

LIFE ASSURANCE MINISTRIES, INC

Proclamation!

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FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS

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

GREG TAYLOR

Imagine you have sincerely believed one way all your life, thought you were walking in truth, taught and modeled a lifestyle in accordance with your faith system, and been involved in leadership and ministry in accordance with that worldview. You have served as a pastor for nearly 20 years in that system. The system has been good to you. You have been well treated and have been honored to

serve a pastor a progressive, exciting, growing church of 500 members. You love the people you serve and have seen the attendance double and close to triple on some weekends during your 8.5 year tenure. Your people love you, too, and are solidly behind your leadership.

Then imagine that you sense a growing move of the Holy Spirit in your heart that something is missing. You are hungry for more of the passion of the early church. You long to see more truly lost people come to faith in Jesus. You desperately long to faithfully carry out the Great Commission to reach the world for Christ but realize that you are not fully carrying out that commission. You launch into a

season of deep prayer and soul searching. You tell the Lord you are willing to lay aside all preconceived ideas and seek His will no matter the cost. Then, after

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

travel and minister in areas of expertise in various places around the United States and in other countries. You are seen as successful in that system and honored for your contributions to new modes of ministry. You are happy where you are

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



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ON PAGE 12

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

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“Your bread and water will be sure”

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

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

Startled, I obeyed. “Thank you for this stupid tree, Lord; now please help it to stand up.”

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

I knew immediately what would happen; as I dropped my arms,

the tree stood tall and sturdy without even a wobble.

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

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

“It looks like we might have a tree after all,” Richard said softly.

We decorated the tree's supple boughs, and no more needles fell from it. Moreover, it never wobbled as we reached for the highest branches. Daily I refilled the water—and daily we and the boys thanked God for the tree.

The night of the party I gazed at the fragrant,

green, sparkling tree in awe. “It's a resurrection tree,” I thought; “it's a tree of life!”

I thought about our decision in recent months to leave the Adventist church, and I felt overwhelmed again by the fears this decision yielded: would we lose our friends? Would we lose our income? Would we lose our house? Would we be able to feed our family? What would happen to us? And then, as the glory of that miraculous tree filled my senses, words filled my head with the same force and clarity as that command to give thanks had filled me the week before: “Your bread and water will be sure.”

I cried as the reality impacted me: God had chosen to make a crooked, dead Christmas tree stand tall and drink as His message to us that we need not fear the unknown future. As long as we followed His leading, He could provide for us in unimaginable ways.

As we extricated ourselves from the church during the next 16 months, and as God has led us in new directions during the succeeding years, He has been faithful. He has always provided what we need, but rarely have we known how He would provide for us before we chose to say “Yes” to his leading. Following Jesus is a walk of faith. Through it all, that Christmas tree has sparkled in my memory, and the command for me to give thanks in all things still leads me to the promise that our bread and water will be sure.

In this issue

In this issue, Greg Taylor and Dale Ratzlaff tell their stories of leaving the church by faith in order to maintain integrity and be true to the gospel. Jeffrey Helsius shares the second part of his letter of resignation to the Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and we introduce Thomas Frances and his story of faith.

If you know God is calling you to follow Him out of the comfortable place you are in but you fear losing the life you know, remember Jesus' words: “So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:31-33, NIV)

—Colleen Tinker, editor

He has always provided what we need, but rarely have we known how He would provide for us before we chose to say “Yes” to his leading.

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Take the world but give me Jesus

THOMAS FRANCIS

If you don't mind, I would like to write this for a select few. Some will not know what I am writing about, but for those select few, maybe sharing something of my life will help.

I am one who loves the old hymns of the church. I think the reason I love them so much is that many are written from backgrounds of pain and suffering. When Luther wrote of "Dungeon, fire and sword," he wasn't looking for words to rhyme with his verse. His world really did include all of these things. Newton's "Amazing Grace" came from a background of serious sin and God's amazing grace. One of my favorite hymn writers was a lady by the name of Fanny Crosby. She lived for 95 years, and all but six weeks of her life were spent in total blindness. Yet despite this handicap caused by the incompetence of a doctor, she wrote more than 8,000 of the most personal and life-changing hymns ever written. One of Fanny's most repeated expressions went like this, "If I had a choice, I would still choose to be blind, for when I die, the first face I will ever see will be the face of my blessed Savior."

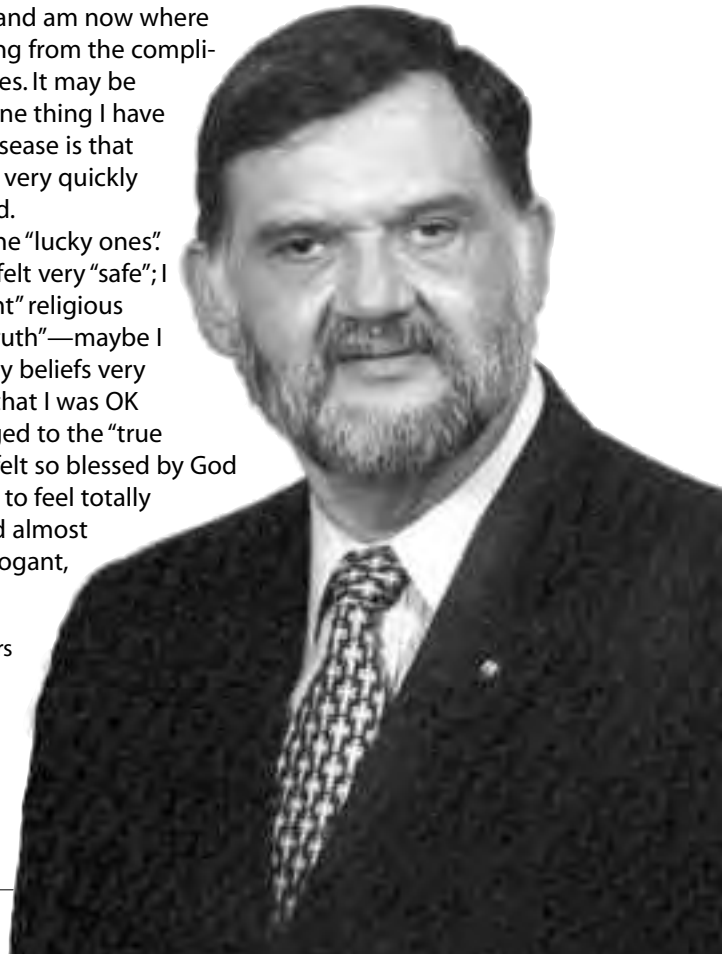
One of her hymns I love is "Take the World But Give Me Jesus." This song brings me to the select group of people to which I would like to speak. It is that group whose world has been "taken"—maybe

by death or divorce, by sickness, disability, betrayal of friends, or the recent news that your life will end in less than pleasant circumstances. You know who you are—the really hurting ones: the walking wounded, or maybe even the walking dead. You feel so alone. You feel so useless. You feel like God has really dealt you a "bad hand".

Maybe I am qualified to talk to you. You see, I have been and am now where you are. I am dying from the complications of diabetes. It may be some time, but one thing I have learned in this disease is that time can change very quickly from good to bad.

I was one of the "lucky ones." Most of my life I felt very "safe"; I knew all the "right" religious stuff. I had the "truth"—maybe I didn't practice my beliefs very well, but I knew that I was OK because I belonged to the "true church." In fact, I felt so blessed by God that I had begun to feel totally independent and almost untouchable. Arrogant,

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



you might say. But one thing I didn't know was the only thing that mattered. Jesus.

Then God "took the world" from me. Within a very short time after finding out that I had diabetes, I began to suffer complications. The disease went through me like a May wild fire through a Florida swamp. I would just get used to one thing, and another would hit. First, I lost parts of both feet. Then I began to go blind through diabetic retinopathy. Then I lost my kidneys. I have had more surgeries than I can remember. In one year, I was in the same surgical theater in Toledo, Ohio, eleven times. I have had gangrene and rampant infection that has caused tremendous pain and the loss of important bodily functions. Doctors have told me that they would try to keep me

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

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

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

I was so angry with God. I said some things that a creation should never say to his Creator. And in His divine grace, He didn't strike me with lightning. What He did was let me rant and rave until I realized that all the "right religious knowledge" and all the "law", all the "right church memberships" and "truth" didn't mean a thing. And I fell on my face, alone in the dark of the blind night, and cried out to Him. And I heard the sweetest thing anyone could ever hear. That soft, sweet, "I'm here." And I met the One and Only who can make all of the pain worthwhile.

Suddenly, I stopped thinking of I and ME and began to trust only in HIM. As Fanny Crosby said in her hymn, "Take the world but give me Jesus. In His cross, my trust shall be. Till with clearer, brighter vision, face to face My Lord I see."

You see, now I understand some things. First, God promised that all things would work for good to those who love Him. That meant ME. It isn't a matter of doing the "right things" or knowing the "right things"; it's all a matter of complete trust in Jesus and what HE did for me. If it took this pain and disability to find Him, then it is a small price to pay. After all, Jesus suffered more than I ever could—for me! Am I deserving of more than my Lord?

For now, my condition is "stable." But experience has taught me that there is much more ahead, unless my Father sees fit to take me gently home. Now, it is my ministry to show the world around me how to die a really horrible death—with Jesus. I have had such

great opportunity to share Him with others. Isn't that what we are all supposed to do? We are beggars who have found the bread of life and now tell others how they might find it, too.

This story isn't about me; it's all about Him. Are you hurting? Have you lost "the world"? Are you afraid? Alone? May I introduce you to my

friend? Put away all your "religious books" and take the Bible. Start with the book of John and look for Him. Ask His Spirit to show you the truth as it really is, not the way you have been taught it is, or think it is, or think it should be, but how it really is. Talk to Jesus. Tell Him that more than anything in the world you want HIM. You don't want to know about Him, you want HIM! Find the cross and wrap your arms around it. NEVER let any person or preacher or church or anything take your eyes from Jesus or add one single rule or doctrine to what HE gives you as a free gift! When it hurts, hang on. When you doubt, trust all the more! It doesn't have to feel good, and it doesn't have to make sense. Trust anyway. When "they" tell you that you are wrong or stupid, TRUST ANYWAY! Never, never, never let anyone take your Jesus away. Did I say NEVER? Not even for something that they tell you is good or important, or "God's will" for your life. Hang on to Jesus.

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

Come soon, Lord Jesus! Please!

Dear Conference President

Part 2

J E F F R E Y H E L S I U S

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

What if "They speak not according to the word or the testimony...?"

Six months after I began serving in my district, I came across a quote in my devotional reading that shook me to the core. It was a quote from the pen of Ellen G. White in a book called *Early Writings*, pages 260 to 261, in which she discusses those of her contemporaries who had declared the 1843/1844 time setting second advent message to be a "delusion". She

referred to them as those who had "hated those who loved His appearing and shut them out of the churches." Here is the crux of her teaching:



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

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

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

My thoughts turned to the Bible. A verse drifted from my memory:

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

Ellen White’s statement that prayers were not reaching Jesus because the prayers were being directed to the “apartment which Jesus has left,” was written in complete defiance of Romans 8:26-27, and demonstrated ignorance of this most basic Biblical theology on prayer!

Ellen White’s statement in effect declares that the 1843/44 Millerite time setting message was a salvation issue. Those who rejected it, she was saying, were no longer offering their prayers to the right apartment, and God, therefore, could not hear them. Such individuals, according to Mrs. White’s aforementioned statement, were in the process of being ensnared by Satan’s signs and lying wonders.

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

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

As I stood in my den devastated by her attack against the majority of Christians in her time who knew that the Millerite time setting was un-Biblical, (“no man knows the day or hour.” Matt. 24:36), I sought Jesus with all my heart because I knew He had called me to serve in this district. As I stood just talking to God and telling Him how much I wanted to know the truth, I was impressed to look up the word apology in the index to Ellen White’s writings. I thought, “Sure, she must have had to apologize in her ministry for things she said that were wrong!” With renewed optimism that my inner conflict was soon going to be resolved, I turned my attention to looking up the word “apology”.

I took two steps to my bookshelf and grabbed my index to Ellen’s writings. I turned in the pages to the word

apology. The few references listed discussed the importance of pastors not apologizing for their preaching, and there was also a reference to the book entitled *Apology* by Tertullian.

Following my highly motivated search of the index, I was left puzzled that in twenty-five million words she never addressed the subject of a Christian’s responsibility to apologize for his or her mistakes.

When it finally sank into my brain that the *Early Writings* statement I had just read did not speak “according to the word, or to the testimony,” I came to the forced conclusion that, as a pastor and as a Bible-believing Christian, I had a “Berean” responsibility to embark upon a more comprehensive study of Ellen White’s writings which we as a church had always referred to as “The Spirit of Prophecy”.

May I suggest that no Seventh-day Adventist should look comprehensively into the writings of Ellen White unless one is prepared to lay one’s life on the line for Jesus Christ and the truth of God’s Holy Word: the Bible. To know that serious problems exist in the writings of Ellen White calls into question her authenticity as the fulfillment of the spiritual gift of prophecy. This realization is a serious and heavy burden indeed!

Each person is responsible for his or her own journey. My journey led me, during the last three years, to read more of Ellen White’s writings than I ever had in my entire life. Because I had loved my church for so many years, and because I had believed it was the remnant church of Jesus Christ, the reality of some of her statements took a long time to sink in. Once the content of some of her assertions finally registered, I realized the implication that such statements had regarding God’s unchanging truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible! I came to the conclusion that Luther’s exasperation over indulgences was “little league” compared to what he would have found in some of the theology and plagiarism of Mrs. White’s writings.

If Seventh-day Adventists cannot and will not face the clear truth about the un-Biblical and anti-Biblical teachings that exist in the writings of Ellen G. White, then Seventh-day Adventists have become no different in God’s eyes than any person or denomination which allows or promotes lies. The end never justifies the means with God.

No amount of good theology, good results, or good fruit will ever be enough frosting to cover one lie or a trunk of lies. The Seventh-day Adventist who happily goes to camp meeting to get fed is not responsible for what he or she does not know. It is Seventh-day Adventist ministers and those in leadership, especially those at the E.G. White estate, that are going to be held responsible before God for whether or not they confronted un-truth, and whether or not they were willing to stand for truth!

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

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

Last year at camp meeting, I stayed up until 2 a.m. one Friday night reading *Spiritual Gifts*, which I had just bought at the Adventist Book Center. I would like to share what I came across in my reading that forced my conscience into the final ten-month battle over what my responsibility was as a Christian and as a pastor regarding the words that leaped off of the pages of those volumes.

Regarding the events surrounding the fall of Satan, E.G. White writes,

“Some of the angels sympathized with Satan in his rebellion, and others strongly contended for the honor and wisdom of God in giving authority to his Son. And there was contention with the angels. Satan and his affected ones, who were striving to reform the government of God, wished to look into his unsearchable wisdom to ascertain his purpose in exalting Jesus, and endowing him with such unlimited power and command. They rebelled against the authority of the Son of God, and all the angels were summoned to appear before the Father, to have their cases decided. And it was decided that Satan should be expelled from heaven, and that the angels, all who joined with Satan in the rebellion, should be turned out with him. Then there was war in heaven. Angels were engaged in the battle; Satan wished to conquer the Son of God, and those who were submissive to his will. But the good and true angels prevailed, and Satan, with his followers, was driven from heaven.” *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, page 18.

This quotation forces us to answer the following questions:

Does the Bible ever say that the rebellion in heaven came about as a result of God “exalting” and “endowing” Jesus with “authority” and “unlimited power and command”?

Answer: Absolutely not. The following text, many say, describes the fall of Satan:

“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart; ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the

stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.” Isaiah 14:12-15

What is Ellen White teaching about the Trinity if God the Father in Heaven “endows” and “exalts” Jesus with “authority” and with “unlimited power and command”?

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

Therefore, can we agree that such a postulation by Mrs. White deems the Father as superior to Christ? Such a

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

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

Does the Bible say that Satan attempted to “reform the government of God”?

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

her description imply that Satan and his followers might have had some good intentions when they started their rebellion? And isn't it implied that maybe God's government needed some reformation? Ellen leaves the door wide open for us to question who is giving her such words. Certainly this information is not from God. Maybe it is from another angel, or maybe it is from her own imagination.

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

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

Does the Bible say that the war in Heaven was fought specifically between Jesus & Satan? Does the Bible say that Satan specifically chose to go after those who were submissive to Jesus' will?

Answer: Absolutely not. The Bible makes no such distinction.

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

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

"When Satan became fully conscious that there was no possibility of his being brought again into favor with God, then his malice and hatred began to be manifest." *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pages 18-19.

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

Her statement sounds like the opening argument of an attorney defending Satan. Bear with me as I illustrate a summation of the unbelievable theology of Ellen G. White from the content of the quotations that you have just read.

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

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

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

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

The Bible never declares that Satan ever repented. For Ellen to say that he repented with tears is one of the most “spooky” assertions in her writings.

I will share with you only a few more incredible examples of her errant theology. Regarding the plan of salvation she writes,

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

“At first the angels could not rejoice, for their commander concealed nothing from them, but opened before them the plan of salvation. Jesus told them that he would stand between the wrath of his Father and guilty man, that he would bear iniquity and scorn, and but few would receive him as the Son of God.” *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pages 22-24.

The Bible declares the plan of salvation was put into place before creation. Read this text:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” *Ephesians 1: 1-6*. NKJV

Ellen describes the Father as having an incredibly bright light enshrouding Him, but Jesus does not. What do you suppose Ellen is stating theologically about Jesus and the Father?

Ellen describes the Father’s bright light enshrouding Jesus three times so that He could not be seen until he emerged the third time. It is reasonable to conclude from such a description that Ellen White is proposing that the Father is far superior to Jesus. In addition, Mrs. White

stated, “The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with his Father”. Anxiety is a product of sin. Ellen is proposing that a product of the sinful experience, anxiety, existed in the hearts of unfallen angels. This is not possible!!

Further, why would there be anxiety when the Trinity was together? This does not make any theological sense. Jesus told us that He and His Father were one. Recall these words from the Gospel of John,

“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him. Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.” *John 14: 7-11*. NKJV

Did Jesus ever need to get physically close to the Father before He could commune with Him? Scripture teaches us absolutely not. The idea that Jesus had to

For Mrs. White to say that Jesus was pleading with the Father over the plan of salvation is to deny that the Father and Jesus are one and sadly implies that Jesus loves mankind more than the Father does.

approach the bright light before He could have a conversation with the Father is absurd. Ellen White’s statement that, “He told them that he had been pleading with his Father,” is theologically incomprehensible, and more importantly, it is unbiblical heresy.

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

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

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

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

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

"He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." 1 Peter 1:20. NKJV

One of the curious observations one can make from reading Ellen White's first vision account is the mention of "Brn. Fitch and Stockman" in Heaven. Consider her description:

"We all went under the tree, and sat down to look at

One of the curious observations one can make from reading Ellen White's first vision account is the mention of "Brn. Fitch and Stockman" in Heaven.

the glory of the place when Brn. Fitch and Stockman, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping." *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, pages 34,35.

This visionary account came about not long after the 1844 disappointment. Let us ponder the following:

If the investigative judgment began on October 22, 1844, then according to Ellen's vision, God judged every person, spanning from the beginning of the world until Ellen White's time, practically at the speed of a twinkling of an eye; otherwise how could she have been shown Fitch and Stockman in Heaven? If God could judge that many people in a short enough time to know the outcome of "Brn. Fitch and Stockman", contemporaries of Ellen White, only a few months after the judgment began, then why are we still here 160 years later? Obviously, there is a "wrench" somewhere in Adventist eschatology....

"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God, and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Now 'if the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?' Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator." 1 Peter: 4:17-18. NKJV

"Love has been perfected among us in this that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world." 1 John 4:17. NKJV

Speaking of judgment, when God judged the world during Noah's time, who closed the door of the ark? God, or an angel?

"An angel is seen by the scoffing multitude descending from Heaven, clothed with brightness like the lighting. He closes that massive outer door, and then takes his course upward to Heaven again." *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, page 68.

What does the Bible say?

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

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

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

"But if there was one sin above another which called for the destruction of the race by the flood, it was the base crime of amalgamation of man and beast which defaced the image of God, and caused confusion everywhere." *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, page 64.

"Every species of animal which God had created were preserved in the ark. The confused species which God did not create, which were the result of amalgamation, were destroyed by the flood. Since the flood there has been amalgamation of man and beast, as may be seen in the almost endless varieties of species of animals, and in certain races of men." *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, page 75.

Bill, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to get the drift of what she is saying here, but I must tell you that my two eyes have seen an unpublished statement in the E.G. White vault at Andrews University which clearly states what she means when she is talking about "and in certain races of men". I know that Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi has seen it because he showed it to one of my classmates, and that classmate took me into the vault and showed it to me. In those days the vault was fairly accessible to theology students.

On this subject, Paul Harvey would have to say, "Well science has proven that the little lady was horribly wrong on this one!"

Aside from the genetic impossibility of her postulation, the more profound affect of her meaning remains hidden with those who hold the keys to the E.G. White vault; to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Former Seventh-day Adventist conference held in July



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

July 30-31 marked the dates of the first conference for former Adventist Pastors and church leaders leaving Adventism. They were misunderstood by their colleagues, misrepresented by their superiors, and often ostracized by family and friends. Few could get through their testimony without showing deep emotion.

Why would pastors leave the security of a good salary, valuable medical insurance and other benefits as well as the promise of retirement? The answer was

unanimous: to follow Christ and be free to proclaim the simple gospel of grace in Christ

All the speakers recounted going through very trying circumstances. They spoke of their personal struggle in sorting out truth from error, the loss of income, estrangement from friends and family. Some told the group that their marriages nearly fell apart because spouses did not understand. The end result, however, was seeing God make a way where there was no way. They spoke of new love for Christ, deeper trust in God and yes, marriages that had been transformed with new love and a deeper commitment than ever before. Nearly everyone spoke of the joy and freedom as the load of legalism was removed by God's grace. They all went through questioning and very trying times but saw that God was faithful. The end result was a deeper love for God and a renewed

desire to share the freedom of the good news of the simple gospel with those still in the bondage of historic Adventism.

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



In addition to their presentations, (L to R) Dirk Anderson, Dale Ratzlaff, and Kenneth Brantley participated in a question and answer session.

Gonzalez-Cantu.

"The Hispanic church is twenty years behind the Anglo church," Cantu says. The facts of E.G. White's plagiarism are just becoming known in the

Hispanic Adventist community, and Cantu is committed to exposing the truth and supporting those who decide to leave.

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

Mark Martin's sermons available online

Many of us received great insight from Mark Martin's books and tapes as we studied our ways out of Adventism. His website, www.sdaoutreach.org, offers books, tapes, Mark's sermons, and other information that continues to help searching Adventists find their way through the morass of confusion they feel as they begin to realize Adventism disagrees with the Bible.

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

Additionally, Mark offers an online devotional. To subscribe, enter your email address in the Grace Mail box at www.calvaryphx.com.

Your subscriber information will be kept strictly confidential.

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

Former Adventist Fellowship prayer chain

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

Pastor steps out in faith CONTINUED FROM FRONT

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

What would you do? Would you just stay where life is comfortable and predictable? Would you mask what you really believe and try subtly to change your system from the inside? Would you speak out and get fired? Would you bury the truths you have learned and go through the motions until you retire? Would you try to tell yourself that it is no big deal, every church has its dark side? Would you still require the distinctives of your new converts, causing them to break connections with family, friends, and jobs, while you yourself are not willing to step out in your faith?

This is our story. These are the questions we had to answer as we discovered the New Covenant. We had been pastoring a Seventh-day Adventist church in Asheville, North Carolina. The church was growing and contemporary. It had a heart for evangelism to the unchurched. The church members and staff were motivated and passionate to share their faith. Many people were coming to Christ. However, by far the majority of converts were either former or inactive Adventists. We were not really reaching the unchurched target we felt called to reach. We were grateful for every conversion but felt God had more in mind for us. The year was 1998. A growing sense of hunger for more began to develop in us and culminated in our discovery of the New Covenant principles of evangelism that the apostle Paul taught in Romans, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, and elsewhere. We also discovered the significance of Acts 15, the central message of Hebrews, and so much more.

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

Now we were faced with a true challenge to our personal faith. We knew that the first time someone heard

that we had serious issues with the Sabbatarian views of the Seventh-day Adventist church, we would be out of a job. Within Adventism there is little room for questioning certain core doctrines. Honest, open dialogue is not allowed, especially for those working for the church. We knew that there was no room for our beliefs within Adventism. We began to pray for wisdom and direction from the Lord regarding our next move.

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

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

We also faced the reality that we could at any time be out of a job. We had no idea where to turn. We had decided that raising our boys was a priority to us, so Paula was doing some writing on the side and some substitute teaching here and there for extra income, but she was not employed to any significant degree outside the home. I was the primary breadwinner. If my salary ended, we could easily lose our home and all we possessed. Our resolve to follow the Lord at the expense of employment was no flippant decision. We had no back-up plan. Our only motivation was to please God and to be people of integrity. We were confident of His leading to this point, and we knew that He would make a way. Where He leads, He provides.

Concurrently with our decision to be ready to leave our secure life, we had such joy coming from the discovery of the New Covenant. At the same time, we had fears associated with leaving. We had to process through all our fears associated with some of Ellen White’s writings about the Mark of the Beast and the end times. But once the

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

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

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

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

Clearly sensing this was the Lord's timing, I opened up the Scriptures and began to share with her the things we

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

That day I began to write down the process of study God had led us on, knowing that it was only a matter of

We did not know that we would not be given a full severance package. But we were to be launched on a faith journey that we will always be grateful for.

time until the news was out. I carefully wrote out a Letter to Family and Friends.* There was a sense of urgency that the Lord laid on me to get this completed. In the mean time, we were asked to share our study with some others at our prayer leader's home. It was not long before the word was starting to get out. I had been in dialogue with a couple of key leaders regarding my study process and shared with them the conclusions we had come to. I told our associate pastor and head elders in late July where we were in our search and of the growing awareness in the congregation. To make a long story short, we were asked to resign by the final week in July, 2001. It was that week that the Letter to Family and Friends was completed. God's timing is always right.

We felt led to leave as quietly as possible. We loved the church we had pastored for those years and felt it would not be wise to try to start a new church in the area at that time. We believed God wanted to use our story in His way without disturbing the ministry of the church there. So, with the exception of making our letter available, we left quietly and trusted that God would provide for us. We did not know at the time that we would be out of work for seven months. We did not know that we would not be given a full severance package. But we were to be launched on a faith journey that we will always be grateful for. During the months without work, God placed us in a prayer ministry that was incredible. We grew in our understanding of the power of prayer and the ways of the Spirit. One Sunday after visiting a local ministry a woman came up and introduced herself. She said, "You probably don't remember me, but I attended your church with a friend a few years ago. While you were speaking, I sensed

the Lord telling me to pray for you and your family. He told me, "This one will obey me." She then told us that the Lord would wake her up every morning to pray for us. This had been going on for the past two years. Sometimes God would wake her up at two or three in the morning with an urgency to pray for our family and God's calling on our lives! During the time we were struggling with this decision and felt so desperately alone, God had raised up a prayer warrior, someone we did not even know, to stand by our side and intercede for us. What an awesome God! We felt so humbled and amazed at God's love for us. He had laid us on the heart of one of his prayer warriors to pray us through the decisions we were being called to make. God is so faithful!

We attended several area churches during our interim season. We learned so much from each of the ministries. God is truly at work in His people. It was exciting to see how the Holy Spirit was moving in churches from a wide range of denominational backgrounds. He truly is not limited by the boxes we humans construct. In spite of the rejection we received from many we had once served, the joy of the Lord was truly our strength.

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

per week already. We are enjoying the ministry to unchurched people in the new area.

Has life been easy for us? Life is never easy if you are following God's call in your life. There will be spiritual battles to wage. But we are so blessed. God has more than provided for us. We are growing in our faith. We thank God daily for His work in our lives and for setting us free. We would not trade this experience for anything in the world. We are contacted regularly by SDAs in the process of similar study. Many of them are being led independently on the same path we were led. There is a true move of God taking place. God is revealing the truth of the New Covenant to hungry, honest, seeking hearts all over the world.

What about you? Has God entrusted you with truth that would set you and your friends and family free? Has he revealed to you the joy of the New Covenant? What are you doing about it? If He has truly entrusted you with the good news, don't bury the gift in the sand. Don't hide in the shadows for an easier time and place. Don't let the hungry, thirsty world around you die for lack of true bread and water. Trust God and step out where your light can shine and your gifts can multiply. God will take care of you. Where He leads He provides! **!**

*This letter is currently posted on www.formeradventist.com. I have since expanded it into book form adding more depth and scriptural detail. The book is now available at www.ratzlaff.com and www.oneflockministries.org.

Dear Conference President CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

do otherwise would ensure that any remaining confidence in her "gift" would immediately disintegrate.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a lot of skeletons in the closet, and I wonder how long will it be before a generation will arrive that has the courage of Daniel and his three friends.

I have touched on only a portion of what I could have discussed, and I have specifically addressed issues that I found in my own personal devotional study so that neither you nor others would be able to discount my letter as some material that was spliced together from what some refer to as "that horrible internet." Everything I have shared is easily accessed through either the Bible or through very familiar E. G. White books.

As I am a history buff, I would highly recommend a study of early Adventist history, specifically the Israel Dammon incident as reported in a local newspaper and written by the judge/editor of the paper at the time of the trial. I would also recommend an article on plagiarism found in the Healdsburg, California, newspaper written during Ellen White's lifetime.

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

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

Yours in the blessed hope of Christ's soon return! **!**

Standing for truth CONTINUED FROM BACK

and said, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!" (Daniel 3:24-26)

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

I had counseled with many informed SDA scholars, pastors, and conference officials, and none of them could show me from Scripture how to get from Daniel 8:14 to 1844. In fact, most of them in private confided that it was impossible.

My mind raced back to the Ellen White "tapes" recorded in my memory—and there were many good ones!

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

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

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

Then there were those other pesky EGW "tapes" that plagued our steps and haunted our thoughts. Would we be lost if we left the SDA church as Ellen White said? Had Satan somehow blinded our hearts and minds? Having started on the journey away from Adventism, would we end up rejecting every point of truth and become infidels? When these plaguing thoughts bubbled up from our memories which had been saturated with the writings of Ellen White, we would be driven back to Scripture where we found solace. The simple gospel of belief in

Christ in the book of John calmed us: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." John 5:24. The clear teaching of righteousness by faith in the books of Romans and Galatians became our solid foundation and assurance. I had memorized a number of chapters from Romans, and when the condemning "tapes" from Ellen White would run, I would change channels and flee back to the good news in Christ, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God." (Romans 5:1)

It was a very difficult decision for me to make that day in the Central California Conference office when I tendered my resignation. We had recently purchased five

...divine intervention often comes after we have made the commitment to follow our informed conscience and not before.

acres and built a nice home on it. We had scraped together everything we had and more besides to complete the project. Our payments were large, as those were the days of 12-18% interest. Both Carolyn and I were employed by the conference. We realized that if we resigned from the church, we could well lose our new home which we had worked so hard to obtain.

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

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

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

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

After we resigned we received a letter from the Conference office that had been written before my resig-

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

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

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

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

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

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

Help us update our mailing list

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

If you live in the USA and order books from Life Assurance Ministries Publishing (LAM Publishing, the for-profit corporation which sells books) and also wish to make a donation to Life

Assurance Ministries, Inc. (the non-profit, 501-C3 corporation which produces *Proclamation!*), we want to suggest that you make your donation by check to Life Assurance Ministries instead of including it with your credit card purchase from LAM Publishing. Of course, if you find it necessary for some reason to include the two together as a credit card transaction, we can accept that. It would, however, eliminate a significant amount of bookwork to separate the two sums. Those living outside the United States, however, may continue to make donations and purchases through LAM Publishing via credit card since international transactions work best by credit card.

Send mail to Life Assurance Ministries at P.O. Box 905, Redlands, CA, 92373, or email LifeAssurance@aol.com. For books contact dale@ratzlaf.com or visit the website, www.ratzlaf.com.

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Searching for truth

I have been searching for the Truth for a long time, and I have asked the Lord to show me. I know I have found it, with the help of the Lord, Mark Martin's tape on Seventh-day Adventism, and your books, Mr. Ratzlaff. I have been a member of the Adventist church for about a year, and it was the worst thing I could have ever done. I have been studying Adventist doctrine for a long time, and always it never sounded right. A part of me didn't like what they were teaching, but I couldn't put my finger on it. I know I have been brainwashed, and my feeling they were the one and only church was a major factor in my wife's and my divorce. I felt she was wrong in her Sunday worship, and I tried to show her the Adventists beliefs, but we just fought. Between Adventism and some other problems, we divorced. I see now where she was right. I now am attending a Sunday church and, like other former Adventists have said, it is such a relief to be with Christians who are Spirit filled. I always felt that the Adventists services were dull and not Spirit filled. Thank you for your time, and God Bless you.

Thank you

Just a note to say thank you for the ministry of LAM. We have been tremendously blessed by many aspects of it in our journey out of Adventism. Enclosed is a small donation toward the work that you are doing in helping to free people from the bondage of Adventism.

Of taxes and EGW

I want to thank you so much for your ministry. My wife Karen and I are sharing the Gospel of Jesus with our Adventist friends. With prayer and the Holy Spirit's moving we are now seeing some movement as our friends and family are asking the necessary questions. Even my parents, 74 and 70 years old, are seeing the Gospel. Yea, God!

I want to share with you an email note I sent to an Adventist friend of mine that is not seeing the problem with E.G. White. He is a CPA so I tried to use his language. Here it is:

You are a CPA. Let me ask you a CPA question.

I have someone giving me advice on taxes. Their advice contradicts the IRS tax codes. They claim to be an authority on all things taxes and even claim to speak for the IRS, even though their advice contradicts the tax codes. On occasion their advice is another tax code altogether. In fact, this person uses a tax code that the IRS does not use anymore and has not been used by the IRS in a long time. What is amazing is that this person has convinced a large number of people that they really do speak for the IRS even though they contradict the IRS tax codes. This group of people have set up schools teaching the contra-

dictory tax code and have set up small groups to discuss their own tax code.

Would you consider me a foolish citizen if I were to take the advice of this person and these people? Did I mention this person had to quit school in the third grade because of a major head injury? Please advice me. Should I stick with the IRS tax code or accept the word of this self-proclaimed expert?

I hope you enjoyed this analogy.

Ratzlaff responds to a long letter

The author of the following letter wanted us to print it. Because her questions and observations (bold type) undoubtedly reflect many Adventist's understandings, we have decided to print it with Dale Ratzlaff's responses inserted after her questions. We understand that the tone of this letter is strong, but it reflects her feelings and most likely those of many others as well.—Editor

Another issue arrived. They always upset me because I can't understand your logic and misdirection. A letter to the editor a year and a half ago (Vol. 3, Issue 4, July/August 2002, page 17) has stayed with me. After much thought and procrastination I'm going to respond to it. I would be very surprised if it shows in print in your magazine. Here we go.

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

Your response to question #5 (The question reads: Do you hold services on Sunday in order to keep Sunday holy?) "No. We hold services on Sunday as a voluntary celebration of the resurrection of Christ."

You VOLUNTARILY made this choice? You VOLUNTARILY made this choice???? You VOLUNTARILY DECIDED TO CALL GOD A TOMATO???? HOW DARE YOU OFFER SO LITTLE RESPECT AND HONOR TO YOUR CREATOR AND HIS SAVIOUR SON!

Let me get my blood pressure back under control and take this a step at a time. We are exactly 33 verses into the Bible when the Biblical Sabbath is established. And don't give any reader grief over the terminology "Biblical Sabbath." From your background as a former Adventist you know exactly what that means. You also know that Jesus kept the Biblical Sabbath while He lived His life here on earth.

Please read John 5:16-18 "For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was *breaking the Sabbath*, but also was calling God His own Father, making

Himself equal with God." John 5:16-18. It is clear from this passage that Jesus broke the Sabbath, at least according to John, the man who knew Jesus best! This indicates that Jesus considered the Sabbath to be a ritual law, not a moral law.

If you recognize Jesus as the Son of God; if you recognize Him as your Personal Savior; you will look to Him as your Example.

Jesus ate lamb and fish and drank wine. Jesus wore tassels on his robe. Jesus kept the Passover and observed the Feast of Lights. If you are going to use the example of Jesus, then it would be right for us to observe all of the above. Is that how you want us to live, Anita?

You already know that Jesus kept the Ten Commandments and expected His followers to do the same. Stop right here, you Bible student, and read Luke 4:15, 16 and 31. Did He keep the Law He established when this new planet was only 7 days old? Did it matter to Him what day was kept? Yes.

Anita, I am not sure you have a text to show that there was a law established when the planet was only seven days old. Could this be an Adventist assumption?

I've always enjoyed the manna story in Exodus 16. Stop right here, Bible student, and read that entire chapter. Come on, do it! It's only 36 verses and an easy read.

Okay, now, four chapters later, Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments are given. Unless you study from a Catholic Bible, you will find the Fourth Commandment is about REMEMBERING to keep the Sabbath.

Anita, I would also encourage you to read these verses very carefully. These verses state that the Sabbath commandment was made between God and Israel only. No Gentiles were included in this commandment. Have you read Galatians 3 where Paul states in three separate ways that the law came in 430 after Abraham and lasted until Christ, and Christians are no longer under law? Have you read these verses?

They've already been keeping it from Creation Week!

Anita, it is only Ellen White that states the patriarchs kept the Sabbath. There is no mention in the Bible of anyone keeping the Sabbath until the time of Moses. Could it be that you are basing your understanding on the writings of Ellen White and not the Bible?

It's a hefty part of the whole: it takes 4 verses to cover it all; it reminds us of Who made it and why He made it. Is it important? Yes. Is it specific? Yes. Did God change it to

Sunday? No.

We do not believe God changed the Sabbath to Sunday.

When Jesus was finishing His ministry, he warned the people that Jerusalem would be destroyed. This happened 40 years later in 70 A.D. He told them to pray that their flight from the doomed city would not be in winter or on the Sabbath. (Matt. 24:20) Jesus expected them to know the Sabbath. He didn't say, "Now, remember, I'm changing the Sabbath when I die. It'll be on Tuesday, or Wednesday, or Sunday, or on whatever day you VOLUNTARILY DECIDE TO KEEP!!!"

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

How POMPUS you are!! And don't bother to tell me I'm wrong about the Sabbath issue. You already know who made the change here on earth; and it was not God's directive.

Anita, are you aware that the Christians started observing the Lord's Day long before there was a Pope or a Catholic Church?

You know very well it was the sacrificial system that ended that day when Jesus died on the cross. God Himself rent the temple veil from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51) and that lucky lamb fled from the knife in the priest's hand. No more animal sacrifices—never again!! Jesus was/is the Lamb—in our place. He paid our price. The "Laws" nailed to the cross were all those ceremonial rituals and rules that led to the slaughter of an innocent being/Being. Not the Ten Commandments. If you disagree with above sentences in this paragraph, does that mean you are still sacrificing animals in your backyard??

He tells you in the very next verse (just like he was expecting you to ask, "What Law?") verse 11, "...Do not commit adultery...Do not kill..." Do those sound familiar? Haven't we heard those rules before somewhere? You mean we are still expected to keep them? All 10 of them? Yes.

No! James 2 mentions two laws: (1) There is the "Royal Law" or new covenant law of Christ which says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Then (2) there is the 10 Commandment law. If you want to be judged by the 10 Commandment then you must keep all the commandments. However, James is encouraging his readers to be judged by "the law of liberty". Otherwise, if one wants to be judged by the old covenant law, judgment will be merciless.

You would never go out and kill your mother, rob that DVD player from your neighbor, swear profusely taking the Lord's name in vain or lie to the IRS(!), etc... You know those things are WRONG! Don't you? Why are they wrong? Are they against the law, or something? Yes, they are against the Law that God wrote in flames on stone tablets, and Jesus did not change them in either His life or His death.

The moral principles of the new covenant are so much higher than the morality expressed in the 10 Commandments that Jesus could contrast the two. Read Matthew 5.

Any former Adventist who is intellectually honest with himself in his heart knows the truth about the Biblical Sabbath.

Anita, whether you know it or not, there are hundreds of pastors leaving the SDA church, and

I would agree with most of what you say above. And I would carry it even further. Jesus fulfilled the whole law. Jesus is the light, he is the lamb, he is the bread of life, he is the water of life, etc. Yes, he is the true rest which the old covenant Sabbath prefigured. (See Heb. 4, Matt. 11:28-30 and Sabbath in Christ, p. 279-292)

Okay, I've come all this way through my discourse avoiding the word you hate so much. But, it finally comes into play now. That word is Obedience. If I don't have to obey the Law, then why did Jesus die at all? He took that Obedience thing to an outrageous level, "...he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phi. 2:8) He agreed to do what His Father willed, fulfilling the Law on our behalf so we can be partakers with Him (Them) in paradise!

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

Cain's disobedience was an absolute insult, flying in the face of God's commands. How about that phrase, "You can't get blood from a turnip"? Fitting here, don't you think?

I'm going to leave you with another text that shows how important those commandments are. You've read the passage many times: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (Matt. 5:17,1) That was from that old, boring King James version.

Anita, I have written a whole chapter on this verse. See *Sabbath in Christ*, p. 265-278. I encourage you to do your own study on this verse. The interpretation of this chapter hinges on the definition of two key words: law and fulfill. Get a concordance, or use a computer Bible program, and look up every time Matthew uses these words. First, define how Matthew uses the term, "law". Then plug this definition back into Matt. 5:17,18 and see if it makes sense. Then look up all the passages where Matthew uses the word "fulfill." I would be interested to know what your conclusion would be. Let me know.

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

Please read the chapter in *Sabbath in Christ*, "Righteousness Beyond the Law." There you will see that former Adventists do believe in obedience, but that obedience does not qualify us for salvation and is not a "law based" obedience; rather, it is the obedience of Christ that is a natural obedience that springs from the Spirit-filled life in a joyous response to God's gracious act in

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

Anita, true, the sacrificial system did come to an end at the death of Christ. Also coming to an end was the reign of law. Please note that the words of the 10 Commandment law are the very words of the old, or first covenant. (See *Sabbath in Christ*, p. 46-52.) This law is expanded and applied to the life and times of Israel in the other laws. The old covenant was one law, not two or three. The old covenant was comprised of some 613 commandments, all given by God to Israel. Behind these laws were many eternal moral principles. However, the administration of law came to an end at the cross. Read Heb. 8,9; 2 Corinthians 3; and Gal. 3-5, and this fact will become clear.

I understand that the book of James was written many years after Jesus was crucified. You know that James says in James 2:10, if you keep the law but offend in one part, you are guilty of breaking the whole law. You ask, "What Law?"

thousands of members are also leaving. Most of these former Adventists have reached the same conclusion based upon their personal Bible study.

This former Adventist should also know a counterfeit when he sees it. That's why Sunday-keeping and tomatoes are alike. Both take the focus away from the real thing.

Anita, I know of no former Adventist who teaches that Sunday is now the Sabbath.

The sacrificial system that was set in place represented God's own Son. God's only Son. The Lamb of God. So innocent, yet willing to go through this test to save you and me. His life for our life. His blood instead of ours. And Cain desecrates the symbolism with vegetables and fruits and grains. He CHOSE to "honor" the Lord from the fruits of his own hands, drawing glory to himself, rather than looking to the Messiah Who was to come. "...without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb. 9:22 Well, I don't know about you, but I want forgiveness for my sins.

accounting us righteous while we were helpless, ungodly sinners and enemies of God!

Oh, one other thing...I DARE you to print this in your magazine. You'll come up with some excuse like we take only so many words limit, or the length of time responding to the original letter is too long or something. I'm pretty sure you'll answer my e-mail article (this little essay) with an e-mail reply, but I'm still daring you to print it.

We printed your letter, not because of your dare, but because there may be other readers who feel the same way you do, and it is our prayer that our short answers will lead you and others to continue to study and follow the leading of God's Spirit. I will send you a free *Sabbath in Christ* book if you are brave enough to read it! Let me know.

Refreshing Reading

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

The material in Stephen Pitcher's article is very informative; however, I don't quite agree with the idea that Figuhr and the members of the select committee tried to con Barnhouse and Martin. These men were sincere and honest Christian gentlemen who desired to bring Adventism more in line with teachings of the Bible. It was the following GC president, the editor of the *Adventist Review*, and a director of the Adventist seminary that began the process to return Adventism to its cultic roots. It has been a long, drawn-out process with the final nails to the Evangelical Adventist coffin being driven in by Knight's annotations in Questions on Doctrine and by Paulsen's remarks.

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

An "Invalid Christian"

I am not (and never was) an Adventist. I am a Christian. I got interested in the Adventist church because I have friends and family members who are involved in it. Around ten years ago I was provoked to look into Adventism after a friend gave me a book by Ellen White that made me feel inferior. The book said that if you loved God, you would obey the commandments of the Old Testament, and not to do so meant that you didn't truly love Him. Obeying the Sabbath com-

mandment, more than anything, was key to being right with God. I was just coming back from a long backslide and was beginning to understand my salvation in a deeper way. I was full of joy until I read this book by Ellen White. It made me feel like an invalid Christian. If I had not been raised by evangelicals who stressed unmerited salvation, I could have easily been trapped into thinking that there was something I needed to do to "help" myself be saved.

Over the years since then I have read and studied writings by Adventists, ex-Adventists, and Ellen White. I have learned a lot about Christianity—what it is and what it isn't. I appre-

...we see the gospel slowly giving up to "Amazing Facts", Maxwell, and Arianism. It would be a truly lonely world without your magazine.

ciate the scholarship of Adventists and what that dedication to learning brings when an Adventist breaks free from legalism. I have been blessed by ex-Adventists' testimonies and the excellent teaching of ex-Adventist pastors. I thank God for your work and pray for the Adventist church to come out of its own "Babylon"! I am praying for my Adventist relatives, too. As yet, they have never admitted to having any questions or discomfort about Adventist doctrines. On the contrary, they always make their church look super good, hoping to draw my husband and me into it. I have held back from sending them ex-Adventist literature because they have never expressed anything but complete dedication to Adventism. I'm afraid that at this point they would just toss the things I sent away. I'm sure their church warns them about "heretical" publications. I do believe most of my Adventist relatives are saved—they just need to know it! Pray for me in whatever way God would use me.

Pray for my husband

Please pray for my husband, that the veil will be lifted and he will see the truth. He joined the Adventists church about a year ago with his brother's encouragement. Now he is a true believer; he says no one can change him...

I enjoy the very informative *Proclamation!* and leave it around for him to read. The Adventist church told him it was a radical paper and not to believe anything that is written in it. He was taught to be closed minded (or brain washed) by

the Adventist church. I pray very hard that he will get out of it.

An Evangelical Adventist

Thank you for sending me a copy of your book *Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*. I am a third generation Adventist, and have long been bothered by some of the things that you discuss. I have read Dr. Desmond Ford's books and articles and have attended his seminars, have read *The End of Historicism* by Kai Arasola, and have attended a number of seminars by Charles Wheeling. I also am a member of the San Diego Adventist Forum and have listened to Raymond

Cottrell. According to your book, I am an "Evangelical Adventist." I am still a member of the church but don't believe in the investigative judgment, the sanctuary doctrine, and a number of other 27 Fundamentals. The year 1844 has no particular significance; E.G. White wrote (or copied) some good books but has no authority to tell me how to live my life, and I no longer send my tithe to the church. Instead, I send it directly to a mission hospital in Ghana that I visited two years ago while on a mission trip with a non-Adventist group.

I write the above just to let you know that there are others that see things the way you do, and I am sure that there are more of "us" than people realize.

Lonely world

I was the pastor of the _____ church until my evangelical roots were exposed. I was fired, re-hired, and retired and now listed as a "former light."

We have a loose network of Evangelical Adventists here [in a western state], but we see the gospel slowly giving up to "Amazing Facts", Maxwell, and Arianism,

It would be a truly lonely world without your magazine.

NOTE: LETTERS MAY BE EDITED FOR CLARITY OR SPACE

Mail letters and donations to:

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Standing for truth

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

This conversation was soon forgotten by all but the businessman who had made the statement of loyalty. Many years later, the same man was in conversation with

...divine intervention often comes after we have made the commitment to follow our informed conscience and not before.

the woman who had challenged him to live, not merely die, for Christ. He recalled this event stating that it caused him to make a deeper commitment to live for Christ in the here and now and not worry about dying for Him at some future time. This man dedicated his life to serve Christ in business and in the church no matter where he was. He now serves as an associate pastor in a healthy church in Maui.

Standing for truth in the here-and-now is not always an easy thing. Sure, when we are in the company of other Christians we can do it quite easily. But following our informed conscience when from all appearances it may cause

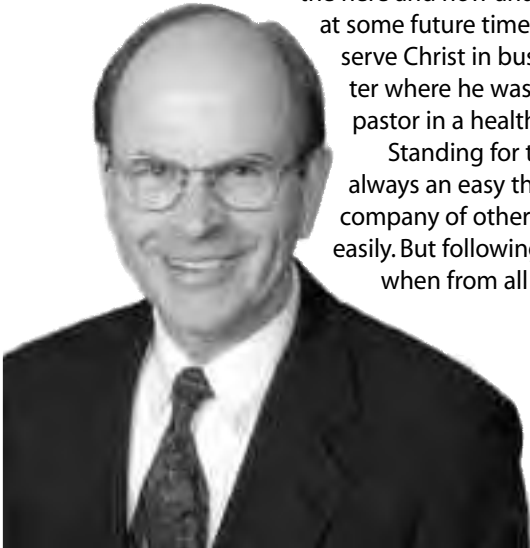
us to lose our friends, our income, our retirement, our reputation, and perhaps even our home or car is not easy. Yet, if we are to take discipleship seriously, when we clearly know the will of God, we must align ourselves with it.

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

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

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



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

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

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

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