

THE BIBLICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE (BRI) ON THE TRUMPETS

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The BRI sent another online magazine where Ekkerhar Mueller reviews and criticizes Erwin R. Gane's theory of a dual interpretation on the trumpets. I did this before for the same reason (as may be found on my website) because I believe in the principle adopted by our church over 30 years ago, which reflects what our church has always believed: the Apocalyptic prophecies have only one fulfillment.

Unfortunately, Mueller then goes on to assume positions that are at odds with what our church has always believed and believes today, especially in relation to the trumpets.

1. Ekkerhard Mueller says, literally: "Adventists... are convinced that the present generation lives at the verge of Christ's Second Coming, in the time of the sixth seal and the sixth trumpet."

But Adventists have never believed this concerning the sixth trumpet, nor do they believe it even today. The sixth trumpet is placed in the context of the altar of incense (in the holy place: Rev 9:13), and this ministry culminated in 1844 when the door was opened to the Most Holy in connection with the seventh trumpet (Rev 11:15-19). If the door to the Most Holy is opened in 1844 (and not at the very end as Jon Paulien and Stefanovic want us to believe), then the seventh trumpet that culminates with the assumption of the kingdom by God and the Lamb has to also be linked to the opening of that door, which is what our pioneers and E. G. White believed.

Contrary to what Mueller now affirms, Adventists have always believed that the seventh trumpet began after 1840/44. When in Rev 10 the seventh trumpet is announced, it is because the sixth trumpet is already over (e.g. it is no longer mentioned because we are between 1840 and 1844). It seems that these European brothers (Pfandl, Mueller, and Stefanovic) think that their new propositions are believed by Adventists in general and that they are, with their particular beliefs, the representation of what our church believes. They do not seem to care about the fact that the interpretation of R. Stefanovic is strongly resisted in our church because it neglects symbols and dates and spiritualizes the apocalyptic content, thus departing from the principles of historicism. The notion Stefanovic proposes that the apostle did not really intend for his symbols to be interpreted is in opposition to what our church believes.

2. Mueller adopts the inaugural view of Rev 4 and 5 because, like his friends, he only pays attention to the furnishings of the Holy Place and forgets about the throne that E. G. White saw over the mercy seat. The Spirit of Prophecy also projected (and exclusively so) the taking and opening of the sealed book in Rev 5 to the end. Never was it projected to the inauguration. She connected the open door to the throne of Rev 4 with the open door of the sixth church, that is, with the Most Holy Place. She was also emphatic in describing the *thrones* within the Most Holy when she saw the transference of ministry of Jesus from the Holy to the Most Holy and declared that she had not seen those thrones before (this implies those thrones were not in the Holy Place). She never saw thrones in the Holy Place. In addition, in the book *The Great Controversy* she quotes the court of Rev 5 when speaking about the final judgment and its connection with the vision of the judgment in Dan 7..., etc. See A. R. Treiyer, *The Apocalyptic Expectations of the Sanctuary* (2008).

3. The simple literary structure of the first half of Revelation as explained in my books is irrefutable. The lightnings and thunderings and voices are given in the seventh plague, and come from the throne in the Most Holy (Rev 16:17-18). The same thing takes place at the end of the seventh trumpet, and they again are portrayed as coming from the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy (Rev 11:19). Will we also link the lightnings and thunderings and voices that come from the throne in Rev 4:5 with the Holy Place in this

vision that is clearly connected to the seventh church? E. G. White identified these Apocalyptic epiphanies with the end, and describes them as divine judgments over the earth that occur in response to the outcry of the martyrs who died under the altar. Keep in mind that the court which reviews the historical seals judges the righteous dead first (see Heb 6:9), and grants them white robes while they rest in their graves awaiting the completion of the judgment of the last generation, namely, of the 144,000 (Rev 6:9). The throne is also surrounded by four cherubim in Rev 4 and 5, which are typologically connected to the Most Holy in the temple of Solomon.

4. These new partial and allegorical trends even made it into the first two lessons of the last Sabbath School Quarterly of 2013. These lessons see sanctuaries everywhere, and open the door to an allegorization of the sanctuary that is confusing some brothers in our church. There is no serious biblical comparison between the tabernacle and Eden (the latter being interpreted as a temple). The reason the lesson had to resort to a Jewish interpreter from the 2nd century B.C. is really because there is no biblical basis for such a conclusion.

Neither is the New Jerusalem a sanctuary. God instead is its sanctuary, which means that the city is not the sanctuary. Mount Sinai is also not the sanctuary, as Angel M. Rodriguez proposed some years ago. God revealed the true sanctuary when He came down from Mount Sinai, and our minds should be focused on the typological projection of that sanctuary. It may seem innocent to do these allegorical comparisons. But let us keep in mind that the allegorization of the temple in post-exilic Judaism under Hellenistic influence (and whose maximal representation was seen in Philo of Alexandria during the first century) resulted in forgetting the heavenly sanctuary, and paved the way for the antichrist to sit in the midst of the spiritual temple, the church.

Richard Davidson, Jack Doukhan, Jon Paulien, and Ranko Stefanovic have been trying to introduce the idea of a sequence of the Jewish Feasts in Revelation without biblical support. For instance, no serious comparison between a presumed Holy Supper (that could be related to the Passover) and the message of Jesus to the churches can possibly be entertained. Paulien and Stefanovic also see the silence in Rev 8:1-5 as analogous to the Mishnaic *tamid*. However, when we read both the Biblical and the Mishnaic *tamid*, there is no such reference to silence. They construct parallel literary structures of Revelation that have nothing to do with the very message involved. Why don't they instead relate the silence in Rev 8:1 with the rabbinic silence assigned for the Day of Atonement? This would make much more sense given the fact it was believed that at the conclusion of the judgment represented by that day Satan could no longer accuse the worshippers.

In the most recent Sabbath School quarterly for the end of 2013 it is also presumed, amidst the background of these new allegorical interpretations, that there is a progression in Revelation from the Holy Place to the Most Holy Place, the latter of which is not attained until right before the description of the seventh trumpet. In this way they break down the undeniable fact maintained by our church that at the conclusion of each and every septet prophetic series (seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets), the end always takes place in the Most Holy. There is no need to wait until the seventh trumpet to read about the end...

5. Dr. Alberto Timm, associate director of the White Center in the General Conference in Washington DC, somewhat saves the reputation of the current BRI because he does not discard the five prophetic months in the fifth trumpet. But the BRI shortened this paper (that was also published in other books and magazines) to avoid apparent contradictions with what Mueller and Pfanld believe. They eliminated from Timm's paper the reason he gives to keep the principle of day per year in the sixth trumpet, and its contrast with the millennium. In this way, the BRI is again undermining the clear testimony of E. G. White regarding the prophetic date of the sixth trumpet which Timm adheres to.

Those who want to have Timm's complete document may find it in "Miniature Symbolization and the Year-day Principle of Prophetic Interpretation," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 42/1 (Spring 2004): 149-67; and "Miniature Symbolization & the Year-day Principle," in Ron du Preez, ed., *Prophetic Principles: Crucial Exegetical, Theological, Historical & Practical Insights*, Scripture Symposium, No. 1 (Lansing, MI: Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2007), 233-70. He also published this paper in Spanish and Portuguese. "El 'simbolismo en miniatura' y el principio 'día por año' en la interpretación profética," *Theologika* (Peru) 22/1 (2007): 2-35; "Simbolização em miniatura e o princípio 'dia-ano' de interpretação profética," *Parousia* (Brazil) 3/1 (2nd Semester 2004): 33-46.

In addition to Timm's arguments in favor of maintaining the prophetic dates of the fifth trumpet, I will provide in my fourth seminar on the sanctuary several arguments to further contrast that date with the millennium. One of them has to do with the fact of different dispensations. The Lord will no longer need to speak with symbols, parables, or prophecies (John 3:12; 1 Cor 13:8-10,12). Concerning Rev 9:15, the text requires, under the context of a prophetic time, to interpret the "year" in terms of 360 days, like the month in terms of 30 days, and like the five months of the fifth trumpet in terms of 150 days...

Let me conclude by saying that these new trends that depart from what we always believed as Seventh-day Adventists encourage me a little more, because they allow me to see that my fourth seminar on the sanctuary (in which I deal with all the prophetic dates of the Bible) comes at the right time. In this fourth seminar I do not criticize other positions as I am now doing online, but rather explain several things that may help many confused brothers better appreciate our prophetic heritage, and the problems these new propositions present that undermine our prophetic faith. Hopefully the BRI will take a step back with regards to these new theories, and so avoid further confusion in our church in the near future.

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