From striving to surrender  TAMMY CHESTER

I grew up in a staunchly legalistic Adventist family where God’s mercy, love and grace were never a part of my theological thought structure. Our family would gather most evenings for family devotions which usually consisted of a passage from one of Ellen G. White’s books. As I grew older, my father would have me read books such as Patriarchs and Prophets, Desire of Ages, and many others and then write book reports on them. Needless to say, the picture of God that became ingrained in my mind, heart, and spirit was one of an angry, judgmental, distant Being who loved to execute revenge on anyone who crossed Him, a God whom I could never fully please nor in whose presence I would be able to stand unless I somehow mysteriously reached a state of perfection. I grew up terrified by the thought of Jesus’ coming, the “end times,” and the persecution I would undergo as an Adventist.

At the age of 12, I was baptized into the Adventist church. The morning of my baptism, I still remember thinking very clearly to myself that from that moment on I would finally be able to live a perfect life that was pleasing to God so that He would love and accept me. God would never accept me the way I was, I wanted nothing to do with Him, either. One day I shook my fist in his face and screamed, “Go ahead, burn me up. I’d rather go to hell than spend eternity with you and a bunch of Adventists!” I had no real fear of hell, believing that I would burn up in an instant, anyway. As an adult I left the Adventist church and for many years lived a life that was far away from God. It never occurred to me that I was defiant, rebellious, bitter, or angry towards God. I just knew I didn’t care at all about having anything to do with Him.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Tami Chester and her husband Ross live in Redlands, California, and have three children. They worship and serve God together as a family at Pathway Church. Tami is involved in discipling children and reaching out to un Saved children in the local community, as she believes bringing the good news of the gospel to children is the greatest commission in the world!

Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.
PO Box 905
Redlands, CA 92373
Address Service Requested

What was nailed to the cross?  PAGE 6

Late in 2002, Life Assurance Ministries, Inc. voted to raise support for a number of former Adventist pastors in Uganda who had studied the New Covenant and had left the Seventh-day Adventist church. The LAM, Inc. board agreed that this support would be for a limited time to allow these men to establish a church and become financially independent. In addition to funds, Life Assurance Ministries helped to send Greg Taylor to Uganda to meet with the former Adventists there and to encourage them in the gospel. Further, LAM Inc. contacted Stan Lincoln, an American missionary in Uganda with Mission Aviation Fellowship, to meet with these men on a regular basis to provide direction and outreach assistance including the Campus Crusade Jesus film, as they conducted public meetings and formed a congregation.

Greg Taylor along with his wife and sons left Adventism during the summer of 2001. Since 2002 Greg has been the pastor for spiritual formation at Crossroads Church in Hagerstown Maryland, and he and Paula also operate One Flock Ministries, an inter denominational ministry which help those caught in sectarian systems to find freedom in Christ and community with other believers. This photo shows Greg standing in front of a typical village church in Uganda.

UPDATE FROM UGANDA
Pastor Greg Taylor visits former Adventists

We now have seen that some seven churches have been born out of the one series of meetings we led here two and a half years ago.

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I had no right to punish my son for my own feelings of failure and helplessness. For those I had Jesus.

I was late on a Saturday night. Energized by legislation, I rushed from cleaning the kitchen sink to finishing the dessert for Sunday lunch. Our younger son could push my buttons in ways few could. His quiet but stubborn refusal to do his chores triggered my feelings of both insult and failure. What self-respecting mother raised a 15-year-old boy—unless that boy was my own son? I lost my temper. Frustrated beyond words, I yelled at him. Volume seemed the only way to get his attention, I rationalized.

With a withdrawn expression and few words, Nathanael grudgingly began scrubbing the bathroom counter. I calmed down as he completed his chores before finally going to bed without saying "Good-night.

And then it hit me: an awareness so real and powerful that it felt like a physical weight had landed on me. My heart broke, and I began to cry. Standing there in the kitchen at 10:00 on a Saturday night, I realized that I had been hurting my son. Not just hurting him—deeply wounding him. I had been piercing his sensitive heart with a weapon more damaging than a mere knife—my anger, criticism, and disapproval. I was creating in him a background of resentment that he could only resist by being passive-aggressive.

I knew the Holy Spirit was confronting me, and I could not ignore Him. I had no right to punish my son for my own feelings of failure and helplessness. For those I had Jesus. My son needed me to love him for God, not to make him bear my own shame.

"Please forgive me, God," I prayed as I cried. "Please heal his heart where I have hurt him, and please help me love him for You."

And then came the second awareness—bold, clear, and irresistible. I had to ask Nathanael to forgive me.

The next morning as Nathanael, the leader of our younger son's boys' club, landed on me. My heart broke, and I began to cry. Standing there in the kitchen at 10:00 on a Saturday night, I realized that I had been hurting my son. Not just hurting him—deeply wounding him. I had been piercing his sensitive heart with a weapon more damaging than a mere knife—my anger, criticism, and disapproval. I was creating in him a background of resentment that he could only resist by being passive-aggressive.

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The next morning as Nathanael, the leader of the high school media team, got ready to leave for his 7:00 AM obligation to prepare the worship slides for that morning (where had I gotten the idea he was irresponsible, anyway?), I apologized. I confessed I had been wrong and pledged with God's help never to speak that way to him again. His eyes softened. "I forgive you," he said.

Since that day, God changed my heart. He has taken away my knee-jerk response of frustration and insult when I deal with Nathanael's open-ended (but highly intuitive and creative) personality. God has given me His security to be able to deal with my son as himself instead of as (what I feared was) an example of my flawed parenting. I praise God for His healing in my heart and for granting Nathanael and me a bond of mutual love, enjoyment, and respect.

Many Commandment-keepers accuse New Covenant Christians of lawlessness. We say the law has been nailed to the cross, they accuse, so we can sin and do what we want without guilt. Nothing could be less true. My encounter with the Holy Spirit in the kitchen that night was an example of New Covenant law at work. The Holy Spirit personally confronted me with my brokenness, and He lovingly and firmly brought me to repentance and restitution.

Further, this particular sin was not one listed in the 10 Commandments. "Fathers [and mothers], do not exasperate your children," admonishes Paul in Ephesians 6:4. New Covenant "law" goes far beyond the outline of the 10 Commandments. Because Jesus died and opened a new, living way to the Father, He can now intimately convict us at any moment through the indwelling Holy Spirit, and He can change our hearts.

The law could never do that.

In this issue McGregor Wright examines what was really nailed to the cross. Richard Goyne reminds us of the central truth of justification by faith, and we will read a report from Greg Taylor of events in Uganda resulting from our assistance to former Adventist pastors two years ago. Stan Emrath shares his faith story, and Tami Chester tells how "discovering" the Holy Spirit took her beyond the outline of the 10 Commandments. Because Jesus died and opened a new, living way to the Father, He can now intimately convict us at any moment through the indwelling Holy Spirit, and He can change our hearts.

This afternoon we are headed to Mokono University, an Anglican University, to talk to the students about the Adventist system and to teach them about the New Covenant. They have been teaching transference theology (Sabbath transferred to Sunday) in the past. They now realize that transference was not correct theology, and it has set them up for the Adventist arguments. God is truly working in the Anglican denomination here. They are Biblical, gospel-oriented, and hungry to learn the word.

One thing that is most exciting to me is the large base of opportunity God has opened for us in the USA and other developed countries to help support what God is doing in Uganda and other places. With solid connections in place with other church systems and colleges, we have opportunities to support people leaving the SDA system by giving to the institutions that will be training and releasing them. In this way, we can help with educational and mentorship expenses for ministers and teachers, while not getting involved in personal financial sponsorship where accountability can become an issue. I also see many more opportunities opening up especially on the African continent. I have been receiving emails from Kenyans, Malawians, Rwandans, and others that are interested in similar opportunities in their countries.

Better go for now. Love to you all! Thanks again for your prayers! In Christ, Greg Taylor

You may contact Greg by email: gregt@onefockmichigan.org
Pastor Greg Taylor visits former Adventists

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

This summer, Greg Taylor, representing the ministry he founded, One Rock Ministries, again traveled to Uganda at the request of the pastors there, and we share here his email dated June 29, 2005. We are rejoicing that the work we feared had collapsed has indeed born fruit and is thriving.

Dear Family and Praying Friends,

Mbala Musizza My Yeso Kristo (I greet you all in Jesus’ Name)

God has been so powerful in this entire ministry trip. We have connected with pastors of major church ministries in the area that have a heart to help former SDAs get connected into ministry. We met with the leadership of the Full Gospel churches in Uganda. They have an inter-denominational college for training ministers. They are currently working with one of the former SDA pastors and are equipping him to plant a church in a region where there are few churches. We also met with Calvary Chapel. I will share more about that connection later.

Musa C. Kimeko (I greet you in Jesus’ Name)

They now realize that transference was not correct theology, and it has set them up for the great trip.

Very exciting! We also connected with pastors of major church ministries in the area. They are just coming to the assurance of salvation after leaving the SDA church.

Today I am thankful for my Adventist education, the wonderful parents God gave me, and for Marti, the wife God chose for me while I was in medical school. The greatest blessing of all, though, was the day I realized that Christ shed His blood for me and chose me to be His child. He then brought me to a full understanding of the true gospel of grace. When I realized that traditional Adventism was incompatible with that gospel, I had no choice but to leave the church of my youth. I am sharing this story to explain why it was necessary for me to leave Adventism in order to be faithful to the gospel of Christ.

Beginnings

I was born in 1952 in Loma Linda, California. My dad was born into the home of a German immigrant father and had eight siblings, all of whom remained in the Adventist church. My dad and three of his brothers went to Loma Linda University and became physicians. My mom’s parents were Adventist missionaries to the Amazon for 27 years. Both my parents were zealous for traditional Adventism. My Dad was like Saul of Tarsus who was advancing in Judaism (Galatians 1:14), except he was advancing in Adventism. As a physician, he knew that connection later.

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I realized that Christianity stands or falls on the death and resurrection of Jesus. In contrast, it became apparent that Adventism stands or falls on Ellen White’s doctrine of 1844 and the Investigative Judgment.

I decided I wanted to be a physician and to Loma Linda. After studying hard and staying out of trouble at Pacific Union College, I was accepted in 1973 into medical school.

The only “gospel” I heard at Loma Linda was the non-threatening message of Jack Provost. To be fair, at that time I had absolutely no interest in Christianity. I knew that his gospel was not the same gospel I heard proclaims in Adventist camp meetings. In February, 1975, I met Marti, my future wife, at a Friday night retreat. Although she had many different schools to choose from to do her RN program, she chose Loma Linda. She was a Lutheran, and her first exposure to Adventism was when she sat down to eat lunch with some other students. When she told them that she was Lutheran, they told her that she had the mark of the beast!

It was Marti who influenced me to go to her with a Seventh-day Adventist Forum and I asked her to share Numbers in May, 1976, when he presented his findings related to his book

Adventism stands or falls on Ellen White’s doctrine of 1844 and the Investigative Judgment.

To Life Assurance Ministries
Thank you for your ministry!

Thank you for publishing Proclamation!
I wish to subscribe to Proclamation! magazine.

I belong to a conservative charismatic group. To this day, I have no idea what a charismatic was and why I should become one. I have a deep, personal relationship with my Lord only, and please don’t ignore the fact that you are one of a very few people… We have been blessed very much by your ministry. God is awesome! I was an Adventist for 25 years and have just received my confirmation of membership withdrawal this month in time for my 53rd birthday. It was a great birthday present! I love the Adventist people. My friend and I shared as much former Adventist info with those left behind as we could, trusting that God would do something. We continue to pray for these people… We have been blessed very much since leaving the Adventist church… Thank you for God you people! God is Awesome!

Letters may be edited for clarity or space.
Two gospels
Just wanted to say thank you for being willing to publish your own two-gospel" doctrinal view of the Bible in this May/June 2005 issue of Proclamation! That was truly outstanding to see just how you would proclaim "Two Gospels"—one for the OT and one for the NT—without even cracking a snicker! Usually I have my christian denominations read the SDAs-bashing publication can get if it really wants. But this page "Two Gospel" approach to the OT and NT just published is truly a gold mine to me!

My "usual" venue for Bible discussion outside of our local church is with evangelical denominations on their Bible message boards. There I find a lot of thoughtful Bible-based challenges to Adventism as well as some not-so-well thought out ideas. But most of them are certainly put forward in love and with a Christian interest in Bible teachings. What a contrast it is to jump from that venue to reading your publication! Just wanted to say again how much I appreciate you being willing to say what you do in print for all to read and then contrast to scripture. After reading your distress by following—reading D.J. Moody's popular rethinking the Ten Commandments, I go with D.L. Moody all the time. I was overtaken by greed, and I wandered far from God. I have been wrong all these years. "I was overcom e with joy and began reading others' stories. A major turning point occurred in 2004 when Marti had a serious stroke. Months later, I attended the 2005 Good Friday service with the Redlands FAF group at Trinity church, and that experience sparked a spiritual renewal that has been completely transforming. I now have a passion for Bible study and prayer. Jesus has become so much more real to me than ever before. He has even restored our marriage and has rekindled my love for Marti anew.

In October, 2004, when Marti had a serious stroke at the age of 50, God illustrated His healing grace in a dramatic way. I was not given much hope for her recovery. They told me to hire a 24-hour caregiver. One night, while hospitalized, while her stroke was extending, Marti thought she was dying. In her anguish, she heard a voice say, "Do not be afraid, I will be with you. Everything is going to be OK!" That truly was the voice of the Lord, as she has made a remarkable recovery in just six months' time. She is totally independent, except for driving, and she is able to write all the checks, manage the household finances, and balance a checkbook. The stroke was extending, Marti thought she was dying. In her anguish, she heard a voice say, "Do not be afraid, I will be with you. Everything is going to be OK!" That truly was the voice of the Lord, as she has made a remarkable recovery in just six months' time. She is totally independent, except for driving, and she is able to write all the checks, manage the household finances, and balance a checkbook.

When she recovered, we returned to Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, Pastor Chuck Smith's sermon title was "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." There was a truly emotional moment when Pastor Chuck said with the women of Faith group and the audience once the beautiful hymn of the sermon title, Tears of joy, praise, and thanksgiving were streaming down our cheeks as we realized that our Lord had indeed been faithful to His promises! That famous Reformation phrase—"Soil Deo Gloria!—really rings true To God be the Glory!

Jerry Gladson, Mark Martin, Dennis Fischer, Chris Lee, Janice and Ken Brantly, Lydell Oltmans, Colleen Tinker, Rey Cantu, and Jonathan Wolitzk. The subjects discussed included Ellen White's plagiarism, the Cather Word, soul sleep and the human spirit, the effect of leaving Adventism on one's Christian experience, what a person leaving Adventism needs from the Christian community, the problems of Adventist Biblical exegesis, the investigative judgment, and more.

We continue to pray that Adventists in bondage to deception or dishonesty will be rescued by the grace of Jesus and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

General Conference session in at St. Louis
The 58th quinquennial General Conference Session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is being held in St. Louis, Missouri, as we prepare this issue for publication. The title for the meetings is "Transformed in Christ!"

During the three days immediately preceding the meetings and throughout the session, local radio station KSJL AM 630 which has the largest Christian market in the area, aired inter views with a total of fourteen different former Adventists on the morning Tim and Al Show. Dale Razlaff gave an introductory survey on June 20, and the featured guests during the weeks of the GC session included Walter Rae, Verle Strelledge.

As we go to PRESS
What was “nailed to the cross”?

The unity of the law

The occasion

There are several ideas circulating among Bible-believing Christians about the status of something variously referred to as “the law of God,” “the Ten Commandments” or “the rule of life for the believer.” Some Christians argue that these ideas express an overarching relationship between the Law and the Gospel and between the Old and the New Covenants.

In the last few years I have encountered antagonists who teach that the Christian is under no Law at all, having been made “free” from the Law at the cross. This idea becomes part of the “cheap grace” mentality that seems unconnected with holiness. I have also met postmillennial Reconstructionists who tell me that except for the ceremonial law which Christ fulfilled, the Law of Moses is still in force in all its detail. These two claims that “the Kingdom is now. We must conquer the world for Jesus by reconstructing our civilization and culture through applying and enforcing the standards of God’s Law,” by which they mean the mosaic system minus the ceremonial elements. Others who worship on Saturday (such as the Seventh-day Adventists or S-D Baptists) claim that the moral law (by which they mean all the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 plus a small selection from the rest of the Mosaic system) still applies to Christians in this age. Others, such as those Presbyterians who worship on Sunday (which they call the Christian Sabbath), still claim that the “moral law” is somehow eternal and must be distinguished from the “civil law” which relates to the Jewish State only, and so doesn’t apply to Christians. It is also supposedly distinct from the “ceremonial law” which was fulfilled by Christ. I also discovered certain Puritan writings which spoke of “a Third Use of the Law,” by which they mean that not only is the Law a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ and to tell us what sin is, but that it also provides a means of sanctification, and so functions as the rule of life for the believer. These are by no means the only possible positions being taught today, but even these few are all seriously incompatible with each other. Some definitions are in order, and some categories need clarifying or questioning. Further, as disturbing as with each other. Some definitions are in order, and some categories need clarifying or questioning. Further, as disturbing as it might be, we must determine whether certain not fully recognized presuppositions and axioms control our discussion. We will also mention related topics such as covenant theology and sabbatarianism, but our main purpose will be...
It is evident that by making perfect obedience to the commandments a requirement for salvation, the effort made by the individual to attain such obedience makes his salvation depend in part upon human effort and not solely by faith in Christ’s atoning sacrifice.

Such is the Adventist doctrine of justification. It is akin to the error which Luther opposed: the doctrine of salvation by faith plus works. Luther and his fellow Reformers taught sola fide (faith only) as the key to salvation. So did the Apostle Paul who wrote, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28).

One result of the Adventist teaching about salvation has been that many give up their Christian experience, knowing that they will never be able to attain the perfection that Adventist doctrine requires. Many more live out their lives trying to perfect their characters in preparation for the investigative judgment.

Those who are discouraged and tempted to give up should remember, “Therefore (he) is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

It may be difficult for someone who has been indoctrinated in a faith plus works doctrine of salvation to grasp the Biblical teaching that we are saved solely by God’s grace through our faith in Christ. It will not be easy for such a person to understand that “if by grace then it is no more works: otherwise grace is no more grace…” (Romans 11:6).

In our humanity we are prone to bring to God the fruits of our own labors as an offering. Those so inclined should carefully study the words of the apostles in a modern translation of the Bible (not a paraphrase). They will find there, among other truths, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9).

Endnotes
1. Biblical quotes are from the King James Version, except where noted.
5. ____., Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-Day Adventists, Church Manual Revision, 1980.

The Pharisees taught that this Tradition was the “Light of the World” in which light the Law was to be read. Naturally, when Jesus said that He was the Light of the World, they immediately understood that He was claiming authority to teach the Law of God independently of the rabbinical traditions. This claim was one of several He made which effectively guaranteed His fate.

The threefold division of the law.

The traditional discussion of the Law divided the many specific laws into three classes: the moral, the civil, and the ceremonial laws. This threefold classification stems from the exegesis of the early Middle Ages. It remains an integral part of the ongoing discussion of the theological significance of the Ten Commandments and of catechetical teachings. It can hardly be denied that these three distinct kinds of laws are actually found in the mosaic system. Clearly, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” is a moral commandment, the Passover sacrifice is a ceremonial, and the laws of inheritance making a person the heir equal to sons is a civil law.

The Moral Law was early equated with the Ten Commandments brought down from Sinai by Moses. They were supposed to be distinguished from the body of the laws by being written on the finger of God on the tablets, by being themselves a summary of the whole Law in principle, and by being a direct reflection of the character of God himself. For example, it was argued that the weekly Sabbath prescribed in the fourth commandment was somehow innate to God’s character; that this Sabbath was back to the creation itself when God “rested” on the seventh day. Other Sabbaths of the mosaic system, such as the 49-year Jubilee cycle of years, were arbitrary and prescriptive; God himself did not take a year off and rest every 49 years, but the Jews had to.

The Ten Commandments were also subdivided into the first table, laws one to four, conditioning our love of God; and the second table, laws five to ten, defining our relation of love towards our fellow man. In this way, the Ten Commandments defined the two greatest commandments, love of God and love of our fellow.

This subdivision of the Ten Commandments only reinforced the idea that they represented the moral character of God.

The Christian thereafter endeavors to lead a righteous life because he has been forgiven, but he is not forgiven because of his attempts to lead a righteous life. Any good deeds that he performs are evidence of his gratitude to God for the free gift of forgiveness. Christ is the one who enjoys because of his faith in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Even as David also described the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputed righteousness without works. Saying, blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered” (Romans 4:6, 7).

Such was the doctrine of justification by faith as taught by Luther and the other major reformers of the sixteenth century. The Roman Catholic Church responded to this teaching with a statement on the subject by the Council of Trent (Section IV, January 1547). The Council anathematized (rejected) the proposition “that justification once received is not preserved and increased by good works; but that those good works are only the fruits and signs of justification, and not causes of our increase.”

The Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church state that “Through Christ we are justified, adopted as the heirs of salvation. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified.”

Chapter One

The Law of God independently

The threefold division of the law.

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The real motivation for the threefold classification is that the NT teaches that the Law was fulfilled in Christ. This teaching presents a problem, however, for those who believe that the moral law was not fulfilled at all, that it is still applicable to everyone in all ages, and that Christ only fulfilled the ceremonial laws. If Christ fulfilled the whole law, however, does that not mean the Ten Commandments were also fulfilled on the cross? Nobody argues that Christians should be sacrificing lambs each day, but what about the fourth commandment? Is it moral instead of ceremonial because it is in the Ten Commandments?

In other words, the traditional threefold division of the Law is intended to buttress the view that only part of the Law was fulfilled by Christ in his redemptive work. The rest remains for us to live by. According to this reasoning, the ten commandments are "the rule of life for the believer's sanctification," thus defining the Puritan's "third use of the Law," referring to the Law as a whole, suggesting that the OT writers identified Sunday as "the Christian Sabbath" (for which there is no evidence in the NT), to the more divisive Seventh-day Adventist understanding that the Sunday-keeping as "the mark of the Beast".

Although many claim no longer to accept this idea, it never-the-less remains a common misapprehension. The real motivation for the threefold classification is that the NT teaches that the Law was fulfilled in Christ. This teaching presents a problem, however, for those who believe that the moral law was not fulfilled at all, that it is still applicable to everyone in all ages, and that Christ only fulfilled the ceremonial laws. If Christ fulfilled the whole law, however, does that not mean the Ten Commandments were also fulfilled on the cross? Nobody argues that Christians should be sacrificing lambs each day, but what about the fourth commandment? Is it moral instead of ceremonial because it is in the Ten Commandments?

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the filter of NT teaching. In the meantime, the Hebrew text of “the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets.”(Jesus’ OT Canon), remains forever the inspired Word of God in its every “got and title” (Matt 5:18). The Old Covenant is not, however, the believer’s direct rule of life like it once was. That role is now filled by the New Testament text itself as it is imprinted on the believer’s heart and mind by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The fact that the New Covenant includes many moral commands that are first found in the Old Testament, the Antinomians referred to in the opening paragraphs. It is not true that the believer is not obligated to any moral commands at all, for the Lord Jesus himself addresses us in just such moral commands. This is what gives content to what I have called for want of any better term, “New Covenant law.” On the other hand, the Reconstructionists who teach that the entire Law of Moses, including its entire civil and moral content in all its detail, is not only in force today, and must be enforced by a Christian government upon the whole U.S. population, cannot get around the fact that the entire Law as was “tossed to the cross,” having been completely satisfied by the Lamb of God in his bodily incarnation and life (Col 2:9+14). Jesus as the Incarnate Torah exhibited a righteousness of his own merit, which is then imputed in its entirety to each believer for whom Christ died.

**Conclusions**

If there is a difference to the above argument that much of the teaching of the Old Testament is repeated or otherwise validated by the New Testament text, or that a modern government can still get guidance and wisdom in formulating its own legal system from the mosaic system. The point is that the Old Covenant Law including the Ten Commandments are not the Christian’s rule of life. They have no more power to sanctify now than they ever had, and therefore the weekly Sabbath of the fourth commandment is no more binding on the believing church of this age than are the rest of the moral laws. To return to dependence on them is the very apostasy that the letter to the Hebrews argues against (to say nothing of Galatians). We do not need the “weak and useless” laws of Moses (Heb 7:18), for we have the commandments of a risen Savior with whom we are right now spiritually united in his resurrection life.

There is nothing in the New Testament to prevent the SDA denomination from worshiping on Saturday if they wish, but to make the day a test of fellowship or a symbol of salvation or loyalty to Christ is completely unbiblical. Further, to condemn other Christians for worshiping on Sunday (or Tuesday for that matter) is an unfortunate legalism at best, and may be associated with a heresy at worst. To claim that Sunday worship is now (or ever will be) “the Mark of the Beast” is just an idiosyncrasy, absurdity, one of those curiosities of eschatological speculation beloved of the less perceptive historicist commentators on the Book of Revelation. There is of course, no ground for such a notion in the Bible.

Further, the Sabbatarianists of those who claim that Sunday must be governed by similar types of restrictions as the Jewish Sabbath quickly slip into legalism as well.

Legalists, in fact, never manage to obey consistently even the laws they do approve. They all come under those many judgments of the New Testament that “we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman” (Gal 4:31), for “as many who are of the works of the Law are under a curse” (3:10-12) for “the Law is not of faith.” Paul meant what he said the “letter kills” (2 Cor 3:6).

Under the New Covenant, the problems of what day to keep and how to keep it provide their own refutation. When it comes to deciding which legalistic details we are willing to accept, like the old maps used to say, “there be dragons!” The Christian dare not let him or herself be judged “in respect of Sabbath days” of any kind (Col 2:16-17). Paul was clear that a believer in Christ has been set free and must not allow himself to be bound again “by a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1).

Jesus Himself has become our rule of faith and practice, and in the words of the New Covenant (Revel 21:5) what that rule to us. As children born of God (John 1:12) we have the witness of the Holy Spirit testifying to our spirits that we are God’s children and heirs (Romans 8:15-17). This heritage means that we have the intercession of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26-27) and the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:14-16) to teach us and empower us to live by His rules and promptings instead of by an external law which has no hope of restraining our natural impulses (Rom 8:3, Col 2:20-23).

The Holy Spirit writes the New Covenant law on our hearts. Jesus has fulfilled all regulations and requirements for righteousness, and He has replaced the law in our lives. The Apostle to the Gentiles must be allowed to have the last word: “You are observing days...I fear for you, that perhaps you have labored over you in vain” (Galatians 4:10-11).

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Saturday, for no other “Sabbath” is known to Scripture. Do we believe in soloScriptura, or not?

My conclusion is that protestant “Sabbatarianists” are not real Sabbatarians at all; they are just Sunday-worshippers who think that Sunday was legally set by Jesus himself. This fact is in my opinion that the traditional threefold division of the Law of Moses leads naturally to the Seventh-day Adventist position.

Presuppositions control everything

There is always a sure-fire method of criticizing a position that seems to have both “the facts” and “logic” in its favor. All we need to do to demolish the theory is to question its presuppositions; if the assumptions are wrong, the whole system is wrong, and all conclusions drawn from it are suspect. More facts and more logic cannot help us here, for presuppositions control an argument in much the same way as the International Rules determine what counts as a valid move in the game of chess.

But first another consideration must be attended to. When Reformed theologians stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith that “the true and full sense of any scripture... is not manifold, but one” (19), they were repudiating the medieaval assumption that every text held that every scripture to have three or four “senses.”

The “fourfold sense” of scripture

Throughout the Middle Ages, the Bible was universally interpreted in four ways. Every word, every doctrine, every phrase, every story and parable was to be considered to have the traditional Four Senses. Virtually all exegesis and preaching regularly asked four questions of the text: 1) What is its literal-historical meaning? In this first and most obvious sense, the word Jerusalem means the city of that name in Palestine. 2) Secondly, what is its allegorical, or spiritual sense? Allegorism was a transformist technique. By using metaphors and similes, the exegete could claim that behind or above the literal meaning was a more “spiritual” significance, supposedly hidden in the text but accessible to the learned. This technique made it possible to apply endless speculation, largely derived from Holy Tradition. So the word Jerusalem also meant the Catholic Church. 3) Thirdly, what was the analogical, or moral sense of this text, word, phrase, etc.? This notion attempted not only to convey what a text meant in its own day and context but also to forge a link with the moral life of the people of God and with each hearer. Today we would call this “bringing out the practical application” of the text. The assumption behind this analysis is that the whole of the Word of God in all its parts “has a message for today” (The Punants in their detailed sermons and commentaries certainly never left a text before drawing out a number of uses or moral applications of its doctrine for their hearers.

James, therefore, was thought to stand morally for the redeemed soul as it grows in grace while resisting the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. John Bunyan might have been reflecting this sense when he spoke of the “City of Mansoul” being besieged in his allegorical story of The Holy War.

4) Finally, many (but by no means all) medieaval interpreters also found a fourth sense, “Christian Sensus.” In fact, it comes from a Greek verb meaning “going upwards,” and this “sensus” of the text supposedly encouraged the believer upward towards God in worship and ultimately, to heaven itself. Thus, while there is a real sense, there also means Heaven.

The problem with these four “senses” is their total arbitrariness. The allegorical sense, for example, is nothing but a declara- tion that X actually “means” Y; whether the original writer could have thought so or not. There are five basic reasons for these medieaval assertions:

1) There is the unspoken (and illogical) assumption that a sym- bolic similarity between signs “really” means identity, and so identi- fies a true meaning.

2) The fallacy of “identity” is then com- bined with a loose use of real literal symbolic correspondences such as typology, in which, for example, the Passover lamb was thought to pre- represents (and points to) the death of Jesus.

3) In addition, medieaval scholars manipu- lated their hearers by teaching that the literal sense of the text is somehow merely fleshly and is therefore insufficient to meet the needs of God’s people. A further meaning called “spiritual” must be found, too.

4) The early church fathers first discovered the usefulness of allegorism in the secular philosophies of Asia, and especially the Stoics. By using allegory, a writer could make Homer’s myths, for example, seem full of spiritual meaning and could make Homer seem to be a philosopher.

5) The final reason for the acceptance of multiple arbitrarily chosen meanings is that for over fourteen centuries of the Middle Ages, preachers and commentators used this catholic method of Bible interpretation. Holy Tradition, consequently, standardized the Four Senses.

This method of arbitrary interpretation is self-justifying. Holy Tradition was built on this method of exegesis, and where the authority of Holy Tradition is concerned, mere illustration becomes proof. Anyone foolish enough to deny this

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assumption was thought to be of a fleshly, literal tempera-
ment, and was probably a heretic to boot.

Despite its obvious problems (of which sheer arbitrariness is the most serious), the allegorical method of understanding the Biblical narratives strengthened the notion that the Sabbath had been changed to Sunday, that the term “Sabbath” in fact meant not only
1) the literal seventh-day sabbath, but also the spiritual sabbath, “proved” by allegorism to be Sunday,
2) the rest of the soul in Christ, the moral rest of sanctifica-
tion as we grow in grace, and finally,
3) the rest of the soul in Christ, the moral rest of sanctifica-
tion as we grow in grace, and finally,
4) the anagogical rest of heaven itself.

Needless to say, verses like Hebrews 4:9, “There remains a rest [i.e., a Sabbath-keeping] for the people of God,” can be used to confirm any or all of these “senses” of the text.

We need to recall that in Catholic thinking, the purpose of the Bible is to confirm and illustrate Holy Tradition, not to supply doctrine by itself. The Bible cannot be understood by itself, but only as part of Holy Tradition, which includes the Fourfold

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Sense of every text. The circularity of this argument should be
obvious.

This kind of traditionalist interpretation made it easy to
accept that for truly spiritual people, the Sabbath really meant
Sunday. By allegorism a verse can be made to teach anything
at all even without direct Biblical support.

Why not, after all, answer the question of what exactly it was
that “nailed to the cross” when Jesus died? This phrase appears in
Col 2:14.

Jesus the incarnate Torah

This expression, the incarnate Torah, simply translates the
idea of the incarnate Logos into the main corresponding
Hebrew word. The Torah was a verbal revelation of the mind
of God, of which the over 600 separate commands of the
Pentateuch were just a fraction. Jesus incarnated the fullness
of God’s purposes not just for Himself, but for the whole
world as the eventual scope of his Kingdom. All that Adam
lost in the Fall, Jesus would regain redemptively for his
people. He was the Second Adam, the Image of God par
excellence. All that Adam might have been had he not fallen, Jesus
was to become. Just as nature fell along with Adam, so nature would also be redeemed in Christ’s
Kingdom. The drama of redemption would finally extend “Far
cas the Curse is found,” as Isaiah Watts puts it in his famous
hymn “Joy to The World.”

When Jesus went to the cross, he took a perfectly fulfilled Torah with him. His life was the perfect expression of what Torah was in its innermost essence. As creator of the
Sabbath, he was Lord of the Sabbath, but as the Second
Adam, he fully obeyed God’s Law as he read it in the books of
Moses. He is the only man in history to have been able to say
to the Pharisees, “Which of you convinces me of sin?” and
still keep a straight face!

In Romans 12:1-2 we find an exhortation explaining
what true spiritual worship is: we are to present our bodies to
God as “a living sacrifice.” This is how we are to walk the
path of the “newness of life” that our baptism set forth (Rom
6:3-4). To present our bodies all for the work of Christ. In the
New Covenant, our individual bodies are the residences of
the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), and corporately, who we
are individually inhabited by the Spirit of God are the tem-
ple in which God’s purposes for the whole
were fulfilled (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

By presenting our bodies we express surrender to the Spirit of Jesus who works through us Those “good works which God has before ordained, that we
should walk in them” (Eph 2:8-10). This surrender of our bodies to the Holy Spirit is not the equivalent of receiving a
supernatural ability to keep the Law. Rather, we experience
the risen Christ indwelling us by his own Spirit—the Living
Law—to give us the very mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:9-16) by
which we are “transformed by the renewing of our minds.”
When we surrender ourselves to Jesus fully, our bodies
become sacrifices of praise as the Holy Spirit does the work of God in and through us. We no longer rely on or answer
to an external law; we respond moment by moment to the
Author of the law Himself who is dwelling in us. Reformed theology calls this process transformation, or “growth in grace” (2 Pet 3:18).

The point is, we offer the body to God that he might live
in and express His love for the whole
world. When Jesus went to the cross, he took a perfectly
fulfilled Torah with him. His life was the perfect expression of what it meant to be a “living sacrifice.” This is how we are to walk the path of the “newness of life” that our baptism set forth (Rom 6:3-4). To present our bodies all for the work of Christ.

He lived and expressed his eternal purpose through the body
of Christ: “A body hast Thou prepared for me...to Thy will, O God?” (Heb 10:5-7). This verse in Hebrews is not a NT novelty, but a midrash commentary on Psalms 40 where the
words, the Jesus of Hebrews was the Torah incarnate.

Therefore, when the nails piercing his sinless hands, the
entire fulfilled Torah, the Law of God in its entirety, was “nailed to the cross” (Col 2:14-15). Some have tried to argue that when
Paul said that “the handwriting of ordinances that was against
us” was nailed to the cross, he meant only to include the hun-
dreds of civil and ceremonial laws of the Pentateuch and not the
“moral” law of the Ten Commandments. But the word for
“ ordinances” is the usual Greek word (dogmatism) for the authori-
tative proclamations of a ruler declaring his laws to the people.
(Lk 22:19) The term “handwriting” (cheirographon) clearly refers to
God’s writing the Ten Commandments on the tablets with his
own “finger” (Ex 31:18, 32:15-16, and Deut 9:10, et al.)

Colossians 2 offers the clearest proof that the entire law
is a unity. After declaring the Law as a unitary system, Paul
continues to specify laws of the mosaic covenant which do not
apply to the Christian, including the laws of “food and drink,” of
“holy days,” of the “new moon,” and of a “sabbath day.” In
this clarification Paul includes not only the food laws commonly
recognized as part of the “ceremonial” laws, but by listing the
feasts in the classic order of “yearly” (holy days), “monthly” (new
moon), and “weekly” (a Sabbath day)—(NRSV), he states that
not only the Jewish festivals but also the weekly Sabbath were

shades of Christ (Col 2:17). In other words, laws often
designated “ceremonial” and also the weekly Sabbath (often
designated “moral” because of its inclusion in the Ten
Commandments) were equally nailed to the cross.

When the Law was a unit. Not only did He hold that to break “the least of these commandments” is to
break the Law (Mat 5:18-20, cf. also Jas 2:10), but He also held that all of the mass of the commandments depends on the two “greatest” commandments, love of God and love of man (Matt.
22:40). None of this makes any sense unless the law is a moral
unity. It makes no difference to this argument that some laws
are more “civil” than “moral.” All the Law is included.
The only appropriate conclusion is that the whole of
the Law in its detailed entirety was “nailed to the cross,” abolished
for the Christian in this age, and replaced by a new “Covenant.”

Just as the entire Law including the Ten Commandments was
abolished with the passing of the Old Covenant, what law directs
the Christian’s life? Does not the claim that the Ten Commandments have also been fulfilled in Christ lead to
antinomianism?

New covenant law

Although the Bible contains accounts of several covenants
governing the relation between God and man in various ages,
the covenants which mainly affect the church’s discussions
today are the Mosaic (called the Old Covenant in the New Testa-
mont), and the New Covenant that replaced it through
the work of Christ. Hebrews declares that the Law of Moses
and Aaron has been replaced by a new covenant, of which the
High Priest is Jesus “after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb.
7:11), and the writer of Hebrews says “the Mosaic Covenant
was nullified, that to break ‘the least of these commandments’ is to
break the Law (7:24). The Mosaic law, now replaced by a new
“Covenant,” was “nailed to the cross.” This is why we no longer
rely on or answer to an external law; we respond moment by moment to the
Author of the law Himself who is dwelling in us. Reformed
theology calls this process transformation, or “growth in grace” (2 Pet 3:18).

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Hebrews therefore teaches that the Mosaic Ten Commandments have been abolished and replaced by the
New Covenant.

But the question still remains: What law, if any, governs the
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Conclusions

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But first another consideration must be attended to. When Reformed theologians stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith that “the true and full sense of any scripture...is not manifold, but one” (19), they were repudiating the medieaval assumption that every text held by every scripture to have three or four “senses.”

The “fourfold sense” of scripture

Throughout the Middle Ages, the Bible was universally interpreted in four ways. Every word, every doctrine, every phrase, every story and parable was deemed to have the traditional Four Senses. Virtually all exegesis and preaching regularly asked four questions of the text: 1) What is its literal-historical meaning? 2) Secondly, what is its allegorical, or spiritual sense? Allegorism was a transformist technique. By using metaphors and similes, the exegete could claim that behind or above the literal meaning was a more “spiritual” significance, supposedly hidden in the text but accessible to the learned. This technique made it possible to apply endless speculation, largely derived from Holy Tradition. So the word Jerusalem means the city of that name in Palestine. 3) Thirdly, what was the analogical, or moral sense of this text, word, phrase, etc.? This notion attempted not only to convey what a text meant in its own day and context but also to forge a link with the moral life of the people of God and with each hearer. Today, we would call this “bringing out the practical application” of the text. The assumption behind this analysis is that the whole of the Word of God in all its parts “has a message for today.” 4) Finally, there was an abstract sense of the text which means, for example, the Passover symbol of the Lord’s Supper represents (and points to) the death of Jesus. 5) In addition, medi eval scholars manipulated their hearers by teaching that the literal sense is somehow merely fleshly and is therefore insufficient to meet the needs of God’s people. A further meaning called “spiritual” must be found, too.

The early church Fathers first discovered the usefulness of allegorism in the secular philosophical tradition, especially the Stoics. By using allegory, a writer could make Homer’s myths, for example, seem full of spiritual meaning and could make Homer seem to be a philosopher.

Allegorism was not for the acceptance of multiple arbitrarily chosen meanings that is for over fourteen centuries of the Middle Ages, preachers and commentators used this catholic method of Bible interpretation. Holy Tradition, consequently, standardized the Four Senses.

This method of arbitrary interpretation is self-justifying. Holy Tradition was built on this method of exegesis, and where the authority of Holy Tradition is concerned, mere illustration becomes proof. Anyone foolish enough to deny this

We know today from archaeology that Moses’ two tablets were not two parts of the law, but two copies, each copy containing all Ten Commandments.
The arbitrariness of these schemes of classification can be exposed merely be asking, But why is the Sabbath law a "moral" law while the laws of the Jubilee are only ceremonial or civil laws? Are they not also part of the Sabbath of the mosaic system? Why should anyone think that the original Sabbath was a "moral" law in the first place?

We know today from archaeology that Moses' two tablets were not two parts of the law, but two copies, each copy containing all Ten Commandments. The mosaic covenant was modeled after the Middle Eastern suzerainty treaties of the time. These treaties or covenants contained the same main divisions that the Law of Moses contains, including an opening statement about the inviolate sovereignty of the ruling king and of his gods, followed by a set of laws governing the lives of the people. Then came lists of curses and blessings to follow submiss or rebellion. When a conqueror or king made a covenant with another city-state, two identical copies of the basic laws of the covenantal code were made, one to be placed in the temple of the victor, and the other to be placed in the temple of the subject nation. Often, a summary of the covenant was inscribed on a stela, or stone monument, and erected in the presence of the subject gods within the subject peoples' temple precincts, for all to read. In the case of the giving of the Law of God to his own people, the two copies were both placed in the ark in the tabernacle (the double witness of Deut 19:15), along with the pot of manna to show God's care and protection of his people, and Aaron's rod that budded, showing God's right to judge through his appointed prophets and priests. These testimonies to the sins of the people resting in the ark below the mercy seat are signs of divine protection and the assurance that God was a "a moral" law in the first place, but such good works are the result of his justification and not a component of it. "Being justified freely by his (God's) grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24).

To Luther the doctrine of justification by faith was the summary of all Christian teaching upon which the church stands or falls. It teaches us that a merciful God justifies the sinner who repents so that he can live out his days with peaceful assurance by his faith in Christ Jesus. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

The believer no longer needs to fear a decision to be announced at the last judgment because God has already decided to accept him justified and righteous for Christ's sake. This is not a moral law...
The Christian thereafter endeavors to lead a righteous life because he has been forgiven, but he is not forgiven because of his attempts to lead a righteous life. Any good deeds that he performs are evidence of his gratitude to God for the freedom from guilt that he enjoys because of his faith in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. “Even as David also described the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputed righteousness without works. Saying, blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are cov-
cered” (Romans 4:6,7).

Such was the doctrine of justification by faith as taught by Luther and the other major reformers of the sixteenth centu-
y. The Roman Catholic Church responded to this teaching with a statement on the subject by the Council of Trent (Section IV, January 1547). The Council anathematized (reject-
ed) the proposition “that justification once received is not preserved and increased by good works; but that those good works are only the fruits and signs of justification, and not cause of it.” The errors of the Council were on the role of good works in salvation.

The Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church state that “Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God’s sons and daughters, and are delivered from the lord-
ship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sancti-
fied—and given the power to lead a holy life.” (8B 10) This statement must be considered with the Adventist doc-
tors of probation and the investigative judgment.

In Adventism the sinner is pardoned when he repents and confesses Christ as His Savior. He is then given the grace to obey the commandments and live a holy life. He will, how-
ev er, live in a state of probation (subject to a period of testing and trial to ascertain fitness), The record of his sins will not be blotted out but will be kept in the heavenly records until he faces the investigative judgment which will determine his eternal destiny based upon his use, or misuse, of the grace given to him (The Great Controversy, pp. 421, 422).

It is evident that by making perfect obedience to the com-
mandments a requirement for salvation, the effort made by the individual to attain such obedience makes his salva-
dtion depend in part upon human effort and not solely by faith in Christ’s atoning sacrifice.

Such is the Adventist doctrine of justification. It is akin to the error which Luther opposed: the doctrine of salvation by faith plus works. Luther and his fellow Reformers taught sola fides (faith only) as the key to salvation. So did the Apostle Paul. Therefore we conclude that a man is justi-
fied by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28).

One result of the Adventist teaching about salvation has been that many give up their Christian experience, knowing that they will never be able to attain the perfection that Adventist doctrine requires. Many more live out their lives trying to perfect their characters in preparation for the inves-
tigative judgment.

Those who are discouraged and tempted to give up should remember, “Therefore Christ is able to save com-
pletely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them” (Hebrews 7:1–5).

It may be difficult for someone who has been indoctrinated-
ed in a faith plus works doctrine of salvation to grasp the Biblical teaching that we are saved solely by God’s grace through our faith in Christ. It will not be easy for such a person to understand that “If by grace then it is no more works: otherwise grace is no more grace…” (Romans 11:6).

In our humanity we are prone to bring to God the fruits of our own labors as an offering. Those so inclined should carefully study the words of the apostles in a modern translation of the Bible (not a paraphrase). They will find there, among other truths, “That if thou with thine hand shalt do any deed of righteousness, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9).

Endnotes
1. Biblical quotes are from the King James Version, except where noted.
5. Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists, Church Manual Revision, 1980.

Richard Goyne is a retired professional engineer, age 95. Since retir-
ing, he has earned a Master of Arts degree in theology and a Master of Sacred Theology degree and has published the book Roots and Branches of Christian Belief.He now lives in Oxford, Maryland.

to decide exactly what the status of “the Law” is for the believer today.

Definitions: what counts as “law”?

Paul who wrote, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justi-
fied by faith without the deeds of the law.” The Bible called the Pentateuch. Further, it is a general term for the Old Covenant itself, as it defined the life and constitution of God’s people as a nation. It also seems in many passages to be a synonym for the “Word of God as a whole” (God’s divine plan), and corresponds roughly to the idea of the Wisdom of God revealed (soaphi), and the Logos, the mind of God as revealed to mankind (the Logos as law or nomos). All these ideas and usages appear in the New Testament (or Covenant) also, as they were part of the common thinking about the Law in first century Judaism.

By the time of Jesus, Judaism had developed a concept of Tradition viewed as the living voice of the Rabbinate handed down from ancient times. The application of the OT laws was not always completely clear, so the Jews developed a tradition of sanctified common sense “to throw a fence around the Law” in order to define its limits and cases. For example, it was not enough to know that we must not work on the Sabbath days, for what counted as work? Was picking up a knife dropped during a meal work or preparation of food? Was reaching to pick up a munch while walking in a field to be included in the work of harvesting? The rabbis said that the first was not work, while the second was. Pulling a sheep from a well-pit on the Sabbath we will not do it. So the lines cheating tasks of a physician were not, for they were work (Mat 12).

All legalisms (ethical schemes teaching salvation or sanctifi-
cation by Law) must develop a “Talmud,” a system of traditions, especially encoded as the written Talmud, detailed the possible answers to these types of questions, and the recorded argu-
ments of the main school of such famous rabbis as Shammie, Hillel, and Gamaliel, showed on what ethical principles one could make these distinctions safely.

One of the principle sources of conflict between Jesus and the rabbis was the leadership of his day was about the validity of these traditional interpretations. There was no question between Jesus and the Rabbinate about which books were in the Canon, or about the absolutely binding character of God’s writ-
ten code, but the Jews viewed their Holy Tradition as having substantially the same authority as the Law of Moses itself. In fact, this oral tradition was considered the authoritative inter-
pretation without which the “true meaning” of the whole OT text could not be known. The Pharsees taught that this Tradition was the “Light of the World” in which light the Law was to be read. Naturally, when Jesus said that He was the Light of the World, they immediately understood that He was claiming authority to teach the Law of God independently of the rabbinical traditions. This claim was one of several He made which effectively guaranteed His fate.

The threefold division of the law. The traditional discussion of the Law divided the many specific laws into three classes: the moral, the civil, and the ceremonial laws. This threefold classification stems from the exegesis of the early Middle Ages. It remains an integral part of the ongo-
ing discussion of the theological significance of the Ten Commandments and of catechetical teachings. It can hardly be denied that these three distinct kinds of laws are actually found in the mosaic system. Clearly, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” is a moral commandment, the Passover sacri-
fice is a ceremony, and the laws of inheritance make thorny duties equal to sons is a civil law.

The Moral Law was early equated with the Ten Commandments brought down from Sinai by Moses. They were supposed to be distinguished from the body of the laws by being written on the finger of God on the tablets, by being them-

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What was “nailed to the cross”?

The unity of the law

The occasion

There are several ideas circulating among Bible-believing Christians about the status of something variously referred to as “the law of God,” “the Ten Commandments,” or “the rule of life for the believer.” Some Christians argue that these ideas express an overarching relationship between the Law and the Gospel and between the Old and the New Covenants. In the last few years I have encountered antinomians who teach that the Christian is under no Law at all, having been made “free” from the Law at the cross. This idea becomes part of the “cheap grace” mentality that seems unconnected with holiness. I have also met postmillennial Reconstructionists who tell me that except for the ceremonial laws which Christ fulfilled, the Law of Moses is still in force in all its detail. These two claim that “the Kingdom is now. We must conquer the world for Jesus.” But I cannot make sense of these approaches unless I am under the Law.

From striving to surrender

Through all life’s circumstances, however, God kept loving me and continued to pursue me. Although I ran from even the mention of His name, He still had a plan for my life. A little over 10 years ago, after much resistance, I finally accepted an invitation to start a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. What joy flooded my heart as I accepted the free gift of salvation paid for on the cross! Little did I know that my troubles were just starting! Now that I was “born again” I wanted to do everything right. I set out working to be the “best” Christian I could possibly be. Although I now believed that God loved me and had forgiven my sins (past, present and future), deep in my heart a root of unbelief was still hidden. That unbelief prevented me from being able to completely accept that God loved me JUST THE WAY I WAS. I knew that nothing I did could make Him love me more, and that I couldn’t earn His approval. I would read scriptures that taught this truth; I would say I believed. I even taught others about God’s unconditional love. Yet the truth of God’s love had not yet rooted out my STRIVING.

Those wonderful “S” words! (SURRENDER and SPIRIT as in the Holy Spirit)

I finally learned about the Holy Spirit. As an Adventist, the “Holy Ghost” was a spooky, spiritualistic phantom to me, a presence of which no one could be sure. But when I began to read about the Holy Spirit’s importance in a believer’s life, I discovered that somehow a personal relationship with Him continued to elude me. I was too busy working hard to earn God’s approval. After all, wasn’t pleasing God the most important thing I could do? I put my time and energies toward being a “good Christian.” Yet the harder I worked to please God, the more I failed. I began to feel that I could never please God.

One day God began to reveal to me that He had placed His precious Spirit in a place of insignificance and inferiority in my life. Somehow in my mind the Holy Spirit was a “lesser” being, the third person at the bottom of the Trinity “hierarchy.” All that mattered to me was that I please God, the Father, because to me He was #1. In spite of my theological misunderstandings and constant STRIVING, God began to reveal to me through His Word that if I would choose to SURRENDER myself to the Holy Spirit, He would transform my life. It was exciting yet scary as I began to realize that God had given me the indescribable privilege and honor of presenting my body to the Holy Spirit to be “His” home here on earth.

Remaining                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        The occasion

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Two gospels

Just wanted to say thanks to you for being willing to publish your own “two-gospel” doctrinal view of the Bible in this May/June 2005 issue of Proclamation! That was truly outstanding and just to see how you would proclaim “Two Gospels”—one for the QT and one for the NT—without even cracking a snicker! Usually I have my chumbers in the QT because of magazine issues—but this one was just too good to pass up! We are all having a wonderful time with it. In past I have had some opportunity to compare the Bible against some things you print with people in our local Adventist church, pointing to specific Proclamation! articles as an illustration of just how far away from sound exegesis an SDA-bashing publication can get if it really tries. But this 11 page “Two Gospel” approach to the QT and NT just published is truly a gold mine.

My “usual” venue for Bible discussion outside of our local church is with evangelical denominations on their Bible message boards. There I find a lot of thought-stimulating challenges to Adventism as well as some not-so-well thought out ideas. But most of them are certainly put forward in the light of some Christian interest in Bible teachings. What a contrast it is to jump from that venue to reading your publication! Just wanted to say again you are doing a great job! How much I appreciate your willingness to say what you do print in all for all to read and then contrast to scripture. After reading your distractful article by reading D.J. Moody’s personal story on the Ten Commandments, I go with D.L Moody all the way. This article along with Dr. Verle Streifling’s article was superb. May our Lord continue to bless you in Life Assurance Ministries in proclaiming the good news of the New Covenant Gospel of grace in God.

Critical and less Godly

I have read several of your Proclamation! publications. It is so sad to see over and over that the only thing your organization has going to is slam the SDA church. Why don’t you just preach the word that you think you have totally right? You don’t need to tear someone else apart to proclaim the word of the Lord.

Every organization has something that they don’t agree about with another organization. The Lord is going to use many means to save people, even Baptists, Catholics, LDS, etc. Tearing another organization apart does not help you get closer to the Lord or heaven. It only makes you critical and less Godly.

Why don’t you just grow up spiritually and stop your vendetta against another group. Some of them will be saved too, you know. If you don’t believe that, then you are not even Christian.

Remove

Please take our name off of your mailing list! Your magazine is disgusting!

Conditional forgiveness

I was reading your investigative judgment article in your March/April issue! I think you leave out some important factors. For instance: all sins are not under the old covenant. The rest, e.g., “Knowest thou the commandments?…Deut. 6:1-5.”… the epistles of Christ… not with ink… not in tables of stone… (2 Cor 3:3)

Incidentally, it’s amazing how easy it is not to notice that when Paul speaks of the law he uses the past tense, and he is speaking of the experience of the Jews before Christ, not Christians after Christ. Roughly paraphrased, “Your foolish Gentiles, the law was our master before the promised seed came. Now that we have been freed, you want to become its slaves? Well, I hope the hand holding the circumcision knife slips” (Gal 3:24, 4:5, 12).

Superb articles

Just finished reading cover to cover the latest Proclamation! and Dale Ratzlaff’s featured article along with Dr. Verle Streifling’s article were superb. May our Lord continue to bless you in Life Assurance Ministries in proclaiming the good news of the New Covenant Gospel of grace in God.

My dad, however (the most honest man I have ever known), was willing to listen. He would at least study the evidence. We had many heated arguments. Over the course of a 10 year, often painful study, he slowly came to realize that he had been deceived by the Adventist system. All the major pillars of Adventism fell—including the Sabbath which required five years of difficult study. He came to me one day and said, “Son, I have been wrong all these years.” I was overjoyed with grace and perspective. He was basically starting over and was not a person just trying to get back at me. My parents continue to grow in grace. My Mom is still committed to the SDA church, but her highest priority is her love for Jesus, and that is followed by the wonderful love she gives to others. She worships with my Dad at a truly spirit-filled evangelical church in Colton. My heart was filled with joy when I had the opportunity to worship with them this last Mother’s Day, 2005! I thank the Lord everyday for their good health and for the wonderful love they’ve given me through the years.

More real than ever before

In my long journey from Adventism into a Reformed Christian faith, I have now had the opportunity to see how those great doctrines of grace have played out in a practical way. For example, I could not resist God’s electing and atoning grace that night that I was saved. Further, I have no problem recognizing my total depravity, and I have experienced God’s preserving grace and His disciplining grace as well. Though I was not in a church for Bible study and prayer for eight years. Gradually, however, I became caught up in life’s cares. I pursued outside business interests.

Prior to salvation, I had developed an interest in thor- oughbred horse racing. I was not interested in gambling as such, but I was fascinated by turning a profit by careful mathematical analysis of the sport. I went back and pursued horse racing again.

I was overtaken by greed, and I wandered far from God. I went to the track on Sundays instead of to church. Our mar-

age was in serious trouble—but Mardi stuck with me through every trying circumstances.

God intervened with His sovereign, disciplining grace, how- ever, and over a seven year period (I was very stubborn) I healed our marriage and brought me back to myself. Gradually I became more interested in Bible study, I discovered the Former Adventist Fellowship (FNF) website in 2003, and began reading others’ stories. A major turning point came when I had a serious stroke. Months later, I attended the 2005 Good Friday service with the Redlands FAF group at Trinity church, and that experience sparked a spiritual renewal that has been completely trans- forming. I now have a passion for Bible study and prayer. I’ve lost my passion for the racetrack. Jesus has become so much more real to me than ever before. He has even restored our marriage and has rekindled my love for Mardi anew.

When she recovered, we returned to Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, Pastor Chuck Smith’s sermon title was “Great is Thy Faithfulness.” There was a truly emotional moment when Pastor Chuck said, “The Silicone faith group and the audience once the beautiful hymn of the sermon title. Tears of joy, praise, and thanksgiving were streaming down our cheeks as we realized that our Lord had indeed been faithful to His promises!” That famous Reformation phrase—“Soil Deo Gloria”—really rings true: To God be the Glory!

Central to the Editor

Let’s go to P R E S S

General Conference session at St. Louis

The 58th quinquennial General Conference Session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is being held in St. Louis, Missouri, as we prepare this issue for publication. The title for the meetings is “Transformed in Christ.”

During the three days immediately preceding the meetings and throughout the session, local radio station KSJL AM 630 which has the largest Christian market in the area, aired inter- views with a total of fourteen different former Adventists on the morning Tim and Al show. Dale Ratzlaff gave an introduc- tory interview on June 20, and the featured guests during the weeks of the GC session included Walter Rae, Verle Streifling, and Jonathan Wolzwick.

Subjects discussed included Ellen White’s plagiarisms, the Clear Word, soul sleep and the human spirit, the effect of leav- ing Adventism on one’s Christian experience, what a person leaving Adventism needs from the Christian community, the problems of Adventist Biblical exegesis, the investigative judg- ment, and more.

We continue to pray that Adventists in bondage to decep- tion or dishonesty will be rescued by the grace of Jesus and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

Jerry Gladson, Mark Martin, Dennis Fischer, Chris Lee, Janice and Ken Brantley, Lydell Oltmans, Colleen Tinker, Rey Cantu, and Jonathan Wolzwick.

We continue to pray that Adventists in bondage to decep- tion or dishonesty will be rescued by the grace of Jesus and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.
I realized that Christianity stands or falls on the death and resurrection of Jesus. In contrast, it became apparent that Adventism stands or falls on Ellen White’s doctrine of 1844 and the Investigative Judgment.

I decided I wanted to be a physician and to Loma Linda. After studying hard and staying out of trouble at Pacific Union College, I was accepted in 1973 into medical school.

The only “gospel” I heard at Loma Linda was the non-threatening message of Jack Provostha. To be fair, at that time I had absolutely no interest in Christianity. All I knew was that his message was Biblical. My wife and I

I had just learned. This might sound silly to the average Adventist, but I am gradually learning. One of these days I will make the break from Adventism. Thank you for your ministry.

God is awesome

I was an Adventist for 25 years and have just received my confirmation of membership withdrawal this month in time for my 33rd birthday. It was a great birthday present! I love the Adventist people. My friend and I shared as much as we could about Adventist info with those around us, but I am sure you know where I am coming from.

Being an Adventist is tough. Learning how to let go and accept the fact that I have little or no control over His plans is something I am just learning. One of these days I will make the break from Adventism. Thank you for your ministry.

God is sovereign

I want to let you know how much I enjoy your magazine. I read it right away when it comes in the mail. I have learned so much from the insightful articles and personal stories. I would like to share a personal revelation I had. After a few minutes of silence, I called him up to his room to discuss it in private. I didn't know what I was going to say, but when I opened my mouth, the most amazing thing happened. I gave a perfect explanation for why he couldn't dye his hair. I told him that the reason he couldn't dye his hair was because his father and I would be very upset if he did it and it just wouldn't look good. He wasn't satisfied with this and wanted a better explanation. I got very upset and told him I didn't want to talk about it any more.

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Adventist arguments. We have been so powerful in this entire ministry trip. We have connected with pastors of major church ministries in the area that have a heart to help former SDAs get connected into ministry. We met with the leadership of the Full Gospel churches in Uganda. They have an inter-denominational college for training ministers. They are currently working with one of the former SDA pastors and are equipping him to plant a church in a region where there are few churches. We also met with Calvary Chapel. I will share more about that connection later. Very exciting! We also met with the leader of the Emmaus group that is currently helping the churches that developed out of our last ministry trip in Uganda. The Emmaus group is similar to Baptists in the states. The Anglicans are training another former SDA pastor. They are truly a Bible believing evangelical group in Uganda, unlike their Episcopal Church relatives. The Anglicans are training ministers developing. I know God has opened the door, I trust He will bring the funding.

Dear Family and Praying Friends,

Mbalu Musizza My Yesso Kristo (I greet you all in Jesus’ Name)

God has been so powerful in this entire ministry trip. We have connected with pastors of major church ministries in the area that have a heart to help former SDAs get connected into ministry. We met with the leadership of the Full Gospel churches in Uganda. They have an inter-denominational college for training ministers. They are currently working with one of the former SDA pastors and are equipping him to plant a church in a region where there are few churches. We also met with Calvary Chapel. I will share more about that connection later. Very exciting! We also met with the leader of the Emmaus group that is currently helping the churches that developed out of our last ministry trip in Uganda. The Emmaus group is similar to Baptists in the states. The Anglicans are training another former SDA pastor. They are truly a Bible believing evangelical group in Uganda, unlike their Episcopal Church relatives. The Anglicans are training ministers developing. I know God has opened the door, I trust He will bring the funding.

They now realize that transfer- ence was not correct theology, and it has set them up for the Adventist arguments.

We had a great day yesterday. Many Africans, especially in the interior, have to deal with legalistic religion. They started it from their association with the animism they’ve come out of. Their gods could easily be offended, so they have to be constantly reminded of God’s grace.

This morning I had breakfast with Brian Kelly and Joshua Carson. They pastor the Calvary Chapel in town. They have been growing quickly. God is truly blessing their ministry. I discussed with them the issues transitioning Adventist pastors face and asked them about these ministers being able to attend their college for remedial training and course work. They were very excited about the idea. They were also interested in speaking to some of the pastors, so we met after the breakfast with four former SDA pastors. They had a great meeting. They would like some of the pastors to start volunteering in their church and to take some classes as they direct. They will look at ways, as God leads, to help them get started in churches of their own should there be good connections. Exciting!

There are 3,000,000 people in Uganda that list themselves as Adventists in the census. While only 150,000 are on the Adventist books, the SDA influence via their meetings has made strong inroads here. Many people don’t attend anywhere because they see themselves as “Adventistized,” so they don’t feel free to connect with other churches. This possibility for former Adventist pastors to train with Calvary Chapel and to find placement in churches is a huge opportunity.

The Calvary guys thought it might be good to have me and maybe another former Adventist come and teach an intensive on Adventism for their college between semesters. They would also like more books. We supplied them with some and will send more. In addition, they also need textbooks in general that we might be able to help them acquire via donations. I will be talking to Mark Martin when I get back. It would be great if he could come and speak at their church and also help with the class on Adventism.

I am so encouraged. I see such a heart among the churches to help Adventists get free and such a hunger in the Adventists to truly start evangelical, Spirit-filled churches. This has been a very fruitful trip.

I am so happy to see all the opportunities for transitioning ministers developing. I know God has opened many doors. I just found out about a seventh church that was started through our ministry two years ago. It is about 60 strong! I trust God is now going to bring support along to help pastors get training they need. This training will be through the covering institutions themselves and will not take our administration. They will screen their candidates, provide instruction and placement them. Since God has opened the door, I trust He will bring the funding.

This summer, Greg Taylor, representing the ministry he founded, One Rock Ministries, again traveled to Uganda at the request of the pastors there, and we share here his email dated June 29, 2005. We are rejoicing that the work we feared had collapsed has indeed born fruit and is thriving.

A case study of God’s sovereign grace…

I am thankful for the privilege of relating my story of God’s sovereign grace. It has been 23 years since I realized that I was no longer an Adventist. Now that I have the advantage of looking through my retrospectoscope, I am rejoicing that I had the privilege of growing up Adventist. All the bitterness that comes from being raised in a system of legalistic righteousness has now been taken away in Christ.

Today I am thankful for my Adventist education, the wonderful parents God gave me, and Marti, the wife God chose for me while I was in medical school. The greatest blessing of all, though, was the day I realized that Christ shed His blood for me and chose me to be His child. He then brought me to a full understanding of the true gospel of grace. When I realized that traditional Adventism was incompatible with that gospel, I had no choice but to leave the church of my youth. I am sharing this story to explain why it was necessary for me to leave Adventism in order to be faithful to the gospel of Christ.

Beginnings

I was born in 1952 in Loma Linda, California. My dad was born into the home of a German immigrant father and had eight siblings, all of whom remained in the Adventist church. My dad and three of his brothers went to Loma Linda University and became physicians. My mom’s parents were Adventist missionaries to the Amazon for 27 years. Both my parents were zealous for traditional Adventism. My Dad was like Saul of Tarsus who was advancing in Judaism (Galatians 1:14), except he was advancing in Adventism. As a physician, he

Stan Ermshar is a physician in Irvine, California. He is an avid reader and especially enjoys the reformed theologians. Stan and his wife Marti attend Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa. They share their home with a black standardoodle name Riverfonz, and they praise God for His intervention and healing in their lives.
I had no right to punish my son for my own feelings of failure and helplessness. For those I had Jesus.

Nathanael grudgingly began scrubbing the bathroom counter.

I calmed down as he completed his chores before finally going to bed without saying “Good-night.”

And then it hit me: an awareness so real and powerful that it felt like a physical weight had landed on me. My heart broke, and I began to cry. Standing there in the kitchen at 10:00 on a Saturday night, I realized that I had been hurting my son. Not just hurting him—deeply wounding him. I had been piercing his sensitive heart with a weapon more damaging than a mere knife—my anger, criticism, and disapproval. I was creating in him a background of resentment that he could only resist by being passive-aggressive.

I knew the Holy Spirit was confronting me, and I could not ignore Him. I had no right to punish my son for my own feelings of failure and helplessness. For those I had Jesus. My son needed me to love him for God, not to make him bear my own shame.

“Please forgive me, God,” I prayed as I cried. “Please heal his heart where I have hurt him, and please help me love him for You.”

And then came the second awareness—bold, clear, and irresistible. I had to ask Nathanael to forgive me.

The next morning as Nathanael, the leader of the high school media team, got ready to leave for his 7:00 AM obligation to prepare the worship slides for that morning (where had I gotten the idea he was irresponsible, anyway?), I apologized. I confessed I had been wrong and pledged with God’s help never to speak that way to him again. His eyes softened, “I forgive you,” he said.

Since that day, God changed my heart. He has taken away my knee-jerk response of frustration and insult when I deal with Nathanael’s open-ended (but highly intuitive and creative) personality. God has given me His security to be able to deal with my son as himself instead of as (what I feared was) an example of my flawed parenting. I praise God for His healing in my heart and for granting Nathanael and me a bond of mutual love, enjoyment, and respect.

Many Commandment-keepers accuse New Covenant Christians of lawlessness. We say the law has been nailed to the cross, they accuse, so we can sin and “do what we want” without guilt. Nothing could be less true. My encounter with the Holy Spirit in the kitchen that night was an example of New Covenant law at work. The Holy Spirit personally confronted me with my brokenness, and He lovingly and firmly brought me to repentance and restitution.

Further, this particular sin was not one listed in the 10 Commandments. “Fathers [and mothers], do not exasperate your children,” admonishes Paul in Ephesians 6:4. New Covenant “law” goes far beyond the outline of the 10 Commandments.

Because Jesus died and opened a new, living way to the Father, He can now intimately convict us at any moment through the indwelling Holy Spirit, and He can change our hearts.

The law could never do that.

In this issue McGregor Wright examines what was really nailed to the cross. Richard Goyne reminds us of the central truth of justification by faith, and we will read a report from Greg Taylor of events in Uganda resulting from our assistance to former Adventist pastors two years ago. Stan Emmiah shares his faith story, and Tami Chester tells how “discovering” the Holy Spirit took her from striving to surrender.

As you read, we pray you will discover that when we are in Jesus, we no longer look to an external law as our authority. Instead, the Holy Spirit takes us directly into the presence of God. He convicts and teaches us, and He changes our hearts.
From striving to surrender  TAM I CHESTER

I grew up in a staunchly legalistic Adventist family where God’s mercy, love and grace were never a part of my theological thought structure. Our family would gather most evenings for family devotions which usually consisted of a passage from one of Ellen G. White’s books. As I grew older, my father would have me read books such as Patriarchs and Prophets, Desire of Ages, and many others and then write book reports on them. Needless to say, the picture of God that became ingrained in my mind, mind, and spirit was one of an angry, judgmental, distant Being who loved to execute revenge on anyone who crossed Him, a God whom I could never fully trust. In whose presence I would be able to stand unless I somehow mysteriously reached a state of perfection. I grew up terrified by the thought of Jesus’ coming, the "end times," and the persecution I would undergo as an Adventist.

At the age of 12, I was baptized into the Adventist church. The morning of my baptism, I still remember thinking very clearly to myself that from that moment on I would finally be able to live a perfect life that was pleasing to God so that He would love and accept me.

God would never accept me the way I was, I wanted nothing to do with Him, either. One day I shook my fist in his face and screamed, “Go away, burn me up. I’d rather go to hell than spend eternity with you and a bunch of Adventists!” I had no real fear of hell, believing that I would burn up in an instant, anyway. As an adult I left the Adventist church and for many years lived a life that was far away from God. It never occurred to me that I was defiant, rebellious, bitter, or angry towards God. I just knew I didn’t care at all about anything to do with Him.

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Tami Chester and her husband Ross live in Redlands, California, and have three children. They worship and serve God together as a family at Pathway Church. Tami is involved in discipling children and reaching out to unsaved children in the local community, as she believes bringing the good news of the gospel to children is the greatest commission in the world.

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Greg Taylor along with his wife and sons left Adventism during the summer of 2001. Since 2002 Greg has been the pastor for spiritual formation at Crossroads Church in Hagerstown Maryland, and he and Paula also operate One Flock Ministries, an inter denominational ministry which help those caught in sectarian systems to find freedom in Christ and community with other believers. This photo shows Greg standing in front of a typical village church in Uganda.

Greg Taylor

UPDATE FROM UGANDA
Pastor Greg Taylor visits former Adventists

Late in 2002, Life Assurance Ministries, Inc. voted to raise support for a number of former Adventist pastors in Uganda who had studied the New Covenant and had left the Seventh-day Adventist church. The LAM, Inc. board agreed that this support would be for a limited time to allow these men to establish a church and become financially independent. In addition to funds, Life Assurance Ministries helped to send Greg Taylor to Uganda to meet with the former Adventists there and to encourage them in the gospel. Further, LAM Inc. contacted Stan Lincoln, an American missionary to help those in need. Greg Taylor to Uganda to meet with the former Adventists there and to encourage them in the gospel. Further, LAM Inc. contacted Stan Lincoln, an American missionary in Uganda with Mission Aviation Fellowship, to meet with these men on a regular basis to provide direction and outreach assistance including the Campus Crusade Jesus Film, as they conducted public meetings and formed a congregation.

Greg Taylor

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