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Accomplished!

We have entered an age governed by rapid digital technology advancement. New devices, apps, and contents – you feel obliged to try them out. Whatever you currently use will be quickly outdated. We feel being forced to run the race to remain

up to date. Who of us wants to fall behind?

Our church also feels obligated to follow current trends and to communicate with a globalized world in new forms, ways, and channels. We are getting busier and busier and ever more skilled in various activities – at all levels. While we are preoccupied with the demands of our life and work, one question looms in the background: are we getting anything accomplished?

The words of Jesus on the cross, “It is finished,” are an important reminder to us: the goal is not to keep ourselves busy. Christ will accomplish His plan for us, in us, through us, and with us. In the midst of our global activism, we need to go back to the up-to-the-minute Word of God and let the state-of-the-art gospel message answer our deepest questions.

Never let Bible-based mission theology take the backseat to global activism. Our mission needs more theological reflection-in-action and missiological action-in-reflection. The challenges of cultural, economic, and educational diversity demand serious thought if we want to accomplish our part in God’s plan.

In Friedensau, we have taken significant steps in this direction with our special focus on mission studies in the Master of Theological Studies (MTS) program. Are you ready to join us?

Dr. László Szabó,
Vice Dean of Theology

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Scholars Discuss European Adventism: Third International Symposium of the Institute of Adventist Studies

Is there such thing as “European Adventism”? How is it like? What are its major contributions to Adventism in general? These were some of the questions discussed at the “Contours of European Adventism” Symposium, recently hosted by the Institute of Adventist Studies at Friedensau Adventist University, Germany. From April 23–26, 2018, symposium participants listened to 21 presentations by Adventist scholars from several European and non-European countries. Presentations were historical, theological, empirical, or sociological, dealing with issues faced by past and present generations of Adventists in Europe.

Past and Present

In the past, making Adventism relevant to the European context did matter for the denomination’s pioneers, several of the presenters said. But that was just one of the challenges they faced. When Adventism started taking roots in Europe, early converts faced imprisonment, beatings, and persecutions because of their faith. As a religious minority, were they to embrace the laws and bow to sanctions of the government, or stand firm and clash with authorities? Several did stand firm, and as a result, they became martyrs. Others who died became unsung heroes because no one kept records.

Today, it was found, issues are partly similar and partly different. “In fact, while Adventism faces secularism, postmodernism, and atheism, there are still sanctions in some European contexts that affect religious freedom,” one of the presenters explained. He suggested needs-oriented evangelism, conscious contextualization, and dialogue as solutions to these issues. At the same time, one of the papers stated that the recent influx of immigrants seems to be helping to check the possible numerical decline of Adventism in Europe.

In Search of European Adventism

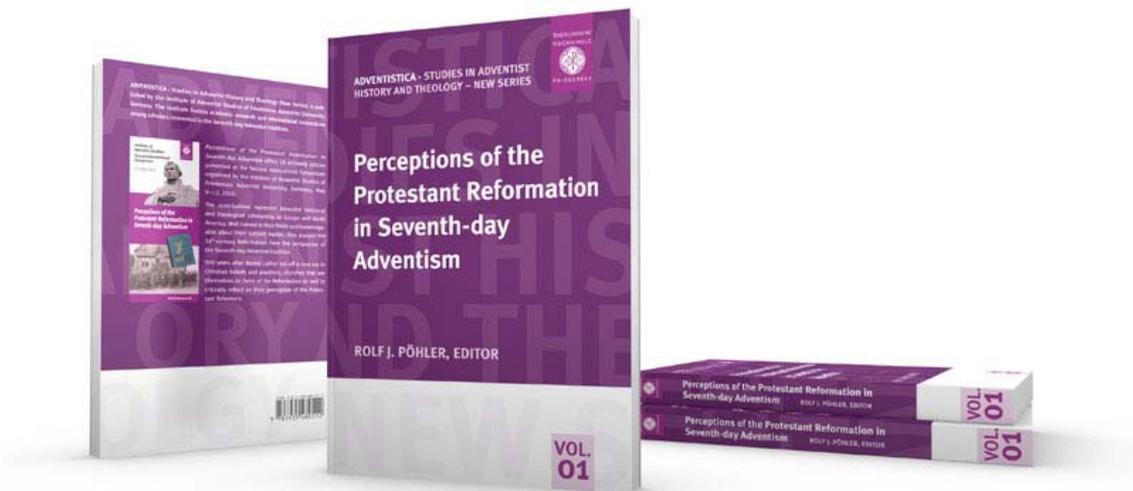
How does the past shape the present? This question was asked time and again during the event. In fact, the question was the center of reflections of the keynote and closing addresses by Denis Fortin, professor of Historical Theology at Andrews University, United States, and Rolf J. Pöhler, professor of Systematic Theology at Friedensau. From different perspectives, both stressed the contributions of European Adventists to the global church. Fortin said that the imprint of European Adventism was due to the specific historical situation it faced: state churches and anti-religious resentment. “European Adventists contribute crucially to the understanding of Adventism as a complement to other Christians, instead of a substitute,” he said. According to Pöhler, the experiences of European Adventists in their respective countries had a decisive influence on local Adventism. Pöhler highlighted the multifaceted providence of God and his blessing on European Adventism. “In the future, there may be a more differentiated Adventism, which may help secure the existence of Adventism in Europe,” he said.

Learning in Fellowship

The atmosphere of the symposium was one of learning, fellowship, communion, and networking. The evening programs included a special guest presentation by Marianne Thieme, leader of the Party for the Animals in the Dutch Parliament. She shared her testimony on being a politician and a Seventh-day Adventist in Europe. The protection of all life and the earth is, in her view, a consistent continuation of the civil rights movement.

Evgeny Zaitsev, from Russia, one of the plenary speakers, said that he enjoyed the topics discussed and the multi-complex approach to different problems that European Adventism is currently facing, be it

historical, missiological, or cultural. “I got a lot from the participants, and it helped me to broaden my understanding of many issues,” he said. Lothar Triebel, from the Institute for Ecumenical Studies and Research in Bensheim, Germany, said that he was impressed by the academic level of the symposium discussions. “At the same time, I am pleased with the noble and friendly, even loving way in which we dealt with each other,” confessed Triebel, who is not a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “I am impressed by the richness of Adventist history and its present as expressed in many lectures, and discussions, [and] I admire the critical inquiries into the own tradition and present situation,” he said.



New Book Series Launched

The first volume of “Adventistica – Studies in Adventist History and Theology – New Series” is scheduled to come off the press in a few days. The 330-page volume, entitled *Perceptions of the Protestant Reformation in Seventh-day Adventism*, contains eighteen papers, first presented at the

2nd International Symposium of the Institute of Adventist Studies in 2016. The book focuses on the following question: how have Seventh-day Adventists perceived the Protestant Reformation in the past and how do they see their relationship to it today? This question is no less timely and relevant now as it was during the quincentenary in 2017. To learn more about and/or buy the book, go to amazon.com or amazon.de or contact us at ias@thh-friedensau.de.

Greek New Testament Books for Babcock University

On a recent trip to his homeland, Nigeria, Chigemezi Nnadozie Wogu, Research Associate at Friedensau University, took some Greek New Testaments with him. Ten of these were given to the ten best Greek students of the 2nd year of the department of Religious Studies in Babcock University, Nigeria. They were a gift from the Friedensau Faculty of Theology. Chigemezi presented them to the Dean of Education and Humanities and the lecturer in charge of Greek. The students were grateful for the way Friedensau aided their studies since Greek New Testament editions are not easy to come by in Nigeria.



Winning Article of the Ministry Writing Contest Published

As reported in the newsletter of June 2017, Sully Sanon, currently an International Social Science student from Haiti, won a first prize in the fifth Ministry Student Writing Contest (which comes with a prize money of \$500). At the time of writing, Sully was a Master of Theological Studies student; he graduated in 2016. Now his essay "Interpersonal Support: A Prophet-Scholar Model" was published in the April edition of Ministry Magazine.

Sully read a lot on J. N. Andrews in a class on Adventist history. "It touched me personally how the human factor is often overlooked in theological debates." He appreciates how Ellen White and Andrews grew together as friends and mutually supported despite differences in opinion.

Sully will graduate in October and start his pastoral ministry in Berlin. "I am looking forward to see God leading me as he did in the past." One of his goals is to integrate music into Bible studies among youth.

To read the price-winning article, go to <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2018/04/>.



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