

Bulletin of Prophetic Historicism

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Editor and Proprietor
Edwin de Kock

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The editor/proprietor assumes responsibility for his own contributions. He is not, however, responsible or liable for the ideas expressed in pieces by other writers, also sometimes mentioned or cited.

Ph.D. Students and Others Using Edwin's books

Three Seventh-day Adventist scholars at work on their Ph.D.s have requested and are using Edwin's books on prophecy as source material. One is a South African minister now resident in the USA. He is doing his doctoral work through a university in his country of origin. The two others are also ministers, twin brothers 28 years of age, in Ukraine. One is focusing on Daniel and the other on Revelation. While their research and dissertations are unfinished and still in progress, it would be unwise to publicize the names of these men.

Scott Burgess of Ouachita Hills College in the USA is preparing new books on Daniel and the Revelation that are due to be published this year by Teach Services. The first is *THE STAND: Jesus in the Book of Daniel*; The other, *THE MARRIAGE: Jesus Stands for His Bride in the Book of Revelation*. In them, Burgess copiously quotes from and refers to four of Edwin's books. Previously, Norman Gulley cited three of them in the fourth volume of his monumental work on Systematic Theology.

Over in South Africa, another scholarly minister conducts a school of evangelism in which he insists on Edwin's approach and uses *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy*.

65th Wedding Anniversary Celebration

Edwin and Ria (van Schalkwyk) de Kock were married in Bloemfontein, South Africa, 65 years ago on December 26, 1954. The celebration of their wedding anniversary was a dazzling potluck affair organized by their loving church family at the Mission Hope Seventh-day Adventist congregation, 408 E 6th Street, Mission, Texas, on December 28, 2019. A report appeared about them in the McAllen Sunday edition of *The Monitor* on January 5.

The couple immigrated to the United States in 1994 and moved from California to the Valley during July 1996, where they both taught English at the University of Texas Pan American, Edinburg, as well as the South Texas Community College, McAllen. Ria obtained her Master's degree at UTPA, aged 68, with all A's except one B. Afterwards, she taught there until she was 76. The De Kocks live between Edinburg and Mission. Before coming to America, the De Kocks had been college teachers in South Africa. For a year, in 1995-1996, they also taught English and Bible at Inchon, South Korea.

After heart failure in 2001, Edwin stopped teaching and concentrated on writing. Over a period of 15 years he completed five published books on Bible prophecy in English.

Edwin and Ria praise the Lord for keeping them alive and together these many years. Their two sons, André and Carl, with their families also reside in the United States. They have three grown grandchildren, born in California.

Photo Attached

A Poetic Masterpiece on the Great Controversy Theme

Edwin de Kock, a Seventh-day Adventist, is probably the greatest living poet in the Esperanto language. Born a South African 90 years ago, he is now a U.S. citizen resident in southernmost Texas with Ria, his wife of 65 years. Last year, the Flemish Esperanto League in Antwerp, Belgium, published his masterpiece, *La Konflikto de la Epokoj* (The Conflict of the Ages). Together with notes, this is an epic poem of more than 400 pages. He had started working on it in 1959, almost six decades ago and finished it in 2018, at the age of 88, with various interruptions. These were mostly caused by other writing, such as his five Historicist books of prophetic interpretation.

La Konflikto is a hardcover book with a beautiful dust cover in full color (See Attachment). This is adorned with images that any knowledgeable Seventh-day Adventist will immediately recognize. At the top are Christ who holds his hand protectively above the globe between him and a surly Satan. Below the title are three images from Bible prophecy. One of them is King Nebuchadnezzar's dream image described in Daniel 2. Around the author's name [Edwin de Kock] are twelve stars, reminiscent of the crown on the head of the woman clothed with the sun in Revelation 12.

Since 1955, Edwin has also written many shorter poems, a 700-page collection of which entitled *Testamente: Plena Originala Poemaro* was published by Mondial, New York, in 2015, as another handsome hard cover.

Esperanto was the invention of Dr. Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof, a brilliant polyglot Jew who lived in Poland. In his first booklet, published during 1887, he presented the basics of the language and several poems. It is a constructed and not an artificial language, as some would have it. Its vocabulary has been cleverly put together from word elements common to various languages. All this is tied together with a grammar that is a masterpiece of both simplicity and great flexibility.

Zamenhof wanted to enable everybody on earth to communicate with everybody else. His lingua franca was never intended to take the place of any other language. The idea was and remains that if people learned only their mother tongue plus Esperanto, it would solve the communication problems of the world and also promote international brotherhood. Unlike other languages, which are too difficult for the great majority of foreigners, it can be adequately learned for basic communication within a few months.

During the 130 years of its existence, Esperanto has unfortunately met with great resistance, misunderstanding, and ridicule from those who wanted their mother tongue to become the interlanguage of the world, among them the French and the English.

Even worse has been the devastating effect of the two World Wars. And three great dictatorial regimes did their best to exterminate it by oppressing or killing those who promoted it, especially because they believed in human brotherhood. Adolf Hitler hated it; he wanted the Germans to be the master race, and Zamenhof, its inventor, had been a Jew. In the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin wanted class battle, and during the great purge just before the Second World War had many Esperantists sent to the gulag or simply exterminated. Under Mao Zedong, in the Chinese Cultural Revolution, things were not much better. Nevertheless, the International Language has survived. Today it is spoken by about two million people. Further details about it are freely available on the Internet.

According to an estimate some years ago, about 10,000 books as well as very many magazines, great and small, have been published in Esperanto. It has an extensive literature.

Published over the years, it consists of many translations and original works. The former include masterpieces from various languages, among others the Bible, ancient Greek plays, Latin poetry, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, *Don Quixote* by Cervantes, almost all of Shakespeare, Goethe's *Faust*; *The Tragedy of Man* by Imre Madách, and many more.

But most remarkable are the original works in the International Language. Especially its poetry has flourished abundantly. The great Esperanto Anthology of 887 pages, which was published in 1982, contains 707 original poems by 163 poets from 35 countries on five continents. Most notable among them have been an Hungarian, Kálmán Kalocsay (1891-1976); an Englishwoman, Marjorie Boulton (1924-2017); a Scot, William Auld (1924-2006); an Icelandic, Baldur Ragnarsson (1930-2018), and a South African, Edwin de Kock (1930-). Some of the work in the Esperanto Anthology is of very high quality.

La Konflikto is by no means unique as a book-length poem in the International Language. Up to the present, the most highly esteemed such work has been *La Infana Raso* (The Infant Race, 1956) by William Auld, a great Esperanto poet. In a masterly fashion, it presents the world view of an atheist and an evolutionist. Another epic, *Poemo de Utnoa* (1993) by Abel Montagut, a Catalan, draws on elements from various sources. Among these are the Bible, the Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamesh, the Indian *Ramayana*, Homer's *Odyssey*, and Vergil's *Aeneid*.

Edwin's great story poem has a simpler and thoroughly Christian, Seventh-day Adventist scheme of reference: the Bible, including several prophecies, meshed with the Great Controversy theme of Ellen G. White's five-volume Conflict of the Ages series after which it is named. *La Konflikto* is a work of 470 pages, including a glossary and notes. The latter were added mainly to assist twenty-first century readers, many of whom are unfamiliar with the Bible. It is longer than John Milton's famous *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* combined, although the basic theme is similar. It is not, however, a ponderous poem but a delightful, fast-moving adventure story, rich in characterization, unexpected twists, and striking metaphors.

Edwin is not only the author of but also a character in *La Konflikto*, much like Dante in his *Divina Commedia*. This represents more than himself, an Everyman who struggles with a burden of sin and sorrow, doubt, and uncertainty. He needs enlightenment, guidance, and salvation. As Virgil and Beatrice came to accompany Dante through Inferno, Purgatory, and Paradise, Edwin is assisted by five persons who guide him.

Four of them are Biblical characters: Enoch, who never died; Moses, who was resurrected some time after his death; and Ezra as well as Isaiah, both of whom are represented as having been raised at the time of our Lord's resurrection. The fifth guide is Abdiel, Edwin's guardian angel. They take him on a journey through space and time, beginning with the fall of Lucifer, followed by that of Adam and Eve, and ending with the earth made new, when sin and sinners are no more. Between these events, the epic conducts the reader through important events in the great controversy on both a human and a supernatural level.

It shows how Law and Love are reconciled through God's incomparable gift of his Son to save a fallen and confused humanity. Also highlighted is its value from the Lord's point of view. Here is a translated sample:

“Ezra, God
is so much greater than the universe,
with us so tiny on this world at the cosmic
edge of things. Why, then, despite all that,

would he, the Son, yet sacrifice himself
and deign to be forever chained by a body
to the human race inclined to messing up
and materiality and space and time?”

“Because of a love beyond the reach of thought,
less fathomable than the universe itself.

“One human being is more valuable
for God than a galaxy. It burns away,
but life for each of those redeemed endures
forever in the ceaseless joy of the Lord.”

(Book 3, Chapter X)

Undergirding this work are all the basic doctrines that Seventh-day Adventists believe, especially the Second Coming and the truth about the state of the dead. It also explains a number of Bible prophecies. *La Konflikto de la Epokoj* is at present the only printed Esperanto book that presents an Adventist worldview. A translation of *Steps to Christ* also exists but is only available electronically. Fortunately a fine Esperanto Bible was published in 1926, almost a century ago.

The scarcity of Seventh-day Adventist books in the International Language contrasts badly with a great abundance of publications that reflect other ideas about religion, both Eastern and Western. Over the years, a number of atheistic works have also been in evidence. These include *Against God* (1925), *The Divine Pest* (1932), and Marx and Engels about religion (1933).

The Spiritualists headquartered in Brazil are particularly vigorous in using this language. Many if not most Esperantists in that country belong to this faith. Several of their books have been directly dictated by spirits to mediums supposedly from beyond the grave.

Roman Catholicism has also made good use of the language. Its first catechism appeared in 1937, the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignacio Loyola in 1952, and several papal encyclicals at various times. Radio Vatican even broadcasts in Esperanto. During 1985, it actually interviewed Edwin about his Adventism.

What critics will eventually say about the literary worth of Edwin's magnum opus is as yet unknown. Two of his fellow poets, Marjorie Boulton and Abel Montagut, have already likened it to *Paradise Lost* by John Milton and Dante's *Divina Commedia*, which is high praise indeed. But some, perhaps many, less sophisticated readers may react against it negatively, and are likely to revile the author as a bigot—although *La Konflikto* generously portrays the Lord's love and compassion for people of all creeds, including pagans, who are honestly ignorant of the truth. It nevertheless makes no bones about condemning the papal Antichrist as well as others who persecute, ill-treat, and torture those who disagree with them.

But Edwin hopes and prays that some Esperanto poetry lovers will not only enjoy his epic as literature but come to know the wonderful Saviour depicted in it.

Esperanto World Congress Montreal, Canada

Esperantists often have get-togethers, locally every month or country wide, to promote or just to socialize and speak the International Language. Moreover, somewhere on earth for the past 125 years, since 1905, there has also been an annual *Universala Kongreso*, a World Congress. The only interruptions have been during the two World Wars. Lasting typically for a week or more, they bring together an average of 2,000 people from 60 countries. All the proceedings are in Esperanto. Many of those who attend speak the language without an accent, so well, in fact, that one cannot recognize their place of origin. For a few glorious days, they associate together not as Americans, Germans, Russians, or this or that nationality, but just as people, members of one great human brotherhood.

Edwin has been at two such world congresses. He went to the first one alone in 1985 at Augsburg, Germany, and remembers several fascinating encounters. One was a conversation between a young American linguist and Prof. Dr. Fabrizio Pennacchietti from the university of Turin about the origin of the definite article (the word *the*). It started, they agreed, in Middle Egyptian, “contaminated” the neighboring Semitic languages and then from there influenced Homeric Greek, in which it had originally been lacking, as in Latin and Slav languages like Polish and Russian. After establishing itself in Classic Greek, the definite article passed into the later forms of the Mediterranean languages. Edwin also met and conversed with several outstanding Esperanto poets belonging to his generation like William Auld from Scotland, Gaston Waringhien from France, and Baldur Ragnarsson from Iceland. Fortunately, in 1991 he met some of them again at Bergen, Norway. At that time, Ria accompanied him. Since then, 29 years have passed, and with them (alas!) every one of them is also gone—though many new writers have taken their place.

For the first week of August this year another *Universala Kongreso* has been scheduled to take place at Montreal, Canada, and Edwin would very much like to go there. Amongst other things, he would like to meet other writers and autograph copies of his epic, which will be on sale. But Ria must accompany him since at his age it is inadvisable for him to travel alone. At the age of 90, his mind still functions well, but physically he is growing frail and uses a walking cane.

To help defray the cost of their air tickets and accommodation, the De Kocks hope to sell more of his books. Perhaps, dear reader, there are still some of them that you do not yet possess. Also please consider that they can be good presents for friends, including those who are not of our faith.

Web Site Linkage

Many more details about Edwin’s publications, our activities, and previous Prophetic Bulletins appear on our Web site: www.propheticum.com, which we hope will soon be reconstructed.

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