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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

A Message from the ATS President
C. Raymond Holmes

Greetings in the name of our Lord to all readers of the Journal of the Adventist Theological Society! Your response to this publication of the Adventist Theological Society has been most gratifying. It serves to encourage further cutting-edge theological articles.

For this issue of the Journal I want to comment on the name Adventist Theological Society, and on two articles of the criteria of membership in the Constitution of the Adventist Theological Society.

Adventist Theological Society does not imply a formal entity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, nor that it is inclusive of Adventist theologians and Bible scholars. The term Adventist signifies no more than that membership is reserved for Adventists as opposed to members of other denominations. It suggests no more than does Association of Adventist Forums, which is not inclusive of all Adventists or a formal entity of the Church, nor more than Association of Adventist Women, which is certainly not inclusive of all women of the Church. Thus Adventist Theological Society is neither ambiguous nor misleading.

Article 1 of the Constitution states: “We are convinced that the Bible is the Word of God—the inspired, infallible revelation of propositional truth. The Bible is its own interpreter, provides the foundation and context for scholarship and the totality of life, and is the unerring standard for doctrine.” The terms inspired, infallible, and unerring represent a high view of the Bible’s authority as revelation from God, and have a long and respected heritage in Christian history.

These terms express the view of Scripture held by Ellen G. White, and more recently that of the 1974 North American Division Bible Conferences. Therefore, with respect to its position on Biblical authority, ATS stands in the great stream of Christian and Adventist history and does not hesitate to confess its belief in the
full authority and accuracy of the Bible as Word of God. The terms are not understood to refer in any sense to a dictation/verbal theory of Biblical inspiration.

Article 3 reads: "We endorse the use of historical-grammatical Biblical interpretation recognizing the necessity of the Holy Spirit's aid in so doing. We reject the use of any form of the 'historical-critical' method in Biblical study." As a co-founder of ATS I am particularly pleased by the inclusion of this Article, as I witnessed first hand the devastation to faith and mission the historical-critical method produced in my former Church. Recent events in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Southern Baptist Convention underscore similar devastation, which has, fortunately, been courageously and successfully reversed in those denominations. As one in the early joys of acceptance of the Adventist message I appreciated immensely the rejection of the historical-critical method by the 1974 Bible Conferences, and later by the "Methods of Bible Study Report"—(Adventist Review, Jan. 22, 1987), which reinforced my confidence that I had found a secure Bible-based spiritual home in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. All the presenters at the 1974 Bible Conferences contributed to that confidence.

I wish to extend to Dr. Leo R. Van Dolson, who has served as distinguished editor for the first six issues of JATS, the most extensive word of appreciation for his outstanding service and dedicated labor. He has taken on new duties in revising a major SDA resource volume, forcing him to relinquish the editorship of JATS. Elder Frank B. Holbrook has been elected as editor and several associate editors have kindly consented to assist him. We wish them God’s blessings for their volunteer ministry in editing JATS.

May this issue of JATS prove to be a rich source of reading pleasure, and may the Lord continue to empower by His Spirit the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church!

Yours in the service of the Master,

C. Raymond Holmes