



REFLECTIONS

Theological Focus

Loving God with our Heart and Mind.....1

Scripture Applied

Lessons from Matthew 75

Book Notes

God's Character and the Last Generation.....8

Adventists and Military Service: Biblical,

Historical and Ethical Perspectives.....9

Index to Reflections11

THEOLOGICAL FOCUS

Loving God with our Heart and Mind¹

by Frank M. Hasel

As Seventh-day pastors, teachers, scientists, and administrators, we engage in research, teaching, preaching, and passing on to others what we have learned and discovered. In doing so we attempt to speak “the truth in love” (Eph 4:15, NKJV). But within our ranks there is a strangely underdeveloped aspect of God’s love that is worth pondering. When we think about the love of God, we usually envision something on an emotional level. But in the Bible the love of God also encompasses our thinking.

In the New Testament there is a noteworthy text where an intellectual man, a lawyer by profession, is in conversation with Jesus about issues of eternal consequence: he wants to know what it takes to inherit eternal life. Jesus refers him back to what is written. The lawyer then recalls the Word of God and gives this answer, of which Jesus approves: “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,¹ and ‘your neighbor as yourself’” (Luke 10:27, NKJV).²

This is a remarkable statement. You shall love God not just with your heart, but with all your mind! The English word “mind” is used for the Greek word *διάνοια* (*dianoia*), which describes the “activity of thinking,” “comprehending,” “reasoning,” and “reflecting” in the sense of understanding something.³ This is how God has created us. Thinking and reflecting is an activity God has endowed human

beings with and we have the privilege to exercise our thinking abilities to explore things not only in the Bible but also in the natural sciences and all areas of life and learning.

Our love of God also includes the way we conduct our thinking. To love God with all our minds encompasses a way of thinking characterized by certain inner attitudes and dispositions toward things like truth, knowledge, and understanding. We could call it “virtuous thinking.” This is about how we pursue what we do when we engage our thinking. Without exercising virtuous thinking we cannot truly love God or honor Him. Neither is it an honor for ourselves if we are deficient in these aspects.⁴ Consider these four virtuous thinking traits as foundational in our pursuit to express our love of God with our heart and mind.⁵

Intellectual Carefulness

Any inquiry into knowledge, any serious study and scientific research, requires carefulness. This is not so much of the scientific rigor and methodological exactness, but rather the intellectual carefulness at the bottom of all our knowledge.

Those who are intellectually careful earnestly want to know the truth and consistently make sure not to rush to any hasty conclusions based on limited knowledge.⁶ Instead, intellectually careful people are thorough and diligent in their thinking, cautious that they do not overlook important details. We all know stories where hastiness or carelessness in work, studies, relationships, science, and theology has led to

disastrous results. Sometimes those negative results of hastiness or careless thinking are seen quickly; at other times it takes a while until they become evident. But the negative effects are inevitable.

If we truly believe we are children of God, then what we do—and how we do what we do—reflects the character of Him to whom our ultimate loyalties belong. As Seventh-day Adventists, we should pursue and cherish intellectual carefulness not just because it is academically sound and scientifically mandated, but because it grows out of our respect for God, who is our Creator and Redeemer. His example and character compel us to work and think carefully. His carefulness in creation and salvation leads the way for our carefulness in thinking. Christian faith that engages our thinking is not sloppy. And faith knows no haste. We do not honor God when we are not meticulous and careful in what we think, say, research, publish, and do! Intellectual carefulness will produce a higher rate of success in every area of our lives. It will also produce a healthy confidence to tackle life's opportunities and obstacles because we will have learned to be careful in our deliberations and evaluations. Put positively: you love God with all your heart and mind when you are intellectually careful!

Intellectual Fair-Mindedness

A second intellectual virtue is fair-mindedness. Fair-minded people earnestly want to know the truth and therefore are willing to listen to different opinions in an even-handed way.⁷ Fair-mindedness is not needed if we think we already know everything and possess all truth. But should we start thinking there is no truth, the virtue of fair-mindedness morphs into meaninglessness, and the end of education is not far!⁸ Fair-mindedness does not mean we have no convictions or do not stand for our convictions. The secret of fair-minded people is that they have chosen to put the truth over any allegiance to their ego or cherished opinions. Therefore, fair-minded people are consistently willing to listen in an even-handed way to different opinions, even if they already have a strong view on the subject. Fair-minded people also try to view the issue from the perspective of those they disagree with, because they are aware that they do not always have the most complete or accurate perspective on a given issue. One could say that an intellectually fair-minded person seeks to know the truth in a fair-minded manner, rather than striving to be right. Intellectual bias would be the corresponding vice.⁹

Among the many benefits of intellectually fair-minded people, two stand out in particular. One is more abstract while the other is amazingly practical. But both are equally life changing. Let's begin with the abstract benefit: the fair-minded person is much more likely to escape from a prison of false assumptions. This historical anecdote illustrates the point:¹⁰

In seventeenth-century Europe, the astronomer Johannes Kepler committed himself to a greater understanding of the stars and planets. Because of Aristotle, the Western world had firmly assumed that the universe revolved around the earth. The Catholic Church was convinced it had interpreted key passages of Scripture in line with the Aristotelian view, which had proven so reliable in many other areas, essentially making Aristotle's view the view of all good Christians. Not only had significant church doctrine been built around this theory, but also almost all scientific inquiry had been rooted in the same set of assumptions. So pervasive and foundational was this perspective that instead of questioning their assumptions, those who noticed inconsistencies between the Aristotelian view and the way the universe actually behaved simply created ever more extravagant explanations for how these inconsistencies were in harmony with the commonly held view. What distinguished Kepler from his predecessors, beyond accumulating evidence undermining the accepted view, was his willingness to look at the evidence in a genuinely fair-minded way. It is unlikely that Kepler was any more intelligent than the many educated people who had considered the heavens before him. He was, however, willing to consider, in a fair-minded way, other possible explanations for the evidence, and the results transformed our understanding of the universe and led to a host of other innovations that form the foundation of science today.

Now let's consider the amazingly practical benefit¹¹ of fair-mindedness: genuinely fair-minded people tend to make and keep friends more easily than people whose thinking habits are closed-minded or biased. The reason for this phenomenon is simple: it is the inherent link between fair-mindedness and attentive listening. Fair-minded people, because they are committed to discovering truth, listen; they actually really listen! Very few things give people a greater sense of their own value, and worth and nothing attracts us to another person more, than the belief that we are valued. This value and respect is often expressed through attentive listening. Such fair-mindedness leads us toward lives of wisdom, richness, and depth. It is something we all can profit from.

Put positively, you love God with all your heart and mind when you are intellectually fair-minded.

Intellectual Honesty

A third virtue is intellectual honesty. The intellectually honest want to encourage the spread of truth and therefore consistently use information in an unbiased way.¹² Unlike other intellectual character traits, intellectual honesty is not primarily about the process of getting knowledge but rather about how we choose to use or present the knowledge we already have. The intellectually honest person is careful not to use

information taken out of context, exaggerate facts, distort the truth by describing it with loaded language, or otherwise mislead others by using statistics or any other type of supporting evidence that might have a deceptive effect. And intellectually honest people do not take credit for ideas that are not their own.¹³ Of all the intellectual virtues, honesty is perhaps the most admired, but unfortunately it is often the least practiced and most tampered with.

When we persist in using or manipulating knowledge in dishonest ways, we begin a battle with our conscience that, unless our conscience wins, will have one of two equally negative outcomes: The first possible outcome is a life weighed down by an encumbering load of guilt. While intellectual honesty often seems to be the more difficult road to take, in the end it is always the one characterized by greater freedom.¹⁴ The second outcome is even worse than living with guilt: it leads to the death of our conscience and thus endangers our moral integrity. When we do what we want and then create a moral code that suits our actions, the result is a corrupted intellectual conscience that no longer values the truth—if it can still distinguish the truth from falsehood at all!¹⁵ The dangerous thing about dishonesty is that, in the end, you firmly believe your own lie. But then you are thoroughly deceived.¹⁶ On the other hand, honesty inevitably builds trust between people, and trust is at the core of all healthy relationships and healthy communities. It also goes a long way toward restoring public confidence in leadership and church governance and is essential for enthusiastic and widespread participation in the church.

Put positively: you love God with all your heart and mind when you practice intellectual honesty!

Intellectual Humility

The virtue of intellectual humility is perhaps the most misunderstood virtue. So what does it mean to be humble in the way we think?

Intellectually humble people have the amazing realization and humbling insight that they are dependent upon something or someone outside themselves. They are aware that truth is not of their own making, but is ultimately God-breathed. Thus, they realize that their reason and rational intelligence is not the measure of everything,¹⁷ and therefore they gladly submit their thoughts in obedience to Christ and His Word (cf. 2 Cor 10:5).

Intellectually humble people understand that the larger our egos are, the less space there is left in our minds for anything or anyone else. The benefits of humbleness in thinking are manifold: A humble inquiry is the foundation of all growth in knowledge, for it generates a freedom that naturally produces a teachable spirit. This makes humble people very

pleasant people to work with. This does not mean that humble people don't have firm convictions. It only means that they are submissive to God's truth and at the same time aware of the limitations of their knowledge, and therefore are capable of expanding their knowledge and understanding of the world in a way that arrogant and proud people are utterly incapable of doing.¹⁸ Proud people feel they do not need to learn from anybody. They think they know all there is to know. But our knowledge must be tempered by humility.¹⁹

This experience from the life of Abraham Lincoln²⁰ is a remarkable illustration of intellectual humility under difficult circumstances:

At the height of the American Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln was doing everything in his power to preserve the unity of his crumbling country. As both the nation's elected president and one of the most intelligent men of his generation, Lincoln had every right to expect deferential respect from his subordinates. And yet, as the war waged, he found himself being criticized and ridiculed by friends and foes alike. One was his secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, whom Lincoln considered a friend. Both publicly and privately Stanton made no secret of his disrespect of Lincoln. Even though Lincoln was aware of Stanton's insubordination, Lincoln kept his secretary of war, believing that Stanton's sharp mind and independent perspective would be a valuable balance to his own.

At one of the war's most critical points Lincoln sent a direct order to Stanton. Not only did Stanton refuse to carry it out, but also he publicly mocked Lincoln again, calling him a fool. Instead of reacting in anger or spite, Lincoln responded: "If Stanton said I was a . . . fool then I must be one. For he is nearly always right, and generally says what he means. I will step over and see him."²¹

Lincoln was no weakling. He had demonstrated many times that he was willing to stand his ground if need be. Still, as the story goes, the two men had a meeting in which Lincoln listened carefully to his subordinate, concluded that Stanton was right after all, and withdrew his order. Lincoln ignored the demands of pride in order to pursue the wisest course. Ultimately, this intellectual humility helped save his crumbling nation and ensured his reputation as one of the greatest statesmen in the history of the United States of America.

Put positively: you love God with all your heart and mind when you are intellectually humble.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we should love God with all our hearts and minds by being intellectually careful, fair-minded, honest, and humble. These

intellectual virtues are significant in yet another important area: our ability to worship God. Entering into meaningful worship with God is closely tied to the character of our minds. To the extent that we apply our minds to understanding God in His written Word and to the exploration of nature that was created by Him, our ability to worship Him increases. While worship is far more than just knowing a lot of information about God, our worship and our relationship with God demand that our minds be fully engaged. You cannot truly worship God without thinking. And when we take on these traits of virtuous thinking, our actions will reflect God's goodness and display a teachable spirit that is fair-minded and honest.

How we think influences how we behave. When we are careful in what we say about others, treat others' opinions in a fair-minded way, are honest in our dealings, and reflect humbleness, it is only natural that our actual behavior toward others will also grow increasingly gracious!²² This is how God deals with each of us.

Imagine if the theological and scientific community we are engaged in and if the church we love and belong to were filled with people of such character and attitude. What a fellowship that would be! Imagine how the relationships and the atmosphere within the church would change for the better if we all would practice this. I think God would be delighted. Others would be attracted and we all would be greatly blessed! So let us strive to be people with such intellectual virtues who love God with all our heart and mind and give glory to our Creator in the way we think.



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¹The following presentation was first given as a devotional at the Faith and Science Council at Loma Linda University April 18, 2017. A shorter version of it was published under the title “*Virtuous Thinking: Loving God with Heart and Mind*” in *Adventist Review* Vol. 195/01 (January 2018): 19–23.

²Emphasis supplied.

³Cf. “*διάνοια, ας, ή*” in Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 234.

⁴The following ideas are taken from a delightful book that has greatly stimulated my own thinking and inspired me to

become a more thoughtful person. I am greatly indebted to Philip E. Dow, *Virtuous Minds: Intellectual Character Development* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013), and follow several of his ideas closely in this article.

⁵Dow, *Virtuous Minds*, lists seven thinking virtues but within the limits of this article we will focus on just four indispensable thinking traits.

⁶Cf. Dow, *Virtuous Minds*, 147.

⁷Ibid., 149.

⁸Ibid., 48. For a powerful argument in favor of truth see Princeton professor Harry G. Frankfurt's short book *On Truth* (New York: Alfred E. Knopf, 2006).

⁹Cf. Dow, *Virtuous Minds*, 49, 149.

¹⁰Ibid., 51–53.

¹¹Ibid., 52–54.

¹²Ibid., 151.

¹³Ibid., 61–69, 151.

¹⁴Ibid., 66.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶(Robert Spaemann, *Gut und Böse – relativ? Über die Allgemeingültigkeit sittlicher Normen* [Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 1996], 13–14) points out that human language is the medium to express our thoughts and that lying makes the real thoughts of a person invisible and thus leads to a disappearing of the person because the medium of language that makes the person visible is destroyed.

¹⁷Cf. Dow, *Virtuous Minds*, 72, 152–153.

¹⁸Cf. Dow, *Virtuous Minds*, 72.

¹⁹Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 462.

²⁰See Dow, *Virtuous Minds*, 72–73.

²¹The story and quote comes from Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years* (New York: Mariner, 2002), 354, as quoted in Dow, *Virtuous Minds*, 196.

²²Cf. Dow, *Virtuous Minds*, 97–98.

**“Love you will find only where you
may show yourself weak without
provoking strength.”**

(Theodor W. Adorno, *Minimal Moralia*,
Aph. 122)

Lessons from Matthew 7

By Clinton Wahlen

In Matthew 7, Jesus continues expounding on the ethics of the kingdom of heaven and includes some wonderful promises. But He also challenges us personally and individually regarding how we relate to God’s law and His teachings. Our attitude toward judging, asking, and giving, culminating with the Golden Rule, reveals whether we have a right relation to God (vv. 1–12). Then, in view of the coming judgment, Jesus makes two personal appeals (vv. 13–23). He concludes this most famous sermon with the parable of the two builders (vv. 24–27), the first parable found in this Gospel. Matthew concludes this section with the impact of Jesus’ teaching on the crowds who heard Him (vv. 28–29).

Interpretation of the Chapter

1. Verses 1–12

- Jesus’ command not to judge others is well known but tends to be applied too broadly. It does not prohibit weighing the truthfulness of a person’s teaching, the rightness of a person’s actions, or gauging their openness to the gospel message, but does warn against judging a person’s motives or whether they are saved or lost, for we cannot read the heart and “we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Rom 14:10).
- It is often easier to see others’ faults (the “speck”) and be blinded to our own (the “beam”). That is why daily Bible reading, study of the life of Jesus, and prayer—all of which can help us see our own spiritual needs—are so important. Only then are we equipped to help a person who has fallen into temptation (Gal 6:1).
- Dogs and swine, which for Jews were the epitome of uncleanness, symbolize people who do not value the things of the kingdom nor desire freedom from slavery to sin and worldly enticements (cf. John 8:34–36). In fact, when backed by a godly life, the proclamation of the truth may provoke

violent attacks not unlike a wild boar attacking its prey (cf. Acts 9:1–2).

- Jesus, having encouraged us to pray directly to our heavenly Father who already knows our needs, now urges us to keep asking and not give up (cf. Luke 18:1). The command to “seek” also suggests effort and persistence, and “knock” underscores the need to wait on God to answer in His time and way.
- God, who alone is truly good (Matt 19:17), is more willing than human parents to give good gifts to their children; moreover, He gives the best gifts (Jas 1:17). But we must ask and believe that we will receive what we ask for (Jas 4:2–3; 1:6–7).
- Having received the good gifts promised, Jesus’ followers are equipped in a similar way to give to others—doing for them what they themselves would like to receive. This “Golden Rule” goes beyond the standard Jewish maxim to refrain from doing to others what you would not want done to yourself by focusing on doing positive good to others. Thus it refocuses the attention we usually give to ourselves and to our own wants and uses it as a guide for how we should treat others. Love for others and seeking to be a blessing to them sums up the entire revealed will of God (cf. Matt 22:37–40) and exemplifies the law and lifestyle of heaven (PP 34–35).

2. Verses 13–23

- There are only two possible life journeys, and, contrary to worldly wisdom, only one leads to everlasting life.
- The wide gate, which is easier to enter, is the default option, which explains why many go through it, despite the fact that

it ends in destruction. By contrast, there are “few” who go by way of the narrow gate because worldliness won’t fit through it (cf. Heb 12:1–2).

- The way to life may seem hard and difficult because it requires the “more abundant” righteousness that can only be obtained from Jesus (Matt 5:20), but it is actually the easier way (Matt 11:28–30), despite the hardships and even persecution that may result (Matt 5:10–12).
- False prophecy is a particularly dangerous deception because counterfeit claims undermine the genuine gift of prophecy (Jer 27:9–17; Ezek 13:1–7).
- The biblical bases for judging the truthfulness of a prophet’s claim include:
 - i. its “fruits” (i.e., whether the effects of the person’s ministry are good or bad);
 - ii. its agreement with prior prophetic revelation (Isa 8:20; 1 Cor 14:32);
 - iii. the fulfillment of predictions (Deut 18:21–22);
 - iv. its proclamation of God’s message, however disturbing (1 Kgs 22:6–8);
 - v. the absence of materialistic motives (Mic 3:11–12);
 - vi. a clear affirmation of the divine-human nature of Christ (1 John 4:2–3);
 - vii. whether or not it fosters unity and clear biblical discernment among God’s people (Eph 4:13–14).
- Like the fruit of a good tree or a diseased one, the quality of our life witness testifies to the genuineness of our profession. The word translated “good” (*kalos*) means “excellent in every way.” It is the same word used of the “good seed” that symbolize the “sons of the kingdom” (Matt 13:27, 38) and of the “good soil” (those who

hear the word and understand it) that produces fruit in abundance (vv. 8, 23).

- Even calling Jesus “Lord” (which can simply mean “Sir,” but in Matthew is a recognition of Jesus as Messiah) is no proof of saving faith or genuine discipleship. Doing the will of the Father is what matters (cf. Gal 5:6).
- As with the gift of prophecy, even miracles are no evidence that God is at work (Matt 24:24; cf. 2 Thess 2:9). After all, the magicians of Egypt were able to simulate several of the signs done by Moses (Exod 7:11–12, 22; 8:7) and Revelation warns of false signs just before the second advent (Rev 13:13).
- Decisive in the judgment is having more than a superficial knowledge of who Jesus is (cf. Luke 13:25–27) and whether Jesus knows us—referring to the kind of knowledge that can only be gained by having a close relationship with someone over an extended period of time. To really know Jesus (and for Him to know us, v. 23) is to love and obey Him (John 14:15–17; 17:3; 1 Cor 8:3).

3. Verses 24–29

- Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount with an appeal in the form of a parable that contrasts a wise man with a foolish one. Both hear the sayings of Jesus. But only the wise man puts them into practice.
- Putting Jesus’ teachings into practice is likened to building one’s “house” (one’s future security and destiny) on a rock (Gk. *petra*) rather than on sand. *Petra* refers not to a small stone but to a massive rock, including bedrock. The parallel passage describes putting forth great effort to dig deeply, which suggests reflecting on Jesus’ teachings and studying them thoroughly in order to understand and apply them (Luke 6:48).
- This first of five major blocks of Jesus’ teachings (each of

which ends with the same phrase, cf. Matt 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1), reached a wide audience who seem to have recognized the inherent truthfulness and consequent authority of what Jesus said, in contrast to the teachings of the scribes whose tentative pronouncements and speculative ideas left people largely uncertain as to what God's Word meant (see DA 253).

Application of the Chapter

Important lessons contained in this chapter include:

1. Spiritual discernment is important in order that we can do the most good, because there will be things (or people) to distract, discourage, or dissuade us from doing the Lord's work and practicing what is right.
2. The gist of Jesus' teachings on asking and seeking suggests that some effort and persistence may be necessary in order for our prayers to be answered and that we should not simply expect what we need to float down to us from heaven.
3. As God's children, one evidence of our faith in God and His Word is a determination to ask only for that which is in accordance with His will (1 John 5:14) and a willingness to surrender our will to His (Matt 6:10; 26:42).
4. Since the storms of life are unpredictable and usually come suddenly, it is a mark of wisdom to make investments in our spiritual future before trouble strikes. Like the building of a house that will stand the test of time, this may require the substantial expenditure of time and energy, but will prove in the end to have been worth it all.

“It is impossible for any mind to comprehend all the richness and greatness of even one promise of God. One catches the glory of one point of view, another the beauty and grace from another point, and the soul is filled with heavenly light. In them He is speaking to us individually.... It is in these promises that Christ communicates to us His grace and power.”

Ellen G. White, *My Life Today* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1952), 337.

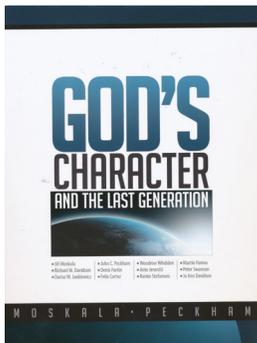
BOOK NOTES

Jiří Moskala and
John C. Peckham, eds.
**God's Character and the
Last Generation**

(Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2018),

286 pp.

US\$29.99



Several critical responses to last generation theology (LGT) have recently come off the press within Seventh-day Adventist circles. Among them are Ángel Manuel Rodríguez's article, "Theology of the Last Generation and the Vindication of the Character of God: Overview and Evaluation,"¹ George R. Knight's book, *End-Time Events and the Last Generation*,² (and Rein-der Bruinsma's *In All Humility: Saying No to Last Generation Theology*.³ The work under consideration, *God's Character and the Last Generation*, is an academic critical analysis of LGT by a group of twelve theologians from Andrews University.

The main content of the book is divided into fourteen chapters. Chapter 1 not only sets the tone by questioning the LGT notion of an anthropocentric vindication of God's character by the last generation of *sinless* saints, but also provides the general outline of the book. Chapter 2 traces the late eighteenth-century historical roots of LGT (starting with Edward Irving) and provides a critical exposition of its main Adventist proponents (including E. J. Waggoner, M. L. Andreasen, Herbert E. Douglass, C. Mervyn Maxwell, Dennis Priebe, Kevin Paulson, and Larry Kirkpatrick). Chapter 3 deals with the biblical concept of sin, with special emphasis on the notion that human beings not only commit sinful acts, but indeed are sinners (condition), and that the sinful nature of God's people will be eradicated only at the second coming (1 Cor 15:50–54). It should be mentioned that all of the major LGT advocates identified in the book affirm this last point regarding the sinful nature being eradicated only through transformation of our sinful bodies at the return of Christ (Phil 3:21).

While chapter 4 forcefully stresses the forensic nature of justification, chapter 5 addresses sanctification as a lifelong process. As stated by Ellen G. White, "We cannot say, 'I am sinless,' till this vile body is changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body."⁴ The author of chapter 6 suggests that we should pay more attention to certain social values than to our own personal lifestyle matters. He gives the impression that to adopt the traditional Adventist lifestyle is not as important as to follow the postulates of Jürgen Moltmann's theology of hope. And chapter 7 exposes several psychological and emotional compulsions driving people towards religious

perfectionism.

Chapter 8 highlights Christ as our perfect Savior and example, stating that His humanity was "perfectly identical with our own nature, except without the taint of sin" and without "the propensities of sin."⁵ Chapter 9 reminds us that the cross was the solution to the problems that arose from the fall of Adam and Eve at the Garden of Eden. Then, chapter 10 differentiates between the "complete" atonement on the cross, available for all human beings, and the "completed" atonement with the eradication of evil from the universe, effective for those who truly accept Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross.

Maintaining that both the 144,000 and the great multitude in Revelation 7 are one and the same group of God's people who "came out of the great tribulation" (Rev 7:14), chapter 11 argues that the last generation is not a group of "super saints" with a level of holiness never attained before. They will be tested in a unique way but will be saved in the same way as the redeemed of all ages. Chapter 12 responds by way of testimony to five "myths" that some Adventists, including the author, held at one time—misleading concepts built on false presuppositions. Chapter 13 reflects on the "delay" of the second coming, affirming that God never revealed the exact date when Jesus will come but only promised that that event will come "suddenly." Unfortunately, no reference is made to Ellen G. White's statements in *Evangelism*.⁶

Finally, chapter 14 summarizes the content of the book in a very didactical way. It points out, for instance, that "although we cannot become absolutely, sinlessly perfect until glorification, we can and should attain character perfection" (274). For the author, "perhaps the greatest problem with LGT is that it makes God's victory in the great controversy dependent upon the fidelity of mere creatures" (280). Undeniably, "it is not what we do as humans that provides the grounds to vindicate God's character." "God Himself provides the full and sufficient means and grounds to vindicate His character" (281).

The book combines both an academic style and an apologetic approach, with a well-organized sequence of topics. But with multi-authored content, the reader can easily notice a significant contrast of writing styles and some differences in theological emphases among the various chapters. A few chapters do not flow as

easily as others. A vast number of endnotes after each chapter provide not only support to its content but also a helpful bibliography for further research. Overall, the book provides a helpful response to some issues raised by LGT advocates and should be read by all those interested in this controversial topic. After all, in these challenging last days we need a much more Christ-centered (rather than anthropocentric) eschatology (Luke 21:28; Heb 12:1-2)!

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¹Included in Artur A. Steele, ed., *The Word: Searching, Living Teaching* (Biblical Research Institute, Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald, 2015), 205-228.

²Pacific Press, 2018.

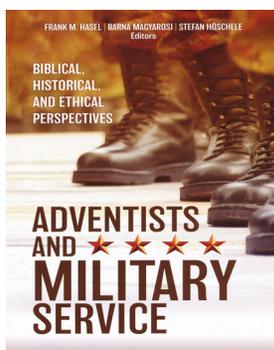
³Oak & Acorn, 2018.

⁴Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 3:355.

⁵Ibid., 13:18.

⁶Ellen G. White, "The Reason for the Delay," in *Evangelism* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), 694-697.

Frank M. Hasel, Barna Magyarosi,
Stefan Höschele eds.
**Adventists and Military
Service: Biblical,
Historical and
Ethical Perspectives**
(Madrid: Editorial Safeliz 2019),
225 pages,
USD 12.99



War is an everyday reality that no longer happens remotely: it is played out in our living rooms and over the breakfast table, thanks to embedded reporters, smartphones, and the Internet. Adventists and Military Service, an initiative of the Inter-European Division Biblical Research Committee, is an ambitious project. Its stated aim is to "give guidance, especially to our young people who are increasingly faced with issues about military service and our engagement in war and the bearing of arms."¹

Previous Adventist publications have tended to concentrate on one aspect of the question, or tell the story of faithful service in the face of the carnage of war. In contrast, this book brings together a unique mix of theology, history, current events, practical experiences, ethical implications, and a look toward what happens after the shooting stops. With such an ambitious remit, one might be tempted to dismiss it as lacking depth, but that would be a mistake.

The series of papers begins with examining violence and war in the Old Testament, followed by an examination of war and non-violence in the New Testament. The compact nature of the book does not allow for expansive discussion; however, the authors build their case clearly and concisely, setting out the arguments for and against their position. In discussing the Old Testament concept of holy war, Barna Magyarosi shows that God's original intention was not for His people to go to war. Rather, holy wars were fought under tight theocratic control, during the very limited period of the conquest. This cannot and should not be used as justification for modern warfare. Johannes Kovar's

exposition of the New Testament position on the Christian life, which emulates Jesus' non-violent, self-sacrificing life of service for others, provides a solid theological foundation for the coming chapters.

An overview of the development of Christian thought and attitudes from the early church to the present helps the reader understand the various strands of Christianity related to war, and how this influences modern thinking. Invaluable for those wanting a better understanding of the development of Adventist thought is Douglas Morgan's analysis of the Adventist journey from pacifism as reflected in its first statement of 1867, through noncombatancy and combatant co-operation up to the current loss of clarity, which this book seeks to address.

This theological foundation and historical framework provide the setting for the more challenging and contentious chapters, which stimulate our thinking and touch on some sensitive issues. Daniel Heinz gives the question of military service a human face as he documents some of the heart-wrenching, lesser-known stories of those who followed their conscience and did not carry arms. Kwabena Donkor illumines from an African perspective the modern challenges and carnage of genocide, adding richness and diversity to the text.

The heart of the question is dealt with in Frank M. Hasel's chapter on the ethical challenges of the military. It poses questions that have been alluded to throughout the earlier chapters. Regardless of where the reader is on the continuum from pacifism to full support of military service, this chapter spells out the practical challenges he or she may face with such clarity that they cannot be denied. It discusses not just the obvious questions of killing and Sabbath keeping

(although these are dealt with), but also the subjects of patriotism, allegiance, lifestyle, and training for military service. The clear logic leads the reader to face the unpalatable practicalities and realities of military service and war and to make a personal decision. For some, when the physical war is over their personal war is just beginning as they deal with the psychological aftermath. Andreas Bochmann highlights the need for appropriate pastoral care and the responsibility to care for and minister to those who come home. Although the book has a clear bias towards no war being justified—hence that Christians should not be in the military—the argument is presented in a fair-minded way, with enough of the contrary perspective to provide a balanced picture. For those who want to read or reflect more on the subject, there are three very useful appendices: a listing of all official Seventh-day Adventist statements on noncombatancy, war, and peace; a bibliography of Seventh-day Adventist literature on war, peace, and military service; and a selected bibliography and annotated literature list on books dealing with war, peace, military service, and non-

violence.

The book delivers on its stated aim to “give guidance, especially to our young people who are increasingly faced with issues about military service and our engagement in war and the bearing of arms.” It is concise, informative, comprehensive, and a must-read for anyone who wants a deeper understanding of Adventists and their relationship to military service. However, keep in mind that it will challenge you, as it challenges all Adventists—young and old, pastors, chaplains, and leaders as well as church members—to think more critically and reflect more deeply about our choices as individuals and as a church.

Reviewed by
Audrey Andersson

¹ Frank M. Hasel, “Introduction,” in *Adventists and Military Service*, 8.

The book *Adventists and Military Service: Biblical, Historical, and Ethical Perspectives* can be ordered in Europe through:

The SDA Publishing House Safeliz in Spain: <https://publicacionesadventistas.com/index.php?route=product/search&search=Adventists%20and%20military%20service>

or

The Adventist Book Center: <https://www.adventistbookcenter.de/adventists-and-military-service-biblical-historical-and-ethical-perspectives.html>

In North America books can be ordered through the BRI: biblicalresearch@gc.adventist.org

Index to *Reflections*

The first issue of *Reflections* was published in January 2003. Since then, we've published many articles.

While it's possible to use Acrobat to simultaneously search all past issues of *Reflections* for one word or phrase, some readers have asked for a formal index. From now on, you will find a pdf index at the end of each newsletter that you can download.

If you wish to search simultaneously all past issues of the newsletter for one word or phrase in

Acrobat, you must download from the BRI website <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/newsletters> all of the *Reflections* issues PDF's to one folder.

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Reflections seeks to share information concerning doctrinal and theological developments among Adventists and to foster doctrinal and theological unity in the world church. Its intended audience is church administrators, church leaders, pastors and teachers.

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