

Millennial Reflections on William G. Johnsson's, *Where Are We Headed?: Adventism After San Antonio*

BY ZDRAVKO PLANTAK, DANIELLE M. BARNARD, MATTHEW KORPMAN, KATRINA BLUE, IGOR LORENCIN, IRIANN MARIE HAUSTED, AND DONNY CHRISSTUANTO



From left to right: Igor Lorencin, Katrina Blue, Donny Chrissutianto, Matthew Korpman, Zack Plantak, Iriann Marie Hausted, Danielle M. Barnard

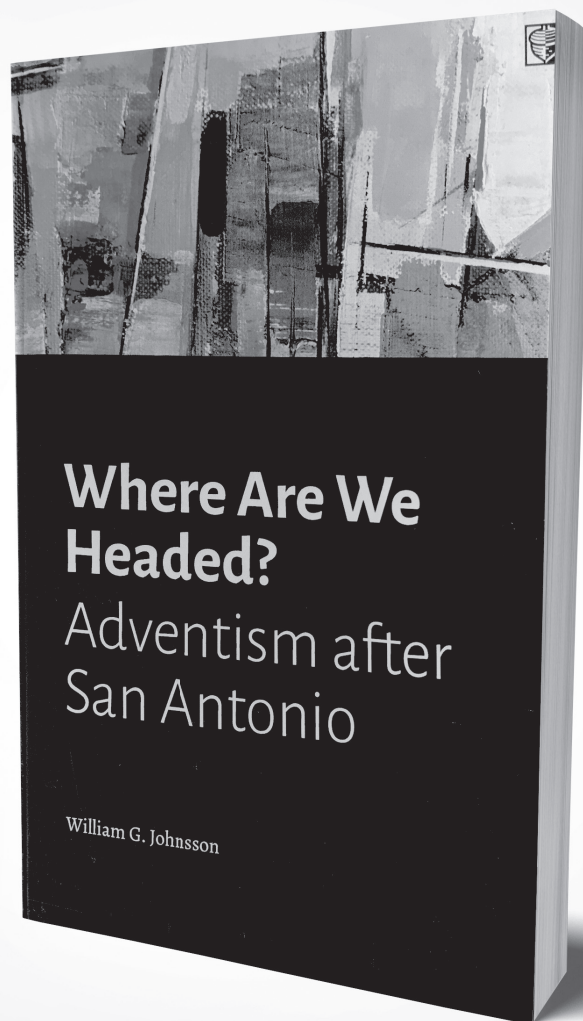
Introduction

by Zdravko Plantak

What a mutual friend called “an anguished cry,” William G. Johnsson called his “sharp points” of “a lover’s quarrel” out of “a heart of love.” After “a truly sad day for the Seventh-day Adventist Church” at the 2015 San Antonio General Conference Session, of which he and many genuine long-time leaders of the church were ashamed, Johnsson recognized the exposed and widened “fault lines

that have been developing for quite some time.” His highly affecting book, *Where are we Headed? Adventism After San Antonio* (Oak & Acorn, 2017), became his personal “Isaac,” as he early on warns some of his friends and colleagues in the leadership of the church that even though it may give them heartburn, his intentions are redemptive.

Through the chapters Johnsson tackles significant issues that seem to be dividing the church and out of which “two radically different versions of Adventism are com-



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peting for the future." His attempt is to ask, and hopefully answer, the question of which of the two versions will prevail. Adventist Society for Religious Studies (ASRS) leaders have taken seriously Johnsson's sturdy call, in which he tells it as he sees it "without beating around the bush." We asked six younger scholars, from theological undergraduate education through the seminary and master level studies, all the way to PhD students, or those who have completed their degrees and have recently embarked on teaching Bible and theology in Adventist universities, to reflect on Johnsson's thesis and respond for a Sabbath Morning Panel at the recently concluded 2017 Annual ASRS Convention in Boston, MA.

The intention was to have different groups represented from various geographic areas of the world. So, the African-American student

who is in the middle of her MDiv program at the Adventist Seminary at Andrews University, Danielle Bernard, responded first, followed by Dr. Katrina Blue, an Australian Systematic theologian and a professor at Pacific Union College. Donny Chrissutianto, an Indonesian who presently studies church history and historical theology at the AIIAS in Philippines, and a Puerto Rican, Iriann Marie Hanstead, PhD student in historical theology at Andrews University, brought Asian and Latina perspectives respectively. Finally, these young scholars were followed by a quadruple undergraduate major (religious studies, archeology, philosophy, and film & television) from La Sierra University, Matthew J. Korpman, and then a New Testament professor at the German Adventist institution of higher education, Friedensau Adventist University, Dr Igor Lorencin, who

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originally came from Croatia and was, prior to his appointment in Germany, teaching at the Adriatic Union Seminary in Marusevec, after completing his doctoral studies at Andrews University in Michigan, in the field of social circumstances of early Christianity. You will be able to hear these six voices from Asia, Latin America, Europe, and Australia, as well as African-American and white voices from North America, as they reflected on the overall theme, or some aspects, of Johnsson's book, and built foundations for the conversation on *Where are we Headed? Adventism After San Antonio*. ■



The SDA Drive for Self-Preservation by Danielle M. Barnard

Dietrich Bonhoeffer penned these words to Eberhard Bethge, on May 21, 1944,

Our church, which has been fighting in these years only for its self-preservation, as though that were an end in itself, is incapable of taking the word of reconciliation and redemption to mankind and the world. Our earlier words are therefore bound to lose their force and cease, and our being Christians today will be limited to two things: prayer and righteous action among people.

Seventy-three years later, the words rang through my mind as I carefully read Dr. Johnsson's short but thoughtful work, *Where are We Headed?: Adventism After San Antonio*. In light of Bonhoeffer's statement, I observed Dr. Johnsson reflecting on several points of our Seventh-day Adventist drive for self-preservation in the first eight chapters. For each chapter I would retitle as follows: Chapter 1: The Preservation of Prestige, dealing with women's ordination; Chapter 2: The Preservation of Peculiarity, dealing with the Seventh-day Adventist tendency toward drastic exclusivity; Chapter 3: The Preservation of the Promise, concerning our constant, yet misguided preoccupation with "when" Christ will return; Chapter 4: The Preservation of Proclamation, where Johnsson examines the message we are called as a people to proclaim; Chapter 5: The Preservation of Power, about the structural and organizational problems we have and the need for major revisions within the organization; Chapter 6: The Preservation of Process, the Seventh-day Adventist battle with evolutionists to uphold a "young earth" and literal six-day creation; Chapter 7: Preservation of Purpose, a look at the nature of the "mission" we attempt to uphold; and Chapter 8: Preservation of the Prophet, examining our church's often abusive and misguided use of Ellen White in our hermeneutical practice.

As my personal re-titles have noted, Johnsson is well aware of the struggles our church has had over the past several decades to preserve Seventh-day Adventism—meaning Seventh-day Adventism not as the movement we love, but as an institution. Millennials such as myself would agree with Bonhoeffer that our attempts as a denomination to save ourselves from whatever "threats" of destruction we believe are there, have made the church, especially in North America, ineffective and "incapable of taking the word of reconciliation and redemption to mankind and the world." How are we as a church able to truly address the issues of members at the local church level if we are constantly on edge? Constantly looking over

our shoulder at evolutionists, rebellious unions, and other threats to unity!

We miss the fact that young African Americans (those who are not of Caribbean heritage, like myself) in our denomination have been leaving the church consistently. These young people are struggling to see the value of being part of a denomination that couldn't care less about them and finding solace in traditionally black denominations with a preached and lived gospel compatible with the God of justice they read in Scripture. We miss the opportunities we have as a church to partake in true revitalization and development of our neighborhoods through intentional community development and part-

nership with local development corporations. We miss ways to minister prophetically and passionately, living out the *now* of the kingdom while patiently, yet eagerly, waiting for the not yet. We miss so much when we believe our church to be so fragile that "unity in diversity" is seen as ending the church as we know it. I believe Dr. Johnsson sees this too, and I appreciate the way in which he communicates all of the above.

Dr. Johnsson concludes in the last two chapters with a call to be the movement God has called us to be. Dr. Johnsson calls us to move beyond our preoccupation with self-preservation and return to prayer, righteous action, and effectual kingdom living and ministry. ■



The Soul of the Church

by Matthew Korpman

Dr. William Johnsson's work can be described as many things: timely, needed, powerful, controversial, straight-forward, Christ-centered, and even apocalyptic (it definitely reveals many things about us as a Church). Its success lies in the fact that it truly gives voice and life to what I would call "the Adventist question." Johnsson's title, "Where are we headed?" informs us less of a fact (where he believes we are) than it raises us to the awareness of a need to stop and reassess where we are, and more importantly, where we are going (something we as Adventists have often taken for granted). Likewise, his title evokes a double meaning, a more worrisome one, for it questions whether we are going somewhere spiritually (in

the ultimate sense) that we may not wish to. It forces us to discover who it is that is guiding us to the direction we are going. Who is truly at the helm of our ship? The Spirit? Which? Like any good question, Johnsson's work opens up more questions than it provides possible answers to. Those questions are needed now.

What is at stake in this question of Johnsson's is nothing less than the soul of the Church he, and all of us, so dearly care about. It's an issue that I care deeply about. Many are surprised to hear me, a Millennial, sounding passionate about a subject such as this. It's certainly not common. Johnsson's book touches on the Adventist Millennial problem a number of times. Don't most of my generation reject the church because of what they see happening within it, you wonder? Aren't Adventists losing hold on them quicker than sand slips through the fingers? The answer: Yes! We are. And that's exactly why Johnson's work must be given ear.

Here's the diagnosis we don't want to accept: the Millennials are not likely coming back any time soon (short of a miracle). There will not be a revival which we can plan to accomplish this. The damage has been done: spiritually, theologically, and personally. We must learn and grow and only so that we have a potential chance to keep the ones we still have. That struggle is already one of our greatest.

Johnsson warns we are ready to lose the youth. He is most certainly correct. I know of countless Adventist millennials, both those still in school and *those already employed in our church as ministers*, who speak openly with me that they are losing faith in serving our church. They are ready

to quit or change denominations, especially since San Antonio's vote. Mind you: these are not disconnected youth who simply have stopped caring. These are deep-thinking and faithful servants of Christ (the future of our church)! They are some of the brightest Adventists I've seen. They are our future, prophetic voices for our church who Christ is ready to use for His causes, those who could steer our Church in the right direction. Yet just when we are in need of these voices and the light they bring, that star is fading and doing so fast.

They see the Adventist church as a patient dying in a hospital. This patient is not incurable, but the patient is obstinate, refusing to even acknowledge the true sickness it suffers from and thus, to accept the correct medication. They don't want to leave it, but they do not want to waste

their time sharing its fate when there is a gospel to still be preached.

Is Adventism already dead? I would argue no. It is however dead to many, even if not ultimately. Johnsson is reminding us in his work that there still is a future for this church. It doesn't have to be this way. We can find our soul again. Yet, as he also wisely notes, "the Lord will not save us from ourselves." We have to make the choice. Will Christ be at the helm of our Advent ship (keeping the main thing the main thing) or will a new sense of papal power, like an iceberg, threaten any potential God might still have for us? Johnsson's work is a gift because it helps us to start this much needed conversation (truly commence it) so that the Holy Spirit may have a chance to lead us to answers that God would have us hear. ■



The War's Not Over **by Katrina Blue**

As a fellow, native Australian, I appreciate immensely Bill Johnsson's straight-forward, honest, personal, and at times cutting and critical reflections in his book, *Where are We Headed?: Adventism After San Antonio*. Having lived a life devoted to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its mission, a stellar resume under his belt combined with the wisdom of the aged, Johnsson, at the age of eighty-two, unravels his personal angst over the current state of Adventism following the 2015 General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas. He offers much upon which

to ponder and reflect. In his own words, he engages in a "lover's quarrel" with the church he has served for decades. But, like many, Johnsson finds it increasingly difficult to identify with its processes and decisions. "Where are we going?" is a natural and pertinent question. I would like to comment on three areas Johnsson raises in his book to engage in further critical thinking.

First, the "war." Johnsson states, "The war is over—San Antonio settled it but not in the manner some Adventists would like to think. The war is over because the ordination of women pastors will spread rapidly throughout most parts of the world church" (12). I fear this jubilant claim is overly idealistic. It's not a war, it's a system, and it's not over. The idea that the Adventist church will surely steam ahead gloriously with the ordination of women pastors, in spite of San Antonio, overlooks the crippling impact yet again of such repeated General Conference decisions on the fate of women in ministry. Following 2015, women were ripped out of women's ministries leadership positions to be replaced by men in various parts of the world. Others were removed from the office of elder, while female pastors had to confront conflicting and confused responses from their congregants. A female pastor shared with me that her church members still say to her, "You're not my pastor."

It's an age-old issue: patriarchy. Whether you believe it was instituted by God in the creation order, or is an outcome of the Fall of Adam and Eve, the basic disharmony,

or dominance/submission model of relationships between males and females is deep-seated and widespread, in spite of modern day appeals to equality. Feminists argue that patriarchy is the basic social system and is near universal in scope across cultures. Women have been able to penetrate institutionalized forms of Christianity in only limited ways. San Antonio sent an unwritten, conflicting, non-verbal message to Seventh-day Adventist women: we still question if we want you. Or, we want you, but ... How do we move forward from this? The North American Division can set goals to include more women in pastoral ministry (to be applauded as a positive step toward promoting qualified and called women into ministry), they can subsidize more salaries, and find conferences to bring female pastors on board, but we must not assume that society or even the local church automatically understands or values them. We need to draw people's attention to God and the *imago Dei*, male-female equality in Christ, in marriage, and in the gospel-centered, Spirit-driven Church.

Second, a church in decline and the millennial generation. Like the Vietnam War which ran from 1955–1975, tiring many Americans of the atrocities of war, and engaging in combat with forces that did not lead to any meaningful solution, the younger generation does not get “the war” and many have had enough. Millennials are engaging in their protest march by marching out the doors of the church. Johnsson goes so far as to say that they are “laughing at Church leaders” out of the absurdity of the church’s official stance on women’s ordination (20). While I haven’t heard laughter, I have sensed and heard the deep-seated frustration and pain. It’s not just young people, the middle-aged and old are included too. They are tired of the institution and its inflexibility. Johnsson’s prognosis is stark: the institution simply cannot sustain itself (68). The statistics simply don’t warrant its long-term financial viability. Moving ahead the church may look very different in the next five, ten, or twenty years. And yet, Johnsson is con-

vinced that the Adventist Church will not merely survive, it will grow. If this is to be the case we need to find new ways to engage in face-to-face, meaningful Christian community.

Third, Johnsson highlights similarities between the Adventist church and the early Christian church. Adventists are now in our second century, he notes, the same point at which the early church departed from Jesus’ teachings and practice (53). Johnsson ends up with a study in contrasts which leaves the Adventist church looking not much better than the whitewashed tombs of Scripture. “What impresses me about Jesus of Nazareth,” he writes “is there’s no baloney. Organized religion is full of it. And we Adventists have developed our own variety. We specialize in Adventist baloney” (135). His statements are vitriolic and honest. Johnsson questions the validity of the church’s number crunching, both qualitative and quantitative. He questions the use and misuse of funds: \$45 million every five years for GC sessions that could be dedicated to the poor, community development, or mission evangelism. Dedicated persons at the Church’s highest level who travel the globe, sitting on committees, and dreaming up new programs that result in little success or advancement of the kingdom. It’s time to get honest.

Is Johnsson’s voice a prophetic warning? Whatever it is, his call is desperate. Instead of worrying which side we belong to, we need to rethink the church. Johnsson rightly points to the Kingdom of Heaven, as the reign of God in which the Church participates. But what about the Church? What kind of church are Seventh-day Adventists embracing? Johnsson identifies two radically different versions of Adventism competing with one another (15). We must be careful. Our weak ecclesiology coupled with “eschatological burnout,” as Johnsson puts it, could lead us down the wrong path. In the end, he falls back on the “Adventism will succeed no matter what” (36–69). (From the experience of the closure of Adventism’s longest running institution, the Review and Herald in 2014, Johnsson learned the fallacy of reason-

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ing "the Lord won't let it fail." He does think that the church may fade away in some regions of the world where it has been in existence for over a century and is currently on life support.) Though hierarchical forms of institutionalized Christianity are going out of vogue in our generation, we need to remind ourselves that Jesus founded the Church on Himself. Has the Adventist church begun to slip off its foundation? The answer may lay, in part, in further, careful reflections on what the Church is. We need to pray, think carefully, and act fast. The Adventist Church may need to radically change its form or be changed by the new forces shaping it. As long as Christ is the Head, and He remains the foundation, His Church will succeed. ■



Obeying Conscious Rather Than Policy *by Igor Lorencin*

William Johnsson points in his latest book to the issues currently shaping the Adventist church. Chapter 1 deals with the ordination of women. He claims the following: It is a moral issue; our treatment is unjust and discriminatory; equality and inclusion is needed. Finally, Millennials laugh at our church and they leave. I believe Johnsson is making a big point here, since according to some statistics we lose 95 percent

of our young people in the western world.

Chapter 2 deals with the chosen or the remnant. According to Johnsson, such self-designation makes us arrogant and exclusive in the eyes of others—it separates us from the world. Johnsson, as a known expert in the epistle to the Hebrews, points out that Jesus died "outside the gate" (Heb. 13:12). He died in an unholy place. "Now," says the Epistle to the Hebrews, "let us go to Him outside the camp" (Heb. 13:13). Johnsson believes that we are called to leave our comfort zones and go where Jesus has gone before—outside the camp, into the public square! My question would be, what is our contribution to the public square, when we are treating our own people unjustly and discriminatorily, being ready to present ourselves as arrogant and exclusive? How appealing is that to the young people of today?

Chapter 8 discusses interpreting the Scripture, distinguishing between (1) the flat literalistic approach, which centers on words and tends to deny the need to interpret and go beyond the literal meaning of the text, and (2) the nuanced approach, which centers on context and is aware of the challenges in understanding the text caused by time, place, and circumstances of the writing. I strongly agree with Johnsson's claim that polarization over the role of women in our church to a large measure stemmed from different approaches to reading the Scripture. Culture and circumstances of the biblical author have to be taken in consideration when we read and interpret the Scripture. It must be acknowledged that words in different contexts could have different meanings.

In addition, our word "ordination" is not part of the vocabulary of biblical writers, but part of the King James Bible vocabulary and the hierarchy struggles of that time. Today's culture must be taken into consideration as well, as we apply Scripture to the needs of our world. I would like to point to the tri-polar thinking, which, according to Fritz Guy, is what distinguishes Adventist theologians: (1) Scripture; (2) today's culture; and (3) Adventist heritage. The main

question is, how can Scripture from the culture of the biblical author be relevant in today's culture, without losing our Adventist heritage?

Chapter 10 deals with unity and the danger of a major split of our church. The main question is, how to keep the big worldwide family together? What is the proper way of dealing with the rebellious unions? My pastoral experience in dealing with conflict situations leads me to agree with Johnsson's assessment, that the course of action that the GC leaders contemplate is wrong. Johnsson suggests that it is wrong in its theology, history, policy, spirit, and that it is more papal than Adventist. Finally, I agree with Johnsson that the issue is one of conscience. He claims straightforwardly, that the "faithful Adventist is bound before God to obey conscience rather than policy when policy conflicts with conscience." Using policy to resolve an issue of conscience does not lead toward a resolution, but toward escalation of the conflict and separation.

At the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, I do not observe a use of policy, but a dialog which brought both sides near, for the purpose of keeping the family together and advancing the work. The crucial moment at the council was the testimony of the working of the Spirit among the gentiles (Acts 15:8–9). Who can prevent the Holy Spirit from working? No policy can restrict women to be a blessing to our church, and we should recognize it and give them equal rights, like the Jerusalem Council recognized gentiles and gave them equal rights in the family of God. Paul's entire missionary work aimed at unifying different parties, as exemplified in 1 Corinthians, as well as in his collection of money among gentile Christians for the needs of the poor in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25–27). I see Paul as a great unifier, as was our Lord Jesus Christ who reunited earth with heaven on the cross. Finally, we are called by Jesus to be peacemakers (Matt. 5:9), aiming at expanding and keeping the family together.

In conclusion, I am quoting George Knight's question from his 9.5 Theses, "how Catholic

do we as a church want to be?" In the light of the events at the Annual Council in October, Johnsson's book continues to be highly relevant. Issues pointed out in his book will decide about the future of our church. Successful leaders recognize strength in diversity and work at keeping the family together. We need diverse people and diverse approaches to reach the diverse world. Finally, we do not have one Gospel in our Bible, but four diverse versions of it, all aiming at the same goal. I pray for sensitive leaders who recognize strength in diversity and keep the big, worldwide family together, as we all together work toward fulfilling the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19–20). ■



Polarization in Reading Scripture **by Iriann Marie Hausted**

In a simultaneous critique and praise of Adventism, William Johnsson opens his experienced heart to us. His fierce critique is equally juxtaposed with a robust hope in what he calls "The Promise of Adventism." He describes it thus: "There is much to be proud of in this history, even if that history has chapters of regret and shame. Adventism has been a movement of promise. It can be again . . . Walk away? I would

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be the worse of ingrates. Adventism is a movement of promise.” (132)

It is in this context that Johnsson addresses San Antonio, not only concerning the role of women, but concerning how it has pointed to the polarization in approaches to Scripture. (2, 116).

Johnsson considers two “radically different versions of Adventism” that “are competing for the future” (3). He identifies these different versions of Adventism as (1) a camp that reads Scripture in flat/literalistic fashion and as (2) a camp that reads Scripture in a principled/nuanced way, ultimately centering upon what he continuously refers as the main thing: “Christ died for our sins” (64, 66). According to Johnsson, one camp “tends to deny the need to interpret, to go beyond the literal meaning of the text” (123), while the other “comes to the text aware of the challenges to understanding caused by time, culture, type of literature, and so on” (123). One “centers in words,” the other in “ideas” (120).

He seems to link the flat/literalistic approach partly with William Miller’s approach to Scripture. Although he argues that Adventism in itself has historically moved towards a principled/nuanced interpretation of Scripture as the orthodox position, yet he also argues that, in recent decades, Adventism has particularly welcomed a flat/literalistic approach, related to Fundamentalist influences and hard views of verbal inspiration.

Currently, Johnsson argues, there are challenges to Adventism’s orthodox “nuanced” approach. For example, the “flat” proponents consider this approach as “worldly.” Further on, conclusions arrived at by a “nuanced” approach to problematic texts, if non-traditional, are looked upon with suspicion on the part of the “flat” proponents. Johnsson asks, for instance: “if any book of the Bible is problematic for Adventists, shouldn’t we dig deep into it rather than avoid it?” (122). Elsewhere he argues—and I think it applies here as well—that “we Adventists find it hard to deal with negative developments” (71). We Adventist “aren’t good at this” (confronting the truth), but

“we like to hear a good report” (4).

Finally (at least when it comes to the points I want to highlight from Chapter 8), Johnsson states that most church members are not aware of differences present today in Adventism in terms of hermeneutic approaches: “they simply come to the Bible and read it as it is, glossing over passages they don’t understand” (122).

I found myself agreeing with the main tenets of Johnsson’s eighth chapter, particularly with his emphasis on the centrality of Jesus (also present throughout the book) and his encouragement for the church to better understand and pursue what he refers to as a “nuanced” interpretation of Scripture. Although it is true that Johnsson might be too simplistic in describing the interpretive practices of our denomination in terms of two camps, the flat-nuanced dichotomy is a good beginning to discuss the matter in a general fashion and in the scope of a short book.

I also found myself agreeing with Johnsson’s concern that a literalistic approach has and will continue to damage our church community, perhaps irreparably.

My main questions related to this discussion, then, are not so much regarding the logic, reasonableness, or content in his arguments, but have to do more with its application in the Seventh-day Adventist church at large. And this, basically, is the issue of theory versus practice. For example, how could elements related to a principled/nuanced interpretation of Scripture be communicated and discussed in terms of a worldwide church that appears to relate more to a flat/literalistic interpretation? In other words, how can the church successfully contextualize its orthodox “nuanced” understanding of interpretation to a large people group within it that does not yet completely understand that this, and not the “flat” approach, is most distinctive of Adventism?

For now, I can only come back to Johnsson’s question: “Where Are We [Adventists] Headed [After San Antonio],” particularly regarding the interpretation of Scripture? ■



In Search of a Christ-Like Spirit

by Donny Chrissutianto

William G. Johnsson, the author of this book, is an experienced worker, editor, and theologian for fifty years in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He calls this book his “Isaac” (i), since it came in an unexpected way, just as Isaac did. He wrote this book based upon his love for this denomination that he believes “is a movement of promise” (137). He wants to see the church become more effective to fulfill the three angels’ messages. He observes several obstacles that should be settled in order for the church to accomplish this task (v, vi).

The impetus for this book was the General Conference Session in 2015 at San Antonio, especially about women’s ordination. He sees the Session “as a moment comparable to the 1888 Minneapolis” (1). From this starting point, he argues that the conflict in San Antonio be described as one that could threaten the Church into other divisive conflicts. In addition to women’s ordination (Chapter 1), there are other issues that could divide or hinder the growth of the worldwide church. He identifies the exclusiveness of some people (Chapter 2), who say that we are the only people chosen by God in this world, and those who focus on the date for the Second Coming rather than the person of Jesus Christ (Chapter 3), as two factors which prevent others from seeing the truth that God has entrusted to us. He suggests that Adventists should concentrate on the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for their sins as the only thing that we should emphasize (Chapter 4). He recognizes some failures by the church that should become important lessons, such mistakes should not be repeated.

Johnsson emphasizes a check and re-check management style that is necessary in order to maintain organizational effectiveness. He proposes that organizations should anticipate world change that affects the church (Chapter 5). For instance, people have changed from reading papers to reading digitally. If this phenomenon could be anticipated, the loss of the Review and Herald and some other institutions would not recur. He calls the Church to compare their understanding with the ongoing facts and not merely their traditions. For example, the case of our world’s age as 6,000 years should be re-studied and redefined (Chapter 6), rather than unswervingly adhering to this time limit. He requests the Church to stop stressing the number of baptisms and focus on church mission (Chapter 7).

As a biblical scholar, William Johnsson calls the Church to give their best interest to Scriptures and apply it in their practices and all decisions. There should be no dichotomy between the Word of God and its application. He identifies many Adventists who pay more attention to Ellen G. White’s writings than the Bible (Chapter 8), while we believe the Bible is the supreme authority. He also desires that the Seventh-day Adventist Church live with no-bablonery (Chapter 9) and follow the biblical leadership from bottom up (Chapter 10).

Johnsson’s notions on these ten potential fractures in the Seventh-day Adventist Church should get the attention of all Seventh-day Adventists. He identifies those potential threats as the upcoming danger. He calls it a tension between two different views in the church. Two poles conflicting in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are not new. Since the beginning, Sabbatarian Adventists who later become Seventh-day Adventists were always made up of two-sided views: whether we should have an organization or unorganized groups; when to keep the Sabbath (from sunset to sunset or 6 pm to 6 pm); Jesus as co-eternal or subordinate to the Father; atonement started at the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven or at the cross; verbal or thought inspiration; righteousness by faith only when we accept Jesus as our Savior or from the conversion to the end, etc. Thus, the two poles can fit many topics. All of these conflicts in the history of the Church, whether doctrines or practices, could be settled by allowing unceasing discussion in a Christ-like spirit and through Bible study. From these facts, when we face the challenges that Johnsson has identified in this book, by showing the love of Jesus in our discussion and unending study of the Bible, I am confident by God’s grace, we also can have consensus in solving our differences today. ■