Finding a family: How does a former Adventist find a new church? 

**LYDELL OLMANS**

n 1989 our family left our local Adventist congregation after the Lord had made us aware of certain doctrinal problems. Only gradually we learned that the haunting echoes of our old beliefs—“We are the only true church, so there’s nowhere to go if you leave,” and “To worship on Sunday is to accept the Mark of the Beast”—were huge stumbling blocks in our spiritual progress. Today we understand that by leaving we had taken only our first step on a spiritual journey. Back then, however, we arrogantly believed ourselves to have some greater grasp of truth than “other Christians” who met on Sunday. We may have left our local church for good doctrinal reasons, but we still believed ourselves superior to all non-Sabbatarians.

Once we are indoctrinated into Adventism, we become unaware of the baggage of Adventist error that we carry. Our journey out of Adventism was a process of recognizing those errors and of learning to live with the Spirit. Living with the Spirit is not intended to take the place of a church body. We missed so much because of our isolation in those years. We had contact with other groups and with the apostles. They willingly explained the difference between justification and sanctification. In that sense, one could say that this order was a historical order rather than a necessary order.

Nearby every former Adventist I have communicated with first discovered the simple gospel. Perhaps this discovery was the result of the early (for us) pioneers such as Robert Brimsmead and Desmond Ford who brought the message of righteousness by faith to the front and center of Adventist thought and clearly explained the difference between justification and sanctification. In that sense, one could say that this order was a historical order rather than a necessary order.

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**Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.**

PO Box 905
Redlands, CA 92373
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**LIFE ASSURANCE MINISTRIES, INC.**

**Proclamation!**

**FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS**

**Preview of the first chapter of Dale Ratzlaff’s new book First things first**

For the transitioning Adventist it will be very helpful to outline the order of study topics. Having personally transitioned out of Adventism and communicated with hundreds of others who have done the same, I have found that, most if not the vast majority, of Formers followed nearly the same subject order in their experience. We desperately wanted to hear His thoughts and have His confirmation of His plans for us. We became pregnant with the expectation that so many of us followed the same path lends credence to it. Therefore, no matter where one is in one’s personal journey or inquiry, it is highly recommended that this order be followed. As in mathematics, so it is for the transitioning Adventist. One must master one step before advancing to the next.

**Contents**

- The Big Three 11
- Granted, many of the study topics are interrelated, and one might say that several need to be studied together, but here are the most important in the order they usually become issues to questioning Adventists.

**The gospel**

Nearly every Former I have communicated with first discovered the simple gospel. Perhaps this discovery was the result of the early (for us) pioneers such as Robert Brimsmead and Desmond Ford who brought the message of righteousness by faith to the front and center of Adventist thought and clearly explained the difference between justification and sanctification. In that sense, one could say that this order was a historical order rather than a necessary order.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14
Studying and leaving

It was the summer of 1998. Richard and I sat alone outside his small church. Outside, the sidewalks shimmered in the Southern California heat, but we didn’t notice. The man who had been our pastor for the past six years sat across from us. He couldn’t let us keep his church, he said, without asking us why we were leaving.

Carefully—hopefully—we outlined what we had learned over the past four years as we had studied the Bible. We explained how we had discovered the gospel, the finished work of Christ, and how that security had transformed us. We talked about the new covenant and how Jesus had fulfilled the law—

We had just shared with this man the singular experience of our new birth, and his reaction had simply been relief that we were not angry.

He listened graciously, and although a few times he had commented on something we had written about what we spoke, he did not finally he spoke. “I can’t let you go,” he said, “as long as I know you are not angry.”

We assured him we felt absolutely no anger. When we arrived back from the church, we drove together back to Loma Linda, chatting lightly with this man who had been to our house to study the Bible with his church and whom we could no longer maintain integrity if we stayed in the Adventist church.

Jesus died to vindicate God’s character?

Today, information is much more universally available than it was twenty or even ten years ago. More and more people are discovering the truth about Adventist and Christian truth that shaped them and defined their worldviews. Local Adventists, however, still assume that people only leave the church because they’ve been hurt or angry or because they’re just lying. They often assume that you can prove your “truth” and reveals the Lord Jesus is a living word, and no day or doctrine could ever make false prophecies, and contradicts the Bible study numerous times.

Lifeline

Your magazine is my lifeline as I transition out of Adventism. I want to thank you for your prayers and praise God for giving me my child out of drug addiction. She’s finding her spiritual pathway and is excited about life in Christ.

It’s a crying shame I have begun to study the Bible for myself again after a period of backsliding. I have read parts of The Clear Word and looked it up on the internet. I found the site where you share what they had been led to believe. I wasn’t surprised. I just wanted to know why you had been led down and for confirming what Bible prophecy says what will happen in the last days! It’s just a crying shame that so many people who know to do right and do it will come up sadly and deadly mistaken when the end of one life comes and eternity begins!

You have succeeded in convicting in my soul what I know for a long time that I needed to do.

We apologize for not checking the editing change with Dennis Fischer before publica-

Correction

In the last issue of Proclamation! we published an editorial error in Dennis Fischer’s article, “Should Christians Practice Tithing?” The following sentence was added during editing and is incorrect: “The Levites not only did not tithe, but Israel’s tithe supported the Levites.” Following is Dennis Fischer’s explanation:

“Although the Levites were required to give a tithe of the tithes received from the people to the priests, the priests themselves were not required to tithe anything. Only a relatively small percentage of the Levites served as priests in the temple. Actually, Israel’s tithes never completely supported the Levites in their 48 cities. At least four square miles of land belonged to each Levitical city. Therefore, the cumulative amount of land equalled almost 200 square miles for pasturing and cultivation. It is interesting that this amount of Levitical land was very near the square mileage assigned to the tribes of Benjamin and Zebulun.

Since some of the cities that the Levites inherited were the most prosperous in the nation, their combined property value would almost equal that of the lesser Israelite tribes. These facts ought to put to rest the belief of some church leaders who imagine that the Levites lived solely off the tithe of the other tribes. In no way was this true. The Levites had to work for their living as anyone else. Only when Levites attended the service of the Tabernacle (whether on a full-time or part-time basis) was the tithe expected to support them (Deuteronomy 16:8-6).

We apologize for not checking the editing change with Dennis Fischer before publication. We now have instituted a policy not to go to press without having edited manuscripts checked and approved by the authors.

I think what has shocked me most of all are replies you received from some Adventist mem-

We had just shared with this man the singular experience of our new birth, and his reaction had simply been relief that we were not angry.
I would like to request the book Sabbath in Christ. My cell mate and I, plus a few other broth-
ners in the yard, will be doing a study on the Sabbath, and I believe your book would really be a
major contribution to directing us to an appro-
riate study. Thank you.

Please keep me on your mailing list, and keep Proclamation! coming! I can’t wait for the next
issue. Thank you for caring and helping me walk closer with Jesus Christ I love you.

Many kinds of Adventists

I get your magazine and read it all. My hus-
bond was an Adventist minister for twenty
years, then he got his own. He became an entrepre-
nur, I am a nurse. We both studied and came to
the conclusion, “You tell me what you think an Adventist is, and I’ll tell you whether I am one or
not.” There are many kinds!

I want the book Culti Doctrine. I will read it. I
have sent money and will send more next month.

Time to study

I was raised in the church at Oakwood College
and lived the charked road of Adventism. I am
now a 34-year-old married mother of four who
has raised her children Adventist. I have come to
regret that training when I look at my two oldest boys who could have been profes-
sional athletes. However, that is not my argument with
the church.

Mazzaferri. That is fine. We do well to consider
what others have to say. But the challenge that
Goldstein laid down for you is that you yourself
should study the Bible that you have considered
and can refute the DARCOM series. And now I am
ready to come to my two points:

1. The battle for you is clearly a battle over
Ellen White’s position. Are Ellen White’s views
important to your understanding of the investiga-
tive judgment and they are to
Goldstein? Your whole basis of attack, as evi-
denced from your reply to Mazzaferri, is based on
unimportant. You say what is said. You clearly do
not want Imin to understand your beating of
Goldstein. According to your commen-
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I was of the opinion that
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I heard in my spir- it, “I AM HERE.” Just that, but along with the words came a sense of His presence that I had never before expe- rienced. All of the fear and anxiety vanished, the black fog rolled away.

Nature seemed to work against me. Heavy thun- derstorms delayed my flight from the Ontario airport to LAX. I became more and more anxious as time passed. When the flight finally left I had to endure a kickboxing class behind closed eyes. The turbulence atmosphere.

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to our faulty theology. We totally surrendered to His will and voice. We intently listened for His answer and began to get immediate, confirming responses privately directing each person to verses of scripture addressing His trustworthiness. Among them was Isaiah 30:21, “You will hear my voice behind you when you turn to the right or to the left.” This and it is coming against the Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity, and the Bible is our only trusted standard of faith. We discovered it was very important to recognize that all Christian churches are a part of the body of Christ rather than there being only one true denomination or group.

To these essentials of faith we added some lessons learned from Adventism: a church should not be focused on the externals of dress or so-called “divinely inspired” extra-Biblical commentary. We learned that a healthy church is one that is outwardly focused and shares the whole gospel rather than concentrating on a pet doctrine. We also learned that it was imperative that we, as former Adventists, keep an open and teachable attitude. Adventist theology leads one to the circular reasoning of E.G. White. Her doctrines, traditions, fictions, and counsel are set in the Adventist church as if in concrete. The freedom from these restrictions became obvious when we found ourselves in the right church body—one to which God had led us, one which honors the essentials of the Christian faith, where the gospel is taught, where Christ is central, and where the Bible is the foundation of all teaching.

We learned that what we needed was not a particular denominational affiliation, worship style, or socio-economic profile; what we needed was a place where God showed up. Our new identities in Christ forced us to learn that Christianity is not ignorant of the “Sabbath question” contrary to Adventism’s teaching. The truth is that Christianity long ago recognized that a believer is not required to observe a certain day. In humility we had to acknowledge that the New Testament church’s moving away from the seventh-day Sabbath observance has resulted in God’s blessing, not in the condemnation imposed by Adventism. The gospel, uncluttered by legalistic reasoning or requirements, is being openly preached in Christianity, and people’s lives are being transformed.

It makes sense that the Lord has separated salvation from the Sabbath so that there would be fewer stumbling blocks to salvation. If it is God’s desire to re-impose the Sabbath on the church, it follows that His blessing on the Sunday congregations should be diminished. Such diminishing is not the case. Once we realized that God has always been moving in Sunday churches, the Sabbath became a moot point. Church history records that when God deems an issue of importance, He is quite effective in confirming His point by pouring His blessing, not in the condemnation imposed by Adventism. Above all on this journey we must remember God is to be trusted as our Guide and Protector. We have His promise in Psalm 36:7: “God sets the solitary in families.”

He has a family and prepared waiting for you.

Lyndel Ulman and her husband David live in southeast Alabama. David is a helicopter pilot-instructor training Air Force students. Lyndel is a homemaker and caregiver for her elderly mother. They are active members of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship where they are leaders in servant evangelism outreach.

He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ... Therefor we do let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a new Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Colossians 2:11b-15, 17

My first remembrance of Vicky is sitting in front of Redlands High School eating lunch together and listening to her explain how upset she was that her parents, when she turned sixteen, were buying her an Acura Integra instead of the red BMW she had wanted. I just couldn’t understand why God gave me Vicky instead of the “intellectual” Christian friend I had been praying for. Over the next several months, Vicky and I became close friends. We were both new to the school and clung onto each other because we didn’t know anyone else. We were an oddity to say the least; I was an agnostic, serious Christian, and Vicky, outgoing and popular. Yet we both grew and matured through our developing friendship. She taught me how to loosen up and meet new people, how to dress and wear my makeup. I taught her how to see beyond the superficial cares of the day and about the deeper issues in life. Eventually she would look back and admit how silly she had been and how lucky she was to have a car at all.

At Redlands High School, I joined the Alternative Club, the Christian club on campus. Vicky would sometimes go with me, often asking me questions. As our friendship grew, so did her interest in spiritual things, and she began to attend church and youth group with me. After a year, she began to open up and share her feelings with me, telling me about her experience as a Korean Seventh-day Adventist and what it meant to her and her family, in particular how her parents weren’t “good” Adventists because they worked Saturdays.

The more I came to know Vicky, the more I became curious about Adventism and began asking my father, an evangelical minister, questions about the faith. Yet no matter what my father told me, he could not prepare me for what I learned from Vicky. Vicky had mixed reactions to her faith; at times she would hate it, and at times she would want to reform it. I asked her about the dietary laws, which she never seemed to adhere to, and she replied that no one she knew actually practiced them outside of church. She also said Ellen G. White was only some woman who was mentioned every once in a while. There were many things that bothered Vicky in our later years together, including the lack of biblical understanding by the people in her church and the lack of any real spiritual substance being taught. But the one thing that bothered Vicky the most was what she repeatedly expressed as the “social club” atmosphere. The people were not concerned with spiritual issues. They went to church, according to Vicky, to see each other and confirm an identity and bond with each other. Marriages were made and jobs gained through the church and its functions. A couple of times, she even went so far as to ask the pastor himself questions she had regarding the faith. I don’t know her exact conversations, but I do know she was never satisfied.

Vicky had mixed reactions to her faith; at times she would hate it, and at times she would want to reform it.

Vicky, where are you?

ANGELA BULLARD

Angela Bullard is currently finishing her M.A in English Composition at California State University, San Bernardino. She also teaches English at Arrowhead Christian Academy and attends the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in Redlands. She resides in San Bernardino with her husband and two sons.

How does a former Adventist find a new church?

Continued from back
Vicky never felt accepted by the church, the same church she grew up in. Curiously enough, it had nothing to do with the questioning of her faith, but more to do with her parents’ career status as conven-
tion state owners, and their lack of church attend-
ance. For this reason, Vicky never fully participated in many times she felt angry with the church for making her father and mother feel inferior.

Vicky complained so much that finally I encour-
gaged Vicky to find a new church, but she didn’t feel comfortable going to unknown churches by her-
self—and more importantly, her parents wouldn’t approve. Since she liked the youth group at my church, I invited her to come to my church. She always enjoyed our youth group whenever she came, and for a while she would go to church on Saturdays and my church on Sundays, but she could never leave her church altogether.

In our senior year of high school, Vicky and I grew apart. We still hung out together, but things weren’t the same. Vicky became more involved in her church than ever before, and I think she just resigned to her fate as an Adventist member, despite her qualms.

After high school, we lost contact. By chance, three years later, we met again at California State University at San Bernardino. It turned out her parents were transferring to Loma Linda University next quarter to become a dental hygienist. After talking with her, she revealed that this was her parents dream for her. Because she told me everybody in her church went into a medical or health profession. She secretly admitted she hated even the thought of working on people’s teeth, but hygienists made good money, she considered.

For the first time, I felt compelled to marry only a Korean Adventist. I remember asking her if she would consider marrying a Korean who was a Christian, but not Adventist. “No,” she replied. I remember asking her if she would consider marrying a non-Korean Adventist. “No,” she said. I guess it wasn’t until I knew her church and cultural back-
ground, not her faith, reigned supreme in her life.

I wasn’t surprised when I received a phone call six months later from a sobbing Vicky. She told me she was kicked out of her church. It turned out her teaches-
covered she had been kicked out. So Vicky kept up her church, or any other church, cannot save me. Each person must come to his/her own realization that he/she is a sinner in need of a Savior.

The Bible says, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12. In a religious operation called Omega. When any church or person takes prece-
dence over or claims equality with Christ, it is idol-
athy. And when any other book (Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price, The Desire of Ages, and the oral traditions of Catholicism) is elevated to equal status with the Bible, then we are telling God that his word is not sufficient.

Vicky, wherever you are, I hope you have perse-
vered. Most of all, I hope that Christ is the center of your life and that whatever church you belong to, I hope it supports you in your quest to serve God and know Him. Most of all, I hope you understand that none of us deserve God’s goodness, but thank God, Christ paid our penalty in full in his work on the cross. Christ’s words are nothing less than we can do to de-
serve our forgiveness or earn our way to heaven—“that work my Lord has done!”

Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you sub-
mit to its rules: “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch. These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings.” Colossians 2:20-23

Note: Vicky is not my friend’s real name.

“Those things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” 1 Jn. 5:13

“...these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you may have life in His name.” Jn. 20:31

“...and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” 2 Tim. 3:15

The witness of Ellen White

“But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord in its support.’”

There are many conflicting statements in the writings of Ellen White on this topic. At one time she will point to the Bible as the ulti-
mate authority. At other times she puts her writings in that place.

The witness of church doctrine

The Adventist church is also somewhat unclear. For example, point number one in the Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists states:

“The Holy Scriptures are infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character; the test of experience, the authorita-
tive revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God’s acts in history.”

However, having stated this, we now turn to point number 17 in the same statement of beliefs where we read:

“One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an iden-
tifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the min-
istery of Ellen White. As the Lord released her, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.”

Summary

If we believe we stand in the heritage of the Protestant Reformation, it seems clear that we must take the Bible and the Bible only as our authority for knowing the will of God and the way of salvation, we can rest in its clear, simple teaching, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31) Understanding that the Bible is our only author-
ity also calls the integrity of Ellen White into question. If her writings cannot be considered authoritative for salvation, doctrine, or prac-
tice, then we must be willing to give up our dependence on them as unreliable at best and soul-destroying at worst and look to the Bible only for our standard of living.

Once a transitioning Adventist has determined what the Gospel is, once he has established the Bible as the only source of authority for knowing God’s will and the way of salvation, and once he has dismissed Ellen White as a reliable source of instruction for a Christian, he will find the reality of Jesus and the certainty of salva-
tion anchoring his soul in Sabbath rest.

Endnotes

1 See Ratzlaff, Cultic Doctrine, p. 189,190.
3 See Cultic Doctrine, p. 31-42.
4 See Cultic Doctrine, p. 51–82.

Whatever we decide is our authority for truth will determine what we believe the gospel to be.

Doctrine should seldom, if ever, come from the visionary pas-
sages of Ezekiel, Daniel, Revelation or other such apocalyptic sec-
tions. Most of these books are open to numerous interpretations. It is also important to realize that we do not have to have all the answers, especially to questions dealing with the interpretation of apocalyptic prophesies! Rather, where the Bible is clear, we can and should be certain. Where the Bible is unclear we must be tentative.

To be dogmatic in the interpretation of Scriptures that are unclear or are honestly open to more than one interpretation is the foundation of the disunity within the Christian church and the recipe for cultic teaching.

When we have established that the Bible alone is our authority for knowing the will of God and the way of salvation, we can rest in its clear, simple teaching, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31) Understanding that the Bible is our only author-
ity also calls the integrity of Ellen White into question. If her writings cannot be considered authoritative for salvation, doctrine, or prac-
tice, then we must be willing to give up our dependence on them as unreliable at best and soul-destroying at worst and look to the Bible only for our standard of living.

Once a transitioning Adventist has determined what the Gospel is, once he has established the Bible as the only source of authority for knowing God’s will and the way of salvation, and once he has dismissed Ellen White as a reliable source of instruction for a Christian, he will find the reality of Jesus and the certainty of salva-
tion anchoring his soul in Sabbath rest.
First things first

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Nevertheless, for most of us, once we clearly understand the gospel, we began to see cracks in the Adventist theological paradigm that caused us to continue our study.

Not only is gospel clarity an important study for the process of transition, it is also the subject of utmost importance! After all, if there is one topic that needs to be clearly understood it is, “What must I do to be saved?” Therefore, we put this as the first order of business for the transitioning Adventist. One must be absolutely clear here: Misunderstanding the gospel at best will rob us of assurance; at worst, it might keep us from experiencing eternal life. The importance of this subject cannot be overemphasized.

However, before we actually discuss this subject we must look at the rest of the big three.

Authority

How is one to determine the essence of the pure gospel? For Adventists this is not always an easy answer. Some will say, “Just read Steps to Christ by Ellen White. It will become clear.” Other Adventists who still use the KJV might answer, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Rev 22:14.

There are many Adventists who would agree with either or both of the above. However, there are major problems with either. Few Adventists know that the real author of Steps to Christ was Fanny Bolton. True, Miss Bolton was working for Ellen White as her secre-

tary when Miss Bolton gathered and arranged the material for Steps to Christ. So in that sense it could (and is) said that Ellen White was the author. However, one must not trust their eternal destiny to a person working for Ellen White.

Next, few Adventists—especially those who still use the KJV—know that the translation of Rev 22:14 is not the correct translation. Modern literal translations such as the NASB or the NIV have “wash their robes in the place of “keep his commandments” when it should have been “wash their robes.”

The earliest manuscript we have reads “wash their robes.” This translation error is an illustration of why it is best to use a modern literal translation when doing serious Bible study as it will reflect the most accurate translation based upon the best manuscript evidence. Most Adventist evangelists know that it is easier to “prove” Adventist theology from the KJV. That is the reason many give away a free KJV Bible to those who attend. While there are several other aspects of concern dealing with the topic of authority, we now identify the last of the big three, and then we will come back to each for further development.

Ellen White

The transitioning Adventist must once and for all come to grips with Ellen White. Either she was a true prophet (or inspired messenger) of God, or she was not. If she was, then we must all return to Adventism, for she repeatedly stated that those who leave the Adventist church will end up becoming infidels and loose their souls. If she was not, then we need not be bound by her many statements damning those who question Adventism.

This is no little matter for Adventists. It must be resolved. I remember the months of turmoil Carolyn and I went through seeking the answers regarding Ellen White. Fortunately, there is a lot more easily accessible information available today on Ellen White than there was for those of us who left in the 80s.

Expanding on the big three

Authority

While the gospel is usually the first discovery most transitioning Adventists make, that discovery leads them quickly to the question of authority. As they learn that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus alone, they begin to compare what they’ve read in the Bible with what they’ve learned from Ellen White and also from church doctrines. Whatever we decide is our authority for truth will determine what we believe the gospel to be. Because the issue of authority colors one’s perception of the gospel, I will address this issue first even though the Gospel is usually the discovery that leads to this question.

When I was struggling with the issue of authority, I reached my conclusion based upon the Bible, Ellen White and church doctrine. While there are contradictions in both the writings of Ellen White and church doctrine on this matter, the Bible witness is clear.

The Bible Witness

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.” 2 Tim. 3:16

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Rom. 1:16

The following is the first part of the letter of resignation (edited for publication) written by Jeffrey Helsius to William Miller, president of the Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists on May 24, 2004. Because of its scope and depth, we will run this letter in two installments; the first deals largely with the heresies endorsed by the church by its printing of The Clear Word. The second part of the letter, which deals with unscriptural statements of Ellen White, will run in the next issue of Proclamation!

Dear Bill:

I want to thank you for the many ways you inspired me to be a passionate leader for Jesus within the Seventh-day Adventist Church here in Minnesota! I promised I would explain more fully why I resigned my position as pastor of my four churches a month ago. I want you to understand how our journey to become authentic in our walk with Jesus has led us to where we are today. Virginia and I believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is at the most important crossroad of its history; as a result of much Biblical study, and church doctrine on this matter, we will run in the next issue of Proclamation!

Jeffrey Helsius

Jeffrey Helsius 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.

Dear Conference President

JEFFREY HELSIUS

Seventh-day Adventist church remains represented by two separate and distinct churches; the first being the historical, not fully disclosed, oftentimes dysfunctional church kept alive by misguided religious zealots, and the second, being represented by those who truly know Jesus Christ as their all sufficient Savior, Lord, and best friend, and who are sometimes brave enough to reject the heretically non-biblical, non-Christ centered positions and emphases of the church’s historical past. A war is raging between these two “churches” for the very “theological soul” of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Consider this theological war as it becomes translated into practical, “rubber meets the road theology.”

Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who enthusiastically embrace every line of historical Adventism still believe they must become literally perfect to survive the “time of Jacob’s trouble,” a supposed time in which the living remnant of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be abandoned to stand alone before Almighty God without a mediator brought about by the cessation of Christ’s mediatory work within the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary. This cessation of mediation lasts from the moment Christ leaves the Most Holy Place, until He reaches earth to

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Dr. Jack Blanco had done surgery to God’s word, forcibly inserting doctrine and interpretations into scriptural verses which could never linguistically support such insertions.

in deeds, but even in every thought they will be perfect. Since Jesus will no longer be actively applying His blood during this time of travel from Heaven to earth, such a remnant must be able to stand alone before God in their own attained perfection. Their perfection will be the perfect emulation of the perfection of Christ, and will qualify them to be treated as the special “remnant,” the special entourage of Jesus forever. Does the Bible ever say that sinful man will become totally perfect this side of the Second Coming? Does the Bible ever say that Christ will abandon the final generation to stand alone before Almighty God? Biblically based Christians know that such theological dogmas are simply not supported by the Bible. The Bible tells us: [emphasis supplied]

So what can we conclude from the aforementioned scriptures? “Never leave” means exactly never! Being with us “always” means always! “Nothing can separate” means that nothing can come between us and Christ for even a millisecond! The Bible says that if we think for a second that we are without sin, we are liars, and the truth is simply not in us! Belief in the attainment of a 100% intrinsic perfection before Jesus comes makes one a liar. The Bible teaches that we remain redeemed, growing in grace sinners, until He is revealed! The Bible teaches that we shall not put our hope on if the Second Coming! It is a fact of life, and long Lord, shall it be before the SDA Church decides to take a stand against the continued teaching of un-Biblical heresy?

Another example of troubling historic Adventist theo- logy has to do with the entrenched Adventist belief that the exact date of Christ’s coming is dependent upon human performance. For example, remember the Adventist postula- tion that if Seventh-day Adventists in 1888 had accepted the 1888 message, Christ would have come! Do you remember hearing in church school that the Second Coming of Christ was contingent upon the character of Christ being perfectly reproduced in His people? Does the Bible teach such theology? Did the Apostle Paul or John the Revelator ever say that the Second Coming was dependent upon human performance? God the Father already knows when His mercy will come to an end, and since He already knows exactly when Christ will come, the aforementioned Adventist belief that Jesus could have or could have been, is not Biblically supported, nor is it even theoretically possible within the context of God’s omnipotence. Such a con- cept is an insult to the sovereignty and majesty of God! Regarding His Second Coming, Jesus said:

We will complete our overview of The Clear Word with a final example of Professor Blanco’s work. Jude 1:9 “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”[NKJV]

Jude 1:9 “In contrast to these ungodly men is the Lord Jesus, also called Michael the Archangel, for He is in charge of the entire angelic host. When He was challenged by Satan about His intentions to resurrect Moses, He didn’t come at Satan with a blistering attack nor did He belittle Him. He simply said, God rejects your claim to His body.”

The Bible teaches that

Jude 1:9 is clear: What Dr. Blanco has inserted into Jude 1:9 is serious linguistic fiction. There are five Biblical references to Michael. Look them up and you will not find the Bible calling Jesus, Michael the archangel. (Daniel 10:13, 10:21, 12:1, Jude 9, and Revelation 12:7) Since we have previously studied some of Dr. Blanco’s problematic translations on the divinity of Christ, it should not surprise us that he not only lowers Christ’s title in Jude 19, by referring to Him as an angel, but consequent- ly places Jesus in a direct confrontation with Satan where- in Christ’s hands are tied. Jesus cannot pronounce a raling judgment against Satan, nor can He rebuke this author of sin because according to this verse, only the Lord can do that: “The Lord rebuke you!” By putting Jesus in this situation and having Him refer to God outside of Himself, he again denies Christ’s divinity.

Scripture teaches us that Jesus is superior to any angel! Hebrews 1:3-14 clearly explains the ways in which Jesus is above them.

To call Jesus an angel, is—well, to call Him a created being. And if He was once created, He cannot be my Savior; for only God could pay the penalty for my sins. I will have to know why Dr. Blanco’s Bible has to make Jesus into an angel. What angel do we know who would like to lower Christ down to his level? Every Christian within the Seventh-day Adventist Church facing that same challenge as faced Shadrich, Meshach, and Abednego. Will we bow our knees to the image of church authority, as evidenced in the publica- tion of the The Clear Word by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, or will we stand straight and tall upon the Word of God, counting it a privilege to enter the furnace with Christ; not stopping to count the cost in famil- y and friends? We conclude this letter in the next issue of Proclamation!
“Caution, You Are About To Enter A No Spin Zone!”
The following text clearly warns the reader to fear going to hell—that is, until you read Professor Blanco’s version.

Matthew 10: 28 “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” KJV
Matthew 10: 28 “Don’t be afraid that you might be killed. They can kill your body but not your spirit of loyalty to Me. Now if there is something to be concerned about, it’s that you don’t lose your faith in God.” The Clear Word

The KJV uses the words, “destroy both soul and body in hell” because the translation is founded on the Greek manuscripts which state in Matthew 10:28, “to destroy both soul, [soul] and soma, [body]”, in greekenna, “hell.”

Dr. Blanco completely changes Christ’s words. The verse changes Christ’s strong warning about avoiding destruction in hell, to a gentle reminder not to lose your faith in God.

The Place of Grace

We continue with two texts that assure the Christian direct access to God, because the writer of Hebrews tells us that we may boldly enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

Hebrews 10: 19-20 “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.” KJV

The word hagion means sacred, holy place, most holy place, holiness, or sanctuary. The context of the verse declares which holy place. The obvious context of Hebrews 10:19-20, tells us that the word hagion is referring to the fantastic news that Christ’s shed blood and broken body has cut the curtain, enabling our souls to enter into that place, i.e. the throne of God.

The Clear Word

Clearly a fiasco of Biblical proportions!

About two years ago I began hearing my church members begin to discuss how much they liked The Clear Word Bible. That raised my curiosity, so I began to read my own copy of it. What I discovered shocked me! Dr. Jack Blanco had done surgery to God’s word, forcibly inserting doctrine and interpretations into scriptural verses which could never linguistically support such insertions.

Consequently he has taken the Word of God captive, sadly with the church’s blessing.

To be fair we must note that Dr. Blanco claims he has written a paraphrase. Can we agree that a paraphrase is a Bible that uses conversational language to describe what is foundational in the root language of each verse? So would not the fruit of Blanco’s work be determined by an analysis of the hermeneutical rules he either employs or does not employ in the production of his “paraphrase”? The proof is in the writing.

Virginia and I believe that God has allowed the publication of The Clear Word to awaken Seventh-day Adventists to a re-examination of what God’s Word alone teaches! Tragically, since the publication of The Clear Word in 1994, the eyes of most Seventh-day Adventists have remained closed to the continued peddling of premediated blasphemy within its ranks. [I wish I could say it in a nicer way, but the “no jot or tittle” theology is quite clear in Matthew 5:18].

In addition, The Clear Word has clearly demonstrated that Dr. Jack J. Blanco is one of the many Seventh-day Adventists who hold fast the belief that Ellen White’s interpretations of the word katapetasma are the only meaning in the sense that Ellen White’s writings serve as the pre-eminent source of authority and comfort for the church, providing a more recent revelation of the meaning and interpretation of God’s Holy Word, regardless of the fact that sometimes her statements seriously conflict with and/or oppose the words of the Bible.

Consequently he has taken the Word of God captive, sadly with the church’s blessing.

The Clear Word Bible is not a Bible, I would like to propose this question, “Can you look up John 3:16 in The Clear Word Bible? If so, then it was not indeed designed to function as a Bible, instead of as a Bible commentary. The first published cover identified Dr. Jack Blanco’s Bible as The Clear Word Bible.

Some say he never intended it to be read in church, or he never intended it to be a study Bible. I would like to ask respectfully, “What do his intentions have to do with the drastic additions and deletions he has made to the content of the Holy Scriptures? How did he intend to be used does not allow him a “Pantus Plate moment” to wash his hands of the consequences of changing God’s Word. The bottom line is he created it, and with the assistance of the denomination, he has potentially placed it in the hands of millions.

I would like to appeal to the leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to reconsider their tacit endorsement of Blanco’s Bible. I give you some poignant examples; (emphasis supplied)

Dr. Blanco completely changes Christ’s words. The verse changes Christ’s strong warning about avoiding destruction in hell, to a gentle reminder not to lose your faith in God.

Hebrews 10: 19-20 “Therefore, my brothers, we have complete freedom to come to the Sanctuary in heaven and with confidence come into the very presence of God through the blood of Jesus and what He has done for us.” The Clear Word

As demonstrated in the KJV, Christians of the apostolic age, steeped in the symbolism of the sacrificial system, were given complete assurance that Christ’s death was once and for all an acceptable sacrifice; the reader is told that he may now have access to the holiest place in heaven because the blood of Jesus has created a living way to enter into that place, i.e. the throne of God.

Since Dr. Blanco’s interpretation ignores katapetasma, consequently defying hermeneutical logic in light of Ex. 26:33, Ex. 26:12, 12:3, Ex. 27:21, 30:40,22-26, Lev. 4:16,17,16:15, 24:3, Num. 18:7, and Matt. 27:51, and since he ignores eigeneis, we can only conclude that
To Tell The Truth
Deut. 5:3 “The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us alive this day.”
Deut. 5:3 “It wasn’t only with our ancestors that He made a covenant, but with us and with all who are alive today.”
Dr. Jack J. Blanco: The Clear Word

In addition to the King James Version, every translation I have in my library interprets Deut. 5:3 in the same way that the covenant was not made with the ancestors. But when I pick up The Clear Word, I discover that Dr. Blanco obviously believes he can change the Bible and state that the covenant was made with the ancestors.

The change Dr. Blanco made to Thomas’ statement about Christ would not only be considered blasphemy by Greek scholars, but would also be considered a theological step back, in line with such denominations as the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Before I share any more examples, I would like to point out that the Old and New Testaments are very clear regarding the holiness of God’s word and change to it: From Revelation 22:18-19, we are warned.

In the KJV, we have Thomas declaring in no uncertain terms that Jesus is fully his Lord and God. This declaration coming from “doubting Thomas” is an especially powerful testimony in light of Thomas’ documented struggle with his identity before the crucifixion. Why would the words to this verse seem completely contrived out of Mid-Air? And why did he choose to replace the words, “My Lord and my God,” (mon kurios kai mon Theos), which declares Jesus to be Jehovah, with the words: “You’re God.”

Regarding kurios, I share the following quotation from Strong’s Expanded Concordance: “thereafter, except in Acts 10/4 and Revelation 7/14, there is no record that kurios was ever altered in the English texts in addressing anyone save God and the Lord Jesus.” (Vines as quoted in Strong’s Expanded Concordance, p. 147 of the Greek Dictionary)

Considering the effect that the word kurios had on the believers of Christ following Thomas’ declaration, it is truly sad that Dr. Blanco takes the punch right out of John 20:28 by giving Jesus a different title than is literally recorded in the Greek text of the verse. We could only guess that Dr. Blanco’s odd decision to water down the theology of this verse by inserting “Son of God,” in place of “My Lord and my God,” has something to do with his belief regarding the divinity of Christ. The change Dr. Blanco made to Thomas’ statement about Christ would not only be considered blasphemy by Greek scholars, but would also be considered a theological step back, in line with such denominations as the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Interestingly, Jehovah’s Witnesses would also prefer Dr. Blanco’s choice in title for Jesus, because the title “Son of God” does not in itself declare that Christ has always been. Those uncomfortable with Christ’s divinity prefer only the “Son of God” title, because they can use it to defend their belief that Jesus is the result of a creative act sometime in the distant past; not a part of “The I Am” construct of God.

The following verses are critical in the understanding of Christ’s divinity:

Colossians 1:15-19 “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.”

In Colossians 1:15-19 “He is the visible likeness of the invisible God, and as God’s firstborn, He has the right to be placed over all creation. Through Him the Father created all things to begin with, both in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. All order and power was instituted through Him, whether spiritual or secular, including the order of governments, rulers, and various levels of authority. All things were created by Him and are intended to serve His purposes. He existed before anything was created, and by Him everything that exists continues to hold together. He is also the head of the church and controls the church as the head controls the body. Although He existed from the beginning, He was the only human who ever died and conquered death. Therefore, He is worthy to be given the first place above everything in heaven and on earth. With pleasure the Father acknowledges Him as fully God, in spite of His human nature.” The Clear Word

In spite of the many changes The Clear Word makes to this passage, I have chosen to review only three key questions that The Clear Word forces us to address: 1. What is meant by Christ being the firstborn? 2. Was Christ only a channel through which God the Father created all things, or was He able to create, because He too is God? 3. What is meant by the fullness of God dwelling within Christ?

In answer to the first question, the word “firstborn” in Greek, prototokos, as applied in Col. 1:15, means that Dr. Blanco’s theology raises the question of whether Jesus was the source of creation, or only a channel of creation. We need look no further than these Greek words in verse 16: “noti in auto eliste to pantos” (because in Him were created all things). The Greek is very clear that Jesus is the source of creative power. (“In Him, [in auto], were all things created”)

In contrast, The Clear Word states, “Through Him the Father created all things to begin with…” I’m puzzled as to how Dr. Blanco justifies his translation? The word for Father is not in the Greek text of this verse.

Finally, what is meant by the fullness of God dwelling within Christ? Again let us look at the Greek in verse 19: “Hoti in auto pantos to pleroma endokesen katoikesai,” (because in Him all the fullness was well pleased to dwell).

The meaning in Colossians 1:19 is quite straightforward. Within Christ dwelt the fullness of “The I Am” in Hebrews 1:10, the writer quotes Psalm 102 and applies it to Christ. The aforementioned citation from Psalm 102 was originally written as a Psalm about Yahweh; therefore the writer of Hebrews is making a profound theological statement when he addresses Christ as “Yahweh.””And, You LORD, (Yahweh), in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands.”

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The change Dr. Blanco made to Thomas' statement about Christ would not only be considered blasphemy by Greek scholars, but would also be considered a theological step back, in line with such denominations as the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Before I share any more examples, I would like to point out that the Old and New Testaments are very clear regarding the holiness of God's word and change to it: From Revelation 22:18-19, we are warned, "And I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," says the Lord. "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit on my throne, just as I have overcome and sat on my Father's throne."

And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the words of this book, and who does not repent, 'I will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'

Dr. Blanco, on the other hand, changes the emphasis and meaning of this verse from that which unabashedly declares Jesus' claim to oneness in deity with the Father, to that which declares that the reason for oneness was not based on essence, but rather on their relationship. Because Jesus is our Lord and our God, we cherish the truth of His word. From the gospel of John we read: John 20:28,"And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." John 20:28,"Thomas stood there speechless. Then he fell to his knees and said, Lord, you're alive! They were right! I believe! You are the Son of God!" The Clear Word

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Regarding kuros, I share the following quotation from Strong's Expanded Concordance: "thereafter, except in Acts 10:4 and Revelation 7:14, there is no record that kuros was ever used. The original Greek was addressing any save God and the Lord Jesus." (Vines as quoted in Strong's Expanded Concordance, p.147 of the Greek Dictionary) Considering the effect that the word kuros had on the believers of Christ following Thomas' declaration, it is truly sad that Dr. Blanco takes the punch right out of John 20:28 by giving Jesus a different title than is literally found in this verse. We can only guess that Dr. Blanco's odd decision to water down the theology of this verse by inserting "Son of God," in place of "My Lord and my God" has something to do with his belief regarding the divinity of Christ. The change Dr. Blanco made to Thomas' statement about Christ would not only be considered blasphemy by Greek scholars, but would also be considered a theological step back, in line with such denominations as the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Interestingly, Jehovah's Witnesses would also prefer Dr. Blanco's choice in title for Jesus, because the title "Son of God" does not in itself declare that Christ has always been. Those uncomfortable with Christ's divinity prefer only the "Son of God" title, because they can use it to defend their belief that Jesus is the result of a creative act sometime in the distant past; not a part of "The I Am" construct of God. The following verses are critical in the understanding of Christ's divinity:

Colossians 1:15-19,"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell;"
The Clear Word

Colossians 1:15-19,"He is the visible likeness of the invisible God, and as God's firstborn, He has the right to be placed over all creation. Through Him the Father created all things to begin with, both in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. All order and power was instituted through Him, whether spiritual or secular, including the order of governments, rulers, and various levels of authority. All things were created by Him and are intended to serve His purposes. He existed before anything was created, and by Him everything that exists continues to hold together. He is also the head of the church and controls the church as the head controls the body. Although He existed from the beginning, He was the only human who ever died and conquered death. Therefore, it is worthy to give Him first place above everything in heaven and on earth. With pleasure the Father acknowledges Him as fully God, in spite of His human nature." The Clear Word

In spite of the many changes. The Clear Word makes to this passage, I have chosen to review only three key questions that The Clear Word forces us to address: 1. What is meant by Christ being the firstborn? 2. Was Christ only a channel through which God the Father created all things, or was He able to create, because He too is God? 3. What is meant by the fullness of God dwelling within Christ? Again let us look at the Greek in verse 19: "Hai in auto pantos ektisthe to pleroma,"[because in Him were created all things]. The Greek is very clear that Jesus is the source of creative power. ("In Him, [in auto], were all things created").

In contrast, The Clear Word states, "Through Him the Father created all things to begin with..." I'm puzzled as to how Dr. Blanco justifies his translation? The word for Father is not in the Greek text of this verse.

Finally, what was the fullness of God dwelling within Christ? Again let us look at the Greek in verse 19: "Hai in auto pantos ektisthe to pleroma endokesen katoikelosei,"[because in Him all the fullness was well pleased to dwell].

The meaning in Colossians 1:19 is quite straightforward. Within Christ dwelt the fullness of "The I Am." In Hebrews 1:10, the writer quotes Psalm 102:9, and it applies it to Christ. The aforementioned citation from Psalm 102 was originally written as a Psalm about Yahweh; therefore the writer of Hebrews is making a profound theological statement when he addresses Christ as "Yahweh." (And, You LORD, Yahweh), in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands."
Dr. Blanco completely changes Christ’s words. The verse changes Christ’s strong warning about avoiding destruction in hell, to a gentle reminder not to lose your faith in God.

Hebrews 10:19-20: “Therefore, my brothers, we have complete freedom to come to the Sanctuary in heaven and with confidence come into the very presence of God through the blood of Jesus and what He has done for us.” The Clear Word

As demonstrated in the KJV, Christians of the apostolic age, steeped in the symbolism of the sacrificial system, were given complete assurance that Christ’s death was once and for all an acceptable sacrifice; the reader is told that he ignores it’s that you don’t lose your faith in God.

“The word hagion means sacred, holy place, most holy, place of grace, entrance to the throne of God. As demonstrated in the KJV, death was to enter into that place, i.e. the throne of God. If Hebrews 10:19:20 is left alone, then you can’t kill your body or your soul, but you can’t be killed. It’s your faith in God that’s so precious.

Hebrews 10:19-20: “Therefore, have confidence, brethren, of the day of salvation and of the glory of God; and as a generalized description of the Sanctuary building—probably for the same reason that Dr. George R. Knight, in his book Exploring Hebrews, preferred the word Sanctuary over Most Holy Place in his translation of Hebrews 10:19, who do you suppose hates the idea of direct access to the Most Holy Place?”

We will look at another sanctuary reference in Hebrews, chapter six:

Hebrews 6:19-20: “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

The NKJV translates the Greek word esoteros, which in combination with the word hagion, or hagion, means “that which is within the veil.”

The很清楚的Word translates the Greek word katapetasma, which in combination with the word hagion, means “that which is within the veil.”

Neither the KJV nor the NKJV, nor anyone else has the right to add the word “in” to the Greek word esoteros. The word “in” is the interpretation of the Reader’s Study Bible that uses conversational language to describe what is foundational in the root language of each verse.

Dr. Blanco is not素质 to change the meaning of the word hagion, or hagion, to mean “enters the inner Sanctuary.”

The word hagion means sacred, holy place, most holy place, holiness, or sanctuary. The context of the verse declares which holy place.

The obvious context of Hebrews 10:19-20, tells us that the word hagion is referring to the magnificent, fantastic news that Christ’s shed blood and broken body has cut the curtain, enabling our souls to gain by faith bold access to that Holy place which was once off limits to 99.99% of mankind!

Dr. Blanco didn’t choose to change the interpretation
to the reader’s version, but instead interpreted hagion as a generalized description of the Sanctuary building—probably for the same reason that Dr. George R. Knight, in his book Exploring Hebrews, preferred the word Sanctuary over Most Holy Place in his translation of Hebrews 10:19. Who do you suppose hates the idea of direct access to the Most Holy Place?

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The KJV uses the words, “destroy both soul and body in hell,” because the writer of Hebrews tells us that we may boldly enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. The NKJV translates the Greek word, “destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Therefore, Dr. Blanco claims he has written a paraphrase. Can we agree that a paraphrase is a Bible that uses conversational language to describe what is foundational in the root language of each verse?

Virginia and I believe that God has allowed the publication of The Clear Word to awaken Seventh-day Adventists to a re-examination of what God’s Word alone teaches! Tragically, since the publication of The Clear Word in 1994, the eyes of most Seventh-day Adventists have remained closed to the continued peddling of premeditated blasphemy within its ranks.

The proof is in the writing.

In addition, The Clear Word has clearly demonstrated that Dr. Jack J Blanco is one of the many Seventh-day Adventists who hold fast the belief that Ellen White’s interpretation of the word katapetasma is the correct interpretation in the sense that Ellen White’s writings serve as the pre-eminent source of authority and comfort for the church, providing a more recent revelation of the meaning and interpretation of God’s Holy Word, regardless of the fact that sometimes her statements seriously conflict with and/or oppose the words of the Bible.

Consequently any attempt to change Ellen White’s loyalty to the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church most likely combined to form the rationale behind many of the inexcusable changes he has made in his paraphrase of the Word of God.

Instead of letting the Bible say only what it says, Dr. Blanco has manipulated texts to make them appear to contain more theology than they presently contain. For example, in The Clear Word, he added the word “now” to Daniel 8:14, and then added 300 more words to Daniel 9:23-27. With such obvious attempts to manipulate key verses to support Adventist theology, other denominational scholars must just shake their heads and roll their eyes at such sectarianism.

The Clear Word, a sectarian interpretation of the Bible, is currently providing a major contribution to the diminishing reputation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a Bible based, Christian denomination. The Clear Word has placed the SDA Church aboard a fast train to the same distinction that other denominations such as the Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Roman Catholics already possess: the distinction that they too have created their own blasphemous bibles and books.

The Clear Word has placed the SDA Church aboard a fast train to the same distinction that other denominations such as the Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Roman Catholics already possess; the distinction that they too have created their own blasphemous books and bibles.

is not solely based in scriptural truth! Doing nothing about it is a sin, because liars and fabricators, according to Revelation 21:22, will not enter the pearly gates.

“The clear word has placed the SDA Church aboard a fast train to the same distinction that other denominations such as the Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Roman Catholics already possess: the distinction that they too have created their own blasphemous books and bibles.”
Herald His Second Coming. It is a historic Adventist belief that this trip requires seven days of traveling. See Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2, page 33.) Why must the “remnant” be perfect during this supposed “time of Jacob’s trouble”? Because at the very moment that Christ no longer intercedes on their behalf, they sincerely believe that only their hope of salvation will be their own intrinsic perfection; such a work of sanctification will mean that even their “inner man” will be perfect, even as Christ is perfect. Not only is he perfect, but even in every thought they will be perfect. Since Jesus will no longer be actively applying His blood during this time of travel from Heaven to earth, such a remnant must be able to stand alone before God in their own attained perfection. Their perfection will be the perfect emolument of the perfection of Christ, and will qualify them to be treated as the special “remnant”, the special entourage of Jesus forever. Does the Bible ever say that Christ will abandon the final generation to stand alone before Almighty God? Does the Bible ever say that sinful man will become totally perfect this side of the Second Coming? Does the Bible ever say that Christ will abandon the final generation to stand alone before Almighty God? Biblically based Christians know that such theological dogmas are simply not supported by the Bible. The Bible tells us: [emphasis supplied]

Dr. Jack Blanco had done surgery to God’s word, forcibly inserting doctrine and interpretations into scriptural verses which could never linguistically support such insertions.

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First things first

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Nevertheless, for most of us, once we clearly understood the gospel, we began to see cracks in the Adventist theological paradigm that caused us to continue our study.

Not only is gospel clarity an important study for the process of transition, it is also the subject of utmost importance! After all, if there is one topic that needs to be clearly understood it is, “What must I do to be saved?” Therefore, we put this as the first order of business for the transitioning Adventist. One must be absolutely clear here: Misunderstanding the gospel at best will rob us of assurance; at worst, it might keep us from experiencing eternal life. The importance of this subject cannot be overemphasized. However, before we actually discuss this subject we must look at the rest of the big three.

Authority

How is one to determine the essence of the pure gospel? For Adventists this is not always an easy answer. Some will say, “just read Steps to Christ by Ellen White. It will become clear.” Other Adventists who still use the KJV might answer, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Rev. 22:14.

There are many Adventists who would agree with either or both of the above. However, there are major problems with either. Few Adventists know that the real author of Steps to Christ was Fanny Bolton. True, Miss Bolton was working for Ellen White as her secretary when Miss Bolton gathered and arranged the material for Steps to Christ. So in that sense it could (and is) said that Ellen White was the author. However, one must not trust their eternal destiny to a person working for Ellen White.

Next, few Adventists—especially those who still use the KJV—know that the translation of Rev. 22:14 is not the correct translation. Modern literal translations such as the NASB or the NIV have “wash their robes” in the place of “keep his commandments” in this verse. Why? Scholars are quite certain how the variant reading of “wash their robes” in the place of “keep his commandments” came into being. In Greek there is only a slight difference in spelling between “keep his commandments” and “wash their robes.” And these two words sounded identical in Greek at the time the Greek manuscripts were copied. The method sometimes used in copying manuscripts was to have a reader who would read the text, and then there were several scribes who would transcribe it as the two words sounded identical and both, in a sense, made sense within the context, one scribe wrote “keep his commandments” when it should have been “wash their robes.” The earliest manuscripts we have reads “wash their robes.” This translation error is an illustration of why it is best to use a modern literal translation when doing serious Bible study as it will reflect the most accurate translation based upon the best manuscript evidence.

Most Adventist evangelists know that it is easier to “prove” Adventist theology from the KJV. That is the reason many give away a free KJV Bible to those who attend. While there are several other aspects of concern dealing with the topic of authority, we now identify the last of the big three, and then we will come back to each for further development.

Ellen White

The transitioning Adventist must once and for all come to grips with Ellen White. Either she was a true prophet (or inspired messenger) of God, or she was not. If she was, then we must all return to Adventism, for she repeatedly stated that those who leave the Adventist church will end up becoming infidels and loose their souls. If she was not, then we need not be bound by her many statements damming those who question Adventism. This is no little matter for Adventists. It must be resolved.

I remember the months of turmoil Carolyn and I went through seeking the answers regarding Ellen White. Fortunately, there is a lot more easily accessible information available today on Ellen White than there was for those of us who left in the 80’s.

Expanding on the big three

Authority

While the gospel is usually the first discovery most transitioning Adventists make, that discovery leads them quickly to the question of authority. As they learn that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus alone, they begin to compare what they’ve read in the Bible with what they’ve learned from Ellen White and also from church doctrines. Whatever we decide is our authority for truth will determine what we believe the gospel to be. Because the issue of authority colors one’s perception of the gospel, I will address this issue first even though the Gospel is usually the discovery that leads to this question.

When I was struggling with the issue of authority, I reached my conclusion based upon the Bible, Ellen White and church doctrine. While there are contradictions in both the writings of Ellen White and church doctrine on this matter, the Bible witness is clear.

The Bible Witness

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.” 2 Tim. 3:16

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Rom. 1:16

Dear Conference President

JEFFREY HELSIUS

The following is the first part of the letter of resignation (edited for publication) written by Jeffrey Helsius to William Miller, president of the Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists on May 24, 2004. Because of its scope and depth, we will run this letter in two installments; the first deals largely with the heresies endorsed by the church by its printing of The Clear Word. The second part of the letter, which deals with unbiblical statements of Ellen White, will run in the next issue of Proclamation.

Dear Bill:

I want to thank you for the many ways you inspired me to be a passionate leader for Jesus within the Seventh-day Adventist Church here in Minnesota! I promised I would explain more fully why I resigned my position as pastor of my four churches a month ago. I want you to understand how our journey to become authentic in our walk with Jesus has led us to where we are today.

Virginia and I believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is at the most important crossroad of its history; as a result of much biblical study, and under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, we came to the sad and persistent conclusion that we could no longer ignore the reality of what could be best described as a tale of two churches. Today the

Seventh-day Adventist church remains represented by two separate and distinct churches; the first being the historical, not fully disclosed, oftentimes dysfunctional church kept alive by misguided religious zealots, and the second, being represented by those who truly know Jesus Christ as their all-sufficient Savior, Lord, and best friend, and who are sometimes brave enough to reject the heretically non-biblical, non-Christian centered positions and emphases of the church’s historical past. A war is raging between these two “churches” for the very “theological soul” of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Consider this theological war as it becomes translated into practical, “rubber meets the road theology.”

Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who enthusiastically embrace every line of historical Adventism still believe they must become literally perfect to survive the “time of Jacob’s trouble,” a supposed time in which the living remnant of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be abandoned to stand alone before Almighty God without a mediator brought about by the cessation of Christ’s mediatory work within the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary. This cessation of mediation lasts from the moment Christ leaves the Most Holy Place, until He reaches earth to

Jeffrey Helsius was born into a Lutheran family. His pastorate, 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.
Vicky never felt accepted by the church, the same church she grew up in. Curiously enough, it had nothing to do with the questioning of her faith, but more to do with her parents’ career status as convenience store owners and the lack of church attendance. For this reason, Vicky never fully felt included and many times she felt angry with the church for making her father and mother feel inferior.

Vicky complained so much that I finally encouraged Vicky to find a new church, but she didn’t feel comfortable going to unknown churches by herself— and more importantly, her parents wouldn’t approve. Since she liked the youth group at my church, I invited her to come to my church. She always enjoyed our youth group whenever she came, and for a while she would go to church on Saturdays and my church on Sundays, but she could never leave her church altogether.

In our senior year of high school, Vicky and I grew apart. We still hung out together, but things weren’t the same. Vicky became more involved in her church than ever before, and I think she just resigned to her fate as an Adventist member, despite her qualms.

After high school, we lost contact. By chance, three years later, we met again at California State University, San Bernardino. It turned out Vicky was transferring to Loma Linda University next quarter to become a dental hygienist. After talking with her, she revealed that she was her parents dream for her. Because she told me everybody in her church was going into a medical or health profession. She secretly wanted to study Psychology—a field and a ground, not her faith, reigned supreme in her life.

For the first time, she felt compelled to marry only a Korean Adventist. I remember asking her if she would consider marrying a Korean who was a Christian, but not Adventist. “No,” she replied. I remember asking her if she would consider marrying a non-Korean Adventist. “No,” she said. That was a big shock, considering she had been kicked out of dental school due to low test scores. She was relieved, but she was scared of what her parents and her church would say after they discovered she had been kicked out. So Vicky kept up the lie of attending dental school until she could keep it up no longer. At which point, she decided that it was time she moved out of her parents’ home and lived on her own. Returning to Cal State, Bernardino, Vicky studied Psychology—a field and a school, she said which is not considered proper by her church. More than this, however, depression set in as she tried to conform to her parents’ and church’s standard, a standard she somehow could not approve. Since she liked the youth group at my church, I invited her to come to my church. She always enjoyed our youth group whenever she came, and for a while she would go to church on Saturdays and my church on Sundays, but she could never leave her church altogether.

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How does a former Adventist find a new church? CONTINUED FROM BACK

The question remains: how is the former Adventist to judge the soundness of the doctrines of a church body? We discovered that, fortunately, Christians have long agreed on the primary points of orthodox Christianity: God is Creator; Jesus is His Son and was born of a virgin; Christ lived and died to provide the only way for our salvation; and is coming again. The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity, and the Bible is our only trusted standard of faith. We discovered it was very important to recognize that all Christian churches are a part of the body of Christ rather than there being only one true denomination or group.

To these essentials of faith we added some lessons learned from Adventism: a church should not be focused on the externals of dress or so-called “divinely inspired” extra-Biblical commentary. We learned that a healthy church is one that is outwardly focused and shares the whole gospel rather than concentrating on a pet doctrine. We also learned that it was imperative that we, as former Adventists, keep an open and teachable attitude. Adventist theology leads one to the circular reasoning of E.G. White: her doctrines, traditions, fictions, and counsels are set in the Adventist church as if in concrete. The freedom from these restrictions became obvious when we found ourselves in the right church body—one to which God had led us, one which honors the essentials of the Christian faith, where the gospel is taught, where Christ is central, and where the Bible is the foundation of all teaching.

We learned that what we needed was not a particular denominational affiliation, worship style, or socio-economic profile; what we needed was a place where God showed up. Our new identities in Christ finally began to grow when we chose to stop focusing on non-essentials and parted company with false doctrines.

Most formers will realize, as we did, that they have been totally isolated from true Christians and must now place themselves in a position to be vulnerable and transparent with other Christ-followers. If you are in the position of wondering where to go now that you have left Adventism, allow the Lord to lead you to meet the people with whom he wants you to grow. He may lead you to try attending concerts or special services at area churches or to attend a community Bible study. Ask the people there what they like about their churches and what activities their churches are doing. Perhaps you might invest time volunteering to work with a non-denominational Christian ministry in your area.

Above all on this journey we must remember God is to be trusted as our Guide and Protector. We have His promise in Psalm 16:7: “God sets the solitary in families…” He has a family prepared and waiting for you.

Lyndal Ulman and her husband David live in southeast Alabama. David is a helicopter pilot instructor training Air Force students. Lyndal is a homemaker and caregiver for her elderly mother. They are active members of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship where they are leaders in servant evangelism outreach.

Vicky, where are you? ANGELA BULLARD

Vicky had mixed reactions to her faith; at times she would hate it, and at times she would want to reform it.

Many formers have reported that the experience of being a former Adventist was a difficult experience. Vicky, where are you? ANGELA BULLARD

M y first remembrance of Vicky is sitting in front of Redlands High School eating lunch together and listening to her explain how upset she was that her parents, when she turned sixteen, were buying her an Acura Integra instead of the red BMW she wanted. I just couldn’t understand why God gave me Vicky instead of the ’intellectual’ Christian friend I had been praying for. Over the next several months, Vicky and I became close friends. We were both new to the school and clung onto each other because we didn’t know anyone else. We were an oddity to say the least; I was an enthusiastic, serious, Christian, and Vicky, outgoing and popular. Yet we both grew and matured through our developing friendship. She taught me how to loosen up and meet new people, how to dress and wear my makeup. I taught her how to see beyond the superficial cares of the day and about the deeper issues in life. Eventually she would look back and admit how silly she had been and how lucky she was to have a car at all.

At Redlands High School, I joined the Alternative Club, the Christian club on campus. Vicky would sometimes go with me, often asking me questions. As our friendship grew, us did her interest in spiritual things, and she began to attend church and youth group with me. After a year, she began to open up and share her feelings with me, telling me about her experience as a Korean Seventh-day Adventist and what it meant to her and her family, in particular how her parents weren’t “good” Adventists because they worked Saturdays.

The more I came to know Vicky, the more I became curious about Adventism and began asking my father, an evangelical minister, questions about the faith. Yet no matter what my father told me, I could not prepare me for what I learned from Vicky. Vicky had mixed reactions to her faith; at times she would hate it, and at times she would want to reform it. I asked her about the dietary laws, which she never seemed to adhere to, and she replied that no one she knew actually practiced them outside of church. She also said Ellen G. White was only some woman who was everyone once in a while.

There were many things that bothered Vicky in our later years together, including the lack of biblical understanding by the people in her church and the lack of any real spiritual substance being taught. But the one thing that bothered Vicky the most was what she repeatedly expounded as the “social club” atmosphere. The people were not concerned with spiritual issues. They went to church, according to Vicky, to see each other and confirm an identity and bond with each other. Marriages were made and jobs gained through the church and its functions. A couple of times, she even went so far as to ask the pastor himself questions she had regarding the faith. I don’t know their exact conversations, but I do know she was never satisfied.

Angela Bullard is currently finishing her M.A in English Composition at California State University, San Bernardino. She also teaches English at Arrowhead Christian Academy and attends the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in Redlands. She resides in San Bernardino with her husband and two sons.
Nature seemed to work against me. Heavy thunderstorms delayed my flight from the Ontario airport to LAX. I became more and more anxious as time passed. When the flight finally left I had to endure a kickboxing class behind closed eyes in that ungodly atmosphere. After touching down at LAX, I sprinted O.J. Simpson style to my connecting gate, only to find the flight to Denver badly delayed as well. Catching Byrd at LAX for a connecting flight to Lincoln, Nebraska was like a slim proposition at this point. As I waited and gazed out the windows of LAX, it grew darker. When the flight boarded an hour later I still retained a tiny hope of making it back to my wife and daughter that night, then we sat on the tarmac for an additional hour and hope fled. There were no more flights from Denver to Lincoln that night. I would not see my family. The darkness would descend far from home with no lifeline to hold on to.

With fear and anxiety in the forefront of my mind and deepest depression threatening to crowd in from somewhere in the depths, I cried out to God, “God, I have to make it home tonight. I don’t know what you can do, but maybe you could just give me a tail wind or something. All I know is that if I don’t see my wife and daughter tonight I’ll come apart at the seams.”

“With fear and anxiety in the fore of my mind and deepest depression threatening to crowd in from somewhere in the depths, I cried out to God, “God, I have to make it home tonight. I don’t know what you can do, but maybe you could just give me a tail wind or something. All I know is that if I don’t see my wife and daughter tonight I’ll come apart at the seams.”

As I waited and gazed out the windows of LAX, it grew darker. When the flight boarded an hour later I still retained a tiny hope of making it back to my wife and daughter that night, then we sat on the tarmac for an additional hour and hope fled. There were no more flights from Denver to Lincoln that night. I would not see my family. The darkness would descend far from home with no lifeline to hold on to. With fear and anxiety in the forefront of my mind and deepest depression threatening to crowd in from somewhere in the depths, I cried out to God, “God, I have to make it home tonight. I don’t know what you can do, but maybe you could just give me a tail wind or something. All I know is that if I don’t see my wife and daughter tonight I’ll come apart at the seams.”

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Arriving at the gate out of breath I was not at all surprised to find my gate unoccupied. I slipped on the plane and was reunited with my wife and daughter that night. My luggage made it home the next day, along with the other passenger from Lincoln. Sometime later a package arrived. In it was my Bible. My father’s Bible. The woman who was perhaps the most injured by my father’s affair and my existence, had wanted me to have her husband’s Bible. Just inside the cover was a picture of my father sitting at his desk, studying the very book I held in my hands. In its pages I found my true Father. The notes and markings told me something about my earthly father, but the words told me about my Heavenly Father. I discovered him through the glorious revelation of his Son Jesus Christ contained in the Bible. I discovered him by the very mere fact of his existing. I discovered him by studying the loving acts of my sister and her mother; I also discovered grace. As the Holy Spirit revealed Jesus to me through scripture and by the power of the indwelling grace awakening. This awakening led me on a jour- ney out of the bondage of legalism, out of Adventism, and into the Body of Christ. I will never be the same; I am still on a journey. This journey leads me Home, but unlike that night years ago, I now have absolute assurance that I will reach my destina- tion, not because of anything I’ve done or can ever do, but because He is with me.

In my spirit, “I AM HERE.” Just that, but along with the words came a sense of His presence that I had never before experienced. All of the fear and anxiety vanished, the black fog rolled away.
I would like to request the book Sabbath in Christ. My cell mate and I, plus a few other brothers in the yard, will be doing a study on the Sabbath, and I believe your book would really be a major contribution to directing us to an appropriate study. Thank you.

Please keep me on your mailing list, and keep Proclamation! coming. I can't wait for the next issue. Thank you for caring and helping me walk closer with Jesus Christ. I love you.

Please Remove Me I am receiving Proclamation! at my home. While I am a former Adventist, I am not a Christian nor a believer in the Bible, so the messages in your publication are of no interest to me. They seem to be just as much internal squabbles among factions of believers. Please remove me from your mailing list.

Many Kinds of Adventists I get your magazine and read it all. My husband was an Adventist minister for twenty years, then he quit on his own. He became an entrepreneur. I am a nurse. We both studied and came to the conclusion, "You tell me what you think an Adventist is, and I'll tell you whether I am one or not." There are many kinds! I want the book Cultic Doctrine. I will read it. I have sent money and will send more next month.

Time to study I was born and raised in the church at Oakwood College and lived the chalked road of Adventism. I am now a 34-year-old married mother of four who has raised my children Adventists. I used to come to regret that training when I look at my two eldest boys who could have been professionals in baseball or football or something. However, that is not my argument with the church. I have found that most former Adventists, that I had no knowledge of the Bible that I could share with others that was not from the words of E. G. White. I can say that I was very disappointed in the time and energy I spent teaching my children about Sabbath. I am not working now because of a three-car collision that has cost me three surgeries and a stroke. Knowing he would not live long after that.

I journeyed to California to be with my sister and my mother as we observed a small family gathering at the graveside. When it was over I felt overcome with loss and a sense of what might have been. I felt the secure and stable world I had so recently built for myself slipping away. The deep dark depression from my youth was rolling in like a black malevolent fog to smother the small measure of happiness I felt seemed irrational and yet undeniably overwhelming. Just hours before I had come from my father's funeral, a man I had met only once, to see him die a few months later. The sense of loss I felt seemed irrational and yet undeniably overwhelming, and the depression was back.

I was an accident, an embarrassment, a poster child for using birth control when conducting extramarital affairs. I grew darker as I gazed out the windows of LAX. The day had started out dark with severe thunderstorms, but now the blackness of night was descending. The weather mirrored my mood as I felt the old darkness engulfing me, swelling up reason and meaning. Just hours before I had come from my family's funeral, a man I had met only once, to see him die a few months later. The sense of loss I felt seemed irrational and yet undeniably overwhelming, and the depression was back. I was an accident, an embarrassment, a poster child for using birth control when conducting extramarital affairs. Today I probably would have been aborted, but in 1969 girls were sent to live with a relative or friend, and the babies were discreetly adopted, sometimes to whomever would take them.

To use a language of pop culture, I was raised in a dysfunctional and abusive adoptive family. However, the reality was probably something more complex than that. There was good as well, I was raised with a knowledge of God, taken to Sabbath School and church weekly, and sent to Sevenths- day Adventist grade school. SDA boarding academy came at an opportune time in my life, just as my adoptive family was disintegrating. I now had a new home. SDA college and university followed, but after eighteen years in Adventist institutions I had to admit that God meant nothing to me, I knew my religion and its doctrines well, but I didn’t know the God it purported to serve.

Chris Lee is a graduate of Sunnydale Academy, Union College, and Andrews University. Chris and his wife Carmen left Adventism after 30 years, along with their daughters Ashlyn and Alyssa, to pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. For the past two years the Lee family has been involved in planting and growing a contemporary church designed to reach the unsaved. Chris is currently the disciplship coordinator for Crossbridge Christian Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, and is also a physical therapist treating Inpatient Therapies at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln.
Studying and leaving

It was the summer of 1996. Richard and I sat alone in our small red saloon car. Outside, the sidewalks shimmered in the Southern California heat, but we didn’t notice. The man who had been our pastor for the past six years sat across from us. He couldn’t let us keep the church, he said, without asking us why we were leaving.

Carefully—hopefully—we outlined what we had learned over the past four years as we had studied the Bible. We explained how we had discovered the gospel, the finished work of Christ, and how that security had transformed us. We talked about the new covenant and how Jesus had fulfilled the law—even the Sabbath. We told him we had come to believe Ellen White was a false prophet, and we could no longer maintain integrity if we stayed in the Adventist church.

He listened graciously, and although a few times he seemed about to counter what we said, he did not. Finally he spoke. “I can’t let you go,” he said, “as long as I know you are not angry.”

We assured him we felt absolutely no anger. When we told him we no longer felt the need to defend a Faith that we had come to know, he drove together back to Loma Linda, chatting lightly with this man we had come to know during our terms as church officers and board members. We were grateful most people who leave the Seventh-day Adventist church never hear from their pastors again. At the same time, we felt strangely distant; although he had been gracious, he did not understand why we had to leave. He did not understand that the love of Jesus had won our hearts, and we could never be the same again. He did not understand that we had found Truth in God’s living word, and no day or doctrine could ever again command our loyalty. We had studied our way out of Adventism, and now we belonged to Jesus.

We had just shared with this man the singular experience of our new birth, and his reaction had simply been relief that we were not angry.

When one has “the truth” after all, how can one study the Bible anymore? Further, over the years, most people who have left do so because the “truth” wasn’t working for them; it was impossibly demanding, or it fostered a critical spirit, or unspiritual people hid behind it while perpetrating various forms of fraud or abuse—in short, “the truth” produced cognitive dissonance and countless wounded or bitter people.

Today, information is much more universally available than it was twenty or even ten years ago. More and more people are discovering the truth about Adventist “truth” that shaped them and defined their worldviews. Loyal Adventists, however, still assume that people only leave the church because they’ve been hurt or angry or because they’ve been deceived. Side notes that Bible study disproves their “truth” and reveals the Lord Jesus is a fact they cannot embrace without threatening their identities.

In this issue we hear from several people who have studied their way into Truth. Dale Ratzlaff, founding editor of Proclamation!, introduces the three main topics transitioning Adventists must address: the gospel, authority, and Ellen White.

Jeffrey Helius, a pastor in the Lake Union district until May of this year, shares his resignation letter addressed to his bishop and conference president. Chris Lee and Lydell Oltmans let us glimpse their experience of coming to faith and learning to walk with the Holy Spirit. Angela Bullard is an evangelistic Christ-follower who calls out to her Adventist friend from high school days—wherever she is.

We want you to notice that the address of Life Assurance Ministries has changed; it is now PO Box 905, Redlands, CA 92373. All donations and manuscripts for consideration for the magazine should now come to this address, and you’ll find the return envelope in your magazine will have this address on it. Email regarding Proclamation! and Life Assurance Ministries should now come to LifeAssurance@aol.com.

Those who wish to order books or to be in touch with Dale Ratzlaff should still send their email to daleRatzlaff@aol.com or telephone (626) 572-9549.

I praise our Father for giving us salvation through His Son Jesus, and I thank Him for sending us the Holy Spirit to draw our hearts from darkness into light and to reveal to us the Truth in His living word.

—Colleen Tinker, editor

We had just shared with this man the singular experience of our new birth, and his reaction had simply been relief that we were not angry.

Correction

In the last issue of Proclamation! we published an editorial error in Dennis Fischer’s article, “Should Christians Practice Tithing?” The following sentence was added during editing and is incorrect: “The Levites only did not tithe, but Israel’s tithes supported the Levites.” Following is Dennis Fischer’s explanation:

Although the Levites were required to give a tithe of the tithes received from the people to the priests, the priests themselves were not required to tithe any. Only a relatively small percentage of the Levites served as priests in the temple. Actually, Israel’s tithes never belonged to each Levitical city. Therefore, the cumulative amount of land equaled almost 200 square miles for pasturing and cultivation. It is interesting that this amount of Levitical land was very near the square mileage assigned to the tribes of Benjamin and Zebulun. Since both of the Levites lived solely off the tithes of the other tribes. In no way was this true. The Levites had to make false prophecies, and contradicts the Bible multiple times.

Lifeline

Your magazine is my lifeline as I transition out of my Christian life. I want to thank you for your prayers and praise God for giving my child out of drug addiction. She’s finding her spiritual pathway and is excited about life in Christ.

It’s a crying shame I have begun to study the Bible for myself again after a period of backsliding I have read parts of the Clear Word and looked it up on the internet. I found the site where you share what you have been led to believe. I wasn’t surprised. I just wanted to let you know how honest about the path you have been led to down and for confirming what Bible prophecy says what will happen in the last day. It’s just a crying shame that so many people who know to do right and do it will come up sadly and deadly mistaken when the end of life comes and eternity begins.

You have succeeded in convincing in my soul what I know for a long time that I needed to do.

Jesus died to vindicate God’s character?

I have been a Sabbath Keeper from my youth. However, after reading Sabbath in Crisis, which is in our church’s library and was recommended by one of our regional pastors, I felt relieved because it was the very first time that I heard anyone explain to the full extent the meaning of the Sabbath. I had left the church and others related to me who are members of the Adventist church, and I have personally noticed that they are deep in religion, but very shallow in spirituality.

I think what has shocked me most of all are replies you received from some Adventist members wishing you would burn in hell, etc., instead of doing like the Bereans did. Then you would have seen that what you are saying are coming directly from God’s words, the Bible, and not from a human being who has proven to be wrong time and time again.

Keeping the Sabbath is not hard. Keep up the good work, you are doing, and may God richly bless you.

Appreciate your magazine

Just a quick note to encourage you to keep up the good work. I have not been in Adventism for a number of years now, but I really appreciate your magazine. In fact, I place it as one of the best theological journals that I read. The reason is this... When I was back a few years ago I was impressed on sins, not sin, and less on the work of the Holy Spirit working the life of Jesus Christ as our life. So, even though you have touched on more meaty doctrinal issues, it is the milk of the Word you emphasize. This emphasis is what the evangelicals are stumbling over, despite having a proper understanding of the more meaty doctrinal issues.

As a Christian I had to release all my doctrinal views that were incorrect in Adventism, but despite my understanding of the rapture, state of the dead, etc., I found that the core of the problems with Jesus Christ came to give His life for me, so that He could live His life through me. What more important than that, in the fundamen of the gospel?

Treated as heretics

Thank you for sending me your March/April issue of Proclamation! I read it from cover to cover. Today while waiting for somebody I re-read the Letters to the Editor. I could send you several similar notes, but would not for fear of being identified and paying dearly for it. However, the following paragraph is general in character and would not lead to speculation. Mrs. White has stated many a time that her writings are meant—among other things—to lead to the Word of God. However, the opposite has happened. I have known best who her writings are the ones who are least familiar with the Bible; and those who regularly study the Scriptures, get into them for answers to their questions are, in their sight, a bunch of heretics. And they treat them as such, openly and cruelly.

I bless you, and those who work at your side!

Mail letters and donations to:

Life Assurance Ministries
PO Box 905
Redlands, CA 92373
Finding a family: How does a former Adventist find a new church?

LYDELL OLTMANS

In 1989 our family left our local Adventist congregation after the Lord had made us aware of certain doctrinal problems. Only gradually we learned that the haunting echoes of our old beliefs—"We are the only true church, so there’s nowhere to go if you leave," and "To worship on Sunday is to accept the Mark of the Beast"—were huge stumbling blocks in our spiritual progress. Today we understand that by leaving we had taken only our first step on a spiritual journey. Back then, however, we arrogantly believed ourselves to have some greater grasp of truth than "other Christians" who met on Sunday. We may have left our local church but believed ourselves to have some greater grasp of truth than "other Christians" who met on Sunday. We may have left our local church believing that we didn’t have all the answers and that it was obvious that those churches, unlike ours, grew. We missed so much because of our isolation in those years. We were rather proud of meeting as we understood the churches of Acts had met. Unfortunately, we overlooked the important characteristics of those churches. Rather than being isolated islands, they had contact with other groups and with the apostles. They willingly received instruction and rebuke to prod their growth. We overlooked the importance of accountability. We chose to ignore the fact that those churches, unlike ours, grew.

We finally realized that we were in a very dry spiritual wilderness. God had not deposited the Holy Spirit into our lives. What we needed was a church that was centered in the Word of God. We decided to step out in faith with a confession of His faithfulness to answer our hearts’ cries uttered from the center of our wilderness. We decided to step out in faith with a willingness to follow truth when the guidance of the Holy Spirit led us to do so. We expected to receive instruction and rebuke to prod our growth. We were rather proud of meeting as we understood the churches of Acts had met. Unfortunately, we overlooked the important characteristics of those churches. Rather than being isolated islands, they had contact with other groups and with the apostles. They willingly received instruction and rebuke to prod their growth. We overlooked the importance of accountability. We chose to ignore the fact that those churches, unlike ours, grew.

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