

Questions on Doctrine: History and Impact in the South American Division

Alberto R. Timm

Introduction

The production process and publication of the 720-page book *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (popularly known just as *Questions on Doctrine*)¹ generated much turbulence within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, especially in North America and Australia.² On one side, there was the administration of the General Conference, with special reference to its Ministerial Association, promoting the book enthusiastically within and outside the denomination. It is stated that General Conference President R. R. Figuhr considered that publication as “the most meaningful accomplishment of his administration,” which lasted for 12 years.³ On the critical side, one finds, for instance, M. L. Andreasen blaming the book of “apostasy” from some Adventist pillar doctrines, and suggesting that the General Conference President should be “impeached.”⁴ The Australian Robert D. Brinsmead also spread around many seeds of antagonism to the book and the leadership of the church. The critical side became so vociferous that the leadership of the denomination decided that the book, after having sold close to 150,000 copies, should no longer be printed.

Meanwhile, *Questions on Doctrine* was well accepted in the territory of the South American Division, where Andreasen’s theology had already lost much of its power, and the above-mentioned criticisms were almost unknown. Interestingly, in 1960, when in North America the English original of the book was already intentionally withdrawn from the press, in South America versions of it in Portuguese and Spanish began to be published as article-series. The present article deals specifically with the history and impact of *Questions on Doctrine* in South America, with special attention being given to its historical antecedents, the articles-series published in Portuguese and Spanish between 1960 and 1978, and its publication in book form first in Spanish (1986) and later on in Portuguese (2008).

Historical Antecedents

The content of *Questions on Doctrine* reached the ministerial circles of the South American Division through the influence of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Back in 1922, a “Ministerial Commission” was established at the headquarters of the denomination, having former General Conference President

¹

² *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957).

³ Helpful insights regarding the production and debates about *Questions on Doctrine* are provided in T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage* 4 (Winter 1977): 35-46.

⁴ Mentioned in “Currents Interview: Walter Martin,” *Adventist Currents*, July 1983, 15. See also Walter Martin’s letter to [Neal C.] Wilson, Feb. 16, 1983, CAR-AU.

Roy A. Anderson, “Brief Story of the Origin of *Questions on Doctrine*” (unpublished manuscript, n.d., CAR-AU), 7. Cf. R. R. Figuhr, “The Pillars of Our Faith Unmoved,” *Review and Herald*, Apr. 24, 1958, 5-6.

Arthur G. Daniells as its Secretary.⁵ Shortly after, under the new name of “Ministerial Association,” its board was increased by the names of Division-level administrators serving overseas, including one from the South American Division. As early as 1924, J. W. Westphal, Field Secretary of that Division, became a member of the Advisory Council of the Association, and in the *1929 Yearbook* he appears already as the Ministerial Secretary of the Division.⁶ In 1930, South American Division President N. P. Neilsen himself accumulated that function. In 1938, the office was filled up by Division Secretary H. O. Olson, while Neilsen still remained a member of the General Conference Ministerial Association. So, by working close to the administration of the Divisions, the Ministerial Association received administrative support to carry on some of its major projects.

The influence of General Conference Ministerial Association on the world field increased significantly through the launching of *Ministry* magazine in January 1928. But in its early days, the content of the magazine was largely circumscribed to the English-reading segment of Adventist ministry. Trying to overcome the language barrier, the South American Division began to publish in 1933 *El Predicador Adventista* (in Spanish) and two years later *O Pregador Adventista* (in Portuguese), which carried some articles translated from *Ministry* magazine and other ones written by local authors. In 1953 *El Predicador Adventista* was replaced by *El ministerio adventista*, and the next year *O Pregador Adventista* became *O Ministério Adventista*. Besides the change of names, the actual size of both periodicals was enlarged considerably, allowing space for more and/or larger articles. Even the content of a few major books was reprinted in those periodicals as articles series. For example, the whole content of the first edition of Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood’s *The Chronology of Ezra 7* (1953)⁷ appeared in the mid-1950s in both *El ministerio adventista*⁸ and *O Ministério Adventista*.⁹

Noteworthy for the purpose of the present study is the fact that both periodicals carried between 1956 and 1959 several articles translated from *Ministry* magazine, much in line with the far larger forthcoming series from *Questions on Doctrine*. Of special significance was a compilation from the Ellen G. White writings on “Christ’s Place in the Godhead” (May 1956),¹⁰ which came out in both Portuguese¹¹ and Spanish¹² in November-December 1956; another one

⁵ Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, 2nd ed., rev. (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2000), 388-89.

⁷ *1929 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1929), 22.

⁸ Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953).

Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood, “La cronología de Esdras 7,” 9-part series in *El ministerio adventista* (Argentina), Nov.-Dec. 1954, 11-13; Jan.-Feb. 1955, 11-16; Mar.-Apr. 1955, 9-15; May-June 1955, 10-15; July-Aug. 1955, 7-15; Sept.-Oct. 1955, 7-13; Nov.-Dec. 1955, 8-10; Jan.-Feb. 1956, 10-16; Mar.-Apr. 1956, 7-14.

Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood, “A Cronologia de Esdras 7,” 9-part series in *O Ministério Adventista* (Brazil), July-Aug. 1955, 9-11; Sept.-Oct. 1955, 7-11; Nov.-Dec. 1955, 7-12; Jan.-Feb. 1956, 7-11; Mar.-Apr. 1956, 7-13; May-June 1956, 8-13; July-Aug. 1956, 6-8; Sept.-Oct. 1956, 10-14; Nov.-Dec. 1956, 4-10.

¹¹ [Ellen G. White], “Christ’s Place in the Godhead,” *Ministry*, May 1956, 26-29.

¹² [Ellen G. White], “O Lugar de Cristo na Divindade,” *O Ministério Adventista* (Brazil), Nov.-Dec. 1956, 16-19.

[Ellen G. White], “El lugar de Cristo en la Deidad,” *El ministerio adventista* (Argentina), Nov.-Dec. 1956, 20-23. In the Spanish version, Topic 2 (“Always with Eternal God”) of Section II (“Eternal Pre-existence of Christ”) was left out.

on “Christ’s Nature during the Incarnation” (September 1956),¹³ which appeared in Spanish between November-December 1956 and January-February 1957,¹⁴ and in Portuguese in May-June 1957;¹⁵ and a third one on “The Atonement–Atoning Sacrifice and Priestly Application” (December 1956–January 1957),¹⁶ with much of its content published in Spanish between March-April and July-August 1957.¹⁷ In addition, W. E. Read’s “The Incarnation of the Son of Man”¹⁸ and Roy A. Anderson’s ““God with Us,””¹⁹ both published in English in April 1957, appeared in Portuguese²⁰ and Spanish²¹ in November-December 1957. Anderson’s “Ideas on the Atonement Contrasted” (January 1959)²² and “The Atonement in Adventist Theology” (February 1959)²³ were published also in Portuguese²⁴ and Spanish.²⁵ Thus, by publishing first some small compilations from Ellen White writings, and later on a few additional articles by other authors, the editors of *El ministerio adventista* and *O Ministério Adventista* prepared the way for the acceptance of the content of *Questions on Doctrine*.

The positive attitude in South America towards *Questions on Doctrine* is well reflected in Arnaldo B. Christianini’s book review published in the January-February 1959-issue of the Brazilian *O Ministério Adventista*. Christianini, an Associate Editor of the Brazilian Adventist Publishing House, stated that

no Adventist denominational worker should miss reading this masterpiece [*Questions on Doctrine*], which is an authentic statement of faith, intended to demonstrate the genuine

¹³

[Ellen G. White], “Christ’s Nature during the Incarnation,” *Ministry*, Sept. 1956, 17-24.

¹⁴

[Ellen G. White], “La naturaleza de Cristo durante la encarnación,” 2-part series in *El ministerio adventista* (Argentina), Nov.-Dec. 1956, 16-20; Jan.-Feb. 1957, 18-24.

¹⁵

[Ellen G. White], “A Natureza de Cristo Durante a Encarnação,” *O Ministério Adventista* (Brazil), May-June 1957, 17-23.

¹⁶

[Ellen G. White], “The Atonement–Atoning Sacrifice and Priestly Application,” 2-part series in *Ministry*, Dec. 1956, 18-24; Jan. 1957, 39-43.

¹⁷

[Ellen G. White], “La expiación–el sacrificio expiatorio y su aplicación sacerdotal,” 3-part series in *El ministerio adventista*, Mar.-Apr. 1957, 17-20; May-June 1957, 21-24; July-Aug. 1957, 17-19. This Spanish version left out the whole section “XI. Redemptive Price Completely Paid on Calvary” (*Ministry*, Dec. 1956, 24) and from topic “4. Forgiveness Solely through Blood of Christ” until the end of the compilation (*Ministry*, Jan. 1957, 42-43).

¹⁸

W. E. Read, “The Incarnation of the Son of Man,” *Ministry*, April 1957, 23-26.

¹⁹

R[oy] A. A[nderson], ““God with Us,”” *Ministry*, April 1957, 32-35.

²⁰

W. E. Read, “A Encarnação do Filho do Homem,” *O Ministério Adventista* (Brazil), Nov.-Dec. 1957, 18-20; Roy A. Anderson, “Deus Conosco,” *ibid.*, 7-9.

²¹

W. E. Read, “La encarnación y el Hijo de Hombre,” *El ministerio adventista* (Argentina), Nov.-Dec. 1957, 17-20; Roy A. Anderson, “Dios con nosotros,” *ibid.*, 7-9.

²²

R[oy] A. Anderson, “Ideas on the Atonement Contrasted,” *Ministry*, Jan. 1959, 13-18.

²³

R[oy] A. Anderson, “The Atonement in Adventist Theology,” *Ministry*, Feb. 1959, 10-15, 47.

²⁴

R. Allan Anderson, “Contrastes nas Idéias Sôbre Expição,” *O Ministério Adventista* (Brazil), Jul.-Aug. 1959, 7-11; *idem*, “A Expição na Teologia Adventista,” *ibid.*, Sept.-Oct. 1959, 7-11.

²⁵

Roy A. Anderson, “Contraste de conceptos en torno a la expiación,” 2-part series in *El ministerio adventista* (Argentina), Jul.-Aug. 1959, 8-14; Sept.-Oct. 1959, 8-11, 23-24.

evangelical nature of the SDA beliefs. Planning to launch a book in which Adventist doctrines should be enunciated precisely, one of the largest Protestant publishers in the USA took the commendable initiative of visiting the headquarters of our denomination. For almost two years, the author, with other researchers, was in touch with our institutions, getting acquainted with our beliefs. The answers he received were brought together in this volume, the reading of which we recommend. It was prepared by a team of scholars from our ranks. It begins with a statement of our fundamental beliefs, followed by comparing our beliefs with those of other branches of the Christendom, our position on the Bible, and the reason of being for our distinctive beliefs. A valuable resource for the workers appears in the section on the heavenly sanctuary, the investigative judgment, the scapegoat, and perceivably in the chapter “Concepts of the Millennium.” Chapter 44 provides a large listing of statements from non-Adventist authors about the state of the dead. This book cannot be missing in the library of any Adventist workers.²⁶

Such endorsement was much in tune with the widespread positive advertisements *Questions on Doctrine* received since 1957 in both *Ministry* magazine²⁷ and the *Review and Herald*,²⁸ which were regarded by many as the two most important “official” periodicals of the denomination. Furthermore, the 1957 Autumn Council of the General Conference Committee had approved a special plan by which a copy of the book should be (1) purchased by “every Seventh-day Adventist family”; (2) displayed “in each church library”; (3) placed “in as many public, college, and seminary libraries as possible”; and (4) presented to non-Adventist ministers “who reside in the vicinity” of our churches.²⁹ With such a strong distribution program within the territory of the North American Division, why could not the book (or at least its content) be made available also in other languages for the benefit of a much wider audience?

Series in Portuguese and Spanish (1960-1978)

The whole advertising-distribution program of *Questions on Doctrine* by the General Conference Ministerial Association and the Review and Herald Publishing Association helped to raise the interest on the book in many places of the world field, including the South American Division, traditionally supportive of the leadership of the church. In February 1959 Enoch de Oliveira became Ministerial Secretary of that Division, and he played a major role in getting started the long process of making the content of *Questions on Doctrine* available to the readers of *O Ministério Adventista* (in Portuguese) and *El ministerio adventista* (in Spanish). The January-February 1960 issue of each of those periodicals came off the press with the following note by Oliveira:

²⁶

²⁷ Arnaldo B. C[h]ristianini, “Livros—para a sua Biblioteca,” *O Ministério Adventista* (Brazil), Jan.-Feb. 1959, 23.

Special one-page advertisements of the book appeared in *Ministry*, Nov. 1957, 29; Dec. 1957, 38; Jan. 1958, 44; Mar. 1958, 40; July 1958, 51; Aug. 1958, 40; Oct. 1958, 41.

²⁸ Special one-page advertisements of the book appeared in the *Review and Herald*, Oct. 24, 1957, 29; Nov. 14, 1957, 31; Jan. 23, 1958, 30; Feb. 20, 1958, 31; Mar. 6, 1958, 30; Mar. 20, 1958, 31; Apr. 24, 1958, 30; May 15, 1958, 21; May 29, 1958, 31; June 5, 1958, 28; June 19, 1958, 15; June 23, 1958, 78; Aug. 7, 1958, 28; Aug. 21, 1958, 30; May 5, 1960, 21.

²⁹ F. L. Peterson, “1957 Autumn Council Report,” *Review and Herald*, Nov. 28, 1957, 19-20.

With the present issue we begin a reproduction in chapters of the book *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, a praiseworthy accomplishment of the Review and Herald Publishing Association. This work is a convincing response to the questions formulated by some theologians, representing other streams of religious thinking, eager to know the reasons of our faith. Prepared by a qualified group of Adventist scholars, in it one can find specific answers to 50 propositions about our beliefs and teachings. We are publishing it in O MINISTÉRIO ADVENTISTA, moved by the desire of placing in the hands of the readers a material of incontestable value for the defense of the foundations of our faith.—E.O.³⁰

Under the title “Os Adventistas do Sétimo Dia Respondem a Perguntas Sobre Doutrina” [Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine], the 85-part series in Portuguese run in *O Ministério Adventista* from January-February 1960 to March-April 1976.³¹ By and large, this series is more complete and precise than the Spanish one. Yet, there are some mistakes and suppressions in the series in Portuguese that cannot be overlooked. For example, the expression “*On Rev. 12:7*” (p. 86) was misplaced,³² and the expression “J. N. Andrews, one of the founding fathers of the Advent Movement, wrote in 1870” (p. 97) was left out.³³ So, the statement that followed the later expression seemed to be from Ellen White herself instead of Andrews. The footnote of page 169 is missing.³⁴ The well-known diagrams on “The 70 Weeks of Daniel 9” (p. 280) and “The 2300 Days” (p. 294) were not included in the version in

³⁰

E[noch de] O[liveira], “Nota,” *O Ministério Adventista* (Brazil), Jan.-Feb. 1960, 19. A similar note, with slight editorial changes, was published also in *El ministerio adventista* (Argentina), Jan.-Feb. 1960, 23.

“Os Adventistas do Sétimo Dia Respondem a Perguntas Sobre Doutrina,” 85-part series in *O Ministério Adventista* (Brazil), Jan.-Feb. 1960, 19-22; Mar.-Apr. 1960, 21-23, 16; May-June 1960, 21-24, 6; July-Aug. 1960, 17-19; Sept.-Oct. 1960, 22-23; Nov.-Dec. 1960, 19-20; Jan.-Feb. 1961, 19-20; Mar.-Apr. 1961, 19-21; July-Aug. 1961, 18-20; Sept.-Oct. 1961, 16-19; Nov.-Dec. 1961, 18-20; Jan.-Feb. 1962, 22-23; Mar.-Apr. 1962, 17-18, 23; May-June 1962, 21-24; July-Aug. 1962, 17-20; Sept.-Oct. 1962, 21-22; Nov.-Dec. 1962, 20-21; Jan.-Feb. 1963, 18-19; Mar.-Apr. 1963, 21-22; May-June 1963, 20-23; July-Aug. 1963, 22; Sept.-Oct. 1963, 22-23; Jan.-Feb. 1964, 21-23; Mar.-Apr. 1964, 22-24; May-June 1964, 22-24; July-Aug. 1964, 22-23, 18; Sept.-Oct. 1964, 21-23; Nov.-Dec. 1964, 22-24; Jan.-Feb. 1965, 21-23, 19; Mar.-Apr. 1965, 22-24, 17; May-June 1965, 23-24; July-Aug. 1965, 21, 14, 22-24; Jan.-Feb. 1966, 21-24; Mar.-Apr. 1966, 22-24, 5, 11; May-June 1966, 19-23; July-Aug. 1966, 23-24; Sept.-Oct. 1966, 22-23; Nov.-Dec. 1966, 22-24; Jan.-Feb. 1967, 23-24; May-June 1967, 23-24; July-Aug. 1967, 24; Nov.-Dec. 1967, 21-23; Jan.-Feb. 1968, 21-23; Mar.-Apr. 1968, 21-24; May-June 1968, 21-23; July-Aug. 1968, 22-23; Nov.-Dec. 1968, 21-23; Jan.-Feb. 1969, 21-23; Mar.-Apr. 1969, 21-24; May-June 1969, 23-24; July-Aug. 1969, 19-23; Sept.-Oct. 1969, 22-23; Nov.-Dec. 1969, 22-24; Jan.-Feb. 1970, 19-21; Mar.-Apr. 1970, 17-19; July-Aug. 1970, 22-24; Sept.-Oct. 1970, 18-20; Jan.-Feb. 1971, 19-20; Mar.-Apr. 1971, 22-24; May-June 1971, 23-24; July-Aug. 1971, 23-24, 22; Sept.-Oct. 1971, 23-24; Nov.-Dec. 1971, 23-24; Jan.-Feb. 1972, 21-24; Mar.-Apr. 1972, 18-20; May-June 1972, 22-24; July-Aug. 1972, 22-23; Sept.-Oct. 1972, 23-24; Nov.-Dec. 1972, 23-24; Jan.-Feb. 1973, 23-24; May-June 1973, 21-23; Sept.-Oct. 1973, 23-24; Nov.-Dec. 1973, 9-12; Jan.-Feb. 1974, 20-22; Mar.-Apr. 1974, 17-21; May-June 1974, 19-21; July-Aug. 1974, 18-22; Sept.-Oct. 1974, 19-22; Nov.-Dec. 1974, 16-20; Jan.-Feb. 1975, 17-21; Mar.-Apr. 1975, 20-22; May-June 1975, 18-21; July-Aug. 1975, 18-21; Jan.-Feb. 1976, 20-24; Mar.-Apr. 1976, 18-23.

“Os Adventistas do Sétimo Dia Respondem a Perguntas Sobre Doutrina,” *O Ministério Adventista* (Brazil), July-Aug. 1961, 20.

³⁴ Ibid., Sept.-Oct. 1961, 18.

Ibid., May-June 1963, 20.

Portuguese.³⁵ The footnote of page 413 does not appear in this version.³⁶ The content of pages 433-438, and beginning of 439, was not included.³⁷ The second paragraph of page 498 was also left out.³⁸ The chapter titled “Representative Adventist Doctrinal Literature” (pp. 629-37) was left out. Topics X-XVIII (pp. 671-80) are missing from “Part I–ATONING SACRIFICE” on Appendix C–“The Atonement.”³⁹

Meanwhile, the Spanish version was published as a 84-part series in *El ministerio adventista* from January-February 1960 to May-June 1978 under the shorter title “Preguntas sobre Doctrinas” [Questions on Doctrine].⁴⁰ It continued to be published for two more years (after the one in Portuguese was concluded) because of the larger number of issues, within the period, in which the series did not appear. The version in Spanish showed also a much larger percentage of suppressions. For instance, of the five topics listed under the subheading “In a Few Areas of Christian Thought, Our Doctrines Are Distinctive with Us. We Believe –” (pp. 24-25), number 3, dealing with the “Spirit of prophecy,” was left out in the Spanish version.⁴¹ The last paragraph of the answer to Question 5 (p. 49) is missing.⁴² Unfortunately, the last half of the answer to Question 6, dealing with “The Incarnation and the ‘Son of Man’” (pp. 58-65), did not appear in Spanish.⁴³ The very last paragraph of the answer to Question 12 (p. 128) was left out.⁴⁴

35

36 Ibid., May-June 1966, 20-21; Sept.-Oct. 1966, 23.

37 Ibid., Mar.-Apr. 1970, 18.

38 See the gap between *ibid.*, Jan.-Feb. 1971, 20, and Mar.-Apr. 1971, 22.

39 Ibid., May-June 1972, 24.

40 See the gap between *ibid.*, Jan.-Feb. 1976, 24, and Mar.-Apr. 1976, 18.

“Preguntas sobre Doctrinas,” 84-part series in *El ministerio adventista* (Argentina), Jan.-Feb. 1960, 23-24; Mar.-Apr. 1960, 19-21; May-June 1960, 21-22; Sept.-Oct. 1960, 20; Nov.-Dec. 1960, 21-22; Jan.-Feb. 1961, 21-23; Mar.-Apr. 1961, 20-22; May-June 1961, 17-19; July-Aug. 1961, 16-17; Sept.-Oct. 1961, 17-23; Nov.-Dec. 1961, 22-23; Jan.-Feb. 1962, 22-23; Mar.-Apr. 1962, 19-23; May-June 1962, 22-24; July-Aug. 1962, 18-23; Sept.-Oct. 1962, 19-21; Nov.-Dec. 1962, 22-23; Jan.-Feb. 1963, 21-23; Mar.-Apr. 1963, 22-23; May-June 1963, 20-23; July-Aug. 1963, 23-24; Sept.-Oct. 1963, 22-24 Nov.-Dec. 1963, 24; Jan.-Feb. 1964, 21-23; Mar.-Apr. 1964, 24; May-June 1964, 21-24, 20; July-Aug. 1964, 21-22; Sept.-Oct. 1964, 19-22; Nov.-Dec. 1964, 22-23; Jan.-Feb. 1965, 22-23; Mar.-Apr. 1965, 22-23; May-June 1965, 23-24; July-Aug. 1965, 23-24; Sept.-Oct. 1965, 22-24; Nov.-Dec. 1965, 9-10, 23-24; Jan.-Feb. 1966, 20-23; Mar.-Apr. 1966, 22-24; May-June 1966, 23-24; July-Aug. 1966, 22-23; Sept.-Oct. 1966, 23-24; Nov.-Dec. 1966, 20-24; Jan.-Feb. 1967, 22-23; May-June 1967, 22-24; July-Aug. 1967, 19-21; Nov.-Dec. 1967, 21-24; Jan.-Feb. 1968, 19-23; Mar.-Apr. 1968, 21-23; July-Aug. 1968, 22-24; Sept.-Oct. 1968, 22-24; Nov.-Dec. 1968, 22-23; Jan.-Feb. 1969, 21-23; May-June 1969, 22-24; July-Aug. 1969, 22-24; Sept.-Oct. 1969, 23-24, 19; Nov.-Dec. 1969, 23-24; Jan.-Feb. 1970, 23-24, 16; Mar.-Apr. 1970, 23-24; Nov.-Dec. 1970, 22-24; Jan.-Feb. 1971, 22-24, 7; Mar.-Apr. 1972, 20-24; Nov.-Dec. 1972, 20-24; May-June 1973, 21-24; Nov.-Dec. 1973, 22-23; July-Aug. 1974, 21-24; Sept.-Oct. 1974, 20-22; Nov.-Dec. 1974, 22-24, 21; Mar.-Apr. 1975, 22-25; May-June 1975, 17-20; July-Aug. 1975, 23-25; Sept.-Oct. 1975, 20-25; Nov.-Dec. 1975, 24-27; Jan.-Feb. 1976, 25-28; Mar.-Apr. 1976, 24-26; May-June 1976, 22-25; July-Aug. 1976, 24-25; Sept.-Oct. 1976, 22-24; Nov.-Dec. 1976, 21-25; Jan.-Feb. 1977, 27-29; Mar.-Apr. 1977, 26-28; May-June 1977, 24-26; Sept.-Oct. 1977, 29-31; Jan.-Feb. 1978, 26-28; Mar.-Apr. 1978, 26-27; May-June 1978, 19-21.

41 “Preguntas sobre Doctrinas,” *El ministerio adventista* (Argentina), May-June 1960, 22.

42 Ibid., Mar.-Apr. 1961, 22.

43 See the gap between *ibid.*, May-June 1961, 19, and July-Aug. 1961, 16.

44 Ibid., July-Aug. 1962, 23.

The poem at the end of the answer to Question 14 (p. 145) was not included.⁴⁵ A new explanatory footnote was added to paragraph 0 of page 166.⁴⁶ Both the footnote of page 220 and the first paragraph of page 223 appear twice.⁴⁷ The last four paragraphs of the answer to Question 22 (pp. 242-43) were left out.⁴⁸ The footnote of page 261, dealing with the meaning of *tamid*, was not included.⁴⁹ In the answer to Question 25, the Spanish version omitted all footnotes (pp. 270-72, 276, 278-79, 282-83, 295),⁵⁰ paragraph 1 of page 274,⁵¹ as well as the diagram on “The 2300 Days” (p. 294).⁵² Likewise, the footnote of page 300 did not appear.⁵³ The paragraph related to Hebrews 9:28 (p. 589) is missing.⁵⁴ The footnote of page 615 was left out,⁵⁵ as well as the last paragraph of page 621.⁵⁶ The chapter titled “Representative Adventist Doctrinal Literature” (pp. 629-37) and all Appendixes of the book (pp. 641-92) are missing in the Spanish version. One might guess that the Appendixes (compiled from Ellen White writings) might have been left out because of their similarities with the above-mentioned compilations which came out in *El ministerio adventista* between 1956 and 1957.

Noteworthy, in January-February 1960, when the *Questions on Doctrine* series began to come out in Portuguese and Spanish, the Second Theology Extension Program for the South American Division was taking place at Brazil College, in Sao Paulo, with the presence of 145 pastors from the whole Division field. The program lasted for eight weeks, with classes being taught by Roy Allan Anderson, Arthur L. White, and Charles E. Wittschiebe.⁵⁷ According to Mario Veloso, Anderson’s classes on Evangelistic Leadership dealt quite extensively with justification by faith and the Evangelical dialogues of the 1950s. There was, however, some opposition from a few Brazilian pastors with legalistic tendencies.⁵⁸ Yet, as a strong defender of *Questions on Doctrine*, he strengthened the confidence of the pastors in its theological postulates.

The series in *O Ministério Adventista* and *El ministerio adventista* reached the whole ministerial body of the South American Division of the 1960s and 1970s, but their impact was

⁴⁵

⁴⁶ Ibid., Jan.-Feb. 1963, 23.

⁴⁷ Ibid., July-Aug. 1963, 23.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Jan.-Feb. 1965, 23; Mar.-Apr. 1965, 22-23.

⁴⁹ See the gap between *ibid.*, Sept.-Oct. 1965, 24, and Nov.-Dec. 1965, 9.

⁵⁰ Ibid., Mar.-Apr. 1966, 22.

⁵¹ Ibid., July-Aug. 1966, 24, 22; Sept.-Oct. 1966, 23, 24; Nov.-Dec. 1966, 24.

⁵² Ibid., July-Aug. 1966, 23.

⁵³ Ibid., Nov.-Dec. 1966, 23.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Jan.-Feb. 1967, 23.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Jan.-Feb. 1977, 28.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Jan.-Feb. 1978, 28.

⁵⁷ See the gap between *ibid.*, Mar.-Apr. 1978, 27, and May-June 1978, 19.

⁵⁸ S[iegfried] Kämpel, “Segundo Curso de Extensão para a América do Sul,” *O Ministério Adventista* (Brazil), Nov.-Dec. 1961, 4-6; *idem*, “Segundo Curso de Extensión para la América del Sur,” *El ministerio adventista* (Argentina), Nov.-Dec. 1961, 5-7.

Mario Veloso, interview by Alberto R. Timm at River Plate Adventist University, Argentina, on February 22, 2007.

diluted over a period of 16 years (for the version in Portuguese) and even 18 years (for the version in Spanish) of publication. Unless somebody would take the initiative of collecting the articles, they would end up forgotten very soon within the back issues of those magazines. So, the succeeding generations of ministers were hardly exposed to those series, except for some sporadic classroom allusions. Yet, there were at least a few theology professors who believed the content of those series was too valuable to remain forgotten within old magazine issues.

Book Form in Spanish (1986)

The publication of a book-form version of *Questions on Doctrine* in Spanish was a long-nurtured dream of the Theology faculty of River Plate Adventist College (now River Plate Adventist University), Argentina, which took some 12 years (1974-1986) to be implemented. Involved in the process were the technicalities of retyping the series published in *El ministerio adventista* between 1960 and 1978; redoing imprecise translations and translating missing parts; as well as preparing the book for publication. Due to the fact that the early translation of the article series into Spanish was done by the Buenos Aires Publishing House, its administration was convinced that such edition should be published by their own office. But, as time went on and nothing concrete happened, the Publishing Board of the College finally took over the task. So, Aecio E. Cairus, president of the Board, wrote to the Review and Herald Publishing Association asking permission to publish the book. For his own surprise, he received two conflicting answers to his request—one from the chief editor, granting unconditional permission, and another one from the associate editor, warning strongly against circulating such a book in Spanish, because of its “dangerous” position on the human nature of Christ.⁵⁹

But such a warning was not taken seriously by the Theology faculty of River Plate Adventist College, who fully agreed with the content of *Questions on Doctrine*. Several translated portions of the book, used in classrooms, were already circulating among professors and students, without causing any problem. Furthermore, Raoul Dederen’s Christology expressed not only in some of his publications⁶⁰ but also in a few classes he taught on that campus—for example, in the 1979 South American Bible Institute⁶¹ and in his classes of 1984 for the Master program of LATS (Latin-American Adventist Theological Seminary)—were much in line with *Questions on Doctrine*. After all, did not the writings of Ellen White point in the very same direction? Why then should the new generations of Theology students be deprived from its content? Consequently, the Publishing Board of the College decided to accept the permission from the chief editor of the Review and Herald, and move on with the publication.

Finally, in 1986 a 353-page volume (with plastic comb binding) was launched in Spanish by Publicaciones C.A.P.,⁶² including the whole content of *Questions on Doctrine* up to page 628. The “Appendixes” (pp. 641-92) were left out due to “technical difficulties” in trying to

⁵⁹

Aecio E. Cairus, e-mail to Alberto R. Timm, June 22, 2007.

⁶⁰

Raoul Dederen, *Cristología*, Curso de Extensión de Andrews University (Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina: Imprenta CAP, 1969); idem, *Lecturas sobre Cristología*, Apuntes de clases (Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina: Imprenta CAP, 1983).

⁶¹

Guillermo Durán, “Instituto Bíblico Sudamericano,” *Revista Adventista* (Argentina), Nov. 1979, 14.

⁶²

See *Los adventistas responden a preguntas sobre doctrina* (Villa Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina: Publicaciones C.A.P., 1986).

find already-translated statements of Ellen White, which, if carried on, would delay even more the release of the book.⁶³ Aecio Cairus' "Preface to the Edition in Spanish" reveals some details of the publication process and demonstrates the positive feelings that prevailed in South America in regard to the content of the book. In it we read:

The Publishing Board of River Plate Adventist College is pleased to present the first book-form edition in Spanish of the work *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*. Without being conceived as a systematic handbook of Adventist doctrines, it comprises many characteristics that allow it to be used in classes of Systematic Theology as first level bibliography. Such are, for instance, its panoramic focus, as well as the seriousness and precision it treats the themes.

The general style is descriptive, reproducing with perceivable clarity and argumentative power the historical position of our church in the doctrinal field. However, in many sections it transcends from the descriptive to the constructive, giving its own contribution to the church's permanent task of doctrinal reflection. In spite of the fact that some have objected that precisely in some topics (like Christology) this work presents only one of the views held within the denomination, such objections have been disregarded in the process of the present edition due to the fact that the positions advocated here are being accepted uniformly for more than two decades in all academic circles of the Adventist theology in South America.

The text of this edition follows the translation made for the *El ministerio* magazine in the beginning of the past decade, except where it seemed to depart somewhat from the original edition (Review & Herald Publ. Assn., 1957), in which cases a new translation was prepared. Due to technical difficulties, the compilation of E. G White statements that appeared in the original edition has been left out.

In the preparation of this edition we have followed, since 1974, a long consulting process, which included: the Theology faculty of River Plate Adventist College (gave their unanimous approval), Buenos Aires Publishing House (prepared the translation into Spanish and, for some time, considered the possibility of launching its own edition in book-form), Review & Herald Publ. Assn. (owner of the English edition, which supported us and at the same time warned us of the already-mentioned objections), and the South American Division (owner of the copyrights of the first translation into Spanish, which authorized the present edition).

We are sure that the students of SALT [Latin-American Adventist Theological Seminary], and even larger circles, will give a warm welcome to this publication.

For the Publishing Board
Aecio E. Cairus, Chairman⁶⁴

Cairus explains also that "it is difficult to know how many copies [of the Spanish version of the book] were printed, because the same originals were used in subsequent years" to

⁶³

Aecio E. Cairus, e-mail to Alberto R. Timm, Sept. 6, 2007.

⁶⁴

Aecio E. Cairus, "Prefacio de la Edición Castellana," in *Los adventistas responden a preguntas sobre doctrina*, [ii].

make additional copies, requested by the professors for their students.⁶⁵ While it took almost 30 years for *Questions on Doctrine* to be published in book-form in Spanish, it was only 20 years later that the book became available in the Portuguese language.

Book Form in Portuguese (2008)

The idea of publishing a book-form version of *Questions on Doctrine* in Portuguese was born at the Brazilian Ellen G. White-SDA Research Center when Alberto R. Timm was still its director. In the mid-1990s, a few student workers of that Center typed into electronic format the whole 85-part series published in *O Ministério Adventista* between 1960 and 1976. The original intention was just to put the series together in a computer file that would facilitate its research. But two main factors fostered its publication as a book. One was the increasing number of independent ministers and individuals in Brazil who accused the Seventh-day Adventist Church of having officially apostatized in 1957, with the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*. Curiously, most of those critics never saw a single copy of the book, but, nonetheless, blamed it vigorously! So, would it not be helpful for the Portuguese-speaking church to have access to the actual content of the book, in order to be able to evaluate for themselves the validity of those criticisms?

A second encouraging factor was the publication in 2003 by Andrews University Press of the “Annotated Edition” of *Questions on Doctrine*.⁶⁶ If the long-out-of-print book came again off the press in a self-explanatory edition, why such edition could not be published also in Portuguese? So, with a special agreement between the Brazilian Ellen G. White-SDA Research Center and the Brazilian Publishing House, the electronic version of the 85-part series was sent to Pastor Josimir Albino Nascimento for a revision and language-updating of the already-existing translation, as well as for a new translation of the Introduction and the notes added to the “Annotated Edition”. Once that work was done, the files were sent to the Brazilian Publishing House for publication. After some delay, the 597-page *Questões Sobre Doutrina: O clássico mais polêmico da história do adventismo* shall come off the press in 2008,⁶⁷ in special allusion to the 50th Anniversary of *Questions on Doctrine*.

Concluding Remarks

The publication of *Questions on Doctrine* in Portuguese and Spanish in the South America Division was a long process that passed through several stages. The preliminary one involved the translation and publication, in *O Ministério Adventista* (Brazil) and *El ministerio adventista* (Argentina), of a few articles compiled from the writings of Ellen G. White and other ones from the pen of Roy A. Anderson and W. E. Read. These materials paved the way for the publication of the actual content of *Questions on Doctrine* in two parallel article series. The 85-part series in Portuguese run from January-February 1960 to March-April 1976, and was the

⁶⁵

Cairus, e-mail to Timm, June 22, 2007.

⁶⁶

Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine, annotated ed., Adventist Classic Library (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003).

⁶⁷

Questões Sobre Doutrina: O clássico mais polêmico da história do adventismo (Tatuí, SP: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, forthcoming in 2008).

more complete of the two series, because it included, in addition to some parts missing in Spanish, also the Appendixes of the book compiled from the writings of Ellen G. White. On its turn, the 84-part series in Spanish came out between January-February 1960 and May-June 1978, and left out some parts of the book, especially those Appendixes. As useful as these series were for the ministers of that time, they ended up largely confined to the magazines in which they came out, no longer directly available to the future generations of pastors.

The plan of giving to the article-series in Spanish a more permanent basis became finally a reality in 1986, when the River Plate Adventist College press launched the book *Los adventistas responden a preguntas sobre doctrina*. In line with its antecedent article-series, the book also left out the Appendixes of *Questions on Doctrine*. Additional reprintings of the book were made basically under the request of some professors that would use it in their classroom. By contrast, it will be only in 2008 that the basic content of the article-series in Portuguese will be merged for the first time into a single book titled *Os Adventistas do Sétimo Dia Respondem Perguntas sobre Doutrina*. While the 353-page Spanish version followed the 1957 edition of *Questions on Doctrine*, the 597-page Portuguese one is a translation of the 2003 “Annotated Edition” of the book. While the first one has already been out of print for many years, the second one will begin to circulate only 22 years later, i.e. in 2008.

In the territory of the South American Division, *Questions on Doctrine* has been regarded over the years not only as a genuine and trustworthy expression of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, but also as a well-taken correction to the pre-*Questions on Doctrine* legalistic and perfectionist trends. This has been the case largely because theological training in that Division has been strongly influenced by the anti-perfectionist ideas of scholars like Roy A. Anderson, LeRoy E. Froom, Edward Heppenstall, Raoul Dederen, and Hans K. LaRondelle. Furthermore, one cannot overlook the traditional South American tendency of respect and loyalty to the leadership of the General Conference, where *Questions on Doctrine* was actually conceived and produced. It was only in the late 1990s that some significant criticisms to the book began to arrive in that region of the world by means of the so-called “right-wing independent ministries.” But the strong bellicose tone of those criticisms has made disciples mainly among people who share the same fighting spirit. Independent of the circulation of *Questions on Doctrine*, the theological thinking of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South America has followed very closely the concepts of that much-influential book.

Yet, while the English original of *Questions on Doctrine* was largely circulated among non-Adventists (especially Theological Seminaries and religious leaders of other denominations), its versions in Spanish and Portuguese were, at least up to 2007, confined quite exclusively to Seventh-day Adventist ministers, professors, and theology students. The circulation of the book in North America helped many Evangelicals to brake with the anti-Adventist bellicose tradition established by D. M. Canright. By contrast, in South America (especially in Brazil) that bellicose spirit has survived in many conservative Evangelical circles. One of the clearest examples of it is the fact that the Brazilian branch of the so-called Christian Research Institute, established and directed for many years by Natanael Rinaldi, still continues to regard Adventism as a heretical cult, in direct opposition to the North American main office, founded and directed for a long time by Walter Martin. That branch still continues to spread such bellicosity among Evangelicals. With this in mind, one might ask, Will the church in Brazil circulate the 2008 Portuguese version of *Questions on Doctrine* also in non-Adventist circles? If so, will this late publication still have on Brazilian Evangelicals the same effect as it had on

North American Evangelicals in the late 1950s and early 1960s? Only the passing of time will allow us to answer properly those questions.⁶⁸

68

Some considerations about the future influence of the version of *Questions on Doctrine* in Portuguese on non-Adventist circles in Brazil were shared with me by Marcos De Benedicto, book-editor of the Brazilian Publishing House, in an e-mail of September 6, 2007.

