page 26 we are introduced to the term "pronouncement stories," which is explained for the uninitiated reader. Brunt also breaks through the useful but often obscuring screen of the "harmony" approach to gospel study by showing the unique and meaningful differences in the varied reports of the gospel writers.

The first chapter is really an introduction or foreword to the book, in which Brunt makes it clear that his purpose is not Sabbath apologetics, fine as such an endeavor may be, but to aid in finding the meaning of Sabbath. Chapter two provides the setting in which the Sabbath miracles occurred while chapter three constructs a framework for understanding Jesus' miracles. Chapter four examines the Sabbath miracles themselves, comparing, contrasting, and explaining them in depth. The first part of chapter

five provides some excellent summary material of the issues raised in chapter four, but the diagrams of healing, Sabbath, and salvation at its close remain a bit of an enigma to me. Chapter six of Brunt's book does much the same as Bacchiocchi's sixth chapter, giving many practical observations on Sabbath keeping.

Both books provide a significant addition to Sabbath literature. No doubt they will contribute to "proper Sabbath observance" on some cold, winter, Sabbath afternoon by the fire—provided the children don't get bored while we read.

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Sex and the Healthy Adventist

Sakae Kubo. *Theology and Ethics of Sex*. 128pp. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980. \$4.95 (paper).

reviewed by William K. Faber

The questioning in the past 20 years of traditional beliefs and attitudes toward sex is not a process that excludes Christians, nor should it. A recent attempt to divide truth from error on the subject comes from former seminary Greek and theology professor Sakae Kubo, who is currently president of Newbold College in England. In *Theology and Ethics of Sex*, Kubo intends to develop a biblically-based theology of sex and to apply it to a number of specific sex-related ethical issues.

The first half of the book exposes some of the post-biblical roots of the negative attitudes toward sex—sex is shameful and a

“necessary evil” for procreation—that the church has retained for centuries. Kubo contrasts these views with the much healthier biblical concept of sexuality, which presupposes a Hebraic and not a Greek definition of human nature. Chapter by chapter he examines passages from the creation story and concludes that sex is not exclusively or even primarily for reproduction, but symbolizes and fulfills the divinely preordained need of man and woman to be completely united. As part of his creation, God pronounced sexuality “good” and not shameful.

Kubo quickly points out that it is in the context of lifelong commitment, where there is enough security to allow the total merger of souls and not simply bodies, that true fulfillment is found. But he sees it as unfortunate that moralists have relied on external consequences such as pregnancy and disease (which can now be circumvented) to deter sexual relations, rather than pointing to restrictions on the context of sex as God’s means to safeguard sex for our highest good.

In the second part of the book, Kubo presents the specific moral issues of premarital sex, divorce and remarriage, homosexuality, contraception and sterilization, abortion, artificial insemination and genetic engineering by primarily summarizing what other Christian writers have concluded on each problem. For example, the chapters on divorce and homosexuality recite familiar Bible texts and the varied commentaries of scholars who disagree in their interpretation of them. While this approach introduces one to some of the complexities of each problem and stimulates discussion, it unfortunately falls short of the book’s stated goal. Kubo fails to use his theology to produce many original answers to the ethical problems he considers.

This is not to say that Kubo has taken no personal stands. To propose, as he does, that men and women fundamentally need each other is risky these days. Furthermore, he contends that sex is not primarily for repro-

duction and argues that Christians should not only practice but promote family planning, even suggesting that Christians guided by the Golden Rule should welcome genetic screening and seek sterilization if indicated. But if one is waiting for a Seventh-day Adventist to take a strong stand against abortion, this is not the place to look. Kubo shows sensitivity to the differences between the ideal and present reality. As a theologian, he holds up what he believes to be God’s ideal, but he has not forgotten the theology of grace, forgiveness, and contingency plans. Kubo delicately handles this tension in his discussions of abortion, divorce, and homosexuality, but unfortunately he stresses prevention and offers few specific cures.

Even though *Theology and Ethics of Sex* uses many widely varied sources and appears to be for a general Christian readership, several direct references to Seventh-day Adventist policy reveal the book’s primary audience. Seventh-day Adventists should be quite at home with Kubo’s theology and moderate stand on ethical issues, whereas a Catholic or Lutheran would likely reach different conclusions from the same material. Frankly, quite a few assertions that do not follow strictly from the arguments that precede them will be swallowed by most readers.

Kubo’s greatest contribution is as an exegetical theologian. A brief, but helpful, biblical theology of sex should be particularly useful for anyone who still feels a little guilty or shameful about sexuality. Unfortunately, the section on ethics is just too cursory to validate hard conclusions, and little “new” is said in it. Yet it may serve as an introduction to the problems of sexual ethics, and though the author did not seem to apply his theology to produce new answers, perhaps the reader can.

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