

Proclamation!

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FORMER ADVENTISTS INQUIRING ADVENTISTS SABBATARIANS CONCERNED EVANGELICALS

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Transformed by faith

CRISTINE COLE

Several years ago, my husband and I decided to add a loft to one of our bedrooms that had a very high ceiling. After the workmen finished the base of the loft, but before they added the guardrails and stairs, I decided to go up there to look around. I got a 6-foot ladder and was able

to hoist myself up easily enough to the loft which was built about 10 feet up from the bedroom floor. However, when I decided to come back down, I became frightened and wasn't sure I could make it down safely. The ladder was still where I had left it, but as I looked down, the bedroom floor seemed like

such a long way off! I called my husband to come and hold the ladder steady for me, which he did. But because I had to go down feet first, it was difficult to see where my feet would land. I would tentatively lower one foot and then pull it back up. After several unsuccessful attempts at grabbing my foot so he could plant it on the ladder, my husband exclaimed in exasperation, "You need to have faith in me!" I finally surrendered my foot to him. He placed it securely on the ladder, and I was able to come down safely.

That seemingly insignificant event got me thinking and asking myself: do I have faith in others and especially in God? What is faith, anyway? And what happens to a person who has faith?

Webster's dictionary defines faith as a "belief and trust in and loyalty to God." In the Bible I found that Paul, in Romans 4:21, defines faith as "being fully persuaded that God (has) the power to do what He (has) promised" (NIV). This means that true faith is tied to my trust in God—He is the important person here. And when He is the focus of faith, a life transformation begins. Reading through the rest of Romans 4, I saw how Abraham was credited as righteous because of his faith. This transformed his life and enabled him to obey God. It also allowed Him to believe God's promise that he would become a father of many nations even though he had no children at that time.

The faith chapter of Hebrews 11 also shows how

this faith transformed many to become courageous individuals. It lists men like Noah, who built an ark even though he had never seen a drop of rain but believed God's condemnation of sin and the coming destruction of the earth; and Gideon, who led a small army of 300 that completely annihilated the mighty Midianite army.

Then there was Rahab, a female Gentile, who risked her

life to save the Israelite spies; Daniel, who refused to give up his prayer time with God even when it meant he would be thrown into the lion's den; and John the Baptist, whose preaching against sin and standing up for truth resulted in his losing his life.

In yet many others, we can see how faith in God turned their perceived personal weakness into strength. Moses, though he was unsure of himself and did not consider himself a good speaker, led millions of Israelites out of captivity in Egypt towards the freedom of the Promised Land. This same type of faith also caused young David, a shepherd boy dressed in shepherd's clothes and unarmed except for a slingshot, to overpower the armored giant Goliath.

It is also significant to note that many people of faith listed in Hebrews 11 did not see or experience any earthly rewards. However, because of their faith in God, they received God's approval and died looking forward to a future reward living with Him in eternity (Hebrews 11:39,40).

Seeing these extraordinary examples of faith enabled me to step out in faith and make choices to follow God, no matter what the cost. A year after my ladder incident (and by that time I had years of in-depth Bible study), I decided to leave the Seventh-day Adventist denomination to worship God in truth. For me it meant risking rejection by family members and friends. However, God has been faithful to me, and I have found that the blessings of knowing Jesus and trusting that He knows what is best for me are worth everything!

As you read this issue, let God show you areas in your life where He is calling you to step out in faith and let Him direct your feet so that you, too, can experience a transformed life.

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Can you pass this quiz?

We are introducing a new feature in *Proclamation!* with this issue: an "Ask the Pastor" column. Dale Ratzlaff will discuss a variety of theological questions that we encounter as we work with people who are processing issues related to Adventism. If you have questions that you would like for Pastor Dale to consider answering in *Proclamation!*, email them to dale@ratzlaf.com, or mail them in the envelope enclosed in this magazine.

To introduce this feature, Pastor Dale has some questions for you.

Start the New Year with a Bible Quiz and maybe a free book

The first ten Adventists who get all the answers correct will receive either an English or Spanish copy of *White Out* by Dirk Anderson. Just email your answers to dale@ratzlaf.com.

Question 1: When reading "Law" in the book of Matthew we should understand "Law" to be:

- ☐ Always the Ten Commandments.
- ☐ Usually the Ten Commandments.
- ☐ Seldom the Ten Commandments.
- ☐ Never the Ten Commandments.

Question 2: When reading "commandments" in the books written by John, we should understand "commandments" to be:

- ☐ Always the Ten Commandments.
- ☐ Usually the Ten Commandments.
- ☐ Seldom the Ten Commandments.
- ☐ Never the Ten Commandments.

Question 3: When reading "the law of the Lord" in the Bible we should understand the "law" to be:

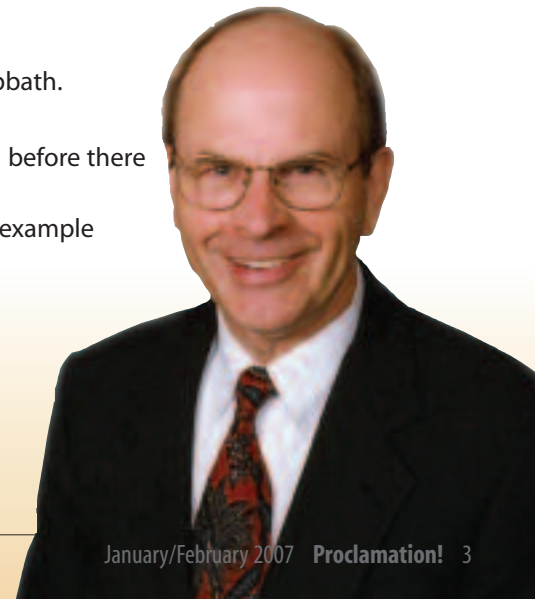
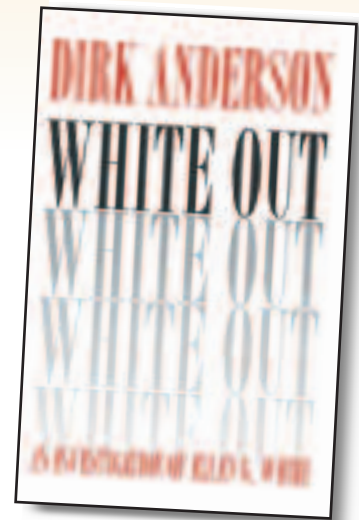
- ☐ Always the Ten Commandments.
- ☐ Usually the Ten Commandments.
- ☐ Seldom the Ten Commandments.
- ☐ Never the Ten Commandments alone.

Question 4: Which of the following statements are true? (Check all that are true.)

- ☐ The Law of Ten Commandments was given before the time of Moses.
- ☐ The reign of Law came to an end with the death of Christ.
- ☐ The Law was given only to the children of Israel.
- ☐ It can be shown from the New Testament that the Gentile Christians kept the Sabbath.
- ☐ According to Old Testament law, it is a sin to build a wood fire on the Sabbath.
- ☐ Many, if not most, Christians in the early church were worshiping on Sunday long before there was a Sunday law in 321 AD and long before there was a Catholic Church.
- ☐ Jesus ate meat during his ministry and even after the resurrection. However, His example should not be followed today.

Email your answers to dale@ratzlaf.com. Include a statement that you are a Seventh-day Adventist, and also include the name of the Adventist church you currently attend.

*Free book to first 10 responses from Adventists with all answers correct. This offer may be withdrawn at any time without notice. This offer is limited to those who are members of the Seventh-day Adventist church.



Great is Thy faithfulness

GENEVA CHINNOCK

Geneva Chinnock is a musician who works as a nurse at Loma Linda University Medical Center. She and her husband have three children and live in Redlands, California.



My husband and I have just returned home from taking our firstborn daughter to college.

The final activity of family orientation was a service of commitment where faculty, students and parents committed themselves to God for the school year. Together we sang the hymn of worship, "Great is thy faithfulness." The lyrics are based on Jeremiah's words in Lamentations: "I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:19-23).

As I tried unsuccessfully to sing through my tears, I thought back: my daughter was two years old when God faithfully brought me, as well as my children, out from Adventism to freedom and security in Christ.

It all began with a thought 16 years ago—"I need to study the Bible." It was an unusual thought because, as a sixth generation Adventist, studying the Bible wasn't really something I did. It was something other people did to become Adventists. Most Adventists I knew, however, preferred their Ellen White books and *Sabbath School Quarterlies* to studying just the Bible.

Soon after, I ran into a friend who spontaneously told me about a wonderful non-denominational, international Bible study she was attending. Her joy about it was infectious and unusual. How could Bible study cause that much joy? I wondered.

A few days later I received an invitation in the mail from a different friend inviting me to her Bible study. It just happened to be the same Bible study that my first friend raved about. I went to the introduction class and began attending soon after. Right away I sensed something very different—well, unusual—about this Bible study. We could use no sources besides our Bibles, and we could share only what the Holy Spirit taught us. Not using Ellen White was a new concept for me—but so was studying the Bible.

It wasn't long, however, before my biblical ignorance collided with my Adventist confidence. I couldn't understand why I didn't know anything about God when, as an Adventist, I had the truth. I knew the Fourth Commandment and was keeping it faithfully, yet all these other people weren't keeping it, and they radiated a joy about their relationship with God that I had never seen before. I couldn't make sense of it.

I kept studying until one day I read: "Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for his feet" (Hebrews 10:11-12). Jesus sat down, signifying that his work was done. If this understanding was true, then Jesus wasn't up there going through the books in the sanctuary to see if I was worthy of salvation. He died for my sin so that by grace, not by works, I could have eternal life (Ephesians 2:8). Salvation did not depend on any of my works.

A tiny window opened in my airtight theology as a question surfaced—what about 1844? I didn't have the answer for that question, but this insight began a trickle of more questions. As time went on, more windows opened as the light of His word exposed the darkness of my theology.

New questions

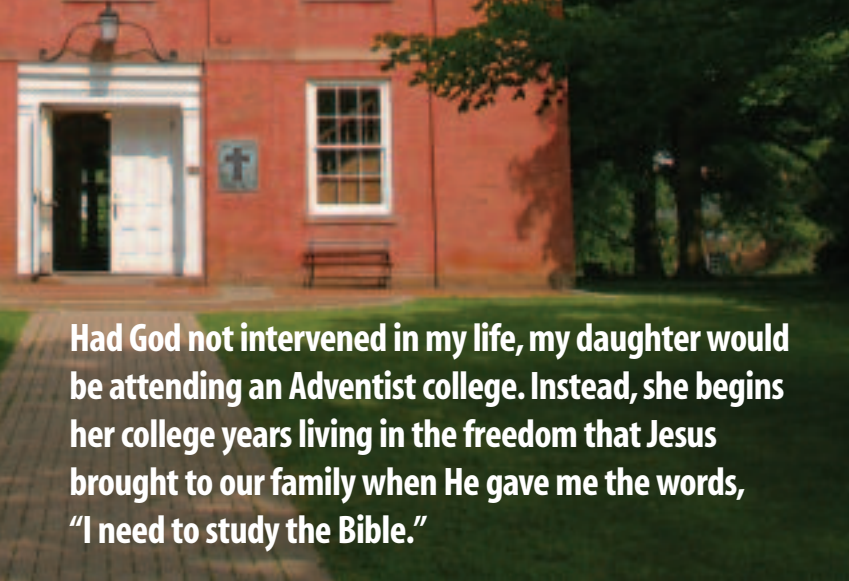
After about a year in Bible study, I attended a meeting advertised at my Adventist church entitled, "An Evangelical Protestant Looks at Adventism." A man named Ken Samples gave a presentation and spoke initially about the gospel. Then, however, he began talking about the Adventist church in a way that I had never heard before. He said that until the 1950s Adventism had been considered a cult. It wasn't until the work of Walter Martin, a Christian apologist, that Adventism was considered a legitimate Christian denomination, albeit with some very unusual doctrines, such as the investigative judgment. No other Christian denomination agreed with that doctrine, he said. Then he talked about the biblical view of death versus the Adventist view called "soul sleep." He also mentioned that Adventists considered other Christians part of Babylon. Finally he talked about the work of Desmond Ford, a man he respected, whose name I had only heard associated with scandal.

I went home that afternoon with many questions. What was soul sleep? What did Desmond Ford do that was so scandalous? And how exactly did Adventists conclude that other Christians were part of Babylon?

Prior to this meeting I had planned to visit some friends that same evening. These friends both happened to be Adventist pastors. I uncharacteristically started asking questions about what I had heard that day. They knew about everything and answered my questions honestly. They knew that the investigative judgment was a false doctrine. They also knew Desmond Ford personally and had lived through the resulting scandal that rocked the church in the 1980s when Dr. Ford proved to church leaders that the investigative judgment was unbiblical. They were familiar with the problems associated with Ellen White as well as Walter Rea's work in documenting her plagiarism. They gave me a book that night which led me to more books and more questions. My theological perspective was being seriously challenged.

Seeing reality

That summer I pored over Scripture and devoured books like *Sabbath in Crisis* (now *Sabbath in Christ*) by Dale Ratzlaff and *Kingdoms in Conflict* by Walter Martin. I learned more and more about the dark secrets of the Adventist church. I read *The White Lie* by Walter Rea which proved that Ellen White had plagiarized a significant portion of books that she had claimed to write. More disturbing than her plagiarism, though, was the fact that she contradicted Scripture. That fact meant that the claim of the Adventist church that Ellen White was a true prophet was false. Like the believers in Ephesus who gathered



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their scrolls and burned them, I gathered every one of her books that was in my house and threw them out.

I began wondering what the Adventist church would be without Ellen White. Her writings were its foundation. Every single Adventist doctrine could be traced to her influence. There would be no Adventist church without her. I concluded that there was no longer any reason for me to be an Adventist.

I was devastated. Why hadn't I known all of this? Why hadn't anyone told me? Everything and everyone that I had ever known had been wrapped up in Adventism. I had attended Adventist schools all my life, lived in an Adventist community, worked at an Adventist hospital, ate Adventist food and went to Adventist doctors and dentists. My theology and identity were in shambles, and I plunged into deep depression.

One day as I was wrestling with my new understanding I imagined a picture. It looked like three books leaning toward each other in the form of a triangle. The books represented Ellen White, the Sabbath, and the investigative judgment—key pillars of the church. And then, as I watched, they fell apart, and inside was Jesus. Jesus was what it was all about—not the Sabbath, soul sleep, the investigative judgment, or anything else. Being a Christian was about knowing Jesus and resting in his finished work on the cross. I began to understand why the Protestant reformers clung to their motto: *sola gratia, sola fide, sola Christus, sola scriptura, soli deo gloria*. Nothing else is needed.

During this time, I met a woman at Bible study who was a former Adventist. Her name was Jan Mace. She understood what I was going through and answered many of my questions. During one of our conversations she told me, “If the voices are screaming, it isn't Jesus.” While I wasn't hearing voices, the thoughts running through my head were anything but gentle—always reminding me about the mark of the beast that I would receive if I denied the seventh-day Sabbath or dared to leave the Adventist church. They were, as I know now, the voice of the enemy.

Decision

It had been almost six months since my questions had first begun, and I sensed that I needed to make a decision. My friend Jan had mentioned her “Sunday” church so many times that I finally asked her to tell me about it. She replied that they just taught the Bible, and the music was great. I was convinced by then that keeping the seventh-day Sabbath was only a

shadow that pointed to the reality that is found in Jesus (Colossians 2:16-17).

I was convinced that, by his grace, I was saved (Ephesians 2:8) and that I could rest from any attempt to be found worthy. I could lay down my worries and fears of hell associated with the investigative judgment. I was now confident that worshipping with other believers on Sunday (or any day) could not be a sin. I decided to attend her church that weekend.

Then came the opposition. Within hours of my decision, a high fever drove me to bed. Sunday morning, however, I was determined to go to church, fever or no fever. I knew that this fever was no coincidence; the enemy hoped to keep me away from freedom in Christ. So I got up and went to church.

Jan was right. It was wonderful—friendly people, lots of Bibles, great music, and the sermon was biblical.

It was not easy to journey out of Adventism. It took some time to get used to going to church on Sunday without false guilt. It took time to let go of my unhealthy concern over what people thought about me because I was leaving the church. Finally, it has taken a long time to get used to life outside my small Adventist world.

One tough decision my husband and I had to make during those first years concerned our children's education. As an Adventist, I would have automatically sent them to Adventist schools. But now what? Christian parents had choices—home school, private Christian school, or public school. We prayed and struggled about what to do. Ultimately we home schooled first, sent them next to Christian elementary schools, and finally sent them to a public high school. I felt as if I were wandering in a foreign land at every turn.

Today

And now I have just delivered my daughter to college. Sixteen years after I began to study the Bible and experienced the crumbling of my Adventist faith, I watched as my daughter sat in the service of commitment at the Christian college she chose. During the service I was overwhelmed as I remembered God's faithfulness in leading me out of Adventism through what appeared to be a series of coincidences.

I continue to be overwhelmed by how he has led me. Had God not intervened in my life, my daughter would be attending an Adventist college. Instead, she begins her college years living in the freedom that Jesus brought to our family when He gave me the words, “I need to study the Bible.” She sits there with no thought of the religious bondage that framed my life, and I am thankful. All of this happened because Jesus pursued me.

My daughter has no idea what is in store for her future, but I know that God will continue to pursue her and invite her into a deeper relationship with him. God has been faithful in leading me. He will be faithful to her as well.

“Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father, Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed thy hand hath provided, Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.”*

*Words by Thomas O. Chisholm, 1866-1960.



Lord, increase our FAITH

DALE RATZLAFF

Faith is a little word that is given major emphasis in the New Testament. Most of us know the “faith verses” from memory such as, “For by grace you have been saved through faith.”¹ “Without faith it is impossible to please Him.”² “It shall be done to you according to your faith.”³ Too often, however, familiarity with things even as important as faith breeds contempt. We often thank God that He has made it so easy to be saved and give the essence of faith little thought! Too often we equate faith with belief when the biblical definition of faith is belief and trust. But the elements of faith are still more complex: What is the amount of our faith? What is the object of our faith? How do we express our faith? And finally, how can we increase our faith?

A lack of faith hinders God’s power.

Throughout my ministry I have tried never to put a load of guilt on a person who prayed for healing but did not experience it by saying, “Well, if you just have enough faith, God would heal you.” Neither am I about to start doing this now. However, as Carolyn and I have been reading through the New Testament again for our morning and evening devotions and



as we have had our own faith tested of late, we have had to come to grips with some of the statements of Jesus where it appears He came down hard on those who had but little faith.

Matthew 17:14–21 records the incident of the disciples of Jesus trying to heal the lunatic without success. When the father of this boy came to Jesus and reported these things, “Jesus answered and said: ‘You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me.’” Later the disciples came to Jesus privately (don’t you love their courage!) and asked, “Why could we not drive it out? And He said to them, ‘Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.’”⁴

After stilling the storm on the lake,⁵ Jesus said, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus reasons that if God can feed the birds and clothe the lilies which appear to have little value, “will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!”⁶

When Jesus came to his home town, Scripture records, “And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.”⁷

After the resurrection Jesus “appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.”⁸

These are a few of the incidents where Jesus made it clear that the amount of faith a person has is at least one of the factors in whether or not we receive the promised blessing.

We summarize this section with the words of Jesus, “And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it will happen.’”⁹

Jesus commends those who immediately believed and stated that their faith was a factor in their receiving the requested blessing.

“And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak; for she was saying to herself, ‘If I only touch His garment, I will get well.’ But Jesus turning and seeing her said, ‘Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well.’ At once the woman was made well.”¹⁰

Matthew records that a Canaanite woman came to Jesus and kept imploring him to heal her daughter. She would not take “No” for an answer but kept pleading. “Then Jesus said to her, ‘O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish.’ And her daughter was healed at once.”¹¹

When the centurion’s servant came to Jesus asking for his master’s son to be healed, he conveyed to Jesus the centurion’s message: “I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.” Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, “I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.”¹² Yes, and the servant was healed that very hour.

God—and our understanding of Him—as the object of faith is without doubt the most important factor in the effectiveness of our faith.

The reason the disciples were filled with fear instead of the needed faith when experiencing the storm on the lake was that they still did not fully comprehend the full deity of Jesus. “...The men were amazed, and said, ‘What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?’”¹³

The blind beggar who heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by cried out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” and he received his sight.¹⁴ He seemed to understand that Jesus was not only the “Jesus of Nazareth,” but was also the promised Messiah, the Son of David.

The woman who was healed of her infirmity believed Jesus to be the “sun of righteousness who will rise with healing in his wings.”¹⁵ This belief in who Jesus is prompted her words, “if I just touch his garments, I will get well.”¹⁶

It appears that even though the disciples on several occasions said they believed that Jesus was the son of God, their full understanding of who Jesus really was did not come until after the resurrection. Jesus was continually trying to teach his disciples who He was (and is), but their

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understanding was limited. In John 16 we have this conversation. The disciples said, “Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God.” Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe?”¹⁷

Faith—any faith—obtains its value in the object of faith. Unless, however, the object of our faith knows the end from the beginning, unless He is true, powerful, trustworthy, gracious, and full of mercy, then no matter how much we believe or trust, our faith is of little or no value. Having faith in faith is pointless; the object of our faith must be in God Himself.

Faith is expressed in action.

In the faith stories above as well as the many other biblical incidents that illustrate faith, it is clear that for faith to operate, faith must be expressed by some action. The paralytic’s faith was expressed by his friends’ digging a hole in the roof and lowering him right in front of Jesus.¹⁸ The woman’s faith was expressed by her touching his garment. At the edge of the river Jordan the priests expressed their faith by stepping into the water.¹⁹ At the wedding in Cana, Jesus’ mother told the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” They expressed faith in filling the water pots with water and then taking a glass of this water/wine to the headwaiter. Abraham expressed his faith by believing that God had the power to fulfill His own promise and give him a son in his old age, and thus Abraham accepted his new name, “Father of a multitude,” before Isaac was even conceived.

How can we increase our faith?

Now we come to where the rubber meets the road. If the amount of our faith is low, it will hinder us from receiving the fullness of God’s promises. If our concept of God is wrong or if we place our faith in the wrong object, it is clear our faith will be of little or no value. If we refuse to act, then faith does not even come into play. Now we must ask, how can we increase our faith?

I want to make it clear that I am struggling in this area myself. Without going into detail, Carolyn and I have, for the last two years, faced major faith tests. James says that we are to “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”²⁰ I will frankly admit that the last two years have not been “all joy.” Yet, our testing has done several good things. It has drawn Carolyn and me closer together. It has drawn both of us closer to God even though we have unanswered questions. It has given us more empathy for others who are suffering. And it has caused us to search Scripture to find comfort and ways to increase our faith.

It could well be that the very testing of our faith is God’s appointed means for increasing our faith. We have seen this to be true in the past, and by faith we can now see God


working. There are doubtless many ways that God works all things together for good to increase our faith and usefulness in ministry.²¹

I want now to share with you both a confession and insight that God has deeply impressed upon me in recent weeks. This involves my view of Scripture. Hang in here with me as I pull several strands together. This insight has come to me from my own study of Scripture, prayer and contemplation of the following events:

First, when I wrote *Adventist to Christian* and later recorded it on CD, I remembered how, in the early 1980’s, I tried to prepare my Adventist congregation for the massive plagiarism in the writings of Ellen White that Pastor Walter Rea had discovered and was soon to be released in the publication of *The White Lie*. My method was to change (lower) the prevailing concept of inspiration to include (1) massive plagiarism, (2) errors in historical facts (3) self-contradictions, (4) contradictions with Scripture, and (5) contradictions with known science. I was encouraged to prepare my parishioners this way by several Adventist scholars, conference officials, and a person at the Ellen G. White Estate.

Second, some months ago, I wrote an article for *Proclamation!* entitled, “You Can Trust the Bible.” Writing this article caused me to rethink my view on the infallibility of Scripture. Previously, I had been quite willing to admit to many errors in Scripture. In my study, however, I read several books including, *Scripture and Truth*, edited by D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge. I was forced to come to grips with the clear teaching of Scripture on the topic of inspiration.

If our concept of God is wrong or if we place our faith in the wrong object, it is clear our faith will be of little or no value.



Third, as I mentioned in a previous article in *Proclamation!*, a number of Adventists—many of them well educated—in trying to evade the clear statements of Paul in Romans, 2 Corinthians and Galatians on the topic of the law and covenants have stated that Paul disagreed with Jesus, and one should not take his statements at face value. One Adventist even rejected his writings completely.

Fourth, and most recently, I listened to Jud Lake's presentation on "The Critics of Ellen White." In his presentation he made it quite clear that he felt one of the main problems with the critics of Ellen White was they were holding Ellen White to a too high view of inspiration. In some of the other presentations made at the same conference the view was presented that what Ellen White said was true and inspired of God. However, her explanations of why she said what she did were not inspired; Ellen White just reached out in her own surroundings and culture for her "why" to go with God's "what." At the same

time it was stated that Ellen White was inspired on the same level as the Bible writers but for a different purpose.

If this claim is true, however, then the Bible's "what" should be separated from the Bible's "why." This conclusion simply will not fly. Just go to your Bible concordance or Bible computer program and look up all the important uses of "because." You will find that the Bible's "whys" are just as important as the "whats" in real, inspired, and authoritative writing.

Over the years since leaving Adventism I have been troubled to see the Adventist's declining view of inspiration. In my Adventist college and seminary days I was not taught verbal inspiration or the inerrancy of Scripture. I was taught a strong—one might even say high—view of "thought" inspiration. My Adventist concept was that the inspired writer was given a divine thought, and the inspired writer used his own vocabulary to accurately express the divine thought in appropriate human language. This method of inspiration, I was taught, applied to Ellen White as well as to the Bible writers. However, it is now well known that the writings of Ellen White contain: (1) massive plagiarism, (2) errors in historical facts, (3) numerous self-contradictions, (4) many contradictions with Scripture, (5) anti-gospel statements, and (6) contradictions with accepted scientific facts. With the coming of the internet the church no longer is able to sweep these facts under the denominational rug where they will be out of sight. Anyone seeking to know the truth about the writings of Ellen White may now do so with a few clicks of the mouse on Google.

In addition to the problems in the writings of Ellen White, several of the fundamental teachings of Adventism have also been shown to be in error. Using sound principles of hermeneutics one cannot, for example, demonstrate from a contextual study of Scripture that "the Seventh-day Adventist church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy," that Sunday worship is or will be "the mark of the beast," that "the seventh-day Sabbath is the seal (or the 'sign of the seal') of God," or that the investigative judgment is biblical or started on October 22, 1844.²² These facts—and they are facts—are met by two reactions: a continual lowering of the Adventists' concept of inspiration to allow for these anomalies, and a reinterpretation of these doctrines so that they can still be held as "truth."

Now I will weave together my various strands of thought on this topic of inspiration. God is convicting me that my previously held concept of inspiration was too low, not too high, as stated by the Ellen White apologists. If I am to experience a growing faith, then my concept of God must be that which is clearly revealed in Scripture—yes, in Jesus Christ Himself, who is "the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power."²³ I must go to His statements about Scripture and faith and line my understanding of inspiration up with them, even if I cannot explain every surface problem. I must, with the Apostle Paul say, "let God be found true though every man be found a liar."²⁴ If I am to put my faith into action—"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all

...there are many factors that make up the elements of faith. It is my conviction that one of them is our view of Scripture. I believe a high view of inspiration and Scripture engenders a strong, dynamic and growing faith. A low view of Scripture undermines faith.



these things will be added to you”²⁵—then I must know that God cannot lie²⁶ and Scripture cannot be broken.²⁷ If I am to avoid the foolishness and the lack of faith demonstrated by the disciples, then I “must believe all that the prophets have spoken.”²⁸ If I am to risk my life and future in following God, then I must be persuaded beyond the shadow of doubt that He “is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.”²⁹ If I am to give heed to the very words of God, then I must know that His every word “is a lamp unto my path,”³⁰ “is tested,”³¹ and the “sum of God’s words is truth.”³² If I am to step out in growing faith in following my Lord, accepting the whole of Scripture, then I must accept what many deny: I must believe in the historicity of Jonah including the story of the whale.³³ I must accept that Daniel was written by none other than the prophet Daniel.³⁴ If I am to live a life of faith, and even joy, while facing suffering and trial, then I must know for sure³⁵ that I now have eternal life.³⁶ I must be free from the worry of facing an uncertain future judgment.³⁷ I must know that even if I die, I will live.³⁸ I must know that when I die and leave this old body I will go home to be with the Lord.³⁹ If I am to believe all that the Lord has spoken, then I must believe the gospel as presented by the Apostle Paul, for he “received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”⁴⁰

Admittedly, there are many factors that make up the elements of faith. It is my conviction that one of them is our view of Scripture. I believe a high view of inspiration and Scripture engenders a strong, dynamic and growing faith. A low view of Scripture undermines faith. During the days of the reformers such as Luther and Calvin, who held quite high views of Scripture and inspiration,⁴¹ the church flourished in Europe. Then the era of the liberal theologians came in, undermined the concept of inspiration and the authority of the Word of God, and in so doing destroyed the faith of millions. Today, Europe has, for the most part, forgotten God and is being overrun by Moslems. They no longer have a moral anchor to determine right from wrong, a moral compass to point the way, or the spiritual power to stand up against Islam. What was once a flourishing center of Christianity is now a breeding ground for “another gospel.” Why? There are probably many reasons, but it is sure that one of the underlying causes was that the church accepted the views of liberal theologians, lowered their concept of inspiration, and consequently lowered their view of Scripture. One understands why Jesus said, “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”⁴²

I confess that I have not always held to a high view of inspiration. Since changing my view I can testify that it

seems, at least to me, that my faith is increasing,⁴³ even though it is being severely tested. It is my prayer and determination to base the rest of my ministry and life here on this earth and my eternal future on the revealed, written Word of God, interpreting this sacred book using sound principles of hermeneutics, asking for and expecting guidance from the Holy Spirit and power from My Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to obey its teachings.

Yes, we are saved by faith—an ever growing belief and trust in the God of Scripture who died for our sins, who rose from the dead for our justification, and who freely gives us the Holy Spirit as a seal and guarantee of our eternal inheritance.

Lord, increase our faith. **!**

Endnotes

1. Eph. 2:8.
2. Heb. 11:6.
3. Mt. 9:29.
4. Mt. 17:20.
5. Mk. 4:35–41.
6. Mt. 6:25–34.
7. Mt. 13:58.
8. Mk. 16:14.
9. Mt. 21:21.
10. Mt. 9:20–22.
11. Mt. 15:22–28.
12. Lk. 7:7–9.
13. Mt. 8:27.
14. Luke 18:38.
15. Mal. 4:2, Obtain Mark Martin’s excellent sermon on Mark 5:25–34. www.CalvaryPhx.com or (888)970-3030.
16. Mk. 5:28.
17. Jn. 16:30, 31.
18. Mt. 2:1–5.
19. Josh 3:13–17.
20. Jam. 1:2–4.
21. Rom. 8:26–30.
22. I have spoken with many Adventist pastors, several Adventist scholars, more than one Conference administrator and one General Conference person in a high position who have admitted to me that this statement is true.
23. Heb. 1:3.
24. Rom. 3:3.
25. Mt. 6:33.
26. Tit. 1:1.
27. Jn. 10:35.
28. Lk. 24:25.
29. Eph. 3:20.
30. Ps. 119:4.
31. Pr. 30:5.
32. Ps. 119:160.
33. Mt. 12:39.
34. Mt. 24:15.
35. 1 Jn. 5:13.
36. Jn. 6:47.
37. Jn. 5:24.
38. Jn. 11:25.
39. 2 Cor. 5:1–9; Ph. 1:21–23.
40. Gal. 1:11, 12.
41. D.A. Carson & John D. Woodbridge, Editors, *Scripture and Truth*, p. 227–234.
42. Lk. 18:8.
43. I recognize that there is no way to intrinsically measure one’s own faith.



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Walking by faith

(even when
I can't see)

COLLEEN TINKER

Well, I will walk by faith, even when I cannot see
“Well because this broken road prepares Your
will for me.”

It's Monday evening Bible study, and I stand with the women in my small group around a table where we've just eaten supper together. We are praising God with over 100 women who meet to study and worship every week, and this chorus from Jeremy Camp's song, "Walk By Faith," etches itself into my memory.

It played itself in my head frequently during the coming days. This business of offering myself as a living sacrifice to Jesus (Romans 12:1) is by far the most rewarding but the least "controlled" experience of my life. There are deadlines (Let's see: I have to get *Proclamation!* ready for design, touch base with the speakers and order the catering for the FAF weekend by Monday...), doubts (How can I be sure I know God's will? What if I've deceived myself? What is truth, anyway?), ministry concerns (How do we handle opposition with authority and godliness while continuing to meet the needs of those truly seeking to know Jesus?), financial concerns (God never seems to show us in advance how He will provide!), and unexpected trouble (Now how could the driver of that muscle pick-up truck have backed up over the hood of our Honda without seeing us? And we surely didn't need Richard to be flattened by fever in the middle of newsletter production and retreat planning!).

Walking by faith is a paradox: on the one hand, my life seems less predictable than ever before. On the other hand, my heart is at peace in a deep security that has eliminated the existential angst that always hummed just below my consciousness.

Questions

I hear questions often; they echo the doubts and confusion that overwhelmed me as I learned who Jesus really was and began to trust Him and His word. "What if I'm wrong? Maybe Satan has deceived me, and I'm walking away from truth by questioning Adventism." "Ellen White said the last deception would be to consider her writings to be of none effect. Is my turning away from her counsels and reading the Bible alone a fulfillment of prophecy?" "How do I live by the Spirit? How do I know what God's answer is when I pray?"

And perhaps an even more foundational question that occurs is, "How do I know the Christian teachings about life, salvation, new birth, death, and the future are any more reliable than the Adventist teachings about those things?"

I will address these issues of living by faith assuming the premise that the Bible is the revealed word of God and is completely reliable. If it is completely reliable, then its claims and promises must also be reliable, and they must withstand the test of experience.

The way we begin to live by faith is by choosing to believe God's promises and acting on that belief. To be

sure, there is an element of risk involved; we cannot prove God's reliability theoretically—any more than we can theoretically prove a human's integrity. Just as we learn to trust a person by risking vulnerability with him or her on a deepening basis, so we can learn of God's trustworthiness. Because we cannot see Him face to face, however, we must accept His special revelation to us in His Word as our guide to learning His will and to knowing how we can become intimate with Him.

Paradigm shift

I had always believed that the Bible was God's word and our final authority. Nevertheless, when I began to pray that God would help me understand His word without the interpretive filter of Ellen's White's commentary, previously vague or obscure passages increasingly made sense. Not only so, but the Old Testament and the New Testament seemed more and more consistent in purpose. In short, God Himself began to reveal Himself through the Bible, and He was both more intimate and more powerful, more just and more merciful than I had ever imagined Him to be.

Because God's word is His own revelation of His purposes, the burden of proof is on Him to reveal its reliability. Yet we must be willing to know Him and receive His proof. In addressing the question of how we know whether the Christian doctrines of life, salvation, new birth, death, and the future are more reliable than the parallel Adventist doctrines, we have one sure answer: God's promises as stated in the Bible are reliable, and God cannot be unfaithful to Himself and to His own word (2 Timothy 2:13; Romans 3:3-4).

The heart of the reliability of God's promises is the Person of Jesus. The reason we can stake our lives—past, present and future, on God's promises in His word is that Jesus Himself has fulfilled them all. "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Further, this passage in 2 Corinthians continues by explaining how we know that God's promises are completely true in Christ and not merely theoretical: "He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Corinthians 1:21b-22). This assertion builds on the revelation in 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 that God has revealed to those who are born of the Spirit the mysteries of His plans for them. The Holy Spirit teaches us all things, and without Him we cannot discern spiritual things. When we are indwelt by Him, however, "we may understand what God has freely given us" (v. 12b). A person without the Spirit rejects the things of God, for they are foolishness to him. The person who has been born of the Spirit, however, has "the mind of Christ" (v. 16).

The Holy Spirit God places in us, bringing our own dead spirits to life when we accept Jesus, also brings to life the words He inspired in the Bible. When we are alive in Christ,

the promises of God and the mystery of Christ become real and knowable to us. Because the Holy Spirit in us brings the Bible alive, we know we can depend upon all God's promises. Because we ourselves are newly born and alive in the Spirit, recipients of the promised new hearts and new spirits, we know that Jesus is God's "Yes," and His promises cannot fail or disappear.

Practical reality

The question for me, however, is this: once I place my faith in Jesus and His faithfulness alone, how do I make the promises of God practical in my life?

At first this question hid behind sudden waves of doubt as I left the Adventist church: What if I was deceiving myself?

Jesus will not play tricks on us. He will not deceive us in order to make a point—and, unlike what many of us learned to fear, He will not allow Satan to pretend to be Jesus and answer our prayers if we have rejected Adventist "truth."

What if Ellen White was right and I was not only fulfilling prophecy but walking away from salvation by replacing the Sabbath with Jesus? Fear would paralyze me.

The only antidote for these crippling assaults was praying and returning to the promises of Jesus in His word: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24); and "What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come.... Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law" (Galatians 3:19a, 25).

As I read these and other promises, I would pray that God would teach me the truth and keep me from deception. As I countered these soul-shattering doubts by turning to Jesus and His word, I learned that God is faithful, and He is stronger than my heart (1 John 3:20b).

I learned that if I pray to know what is true and ask God to keep me grounded in reality and in Himself, I can trust that my saying "Yes" to Jesus is not deception. Jesus will not play tricks on us. He will not deceive us in order to make a point—and, unlike what many of us learned to fear, He will

not allow Satan to pretend to be Jesus and answer our prayers if we have rejected Adventist "truth."

As I learned to trust that my following Jesus out of Adventism was not an act of self-deception but one of obedience to Him, I encountered a related but slightly different fear. What if, in my desire to follow Jesus, I misunderstood what the Bible was really saying? How could I be sure that I was not replacing Adventist indoctrination with another agenda-driven indoctrination called "the new covenant"?

I knew that I was different than I had been; I felt love for Jesus, and I actually experienced His presence with me. He was real to me—but how could I be sure my understanding of the new covenant was really true? What if I was leading myself down the garden path, so to speak?

A verse from Paul became one of my anchors to reality: "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6). God is trustworthy. When I entrust myself to Him, He takes responsibility for leading me deeper into knowing Him, and he puts in me the discernment and desire to work for Him and to want His will (Phil 2:13).

I could trust that God was teaching me truth when I read the words, "But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.

But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:14-17)—or these words: "For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.... By calling this covenant 'new,' he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear" (Hebrews 8:17, 13).

I could trust God Himself to keep my heart and mind safe in Jesus.

God's will

Learning to trust that God was teaching me truth and leading me to Himself has helped me learn to trust Him when I face hard decisions or find myself in difficult situations demanding wisdom and godliness.

In Romans 8 Paul says that we are not controlled "by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in [us]" (v.9). Yet living by the Spirit often seems mystifying. How do we know when we are speaking or acting in God's power instead of our own insight?

One evening a couple of years ago, a young woman was telling me about a deep trauma in her life. She was clearly

suffering, and I didn't know what to say that would be neither trite nor perfunctory. I vividly remember praying as I listened that God would put His thoughts into my mind, that I would speak what He wanted me to speak. I felt utterly helpless. The girl in front of me ceased speaking, and I realized I still had nothing remarkable to say.

As I looked at her, I prayed again for God to put His words in my mouth. I realized that He wasn't going to surprise me with a brilliant idea. Internally I said to Him, "I'm giving this moment to You. I'm going to trust that the unremarkable words I speak will be what You want me to say. Please take me and this moment and make it Yours."

I began to speak, and while I do not remember what I said, I do remember that I consciously realized that I had prayed and God is faithful. Therefore, I had to trust that He would minister to that young woman through my conversation with her, even though I had no sense of special insight unique for her.

Giving up control of the outcome

Learning to recognize God's voice has required that I give up my personal interest in the outcome of my situations. I struggle with this surrender, but it is the point to which God continually brings me.

This morning, in fact, I faced another such struggle. Richard has been sick for the past four days with a high fever and no definitive symptoms. A doctor's visit yesterday yielded an antibiotic and a lot of lab tests. The Former Adventist Fellowship weekend is fast approaching, and the next issue of *Proclamation!* was supposed to be in the design process by now. This illness not only has Richard out of commission, it has required my time and attention as well.

As I prayed about this situation, I was convicted by Philippians 1:29: "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake not only to believe in Him but also to suffer for His sake." I realize that Richard's being sick is not directly related to the gospel as Paul's imprisonment was, but the fact is that God asks us to trust Him in all the out-of-control situations in our lives. When we can praise Him and trust Him for the outcomes even when we are suffering in our bodies, our relationships, our finances, our work—in any part of our lives—He is glorified.

I had to be willing to give up my concern over my looming deadlines and my worry about Richard's recovery. I had to be willing to trust that God would care for my husband in the best possible way for His glory. I had to trust that my deadlines were not for my work—God is the one who is ultimately responsible for the jobs He puts in front of me. I had to trust God to be in charge of the magazine's production and delivery and also for the plans for the coming FAF weekend.

If I was going to trust Him, therefore, I had to give up my own control over the outcomes. I had to believe that God would protect His concerns and care for my husband—and

my job was to do what He assigned me without allowing myself to be distracted and worried. I had to finish editing the magazine, whether or not Richard was well enough to work. I had to trust that when it was time for the magazine to be designed, God would grant Richard the endurance to do it. I had to leave the outcomes in His hands and accept His Sabbath rest in my heart, surrendering to Him my temptation to worry and micro-manage.

Suffering for Christ's sake means surrendering my desires and anxiety to Jesus. It means I must pray with thanksgiving as well as supplication and allow His peace to be more real to me than my fear. I have to trust that He will keep His promises and protect His own interests. I further have to trust not only my work and relationships to Him but also my health and the health of those I love. I have to trust that God will glorify Himself in my body, as Paul says in Philippians 1:20, "whether by life or by death." Finally, I must trust that the Savior who became my sin and took God's wrath in my stead will be faithful to keep me hidden in Himself no matter what circumstances I encounter.

Walking by faith

Living by the Spirit—walking by faith—means that my life is not predictable in the usual way I imagine a planned life. My life is not my own; I am a living sacrifice offered to the Lord Jesus (Romans 12:1). Yet with my growing trust and subsequent surrender of my own control, a miraculous consistency is beginning to emerge: God is faithful to keep His promises. He provides in times of material uncertainty when I am seeking His kingdom (Matthew 6:25-34). He gives my heart peace when I come to Him instead of lingering in my own control (Matthew 11:28). His love casts out the fear in my heart (1 John 4:18). He is faithful, because He cannot be unfaithful to Himself (2 Timothy 2:13).

I have much to learn about walking by faith. It seems God has new ways to stretch me and challenge me to surrender each day. One thing, though, is certain: I can trust Him. He teaches me and roots me in reality through His word, and His Spirit gives me the desire and the means to obey Him and to let go of my clutch on outcomes. He Himself gives me the strength to walk by faith.

Even when I cannot see. **!**

Colleen Tinker is the editor of *Proclamation!* She and her husband Richard lead the weekly Former Adventist Fellowship Bible study at Trinity Evangelical Free Church in Redlands, California. They have two sons in college.





The exclusiveness of REMNANTISM

MOSES DRAKE LUSWATA

Editor's note: Moses' piece may seem extreme to many North American readers. Much of what he describes may resonate with those who remember traditional Adventism from the 50s and 60s (or even before!) While the North American church has made many external changes over the past few decades, still traditional Adventism is being taught in many areas of the world—and even in North America, the core doctrines have not changed. Moses shares his current experience with Adventism in Uganda, located in East Africa.

When a person listens to the preaching in Adventist evangelistic crusades, it is easy to think that Adventists are near the gates of heaven, and one is compelled to join them. At face value they seem to be “the people of the Book” (The Bible) as they claim, and, because of the brainwashing and the proof-texting drills one undergoes, it’s almost impossible, at first, to discover that Adventists’ systematic theology is built on fables, not on the truth of the Scriptures. At one time I was a victim of this evangelistic deception, but I thank God the veil which they had put on my spiritual eyes was removed in Jesus Christ. “Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away” (2Cor 3:15, 16).

Remnant

At the age of 15 I was baptized into the faith of Adventism. I was filled with joy thinking that I had escaped the wrath of God by coming out of Babylon into the Adventist church. The 27 Fundamental Beliefs (revised to 28 Fundamental Beliefs in 2005) were introduced to me, and among these was the doctrine of “the remnant.” When the church elder taught the new converts this doctrine, I loved it. It put me in a situation where I, a person considered to be “less privileged,” was suddenly elevated to new status; I was now one of the REMNANT of GOD. Statements such as the following made me feel I was not only a special person but also a unique person:

“The Bible portrays the remnant as a small group of God’s people who, through calamities, wars, and apostasy, remain

loyal to God" (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, second ed., 2005, p. 190, par. 3).

"God's remnant people are characterized by a faith similar to that which Jesus had" (*ibid.*, p. 191, par. 1).

"Genuine faith in Jesus commits the remnant to follow His example" (*ibid.*, p. 191, par. 3).

"In every church [during the late 18th and early 19th centuries] believers in the imminent return of Christ could be found, all praying, working, and anticipating the climax of the ages" (*ibid.*, p. 192, par. 1).

"The Advent movement was a truly Biblical interconfessional movement centered in the Word of God and the Advent hope" (*ibid.*, p. 192, par. 2).

When a person is still veiled with this teaching, it looks like the absolute truth. One believes one has to work hard to maintain and keep him/her self in the remnant of God. This doctrine shaped me into a unique person, and little by little I became enmeshed in remnantism. I reached a point of looking at non-Adventists as the lost, the unclean, and as those destined to destruction at the Second Advent.

Marks of the remnant

After I graduated as a Bible instructor from Nabiyagi (Emiti) Bible college, I started zealously teaching the 27 fundamental doctrines. I put more emphasis on the doctrines of the remnant and the Sabbath because these two, to me, most defined our identity as a unique and special group of God's people. I never thought—moreover, it would have been too hard for me to believe—that other Christians who are not Seventh-day Adventists could ever be saved. I based my belief on the remnant hypothesis that Revelation 12:17 refers to Adventists: only those who keep the 10 Commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus (which we identified as the ongoing prophetic ministry of Ellen White) will be saved. Apart from meeting those qualifications, other so-called Christians are lost. After all, the Bible tells us so:

"For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Matt 7:13-14).

Whenever I looked at the other Christians who numbered far more than Seventh-day Adventists, I ignorantly used Matthew 7:13-14 as my proof text, as I had been taught, that Adventism is the narrow way because it comprises the small remnant, and the other Christians are on the wide way which leads to hell.

I remember one evening after preaching in an evangelistic crusade and making a strong appeal to my listeners to get out of Babylon and come and join the remnant church, a young girl came to me and told me, "I would join your church because you preach well, but you have too many 'do's' and 'don'ts.'" I told this young girl that if she wanted to be saved, she didn't have any options besides becoming an Adventist or

being lost. With this legalistic attitude, I lost many souls who would have accepted Christ.

This spirit of remnantism looks to be godly, but it is a demonic spirit; it keeps someone who is under its power in a religious bondage that leads one to disassociate himself from other Christians and to become unique in behavior. Remnantism requires one to understand God differently from the way He is described in Scripture. At times, remnantism requires adherents to change jobs so they can be good observers of the law.

I remember I reached a point of not eating anything cooked at my relatives' houses because their cooking utensils had been used to cook pork and other unclean foods. My belief in the strict observance of the dietary restrictions of Adventism had isolated me. In our culture it is an abomination not to eat at one's relatives' house when visiting. To avoid this social abomination, I decided not to visit my family, and eventually I ended up almost losing them.

Remnant isolation

I found that a Seventh-day Adventist feels better associating with a fellow Adventist than with his family members who are not Adventist. Because of the remnant attitude, one ends up creating another family because he or she no longer "fits in" with others who are not Adventists. As an Adventist, one can't go to their functions, yet functions here in Africa are one of the ways we strengthen our relationships. Using Romans 1:32b as our Scriptural proof text, "they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them," Adventists had to separate themselves from family gatherings and from non-Adventist friends.

As a special group—as the "remnant"—we were taught that all functions which were not prepared and organized by Adventists were not godly. If, as Adventists, we were to go and participate in—thus blessing—non-Adventist occasions, we would become part and parcel of all evils done in that function. Consequently I ended up not attending any function apart from those organized by the Adventists.

While Adventist functions were considered the only appropriate activities for an Adventist to attend, many evil things often occurred in those gatherings. For example, one time a young unmarried girl was brought to the church board because she was pregnant. When this girl was asked how she became pregnant, she replied that it had happened at camp meeting. In fact, many similar cases have been found to have occurred at camp meeting, even to date.

If our use of Rom 1:32b as a proof-text commanding abstinence from all non-Adventist functions were valid because of guilt by association, then all those Adventists who attended camp meetings and other functions where such evil things occurred should also be considered guilty of them. I ask myself why I couldn't reason so clearly at that time!

With a "remnant attitude" one finds oneself not associating with other people who are not Adventists—including



Members of Moses' congregation at Grace Place Community Church in Kajansi, Uganda, meet in the framework of their new church building. The roofing was made possible by a donation from One Flock Ministries founded by Greg Taylor. They are praying God will provide for them to be able to enclose the building and plant flowers around it.

relatives—not because one doesn't want to, but because of fear. Because this doctrine is built on fables and not on Biblical truth, there is little likelihood that a non-Adventist Christian will examine it. Thus the Adventists take this doctrine for granted without encountering dissenting opinions although it is robbing them of their freedom in Jesus Christ for which they long.

The unveiling begins

I thank God that I joined Bugema University, an Adventist university in Kampala, Uganda. This move was the beginning of the unveiling of my spiritual eyes. While in Bugema, I discovered that the doctrines of Seventh-day Adventists were full of ambiguities. This growing realization stirred many doubts in me, and I could not rest until I reached the core of these doctrinal discrepancies. The more I researched these doctrines, the more God led me into deeper study and discovery of many things. At first I thought I was just doing research and studying for the sake of studying. I did not realize that God was leading me to the freedom He promised to His true believers—that I would know the truth, and the truth would set me free. I thought that things would be simple, that I could dismiss the problems and keep the truth. Every day, however, I got up to read my Bible, and new revelations started coming to my mind. I never imagined that I would ever leave Adventism, but I

finally vowed that when I finished my Bachelor of Theology, I would never preach from E. G. White's books again. I would only preach the gospel alone from the Bible alone.

One day while I was still in the state of confusion, a professor from the theology department came to our class and made this statement, "I cannot honor and respect the writings of the prophetess of the church because they are full of lies." Another time he came to our class and told us, "You people, you go around boasting that you are the remnant of God. That is not true. You are just a faction of Christendom. God will save even other Christians in the other sects in the same manner as He will save you!"

As if that were not enough, he made another statement, "You people—you go on saying that Jesus is coming soon. Where is He coming, and to do what? The gospel is not yet preached, and you think that Jesus is coming! I pity you, you Adventists pastors, when you leave here to go back and preach what you call the gospel. Stop preaching soy-

ameat and all those nonsense sermons!" If I were to tell all the statements this professor made, they would be nearly endless; he made my life so difficult! Because of his challenging teaching, I found myself concentrating more on researching my faith in this so-called "only True and Remnant Church of God" than on studying my academic books to pass my examinations. It was almost funny; the more I researched, expecting to find the solutions to my questions, the more truth hit me hard. I started seeing the doctrines which I liked the most flying away one by one, like butterflies from my hands.

The last two doctrines

I could not believe that the Sabbath and Remnant doctrines would also fly away. I clung to them tightly. I could let other doctrines go, but not these two! The time came, however, when I finally had to let the Remnant also go, but Sabbath stayed for a while. I resigned from my Adventist pastoral duties, but still I kept on fellowshipping on Saturday. I reasoned like this: after the work of redeeming man, Jesus accomplished this work on Friday, and on Sabbath (Saturday) He rested in the grave. Therefore, as Christians, we have to rest on that day in order to commemorate that great work which no human being could do—restoring and reconciling a sinner to God, His Creator. On the surface this reasoning seems to make sense, but when I

read other books from other authors such as *Sabbath in Christ* by Dale Ratzlaff, the series *Judeo-Christianity Challenged By Paul* by Samuel Pestes, *A Theologian's Journey* by Jerry Gladson, *New Covenant Christians* by Clay Peck, and the more recent one by Pastor Greg Taylor, *Discovering The New Covenant*, I found out that my reasoning vanished into thin air.

When a person is still blinded by legalism, he cannot realize the dangers of remnant theology, but let a person leave such a group—then he or she will suffer the consequences of it. The very doctrines I cherished now worked against me. I became isolated even more than before. I could not go back to Adventism now that I had studied it deeply, but other Christians rejected me thinking that it would be too hard for me to leave Adventism and I would go back. Others said that I was spying—and if not spying, that I was masquerading as a Christian and had really come to destabilize Christianity. Because of the remnant theology I had cherished so much, I had finally reached a point of having no friends but Adventists, and now I was leaving even them.

When I stood out boldly to oppose them, I had no choice but to resign from their service. At first things were not too hard for me because Life Assurance Ministries started giving me assistance. For almost one year LAM provided support for me and my four colleagues as we tried to start a ministry. Despite some persecution from the so-called “church,” I did not feel the effect of abandoning the remnant. Things changed immediately, however, after our group of five mishandled our situation. The ministry we tried to put up collapsed; LAM stopped the assistance, and the whole group scattered. Then I began to see how hazardous the teachings I cherished were.

But God is faithful.

Remember, because of “remnant teaching,” I believed I was special and unique. I didn’t have any dealings with anyone apart from Adventists. At the same time, my name was already being read in the churches around the Central Uganda Field of Seventh-day Adventists, and all the remnant people were repelling me. I was alone. Life became too hard, and I reached a point of joining a denomination I well knew was worse than the one which I had left. In spite of all the pain, however, one thing I didn’t contemplate was going back to Adventism!

It took me one and a half years without genuine friends before I began to emerge from the darkness. The worst of my experience was that the remnant people were mocking and laughing at me. I could hear them saying, “This Church is the remnant of God, and those boys are suffering because they tried to destroy it. No one lays his/her hands on this church and gets away without the punishment of God. God has to defend His church—and that defense is just the beginning of what He will do!” Such statements were made, but they didn’t move me because I had finally found rest for my soul in Jesus Christ.

Resolution

Because of my “remnant mentality,” I had hated reading any other books apart from books which were written by Adventist writers, especially E G White. We were told that the Beast is using many people to write books which are misleading, and we should avoid them. For many years I ignored treasured and spiritually packed books because they were not written by Adventists. Many times before I would buy a book, I looked first to see if the author was an Adventist. If not, the book had no value to me. The spirit of legalism had blinded me, I didn’t know that I was ignoring literature which could bring freedom, peace, and the full knowledge of understanding the free gift of God which is in Jesus Christ. I thank God today I have an independent mind. I read many spiritual books, and I have found statements in those book which have brought happiness to my soul.

It has cost me a period of one and a half years of loneliness and grief to find new Christian friends who can trust me. What amazes me is that during the time of my isolation, not even a single pastor with whom I used to serve in the Adventist church came to my home to say a word or to try to woo me back to Adventism! Do you see how the doctrines of this church, instead of creating love, sympathy, unity and care for others, actually create enmity? By teaching its people remnant theology, Adventism has made people think that they are fighting for God when in reality they are endangering themselves and keeping other Christians at arm’s length.

I thank God for the gospel of the New Covenant. Now I look at all Christians as God’s people, and I am not special or unique from them. I no longer preach condemnatory sermons but rather call all Christians to look at the cross where there is hope for the sinner. Because of the gospel of the New Covenant I realize that the Remnant of God is not measured by our human understanding of what people can do. Rather, it is determined by the act of God at the cross, and whoever believes it, regardless which church he/she attends, is part of the remnant of God. **!**

Moses Drake Luswata is the pastor of Grace Place Community Church in Kajansi, Uganda. He is also the coordinator for One Flock Ministries (directed by Greg Taylor) in Africa. He and his wife Jane have five children: Idah, Esther, Joshua, Florence, and Juliana.



Excellent Proclamation!

Congratulations on another excellent *Proclamation!* This [Nov/Dec] issue struck a cord with both of us. Colleen Tinker's article on integrity was particularly meaningful, and we both admire her theological grasp of the gospel of grace. While we both enjoyed all the articles immensely and were blessed and encouraged by each one, I found Karen Earp's very special—free at last to worship Christ without a filter.

We always enjoyed Dale Ratzlaff's writing, and I have to wonder whether Jud Lake, after reading this issue of *Proclamation!*, will someday seek freedom from the bonds that are presently binding him so tightly. After this issue of *Proclamation!* he has to have some seriously nagging questions about the cross of Jesus Christ and what it has done for those who accept it completely, not to mention the transparency of Ellen White's false prophecies, wisdom, and blatant deceit.

I cannot understand how sincere Christians in the Adventist church can read Galatians (and all of the Apostle Paul's writings, for that matter) and still remain so deceived by Ellen White. Every member of our families are adamantly such. How often we have wished to share *Proclamation!* with them. I shudder when I realize that I was there for most of my life!

Anyway, thank you very much for the hard and must-be-tiring work that you are doing for *Proclamation!*

Persevere

I receive *Proclamation!* and I appreciate your ministry. I encourage you to continue through some of the tough letters you may receive. I'd like my grandfather to receive this publication if possible.

Thought-provoking

Please keep up the gospel saving message. We wait so anxiously for *Proclamation!* to come. You have such thought-provoking articles, and yet you keep it simple. Very important.

Contrast between pictures

Why is it that Dale Ratzlaff's picture [Nov/Dec issue] shows a smiling man sharply in focus while Jud Lake's picture is blurry, showing him in his most awkward expression? Would you select one of your worst pictures and publish it in your magazine? If not, why do you do it to the one who happens to disagree with you? Sad.

Editor's note: We asked Jud Lake for a high quality photo of himself to use for the Nov/Dec issue, explaining the context in which we would use it. While he responded to our email politely, he did not address our request for a picture nor

did he send one. Consequently, we used a frame from the video of his presentation.

The brightest lights

Take me off your mailing list. It is also written that the "brightest lights will go out." Apparently your light went out, and you are not even the brightest.

Encouragement

What an encouragement you are! I just read your magazine—front to back. It is awesome, and a great blessing to those who are struggling with Adventism and finding the truth in Jesus and the new covenant. Keep me on your list.

Dear Demas [see 2 Timothy 4:9-10]

Yes, I will pray for you. How is it that you could leave the Sabbath of the Lord? How is it that you could join with those who believe in immortality of the soul? How is it that you embrace the doctrine of eternal burning hell?

The problem is, you were never really Seventh-day Adventists. You never knew God nor trusted Him. You

the things they believe now. My mother told me all other religions are of Satan! I keep trying to talk to them about the false teachings of Ellen White, and they look at me as if I am stupid.

Pray for them, and for me to have wisdom in how to keep trying to get through to them. Or should I just leave them alone?

Editor's note: If your parents have truly placed their trust in Jesus, they will certainly go to heaven. God knows those who are His, and He goes out, as did the Good Shepherd in Jesus' parable, to find those who wander away. He will not leave them alone.

It is useless to argue about theology with them if they are unwilling to listen to you, but do feel free to talk about Jesus and what He is doing in your life. The most important thing you can do is to pray that God will open their eyes to His truth and give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so they will know Him better (Ephesians 1:17). You can also pray that God will open a door for the gospel as you interact with them, that He will prepare their hearts and give you wisdom in knowing how and when to speak.

Of burning and the remnant

Please take me off your mailing list. I read your magazine, and can prove that the Sabbath IS BINDING and the Investigative Judgment IS supported by Scripture, contrary to your lies. Your "special mailing" made great starter paper for my fireplace! I know for a FACT that this church, the Seventh-day Adventist

Church, IS God's remnant church, and if you don't repent of your lies, you, too, will burn. May God have mercy on you.

Through God's guidance

I'm writing to you from Germany. After studying again the "special" Adventist doctrines and E. G. White's writings from a purely biblical perspective, my wife and I left the Adventist church three months ago. We never thought that this would ever happen, but thanks to Jesus who lovingly guided us. Thank you and many others who posted biblically rooted information on the Internet. It was done through the guidance of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Keep talking the truth. God bless you!

Toss it

We received your *Proclamation!*. My husband read it and said, "Toss it!" I looked through it, and from [Colleen Tinker's] appearance and that of Karen Earp, I concluded you really do not believe in the Bible (1 Timothy 2:9, Isaiah 3:16-24, 2 Kings 9:30), nor in God's statement of

Apparently your light
went out, and you are
not even the brightest.



didn't want to believe in E. G. White because of what she counseled you to do. So you took the easy road, the broad way that leads to destruction.

No doubt you've abandoned the health message, too. Having ham for Christmas? Turkey?

Please reconsider what you've left and where you're headed. Do you realize that you are actually proving some of E. G. White's prophecies? She said that some of the most earnest enemies of Adventists in the last days will be those who once walked with us.

How is it that you can disregard the counsel of God and join yourselves to Babylon? God be merciful.

Yes, I will pray that God's Spirit will be able to still reach you, before you abandon Him forever.

Please pray for my parents

My parents are elderly. They became Adventists about 10 years ago. When they die, will they NOT go to heaven? They have always been Christians attending a non-denominational church most of their whole lives. I am very sad at

being in the world, but not of the world. It is obvious you prefer the world. I feel sorry you can't realize that God has always used a prophet to guide His people. My only concern is that we should pray for you because God loves you despite your rejection of His directives.

Dear Pastor Ratzlaff,

I want to thank you for an exceptionally well-balanced article in the Nov/Dec

Proclamation! You have no clue—then again, maybe you do—how many Adventists are struggling with Ellen G. White.

Bible studies needed

Sirs: Can you provide Bible studies on these topics: The seventh-day Sabbath abolished, Sunday holiness, and nine commandments only are to be followed?

P.S. Send no one to my home.

Editor's response: We do not believe any of the above three assertions. We believe Christ fulfilled the shadow of the law including the weekly Sabbath. Sunday is not a holy day—it is the same as all the other six. We honor the Lord Jesus and find unending Sabbath rest in Him (Hebrews 4:1-11). His Spirit indwells us—the Living Law who brings us to life and works in us “to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).

I was set free in Christ!

My husband is a fifth generation Adventist. I was born to Adventist parents, but my mother, being of Baptist background, wasn't quite settled in the faith. Due to the very unloving behavior she experienced while in the “remnant” church, she began to question whether people so capable of vicious gossip and ignorance could possibly be the “True Church.” We studied with Jehovah's Witnesses and attended their meetings for three years after she divorced my dad. Eventually, they remarried, but their second union only lasted two years. This time when she left him, she left Adventism for good. My dad got custody of us the second time around, and of course, I was then sent to Adventist schools.... As far as sincerity and enthusiasm go, I was probably one of the best banner-waving, “Thank God, I'm Adventist” persons there ever was. I worked Adventist summer camps for 10 years because I believed so strongly that we had the true message.

I married an Adventist young man, son of a pastor. We graduated from an Adventist college in Texas and then proceeded to join the work in radio ministry. We were very dedicated to this work. My husband poured himself into the ministry with all the zeal he could muster—often ignoring his wife and children in order to do so. I was quite the lonely stay-at-home mom and I began to get caught up in an independent study group who felt the main body of Adventists were watering down the truth. I was taught that wedding bands were a sin, that to keep Sabbath, you should stay in dress clothes all day long, that sex is evil, that we should eat a strict vegan diet of only two meals a day in order to ready ourselves for the diet of heaven. Drums in music were a definite no-no; in fact the only acceptable music was scripture songs. I began wearing dresses all the time, and we refused to allow television into our home. I idolized Ellen White, and we were as strict as could be. Secretly, I loved it when people admired me for my piety. However, the only ripple in this shiny little pond was that I became addicted to internet pornography on the side. I couldn't get away from it—but hey, I didn't own a TV, wear make-up or listen to contemporary Christian music! I've always had a heart for spiritual things, and feeling such an intense burden of guilt about my secret behavior, I would cry out to God to have mercy on me and help me get rid of all the sin in my life. Anyway, I became so convinced I'd never make it into heaven that I told my husband,

“I've done everything I've been told, and I've studied Ellen White until I'm nearly crazy in the head and I'm still just a lousy, rotten sinner. If this is all there is to religion, to try and constantly fail, then I'm OUT!” About that time, God heard my cries for help, and suddenly everyone in the study group was moving in different directions. God scattered us across the country, and two others that I know of from that group have since called to apologize and praised God with me for finding grace.

As we were moving to our new headquarters with the radio ministry, God spoke to my heart in the truck saying, “You are tired because you have been working too hard. I want to give you rest, and I am going to show you My truths, but first we need to tear down this wall of beliefs you have built and start all over again. I want you to read the Gospels and learn about My Son.” It was such a strong impression, I knew it was God, and I obeyed. Starting in Matthew, I began to get a whole new picture of God, faith, and holiness. I found myself a Pharisee of the worst kind as I read the seven woes. I saw that many of the Adventist church members and leaders were constantly cleaning the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they were filthy and lifeless. It broke my heart and brought me to my knees before God. I began to realize that salvation was about a Savior, not my behavior.

It's a terrible thing to realize there is nothing I can bring to the foot of the cross except a weary, old, filthy, bruised heart. But that is reality. The New Testament began opening for me in a way I had never before seen. I was saved by the perfect life and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ—not the Law or the Sabbath! Furthermore, Christ IS the Wedding Garment so freely offered in the parable of the wedding feast! My sins are not written in a book and kept as evidence against me—they have been erased by His blood!....

The thing that reduced our involvement with the church was after 11 years of our faithfully moving all over the country, sacrificing family time, selling our house and investing ourselves whole-heartedly into the radio ministry, they fired my husband! It was almost a relief after enduring two years of abusive and power-hungry leadership. This was how God pushed the “eject” button for us....

The fact that my salvation was sealed forever at the cross has been a bitter-sweet revelation. “It is finished” is Good News! Please pray for me as I continue to seek, ask and knock.

Would you happen to be a coffee drinker?

Dear departed brethren

I read enough of your magazine *Proclamation!* to know that it is strictly of Satan. You seem to be part Catholic, part atheist, and part displaced Protestant. Evidently, you have departed from all Bible truth. You must read the Bible from a distorted mind-set to begin with. When you turn away from the Ten Commandments, you may as well forget the rest of the Bible, for those Commandments are that which gives birth to Christian living.

I am writing rather harshly to you, but on reading from your magazine such awful departure from pure Christian doctrine, I feel that you need someone to speak harshly to you, yet in love...

If Ellen White's message on proper eating habits were followed today—including her instruction against tobacco, alcohol, and caffeine, there would be much less cancer and other illnesses today. Would you happen to be a coffee drinker?

Please do not take this personally. It is against your hellacious teaching, not you as a person. Please give it up.

Pastor Dale responds

Thank you for your letter of concern. It shows that you care that we follow the truth and that attitude is to be commended. You seemed to be very concerned that we might be eating meat, perhaps even unclean meat, and drinking coffee. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you my findings on these topics.

First, there is not even a hint in the Bible that we should not eat meat today. True, Adam and Eve were given a vegetarian diet, but that ended with the flood. Then God said, "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you." (Gen. 9:3) We believe there is evidence that all the great men (and women) of faith were meat eaters. Daniel did not want to eat the king's food and we can only speculate as to all the reasons. Perhaps he did not want to be intoxicated or even poisoned with the king's drink. He did not want to eat the king's meat because it probably was not prepared according to the regulations of the Torah, and it also might include meat from unclean animals. It is quite clear that Jesus and His disciples ate meat on several occasions. They ate the Passover lamb and they ate fish on a regular basis. We should remember that Jesus not only ate fish after the resurrection, (Lk. 24:42) but he prepared a fish breakfast for his disciples (Jn. 21:12, 13).

Second, my reading of the New Testament causes me to conclude that the distinction between clean and unclean no longer applies to new covenant Christians. (Mk. 7:17-19; Acts 10:12-16; Rom. 14:13-23).

Third, the next day after I first read your letter in a draft copy of *Proclamation!* I received an excellent book reporting on a number of the latest scientific health studies, one of which was on the use of coffee. Perhaps this study will be of interest not only to you but the other readers of *Proclamation!* By printing this short summary we at Life Assurance Ministries are neither promoting nor condemning the eating of meat, unclean meat or the use of coffee. Rather, we feel that decisions of what a person eats and drinks is a private decision based upon individual health assessments and

needs. "The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves" (Rom. 14:22). Here is the coffee study entitled, "Dr. Coffee, M.D."

"The health benefits from drinking coffee continue to be reported—and to the extent where they almost seem too good to actually be true.

"Coffee decreases diabetes risk. Drinking six cups a day slashed risk of diabetes by 54% for men and 30% for women in an 18-year Harvard study. Even drinking only one cup a day was found to reduce risk by several percent.

"At least six additional studies indicate coffee drinkers reduce their risk of

Parkinson's disease by up to 80%.

"And other studies have reported that drinking at least two cups of coffee a day can reduce risk of colon cancer by 25%, risk of gallstones by 50% and risk of liver cirrhosis by 80%.

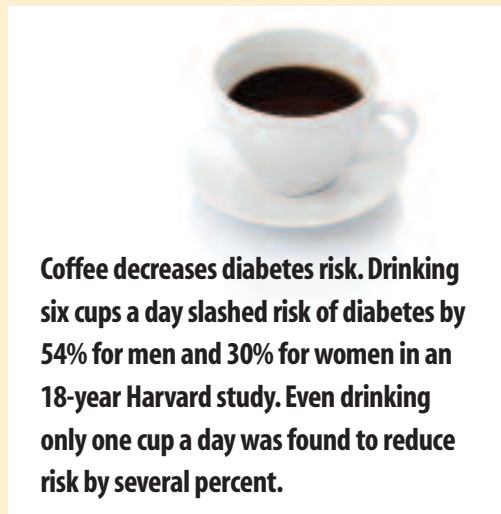
"There's even evidence that coffee drinking offsets some of the health damage caused by smoking and excessive drinking—those who engage in such health vices but also drink coffee have been reported to suffer less heart and liver damage than those who don't.

"And other studies have indicated coffee may help to control asthma, relieve headaches, lift spirits and even prevent cavities.

"Coffee can also increase athletic performance and endurance—until recently, it was a controlled substance at the Olympic Games.

"Moreover, coffee is even good for children. One study in Brazil indicated that children (age 12 average) who drank coffee with milk were less prone to depression and were more alert in school. No study indicates that coffee consumed in reasonable amounts is in any way harmful for children."

Quoted from *The Bottom Line Library of Genius*, page 34, taken from Tomas de Paulis, PhD, coffee chemist and research assistant professor of psychiatry, Institute for Coffee Studies, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN. Used by permission. For more health studies, go to: www.BottomLineSecrets.com.



Sorry you gave up your salvation

I received your magazine for November and December. I read it from cover to cover. All I found was that all the articles were filled with error. I am not going to condemn you because as Christ said, "Forgive them for they know not what they do." I know that it was used in a different context, but it fits here. Remember what Christ said about those who lead His sheep astray. I would not want to be in your shoes when Christ asks you, "Where are the sheep I entrusted to you?"

You say that the reason you left the church is that "you studied yourself out of the Adventist church." I find that hard to believe. You set yourself up for the master deceiver to take you out. If you don't like Sister White, don't read her works. I don't see anywhere where it says, "Believe in Sister White and thou shalt be saved." I have studied the Bible and Sister White more years than you have lived and see no conflict between the Bible and her writings.

I have also noticed that most of your group who have left the church are going to Sunday-keeping churches. I have also noticed through the years that those who leave the church usually fall along the wayside and are never heard from again. I have further noticed that those who leave the church are critical because they have never been truly converted or had good personal relationships with Christ, or they have been reprimanded by the church for some bad conduct on their part.

Remember Saul thought he was doing right but found out the hard way that it was he who was wrong. Perhaps that is your case. Christ has only one church, and I can say without doubt that your group is not it. All I can say is that I feel so sorry for your followers. They have given up their salvation to follow the arch deceiver. It is now time for you to study yourselves back into the church. You will be welcomed gladly.

I just want to make one comment on the article by David Dykes. I realize that he is a Baptist, but that doesn't change the Ten Commandments. They were never nailed to the cross. The only thing that changed at the cross was the sacrificial system and laws that dealt with that. Health rules are never obsolete or out of vogue. God made us and certainly must know what is best for our bodies. If God changed the Sabbath to Sunday, then He cannot be trusted. Quite frankly, I'll trust in Him, because I know in whom I believe.

I could say more, but I just hope you and your group will come to your senses and will see your errors. Also I want to say once again, I feel so sorry that you have chosen to give up your salvation and your mansion in heaven. We will be praying for you.

We'll find out...

I am sorry you have decided to leave the Adventist church, but I fully respect your choice to belong to any denomination you desire. I agree that the Adventist church is not perfect, but I have not found another church that agrees more with the Bible than it does. I suppose if we live until the seven last plagues are poured out, we will find out who is correct in God's eyes.

Pray, search, and study

I am your typical story, 40 years old, raised in the church, and have held jobs within the church such as youth leader, Pathfinder leader, usher, head deacon and elder, and so on. Ten to 20 years ago I studied every part of Seventh-day Adventist theology, or so I thought.

I started receiving your magazine about a year ago and have found it of great value. Where I do not agree 100% with everything, I can say it has caused me to study and search like never before.

Years ago, we would take what "the church" said as gospel because there was no real way to double-check it. With today's technology, you can validate anything. The knowledge we have today is superior to anything we had 10 or 20 years ago. At first what I found was disturbing. What I took on "faith" was shattered. The contrast between what I believed from the church and its leaders and what I have found over the past year is like black and white.

I read in your magazines the letters that are sent, and I find them very balanced with positive and negative letters, which I appreciate. One letter really struck home to me. It was by a sister who said, "Why are people so worried about my being 'in' the church instead of what my relationship is in Jesus Christ?" The church is not going to save me; my relationship with Jesus Christ will.

I am in the process of asking a lot of questions within our church, just like Christ and His disciples did throughout their ministries. A true remnant church should be able to stand up to any questioning. While the Adventist Church calls itself "the true remnant church," only a little research brings that claim into question. While they say they have the only prophet that is a true prophet, again 10 minutes on the internet brings that claim into question, too. I still agree 100% that Saturday was the God-given Sabbath (however, I am still researching this subject and still keep an open mind).

I urge all Seventh-day Adventist Christians to truly study, search, pray, and ask questions about everything. When people quote the Bible or Ellen G. White, ask, "Where, what chapter, and what page?" I have found people who love to quote but can't back up their quotes with references. Many Adventist opinions are cloaked under the name of Ellen White. Until we pray, search and study for ourselves, we will never truly understand the abundant life God has for us.

I ask for your continued prayers as I continue to research and ask questions. I still attend the Adventist church, but the more I study, the more I question—and so should anyone else!

Attractive publication

Thank you very much for your very attractive publication. We're been receiving gift copies of an Adventist publication for several years. My husband had ordered a book from the Adventists, and since then they have been sending magazines and literature often even though my husband died in 2003.

We were former members of the Worldwide Church of God. We joined in the early 50s and remained until 1977, nearly 25 years. Through outside help we finally broke the spiritual yoke that held us in their doctrines. Then, through prayer and Bible study, we have been able to break away into freedom in Jesus' Christ's supreme sacrifice for us all.

I appreciate the quality of your magazine and appreciate also being able to send it to my friend in Florida.

"The Lord helps us and delivers us from the wicked, and saves us because we take refuge in Him" (Ps 37:40).

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

Bike ride with God

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

At first I saw God as my observer—my judge who kept track of the things I did wrong so He would know whether I merited heaven or hell when I die. He was distant, sort of like the president. I recognized His picture when I saw it, but I really didn't know Him.

Later, when I met Christ, it seemed as though life were rather like a bike ride, but it was a tandem bike. I noticed that Christ was in the back helping me pedal. I don't know just when it was that He suggested that we change places, but life has not been the same since.

When I had control, I knew the way. It was rather boring but predictable—the shortest distance between two points. When He took the lead, however, He knew delightful long cuts: up mountains, through rocky places at breakneck speeds, and it was all I could do to hang on. Even though the ride seemed like madness, He commanded, "Pedal!"

I worried and asked anxiously, "Where are You taking me?"

He laughed and didn't answer, and I

started to learn to trust. Soon I forgot my boring life and entered into the adventure—but sometimes I'd blurt, "I'm scared!" He would only lean back and touch my hand.

He took me to people with gifts that I needed, gifts of healing, acceptance, and joy, and they gave me these gifts to take on our journey—my Lord's and mine.

As we rode farther, though, He said to me, "Give the gifts away; they're too much weight for us if you carry them." So I gave them to the people we met, and I found that in giving I received—and still our burden was light.

I did not trust Jesus, at first, to be in control of my life. I thought He would wreck it. But He knows bike secrets. He knows how to make the bike bend to take sharp corners. He knows how to jump to clear high rocks, and He even knows how to fly to shorten scary passages.

I'm learning to shut up and pedal in the strangest places, and I'm beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with my delightful constant companion, Jesus Christ. Then, when we suddenly encounter a new obstacle, when I grow weary, and when I'm sure I just can't do anymore, He smiles at me and says, "Pedal!"

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