

Peter and the keys ELIZABETH INRIG 10

# Proclamation!

FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONFIDENT EVANGELICALS

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# The gates of hell have not **Prevailed** COLLEEN TINKER

**In gratitude and awe I allowed myself to sit and cry as, moved by the ancient act of baptism, I saw myself for the first time connected by the unbroken life of the Holy Spirit to all those earliest Christ-followers, including the apostles themselves.**

I sat in church one Sunday evening in the spring of 2004. Several people were being baptized that night, and as I listened to their stories of how they came to know Jesus, I couldn't keep my eyes dry. More than ever before, I was overwhelmed by the sense of continuity between these people declaring their faith in Jesus and all the Christ-followers who had

made the same public declaration of trust over the past 2,000 years.

That day came near the end of a year of studying the book of Acts in women's Bible study. I had always known that the church was

born at Pentecost, but I had never clearly understood that during the months right after Jesus' ascension, the body of Christ was defined and identified by Peter's apostolic preaching and authority. While God raised up Paul to explain the "administration of this mystery" of the New Covenant (Ephesians 3:9), there were no new practices or beliefs Christ-followers were expected to observe that those first converts did not receive.

As an Adventist I had known that the Holy Spirit came on the Jewish converts on the Day of Pentecost and birthed the church. In spite of the clear statement in Acts 2:16-21 that Pentecost fulfilled the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32, however, I had been taught that Pentecost represented the "early rain" spoken of in that prophecy—that the latter rain would not come in power until the time right before Jesus returned. Further, I had been taught that the Seventh-day Adventist church was raised up in the mid-19th century with a special end-time message for the church. The "true church," in other words, did not come into existence until about 1844. Pentecost was, in a sense, merely the beginning of the church, a shadow and a promise of the true "remnant" that God would reveal embodied in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I had also learned that the church had become corrupted, that Martin Luther and the Reformation freed it from its papal pollution—

but that neither Luther nor any other reformer had "all the light." It remained for the Adventist Church to continue Luther's reformation and restore to God's church the true Sabbath and the knowledge of Jesus' eminent return.

As I watched people declare their loyalty to Jesus that Sunday, I was overwhelmed realizing that the true church of the Lord Jesus had never disappeared. In spite of darkness and corruption, there have always been true Christ-followers keeping alive the apostolic teaching of Jesus and Him crucified, risen, and ascended to the Father. The good news of Jesus' completed atonement for our sin and of salvation by faith alone through grace alone in Christ alone has never disappeared. Had not Jesus Himself promised that the "gates of Hades will not overcome [His church]" (Matthew 16:18)? How could I have ever imagined that the true body of Christ had disappeared or was distinct from this miraculous birth begun at Pentecost and continued throughout the book of Acts?

In gratitude and awe I allowed myself to sit and cry as, moved by the ancient act of baptism, I saw myself for the first time connected by the unbroken life of the Holy Spirit to all those earliest Christ-followers, including the apostles themselves. With them I, too, received "the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints," and I, too, had the divine commission to contend for that faith (Jude :3).

In these pages Chris Badenhorst examines the true nature of Christ's body and contrasts that with the Adventist belief in its status as the "remnant church of Bible prophecy." Elizabeth Inrig explains the birth of the church, and Richard Goyne discusses the Adventist tradition of adding foot-washing to the communion service. Recent college graduate Aerin Toussaint tells her story of finding Jesus as her Savior and of subsequently leaving Adventism, and Shirley Burton shares how God helped her lose the chains of legalism.

As you read, praise God for His sovereign purpose that has given us a role in His story. "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God would be revealed to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:10-11).

## Proclamation!

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# I missed out on cheeseburgers, but I found the feast!

AERIN TOUSSAINT

**A**bout 7 years ago, my family left the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Looking back, it is amazing to remember the proud feeling I had when I could tell someone that I was a Seventh-day Adventist.

I was born Adventist. My parents were very involved in our church, from the tech team to children's ministry. This involvement, of course, made me very involved as well. From a young age I was playing the piano for church, doing special music, helping present Mission Focus, serving as a junior deaconess, volunteering at the Amazing Facts Crusade. I eagerly soaked up all of the material and knew all of the facts and could quote all of the prophecies and dates. I remember crying because I thought that my best friend, who was a non-denominational Christian, wouldn't go to heaven because she attended church on Sunday and didn't know the "Truth."

At eleven years of age I was arguably a more devout Adventist than many in the church. I remember clearly the day I obeyed the altar call and went up to the front in our church

sanctuary. I had felt enormous guilt at not following the call I felt pressing on my heart as I stayed hunkered down between my parents. Once I went forward, I felt an overwhelming sense of happiness because I knew that I would have a better chance of going to heaven now that I would soon be baptized into the Adventist church.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of

**Aerin Toussaint** graduated from Texas A&M in May of 2006, majoring in English and minoring in communications. The summer after graduation, she went to Zambia, Africa, for a month to work with orphans and underprivileged children there (see picture). When she returned to the states, she began a one-year, full-time internship at her college church, Grace Bible Church, in College Station, Texas. She believes that God is leading her to pursue a future in ministry of some kind, and although she does not currently know what that future will look like, she knows that He has a plan for her life, and she is eager to see what that is!



God—not by works, so that no one can boast." In spite of all the Scripture memorization I did when I was a child, somehow the meaning of this passage completely escaped me for most of my life. I lived for doing good deeds.

I was constantly fearful about my salvation. I cried myself to sleep many nights, praying countless times for God to save me. I recognized that I was a sinner and in need of salvation, but Adventist doctrines said to me that if I slipped up just once, I was in danger of hell if I didn't confess that sin before I died.

One Sabbath, a non-Adventist guest speaker came to our youth Sabbath School Class. He posed the question, "What if you were a Christian and you were out driving one day. Suddenly a Mac Truck pulled directly into your path, so you cussed as you swerved, and a second later the truck hit you

and you died. Would you be saved?" No one in the class could answer him. Our general consensus was that we couldn't know whether or not committing a sin just before we died would keep us out of heaven. He was horrified and showed us some Scripture detailing the overwhelming grace and power of God. I came home amazed by my newfound knowledge, and I remember my mom being shocked that I hadn't known that once you were saved, you were saved. Yet I had learned that I could not be certain of salvation.

I continued to struggle with fear and doubt. I would lie in bed at night, crying, afraid that if I died, I would not go to heaven. I prayed and asked Jesus to come into my heart on at least a weekly basis.

To guarantee my place in heaven, I obeyed all the Adventist laws and regulations. No matter how my friends pressed me, I refused to eat meat or dairy products or to drink anything with caffeine in it. Looking back now, I am amazed at how devout and disciplined I was then.

When I say that I was devout, I mean it in the fullest sense of the word. I was a very zealous little Adventist. I knew all the dietary laws and berated others for not following them. Because of our strict diet, I ate only the crusts of pizza, declined ice cream, soft drinks and candy, and never ate meat until my family left the church. Horrified, I listened as some of the older kids at church talked about eating

hamburgers and even drinking Cokes—didn't they know that caffeine was of the devil?

As far back as I can remember I did everything in my power to do what I thought God wanted me to do. I read Sabbath books on Saturdays, didn't watch movies when at friends' houses, and gave up playing sports and having sleepovers for that oh-so-inconvenient 24-hour Sabbath period. As for foregoing certain activities on Saturdays, I knew that I might be heaven-bound if I obeyed all the rules, and this obedience gave me incredible strength.

My mom home-schooled me and did an excellent job of having me participate in acceptable activities. I hardly noticed that my involvement was modified. Piano competitions, swim meets, birthday parties—all inevitably fell on Saturdays, and I missed them all, except for the piano Hymn Festival. For some reason, I couldn't participate in the Rock Festival, Baroque Festival, or any of the other events that fell on Saturdays, but the Hymn Festival was deemed permissible.

## The catalyst

During my eighth grade year, our church underwent a crisis which caused members to take sides and the church to crumble. As a result of this confusion, my mom stopped attending. God was definitely doing something in her life, though; she had a quiet, joyful peace she could not explain. Even though my dad was becoming disenchanted with the church, however, his tie to it was still overwhelmingly strong.

Now 13, I was very educated about Adventist doctrines and was quite a rabid little legalist. I believed it was very wrong for my mom not to be attending church, and I still went with my dad and brothers. As the church continued to disintegrate, however, my dad stopped attending as well. It was only at this point that I began to sense not only my parent's dissatisfaction with Adventism but my own. During this time my mom explained the gospel to me clearly, and I began to notice the "scales fall from my eyes". Nonetheless, I continued to be fearful about my salvation and continued praying to receive Christ almost every night.

During this time of upheaval, I learned the truth about Ellen White, and I started to doubt other doctrines of the Adventist church. The longer we stayed away from church, the more the Bible came alive to me on its own. I remember reading certain passages of Scripture in disbelief—"has this verse always said this?" I wondered.

My transformation did not happen overnight. My family started attending the comfortable Saturday night service at a nearby Bible church. We definitely were not breaking the Sabbath—nor were we succumbing to Sunday worship! One weekend, though, the church announced the completion of its new worship center—an event which would call for the abridgement of the church service schedule. From

**I continued to struggle with fear and doubt. I would lie in bed at night, crying, afraid that if I died, I would not go to heaven. I prayed and asked Jesus to come into my heart on at least a weekly basis.**

# The true church Not an institution

CHRIS BADENHORST

Many Christian denominational creeds or statements of faith describe the nature of the Christian Church in the language of The Nicene Creed (AD 325) as the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic church." These attributes, which constitute the true church, are biblical concepts. During the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, controversy arose over the identity of the true church. The Papacy contended that the Church of Rome was the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. The Reformers, on the other hand, denied Rome's claim. But how could one test the claims of divergent religious bodies to be the "true church"?



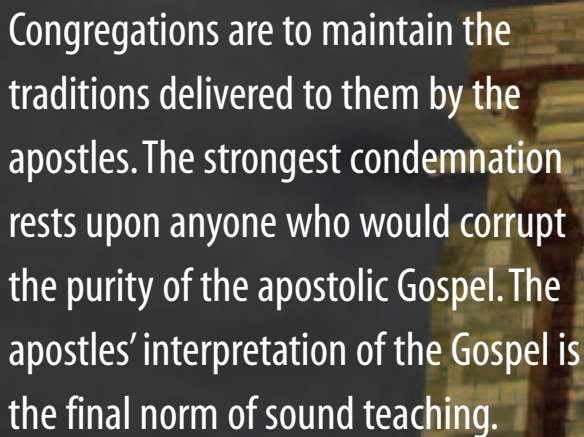
**Chris Badenhorst** is a retired civil engineering technician who still works part time on one of South Africa's oil refineries in the city of Durban on the east coast. He is married with three step-children and one grandchild. His wife is also a former Adventist who shares his enthusiasm for the gospel of God's free grace. Although they are not members of a particular denomination, they attend a local Baptist church for worship and fellowship.

**T**he New Testament teaches that the attributes of the true church are soteriological and not institutional. The church is *one* because the atonement that Christ made on the cross has "destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility... His purpose was to create in (union with) himself one new man... thus making peace" (Eph. 2:14, 15). So, the barrier which separates fellow believers according to class, race and sex has been removed by Christ's death on the cross. The risen Lord is therefore the exalted Head of "a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17) which is His "one body" (Eph. 1:16, 19-23; 2:14).

The church is *holy* because by His death on the cross Christ purchased and set apart to be God's chosen people all those who believe the Gospel. In biblical usage "holiness" or "sanctification" refers to that which is set apart by God for His service—which includes preaching the Gospel of salvation, reconciliation and

peace. The community of believers in Christ is the fellowship of “those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy” (1 Cor. 1:2). So, the “saints” are those who have put their trust in Christ as Saviour, who have been born again by the Spirit, who have been reconciled to God and to each other and whom God has separated from the world to be His people (2 Thess. 2:13, 14; 2 Tim. 1:9, 10).

The church is *catholic* (i.e. universal) because Christ has made atonement (payment) on the cross for the sins of the whole world and because this good news is now being proclaimed “to every nation, tribe, language and people” (Rev. 14:6). So, the universal church of God consists of all believers in Christ throughout the world. These are they who have received forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ’s name (Acts 10:43) and who have been born again into the family and kingdom of God (John 1:12, 13; 3:1-8). Local congrega-



Congregations are to maintain the traditions delivered to them by the apostles. The strongest condemnation rests upon anyone who would corrupt the purity of the apostolic Gospel. The apostles’ interpretation of the Gospel is the final norm of sound teaching.

tions are but the local manifestations of the one universal church of Christ.

The church is *apostolic* because its faith and life are grounded solely on the testimony of the apostles whom Christ sovereignly appointed to witness and proclaim His saving work (Luke 6:13; Acts 1:2, 21, 22; John 14:26; 15:26f; 17:20). The New Testament has preserved for the church the content of the apostles’ teaching concerning Christ, His redemptive work on the cross, His triumphant resurrection from the dead, and His ascension to heaven where He was exalted by the Father to sit at His right hand. The New Testament has preserved as well the implications of all these things for the life of the believing community—that it is one, holy and catholic.

Just as the church was founded upon the apostles’ witness, so it is nourished and grows by continuing in the apostles’ teaching (Acts 2:42). Congregations are to maintain the traditions delivered to them by the apostles (1 Cor. 11:2; 15:1-11; 2 Thess. 2:15). The strongest condemnation rests upon anyone who would corrupt the purity of the apostolic Gospel (Gal. 1:6-

9). The apostles’ interpretation of the Gospel is the final norm of sound teaching (2 Ti. 1:13-14; Tit. 1:3, 9). This is “the faith that was once (for all) entrusted to the saints” (Jude 3), and insofar as the Christian Church upholds the true Gospel as proclaimed by the apostles, it is “the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). This commitment to the apostolic witness alone will safeguard the unity, holiness and catholicity of the church.

## Roman Catholicism

Rome interprets the attributes of the church in institutional terms. *Unity* means lockstep conformity and submission to the demands and teachings of the hierarchical Roman structure. *Catholicity* means the propagation and maintenance of a formal, worldwide organization. *Holiness* means the strict adherence to ecclesiastical rites. *Apostolicity* means the uncompromised acceptance of the teaching of a succession of Roman bishops who claim to wear the mantle of Peter.

## The Reformers

The Reformers denied Rome’s claim that its organization constituted the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church because they had discovered a vital truth in the New Testament—that the attributes of the church are not institutional but soteriological. Therefore, the nature of the church could not be correctly understood apart from the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus did they contend that the church’s real unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity are all rooted in God’s great saving act on Calvary. This Gospel alone would produce the attributes by which the true church can be known. They therefore stated that the true church could be identified by whether or not the faithful preaching of the Gospel and the proper administration of baptism and the Lord’s Supper (by which the Gospel is portrayed) were present in the community.

Therefore, according to the New Testament and the Reformers, Christ’s true church is the community of all who have put their trust in Him, and its attributes may be described as “one, holy, catholic and apostolic.” The marks by which we may know the true church are: it believes and faithfully proclaims the pure and unadulterated Gospel as recorded in the Scriptures by the Lord’s chosen apostles, and it faithfully administers baptism and the Lord’s Supper (by which the gospel is portrayed). The church’s unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity are therefore grounded upon the Gospel of Christ’s finished work of redemption on the cross.

## Sectarian Claims

Certain religious institutions claim to be Christ’s only true church to the exclusion of other Christian groups, which are regarded as apostate Babylon. In attempts to find scriptural support for such self-commending claims, appeal is made to certain proof-texts upon which dubious interpretations are imposed. For example, Roman Catholicism appeals to Matthew 16:18 (“And I tell you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church”) in an effort to establish its supremacy.

Some religious groups make the *name* of their denomination the mark of the true church (e.g. "The Church of Christ"). Some charismatic denominations contend that tongue-speaking is the evidence that they alone have God's approval.

Sectarianism is contrary to the principles of the Nicene Creed by denying the unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity of the Christian Church as depicted in the New Testament Scriptures. It denies the *unity* of all who believe in Christ for the forgiveness of sins and that all believers have a common Father in heaven and share a common new life in the Spirit constituting them members of one family. Thus does sectarianism bring division into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 3:16, 17).

It denies the *holiness* of the church because it ignores the fact that the imperfections in belief and practice seen in the different segments of the Christian community are covered by the blood of Christ. It usually claims perfection for the doctrines it promulgates referring to them as "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." According to them all other denominations are steeped in darkness and error.

It denies the *catholicity* of the church by its exclusive claim to be the one and only true church—God's end-time remnant in contradistinction to all the other denominations, which are denounced as apostate Babylon. By this it cuts itself off from open fellowship with the rest of the worldwide Body of Christ.

It denies the *apostolicity* of the church by its claims to have light and knowledge in advance of the rest of Christendom and sometimes even of the chosen apostles of Christ to whom were revealed all the truth the church needs to know this side of eternity. This advance light and knowledge is usually based on an extra-biblical authority.

### Seventh-day Adventism

In many respects the Adventist understanding of the church is very much like that of Roman Catholicism. This comes out clearly when it is realized that ecclesiology is but an extension of soteriology. That is to say that any denomination's doctrine of the church will be determined by its understanding of the Gospel and how God saves people by means of the Gospel.

### The True Church and Remnant

Adventism regards itself not merely as "a church" but as "the church." It claims that its denomination is the only true church on earth today. All other denominations it denounces as Babylon. Therefore, according to Adventism, it is the only legitimate visible church in the entire world. As stated above, such claims are only made by sectarian cults of which the Roman Catholic denomination is the greatest.

Adventism not only claims to be the only true church on earth today, it also claims to be God's remnant—His end-time church. The two main proof texts for this claim are Revelation 12:17 and 19:10. Based on these two texts it states that the true end-time church—the remnant—must observe all ten commandments and have a prophet. Accordingly, Adventism claims that it alone qualifies as "the remnant church."

### Adventism's 1844 Theology

The above claims by Adventism are also based on its unique interpretation of its cardinal text of Scripture—Daniel 8:14. Mrs. E. G. White, Adventism's end-time prophetess, states: "The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: 'Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.' Daniel 8:14" (GC 409).

In their interpretation of this text, the pioneers stated that the 2300 days (KJV) means 2300 years. This time period, they calculated, would terminate on October 22, 1844. The event referred to as "the cleansing of the sanctuary" was first believed to refer to the second coming of Christ in glory to redeem the righteous and destroy the wicked by cleansing the earth with fire. Thus did they dogmatically set an exact date for the Lord's return.

But nothing can justify this date-setting, nothing at all. It is against the explicit command of Holy Scripture and the lessons of history. When the Lord did not come as they predicted, the pioneers experienced what is referred to in Adventist history as the Great Disappointment. But instead of coming to their senses and repenting for their apocalyptic foolishness, the pioneers re-interpreted Daniel 8:14 by linking it to "the cleansing of the sanctuary" on the Day of Atonement in ancient Israel. Based on this linkage they projected the entire Old Covenant sanctuary ritual into heaven, making the heavenly ministration of Christ run parallel to that of the earthly.

They now concluded that on October 22, 1844, instead of Christ coming to earth, He went into the Most Holy apartment of the heavenly sanctuary to make the "final" or saving atonement for its cleansing by which the record of believers' sins would be blotted out. Up to this time He was in the first apartment making a "preliminary" atonement for believers by which their confessed sins were transferred onto Him as sin-bearer. But now, by means of the "final" atonement, He would transfer these sins onto Satan, the anti-typical scapegoat, who must pay (atone) for them in the end!

The implication of this teaching was clearly stated by the pioneer O. R. L. Crosier in his pathfinding treatise on the sanctuary in *The Day-Star Extra* of February 7, 1846. He explicitly declared that Christ makes the atonement in heaven. He therefore concluded that Christ did not even begin His work of atonement on the cross! In 1877, Uriah Smith—a prominent Adventist scholar—was just as bold when he declared: "Christ did not make the atonement upon the cross. Let this fact be fixed forever in the mind." (*The Sanctuary and the Twenty-Three Hundred Days of Daniel V111*, 14. p. 276). In other words, according to the pioneers of Adventism, Christ did not make the saving atonement on the cross; He makes it in heaven from 1844 onwards. By this atonement the believer's record of sins is blotted out, he receives justification "full and complete," the irrevocable seal of God, and the latter rain.

This face-saving explanation of a two-apartment sanctuary in heaven and of the assumption that on October 22, 1844, Christ went from the first apartment to the second to com-

mence His redemptive final atonement ministration became the foundation and central pillar of Adventism's theology—the only original contribution it has made to Christian theology and the only legitimate reason for its existence as a religious body.

So, the date 1844 and the teaching on the two-phased ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary are the nerve center of Adventism. From this interpretation of Daniel 8:14 comes a plethora of unique Adventist teachings such as the two apartments and their respective ministrations of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, the investigative judgment, the blotting out of the record of sins, the transfer of sin onto Satan, the special sealing, the latter rain, the close of probation, the time of the end, the remnant, and the Spirit of Prophecy.

## An Evaluation:

### 1. Adventism's 1844 theology

What can be said of Adventism's 1844 theology? Just as Christianity stands or falls on the resurrection event (1 Cor. 15:1-4), so Adventism stands or falls on the "1844 event." If there were no resurrection, there would be nothing salvageable in Christianity. If no event of redemptive significance occurred in heaven on October 22, 1844, there is nothing salvageable in Adventism.

But the pioneers, Mrs. White, and Adventism have staked everything on the veracity of this interpretation of Daniel 8:14. Adventism is adamant that God had revealed the true meaning of Daniel 8:14 to its pioneers and Mrs. White and that He has entrusted it to the Adventist denomination as His end-time message to Christendom and the world. This is the basis of Adventism's triumphant self-image: "a special people with a special message for a special time" (to quote a popular Adventist slogan).

Not only, however, is there no biblical data—a clear 'Thus saith the Lord'—to support the 1844 date and Adventism's explanation for the Great Disappointment debacle, the 1844 theology is contrary to the New Testament Gospel. Christ's finished work of atonement (redemption) on the cross and His once-and-for-all entrance into the Most Holy Place (heaven itself—Heb. 9:24) to sit down at the Father's right hand exclude a redemptive event beginning on October 22, 1844 (the 'final' atonement, the blotting out of sins, the transfer of sin onto Satan, justification 'full and complete,' the latter rain, the final seal of God, etc.).

In proclaiming such an event and exhorting people to place their faith in it, Adventists are preaching "another gospel" (Gal. 1:6-8)—a gospel with features not found in the writings of the New Testament apostles. At best, Adventism's 1844 theology can only rest on an extra-biblical authority—that of its prophetess, Mrs. White. Raymond F. Cottrell, one of Adventism's leading scholars, frankly admitted this. (See his paper submitted to the Glacier View Sanctuary Review Committee, August 10-15, 1980, entitled, *A Hermeneutic for Predictive Prophecy*, esp. pp. 28-30). So, in promulgating their 1844 theology, Adventists go beyond the apostolic witness as recorded in the New

Testament. It cannot therefore claim to be a church based on the apostolic teaching of the Gospel.

### 2. Adventism's True Church and Remnant Claim

As stated above, Adventism claims to be the remnant which has survived the great Babylonian captivity (papal apostasy), which has come out of Babylon, and which is rebuilding the ruins by calling Christendom out of Babylon (denominationalism) to become part of God's true church and end-time remnant—the Adventist denomination (see Joel 2:32; Rev. 12:17; 14:12).

The remnant motif first appears in the Old Testament in reference to the minority in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19:18). It later came to refer to those Jews who would survive the disaster of the Babylonian captivity. These survivors of Israel would be the faithful few (the remnant) who would return to rebuild the ruins of Jerusalem (Isa. 1:9; 7:3; 10:20, 21; Amos 5:15).

But the New Testament apostles employed the remnant motif to describe the New Testament community. (Acts 15:14-18; Rom. 9:27-29; 11:1-5). Thus did first-century Christians see themselves as the eschatological remnant by virtue of their faith-union with Christ. Dr. F. F. Bruce states it as follows: "When the crucial test came, the faithful remnant was reduced to one person, the Son of Man who entered death single-handed and rose again as his people's representative. With him the people of God died and rose again" (*The New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes*, p. 49). Surely then, to suggest that one could be "in Christ" through faith and not be part of the elect or remnant is nonsense! Therefore, in the light of the New Testament, the Christian Church or Body of Christ IS the remnant since its inception on the day of Pentecost and will remain so until the last day when Christ will come again.

### 3. The Time of the End

The pioneers of Adventism developed their 1844 and end-time-remnant doctrines on the assumption that the last days did not arrive until 1798 (1844 era). James White, a prominent pioneer, said that the remnant of Joel 2:32 (meaning the Adventist Church) did not appear until 1844. This led them to think that, as God's remnant, they had to have a new message corresponding to the new era they had entered. Thus did they believe that their unique 1844 sanctuary doctrine was God's end-time message entrusted to them as His remnant for Christendom and the world to prepare them for the coming of the Lord.

But the apostles declared that they were already living in the time of the end and that the Gospel they were preaching was God's end-time message for the world (Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:1, 2; 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 1:1). "The proclamation of the Gospel is an eschatological event" (Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, tr. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 2:729). This is clearly shown in the New Testament as follows:

1. The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that Christ "has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26). Calvary is therefore an end-time event. Dr. F. F. Bruce states it thus: "It is not that the

consummation of the ages was the time when, in fact, He [Christ] appeared; it is rather that His coming and achievement made that particular time the consummation of the ages" (*Defence of the Gospel*, p. 89).

2. The outpouring of the Spirit to proclaim the Gospel took place on the Day of Pentecost. Peter announced that it was the fulfilment of what Joel had prophesied would take place in the last days (Acts 2:16, 17). The preaching of "the gospel... by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven" (1 Peter 1:24) is therefore an eschatological (end-time) ministry.

3. The New Testament repeatedly declares that the last days have arrived (Acts 2:16, 17; Heb. 1:1, 2; 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20). All the blessings which come to the believer in Christ are gifts which belong to the end of the world—that is, justification is the liberating verdict of the final judgment (Rom. 2:13, 16), eternal life is the life of the age to come (John 5:24), the gift of the Spirit is the down payment of glorification (Eph. 1:13, 14), and salvation is deliverance from God's end-time wrath (Rom. 5:9).

Therefore, Adventism's claim that the last days arrived when it arrived on the scene in 1844 is way off the mark by about 1800 years! No, the last days arrived when Jesus arrived on the public scene 2000 years ago. This is the witness of His apostles. To now go beyond what the apostles preached and wrote is cultic. Adventism has officially denied what the New Testament says in this regard in order to maintain its unique 1844 theology and all that goes with it.

### Adventist Confusion

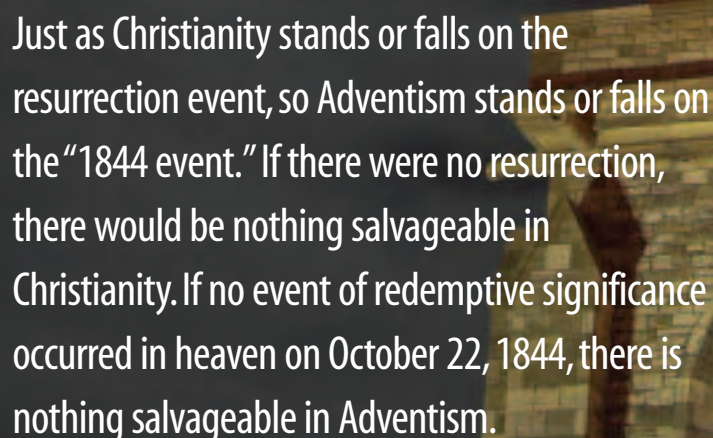
Up to the 1950's traditional (historic) Adventism, based on the original charter formulated by the pioneers as based on their unique interpretation of Daniel 8:14, constituted the only authentic form of Adventism. But during the 1950's two new strands appeared on the Adventist scene, namely 'Evangelical' Adventism and 'Liberal' Adventism. Each of these had its own interpretation of what constitutes authentic Adventism, and each based its claim on statements by Mrs. White.

'Evangelical' Adventism was a religious movement based on a compromised synthesis between Evangelical theology and traditional Adventism. During the 1950's it was spearheaded by evangelically minded leaders in Adventism's headquarters, Washington, D.C. In 1957 it made its official debut with the publishing of the book *Questions on Doctrine* in which the 'special' doctrines unique to traditional Adventism were radically changed so that Adventism could appear 'evangelical' to the Evangelicals—Drs. Walter Martin and Donald Barnhouse. These two Evangelical scholars investigated Adventism and threatened to brand it a cult unless its 'special and unique' doctrines were discarded so as to come into line with Evangelical Christianity.

'Liberal' Adventism also came onto the scene prominently during the 1950's when many Adventist students started attending non-Adventist universities and receiving graduate degrees from them. In many cases, these universities were known for their theological liberalism. Thus were these Adventist students exposed to modern biblical criticism and liberal theology. The

influence this exposure had on them could be seen in many aspects of their theology. The traditional teaching of Adventism and that of Evangelical Christianity were regarded as outdated and inadequate for communicating the true character of God to modern man. They therefore replaced them with the 'Moral Influence Theory' of the death of Christ. Liberal Adventism was also comfortable with pluralism of thought.

By 1980 all three strands—Traditional Adventism, Evangelical Adventism and Liberal Adventism—were featuring prominently in the church. This resulted in total confusion amongst both clergy and laity as to what constitutes authentic Adventism—that which makes them different from all other Christians; that which gives them their true identity and that which makes them special in God's sight—His one and only Remnant Church! The liberal Adventists regarded this confusion as a healthy diversity in pluralism.



Just as Christianity stands or falls on the resurrection event, so Adventism stands or falls on the "1844 event." If there were no resurrection, there would be nothing salvageable in Christianity. If no event of redemptive significance occurred in heaven on October 22, 1844, there is nothing salvageable in Adventism.

### Conclusion

In view of the above, what arrogance is manifested in Adventism's claim to be the remnant church while not possessing that which alone makes a person part of God's remnant—the true Gospel of Christ as promulgated by the New Testament apostles. Faith alone in this Gospel made the Gentiles part of the end-time remnant. The Jews had the Ten Commandments, observed the Sabbath and boasted the possession of more than one prophet (outdoing Adventism on this point). Yet they were excluded as a nation from the remnant because they rejected the Gospel concerning Christ and His saving work. Therefore, when weighed in the balances of the apostolic witness of the Gospel as recorded in the New Testament, Adventism is found wanting. Not only does it not have the true Gospel, the three divergent theological strands within Adventism constitute nothing less than Babylonian confusion. And then it has the audacity to label all other Christian denominations Babylon! Adventism does not therefore qualify as the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic church" as per the attributes stated in the Nicene Creed. !

# Peter and the Keys



ELIZABETH INRIG

Standing before the craggy cliffs, I stared at the rough face of the mountain. This was the mountain at “Caesarea Philippi,” or *Panion*—the area Jesus and His disciples frequented (Mt. 6:13; Mk. 8:27) during His time on earth.

This was an important place for me and fifty other Christian pilgrims who had come to walk the steps of Jesus in the Holy Land. Now here we were, looking up at the huge rock formation where Jesus had posed the most important question any human being will ever answer: “Whom do men say the Son of Man is?” These mountains had witnessed the answers to this question as well as Jesus’ prophetic words about how He would build His church.

I tried to imagine what the disciples were thinking two thousand years earlier when they heard Jesus’ question. They saw what we saw outside the Israel of their day which was a short sixty-four miles north of Jerusalem: rough, rugged mountains once given over to the honor of the pagan god Pan. They heard the sound of rushing water—one source of the Jordan River. They also heard Jesus’ voice, and they did not mistake His question. Matthew says they

answered quickly: “Some say you are John the Baptist, others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

“But what about you?” He asked, “Who do you say I am?” Peter spoke up. By this time, he was the leader of the group, the most eager to share his opinion. He regularly said what he was thinking. This day was no exception: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!”

This was no politically correct word nor a shoe-polishing statement designed to impress Jesus. It came from Peter’s heart. And Peter was, as Jesus said, “Blessed for blurting it out!” He had not gained this information from “flesh and blood” or from his good Jewish family. No one could take credit for teaching Peter Jesus’ eternal identity. The Father in heaven alone had revealed it to Peter. As He had watched this Man called Jesus, God the Father had opened the eyes of Peter’s heart to the truth about Jesus’ true nature: “You are the Christ, Messiah, Anointed One. You are the One promised in the Old Testament, come to earth. You fill full

“Jesus appointed Peter to oversee His establishment of the church so there would be no doubt about His including Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles equally on the basis of their faith in Him, their repentance, their birth by the Holy Spirit, and their willingness to be baptized as the sign of their commitment to Him.”

the shadows of the Law by living out in real and human substance God's promises to Israel and to the world. You are God in human flesh, and You are about to establish a New Community.”

#### **Jesus' promise/prophecy of the church**

What Jesus says to Peter next is significant for all who take the name “Christ-follower.” His words clarify the identity of those made alive by the Spirit, those whom He immerses into the body of Christ. Jesus' prophetic words set Peter apart as God's primary Apostolic voice for the planting of the church. Christ's words that “...I will build my church...” know their infant fulfillment after three singular events: first, when Peter preaches in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and 3,000 Jews come to faith in Christ (Acts 2); second, when he and John visit the Samaritans to confirm their faith in Christ (Acts 8); and third, when Peter witnesses Cornelius and his family receiving Jesus—the first Gentiles to come to faith in Christ (Acts 10). Each group—Jew, half-breed and Gentile—receives the Holy Spirit at Caesarea and so completes the birth of the church.

Remembering Jesus' words as members of the body of Christ two thousand years after He spoke them thrilled us:

“You are Peter (little stone—*petros*, which is Peter's name, no figure of speech intended) and on this rock (*petra*—the word is used of Christ Himself—a fact Peter understood and records in 1 Peter 2:4,5,6 and Acts 4:11, 12) I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven—whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven...whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:17-19).

After standing at Caesarea Philippi where Peter received Jesus' prophetic commission, we followed Peter's Pentecost journey, remembering his marching orders to “preach the gospel for the loosening (forgiveness) of sins” so the Christ could build His church. Retracing the apostle's ancient steps, I praised God for Peter who obeyed his Savior despite his momentary denial. Peter's faithfulness to His Lord's promise to build His church caused him to proclaim the truth of Christ in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. There, three thousand Jews believed, repented, and were baptized into the body of Christ. Later, in the area of Samaria, I imag-

ined how overjoyed the Spirit-birthed believers were as the door of the gospel was opened to them, and many came to faith. Finally, in concurrence with the Scripture, as we stood at the Roman Aquaduct (pictured) in Caesarea by the Sea, I remembered how Peter opened the door of the church and of the kingdom to the Gentile Cornelius and his family.



By proclaiming the truth about Jesus to Jews and Gentiles, Peter was doing more than conducting evangelistic crusades! He was opening the door to the kingdom through the Church – to Jews first, then to half-breeds (the Samaritans whom he had learned to despise that descended from the Israelites of the northern ten tribes who had intermarried with the Babylonians during the exile) and finally to the Gentiles (that group whose food he had loathed and whose table he had spurned). More than that,

he was ushering in the grand program planned from before the foundation of the earth: the gathering in of the New Covenant Community prophe-



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sied in the Old Testament (Jer. 31:31-33) to include Jews and Gentiles (John 1:12).

Furthermore, by being present when each of these three people-groups received the Holy Spirit as God's seal on them (Ephesians 1:13-14), Peter gave Apostolic oversight and authority to the validity of their conversions. If he had not been present, the apostles in Jerusalem would likely have disbelieved that the previously "unclean" Samaritans and Gentiles could be included as full-fledged members of God's people, and the church would have been split from its inception. Jesus appointed Peter to oversee His establishment of the church so there would be no doubt about His including Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles equally on the basis of their faith in Him, their repentance, their birth by the Holy Spirit, and their willingness to be baptized as the sign of their commitment to Him.

### The rock of the church is Christ

Since my recent trip to the Middle East, I have thought about Peter, "the stone." Nothing in his behavior, particularly in his denial of Jesus, assumes that Peter is the "rock." Everything in Peter's words recorded in the book of Acts assumes the church will be built on His Lord Jesus—the One who forgave him for his betrayal! Peter's Pentecost message fulfilled God's plan for him; he used the "keys of the kingdom"—those eternal and penetrating truths about Christ, His person, and His substitutionary atonement for man's sin—to preach boldly in order to usher new believers into the Kingdom of God: first Jews, then Samaritans, and finally Gentiles.

Last spring as I stood in Caesarea Philippi, in Jerusalem, in the area near Samaria, and finally in Caesarea on the Mediterranean, I rejoiced! Christ Jesus has been building His church for 2,000 years. With 50 other Gentile believers from Redlands, California, I praised God that our names had been written in the Lamb's book of Life. As we sang "The Church's One foundation Is Jesus Christ Her Lord," we stood as "living Gentile stones" (1 Peter 2:25). Each one of us had been individually placed by the Holy Spirit into the church of Christ—His own body—now 2,000 years old and growing!

A time is coming, Paul says in similar language, when the last stone will be placed in the body of Christ; it will be finished, complete, done (Eph. 2:19-22). Until then, we who are His Bride, His church, have the awesome privilege of preaching to those who are near (the Jews) and to those afar off (the Gentiles) [Ephesians 2:13] the gospel which reveals the unsearchable riches of Christ.



# Foot Washing and Humility

RICHARD GOYNE

It is a practice in Adventist churches that the communion service is always preceded by the ordinance of foot washing. The practice of foot washing as a public expression of humility is not an innovation initiated by Adventists. It had been adopted by Anabaptists in the earliest years of the Protestant Reformation. It had continued in some of the churches which came into being at that time. Foot washing, as an example of humility, had been practiced on various occasions through the centuries of the Christian era. The Kings of England had traditionally washed the feet of beggars at Christmas time until Queen Elizabeth I discontinued the custom.

The efforts of Anabaptists and others to introduce the practice was an attempt on their part to replicate what they understood the procedures of the Christian church at the time of the apostles to be. Most Christian churches (Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant) do not, and never have, included foot washing as a prelude to the communion service. It would seem appropriate to review what the Scripture tells us about this subject.

The synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke all give accounts of the Last Supper in which Jesus initiated the communion service (Mt. 26:20-30, Mk. 14:17-26, Lk. 22:14-20). All of these gospels record in detail the events that occurred and the words and acts of Jesus in the sharing of the bread (this is my body) and the wine (this is my blood). These gospels, however, say nothing about foot washing. Only John's gospel records the foot washing incident. According to John, after Passover meal was finished, Jesus got up from the table and, taking a basin of water and a towel, washed the feet of his disciples (Jn. 13:4,5).

In reading these gospel records, there are certain features that stand out. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke say nothing about Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. This indicates that the authors of these three gospels did not consider the foot washing to be related to the communal sharing of the bread and wine by which Jesus instituted the Christian communion service.

John's gospel, which records the foot washing, makes no mention of Jesus serving the bread and the wine to his disciples at the Last Supper. There is nothing in John's account that would lead his readers to associate the foot washing with the communion service. John's gospel was written some sixty-five years after the Last Supper, and, as far as is known, there did not exist any other account of the foot washing incident during that time.

Nor is there any mention of foot washing in any of the New Testament epistles by which the early church leaders sought to guide and instruct their congregations. This is especially noteworthy in the case of Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth, for that church was not observing the communion service in an orderly and respectful manner. Paul reproved them and plainly set forth the manner in which the service should be conducted (1 Cor. 12:23-26). Surely, if foot washing was intended to be part of the preparation, Paul would have made mention of it in his

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**Richard Goynes** is a retired professional engineer, age 96. Since retiring, 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.

explicit instructions. He says nothing about it, and his silence on the subject is noteworthy.

There is also the very early church manual (*The Didache*)<sup>1</sup> which sheds light on the practices of a Christian church of the first century. This manual was used to instruct new converts in preparation (fasting, prayer, etc.) for baptism and the subsequent partaking of communion. While the instructions given were explicit and detailed, there is no mention of foot washing. We can only conclude from studying this manual and from the New Testament epistles that the early Christian churches did not practice foot washing in connection with the communion service. This does not mean that a church may not elect to include foot washing as a preparation for taking communion. There are surely some members of a congregation who benefit spiritually from it.

It should be recognized that a consequence of so doing is that the communion service is thereby held much less frequently, because of the time and preparation needed for the foot washing, than as is done in most churches. In fact, it is done less frequently than, according to Scripture, it was done in the New Testament times. For we read that "They went as a body to the temple every day but met in their houses (afterward) for the breaking of the bread" (Acts 2:46 JB).

There is also the difficulty of reconciling the personal expression of humility on the part of the participant in the foot washing service with the exclusiveness taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There is little humility to be found in the Adventist assertion that it alone is the true remnant church, that it has been solely entrusted with God's message for the last days, or in the references in Adventist publications to the other Christian bodies as "apostate" or "fallen churches."

It was just such a spirit of exclusiveness that our Lord confronted with his parable about those who despised others (Lk. 18:9-14). The Pharisee in the parable thanked God that he was "not as other men are." In contrast, the publican prayed, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Jesus said that this man (the publican) went down to his house justified rather than the other. It takes something more than foot washing to bring us to that condition. Nothing less than the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit is able to bring our fallen natures to that state of contrition.

"Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice, an humble and a contrite heart."

## Endnote

1. Aaron Milevac, *The Didache*, Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 2003

## From deception to the gospel of grace CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

then on both services would be on Sunday mornings. We were cornered—we were about to accept the Mark of the Beast on our hands by becoming true Sunday worshipers! It took a little while, but by the time school started in the fall of my sophomore year of high school, my whole family was attending church together on Sunday mornings.

It wasn't until toward the end of that semester that I was ready to renounce Adventism completely. I remember taking offense in Bible class when my teacher linked Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses into the same group as people who don't give Jesus his due role as Savior in their religions. One of my friends protectively went to the teacher, saying, "Aerin's a Seventh-day Adventist, and she believes in Jesus!" A little more thought and maturity on my part, however, had me admitting the truth of my teacher's statement and desiring to dismiss all ties with Adventism.

I attended a youth retreat at our new church, and there we were encouraged to spend "20 Minutes" communing with God and seeking his face for what he wanted us to do. During that time I committed myself and told Him that I believed that He had the power to save and desired to save me. I decided that I needed to have faith and trust God to take away my sins and give me His gift of salvation. I decided to pray one last time, once and for all—and that prayer marked the beginning of a new life

for me! Since then, I have experienced an abundance of freedom in Christ. I sometimes marvel at where I used to be, lost in the clutches of legalism, and where I would be now if not for the all-powerful, saving grace of Christ.

Today, at 21, I look back on my Adventist days wistfully, wondering what I would have been like if I had never been an Adventist. My family will sit together sometimes, laughing at the things we used to believe or to fear. For example, chewing gum would give you ulcers, cheese should never enter the stomach, meat-eating would arouse animal passions especially in children, and drinking coffee is sinful. Just remembering the things that we never got to do—competitive sports and sporting events, television shows we missed completely—and remembering all the Friday nights and Saturdays we spent in boredom brings a wistful sadness for lost experiences.

I strongly believe, however, that God brings each of us through life on a certain path for a specific reason. If I now have a super-appreciation for the grace of God and the love He has for me as a result of my background, I praise Him. If I can someday counsel someone struggling in the clutches of legalism, God will be redeeming my past. More than anything, I give praise and thanks to God for the place to which He has brought me—to His banqueting table, feasting on the everlasting love of the Bridegroom.



## Thanks for sanctification article

I would like to thank Lari Mobley for her well written article ["Sanctification: It's who you know," *Proclamation!* July/August 2006]. It is a wonderful testimony of her journey to grace. Her personal experiences touched my heart. In particular, the "...reluctance to trust God with my emotions" as well as the "...process of opening up our innermost hearts and emotions to the Holy Spirit" are, indeed a critical element in my own salvation.

As she stated, she did not understand this vulnerable necessity in her transformation.

Lari, may the Lord continue to bless you on your walk with him. Grace is a beautiful thing, and thank you for sharing it so well in your writing.

## Beautiful!

The new *Proclamation!* look is beautiful! God bless you.

## Please send subscription

I personally left the SDA church [over 10] years ago when God revealed to me the true Gospel. What a relief His grace has been. Anyway, I was in the process of writing several papers on much research I had done over the years regarding E.G. White and the Adventist church's teachings that are contrary to what Scripture teaches. Then I discovered [the Life Assurance] website and its resources which are clear, concise and better written than anything I could probably produce. I bought and read most of the books offered and now plan to share these with my family. I have been praying for God's timing in this for a long time.

Thanks for your hard work in putting these magazines together. May God be glorified and his kingdom increased through you and your work.

## Thank you

I want to thank you for *Proclamation!* I have been receiving it for a few years now and have been blessed... I am now grounded in the Lord and in a great Bible based church... The only thing I have a problem with is myself; I get mad

that I spent 12 years as an Adventist, and that I sheltered my kids in the Adventist circle. But I'm very thankful I'm free of the Adventist bondage. Again thank you for your ministry.

## Amazing

Thank you for your magazine. It is very relevant and encouraging to me, a former Adventist. It is amazing how threatened and angry some people are when confronted with the evidence that their belief system might be wrong. Keep up the good work.

## Need materials for classes

I read some copies of *Proclamation!* and am very interested in them. I am a devout, God-loving Christian. Presently, I'm getting together a bunch of materials to give seminars and classes on cults and false religions. I'm willing to send donations in exchange for a subscription to your magazine.

## Missing the magazine

May the Grace of God be with you now and forever.

This is to inform you that I have not received my copy of *Proclamation!* for some time now and don't want to miss it since the way you explain Grace and Law is so appreciated. So please put my name on the mailing list and let me receive my copy the next issue.

May God bless you and supply the means as you continue to proclaim the gospel truth.

Thank you very much.

## God will take care of you

Just a short note this morning to encourage you to keep on in your work with Life Assurance Ministries. God will take care of you, Richard. He will care for you in ways you don't know.

We no longer attend an Adventist church. We feel so free. Last evening in my First Responders class, a fellow student told me how the pastor of the Adventist church they had been attending said this man's wife could no longer help with the music because she smoked. How sad. My conversation with him is not finished; there are more classes to come.

We pray for you daily.

## Open letter to Richard Tinker

Richard, don't you have any decency? How could you have been receiving a check, month after month, for years from an organization dependent on and supported by the Church that you were trying to destroy?

Don't you know that the Conferences of the Pacific Union allocate almost 25% of the tithe to our educational institutions?

Don't you have any sense of ethical or moral conduct? Don't you have any understanding of what "conflict of interests" is all about?

Don't you know what a "hypocrite" is?

I don't believe for a moment that you "...prayed for years about leaving Loma Linda, but it seemed that God's answer was, 'Wait.'"

I can tell you that God was not the one telling you to wait; probably it was another spirit. God plainly says in His Word that the people who try to undermine and destroy His church are false brothers and teachers. "...this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy)..." (Galatians 2:4,5) "...false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies...with deceptive words..." (2 Peter 2:1-3).

I only regret that I did not know that you were working in one of our institutions. I would have informed our administrators and lobbied them, so you could have been fired a lot sooner.

## Richard Tinker responds

*I received a paycheck for performing my job to the best of my ability. That paycheck was not payment for my beliefs.*

*Loma Linda University has employees with a wide variety of religious beliefs. I have friends and acquaintances that teach or work on the staff at Loma Linda University who are practicing Muslims, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Roman Catholics, Buddhists, and agnostics as well as members of many protestant denominations.*

*I was never secretive about my beliefs or practices. As stated in my story ["Fired from Loma Linda," *Proclamation!* July/August 2006], I informed my supervisor and also my dean when I left the Adventist church. They told me that my leaving would not be a problem. My work with Life Assurance Ministries was never hidden—administrators at Loma Linda University are on our mailing list.*

*God protected my position until my assignment at Loma Linda University was completed. I praise Him for His faithfulness and provision.*

## Adventist Pastor David Newman Writes

I refer to your answer to the letter headed "Immensely sad" in the May/June issue. I was immensely sad by your reply. It is always dangerous when you make absolute statements as you did when you wrote, "In addition, they essentially keep their salvation by continuing to obey the Ten Commandments. If people were to abandon any of them—most notably the fourth—they would lose their salvation."

In logic fallacies this is called a hasty generalization. Have you surveyed every Adventist in the world to see if they believe this way? I certainly do not and I know many other pastors and church members who believe the same way I do.

Your answer at the beginning of your comment was correct. Since right behavior is never the ground of our acceptance with God the other side of the equation must also be correct, wrong behavior cannot keep a person out of heaven. One is saved from first to last by the

complete sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. One is not lost by not keeping the Sabbath or giving up the Sabbath! If a person is lost it is because they do not have a saving relationship with Jesus, trusting in Him completely through faith.

One is saved because one chooses to enter into a saving relationship with Jesus. The only way to lose that salvation is if a person chooses

### One is not lost by not keeping the Sabbath or giving up the Sabbath!

to reject that saving relationship. Unfortunately, you have such a fixation against the Sabbath you cannot see that many people honor the seventh-day Sabbath for very different reasons from what you give.

I honor the Sabbath not as part of the ground of my acceptance but as the premier symbol in Scripture for justification, for grace.

You see when I cease to work my ordinary work on the Sabbath I am reminded that I cannot work my way to heaven. Just as I trust God to provide for my physical needs by not working on that day so I trust God to provide for my spiritual needs, my salvation. Fifty-two times a year I am reminded in a wonderful object lesson that I trust God completely for my salvation through faith alone. The Sabbath is all about grace.

Please, unless you have surveyed ALL Adventists do not tar me with your brush. Use statements such as "some Adventists believe this way."

Sincerely,

J. David Newman, D.Min, Senior Pastor  
New Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church  
Fulton, Maryland.

PS. In the four years that I have been at New Hope where grace is the premier doctrine and teaching we have grown from 250 in attendance to 620 with an increase in membership from 368 to 538 persons. Grace is what wins people.

## Editor's response

Thank you for your email. I understand what you are saying about the Sabbath. In fact, your letter illustrates a very real problem within Adventism today. If I were to survey a sampling of Adventists from around the world, they would believe many different things. Many would say that they actually do not believe one or more of the traditional Adventist "distinctives."

The fact remains, nevertheless, that the Seventh-day Adventist church still maintains Sabbath-keeping as a necessary observance for those who have heard and understood the Sabbath doctrine. General Conference President Jan Paulson, in his *Theological Landscape* of 2002, said that he would stand to lose his salvation if he were to give up the Sabbath. The fact that one or thousands of Adventists say they no longer believe in the Sabbath or in any other Adventist distinctive does not negate the church's official requirements and teachings. In fact, Sabbath observance as the seal of God and Sunday "worship" as the mark of the beast are still taught in official Adventist evangelistic campaigns.

Sabbath observance is also actively taught in Adventist schools as well as from pulpits.

Further, the Sabbath is not the "premier symbol in Scripture for justification, for grace." Actually, the books of Romans and Hebrews and Galatians and Colossians present Jesus and His cross as the premier "symbols" of justification and grace. The Sabbath with all other Sabbaths were "a mere shadow

### ...you are offering a confused message to your parishioners by representing the SDA church.

of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ" (Col 2:17).

While it is true that Romans 14:5 clarifies that any day may be honored or all may be considered alike, this allowance does not suggest that Sabbath or any other day has a special meaning in the New Covenant. I understand your reasoning for keeping the Sabbath; I have used similar reasons in the past for my own Sabbath-keeping. The fact remains, however, that this reasoning is a

form of rationalizing that allows one to embrace publicly the most visible Adventist doctrine while mentally distancing oneself from the untenable reality of the actual teaching of the church. It allows people to appear loyal while mentally disagreeing.

If you truly do not believe that the Sabbath is in any way connected to your salvation, you are offering a confused message to your parishioners by representing the Adventist church. Since the church has a clear and present teaching about Sabbath sacredness and its meaning, to be a pastor who does not believe this teaching puts one in the uncomfortable position of rationalizing and of living in deep cognitive dissonance. Unless one actually believes the church's doctrines and official teachings, he is acting dishonestly if he officially represents that church as a loyal member and leader.

Respectfully, I disagree that it would be more accurate to say "some Adventists believe this way." Adventists DO believe in Sabbath sacredness. Those who do not are living with deep compromise.

In Jesus, Colleen Tinker, editor

## With love and prayers

My [close relative] called and would like to receive your publication... Thank you again for your faithfulness! I really enjoy *Proclamation!*

## Mother/daughter letter

Hi! My daughter wrote the following paragraphs for you, and many of you know us. We do not condemn you. We love you. I pray if there are wounds from your past, you may find sweet peace and healing in Jesus.

"There are two errors against which the children of God especially need to guard: the first is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they can do, to bring themselves into harmony with God.

"All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith which makes us holy.

"The second and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with redemption."

"There's a very delicate balance between what is acceptable to God and what is not. Yet, it is made very plain in God's word. We have no reason whatsoever to wonder what we should do. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." In both Old and New Testaments God has made clear His expectations.

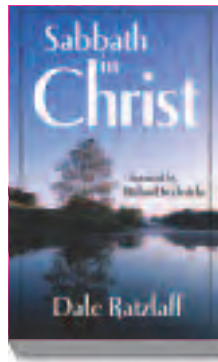
"I fear that some of his children have strayed from reading God's word as He has inspired it and as it has been written, preserved for thousands of years.

"Jesus died so that we could obtain salvation by obeying AND believing that we (the players) must abide by his law (the rules) in this path of life (the game) toward heaven (the goal).

"Your 13-year-old friend."

Please enter both our notes in your magazine. I pray for the hurts you have all experienced, but do not agree with the way you seek to heal them.

• *We appreciate your concern. As surprising as it may seem, however, most of us have not left the church because of hurts or bad experiences. Rather, we left because God opened our eyes to the gospel of grace and the pure Word of God. Jesus Himself is the One for whom we left. Now we obey not the temporary law (Galatians 3:15-25) but the law of Christ summarized by Jesus' new command to us: "As I have loved you, so must you love one another" (John 13:34). Sacrificial love, possible only as we surrender our lives to the Holy Spirit and live by Him, is His command to us. He is the One whom we honor; He is the One whom we obey.*



## Benefits from your ministry

I recently ended my membership with the Adventist denomination because of their many theological landmines that would keep me from ever wanting to lead someone to Christ under such a banner. Dale Ratzlaff's two books, *Cultic Doctrine* and *Sabbath in Christ*, given to me by a friend, were the nails in the coffin that had been in the making for a couple of years.

I'm writing to request a subscription to *Proclamation!* magazine. I'm happy to donate to support the ministry. Thanks for all the hard work you put into your ministry. I am one of many who have benefited from it.

• *To order Dale Ratzlaff's books, phone 800-355-7073 (orders only). For more information you may call 623-572-9549.*

## Come back to the truth

My heart aches for you that you have been so fooled by Dale Ratzlaff. He thinks he is following the Lord, but he has given up his salvation to try to drag Adventists down with him. I feel you have given up the Sabbath and eternal life.

If you would read *Steps to Christ*, *Desire of Ages*, and *Great Controversy*, you cannot help but know [Ellen G. White] was a prophet and prepares us for the end.

I know the end is very near, and I pray for you that you can come back to the truth.

Please do not send me any more of that trash.

## Thank you so much

I thank you so much for your faithfulness in sending me *Proclamation!*. I look forward to each issue and read every article... I commend everyone else who edits and has a part in making this fine magazine possible... I do wish to express my very deep appreciation to you for a ministry which really helps a lot of people who have questions about Adventist beliefs. Had such information been available to me in the 1950s I would have left Adventism within a very short time of when I joined. I had many of these very same questions which never were adequately answered during my years as an Adventist.

## Great issue

What a great issue of *Proclamation!* (July/August). The mail came, and as soon as I could sit down with it in my hands, I devoured it. It is a work of art thanks to Richard.

This is such an important time for edification of "formers" and for sharing the light of the true gospel of Jesus Christ to our Adventist friends and relatives. I am guessing that *Proclamation!* is reaching 5,000 of us "formers" [our mailing list currently numbers about 10,000 addresses]. If we all contributed fifteen to twenty-five dollars per month, wouldn't Life Assurance Ministries then have the funds to accomplish great things for the Lord? Of course, the important thing would be to bathe all of our efforts in prayer and to give all of the glory to God.

## Double your blessings

Dear Everyone at Life Assurance Ministries: just a small donation to show our support of what you are doing by faith. May the Father of all things not only double your blessings but pour out unlimited Spirit and anointing to your lips, minds, hearts, and influencing spirit.

## Mail letters and donations to:

**Life Assurance Ministries**  
P.O. Box 905  
Redlands, CA 92373

## Life Assurance Ministries, Inc

### MISSION

To proclaim the good news of the New Covenant gospel of grace in Christ and to combat the errors of legalism and false religion.

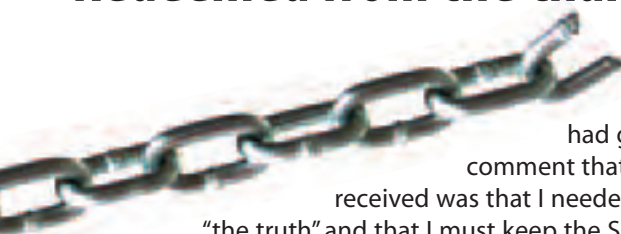
### MOTTO

Truth needs no other foundation than honest investigation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and a willingness to follow truth when it is revealed.

### MESSAGE

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not of works, that no one should boast." Ephesians 2:8,9

# Redeemed from the chains of legalism CONTINUED FROM BACK PAGE



number of people with whom I had grown up, but the comment that I continually received was that I needed to come back to “the truth” and that I must keep the Sabbath in order to be a Christian. The frustration that I felt is hard to put into words. . . The easiest and most comfortable way for me to deal

helped me share my faith story with my friend. I remember that, as I told her my story, I could sometimes feel the chains threatening to restrain me. But as I remembered things I had refused to think about for a long time, I could feel the Lord’s presence with me, giving me the words to say and showing me what He had done for me. It was awesome.

Some years passed. I was no longer afraid to remember and to process my painful memories. In my search for information for my friend, I tried one day to find a book entitled *Who Changed The Sabbath?* which had helped me in my journey to faith in Christ. While looking on the internet for the author of the booklet, I stumbled across a website called FormerAdventist.com. I will never forget the feeling when I read story after story of people who had journeyed similarly to myself and had come to faith in Christ. I had always felt so alone in my spiritual journey; I knew only one other person who had experienced the yoke of Adventism and had received Christ. Now I knew that I had brothers and sisters in Christ who understood. I was overwhelmed. Filled with gratitude, I had no idea God had yet another gift in store for me!

A few months ago God gave me a special blessing—a trip to Palm Springs, California, which is 45 minutes away from Trinity Evangelical Free Church and a group of Former Adventists. I spent two wonderful weekends fellowshiping with Former Adventists who had found Christ—it was incredible! Once again I walked back into that time that I had wanted to forget, but this time it wasn’t just I who was walking. The Lord and I were hand-in-hand as I walked with my new brothers and sisters into shared memories, fears, and surpassing praise to God for His deliverance through the blood of Jesus!

I have many memories of a time that was bound with legalism and frustration, but I have far more memories of a Savior who loved me, who died for me and released me from the burden of legalism. I will never know this side of Glory how Paul and Barnabas felt as they went back into the towns where they were stoned, but the Scriptures indicate that the church grew as the Good News was preached, even in places that were initially hostile. I praise Jesus that out of the ashes of my painful past He has brought new life and healing to my heart with His love and His blood.

Acts 15:10 & 11 sums up my thoughts. “Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

I am saved through grace—Praise His Name.

**I had always felt so alone in my spiritual journey; I knew only one other person who had experienced the yoke of Adventism and had received Christ. Now I knew that I had brothers and sisters in Christ who understood. I was overwhelmed.**

with this frustration and helplessness was to put it out of my mind. I was not yet ready to process my own experience in the church.

Approximately ten years ago I met a vocalist at a funeral home at which I worked. The first time we met she pulled out her Seventh-day Adventist hymnbook, and I reacted with those same thoughts—here is another person who is bound by legalism and will not understand what I have experienced. She is an amazing vocalist, and that day we began a friendship that continues to this day. I believe she did not know initially that I was raised an Adventist, but it wasn’t long until she found out, and we started to have some discussions about faith. At one point she invited me to attend some Revelation meetings at her church specifically relating to the Sabbath. I politely thanked her but said no. I remembered attending Revelation meetings growing up, and they were depressing and scary. They did not focus on God’s gift of salvation. Once again I could see people trying to live their lives with huge loads of legalism attached to them. My life was now so changed and I was so excited with my faith. I did not want to go back to a time that was so difficult for me.

Yet here was my new friend, and I knew that not many people understood both where she was and also the freedom that could be hers. I prayed and told the Lord that if He wanted me to reach out to this person—an act which would take me back into my childhood memories—that I needed Him to take my hand and walk with me. He did just that, and He



## Former Adventist Fellowship Weekend 2007

TRINITY CHURCH, REDLANDS, CALIFORNIA

FEBRUARY 16 TO 18

# The Body of Christ

**All of us, like sheep, strayed far from our Shepherd**, wandering in deception and despair. He knew where we were, however, and He found us, rescued us and carried us to His fold. Now that we are safe, we notice that we are surrounded by a whole body of sheep that belong to the Shepherd.

**Join us for a weekend of celebrating** that we belong to the Good Shepherd. As His sheep, we have the awesome privilege of knowing Him and of learning to function in His flock. Enjoy presentations and small group breakout sessions in which we will learn how to live, grow, and participate in the true body of Christ.

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." 1 PETER 2:24-25, NIV

## SCHEDULE

- Friday, February 16, 2007, 6:00 to 7:00 PM • Arrival and registration
- Meetings and breakout sessions Friday through Saturday evening
- Worship service on Sunday morning

## TO REGISTER (SPACE LIMITED TO THE FIRST 200)

- \$65 per person (on or before December 31, 2006)
- \$75 per person (on or before January 19, 2007)
- You must register by January 19, 2007 so that we can make meal plans.
- Make check payable to "LAM" and return in enclosed envelope.
- Fee includes cost of sessions, handouts, three meals, and snacks.
- You must make your own lodging/transportation arrangements.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PHONE 909-794-9804

## LODGING

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1230 W Colton Ave.  
Redlands, CA 92374  
(909) 335-9988  
[www.comfortsuites.com](http://www.comfortsuites.com)

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### BEST WESTERN SANDMAN HOTEL

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[bestwestern.com](http://bestwestern.com)

## Redeemed from the chains of legalism

SHIRLEY BURTON

It was Tuesday evening, and the ladies had come to my home for our weekly Bible study. We were studying *To Live Is Christ—The Life and Ministry of Paul* by Beth Moore. That particular week we had studied Paul's first missionary journey. After we had opened with prayer, one of the women remarked how impacted she was by the fact that in Acts 14:21, Paul had gone back to the cities where he had been beaten and stoned to see how the brothers were doing. Even though he had experienced many difficulties, he was will-

ing to risk again and go back. Paul's return to the places that had been difficult for him encourages me as I look back at my journey out of Seventh-day Adventism. It began 37 years ago when I was a teenager. I was raised in a strict Seventh-day Adventist home and often felt like a prisoner to all the rules that the church taught. I knew that I was not measuring up to the standards that my mother and the church had

for me and believed that I would not be good enough to get to heaven. I lived my childhood and teen years in fear and frustration. In high school I met a girl who was a born-again Christian. I saw in this new friend a love for Jesus that I had not experienced as well as a freedom to love Him without all these rules. Initially I thought that I would show her that Sabbath-keeping was mandatory for Christians, but she instead explained to me with the aid of Scripture that Christ had fulfilled all of the old law at the cross. I made a decision to accept the gift of salvation that Christ offered me through grace

**But as I remembered things I had refused to think about for a long time, I could feel the Lord's presence with me, giving me the words to say and showing me what He had done for me. It was awesome.**



**Shirley Burton** lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. She has been married for 33 years to her husband Dan and they have three children who are grown and on their own. She was raised in an Adventist home and became a born-again Christian at the age of 18 through the influence of a godly Christian friend that she met in high school. She currently worships at Waverley Fellowship Baptist Church in Winnipeg. She loves to travel, spend time at their cottage, scrapbook and read.

and became a born-again believer. For many years after that I had minimal contact with Adventists other than my mother who remains a member to this day. When I thought of those who still remained in the Adventist church, I pictured people walking with very heavy loads of legalistic rule strapped to their feet. With that scene in my head came frustration and at times anger with a church that taught such crippling doctrines. Further, I was so excited about my new relationship with Christ I wanted the Adventist people also to experience this relationship with Him. I had tried sharing my newfound faith with a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

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