

Editorial

Spes Christiana is the journal of the *European Adventist Society of Theology and Religious Studies* – abbreviated as EASTRS. The two key words in the name are “European” and “Adventist”. This does not mean that the journal only accepts contributions from Seventh-day Adventist authors, and only welcomes contributors who hold a European passport. Yet these two words are intentional, and to a large extent describe the character of our journal. One of its main objectives is to offer an opportunity to European scholars to publish articles and book reviews that are related to issues in Adventism in the widest possible sense – in the domain of theology and in related disciplines.

The content of this issue of *Spes Christiana* (autumn 2021) certainly corresponds with this characterization of our journal. Four of the main articles have been written by professors in Adventist institutions of higher education in Europe and one by a theologian who is teaching at an American university but has her roots in Europe. The authors deal with themes that can very definitely be labelled “Adventist”: They concern eschatology, the Sabbath and the Fundamental Beliefs of the Adventist Church. One article deals with hermeneutics, but from an Adventist perspective.

Dr Jan A. Sigvartsen, who is an Associate Professor of Old Testament at Friedensau Adventist University in Friedensau-Möckern (near the German city of Magdeburg) addresses an aspect of the doctrine of the resurrection. He argues that there will be two separate eschatological resurrection events, and, based on Revelation 20–22, he differentiates between a resurrection of the “righteous” and one for the “wicked”, with a thousand-year intermezzo. He acknowledges that this is a minority standpoint among Christian denominations and theologians, but points out that an interesting parallel may be found between the pseudepigraphical text of the *Martyrdom and the Ascension of Isaiah* and the Apocalypse.

One of Sigvartsen’s colleagues also contributed an article for this issue of our journal. Prof. Stefan Höschele is the vice-dean of the School of Theology of Friedensau Adventist University, while also serving as Professor for Systematic Theology. In addition, Professor Höschele has a strong interest in the history of Seventh-day Adventism. A year ago, he contributed an article about the earliest summary of the fundamental beliefs of the Adventist Church,

which dates from 1872, and analysed its contextual-theological significance. He has now followed this up with a study entitled “Adventist Orthodoxy Codified,” which analyses the more complete statement of the corpus of Adventist doctrines that dates from 1931.

Members of the theology department of Newbold College of Higher Education, located in Binfield (Berkshire), some 30 miles from London in the UK – recently renamed The Centre for Ministry and Mission) – have contributed two significant articles. Dr Gunnar Pedersen, Emeritus Professor of Systematic Theology, and his colleague in Systematic Theology, Dr Jan Barna, are the co-authors of a study that focuses on “a search for the biblical epistemic horizon.” They suggest that “a seven-stage theistic narrative method” will allow the reader of the Scriptures to arrive at a “meta-hermeneutic”. Since “hermeneutics” is a hot topic in current Seventh-day Adventist discussions, *Spes Christiana* has a special interest in this subject and welcomes future submissions of articles that deal with aspects of hermeneutics that are especially meaningful in the ongoing Adventist debate.

In Adventist preaching and popular Adventist publications the verses with the “three angels’ message” form perhaps the most referred-to passage in John’s Apocalypse. It is considered by many as crucial for Adventism’s self-identity, and is seen as closely linked to other eschatological elements. Dr Laszlo Gallusz, a Senior Lecturer in New Testament at Newbold, emphasizes a further theological link and shows how the notion of “covenant” is an important underlying concept, and how creation and judgment motifs can be clearly found in these three angelic messages of Revelation 14:6–12. They constitute elements, Laszlo contends, that clearly belong together in the theological horizon of the Revelation.

Most popular publications about the Sabbath by Seventh-day Adventist authors deal with the question which day of the week qualifies as the Biblical Sabbath, whereas academic publications on this Sabbath topic tend to focus more on the meaning of the divinely instituted day of rest. Dr Mathilde Frey contributes a superb article about the Sabbath to this issue of *Spes Christiana*. She served for a number of years as an Adventist pastor in Germany, before moving to the USA in preparation for her doctorate in Old Testament. After teaching for six years in the Philippines, Dr Frey came to Walla Walla University in the town of that same name in Washington State (USA), as Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament. Her article about the Sabbath has the fascinating

title “The Art of Remembering: It Matters how We Tell the Sabbath Story.” We are delighted that we could include this insightful and inspiring piece in the current issue of our journal.

Dr Tom de Bruin, a specialist in New Testament and Second Temple Judaism, who is the web-editor for the EASTRS and also sees to it that our journal is properly uploaded on the website, informed me recently that the section with the book reviews scores the highest number of “hits.” I was delighted to hear this, and I am grateful to our book review editor and managing editor, Dr Kerstin Maiwald, for once again including a number of well-written book reviews in this issue. Her duties at Friedensau Adventist University have recently been augmented, and we are therefore delighted that she will now be assisted in her role for *Spes Christiana* by Mr John Okpechi, a pastor, MTS student and now student-assistant at Friedensau Adventist University, who will have a major role in preparing the manuscripts for publication.

I wish our readers much academic satisfaction as they read the articles in this volume. I appreciate the expertise and hard work of the authors that went into the writing of their contributions. But let me conclude with a fervent appeal that many of the members of EASTRS (and others who feel affinity to it) will submit articles (perhaps by converting or adapting papers they have read at some convention) and will serve as peer-reviewer or indicate their interest in writing a book review. Authors from Newbold College and Friedensau Adventist University will continue to be more than welcome, but it would be great to also see more contributions from scholars at other (European and other) institutions in the next issue.

Reinder Bruinsma, General Editor

