

From the President

The Seventh-day Adventist Church

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UPDATE

From Campgrounds to Palace

Grounds: During the last two weeks, I have been following a travel schedule that has taken me to the Nevada/Utah Campmeeting and into the countries of Taiwan and Korea. In this edition of FTP I will explain the first portion of this work itinerary, saving the commentary on Korea for next week. The stop-over at campmeeting was beneficial, not only for an opportunity to visit with fellow church members in such a beautiful place as Camp Richardson on Lake Tahoe, but it was also a perfect opportunity to video record another in a series of sermons dealing with the fundamental beliefs of Seventh-day Adventism. After the retreat of campmeeting, I traveled to Taiwan in order to meet with the country's president, Lee Teng-hui and to participate in the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Adventist Church's organization there.

In preparation for this historic event, I did a little research into this history. What I found was an inspiring reference to faith that is yet another example of the tenacious spirit of the Adventist missionary.

According to the Adventist Encyclopedia, the first known worker to enter Taiwan was T.S. Yang, a colporteur from South Fujian, China who arrived in 1907. In spite of persecution and occasional imprisonment, he faithfully carried on his work. In 1912, before Yang left Taiwan, there were 10 converts. Throughout the years to come and after World War II the Adventist faith struggled to survive in Taiwan. It is remarkable that the fledgling church established an acute care hospital in

the capitol city of Taipei in 1955. This institution exists today as a tribute to selfless and dedicated Adventists who refused to be discouraged, despite many obstacles and difficulties.

FOCUS ON FAITH

Old Testament Canon (cont.):

Segment six looked at the origin of the Old Testament canon. One reason for its development, we said, was the fact that its authors were considered to be inspired.

Until the beginning of the last century, Christians in general accepted the information concerning authorship given in Scripture itself. Thus, it was believed that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, the prophets wrote the books which bear their names, many Psalms come from David, and that the historical books were written at a time roughly contemporaneous with the events concerned. The whole Old Testament, therefore, was believed to have been completed by ca 400 B.C.

With the rise of rationalism and its influence on Christianity, it has become a hallmark of so-called "scholarship" to deny the possibility of the supernatural. Scripture for these scholars is no longer God's revelation to man, but a historical record of man's thinking about God. Furthermore, the books were not written by Moses and the prophets as indicated in Scripture, but by many different unknown authors and redactors living hundreds of years later.

Julius Wellhausen (1844-

1918), for example, in his book *The Composition of the Hexateuch* (1876) explains the existence of the Pentateuch along these lines: In the time of Elijah (ca 850 B.C.) an unknown author called the Yahwist ("J" from the German "Jahwe"), because he uses the Hebrew name "Yahweh", wrote down the stories of the past which until then were transmitted orally around the camp fires in Judah. A hundred years later another unknown author called Elohist (E), because he uses the Hebrew name "Elohim", did the same in the northern kingdom Israel. Around 650 B.C. an unknown redactor combined those two sources into one continuous story.

Then in 622 the book of Deuteronomy was found in the temple (2 Chron 34). According to the critics, king Josiah commissioned his priests to write the book and then "to find" it in the temple. Around 550 B.C. another unknown redactor revised the existing Yahwist/Elohist material and added the book of Deuteronomy (D).

Finally, after the Babylonian exile, the priests, in reinstating the temple service, wrote the legal and religious parts of the Pentateuch called the "Priestly Code" (P), containing the oral traditions concerning the Hebrew cultus. A new redactor combined the existing material with the "Priestly Code" and, thus, by ca 400 B.C. the Pentateuch was finally completed. ■

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