Title: The third look theology of Carlos H. Abesamis, SJ: application from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective

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Abstract:

Problem

This study clarifies and reemphasizes integral salvation. It is applied to Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) doctrines. Two major doctrines are addressed. First, the holy Sabbath rest; second, the Parousia. Both are examined through the eyeglasses of Abesamis Third Look Theology.

Abesamis Third Look Theology

This study involves the basic elements of the Third Look Theology as presented by Carlos H. Abesamis. Third Look Theology emphasizes integral salvation. It attempts to do away with the old dualism that still linger on in classical theology which views body and soul as separate entities. The Third Look Theology uses world-view as a hermeneutical key.

One of the key concepts in Abesamis Third Look theology is the Reign-Kingdom of God. Abesamis emphasizes the basic principles of the Reign-Kingdom of God as life instead of death, food instead of hunger, health instead of disease, and justice instead of injustice. So the Reign-Kingdom of God includes all dimensions of life.
The Reign-Kingdom of God addresses the whole man, for Jesus Christ came down in the flesh. His incarnation made total salvation possible. His saving power penetrated all areas of life. Therefore the Reign-Kingdom of God includes all the physical and spiritual blessings spoken of in the Sermon on the Mount.

Third Look Theology rediscovers the most ancient core of the New Testament faith with the help of many tools. The first tool is practice. The second tool is being close to the people at the grassroots. No serious theological reflection can be done in a complete detachment from the poor and their situation. The third tool is the use of scientific instruments, such as historic, critical, structural, and sociological methods. World-view has been neglected in the past as an effective instrument in rediscovering the core message of the gospel.

Application in the SDA Church

The principle of integral salvation has been emphasized by the SDA Church and expressed in the medical and educational work of SDA institutions. However, SDA integral salvation developed in a Western setting. After the Second World War, European national states took over many social responsibilities that had been carried by the different churches. As a result, the work of the church became more private and less concerned with material, social, and physical needs. More money was available for evangelism in the sense of word proclamation. Gradually, the concept of integral salvation in the SDA church became more and more spiritualized. A study of Abesamis theology may give new insights on how to serve the needs of the majority of its members living in third world countries. Abesamis’ reflection on the concept of an integral salvation, from a third world perspective, may help SDAs to develop a new awareness about the old dualism which still lingers on and to infuse the concept of integral salvation, with a new meaning.
Integral Salvation and the Sabbath

Integral salvation applied to the holy Sabbath rest requires a total view on the Sabbath concept in the Old Testament. The Sabbath teaches equality of all human beings. The Sabbath is holy (Lev 19:2). To keep the Sabbath holy is to forget one’s ego, and develop an awareness of the need of others. Regulations related to the Sabbath year and the year of jubilee, found in Ex 23 and Lev 25, were made so that the land and its inhabitants were protected, slaves released, land returned to the original owners, and debts remitted. The holy Sabbath rest is embedded in a structure of thought that includes the totality of human existence.