Standing for truth

It was about 1984 in a home Bible study in California. One young businessman who was attending the study stated in a moment of deep conviction, “I am ready to die for Christ.” A woman in the group responded, “It is easy to say we would die for Christ, but do you have the courage to live for Him today?”

This conversation was soon forgotten by all but the businessman who had made the statement of loyalty. Many years later, the same man was in conversation with the woman who had challenged him to live, not merely for Christ. He recalled this event stating that it caused him to make a deeper commitment to live for Christ in the here and now and not worry about dying for Him some future time. This man dedicated his life to serve Christ in business and in the church no matter where he was. He now serves as an associate pastor in a healthy church in Maui.

Standing for truth in the here-and-now is not always an easy thing. Sure, when we are in the company of other Christians we can do it quite easily. But following our informed conscience when from all appearances it may cause us to lose our friends, our income, our retirement, our reputation, and perhaps even our home or car is not easy. Yet, if we are to take discipleship seriously, when we clearly know the will of God, we must align ourselves with it. It would have been very easy for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to fall down with the others who were worshiping the golden image of King Nebuchadnezzar in ancient Babylon. They could have said to one another, “Look, let’s just bow down with the others when the music starts, but instead of worshiping the golden image, we will say our prayers silently to Jehovah.” That would have been easy. And that could well be what some of us would have done had we been there! But because these three “worthies” refused even to appear to be worshiping the golden image, we have the miraculous story of God’s intervention.

When given a second chance to worship the golden image, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” Daniel 3:16-18

The enraged king had the furnace heated up seven times its normal heat, and the men were thrown into the flames. Then Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace and stood in amazement.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

DALE RATZLAFF

Dale Ratzlaff is president of Life Assurance Ministries and founding editor of Proclamation!

In the 1980s, while nearing the end of his doctoral program at Andrews University, Dale did an in-depth study of the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment. When he became convinced he could no longer teach this doctrine in good conscience because it was scripturally unsupported and contrary to the gospel, he and his wife left the denomination. Dale and his wife Carolyn live in Peoria, Arizona, and worship at Calvary Community Church.

Are you willing to lose everything except Jesus?
Pastor steps out in faith

Imagine you have sincerely believed one way all your life, thought you were walking in truth, taught and modeled a lifestyle in accordance with your faith system, and been involved in leadership and ministry in accordance with that worldview. You have served as a pastor for nearly 20 years in that system. The system has been good to you. You have been well treated and have been honored to serve Christ in business and in the church no matter the cost. Then, after matter the cost, you are called to do something new.

The enraged king had the furnace heated up seven times its normal heat, and the men were thrown into the flames. Then Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace and stood in amazement.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

GREG TAYLOR

Greg and Paula Taylor and their two sons Jordan and Matthew left Adventism during the summer of 2001. Greg is now the pastor for spiritual formation at Crossroads Church in Hagerstown, Maryland. He and Paula also operate One Flock Ministry, an interdenominational ministry which helps those caught in sectarian systems to find freedom in Christ and community with other believers.

Would you bury the truths you have learned and go through the motions until you retire?

Greg and Paula Taylor and their two sons Jordan and Matthew left Adventism during the summer of 2001. Greg is now the pastor for spiritual formation at Crossroads Church in Hagerstown, Maryland. He and Paula also operate One Flock Ministry, an interdenominational ministry which helps those caught in sectarian systems to find freedom in Christ and community with other believers.
It was December of 1997. Irritated, I leaned my weight against an eight-foot fir tree that, after an hour of Richard’s effort and increasing frustration, refused to balance by itself in its stance. Silently I vowed never again to choose a Christmas tree after dark on a rainy night. “This tree is not only crooked,” my husband announced in clipped tones as he swept aside a disquieting pile of dead needles from under the mustyness, “it’s dead.”

Suddenly the words in my head were an uninstructive command: “Give thanks in all things.” Startled, I obeyed. “Thank you for this stupid tree, Lord; now please help it to stand up.”

We boiled water in eight hours. Four days later, when we were finally able to attempt to replace it, we were pressed for time—water was needed in the tree, Lord; now please help it to stand up.”

The next moment Richard called from beneath the branches, “OK, let go.”

I knew immediately what would happen; as I dropped my arms, the tree stood tall and sturdy without even a crooked tone.

By morning, however, I knew we were in trouble. That giant tree had not drunk a drop of water in eight hours. Four days later, when we were finally able to attempt to replace it, we could find no more similar trees at the lot where we had purchased it. We were pressed for time—Richard’s office party was scheduled for the following week in our home—so we decided to camouflage the dead tree with decorations and resist turning on the lights unless we were in the room.

When we arrived home, I walked to the tree and looked at the water bowl of the tree. I gasped—it was empty with a film of moisture on the bottom. As if the tree had just finished the last drop and the basin had not yet had time to dry. I remembered the silent command, “Give thanks in all things,” as I filled the stand with a gallon of water.

“Your bread and water will be sure”

“Your bread and water will be sure”

accounting us righteous while we were helpless, ungodly sinners and enemies of God? Oh, one other thing...I DARE you to print this in your magazine. You can’t come up with any excuse like we take it only as many words limit, or the length of time responding to your letters...I am worried about the length of this an-e-mail reply, but I’m still sending you to print it. Do you print your letters, even if of four words? I have full of joy until I read this book by Ellen White. It made me feel like an invalid Christian! I had not been raised by evangelicals who stressed unmerited salvation, I could have easily been trapped into thinking that there was something I needed to do to “help” myself be saved.

Over the years since then I have read and studied writings by Adventists, ex-Adventists, and Ellen White. I have learned a lot about Christianity—what it is and what it isn’t. I appre-
Sunday? No. We do not believe God changed the Sabbath to Sunday.

When Jesus was finishing his ministry, he warned the people that Jerusalem would be destroyed. This happened 40 years later to 70 A.D. He told them to pray that their flight from the destroyed city would not be in winter or on the Sabbath. (Matt. 24:22) Jesus expected them to know the Sabbath. He didn’t say, “Now, remember, I’m changing the Sabbath when I die on the Friday or Tuesday, or Sunday, or on whatever day YOU VOLUNTARILY DECIDE TO KEEP!!”

Please see Sabbath in Christ, page 351-356 for a detailed answer to your question.

How POMPOUS you are! But don’t tell me I’m wrong about the Sabbath issue. You already knew who made the change here on earth, and it was not God’s directive.

Anita, you are aware that modern men have emasculated the observing the Lord’s Day long before there was a Pope or a Catholic Church? You know very well it was the sacrificial system that led to the slaughter of an innocent being. Not the sacrifice, but the use of the sacrifice to prove themselves to God.

To keep the Sabbath, you would have to stop doing anything on Sunday. No. James 2:10, if you keep the law but offend in one part, you are guilty of breaking the whole law. You ask, “What Law?”

I would agree with most of what you say above. And I would carry even further. Jesus fulfilled the whole law. Jesus is the light, he is the lamp, he is the bread of life, he is the water of life, etc. Yes, it is true rest which the old covenant Sabbath prefigured. (See Heb. A, Matt. 11:28-30 and Sabbath in Christ, p. 279-292)

I’ve come all this way through my discourse avoiding the word you have so much. But it, finally comes into play when I look at Matt. 11:28-30. If you want to be judged by the Law of Liberty, then obey the Law, then why Jesus die at all? He took that obedience thing to an extreme level, “...he increased himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil. 2:7) He died to what His Father will, fulfilling the Law on our behalf so we can partake with Him (Themselves) in paradise.

My study has caused me to reach the conclusion that Jesus came to ratify the Eternal Covenant God made with Abraham, not the old covenant.

Cain’s disobedience was an absolute insult, flying in the face of God’s command. Now about that phrase, “You can’t get blood from a turnip?” Fitting here, don’t you think?

I’m going to leave you with another text that shows how important these commandments are, you’re to read the passage many times: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matt. 5:17,17) Was from that old, boring King James version.

Anita, I have written a whole chapter on this verse. See Sabbath in Christ, p. 265-278. I encourage you to do your own study on this verse. The interpretation of this chapter bring all the definition of the two key words: law and fulfill. Get a concordance, or use a computer Bible program, and look up every time Matthew uses these words.

First, define how Matthew uses the term, “law.” Then plug this definition back into Matt. 5:17,18 and see if it makes sense. Then look up all the passages where Matthew uses the word “fulfill.” I would be interested to know what your conclusion would be. Let me know.

I imagine the LAM version, with your overriding po- sition on grace, would want to write something like this: “He here tells you to throw out the Law. It doesn’t matter anymore; and all the old prophets were wrong. Break commandments? Sure, go ahead, the Law doesn’t matter anymore—I’m here! I’M HERE TO SPREAD MY GRACE ALL OVER YOU!”

Please read the chapter in Sabbath in Christ, “Righteousness Beyond the Law.” There you will see that former Adventists do believe in obedience, but not as a law. I hope you do not judge us by God that I had begun to feel totally independent and almost unteachable. Arrogant.

Theologian and Author, Thomas Francis, lived most of his life in the Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana areas. After careers in radio broadcasting, insurance, and law enforcement, he was forced to take disability retirement because of the complications of diabetes. Raised a second generation Adventist, he is currently a member of College Road Baptist Church in Ocala, Florida, where he has just been selected to serve as an adult Sunday School teacher. He has two grown children, three grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter. He and his wife Carol live in Ocala.
Proclamation!

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Proclamation!

AUGUST

JULY

You see, now I understand some things. First, God promised that all things would work for good to those who love Him. That meant ME. It’s not a matter of doing the “right things” or knowing the “right things”; it’s all a matter of complete trust in Him. For me, if this took the pain and disability to find Him, then it is a small price to pay. After all, Jesus suffered more than I ever could—for me! I am deserving of more than my Lord!

For now, my condition is “stable” but experience has taught me that there is much more ahead, unless my Father sees fit to take me gently home. Now, it is my ministry to show the world around me how to die a really horrible death—with Jesus. I have had such great opportunity to share with others, isn’t that what we are all supposed to do? We are beggars who have found the bread of life and now tell others how they might find it, too.

This story isn’t about me; it’s all about Him. Are you suffering? Have you lost “the world”? Are you afraid? Alone? May I introduce you to my friend? Put away all your “religious books” and take the Bible. Start with the book of John and look for Him. Ask Him, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” It is really, not the way you have been taught it is, or think it is, or think it should be, but how it really is. Talk to Jesus. Tell Him that more than anything in the world you want Him. You don’t want to lose Him, you want Him to find the cross and wrap your arms around it. NEVER let anyone or preacher or church or anything take your eyes from Jesus or add one single rule or doctrine to what He gave you as a free gift! When it hurts, hang on. When you doubt, trust all the more! It doesn’t have to feel good, and it doesn’t have to make sense. Trust anyway. When “they” tell you that you are wrong or stupid, TRUST ANYWAY! Never, never, never let anyone take your Jesus away. Did I say NEVER? Not even for something that they tell you is good or important, or “God’s will” for you.

I love Paul. He, too, endured so much. One of his writings has become my life’s motto. It’s in II Corinthians, Chapter 4:16-18: “Therefore we do not lose heart; though the outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (NASB)

 Come soon, Lord Jesus! Please?

Have you read Galatians 3 where Paul states in three separate ways that the law came in 430 after Abraham and lasted until Christ and Christians are no longer under law?

Your response to question 55 (The question reads: Do you hold services in Sunday in order to keep Sunday holy?)

“Nay, we hold services on Sunday as a voluntary celebration of the resurrection of Christ.”

You VOLUNTARILY made this choice! You VOLUNTARILY made this choice!!! (NOTE: YOU VOLUNTARILY DECIDE TO KEEP GOD A KIDNapper! HOW DO YOU OFFER SUCH LESSER RESPECT AND HONOR TO YOUR CREATOR AND HIS SAVIOUR!)

Let me get your blood pressure back under control and take it down before I use my CPA language. Another issue arrived. They always upset me because I felt that the Adventists services were dull and not spiritually filling. Then I lost my kidneys. I have had more surgeries than I can remember. In one year, I was in the same surgical theatre in Toledo, Ohio, ten times. I have had gangrene and rampart infection that has caused tremendous pain and the loss of important bodily functions.

Doctors have told me that they would try to keep me alive over night and “see where we are in the morning.” I have just completed four-and-a-half years on crutches from my last infection. At the age of 45, I was told I would never be able to work or have meaningful activity again. That meant a career in public safety, a career that I loved, was over, and my life would be spent, for the most part, in hospitals, and inactivity.

At the age of 45, I would be told never to work or have meaningful activity again. That meant a career in public safety, a career that I loved, was over, and my life would be spent, for the most part, in doctors’ offices, hospitals, and inactiveness.

Proclamation!
past months lifted my spirit and my feet. When I arrived home from my trip to the Conference office, I began mowing our front lawn. As I pushed the mower around the yard, I literally jumped and say, “I’m free! I’m free!” I frolicked all around the yard, over and over again. This euphoria was not something I planned or forced myself to express; it was just a spontaneous reaction to being set free from under the load of restrictions and false guilt.

As we resigned, we received a letter from the Conference office that had been written before my resignation. It stated that the only way we could stay employed was for me to go to a church in the southern part of the conference, too far away to commute home on a daily basis, and work with an experienced pastor who would oversee all my actions. Carolyn, who was a “Bible worker”, was to stay in the Watsonville area and continue her work there. This meant that the only way we could stay employed was for us to be separated by several hundred miles. We felt this was definitely not God’s will!

One evening shortly after our resignation a large group of people from the Watsonville SDA church came over to our home to encourage us and to discuss the future. Without our suggestion someone “passed the hat” and an offering of about $7,000 was received. This later became the seed money that was used to start our new church.

Both of these events came after our resignation and served as confirmation to us that our decision which had been based solely upon Scripture was indeed the will of God.

I know there are many readers of Proclamation! who are faced with difficult decisions. I get emails and phone calls from you nearly every day. Those of us at LAM pray for you that you will (1) study the word of God so that you will clearly know God’s will, and (2) that you will have the courage to follow God’s will once it is clearly revealed. Remember, confirmation may come after you decide to do God’s will.

“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” (1 Tim. 1:5) We are to “fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and thereby suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.” (1 Tim. 1:18b-19) Finally, “I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day.” (2 Tim. 1:3)

Help us update our mailing list

We are currently updating our database and mailing list, and we need your help! If you are currently receiving more than one copy of each Proclamation! at the same address (or at different addresses) with different names on the labels, please notify us of the correct name and address so we can eliminate the extra copy. If you know people who could benefit from the magazine, please send us their names and addresses, and we will add them to the list.

If you live in the USA and order books from Life Assurance Ministries Publishing (LAM Publishing, the for-profit corporation which sells books) and also wish to make a donation to Life Assurance Ministries Publishing (LAM Publishing, the for-profit corporation which sells books) and also wish to make a donation to Life Assurance Ministries Publishing, please send us their names and addresses, and we will add them to our mailing list.

In the last issue we published the first part of Jeffrey Helius’s letter of resignation from his pastoral position in the Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. We conclude his letter in this issue.

What if “They speak not according to the word or the testimony…”?

Six months after I began serving in my district, I came across a quote in my devotional reading that shook me to the core. It was a quote from the pen of Ellen G. White in a book called Early Writings, pages 260 to 261, in which she discusses those of her contemporaries who had declared the 1843/1844 time setting second advent message to be a ‘Delusion’. She referred to them as those who had ‘hated those who loved His appearing and shut them out of the churches.’ Here is the crux of her teaching:

“If they rejected the first message, they rejected the third angel’s message, the second angel’s message, and the fourth angel’s message. . . . ‘They speak not according to the word or the testimony’ . . . ? ‘Six months after I began serving in my district, I came across a quote in my devotional reading that shook me to the core. It was a quote from the pen of Ellen G. White in a book called Early Writings, pages 260 to 261, in which she discusses those of her contemporaries who had declared the 1843/1844 time setting second advent message to be a ‘Delusion’? She referred to them as those who had ‘hated those who loved His appearing and shut them out of the churches.’ Here is the crux of her teaching:

“Those who rejected the first message could not be benefited by the second; neither were they benefited by the midnight cry, which was to prepare them to enter with Jesus by faith into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. And by rejecting the two former messages, they have so darkened their understanding that they can see no light in the third angel’s message, which shows the way into the most holy place. I saw that as the Jews crucified Jesus, so the nominal churches had crucified these messages, and therefore they have no knowledge of the way into the most holy, and they cannot be benefited by the intervention of Jesus there. Like the Jews, who offered their useless sacrifices, they offer up their useless prayers to the apartment which Jesus has left; and Satan, pleased with the deception, assumes a religious character, and leads the minds of these professing Christians to himself, working with his power, his signs and lying wonders, to fasten them in his snare.”

Early Writings, pages 260-261.

As I stared at the page, I noticed the past tense of her words, ‘had crucified’. She made this declaration not many months after the ‘disappointment’ in October of 1844. In it she declared that everyone who had opposed the Millenarian messages was now offering up useless prayers and was now in the process of being fastened into Satan’s snare.

Jeffrey Helius was born into a Lutheran family. His pastor, C. Raymond Holmes, left the Lutheran church and became a Seventh-day Adventist minister, eventually accepting the post of Associate Dean of the Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Jeffrey, a teenager, followed his pastor, and in 1988 graduated from Andrews University with a BA in religion. Before accepting a call to the Adventist ministry, Jeffrey worked as a nursing home administrator, a career he and his wife Virginia are now pursuing in St. Augustine, Florida. He also writes, sings, and records music in his home studio. This last March he conducted an evangelistic campaign in Bulgaria. He is pictured with his translator’s baby.

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My thoughts turned to the Bible. A verse drifted from my memory: "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Romans 8:26-27 NKJV

Ellen White's statement that prayers were not reaching Jesus because the prayers were being directed to "the apartment which Jesus has left," was written in complete defiance of Romans 8:26-27, and demonstrated ignorance of this most basic Biblical theology on prayer! Ellen White's statement in effect declares that the Adventist time setting was un-Biblical, ("no man knows the day or hour.") Matt. 24:36), I sought Jesus with all my heart and soul. Because I knew He had called me to serve in this district. Millerite time setting was un-Biblical, ("no man knows the day or hour.") Matt. 24:36), I sought Jesus with all my heart and soul. Because I knew He had called me to serve in this district.

I may suggest that no Seventh-day Adventist should look comprehensively into the writings of Ellen White unless one is prepared to lay one's life on the line for Jesus Christ and the truth of God's Holy Word: the Bible. To know that serious problems exist in the writings of Ellen White calls into question her authenticity as the fulfill-ment of the spiritual gift of prophecy. This realization is a serious and heavy burden indeed! Each person is responsible for his or her own journey. My journey led me, during the last three years, to read more of Ellen White than ever had been in my entire life. Because I had loved my church for so many years, and because I had believed it was the remnant church of Jesus Christ, the reality of some of her statements took a long time to sink in. Once the content of some of her assertions finally registered, I realized the implication that such statements had regarding God's unchanging truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible. I came to the conclusion that Luther's exasperation over the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!" (Daniel 8:24-26).

This story teaches us that divine intervention often comes after we have made the commitment to follow our informed conscience and not before. Carolyn and I have found this to be true. When faced with the demand either to promise to teach all the 27 Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists or resign, our hearts wrenched. I vividly recall walking alone down the quiet country road in front of our home one evening as the bone-chilling fog came rolling in on the west wind from the restless sea a few miles from us. Why, Lord? Why me? Why can't I just go along as many of the other pastors are doing? Am I wrong? Should I just submit to the judgment of the experienced conference officers? Are my motives pure? Am I seeking to be a martyr for recognition? How far should I go in compromising my conscience and teach-ings that I know aren't true?

I had counseled with many informed SDAs scholars, pastors, and deacons. Many of them could show me from Scripture how to get from Daniel 8:14 to 18:44. If fact, most of them in private confessed that it was impossible. My mind raced back to the Ellen White "tapes" record-ed in my memory—and there were many good ones! "The want of the world is the want of men, men who are true and honest, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall." Even though I knew some of Ellen White's statements were patently wrong and had great admittance for many of the quotations I had memorized—but although I now knew that many of her good quotes were lifted from other sources. This one confirmed our conviction.

How could I turn back now? Carolyn and I spent many hours talking over these things, reading our Bibles, and crying out to God in prayer for guidance. Then there were those other pesky EGVs "tapes" that plagued our steps and haunted our thoughts. Would we be lost if we left the SDA church as Ellen White said? Had Satan somehow blinded our hearts and minds? Having started on the journey away from Adventism, would we end up rejecting every point of truth and become infi-del? When these plaguing thoughts bubbled up from our memories which had been saturated with the writings of Ellen White, we would be driven back to Scripture where we found solace. The simple gospel of belief in Christ in the book of John calmed us: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." John 5:24. The clear teaching of righteousness by faith in the books of Romans and Galatians became our solid foundation and assurance. I had memorized a number of chapters from Romans, and when the condemning "tapes" from Ellen White would run, I would change channels and flee back to the good news in Christ. "Therefore, having been justi-fied by faith, we have peace with God." (Romans 5:1)

It was a very difficult decision for me to make that day in the Central California Conference office when I ten-dered my resignation. We had recently purchased five acres and built a nice home on it. We had scraped togeth-er everything we had and more besides to complete the project. Our payments were large, as those were the days of 12-18% interest. Both Carolyn and I were employed by that conference. We realized that if we resigned from the church, we could well lose our new home which we had worked so hard to obtain. Those who follow God are not always delivered from hardship, pain and even death. The faith chapter from Hebrews 11 lists those who had marvelous interventions by God and were delivered. It also states that "others experienced mockings and scourings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground." Heb. 11:36-38.

Why God intervenes at times and at other times does not appear to do so, is a divine mystery. Yet, the one thing we know is that it is always God's desire that we follow His will.

Carolyn and I did not have much "confirmation" other than Scripture that our decision was the right one until after we resigned. I will never forget the feeling of eman-cipation I experienced after my decision—forced as it was—to resign. To be set free from the weight of all the denominational hassle I had been through over the...
Dear Conference President

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

The historical contrast of what evangelical Christians were accomplishing during the pre-Civil War/Civil War period as compared to the emphasis and fruits of early Adventism during that time is also incredibly insightful. Ellen White’s failed Civil War-related prophecies are quite sobering. The historical contrast between what Dwight L. Moody and Ira Sankey were accomplishing for Jesus and what contemporary Adventists were doing at that time leaves plenty of room for modern Adventists to contemplate “the tale of two churches.”

Ellen White once said that she couldn’t pray for people until she went home and prayed to find out if she was allowed to pray for them. Well, Bill, I want you to know that I understand how much I need to pray for myself and how much I need to pray for everyone who will ever read about my journey, I pray God’s blessing upon you and your team, and I pray that you will continue to make Minnesota Adventism more closely related to the bride that knows Jesus Christ!

Yours in the blessed hope of Christ’s soon return!

I came to the conclusion that Luther’s exasperation over incensences was “little league” compared to what he would have found in some of the theology and plagiarism of Mrs. White’s writings.

statement should be easily recognized as being theologically untenable and incredibly un biblical, not only by Ellen herself but by anyone who has ever read the aforementioned quote from Spiritual Gifts. Certainly it is reasonable to conclude that if a prophetess bears the authentic gift of prophecy, God would tell her the truth about herself, and she would not teach that Jesus was less than the Father.

Does the Bible say that Satan attempted to “reform the government of God”? Answer: Absolutely not. To infer a nicer connotation to Satan’s rebellion by stating that Satan and his angels were “striving to reform the government of God” makes it literally feel sick in my stomach as I write this. Doesn’t it?
her description imply that Satan and his followers might have had some good intentions when they started their rebellion? And isn’t it implied that maybe God’s government needed some reformation? Ellen leaves the door wide open for us to question who is giving her such words. Certainly this information is not from God. Maybe it is from another angel, or maybe it is from her own imagination.

The tone of her comments regarding Satan are more fully exposed in the pages that follow the aforementioned quotation. Bill, I ask you to prayerfully consider this summation in its entirety.

This particular quote is probably one of the most incredible you will ever read in the writings of Ellen G. White. To say that Satan and his angelic followers not only repented but repented with tears is absolutely mind-boggling. Think about the consequences of what she is saying.

Her statement sounds like the opening argument of a lawyer defending Satan. Bear with me as I illustrate a summation or a ‘mirage’, if you will, of Ellen G. White from the content of the quotations that you have just read.

“Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, before you stand the accused and his followers. The prophets of God, Ellen White, has stipulated for the record that the defendants did engage in a direct attack against the Son of God, but their intention was to reform the government of God, which they believed at the time needed reforming because they could not understand why the Father had endowed and exalted the Son of God with such unlimited power and authority.

“Since the alteration in Heaven, and since being ejected from the courts of Heaven, ‘the prophets’ has been very clear that the accused and his followers have been duly noted in their tearful repentance and have desired to be reinstated in Heaven in any place God might choose to place them. But it is our understanding, again according to Ellen White, that God will not accept their repentance, because sin originated with them, and they might still threaten Heaven with jealousy.

“Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, how is it that man who is lower than the angels received a plan of redemption, but according to Ellen White, the highest angel in Heaven posts a tearful repentance but is not able to qualify for a plan of redemption? It has been recorded by Ellen White that the defendant did not really manifest malice and hatred until after he became fully conscious that his repentance would not be accepted. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, who then is Ellen White implying must be responsible for the bitterness that has grown in the heart of the defendant since his repentance was not recognized, and Gentlemen of the jury, that is for you to decide.”

Considering the unthinkable, unbelievable consequences of Ellen White’s theology in the aforementioned quotations from Spiritual Gifts, ask yourself “Can I honestly continue to refer to the writings of Ellen as divinely inspired by God?” The depth of Ellen White’s Christian experience, considering her lifelong denials of plagiarism and considering her lack of public repentance over gross amounts of plagiarism, is left for God to decide, but I am responsible to inspect the fruit of her theology. The fruit of the aforementioned theology by Ellen White is rotten to the core!

truth of the New Covenant was clearly in our hearts and minds, the joy and assurance of the Gospel set us free from those fears. We were so full of peace and freedom we could hardly bear keeping these truths to ourselves. We wanted to proclaim to the right person at the right time to share the truth of the Word.

Just as Nicodemus wisely sought Jesus by night to check out His teachings so as not to wrongly influence the people in his area of responsibility, just as Joseph of Arimathaea studied Jesus carefully and secretly before stepping out, we too studied, prayed and waited for God’s timing in all of this. But we had a growing conviction that the time was nearing. We remembered that one day Joseph and Nicodemus had stepped out of the shadows to declare their allegiance to the cause of Christ—their former careers ruined, but their colors now clear. We waited for our day.

We also thought of the risks of staying in the shadows too long. Again Bible stories came to our minds. The rich young ruler had a golden opportunity to follow Jesus, but he chose the way of comfort and security. Such a tragic story! Perhaps he wanted to wait until his kids were out of school and the conference college tuition subsidy was spent. Perhaps he wanted to wait until his retirement checks started coming in. The disciples were another example to us. What if they had said, “We will follow you Lord, but once we have retired, we will pay enough money in the bank, and …” We did not want to stay in the boat if Jesus was calling us to walk on the water.

Would have happened if the apostles in the New Testament had stayed away from Jesus from inside the safety of Judaism? What if Paul would have tried to save his career by being the secret agent apostle? We knew God was not calling us to compromise. So we prayed and waited for His direction.

One morning I was feeling overwhelmed with the joy of the New Covenant. After some hours with the Lord I felt this urgency to share the Good News. How could I keep this joy to myself any longer? I literally felt I would burst. So I prayed, “Lord, if there is someone you want me to share this with, please send them to my office today and let me know where I can find them.” Shortly after a knock came at my office door. It was our prayer ministry director. She sat down across from my desk, and the first words out of her mouth were, “Pastor, I have been struggling with the seventh-day Sabbath issue. Is this a moral command from God, why aren’t we more strict about keeping it? It seems like people aren’t as careful about guarding the edges anymore. And if the Sabbath isn’t that important we need to know why, I have been praying about this all morning and I sensed the Lord telling me to come and talk to you.”

Clearly sensing this was the Lord’s leading, I opened up the Scriptures and began to share with her the things we had learned. We studied passage after passage systematically. As she would ask questions, I would take her further scriptures. At each stage of the study her eyes widened. She kept saying, “It’s true, I know it’s true. I never knew it was this true.” Three hours later we concluded the study. She was so full of joy she could hardly contain herself. She said, “It finally all makes sense! I finally understand what I have been struggling with for years. I know that this is very risky for you, but I hope that you will write this down step by step as you explained it to me today. There are so many people who need to know the truth and be set free.”

That day I began to write down the process of study God had led us on, knowing that it was only a matter of time until the news was out. I carefully wrote out a Letter to Family and Friends. There was a sense of urgency that the Lord laid on me to get this completed. In the mean time, we were asked to share our study with some others at our prayer leader’s home. So we shared our study with some others at our prayer leader’s home. So we shared the conclusions we had come to. I told the group we had been in dialogue with a couple of key leaders regarding our study process and shared with them the conclusions we had come to. I told our associate pastor and head elder in late January that we were in search of and of the growing awareness in the congregation. To make a long story short, we were asked to resign by the final week in July, 2001. It was that week that the Letter to Family and Friends was completed. God’s timing is always right.

We felt led to leave as quietly as possible. We loved the church we had pastored for those years and felt it would not be wise to try to start a new church in the area at that time. We believed God wanted us to use our position in His way without disturbing the ministry of the church there. So, with the exception of making sure our belongings were available, we left quietly and trusted that God would provide for us. We did not know at the time that we would be out of work for seven months. We did not know that we would not be given a full severance package. But we were to be launched on a faith journey that we will always be grateful for.

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To say that Satan and his angelic followers not only repented but repented with tears is absolutely mind-boggling. Think about the consequences of what she is saying.

Does the Bible say that the war in Heaven was fought specifically between Jesus & Satan? Does the Bible say that Satan specifically chose to go after those who were submissive to Jesus’ will? Answer: Absolutely not. The Bible makes no such distinction.

Let us continue our investigation with a quotation from Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 1, pages 18-19, regarding the tearful repentance of Satan and his followers:

“After Satan was cast out of heaven, with those who fell with him, he realized that he had lost all the purity and glory of heaven forever. Then he repented and wished to be reinstated again in heaven. He was willing to take his proper place, or any place that might be assigned him. But no, heaven must not be placed in jeopardy. All heaven might be marred should he be taken back; for on originated with him, and the seeds of rebellion were within him. Satan had obtained followers, those who sympathized with him in his rebellion. He and his followers repented, wept, and implored to be taken back into the favor of God. But no, their sin, their hate, their envy and jealousy, had been so great that God could not blot it out. It must remain to receive its final punishment.

“When Satan became fully conscious that there was no possibility of his being brought again into favor with God, he made his malice and hatred begin to be manifested!” Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 1, pages 18-19.
digging into the Word through intense study of the Scripture. We came to realize that you may have been missing much of the heart of the New Covenant, that many of the "truths" you had been teaching were not considered necessary in the New Testament. In fact, some of the original distinctions you had been teaching as requirements for your potential converts were actually not requirements at all. In fact, these distinctions were unnecessary roadblocks to evangelism by the New Testament church.

What would you do? Would you just stay where life is comfortable and predictable? Would you mask what you really believed? Would you try to change your system from the inside? Would you speak out and get fired? Would you bury the truths you have learned and go through the motions until you retire? Would you try to tell yourself that it is no big deal, every church has its dark side? Would you still require the distinctives of your new converts, causing them to break connections with family, friends, and jobs, while you yourself are not willing to step out in faith? This is our story. These are the questions we had to answer as we discovered the New Covenant. We had been pastoring a Seventh-day Adventist church in Ashville, NC. The church was growing and contemporary. It had a heart for evangelism to the unchurched. The church members and staff were motivated and passionate to share their faith. Many people were coming to Christ, but by the majority of converts, were either former or inactive Adventists. We were not really reaching the unchurched target we felt called to reach. We were grateful for every conversion but felt God had more in mind for us. The year was 1998. A growing sense of hunger for more began to develop in us and culminated in our discovery of the New Covenant principles of evangelism that the apostle Paul taught in Romans, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, and elsewhere. We also discovered the significance of Acts 15, the central message of Hebrews, and so much more.

The summer of 2001 we were convinced that the primary emphasis of the Seventh-day Adventist church, the Sabbath as a sign of loyalty required of all true believers, was not in harmony with the New Testament. We discovered that such an emphasis was actually discouraged as an unnecessary roadblock for evangelism. We also discovered that the Seal of God in the New Testament is the Holy Spirit, not the Sabbath, as Adventists teach. We realized that we had been inadvertently blocking our own evangelistic efforts and were laying on people unnecessary burdens.

Now we were faced with a true challenge to our personal faith. We knew that the first time someone heard the Bible never declares that Satan ever repented. For Ellen to say that he repented with tears is one of the most "spooky" assertions in her writings. I will share with you only a few more incredible examples of Ellen’s heretical theology regarding the plan of salvation she writes.

"Sorrow filled heaven, as it was realized that man was lost, and the world that God created was to be filled with moral corruption and death and sin, and no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die. I saw the lovely Jesus, and beheld an expression of sorrow and surprise upon His countenance. Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father. Said my accompanying angel, He is in close converse with His Father. The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was conversing with the Father. The angel seemed to be worn out by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time he came from the Father, his person could be seen. The anxiety was calm, free from all perplexity and trouble, and shone with benevolence and lovefulness, such as words cannot express. He then made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that he had been pleading with His Father, and had offered to give His life a ransom, and take the sentence of death upon himself that through him man might find pardon. That through the merits of his blood, and obedience to the law of God, they could have the favor of God, and be brought into the beautiful garden, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life.

"At first the angels could not rejoice, for their commander concealed not the sense of his heart, for fear his heart would have been following this way of escape. But he was shut in, and the bright light shut in. The expression of sympathy and sorrow upon his countenance. Soon I saw him approach the exceeding bright light before He could have a conversation with the Father. I was so sweetly influenced by the Father that I could not help trembling. Then I beheld the Father, and He opened the windows of His heart, and said, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, I will share with you only a few more incredible assertions from Ellen White.

For Mrs. White to say that Jesus was pleading with the Father over the plan of salvation is to deny that the Father and Jesus are one and sadly implies that Jesus loves mankind more than the Father does. approach the bright light before He could have a conversation with the Father was absurd. Ellen White’s statement that, “He told them that he had been pleading with His Father,” is incomprehensible, and more importantly, it is unbelievable here.

For Mrs. White to say that Jesus was pleading with the Father over the plan of salvation is to deny that the Father and Jesus are one and sadly implies that Jesus loves mankind more than the Father does. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ and the Father are always in agreement. To believe in Ellen White’s vision of the development of the plan of salvation demands that one must throw out the Bible. To believe what Ellen is stating in her vision as fact, is to believe a lie about the Father. Might I ask, who is interested in misrepresenting or destroying the reputation of God the Father?
**Proclamation!**

**NEWS and updates**

**Former Seventh-day Adventist conference held in July**

July 30-31 marked the dates of the first conference for former Adventist Pastors and church leaders leaving Adventism. They were misunderstood by their colleagues, misrepresented by their superiors, often ostracized by family and friends, and often found through their testimony without showing deep emotion. Why would pastors leave the security of a good salary, valuable medical insurance and other benefits as well as the promise of retirement? The answer was unanimously: to follow Christ and be free to proclaim the simple gospel of grace in Christ.

All the speakers recounted going through very trying circumstances. They spoke of their personal struggle in sorting out truth from error; the loss of income, estrangement from friends and family. Some told the group that their marriages nearly fell apart because spouses did not understand. The result, however, was seeing God make a way where there was no way. They spoke of new love for Christ, deeper trust in God and yes, marriages that had been transformed with new love and a deeper commitment than ever before. Nearly everyone expressed the joy and freedom that went through questioning and very trying times but saw that God was faithful. The end result was a deeper love for God and a renewed desire to share the freedom of the good news of the simple gospel with those still in the bondage of historic Adventism.

Rey Cantú, the conference organizer, translates for Ricardo Carreon whose great-grandfather was an Adventist pioneer in Mexico.

Rey Cantú, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” 1 Peter 1:28. NIV

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“Jesus told them that he would stand between the wrath of his Father and guilty man….” Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 1, page 23.

“…that the plan of salvation was devised, and his Father had accepted the plan.” Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 1, page 25.

“Jesus bid the heavenly host be reconciled to the plan that his Father accepted, and rejoice that fallen man could be exalted again through his death, to obtain favor with God and enjoy heaven.” Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 1, page 25.

Jesus is not the “good cop” and the Father is not the “bad cop.” The Triune God was always in agreement that it should be saved, long before the foundation of the world.

“…it is good that man should be as God, they closed the door of the ark? God, or an angel? ‘An angel is seen by the scoffing multitude descending from Heaven, clothed with brightness like the lightning; He closes that massive outer door, and then takes his course upward to Heaven again.’ Spiritual Gifts, vol. 3, page 68.

What does the Bible say?

“And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life. So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in” Genesis 7:15-16. NIV

The word for Lord in this verse is the national Jewish name for God, Jehovah.

My final example from Ellen’s book Spiritual Gifts, has to do with her statements regarding amalgamation.

“…that the plan of salvation was devised, and his Father accepted the plan…” Spiritual Gifts, vol. 3, page 64.

Here are some of the quotes that have been transformed with new love and a deeper commitment than ever before. Nearly everyone expressed the joy and freedom that went through questioning and very trying times but saw that God was faithful. The end result was a deeper love for God and a renewed desire to share the freedom of the good news of the simple gospel with those still in the bondage of historic Adventism.

Rey Cantú was the organizer of this conference. A number of Spanish pastors were present. Some drove 600 miles to attend, while others flew in. All paid their own way. Dale Ratzlaff gave presentations on the topics of the judgment and the Sabbath. Dirk Anderson, webmaster of www.ellenwhite.org, shared his fascinating story of discovering the truth about Ellen White and gave a carefully thought-out way of opening the minds of Adventists for further study. Kenneth Brantley shared his rich SDA history and his research which caused him to write and print the book Jewelry. Other presenters included Ricardo Carreon, DDS, and Antonio Lopez, MD, both from Montemorelos, Mexico, and Saul Gonzalez-Cantu.

The “Hispanic Adventist community is twenty years behind the Anglo church.” Cantú says. The facts of E.G. White’s plagiarism are just becoming known in the Hispanic Adventist community, and Cantú is committed to exposing the truth and supporting those who decide to leave.

Several attendees met on Saturday and agreed to organize a loose association of former Adventist pastors and leaders to provide prayer and moral support for one another as they transition. They will meet to organize in September, and they plan to hold reunions from three to four times in a different place. Their motto is, “We are not alone.”

Your subscriber information will be kept strictly confidential.

Mark’s deep understanding of the new covenant and his articulate delivery uphold Jesus and our security in Him. Make a point to check out his online ministry!

**Former Adventist Fellowship prayer chain**

The members of the forum on www.formeradventist.com invite you to join them every Saturday at 1:00 PM, Pacific time (2:00 PM, Mountain, 3:00 PM, Central, 4:00 PM, Eastern) in prayer for the Adventist friends and relatives you have who need to know Jesus and the freedom of His Gospel. Also, forum members are praying for them at sundown (whatever time that is in your area), asking God to send His Spirit to open their hearts and eyes to the truth of Jesus in the Bible as they enter their Sabbath hours. Please join them in this weekly concert of prayer.

**Mark Martin’s sermons available online**

Many of us received great insight from Mark Martin’s books and tapes as we studied our ways out of Adventism. His website, www.calvarychurchphoenix.com has to do with his statements regarding amalgamation, and other information that continues to help searching Adventists find their way through the morass of confusion they feel as they begin to realize Adventism disagrees with the Bible.

Mark, formerly an Adventist pastor, is now the senior pastor of Calvary Community Church in Phoenix, Arizona. It is a growing congregation with over 9,000 members. Mark’s clear, inspiring, Bible-based messages uphold Jesus and His finished work. Now, his sermons are available online in audio or video streaming on Sunday mornings and evenings. Listen live (if you’re not in church) by logging onto www.calvaryphx.com.

Additionally, Mark offers an online devotional. To subscribe, enter your email address in the Grace Mail box at www.calvaryphx.com.
One of the curious observations one can make from reading Ellen White’s first vision account is the mention of “Brn. Fitch and Stockman” in Heaven. Consider her description:

“We all went under the tree, and sat down to look at the glory of the place when Brn. Fitch and Stockman, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping.”

Saul Gonzalez-Cantu, MD, both from Montemorelos, Mexico, and Antonio Lopez, MD, both from Monterrey, Mexico, and Saul Gonzalez-Cantu. “The Hispanic Adventist community, and Cantu is committed to exposing the truth and supporting those who decide to leave. Several attendees met on Saturday and agreed to organize a loose association of former Adventist pastors and leaders to provide prayer and moral support for one another as they transition. They will meet to organize in September, and they plan to hold reunions from three to four times in a different place. Their motto is, “We are not alone.”

“My example from Ellen’s book Spiritual Gifts, has to do with her statements regarding amalgamation. “But if there was one sin above another which called for the destruction of the race by the flood, it was the base crime of amalgamation of man and beast which defaced the image of God, and caused confusion everywhere.” Spiritual Gifts, vol. 3, page 64. “Every species of animal which God had created were preserved in the ark. The confused species which God did not create, which were the result of amalgamation, were destroyed by the flood. Since the flood there has been amalgamation of man and beast as may be seen in the almost endless varieties of mixed offspring, and in certain races of men.” Spiritual Gifts, vol. 3, page 75. Bill, you don’t have to be a rocket scientist to get the drift of what she is saying here, but I must tell you that my two eyes have seen an unpublished statement in the E.G. White vault at Andrews University which clearly states what she means when she is talking about “and in certain races of men!” Knowing Dr. Samuel Bacchiocchi has seen it because he showed it to one of my classmates, and that classmate took me into the vault and showed it to me. In those days the vault was fairly accessible to theology students. On this subject, Paul Harvey would have to say, “Well science has proven that the little lady was horribly wrong on this one!”

Aside from the genetic impossibility of her postulation, the more profound affect of her meaning remains hidden with those who hold the keys to the E.G. White vault; to your email address in the Grace Mail box at www.calvaryphx.com.

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Pastor steps out in faith
CONTINUED FROM FRONT

digging into the Word through intense study of the Scriptures and learning to come to realize that you had been missing much of the heart of the New Covenant, that many of the “truths” you had been teaching were not considered necessary in the New Testament. In fact, some of the most important distinctions you had been teaching as requirements for your potential converts were actually not requirements at all. In fact, these distinctions were considered unnecessary roadblocks to evangelism by the New Testament church.

What would you do? Would you just stay where life is comfortable and predictable? Would you ask what you really believe and try to change your system from the inside? Would you speak out and get fired? Would you bury the truths you have learned and go through the motions until you retire? Would you try to tell yourself that it is no big deal, every church has its dark side? Would you really believe and try subtly to change your system from the inside. This is our story. These are the questions we had to answer as we discovered the New Covenant.

We had been pastoring a Seventh-day Adventist church in Asheville, North Carolina. The church was growing and contemporary. It had a heart for evangelism to the unchurched. The church members and staff were motivated and passionate to share their faith. Many people were coming to Christ. However, by far the majority of converts were either former or inactive Adventists. We were considering them to break connections with family, friends, and jobs, while you yourself are not willing to step out in your faith.

We were internally grieving because we loved our church and our administration in our local conference. We had family and friends throughout the SDA system. We realized the fear and rejection that would be aroused if we shared our discoveries from God’s Word. The easiest thing would have been just to keep quiet and try to encourage slow, incremental changes within the system. We also realized, however, that such efforts seldom bring true change. They generally bring about an external facade but seldom truly change anything because the theological substructure of the belief system has not been faithfully addressed.

Meanwhile, our convictions grew deeper by the day. Through the course of the spring and summer of 2001 we studied and prayed with an earnestness that cannot be described. We spent hours upon hours before the Lord seeking His guidance and will in our lives. After every season of prayer we would be filled with peace and joy that is indescribable. We determined that we would wait on the Lord for His timing, but we would not hide our true heart if asked for what we believed. In the meantime, we did not borrow trouble by preaching on topics that we knew were out of harmony with the Adventist view.

The Bible tells us absolutely not. The idea that Jesus had to be ready to leave the Father before He could commune with Him is theologically incomprehensible, and more importantly, it is unbiblical heresy. For Mrs. White to say that Jesus was pleading with the Father over the plan of salvation is to deny that the Father and Jesus are one and sadly implies that Jesus loves mankind more than the Father does.

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Meanwhile, our convictions grew deeper by the day. Through the course of the spring and summer of 2001 we studied and prayed with an earnestness that cannot be described. We spent hours upon hours before the Lord seeking His guidance and will in our lives. After every season of prayer we would be filled with peace and joy that is indescribable. We determined that we would wait on the Lord for His timing, but we would not hide our true heart if asked for what we believed. In the meantime, we did not borrow trouble by preaching on topics that we knew were out of harmony with the Adventist view.

The Bible tells us absolutely not. The idea that Jesus had to be ready to leave the Father before He could commune with Him is theologically incomprehensible, and more importantly, it is unbiblical heresy. For Mrs. White to say that Jesus was pleading with the Father over the plan of salvation is to deny that the Father and Jesus are one and sadly implies that Jesus loves mankind more than the Father does.

The Bible never declares that Satan ever repented. For Ellen to say that he repented with tears is one of the most “spooky” assertions in her writings. I will share with you only a few more incredible examples of Ellen’s heretical theology regarding the plan of salvation she writes.

“Sorrow filled heaven, as it was realized that man was lost, and the world that God created was to be filled with the sentence of death upon himself, that through him man might find pardon. That through the merits of his blood, and obedience to the law of God, they could have the favor of God, and be made the heirs to the beautiful garden, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life.” (3T, p. 224)
her description imply that Satan and his followers might have had some good intentions when they started their rebellion? And isn’t it implied that maybe God’s government needed some reformation? Ellen leaves the door wide open for us to question who is giving her such words. Certainly this information is not from God. Maybe it is from another angel, or maybe it is from her own imagination. The tone of her comments regarding Satan are more fully exposed in the pages that follow the aforementioned quotation. Bill, I ask you to prayerfully consider this summation in its entirety.

To say that Satan and his angelic followers not only repented but repented with tears is absolutely mind-boggling. Think about the consequences of what she is saying.

Her statement sounds like the opening argument of an attorney defending Satan. Bear with me as I illustrate a summation of Ellen White’s view of Satan: From the content of the quotations that you have just read.

“Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, before you stand the accused and his followers. The ‘prophets’ of God, Ellen White, has stipulated for the record that the defendants did engage in a direct attack against the Son of God, but their intention was to reform the government of God, which they believed at the time needed reforming because they could not understand why the Father had endorsed and exalted the Son of God with such unlimited power and authority.

“Since the altercation in Heaven, and since being ejected from the courts of Heaven, the ‘prophets’ has been very clear that the accused and his followers have been duly noted in their tearful repentance and have desired to be reinstated in Heaven in any place God might choose to place them. But it is our understanding, again according to Ellen White, that God will not accept their repentance, because sin originated with them, and they might still threaten Heaven with jeopardy.

“Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, how is it that man who is lower than the angels received a plan of redemption, but is not able to qualify for a plan of redemption? It has been recorded by Ellen White that the defendant did not really manifest malice and hatred until after he became fully conscious that his repentance would not be accepted. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, the reason is that Satan and his followers, the ‘prophets’ of God, has been praying to return to the favor of God. But no, their sin, their hate, their envy and jealousy, had been so great that God could not blot it out. It must remain to receive its final punishment.

“When Satan became fully conscious that there was no possibility of his being brought again into favor with God, he made up his mind and began to be manifest.”


This particular quote is probably one of the most incredible you will ever read in the writings of Ellen G. White. To say that Satan and his angelic followers not only repented but repented with tears is absolutely mind-boggling. Think about the consequences of what she is saying.

The Bible say that Satan specifically chose to go after those who sympathized with him in his rebellion. He wished to be reinstated again in heaven. He was willing to do anything it would take to be taken back into the favor of God. But no, their sin, their hate, their envy and jealousy, had been so great that God could not blot it out. It must remain to receive its final punishment.

Does the Bible say that the war in Heaven was fought specifically between Jesus & Satan? Does the Bible say that Satan specifically chose to go after those who were submissive to Jesus’ will? Answer: Absolutely not. The Bible makes no such distinction.

Let us continue our investigation with a quotation from Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 1, pages 18-19, regarding the tearful repentance of Satan and his followers:

“After Satan was cast out of heaven, with those who fell with him, he realized that he had lost all the purity and glory of heaven forever. Then he repented and wished to be reinstated again in heaven. He was willing to take his proper place, or any place that might be assigned him. But no, heaven must not be placed in jeopardy. All heaven might be marred should he be taken back; for if he originated with him in his rebellion. He and his followers repented, wept, and implored to be taken back into the favor of God. But no, their sin, their hate, their envy and jealousy, had been so great that God could not blot it out. It must remain to receive its final punishment.”


truth of the New Covenant was clearly in our hearts and minds, the joy and assurance of the Gospel set us free from those fears. We were so full of peace and freedom we could hardly bear keeping these truths to ourselves. We were so full of peace and freedom we could hardly bear keeping these truths to ourselves.

Just as Nicodemus wisely sought Jesus by night to check out His teachings so as not to wrongly influence the people in his area of responsibility, just as Joseph of Arimathea studied Jesus carefully and secretly before stepping out, we too studied, prayed and waited for God’s timing in all of this. But we had a growing conviction that the time was nearing. We remembered that one day Joseph and Nicodemus had stepped out of the shadows to declare their allegiance to the cause of Christ—their former careers ruined, but their colors now clear. We waited for our day.

We also thought of the risks in staying in the shadows too long. Again Bible stories came to our minds. The rich young ruler had a golden opportunity to follow Jesus, but he chose the way of comfort and security. Such a tragic story! Perhaps he wanted to wait until his kids were out of school and the conference college tuition subsidy was spent. Perhaps he wanted to wait until his retirement checks started coming in. The disciples were another example to us. What if they had said, “We will follow you Lord, but we want to be sure we have enough money in the bank, and ….” We did not want to stay in the boat if Jesus was calling us to walk on the water. What would have happened if the apostles in the New Testament church had tried to share Jesus from inside the safety of Judaism? What if Paul would have tried to save his career by being the secret agent apostle? We knew God was not calling us to compromise. So we prayed and waited for His direction.

One morning I was feeling overwhelmed with the joy of the New Covenant. After some hours with the Lord I felt this urgency to share the Good News. How could I keep this joy to myself any longer? I literally felt I would burst. So I prayed, “Lord, if there is someone you want me to share this with, please send them to my office today and let me know that it is from You.” Shortly afterward a knock came at my office door. It was our prayer ministry director. She sat down across from my desk, and the first words out of her mouth were, “Pastor, I have been struggling spiritually for the last seven-day Sabbath issue. If this is a moral command from God, why aren’t we more strict about keeping it? It seems like people aren’t as careful about ‘guarding the edges’ anymore. And if the Sabbath isn’t that important we need to know why. I have been praying about this all morning and I sensed the Lord telling me to come and talk to you.”

Clearly sensing this was the Lord’s plan, I opened up the Scriptures and began to share with them the things we had learned. We studied passage after passage systematically. As she would ask questions, I would take her to further scriptures. At each stage of the study her eyes widened. She kept saying, “It’s true, I know it’s true. I never saw it before! It’s true!” Three hours later we concluded the study. She was so full of joy she could hardly contain herself. She said, “It finally all makes sense! I finally understand what I have been struggling with for years. I know that this is very risky for you, but I hope that you will write this down step by step as you explained it to me today. There are so many people who need to know the truth and be set free.”

That day I began to write down the process of study God had led us on, knowing that it was only a matter of time until the news was out. I carefully wrote out a Letter to Family and Friends. There was a sense of urgency that the Lord had laid on me to get this completed. In the mean time, we were asked to share our study with some others at our prayer leader’s house. The report that had been written before the word was starting to get out. I had been in dialogue with a couple of key leaders regarding my study process and shared with them the conclusions we had come to. I told our associate pastor and head elders in late July where we were in our search and of the growing awareness in the congregation. To make a long story short, we were asked to resign by the final week in July, 2001. It was that week that the Letter to Family and Friends was completed. God’s timing is always right.

We felt led to leave as quietly as possible. We loved the church we had pastored for those years and felt it would not be wise to try to start a new church in the area at that time. We believed God wanted us to use our story in His way without disturbing the ministry of the church there. So, with the exception of making our letter available, we left quietly and trusted that God would provide for us. We did not know at the time that we would be out of work for seven months. We did not know that we would not be given a full severance package. But we were to be launched on a faith journey that we will always be grateful for.

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do otherwise would ensure that any remaining confidence in her "gift" would immediately disintegrate. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a lot of skeletons in the closet. We have learned so much from each of the ministers. God is truly at work in His people. It was exciting to see how the Holy Spirit was moving in churches from a wide range of denominational backgrounds. He is truly not limited by the boxes we humans construct. In spite of the rejection we received from many we had once served, the joy of the Lord was truly our strength.

God provided for us miraculously. We never missed a house payment. We paid all our bills. In March of 2002 we joined a church planting effort in Hagerstown Maryland. Crossroads Church, an interdenominational fellowship sponsored by the Brethren in Christ, hired us to be Pastor for Spiritual Formation. Since that time we have planted another church and attendance has grown to 300-350 per week already. We are enjoying the ministry to unchurched people in the new area.

We can all agree that there are authentic Christians sitting in the pews of some of the most unlikely churches, yet we would also agree that some of the blatantly un-Biblical teachings of such "mother" denominations came about as the result of generations of compromised pastors and church leaders.

There will be millions of Seventh-day Adventists in heaven, and there will be thousands of Seventh-day Adventist pastors and leaders who will share the slander of hell, because God knows that they who are about to continue to share, and God knows that they never took a stand. God knows that they never told their flock, and God knows that they never told the truth, so help them God.

Last year at camp meeting, I stayed up until 2 a.m. one Friday night reading what John Ware Martin had just bought at the Adventist Book Center. I would like to share what I came across in my reading that forced my conscience into the final ten-month battle over what my responsibility was as a Christian and as a pastor regarding the words that leaped off of the pages of those volumes. Regarding the events surrounding the fall of Satan, E.G. White writes, “The historical contrast of what evangelical Christians were accomplishing during the pre-Civil War/Civil War period as compared to the emphasis and fruits of early Adventism during that time is also incredibly insightful. Ellen White’s failed Civil War-related prophecies are quite sobering. The historical contrast between what Dwight L. Moody and Ira Sankey were accomplishing for Jesus and what contemporary Adventists were doing at that time leaves plenty of room for modern Adventists to contemplate "the tale of two churches." Ellen White once said that she couldn’t pray for people until she went home and prayed to find out if she was allowed to pray for them. Well, Bill, I want you to know that I understand how much I need to pray for myself and how much I need to pray for everyone who will ever read about my journey. I pray God’s blessing upon you and your team, and I pray that you will continue to make Minnesota Adventists more closely related to the bride that knows Jesus Christ! Yours in the blessed hope of Christ’s soon return!”

Dear Conference President

Continued from Page 10

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I came to the conclusion that Luther’s exasperation over indulgences was “little league” compared to what he would have found in some of the theological and plagiarism of Mrs. White’s writings.

The statement should be easily recognized as being theologically untenable and incredibly unscriptural, not only by Ellen herself but by anyone who has ever read the aforementioned quote from Spiritual Gifts. Certainly it is reasonable to conclude that if a prophetic weapon does not bear the authentic gift of prophecy, God would tell the truth about Himself and she would not teach that Jesus was less than the Father.

Does the Bible say that Satan attempted to “reform” God’s government? Answer: Absolutely not. To infer a nicer connotation to Satan’s rebellion by stating that Satan and his angels were “striving to reform the government of God” makes me literally feel sick in my stomach as I write this. Doesn’t

What is Ellen White teaching about the Trinity if God the Father in Heaven “ends” and “exalts” Jesus with “authority” and with “unlimited power and command?” Answer: Ellen White is teaching that Jesus moved from a position of limited power and command to a position of unlimited power and command. Only a created being can be the recipient of an endowment, or an increase in power. Jesus, who is fully God and equal with the Father, cannot be improved upon! By her statement, Ellen White is teaching that God the Father is superior to Christ, because the Father is the “endower,”and Jesus is the “endowed.” It is important to note that Mrs. White’s statement has nothing to do with the incarnation of Christ or His humble birth. She is discussing Christ’s position in heaven long before the incarnation.

Therefore, can we agree that such a postulation by Mrs. White deems the Father as superior to Christ? Such a
My thoughts turned to the Bible. A verse drifted from my memory:

“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” Romans 8:26-27 NKJV

Ellen White’s statement that prayers were not reaching God because the prayers were being directed to the “apartment which Jesus has left”, was written in complete defiance of Romans 8:26-27, and demonstrated ignorance of this most basic Biblical theology on prayer! Ellen White’s statement in effect declares that the 1843/1844 Millenial time setting message was a salvation issue. Those who rejected it, she was saying, were no longer offering their prayers to the right apartment, and God, therefore, could not hear them. Such individuals, according to Mrs. White, were unfaithful, and were in the process of being ensnared by Satan’s signs and lying wonders.

...no Seventh-day Adventist should look comprehensively into the writings of Ellen White unless one is prepared to lay one’s life on the line for Jesus Christ and the truth of God’s Holy Word: the Bible.

This theology that comes down to us from the pen of Ellen White via the Seventh-day Adventist church is nothing short of... dare I say blasphemy? Every Seventh-day Adventist must face this question, and answer it before God.

As I stood in my den devastated by her attack against my ministry for things she said that were wrong! “With the desire to make...” I thought... we have a right to believe what we believe. Because I had loved my church for so many years, and because I believed it was the remnant church of Jesus Christ, the reality of some of her statements took a long time to sink in. I realized that if we resigned from the Seventh-day Adventist church, we could well lose our new home which we had worked so hard to obtain.

Those who follow God are not always delivered from hardship, pain and even death. The faith chapter from Hebrews 11 lists those who had marvelous interventions by God and were delivered. It also states that “others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheeps’ skins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.” Heb. 11:36-38

Why God intervenes at times and at other times does not appear to do so, is a divine mystery. Yet, the one thing we know is that it is always God’s desire that we follow His will.

Carolyn and I did not have much “confirmation” other than Scripture that our decision was the right one until after we resigned. I will never forget the feeling of emanation I experienced after my decision—forced as it was—to resign. To be out from under the weight of all the denominational hassle I had been through over the

Standing for truth CONTINUED FROM BACK

and said, “Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire? Certainly, O king!” He said, “Look! I see four men loneliness and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!” Dan. 3:26-28

This story teaches us that divine intervention often comes after we have made the commitment to follow our informed conscience and not before. Carolyn and I had found this to be true. When faced with the demand either to promise to teach all the 27 Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists or resign, our hearts were prueba. I vividly recall walking alone down the quiet country road in front of our home one evening as the bone-chilling fog came rolling in on the westward wind from the restless sea a few miles from us. Why, Lord? Why me? Why can’t I just go along as many of the other pastors are doing? Am I wrong? Should I just submit to the judgment of the experienced conference office? Are my motives pure? Am I seeking to be a martyr for recognition? How far should I go in compromising my conscience and teaching things that I know aren’t true?

I had counseled with many informed SDA scholars, professionals and laymen, most of them could show me from Scripture how to get from Daniel 8:14 to 1844. If fact, most of them in private that it was impossible. My mind raced back to the Ellen White “tapes” record in my memory—and there were many good ones!

“The want of the world is the want of men, men who are true and honest, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.”

Even though I knew some of Ellen White’s statements were patently wrong, I also had great admiration for many of the quotations I had memorized—although I now knew that many of her good quotes were lifted from other sources. This one confirmed our conviction.

How could I turn back now? Carolyn and I spent the many hours talking over these things, reading our Bibles, and crying out to God in prayer for guidance.

Then there were those other pesky EGW “tapes” that plagued our steps and haunted our thoughts. Would we be lost if we left the SDA church as Ellen White said? Had Satan somehow blind our hearts and minds? Having started on the journey away from Adventism, would we end up rejecting every point of truth and become infi dels? When these plaguing thoughts bubbled up from our memories which had been saturated with the writings of Ellen White, we would be driven back to Scripture where we found solace. The simple gospel of belief in Christ the book of John calmed us: “Truly, truly, I say to you he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” John 5:24. The clear teaching of righteousness by faith in the books of Romans and Galatians became our solid foundation and assurance. I had memorized a number of chapters from Romans, and when the condemning “tapes” from Ellen White would run, I would change channels and flee back to the good news in Christ. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God.” (Romans 5:1) It was a very difficult decision for me to make that day in the Central California Conference office when I tendered my resignation. We had recently purchased five acres and built a nice home on it. We had scraped togeth er everything we had and more besides to complete the project. Our payments were large, as those were the days of 12-16% interest. Both Carolyn and I were employed by the conference. We realized that if we resigned from the church, we could well lose our new home which we had worked so hard to obtain.

...divine intervention often comes after we...
Lutheran church and became a Seventh-day Adventist minister, eventually accepting the post of Associate Dean of the Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Jeffrey worked as a nursing home administrator, a career he and his wife Virginia benefited from in the USA and order books from Life Assurance Ministries Publishing (LAM Publishing, the for-profit corporation which sells books) and also wish to make a donation to Life Assurance Ministries, Inc. (the non-profit, 501-C3 corporation which produces Proclamation!, the non-profit, 501-C3 corporation which produces Proclamation!). We want to suggest that you make your donation by check to Life Assurance Ministries instead of including it with your credit card purchase from LAM Publishing. Of course, if you find it necessary for some reason to include the two together as a credit card transaction, we can accept that. It would, however, eliminate a significant amount of bookwork to separate the two sums. Those living outside the United States, however, may continue to make donations and purchases through LAM Publishing via credit card since international transactions work best by credit card. Send mail to Life Assurance Ministries at PO. Box 905, Redlands, CA, 92373, or email LifeAssurance@att.net. For books contact dale@ratzlaf.com or visit the website, www.ratzlaf.com.

Help us update our mailing list

Past months lifted my spirit and my feet! When I arrived home from my trip to the Conference office, I began mowing our front lawn. As I pushed the mower around the yard I literally jumped and say, “I’m free! I’m free!” I frolicked all around the yard, over and over again. This euphoria was not something I planned or forced myself to express; it was just a spontaneous reaction to being set free from under the load of restrictions and false guilt.

As I pushed the mower around the yard I would literally jump and say, “I’m free! I’m free!” I frolicked all around the yard, over and over again.

It stated that the only way we could stay employed was for me to go to church in the southern part of the conference, too far away to commute home on a daily basis, and work with an experienced pastor who would oversee all my actions. Carolyn, who was a “Bible worker”, was to stay in the Watsonville area and continue her work there. This meant that the only way we could stay employed was for us to be separated by several hundred miles. We felt this was definitely not God’s will!

One evening shortly after our resignation a large group of people from the Watsonville SDA church came over to our home to encourage us and to discuss the future. Without our suggestion someone “passed the hat” and an offering of about $7,000 was received. This later became the seed money that was used to start our new church.

Both of these events came after our resignation and served as confirmation to us that our decision which had been based solely upon Scripture was indeed the will of God.

I know there are many readers of Proclamation! who are faced with difficult decisions. I get emails and phone calls from you nearly every day. Those of us at LAM pray for you that you will (1) study the word of God so that you will clearly know God’s will, and (2) that you will have the courage to follow God’s will once it is clearly revealed. Remember, confirmation may come after you decide to do God’s will.

“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” (1 Tim. 1:5) We are to “fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience; which some have rejected and thereby suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.” (1 Tim. 1:18b-19) Finally, “I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day.” (2 Tim. 1:3)

“Those who rejected the first message could not be benefited by the second; neither were they benefited by the midnight cry, which was to prepare them to enter with Jesus by faith into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. And by rejecting the second message, they have so darkened their understanding that they can see no light in the third angel’s message, which shows the way into the most holy place. I saw that as the Jews crucified Jesus, so the nominal churches had crucified these messages, and therefore they have no knowledge of the way into the most holy, and they cannot be benefited by the intercession of Jesus there. Like the Jews, who offered their useless sacrifices, they offer up their useless prayers to the apartment which Jesus has left; and Satan, pleased with the deception, assumes a religious character, and leads the minds of these professed Christians to himself, working with his power, his signs and lying wonders, to fasten them in his snare.” Early Writings, pages 260-261

In the last issue we published the first part of Jeffrey Helius’s letter of resignation from his pastoral position in the Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. We conclude his letter in this issue.

What if “They speak not according to the word or the testimony…”? Six months after I began serving in my district, I came across a quote in my devotional reading that shook me to the core. It was a quote from the pen of Ellen G. White in a book called Early Writings, pages 260 to 261, in which she discusses those of her contemporaries who had declared the 1843/1844 time setting second advent message to be a “Delusion.” She referred to them as those who had “hated those who loved His appearing and shut them out of the churches.” Here is the crux of her teaching:

Jeffrey Helius was born into a Lutheran family. His pastor, C. Raymond Holmes, left the Lutheran church and became a Seventh-day Adventist minister, eventually accepting the post of Associate Dean of the Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Jeffrey, a teenager, followed his pastor, and in 1988 graduated from Andrews University with a BA in religion. Before accepting a call to the Adventist ministry, Jeffrey worked as a nursing home administrator, a career he and his wife Virginia are now pursuing in St. Augustine, Florida. He also writes, sings, and records music in his home studio. This last March he conducted an evangelistic campaign in Bulgaria. He is pictured with his translator’s baby.
At the age of 45, I would be spent, for the most part, in doctor’s offices, hospitals, and institutions. At the age of 45, I was told I would never be able to work or have meaningful activity again. That meant a career in public safety, a career that I loved, was over, and my life would be spent, for the most part, in doctors’ offices, hospitals, and institutions.

Now you must understand, I am not a brave person. I am a card-carrying member of the First Reformed Church of the Weenee. Our patron saint is the chicken. I am allergic to pain. It hurts me... a lot. So this type of life is not one I would gladly choose. But I wouldn’t change a thing. I would never trade one thing for what I have gained.

I was so angry with God. I said some things that a creation should never say to his Creator. And in His divine grace, He didn’t strike me with lightning. What He did was let me rant and rave until I realized that all the “right religious knowledge” and all the “law,” all the “right church memberships” and “truth” didn’t mean a thing. And I fell on my face, alone in the dark of the night. Then God “took the world” from me. Within a very short time after that last infection, I was told I would never be able to work or have meaningful activity again.

That meant a career in public safety, a career that I loved, was over, and my life would be spent, for the most part, in doctors’ offices, hospitals, and institutions.

You see, now I understand some things. First, God promised that all things would work for good to those who love Him. That meant ME. It isn’t a matter of doing the “right things” or knowing the “right things.” It’s ALL a matter of complete and unreserved surrender to ME. If I let this take the pain and disability to find Him, then it is a small price to pay. After all, Jesus suffered more than I ever could—far! Am I deserving of more than my Lord?

For now, my condition is “stable.” But experience has taught me that there is much more ahead, unless my Father sees fit to make me gently home. Now, it is my ministry to show the world around me how to die a really horrible death—with Jesus. I have had such great opportunities to share Him with others. Isn’t that what we are all supposed to do? We are beggars who have found the bread of life and now tell others how they might find it.

This story isn’t about me; it’s all about Him. Are you hurting? Have you lost “the world”? Are you afraid? Alone? May I introduce you to my friend? Put away all your “religious books” and take the Bible. Start with the book of John and look for Him. Ask yourself if my life is real, is it really possible, that you have been taught it is, or is it think it should be, but how it really is. Talk to Jesus. Tell Him that more than anything in the world you want Him. You don’t want to hurt Him, you want Him to find the cross and wrap your arms around it. NEVER let any person or preacher or church or anything take your eyes from Jesus or add one single rule or doctrine to what He gives you as a free gift? When it hurts, hang on. When you doubt, trust all the more! It doesn’t have to feel good, and it doesn’t have to make sense. Trust anyway. When “they” tell you that you are wrong or stupid, TRUST ANYWAY! Never, never, never let anyone take your Jesus away. Did I say NEVER? Not even for something that they tell you is good or important, or “God’s will” for this or that. I love Paul. He, too, endured so much. One of his writings has become my life’s motto. It’s in I Corinthians, Chapter 4:16-18: “Therefore we do not loose heart; but though the outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (NASB)

Come soon, Lord Jesus! Please?
Hello to the Editor of Faith

If you want to be judged by the 10 Commandment then you must keep all the commandments. However, James is encouraging his readers to be judged by the “law of liberty.”

Anita, true, the sacrificial system did come to an end at the death of Christ. Also coming to an end was the reign of law. Please note that the Law that God wrote in flames on stone tablets, and blood is no remission. “Heb. 9:22” Well, I don’t know about you, but I want forgiveness for my sins. My study has caused me to reach the conclusion that Jesus came to ratify the Eternal Covenant God made with Abraham, not the old covenant. Cain’s disobedience was an absolute insult, flying in the face of God’s commands. How about that phrase, “You can’t get blood from a turnip?” Fitting here, don’t you think?

I’m going to leave you with another text that shows how important these commandments are, you’ve read the passage many times: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matt. 5:17,18) Was that from an old, boring King James version?

Anita, I have written a whole chapter on this verse. See Sabbath in Christ, p. 265-278. I encourage you to do your own study on this verse. The interpretation in this chapter brings on the definition of two key words: law and fulfill. Get a concordance, or use a computer Bible program, and look up every time Matthew uses these words.

First, define how Matthew uses the term, “law.” Then plug this definition back into Matt. 5:17,18 and see if it makes sense. Then look up all the passages where Matthew uses the word “fulfill.” I would be interested to know what your conclusion would be. Let me know.

I imagine the LAM version, with your overriding position on Grace, would say something like this: “Heb. 9:22, here to tell you to throw out the Law. It doesn’t matter anymore; and all the old prophets were wrong. Break commandments? Sure, go ahead, the Law doesn’t matter anymore— I’m here! I’M HERE TO SPREAD MY GRACE ALL OVER YOU!”

Please read the chapter in Sabbath in Christ, “Righteousness Beyond the Law.” There you will see that former Adventists do believe in obedi- ence, but they do not consider it to be a law. They would say something like this: “Heb. 9:22, here to tell you to throw out the Law. It doesn’t matter anymore; and all the old prophets were wrong. Break commandments? Sure, go ahead, the Law doesn’t matter anymore— I’m here! I’M HERE TO SPREAD MY GRACE ALL OVER YOU!”

I am not looking for words to rhyme with his verse. His world really did include all of these things. Newton’s “Amazing Grace” came from a background of serious sin and God’s amazing grace. One of my favorite hymn writers was a lady by the name of Fanny Crosby. She lived for 95 years, and all but six weeks of her life were spent in total blindness. Yet despite this handicap caused by the incompetence of a doctor, she wrote more than 8,000 of the most personal and life-changing hymns ever written. One of Fanny’s most repeated expressions went like this, “If I had a choice, I would still choose to be blind, for when I die, the first face I will ever see will be the face of my blessed Savior.”

One of her hymns I love is “Take the World But give Me Jesus.” This song brings me to the select group of people to which I would like to speak. It is that group whose world has been “taken”—maybe by death or divorce, by sickness, disability, betrayal of friends, or the recent news that your life will end in less than pleasant circumstances. You know who you are— the really hurting ones: the walking wounded, or maybe even the walking dead. You feel so alone. You feel so useless. You feel like God has really dealt you a “bad hand.”

I am qualified to talk to you. You see, I have been and am now where you are. I am dying from the compli- cations of diabetes. It may be some time, but one thing I have learned in this disease is that time can change very quickly from good to bad. I was one of the “lucky ones.” Most of my life I felt very “safe”; I even the walking dead. You feel so alone. You feel so useless. You feel like God has really dealt you a “bad hand.”

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It was December of 1997. Irritated, I leaned my weight against an eight-foot fir tree that, after an hour of Richard’s effort and increasing frustration, refused to balance by itself in its stand. Silently I vowed never again to choose a Christmas tree after dark on a rainy night. “This tree is not only crooked,” my husband announced in clipped tones as he swept aside a disquieting pile of dead needles from under the monstrously, “It’s dead.”

Suddenly the words in my head were an inaudible command: “Give thanks in all things.”

Startled, I obeyed. “Thank you for this stupid tree. Let’s get rid of it.”

The night next Richard called from beneath the branches, “OK, let go.”

I knew immediately what would happen; as I dropped my arms, the tree stood tall and sturdy without even a wobble.

By morning, however, I knew we were still in trouble. That giant tree had not drunk a drop of water in eight hours. Four days later, when we were able to attempt to replace and replant it, I could find no more similar trees at the lot where we had purchased it. We were pressed for time—Richard’s office party was scheduled for the following week—in our home—so we decided to camouflage the dead tree with decorations and camouflage the dead tree with decorations and look at the water bowl of the tree stand. I looked at the water bowl of the tree stand. I cried as the reality impacted me: God had chosen to make a crooked, dead Christmas tree stand tall and drink as His message to us that we need not know the future. As long as we followed His leading, He could provide for us in unimaginable ways.

As we extricated ourselves from the church during the next 16 months, and as God has led us in new directions during the succeeding years, He has been faithful. He has always provided what we need, but of course we would not have known how He would provide for us before we chose to say “Yes” to His leading.

Following Jesus is a walk of faith. Through it all, that Christmas tree has spoken to me in remarkable voice, and I have given thanks in all things still leads me to the promise that our bread and water will be sure.

In this issue

In this issue, Greg Taylor and Dale Ratzlaff talk about the leadership changes in the Adventist Church. The Church is not a democracy, but a Kingdom of God. The new leadership has brought about a change in direction, but it is not clear what the future will bring. The Church is at a crossroads and needs the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

accounting us righteous while we were helplessness, ungodly sinners and enemies of God. Oh, one other thing… I DO want you to print this in your magazine. You’ll come down with some excuse like we take it as a challenge. I’ve only as many words limit, or the length of time responding to your editor’s letter. I’ve agreed to keep a short, but the pretty sassy woman’s answer on this one. Copy your e-mail to me, I want to read it. But I’m still doing you to print it. This you printed your letter, not because of your done, but because there may be other readers who feel the same way you do, and it is your promise that our short answer will be sure. Others to continue to study and follow the lead- ing of God’s Spirit: I will send you a free Sabbath in Christ book if you are brave enough to read it.

Let me know.

Refreshing Reading

The March/April issue of Proclamation! arrived a few days ago, and it was very refreshing read- ing. The editorial was great, and Cristine Cole’s story indicates that it will be an asset to the magazine.

The material in Stephen Pitcher’s article is very informative, however, I don’t quite agree with the idea that Figuero and the members of the select committee tried to con Barnhouse and Martin. These men were sincere and honest Christian gentleman who desired to bring Adventism more in line with the Bible. The article was also informative and interesting. It is clear that the Evangelical Adventists were driven by Enlightenment’s questions in Quotations on Quotations on Doctrine and by Robert’s remarks.

Second, there will be no healing between Evangelical Adventists and the traditional funda- mentalist segment of the Church. The schism between the two groups will only deepen and widen. One does not need to be a prophet to see the development of animosity between radical fundamentalists among Jews, Christians and Muslims with mainstream adherents to each of these faiths. Real trouble ahead for the church.

An “Invalid Christian”

I am not an Evangelical Adventist. I am a Christian. I got interested in the Adventist church because I have friends and family members who are involved in it. Around ten years ago I was pro- voked to look into Adventism after a friend gave me a book by Ellen White that made me feel im- paired. I have been very interested in learning about Adventism. I have read many books and articles and have attended seminars, have read The End of Historicism by Karen Armstrong, and have attended a number of seminars by Charles Wheeling. I am a member of the San Diego Adventist Forum and have listened to Raymond

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Standing for truth

It was about 1984 in a home Bible study in California. One young businessman who was attending the study stated in a moment of deep conviction, “I am ready to die for Christ.” A woman in the group responded, “It is easy to say we would die for Christ, but do you have the courage to live for Him today?” This conversation was soon forgotten by all but the businessman who had made the statement of loyalty. Many years later, the same man was in conversation with the woman who had challenged him to live, not merely die, for Christ. He recalled this event stating that it caused him to make a deeper commitment to live for Christ in the here and now and not worry about dying for Him at some future time. This man dedicated his life to serve Christ in business and in the church no matter where he was. He now serves as an associate pastor in a healthy church in Maui.

Standing for truth in the here-and-now is not always an easy thing. Sure, when we are in the company of other Christians we can do it quite easily. But following our informed conscience when all appearances may cause us to lose our friends, our income, our retirement, our reputation and perhaps even our home or car is not easy. Yet, if we are to take discipleship seriously, when we clearly know the will of God, we must align ourselves with it.

It would have been very easy for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to fall down with the others who were worshiping the golden image of King Nebuchadnezzar in ancient Babylon. They could have said to one another, “Look, let’s just bow down with the others when the music starts, but instead of worshiping the golden image, we will say our prayers silently to Jehovah.” That would have been easy. And that could well be what some of us would have done had we been there! But because these three “worthies” refused even to appear to be worshiping the golden image, we have the miraculous story of God’s intervention.

When given a second chance to worship the golden image, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” Daniel 3:16-18

The enraged king had the furnace heated up seven times its normal heat, and the men were thrown into the flames. Then Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace and declared, “I see four men, standing and walking around in the fire, not hurt norậped.” Daniel 3:26

Greg and Paula Taylor and their two sons Jordan and Matthew left Adventism during the summer of 2001. Greg is now the pastor for spiritual formation at Crossroads Church in Hagerstown, Maryland. He and Paula also operate One Flock Ministries, an interdenominational ministry which helps those caught in sectarian systems to find freedom in Christ and community with other believers.

Are you willing to lose everything except Jesus?
Pastor steps out in faith

Imagine you have sincerely believed one way all your life, thought you were walking in truth, taught and modeled a lifestyle in accordance with your faith system, and been involved in leadership and ministry in accordance with that worldview. You have served as a pastor for nearly 20 years in that system. The system has been good to you. You have been well treated and have been honored to serve in the new way of the Spirit. When he became convinced he could no longer teach this doctrine in good conscience because it was scripturally unsupported and contrary to the gospel, he and his wife left the denomination.

Dale Ratzlaff is president of Life Assurance Ministries and founding editor of Proclamation! In the 1980s, while nearing the end of his doctoral program at Andrews University, Dale did an in-depth study of the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment. When he became convinced he could no longer teach this doctrine in good conscience because it was scripturally unsupported and contrary to the gospel, he and his wife left the denomination.

Dale and his wife Carolyn live in Peoria, Arizona, and worship at Calvary Community Church.

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TAKE THE WORLD BUT GIVE ME JESUS

Would you bury the truths you have learned and go through the motions until you retire?

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