

Letter of response to BRI regarding their Reflections article on the Bible translations:

The Director

Biblical Research Institute
General Conference of Seventh Day Adventists

Dear Dr. Rodriguez

Enclosed is a letter addressed to the BRI for your attention. It concerns the recently published article on Bible versions in your newsletter "Reflections". A copy of this communication has also been sent to the Union of the Southern African Division of Seventh Day Adventists.

I also append an article which I have written regarding this issue and I hope that I will be hearing from you in the near future.

With Christian greetings

Walter Veith

Attachment 1. My letter of response: Also attached was my Bible versions document for their comment

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Dear Brethren of the BRI

I have read the article "The Textus Receptus and the Modern Bible Translations", penned by Johannes Kovar and published in your official newsletter "Reflections" with interest. I must admit that I was somewhat surprised to see my name used negatively in that article without any prior communication of such an intention to me personally. After all, I am a fellow colleague and full time evangelist in the employ of the Seventh Day Adventist Church as well as an ordained pastor of the church. If my critics were actuated by a sincere regard for the integrity of God's Word, that would be understandable, but then one would expect them to act according to its precepts. I wish to remind you that I dutifully sent my DVD's to the BRI for evaluation but also received no answer. It was then and now my wish to work in harmonious union with the brethren and I am not unwilling to cooperate and study prayerfully together with my colleagues.

I am fully aware that my lectures on the topic of Bible translations caused quite a stir when I presented them a few years ago and that is why I sent the DVD's to you for evaluation in the first place. At the time I was not aware that some of the academia of the Church held precisely the opposite view of what I presented, and so there was no evil intent on my side to cause polarization in any way. After the initial reaction to my lectures and the numerous discussions which followed, I was prepared to let the matter rest and for the last three and a half years I have held my peace and not ventured on that ground in the public domain. Your article has, however rekindled this debate and I must admit that I was disturbed at the content and some of the nuances and assumptions made in that document. I do need to ask the question as to whether there was any intention on your part to place me and my credentials in a negative light in such a public forum. I am almost afraid that a Pandora's Box has been opened and it might not be possible to put this Genie back into the bottle. Your article has caused quite an upheaval and numerous people have contacted me incensed at its content. They feel that my academic stature has been attacked and so it is not only I who have a problem with the style and content of the document. As to my stature as an academic, I need not defend myself here as my credentials and academic record are there for all to scrutinize. Am I right in my assumption that the somewhat derogatory reference to "Walter Veith, a Zoologist," in your article, suggests that non-theologians should not venture on the holy ground of the theologian? If this were so, it would be strange, since Sir Isaac Newton was a "mere physicist" but wrote more on theology than he did on science. Moreover, it is the theologians who invented such amazing doctrines as the immortality of the soul, dispensationalism, predestination, theistic evolution and the many unbiblical doctrines which plague the world today. If my assumption is correct (and I hope it is not), then this kind of spiritual arrogance would require the same rebuke as given by our Lord to the "theologians" of his day.

Noteworthy is also the statement that I arrived at my conclusions regarding the "*Textus Receptus*" (which by the way does not make me a "KJV only" activist) as a consequence of "certain conspiracy theories." This is an amazing assumption. Does the writer know me personally? Does he know my mindset or could this be seen as an attempt to rid oneself of the nuisance of "laity" by dispatching them into the drawer of "conspiracy theorists"? Did you not consider such a broad sweeping statement as somewhat unfair towards a colleague who has to battle daily against all the odds out there to win souls for the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ? In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. I arrived at my conclusions on the basis of simple logic and linguistic analysis as well as a deep concern for Adventist truth and a zeal for the veracity of God's Word, which I believe is "given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 2Ti 3:16"

It is also stated that "*this has caused some stir and irritation among church members and pastors in various countries.*" I assume that this stir and irritation was felt particularly by those who espouse a different view and by those who do not relish the straight testimony of so-called alarmists who "expose the wickedness of the man of sin". These brethren need to understand that I have a zeal for soul winning since I myself was enshrouded in darkness most of my life and cannot bear to see people drowning without passing them the same lifeline which by the grace of God was given to me. I am grateful and privileged, no, humbled, that God has used this ministry to bring thousands from all walks of life to a knowledge of present truth all over the world. Many of them that have come into the church as a consequence of

these lectures serve as Seventh Day Adventist pastors, elders, prominent evangelists and leaders in the church worldwide. Quite a number were pastors of other denominations or priests of Roman Catholicism and many have come out of Freemasonry, occultism and its New Age organizations to add their powerful witness to the truth for this time. Moreover, those that have embraced these messages are faithful members grounded in Adventist truth not easily shaken by every wind of doctrine.

I feel that I must say that your document presents a very one sided view largely espoused by those who support the Alexandrian text which according to the document represents *“clearly the closest that we can come to the lost originals.”* This view admittedly is that held by most theologians today because this is the view that they are exposed to in the theological seminaries of the world. This is by no means, however, the only view, and if left unopposed would leave the discerning reader without an alternative argument on which to base his or her judgement. Not only was the article extremely biased, but in places it presented an erroneous expose of the positions held by those who favour the Received Text.

As this letter is not the forum for presenting the other side of the argument, I attach a document of my own, which addresses most of the issues of concern and which I wish to publish in a public forum in future. I would appreciate it if the brethren could scrutinize this document to ascertain for themselves whether my motivation is purely from the basis of “conspiracy theories” or whether there are real linguistic and textual issues at stake here. The document is by no means complete, and is also not a one man attempt to steamroller his opinion. In fact, I acknowledge the aid of pastors, theologians, Greek and Hebrew scholars and laity for which I am grateful. I apologize for its incompleteness, but your article has now precipitated this hasty response.

There are one or two points which I would wish to bring to your attention which are as yet not adequately addressed in my document but which are brushed aside in your article as mere speculation. These would include the occult angle and also the Spirit of Prophecy. The occult angle in particular seems somewhat ludicrous to you judging by the way you deal with it, but I assume that this is so because you have never had the misfortune of being involved in it as I have. I must thus conclude that this naïve attitude stems from ignorance regarding this matter, which is not a bad thing considering the nature occultism. My knowledge and experience in this field I would not wish others to emulate, but it has helped me as an evangelist to pluck brands from the fire. Please remember that evangelism is not intended to give to those who already have but to reach those who are trapped in chords of Satan’s devising. Many sensitive individuals born into the truth see no sense in dealing with these issues (and I wish to God it were not necessary) but ask any New Ager trapped in Babylon how it feels to have stepped over to the truth because someone dared to expose the lie. The same holds true for those trapped in Catholicism or any of the Babylonian confusions out there. Does not the Spirit of Prophecy say that the occult world will unite with the Beast and False Prophet and sweep the world into the final apostasy?

You also dispatch the occult connections of Westcott and Hort as speculative and so I must assume that you have never read their letters or the published works of their children. Perhaps you underestimate the power of the occult world or its influence. Perhaps you have no idea of the inroads of theosophy into the realms of theology, particularly Protestant theology. Perhaps you are even unaware of the writings of the most respected occult writer of all ages to whom all modern day occultists and New Agers bow in reverence and awe.

The most prominent occult prophet was Madam Blavatsky. In fact she is to the occult

world what Ellen White is to faithful Seventh Day Adventists. She had much to say on Bible manuscripts and it is indeed noteworthy to see how she used the Westcott and Hort text to justify theosophy which espouses the worship of Lucifer and the deity of the self. Blavatsky is an ardent supporter of the Alexandrian texts and an equally ardent hater of the Received Text which even Westcott and Hort called “villainous”. She particularly reviled the King James Version of the Bible, writing:

And King James’s translators have made such a jumble of it that **no one but a kabalist can restore the Bible to its original form.** (Emphasis added) (*Isis unveiled II p 36*)

She is also a staunch defender of everything Alexandrian and thus the Protestant Bible is a thorn in her flesh. Her definition of a theosophist is as follows:

“THEOSOPHIST. It comes to us from the Alexandrian philosophers, called lovers of truth, Philaletheians, from *phil* "loving," and *aletheia* "truth." The name Theosophy dates from the third century of our era, and began with Ammonius Saccas and his disciples¹, who started the Eclectic Theosophical system.”

Now let us see what Blavatsky (the antithesis, the contemporary counter-prophet to Ellen G. White) has to say on just one of the changes brought about by the new text based on the “reliable” Alexandrian documents and the Greek text of Westcott and Hort. She writes in the Journal *Lucifer* under the heading “The Esoteric Character of the Gospels”:

“. . . . Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy presence, and of the consummation of the age?” * asked the Disciples of the MASTER, on the Mount of Olives.

The reply given by the “Man of Sorrow,” the *Chrêstos*, on his trial, but also on his way to triumph, as *Christos*, or Christ,† is prophetic, and very suggestive. It is a warning indeed. The answer must be quoted in full. Jesus . . . said unto them:— Take heed that *no man* lead you astray. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray. And ye shall hear of wars . . . but the end is not yet. *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places.* But all these things are the beginning of travail And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray . . . then shall the end come . . . when therefore ye see the abomination of desolation which was spoken through Daniel . . . Then if any man shall say unto you, *Lo, here is the Christ*, or there; believe him not If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the wilderness, go not forth: Behold, he is in the inner chambers; believe them not. For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west: so shall be the *presence* of the Son of man, etc., etc.”

The footnotes to this portion of Scripture are enlightening. Blavatsky here quoted the revised rendering of the verses after the 1881 revision of the King James Version. The footnotes read:

“* *St. Matthew*, xxiv, 3, *et seq.* The sentences italicised are those which stand corrected in the *New Testament* after the recent revision in 1881 of the version of 1611; which version is full of errors, voluntary and involuntary. The word “presence,” for “coming,” and “the consummation of the age,” now standing for “the end of the world,” have altered, of late, the whole meaning, even for the most sincere Christians, **if we exempt the Adventists.**” (Emphasis added) [*Lucifer*, Vol. I, No. 3, November, 1887, pp. 173-180]

Now isn’t this fascinating. The changed rendition of Matthew 24 will be acceptable to all with the exception of the Adventists. I wonder why? Could it be that we believe in a literal return of Jesus and an end rather than a consummation of the age? The Alexandrian text suits the Catholics (the Jesuits being the champions of this text) and the esoterists; should we as Adventists not take a closer look as to why this is so? The Crown witnesses of the Alexandrian manuscripts the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus

cut out many of the words of Jesus as needless repetitions (as you affirm in your own document) but is this really so? Is not every word to be established by two or three witnesses to render the document a legal entity as required by a covenant? It might be useful to mention just one quote found in the Spirit of Prophecy mentioned by Ron du Preez in his book *"No Fear for the Future"* which has a beautiful little chapter on Bible translations and the Spirit of Prophecy in this context. He writes:

"Remember the story of the thief on the cross. Well, according to the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts (and thus all the modern New Testament translations based largely on these manuscripts), the thief did not call Jesus "*Lord.*" Vaticanus, and Sinaiticus record that the thief simply said, "*Jesus, remember me...*" However, in my research I came across this extended statement in that classic volume on the life of Christ, *The Desire of Ages*, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as we as Adventists believe. Here is what Ellen White says:

Hope is mingled with anguish in his voice as the helpless, dying soul casts himself upon a dying Saviour. "*Lord, remember me,*" he cries, "when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.' ...

How grateful then to the Saviour was the utterance of faith and love from the dying thief! While the leading Jews deny Him, and even the disciples doubt His *divinity*, the poor thief, upon the brink of eternity, calls Jesus *Lord*. Many were ready to call Him *Lord* when He wrought miracles, and after He had risen from the grave; but none acknowledged Him as He hung dying upon the cross save the penitent thief who was saved at the eleventh hour.

The bystanders caught the words as the thief called Jesus *Lord.*"

Ron continues:

"Ellen White wrote *The Desire of Ages*, which was published 13 years *after* the publication of the Revised Version (which was based largely on the manuscripts that had been relatively recently discovered). And more significantly, Ellen White had that Revised Version available to her at this point in time. How do we know? She actually quoted passages from the Revised Version or its marginal readings about two dozen times right there in *The Desire of Ages*. Yet, even though she was fully aware of that Bible translation and quoted from it repeatedly, she never used it when it came to the passage in Luke 23:42."

The Spirit of prophecy thus clearly quotes the words of Scripture as recorded in the *Received Text* and the bystanders heard the thief say "Lord". What now? Do we dismiss the Spirit of Prophecy here or do we say that she was "influenced by the King James Version" to say what she said? Brethren, am I wrong when I say that this sentiment is popular today and has even been voiced by members of the BRI? Correct me if I am wrong, but was it not said by a BRI representative at the Faith and Science meetings that Ellen White was "influenced by the margin of the King James Version" to say that the earth was about six thousand years old? If this is so, what else was she influenced by when it suits us to dismiss certain of her statements?

As a little amusing aside, let me also remind you that the great "Alexandrian Crown Witnesses" also contain the epistle of Barnabas which changes the Sabbath to the first day of the week and has the Hyena changing its sex and the weasel conceiving by the mouth. Perhaps it takes a "Zoologist" to know that this is scientifically untenable and renders the Alexandrian document untrustworthy to him although some without a biological background might find this informative and worthy of support.

Brethren I hope that it is not construed that my letter is combative, but rather that it is my sincere wish that the truth be triumphant. Truth is more important than our individual feelings. I would like to hear a personal response, however, which is more

than I received when I addressed a previous document to the BRI regarding doctrinal issues encountered in Germany.
May the Lord bless us and His Church as we seek the truth together.
Your brother in Christ
Walter J. Veith

BRI first reply

----- Original Message -----

From: Mueller, Ekkehardt

To: 27829425958@vodamail.co.za

Sent: Friday, February 15, 2008 7:45 PM

Subject: Response

Dear Walter,

Thank you for your extensive email including the long attachment. We have taken a look at them. Allow me to respond on behalf of the BRI staff to some of the issues mentioned in you correspondence.

We acknowledge that you have served the church well. But we both agree also that, as you acknowledge, your lectures have caused some stir in the church. There was a problem in Europe several years ago which led the German administrators to the decision to abstain from inviting you to Germany. Obviously, your teaching of the subject was not limited to Europe. Repeatedly, we have received emails and phone calls concerning your teachings on the *textus receptus*. Although you may not have lectured on this topic during the last few years, your DVDs (in English) are still available to be purchased, and they speak for themselves.

Your statement that you sent your DVDs to BRI for evaluation and we did not evaluate them came to us as a surprise, because we are not aware of having received them. On the other hand, it is our understanding that you received my evaluation of your presentation in Germany a couple of years ago, requested by a conference president. At the request of this conference president I listened to your tapes, and one of my colleagues also listened to them. My former evaluation tells you where BRI stands, and your email actually acknowledges your awareness of our position.

As far as I know, your material on biblical manuscripts, the *textus receptus*, and Bible translations was evaluated by at least three different institutions, Bogenhofen Seminar, Friedensau University, and myself as a member of BRI. The evaluations agreed with each other that your approach is not helpful to the church and should be abandoned. In addition, I personally talked to you at the Faith and Science Conference in Denver. All these attempts seem to have been futile, because you are still defending your cause using more or less the same arguments we have heard years ago. The article in the BRI newsletter was an attempt to help church leaders and pastors to address some of the issues you have raised and that have created confusion among

church members. In the article you were mentioned only in the beginning. The article tried to deal with the facts, not with your interpretation, and did not intend to damage you. This article, we believe, is an excellent piece of work and not "extremely biased" as you suggest.

As you remember, I pointed out in my earlier evaluation that textual criticism is a highly specialized field, which even biblical scholars and theologians oftentimes leave to the specialists. It requires an excellent command of various languages such as Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, and Syriac. It requires a detailed understanding of biblical books and theological themes. The issues are much more complex than they appear at first. Although all Adventists can read Scripture and can understand and communicate its basic message, there are areas which require a high degree of specialization. That does not make one group superior to another one, but it would be helpful to listen to each other carefully and respectfully.

Walter, your long documents could lead to an equally long or even longer response. We cannot provide that. Let me just make some general suggestions and then deal with about two pages of your examples.

Here are some general observations:

- It will be important for you to look at the broader picture. We should not focus on one verse only but take into consideration the surrounding verses. For the New Testament, one has to study the usage of Greek vocabulary in the entire biblical book in which a variant reading occurs.
- We shun an approach which claims that truth is automatically found where the majority is. This does not work for believers nor does it work for manuscripts.
- One should be careful not to formulate a doctrine of inspiration that is too narrow and does not match the biblical self-testimony, the biblical data, and the teachings of Ellen White and apply it to textual criticism.
- We stay away from taking an approach that considers some manuscripts only bad and others only good. Such an approach does not match the data.
- It would be wise not to draw hasty conclusions, if variances appear in manuscripts. It is not necessary to see evil intent in the majority of the variations. It is better to focus on God's miraculous preservation of the biblical text than reading extensively about the occult.
- We keep in mind historical developments: The Catholic Church supports the doctrine of the trinity, even though somewhat different from us, and the divinity of Jesus. It had and has no interest in altering christological statements. No matter which translation you use, maybe with the exception of the Bible of the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Lordship and Deity of Christ can be shown from any version.

I now turn to your examples on pages 17-19.

1Tim 3:16 The difference between "God was manifest in the flesh" and "He was manifest in the flesh" does not open "the way for Jesus to be just a created being as gnosis would have it." The early church was involved in a deadly fight against *gnosis* and was not interested in downplaying the importance of Jesus. The antecedent to "who" in verse 16 is "God" in verse 15. That means that in Christ God himself had appeared in a human body. In addition, Christology and the doctrine of God are not based on one verse each, the Bible is full of texts talking about these topics.

1Tim 6:14-15 The differences discussed by you are differences of translation, not differences of manuscripts. The "he" in verse 15 is undoubtedly God the Father, which is supported by the Adventist Bible commentary which says that the title "King of kings" applies to both Father and Son (7BC 320). This is correct. Father and Son share many titles. The immediate context takes precedence over the work of another author in which the title is applied to another person of the Godhead (Rev 17:14). Verse 16 supports this by defining the "he" of verse 15 as the one "whom no man has seen," which is the Father and not the Son.

1John 3:13 This must be John 3:13. The verse speaks two or three times about "heaven" depending on the manuscripts. Those manuscripts that have just two references to heaven nevertheless confirm that Jesus ascended to heaven. Therefore, he must be there. A theological difference should not be constructed. In this case, Codex Alexandrinus supports the third reference to heaven. This shows us that scholars today do not just follow one manuscript or one group of manuscript slavishly. Why do they choose one reading over another? There are a number of criteria, e.g., the context of a passage, the use of vocabulary by a specific biblical author, the understanding of how a variant reading may have come about.

Matt 1:18 It cannot be shown that gnostic writers have brought about the change from *gennēsis* to *genesis*. This is a pure assumption. The suggestion that the Greek term *gennēsis* has to be preferred over *genesis* overlooks that in Matt 1:1 *genesis* and not *gennēsis* is found. In other words, the first passage as well as the second passage of the Gospel of Matthew begin with the *genesis* of Jesus, the birth of Jesus. It is better to use *genesis* in both cases.

John 6:69 This verse contains a number of variant readings: "You are Christ," "You are the Holy One of God," "You are Christ, the Holy One of God," and "you are Christ, the Son of the living God." Concerning the divinity of Christ there is no difference between "Son of God" and "Holy one of God." According to Revelation, a book by the same author, Jesus is holy (Rev 3:7) as is the Father (Rev 4:8). The difference between "Son of God" and "Son of Man" in the variant readings of John 9:35 is not one of deity.

Rev 1:8 The argument concerning the Alpha and Omega, namely that it must be Jesus in Rev 1:8, otherwise his equality with God the Father would be abandoned, does not work. No matter which reading we choose, the context of Rev 1:8, i.e., verses 4-7, affirms that the Alpha and Omega in this verse is God the Father. The phrase "says the Lord" is found in both groups of manuscripts and does not make a difference. What is left out in some manuscripts is "beginning and end." However, according to Rev 21:6 God the Father is the Alpha and Omega and the beginning and the end. Finally, in Rev 22:13 Jesus is called the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the

beginning and the end." It is not true that if "Alpha and Omega" is not applied to Jesus, he is robbed of his "position of equality with the Father." If the title "Alpha and Omega" were only applied to Jesus we actually would not know whether or not it is a divine title. However, if the title is applied to God the Father in the beginning of the Apocalypse and then to the Son at the end of the Apocalypse Jesus' divinity and equality with God the Father is established.

John 7:8 The reading "I do not go up to this feast because my time has not yet fully come" instead of "I do not yet go up" does not mean that Jesus would be a liar, since he went later. This has to do with the subtlety of language and double entendres in the Gospel of John. Furthermore, Jesus used figures of speech (e.g., Matt 18:8). The context seems to indicate two levels of time. This may be confirmed by verse 10. There is private time and public timing in the life of Jesus. Furthermore, that Jesus did not go up to the feast may point to his final going up to the feast, namely the Passover, in order to die. Here, we have to understand how language and theology work in the Gospel of John. For instance, Jesus' glorification or his being lifted up oftentimes describe his crucifixion. Thus, already in the story of the wedding in Cana a reference to the cross is found.

1Cor 12:3 To talk about a diabolic perversion because of direct speech versus indirect speech in some Bible translations is unwarranted. It jumps to a hasty conclusion, which probably is based on a preconceived notion, without dealing with the data carefully. The difference between "no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed" and "no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus is accursed,'" is minimal. If it would mean that by reading the text in the second version, we would "inadvertently . . . curse the Lord," what then should we do, for instance, with Psalm 14:1, where we then, according to the same rationale and even according to the KJV would declare that God does not exist?

These examples may suffice. There is much more to be said, also with regard to your methodology. A distinction should have been made especially between different manuscript readings and different translations of the same reading. By discussing both issues simultaneously these problems are blurred, and wrong impressions may be created. It also would have been helpful to look at some more literal translations such as NASB and ESV and not at the NIV only.

In any case, these lines show you that we cannot agree with many of your conclusions. You certainly have the freedom to believe what you want. However, we would wish that you grant sincerity to those that disagree with your position and help remedy the rift that has come into some parts of the church.

May our Lord be with you. With Christian regards,

Ekkehardt Mueller, BRI

My response:

From: Walter Veith [mailto:27829425958@vodamail.co.za]

Sent: Sunday, February 17, 2008 1:26 AM

To: Mueller, Ekkehardt

Cc: Francois Louw

Subject: Re: Response

Dear Ekkehardt

Thank you for your response. I must admit, however, that I did expect something more than this. There is not even a hint of acknowledgement that there may be one or two points in my document that should concern Seventh Day Adventists. The doctrinal issues regarding the distinctive Advent message were not mentioned at all and the quotes from the Spirit of Prophecy and the occult world were also not considered. Moreover, the impression is created that I, and by implication those with a similar view on manuscript transmission, could be construed as troublers of Israel without noticing that the same could be true for the other side. Not only is the view reflected in "Reflections" given in published form, but this same view is now being forcefully presented on our television channels and other publications. Can this not be considered divisive to those in the other camp? Or is the fact that it comes from administrators' evidence enough for its validity.

You do mention a few of the texts which I quoted and give reasons as to why these are not valid in terms of the argument. You also state the complexity of the issue surrounding these texts and that this should be left to "specialists" to unravel. I wish to point out that these texts were not used by me under my own volition but were quotes, together with his comments, from Rudolf Ebertshäuser, who sits on the committees of the Schlachter Bible, which is after all a very prominent Bible in Germany and must have "specialists" and competent theologians on its board. As your comments are a critique of his statements, I feel, in the light of what you have said that he and his board would be the best to defend their position and will forward your comments to them for evaluation.

My dear brother in Christ, I have a feeling that there is more at stake here than meets the eye. The brethren in Germany were unhappy with me before these lectures on the Bible versions, as can be proved by the letter of the rector of Friedensau warning students from attending my meetings before these lectures were even given. They were unhappy with my traditional Adventist stand on health, science and the antichrist because they themselves felt exposed. It was only when I dared to venture onto what they considered their field of competence that they seized the opportunity to silence me. I mentioned in my previous a previous communication to you a letter which I sent to the relevant parties at that time (including the BRI, in 2004) to which I received no answer. I append those documents again for clarification. There were no steps taken to correct the stand of these brethren and your silence then, together with your public rebuke of my position now, could be construed as support for their overall position. I

thus need official clarification on the position of the BRI regarding some of these matters and would appreciate a frank answer, simply stating yes or no.

1. Does the BRI officially stand by the doctrine that the papacy is the antichrist and that the pope in Rome is the embodiment of the “man of sin”?
2. Does the BRI officially accept the writings of Ellen White as the revealed will of God for the remnant and can these writings thus be considered as authoritative in issues of health, science and Bible doctrine?

I respectfully await your reply

Your brother in Christ

Walter Veith

BRI response

----- Original Message -----

From: [Mueller, Ekkehardt](#)

To: [Walter Veith](#)

Sent: Tuesday, February 19, 2008 7:17 PM

Subject: RE: Response

Dear Walter,

Thank you for your response. Regarding your questions on what the BRI believes, I do not need to answer. Our position is well-known throughout the world field. The issue at stake is not a different understanding of the papacy or of Ellen G. White. It is the issue of the Greek text of the New Testament. In this regard the BRI stands with its publication in the BRI newsletter.

May our Lord bless you,

Ekkehardt Mueller, BRI

My final response to which no answer was forthcoming:

Dear Ekkehardt

Thank you for your short reply. I also do not wish to pursue this debate any longer as I have to get back onto the wall. Time is running out. I feel, however, that I must tell you that the BRI position with regard to my two last questions is not resolved, and in four years I have still not received an answer to the documents sent to you regarding the doctrinal differences in Germany.

All that I have to base a judgement on are the few statements which I have from your communications. Regarding the papacy, there is no repudiation of the German leadership position from your side, and you have stated in your personal responses to me that:

“.. the early Catholic Church cannot be compared with the Roman Catholic Church of the 19th and 20th century” (First response to my initial lectures) **and:**

“We keep in mind historical developments: The Catholic Church supports the doctrine of the trinity, even though somewhat different from us, and the divinity of Jesus. It had and has no interest in altering christological statements” (Latest response)

The Spirit of Prophecy states that “Rome never changes” and Pope Benedict confirms this statement in all of his actions and speeches. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church certainly has an interest in altering Christology (including statements), after all, it changes Jesus Christ into a morsel of bread, replaces his mediatorial role with that of Mary and a plethora of saints and dispenses the grace of Christ through Pope Benedict alone (according to one of his latest profound statements).

Regarding the Spirit of Prophecy I have seen no correction of the statement that Ellen White was “influenced by” what she read in order to make some of her definitive statements (Faith and Science meetings) and your following statement must be regarded circumspectly:

“One should be careful not to formulate a doctrine of inspiration that is too narrow and does not match the biblical self-testimony, the biblical data, and the teachings of Ellen White and apply it to textual criticism.”

Whilst it is true that narrow fanatical positions do more harm than good, plain statements of Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy cannot be interpreted in “too narrow” a fashion lest we end up on the broad road that leads to destruction.

In the light of your responses (and non-responses), I can only conclude that the BRI is in harmony with the ecumenical mindset that is so prevalent in the German leadership and alas, also in many other parts of the world. This saddens me, but I will not be discouraged and will continue proclaiming the Three Angels’ Messages in order to win souls for the Kingdom.

Your brother in Christ

Walter Veith