

Summer 2009: Tour of encouragement

DALE AND CAROLYN RATZLAFF

LifeAssuranceMinistries.org

# Proclamation!

FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS  
INQUIRING ADVENTISTS  
SABBATARIANS  
CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

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VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1

## Is this Word clear?

STEVE PITCHER

## Amazed by the Bible

BERIT FISCHER

## Did Ellen White change as she aged?

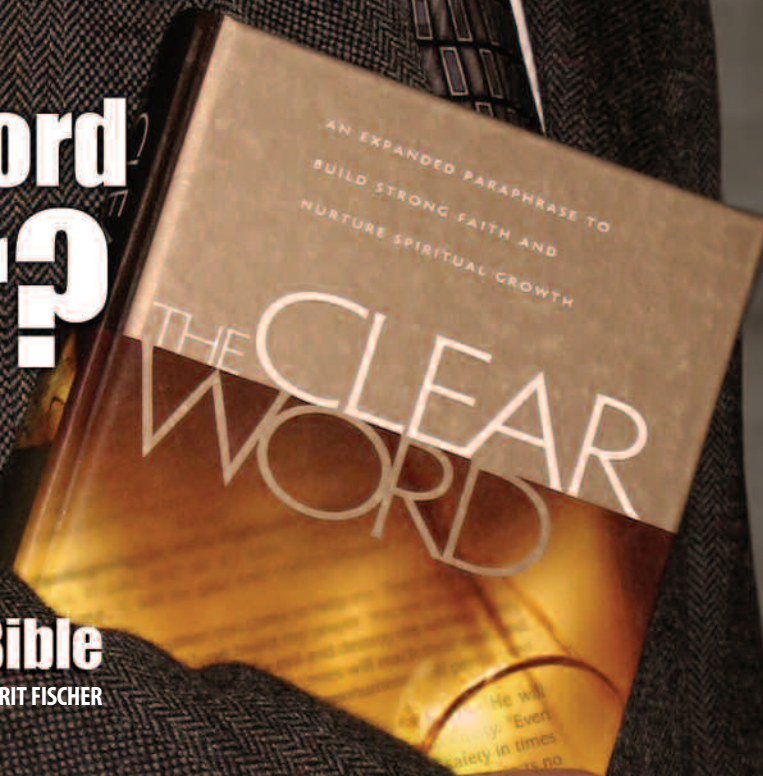
COLLEEN TINKER

## How I discovered the truth about Adventism

ADRIAN BURY

## Investing for eternity

ELIZABETH INRIG





## Putting God's truth into **my mind** COLLEEN TINKER

**T**he moment is vividly imprinted on my memory: I was sitting in a psychologist's office about three-and-a-half years ago with a young woman who was in treatment for a serious eating disorder. The counselor had requested that she bring me with her to a session because I was a spiritual mentor to her, but my role that day was primarily that of observer.

Within the first few minutes the psychologist looked at his client and asked, "So, how's your Scripture memorizing going?"

Startled to hear that question from a counselor, I looked from him to the girl and back again. She looked down, and he said words to her that changed my life: "Truth is not in your head; it is in

the word of God. If you are not ready to put the truth of God's word into your head, you are not ready to get well." Then he assigned her three chapters from Romans and two from Psalms.

I remember driving home that day deeply convicted. For a year or so I had been avoiding an intensifying nudge to memorize Scripture. Elizabeth Inrig, our women's Bible study leader, often challenged us and gave us weekly verses to learn. I had never made a point, however, to really learn those verses in a serious way. My brain was too old, I rationalized; I would have to be content simply to study, not to memorize.

I knew that day, however, that God was asking me to memorize. I couldn't imagine why—I was already studying consistently—but I knew I could no longer ignore my conviction. The next morning I began Romans 8.

Since that day I have nibbled, one verse at a time, at long passages from the Bible, and as I have struggled to revive my memorizing skills by focusing on details like prepositions and grammatical patterns, I have learned why God didn't let me ignore His nudge. Truth, as that psychologist said, is in Scripture. Reality becomes more and more clear as I methodically internalize the word of God.

I cannot explain adequately how Scripture has changed me, but I can say this: no other book has ever had this effect on me. God literally reveals Himself to me as I ponder each individual word

He inspired. There is no lingering doubt in my mind as to the reliability of this Book.

Truth and error are more distinct. God's faithfulness, mercy, and justice are real. The fact of God as my true Father has become tangible, and the all-powerful, all-sufficient, eternally-mediating Jesus fills my heart with awe and gratitude. The ever-present, personally-guarding and teaching Holy Spirit disciplines, convicts, and comforts me. The Triune God reveals Himself through His word, and without the truth of that word in my own head, I could not know Him as deeply.

As I have learned to know our Triune God through His own word, I am profoundly disturbed by perversions of the text many groups have created to support their own doctrines. Included in this group of perverted Scriptures is *The Clear Word*, a paraphrase written by Jack Blanco but whose copyright is owned by the Adventist Review and Herald Publishing Association.

To imply that Ellen White's ideas and unique Adventist doctrines are expressed in God's words is to deceive those who don't know what the Bible really says, and I am horrified by this transgression against the unsuspecting. I am offended by this perversion of God's own word—the word He gave us so we could be washed clean and made new.

In this issue Steve Pitcher takes a close look at some of the problems in *The Clear Word*. Jeremy Graham and I examine a sampling of Ellen White's later works that show she never had a clear biblical understanding of salvation. Adrian Bury tells his story of discovering Adventism, and Berit Fischer shares how she came to faith in Jesus. Finally, Elizabeth Inrig challenges us to live for eternity as we face a new year.

We pray the Holy Spirit will reveal the truth of Jesus and the power of His word as you read this issue. "For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Peter 1:4). †

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## Proclamation!

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## Why make an issue of *The Clear Word*?

**Q. Mr. Ratzlaff, why do you folks make such an issue of *The Clear Word* when so many other Bibles are printed with the author's remarks and interpretation? It seems you are just picking on Adventists when they do what evangelicals do.**

**A.** This is a good question and one which we often get. I believe there is a HUGE difference between most study Bibles and *The Clear Word*. The study Bibles I am familiar with do not seek to change the TEXT of the Bible itself, but simply give the author's interpretive remarks in the footnotes. Evangelicals seek to make the original meaning as clear as possible.

My copy, which I purchased some years ago, titles this work as *The Clear Word Bible*. It is now titled *The Clear Word*. My copy has a jacket on it with the following statements which are very similar to the current advertisements for *The Clear Word*:

For everyone who hungers for a clearer understanding of God's Word and a richer devotional life....Imagine how much more you would get out of the Bible if the meaning of every passage was crystal clear...*The Clear Word Bible* lets the power of ancient texts come through today...The result of this careful paraphrasing is that you find not only more understanding in reading the Bible, you find more joy. As the meaning of Scripture becomes more transparent...every text is phrased to make its original meaning as plain as possible to a modern reader.

Here is the current advertising copy for *The Easy English Clear Word*:

At Last God Speaks Your Language. What better way to get acquainted with the English language than to study the world's greatest book—the Book upon which the culture was founded. This fresh, slightly condensed paraphrase of the Bible conveys the ideas of each Bible verse in the most basic terms. There are no strange idioms, archaic jargon, or big words for scholars. Just pure, simple English to make God's message plain to those who are not native speakers of the language.<sup>1</sup>

It seems to me that anyone reading the above quotes would conclude that *The Clear Word* was indeed, a “careful paraphrase”, designed to make its “original meaning as plain as possible”, and its message is “God speaking our language” and that it makes

“God's message plain to those who are not native speakers in simple English.”

As I have studied *The Clear Word* and read what others have found, my conclusion is that *The Clear Word* is the most corrupt and twisted “Bible” ever printed by a so-called Christian organization. *The Clear Word* often puts into the actual text the teachings of Ellen White and the SDA church. In other words, it seems to me that *The Clear Word* is designed to deceive the read-

**...it seems to me that *The Clear Word* is designed to deceive the reader into thinking this is an accurate rendering of God's word in modern English when actually it is a subtle attempt to make the unbiblical teachings of Adventism appear biblical. I can see no other reason for its existence.**

er into thinking this is an accurate rendering of God's word in modern English when actually it is a subtle attempt to make the unbiblical teachings of Adventism appear biblical. I can see no other reason for its existence.

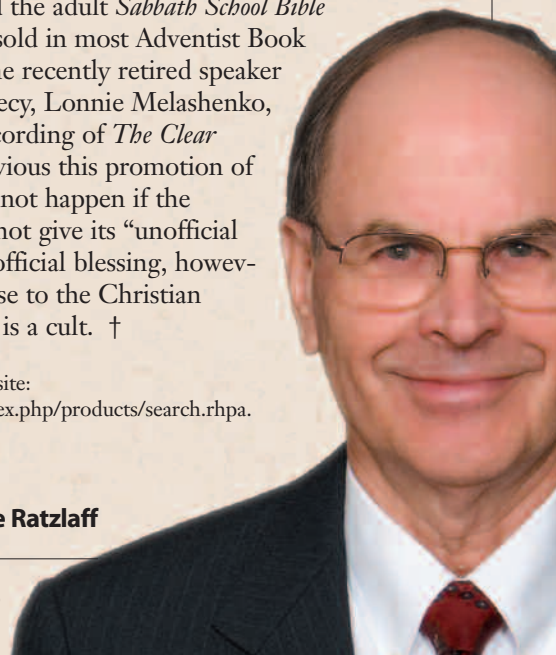
The “official position” of the Adventist church on *The Clear Word* is that the church has nothing to do with the paraphrase. However, consider the following: according to the Seventh-day Adventist Review and Herald Publishing Association website, *The Clear Word* is known as “the beloved paraphrase”. It now comes in some 17 versions or bindings; it is promoted in Adventist journals and the adult *Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, and it is sold in most Adventist Book Centers. Moreover, the recently retired speaker of the Voice of Prophecy, Lonnie Melashenko, has made an audio recording of *The Clear Word*. It should be obvious this promotion of the paraphrase would not happen if the Adventist church did not give its “unofficial blessing”. To give its official blessing, however, would clearly expose to the Christian world that Adventism is a cult. †

1. Review and Herald web site:  
<http://www.rhpa.org/index.php/products/search.rhpa>.



More answers can be found in Dale Ratzlaff's four books available on the web at [LifeAssuranceMinistries.com](http://LifeAssuranceMinistries.com) or by phoning (800) 355-7073.

Dale Ratzlaff



# Amazed

## by the Bible

BERIT FISCHER



I was baptized in 1992 and spent eight years as a student and co-worker at different schools connected to the church.

Nearly three years ago I got a letter from a person I regard highly. It challenged me because it went against what I had learned as an Adventist about the letter to the Galatians. I was encouraged to study Galatians thoroughly, and this study has changed my Christian experience! I have come to the cross and understood more of what Jesus really has done for me.

### Studying Galatians

The study of Galatians led me further to study the issue of the covenants, something about which I knew little. With the aid of the Bible, a concordance, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised would lead us to the whole truth, I slowly began to understand. I have looked up about 150 Bible texts that have to do with this topic. I have read a great part of the New Testament over again. Books and chapters like Galatians, Romans, Hebrews, 2 Corinthians 3, Ephesians 2, and Colossians 2 have taught me new things.

Adventism teaches that Jesus abolished the “ceremonial laws” but says the Ten Commandments are still binding for Christians. The New Testament is clear that the old covenant is gone. The law was a separating wall between the Jews and the gentiles, and Jesus came to tear this wall down (Eph. 2: 11-22). The law was the tutor that should lead people to Christ, but, as Galatians 3 says, because Jesus has come, we are no longer under a tutor. To continue focusing upon the law means that we have not found Christ and accepted His sacrifice for us. This fact is so vital to understand!

When I began to read about the covenants, I came to see that the Ten Commandments are inseparable from the law and the old covenant. The Bible told me that the Ten Commandments were a part of the whole law to which Jesus came to make an end. I was totally shocked! To claim that the

# I'd like to share what has made me revise my understanding of the Bible and, therefore, also to change my position towards Adventism. I want to make it clear that I do not want to attack the Seventh-day Adventist church. This account gives my personal experience, and I encourage each one to do his or her own study of Galatians.

expression “the law” means the Ten Commandments, I learned, was not correct because the Decalogue only represents a part of the law and is never called “the law” by itself. The expression “Ten Commandments”, however, is used three times in the Old Testament (Ex. 34:28, Deut. 4:12,13, and Deut. 10.4,5) and there it is described as the covenant! The Ten Commandments are referred to as the covenant between God and Israel, and the Sabbath was the sign of this covenant (Ex. 31:16-18). If, as Hebrews 8 explains, the old covenant is gone, then the content and the sign of the covenant also must be gone, I reasoned.

## **Adventists “distinctives” are old covenant**

It cannot be, I thought; the Decalogue is not our “law”? How does God then make people understand what is right and wrong? And most importantly, the Sabbath is a part of the commandments, and it surely is still valid since a Sunday law is to come! How can this be?

I prayed to God that he would teach me with His Spirit, and I was just amazed as God revealed His grace and power to me through His word. I found a key to understanding in Jesus’ introduction of the new covenant (the Lord’s Supper, see Jn. 13) to His disciples. As the Decalogue was linked to the old covenant, Jesus now linked a new commandment to the new covenant: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (Jn. 13:34). By this Jesus gave His followers a higher standard than the law.

## **Sabbath and the New Testament**

I still wanted to prove from the New Testament that the Sabbath requirement is valid. After all, I had been to two Bible schools and knew all the “proof-texts”. When I opened the concordance, however, I was surprised by how few texts there are in the New Testament about the Sabbath. After reading most of the letters and the Gospels, I had new questions:

- Why is the fourth commandment itself not repeated even once in the New Testament?
- Why is it that nowhere in the New Testament is Sabbath-breaking condemned as sin?
- If Sabbath-keeping is so important for a follower of Jesus, why did Jesus not mention it in his Sermon on the Mount or in any of his teachings?
- Why did not Jesus, the apostles, or Paul command Sabbath keeping?
- Why is the Sabbath not mentioned in Revelation if the Sabbath will have such significance in the end time?

Acts 15 was interesting. After a dispute among the first Christians concerning the gospel and the law, the apostles came to a conclusion about what they were to teach the gentiles. “For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.” (Acts 15:28-29) Sabbath-keeping, tithing, and unclean foods were obviously not considered as requirements any longer!

Furthermore, Jesus did not command the Sabbath. He said He was the Lord over the Sabbath and that we are to come to him and find rest (Mat. 11: 28). Neither did Paul instruct the gentiles and the new churches about the Sabbath nor condemn Sabbath-breaking, but he “esteemed all days alike” (Rom. 14:5). Paul expressed concern for the Christians who still were observing days, months, seasons, and years (Galatians 4.10) and warned them of legalism. Like Paul, I have come to understand that all days are alike when it comes to worshipping God.

I have come to see that the Sabbath was a picture of Jesus. The Sabbath was fulfilled in Jesus, and in Him I may find rest 24 hours a day, all week long! Jesus is our Sabbath-rest according to Hebrews 3 and 4. In the end of this world’s history I believe the focus is to be upon a person, Jesus the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

# Is this word Clear?

STEPHEN PITCHER



From top to bottom:

1. *The Clear Word*, pocket black bonded leather; Copyright 2004 by Jack J. Blanco
2. *Savior, Four Gospels One Story*; Copyright 2008 Review and Herald Publishing Association, published by Autumn House Publishing, a division of Review and Herald Publishing Association
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## Cults and the Christian

I became a Christian at the age of 17. After reading the book of Mark I discovered a person named Jesus who brought me into a vibrant experience with the one true God. I didn't know much about Christian doctrine. Within two months of my conversion, however, I encountered, for the first time in my life, a number of religious people who seemed interested in me and expressed concern that I was not aware of what they considered to be numerous problems associated with orthodox Christian doctrine.

These people spent two years "helping" me understand doctrines correctly, and in the process, they turned me into a spiritual pretzel. Having grown up with no religious influence and being spiritually naive, I was not alarmed by the five groups that initially made contact with me during those first two months of my life as a Christian. After all, they each had writings that were going to help me understand God correctly. Some of these people even referred to their writings as Scripture and indicated that God still delivers truth through modern prophets.

After two years, I learned the awful truth.

Not one of these groups believed that historical Christianity was correct. They taught me to disbelieve everything I had been taught, even to the point of doubting my very real encounter with Jesus.

When I learned from the Bible that there actually existed "another Jesus, another spirit and another gospel"<sup>2</sup> used by Satan as a tool to deceive the very elect, if that were possible, I began a study that has, in different forms, lasted for 35 years. This study has shown me that God's word revealed in the Bible is the only infallible, objective source of truth in this world.

I learned to "check all things, and hold fast to that which is good."<sup>3</sup> This checking included reading the "scriptures" of every religious group that crossed my path. In the process I learned that there was one man whose research in this area I could trust—Walter Martin—the cult expert. As I checked out many groups' claims, I discovered that Martin was accurate in his conclusions regarding every group that I encountered. The one thing I forgot in this process, however, was that Martin was a fallible human being, and putting my trust in his research became the source of an almost fatal spiritual flaw.

Martin had been misled by the Seventh-day Adventists. He was told that the doctrines peculiar to the Adventist church were misunderstood.<sup>4</sup> The Adventists he interviewed were now using language that had hitherto been mostly absent from Adventism, language that was familiar and comfortable to Martin and other evangelicals. They claimed to hold solely to the Bible as their source of doctrine and over the period of many meetings were able to demonstrate to Martin that they were not the cultic organization that many believed them to be.

Trusting Martin's assessment that the Adventist church was an evangelical Christian organization caused me to disarm myself when I finally encountered Adventism in

**"Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you will make it known to me." (Job 1:2,3)<sup>1</sup>**

the early 1980's. I did not put them to the tests Scripture commands us to use.

Adventism provided for me a very secure place with clear distinctions between right and wrong. On top of everything, almost every Adventist I met seemed to adhere strictly to the Bible, and Adventists did not have their own version of Scripture.

The words that were used by Adventists were words that I found in the Bible. Little did I know that my brothers, sisters, and pastors in Adventism used the same words Christians used, but the Adventists had different definitions for those words. At first I thought we had a common language and vocabulary, but we meant two very different things.

## Words Are Important

Our Almighty God tells us throughout Scripture that words are important. Jesus is the eternal Word of God (Jn. 1:1). God puts His words in the mouths of the prophets, and they speak whatever He commands them (Deut. 18:18). In the beginning God spoke, and the universe came into existence by His words and through His Word (Gen. 1, Jn. 1:1-3, Col. 1:16-17). In the end, God gives a severe warning to any who would add to or subtract from His revealed word, the Scriptures (Rev. 22:18-19). No Scripture was written by a human who was ingenuous enough to speak for God (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

Not only the ideas in Scripture but the words used to convey those ideas are God's. After I finally understood that Adventists mean different things than most Christians mean while saying many of the same words, I went to an Adventist church website for insight into the Adventist understanding of Biblical inspiration. The Adventist Church does not agree that the exact words of Scripture are important.

## How Does the Adventist Biblical Research Institute Explain Inspiration?

After reading through many pages of information on the "high view" that the Adventist church places on the gift of inspiration, the following statements provide great insight:

"Does the divine communication come to the prophet in a specific set of words which he simply repeats? While this may be true at times, the evidence indicates that it is not always true.

“Sometimes the writers are told to describe what they see. Various representations are then caused to pass before their vision with little or no verbal instruction. It would seem reasonable to surmise that the prophet in such cases used his own language patterns. Expressing the divine messages in his own words would allow a writer to change individual terms or to add to a writing if in doing so he could strengthen or clarify the expression of the divine purposes.

“Those who argue for the theory of verbal inspiration for the original autographs are for all practical purposes limited to the thoughts as expressed by the wording of extant manuscripts. But we would believe that the biblical evidence points to a fuller functioning of the human personality. There is a blending of the divine and human agencies.”<sup>5</sup>

Also, in relation to Ellen G. White’s pronouncements on inspiration, we find the following:

“Here is her classical statement: ‘It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man’s words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.’ [Quoting from *Selected Manuscripts*, Vol. 1, p. 21] (*Manuscript 24*, 1886; written in Europe in 1886).”<sup>6</sup>

The act of “diffusion” results in a lower concentration of the original element as it diffuses into (mixes with) a foreign element. Although true in chemistry, in inspiration it would be strange to say that God’s ideas were “diffused” in the mind of the inspired writer. Would God need the assistance of a human writer to “strengthen or clarify” the words that lost potency and effectiveness in the transmission process?

All of this is keeping with the Adventist ways that were handed down by Ellen White. In *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 21, she said, “The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God’s mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented.”<sup>7</sup>

One can read numerous documents from Ellen White and others within Adventism on the subject of the inspiration of Scripture. Often the words used seem to reflect the same kind of thinking that goes on in most Christian groups and churches. However, one must not become too comfortable with the language used as the definition of the terms that are being used have very different meanings from those commonly accepted by the Christian community around the world. Christians generally regard the Bible as of divine origin. SDAs will agree with that, yet once one presses a specific point of view that is not in harmony with SDA doctrine it is often discounted as not a correct understanding of the intent of the author. As can be seen from the last Ellen White quote above, “God as a writer, is not represented” in the Bible. It is, when all is said and done, a document of human origin in the Adventist mind, even if unconsciously. Since the words were crafted by fallible

human authors, others with good intentions should feel free to modify the exact wording to “strengthen or clarify the expression of the divine purposes.”

The position of the SDA Church is neither new nor unique among the various American religious cults.

### **A Brief History of American “Bibles” Among the Four Major Cults<sup>8</sup>**

Joseph Smith, Jr., the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (also known as Mormons) taught that God did not protect His word over the last two-thousand years. Not only did he claim to receive new revelations from God (*Doctrine and Covenants*), translate newly-found “scriptures” (*The Book of Mormon* and *The Pearl of Great Price*), he also claimed direct revelation on how to restore the Bible back to its original wording. This revised Bible is found in *The Inspired Version*, published by The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Missouri (now known as The Community of Christ).

Charles Taze Russell, influenced by Seventh-day Adventists, taught what would eventually be incorporated into the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Jehovah’s Witnesses. His time prophecies, which modified the Adventist prophetic understanding of Oct. 22, 1844, culminated in his setting October, 1914, as the date of the second advent of Jesus Christ. Since then, their “Jesus” has been reigning from their world headquarters.

The Watchtower eventually published its own version of the Bible known as the *New World Translation*. The Jehovah’s Witnesses do not believe that Jesus is Jehovah in the flesh. They believe that he is a creature, created by Jehovah God. He is “a god” (Jn. 1:1, NWT) not “God” as any good translation of Scripture will render the first verse of John.

Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of the American cult The First Church of Christ Scientist (Christian Science), chose not to rewrite Scripture. Instead, she provided her followers with a way of interpreting the Bible that was at odds with accepted word-usage. That book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, completely redefines the accepted meanings of words that have been used for thousands of years. In *Science and Health* she denies the reality of physical matter and provides the following definitions:

JESUS. The highest human corporeal concept of the divine idea, rebuking and destroying error and bringing to light man’s immortality.<sup>9</sup>

CHRIST. The divine manifestation of God, which comes to the flesh to destroy incarnate error.<sup>10</sup>

Although it took much longer than the three other major cults, by 1994 the Adventist Church had finally published a version of the Bible that contained statements that are to be found nowhere but in their own literature. Although it can only be speculated, this writer is of the opinion that the Adventist church kept Blanco’s paraphrase from publication until after the death of Walter Martin in 1989. If this work had been published in his lifetime, Martin would have wasted no time in reapplying the label “cult” to this chameleon.



## Are Cultic Writings Available Through Christian Bookstores?

I did an on-line check of internet-based Christian booksellers to determine how well these four groups have made inroads into the world of Christian writings. I searched the top nine Christian booksellers which had internet sites, including the two largest Christian bookstores in the USA. Of these nine sellers, seven of them carried *The Clear Word*; one, with stores in Southern California, actually had *The Clear Word* in the physical store on a shelf with other Bible translations.

With only one exception, these same booksellers did not carry any of the other writings developed by the other three major cults. The Seventh-day Adventist organization has been masterful at presenting itself as just another Christian denomination, a technique the Mormon church is now employing.

## Letting the “Power of the Ancient Texts Come Through”

“*The Clear Word* lets the power of ancient texts come through today. As the meaning of Scripture becomes more transparent, you see more of God’s grace. His love shines through even in difficult Old Testament passages.”<sup>11</sup>

Although Adventism lagged behind Mormonism, the Watchtower, and Christian Science in the publication of their version of the Bible, they have made up for lost time by outperforming these other organizations with numerous printings and changes. Since its first printing in 1994, *The Clear Word Bible* has been reworked into no less than seven unique versions of the Scriptures.

The seven versions are: *The Clear Word Bible*, ©1994,<sup>12</sup> *The Clear Word*, ©1994,<sup>13</sup> *The Clear Word*, ©2003,<sup>14</sup> *The Clear Word*, ©2004 (Pocket edition),<sup>15</sup> *The Easy English Clear Word*, ©2005,<sup>16</sup> *The Clear Word for Kids*, ©2005,<sup>17</sup> and *Savior (The Clear Word version of the gospels, combined into one narrative)*, © 2008.<sup>18</sup> *The Clear Word Bible*, original edition, has never been recalled or rejected by the Seventh-day Adventist organization. Although some changes have occurred to the text, the church has not publicly called for the original to be removed from circulation. Because the changes to the text in many cases are not directly doctrinal, recalling the early editions would not change the status of this work.

After receiving criticism for the title, the publisher removed the word “Bible” from the original *The Clear Word Bible*, and the words “An Expanded Paraphrase” were added to subsequent printings. These subsequent versions are not just reprintings with modifications to the title. They are different versions containing numerous changes to content throughout the books. Most modern publishers will be honest with their readers, indicating changes to content or revision of materials when books are reprinted. The Review and Herald Publishing Association, however, provides no statement to this effect, leaving the reader to believe that he/she has the same document in hand with only modifications to the title. In the publishing world, this lack of disclosure is tantamount to lying.

## I learned to “check all things, and hold fast to that which is good.” This checking included reading the “scriptures” of every religious group that crossed my path.

What is truly shocking, however, are not the changes, but the problematic passages that have remained. Although the back cover of *The Clear Word* indicates that the author/paraphraser is allowing “the power of the ancient texts [to] come through”, he does not indicate that the texts are coming through a very strong Adventist theological lens, replete with quotes and paraphrases from the writings of Ellen G. White. Following we will examine how three Adventist teachings regarding food, Sabbath, and hell have shaped Blanco’s thinking resulting in inaccurate wording of the “biblical” text. Then we will look at ten texts dealing with the nature of God.

## Adventist Doctrine Incorporated into *The Clear Word Bible*

*The Clear Word Bible* has provided us with the ability finally to see the actual definitions of common Scripture passages that are twisted in the Adventist mind. By comparing *The Clear Word* passages with accepted translations of the Bible there is no doubt that a spirit other than the Holy Spirit is at work in Adventist theology.

## Food Laws

Adventism promotes vegetarianism and requires members to follow the Old Testament food laws given through Moses to the Israelites. *The Clear Word* (TCW) demonstrates that, regardless of what is stated by individual Adventists, the abstinence from certain foods is a major church teaching.

**Gen. 9:3, ESV:** “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.”

**Gen. 9:3, TCW:** “Many of these animals will provide food for you, and from now on, you may eat meat as well as vegetables.”<sup>19</sup>

The words “every” and “everything” are replaced with “many,” and “meat” and “vegetables.”

Of course, the Christian doesn’t live by the code of conduct given in the Old Testament. Christians take the words of Jesus and His apostles in the New Testament for final authority on these matters. It is no wonder, then, that Blanco twists the meaning of one of the clearest passages in the NT to promote the SDA understanding:

**1 Timothy 4:1-5, ESV:** “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of

demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.”

**1 Timothy 4:3-5, TCW:** “Others will say that it’s wrong to marry and to eat the good things God created which we should receive with gratitude. God created everything. Nothing should be rejected which He has said we can eat, and we should do so by offering thanksgiving and praise. These foods not only have the approval of the word of God, but will also be blessed by Him through our prayers.”

Once one is indoctrinated into the Adventist worldview, the good things God created “which He has said we can eat” is understood to be vegetables and clean meats according to the Mosaic law. In Adventism it is only the clean meat that has the “approval of the word of God.” This deviates from the clear counsel of Paul to Timothy that “nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving” and that all food, not only the meat of clean animals, “is made holy by the word of God and prayer.”

Mark 7:18-19 record Jesus’ words to the Pharisees about what truly defiles a man. All modern translations of Mark include a parenthetical statement at the end of verse 19 which was not included in the King James’ version of the Bible. The reason for its inclusion in more recent versions is that older manuscripts than those used for the KJV have been discovered which include this sentence:

**Mark 7:19b, ESV:** “(Thus he declared all foods clean.)”

*The Clear Word* in all its versions simply omits this statement. Its omission underscores the Adventist teaching that God requires the observance of the Mosaic food laws.

### **Saved by the Sabbath**

Does the Adventist church really teach that one must keep the seventh-day Sabbath to be saved?

In any accepted translation of the Bible, including the KJV, Colossians 2:16-17 delivers this message:

**Col. 2:16-17, ESV:** “Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.”

In order to harmonize with Adventist doctrine, *The Clear Word* has changed that statement:

**Col 2:16-17, TCW:** “Don’t let anyone control your life by giving you a set of ceremonial rules about what to eat, what to drink and which monthly festivals or special Sabbaths to keep. All these rules about ceremonial days were given as a shadow of the reality to come and that reality is Jesus.”

A distinction here is implicit between “special” or “ceremonial” Sabbaths and the weekly Sabbath. This distinction is even clearer in the *Easy English* and *Clear Word for Kids* where there is no doubt that a weekly Sabbath is necessary for salvation:

Col. 2:16-17, *Easy English* and *Clear Word for Kids*: “Don’t let anyone tell you that you have to go through certain rituals, eat certain foods, keep certain feasts, or observe extra Sabbaths to be saved. All these things pointed forward to Jesus. So now they’re meaningless.”

This passage is one of the clearest implicit examples from Blanco’s eisegesis indicating that the keeping of the weekly (not an “extra”) Sabbath is something observed by those who are being saved. This Sabbath-requirement is the kind of legalism with which Jesus constantly confronted the Pharisees. It is the kind of legalism that Christians are to avoid, particularly given Paul’s stern warning to the “bewitched” Galatian gentiles who were being led into Jewish practices like those taught by the Adventist church and emphasized by Blanco.

### **Hell or Annihilation?**

Adventism does not teach eternal punishment for the disobedient. In effect, Adventists interpret the hell promised by Christ as a mercy killing so the lost do not suffer the consequences of their rejection of the eternal sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Only by redefining the meaning of the biblical words can one avoid the terrible consequence of rejecting Christ. At the end of Jesus’ discourse in Matthew 25, he tells the consequences for the righteous and wicked:

**Matt. 25:46 ESV:** “And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

*The Clear Word* removes the reference to “eternal life” and redefines “eternal punishment”:

**Matt. 25:46, TCW:** “I have no choice but to end your lives, because in my kingdom everyone cares about everyone else.”

In Adventist theology, the unrighteous dead are awaiting God’s judgment which will follow their resurrection at the end of time. Once judged, they will be annihilated, never to suffer again. In contrast to this belief, Peter states:

**1 Peter 2:9, ESV:** “then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.”

Adventist doctrine cannot have the wicked being punished now, however, because this belief contradicts both their doctrine of soul sleep and the ongoing “investigative judgment”. Blanco settles this problem by reworking this verse to read:

**1 Peter 2:9, TCW:** “From Lot’s experience you can see that the Lord knows how to rescue His people but bring the wicked to judgment to face what they have done.”

### **The Amalgamated God**

The Adventist understanding of the Godhead has undergone many changes. The organizers and influential individuals within the early Advent movement were primarily Arians and other anti-Trinitarians. Co-founder James White, the husband of their “messenger of God,” Ellen G. White, was a

minister from the Christian Connexion which denied the deity of Jesus. Upon founding the Seventh-day Adventist church, these anti-Trinitarians were not ready to part with the doctrines they had so fervently defined and defended.

While today's Adventist scholars acknowledge the anti-Trinitarianism of the organization's founders, they assert Adventism now teaches the Trinity. Nevertheless, they have never renounced nor repented of their founding error or corrected its lingering effects.

An important book came off the Adventist presses in 2002, titled *The Trinity*.

"From about 1846 to 1888 the majority of Adventists rejected the concept of the Trinity—at least as they understood it. All the leading writers were anti-Trinitarian, although we find scattered references to members who held Trinitarian views.... Ambrose C. Spicer ... grew so offended at the anti-Trinitarian atmosphere in Battle Creek that he ceased preaching."<sup>20</sup>

The Adventist church has never repented of its Arian/anti-Trinitarian position, nor has it dealt with the resulting issues that allow current members to maintain membership while being openly anti-Trinitarian. It is a well-documented fact that anti-Trinitarianism is on the increase within Adventism. George Knight, retired professor of church history at Andrews University, the Adventist seminary, has made this fact very clear in the annotated edition of *Questions On Doctrine* published in 2003. He states:

"... the denomination in the closing years of the twentieth century and the opening years of the twenty-first has witnessed a resurgence of anti-Trinitarianism and semi-Arianism on the basis that the earliest founders of the denomination held those views."<sup>21</sup>

The Adventist church is much more articulate about its day of worship than about the nature of the God to be worshiped. They leave little room for error regarding when the seventh-day Sabbath begins and ends and what must be done in preparation for that day. The understanding of the nature of Christ within Adventism, however, is so diverse that one Adventist theologian, Eric Claude Webster, was able to write *Crosscurrents in Adventist Christology*, showing at least four major streams of thought within Adventism ranging from His being a deified human who showed us how to live, to His being one who was truly God-with-us.<sup>22</sup>

Jack Blanco incorporates the continuing anti-Trinitarian influence within Adventism into *The Clear Word*. Below we compare ten passages from TCW with an accepted modern translation and identify the problems in *The Clear Word*. (TCW refers to the current version of *The Clear Word*, copyright 2003, that is currently sold in Adventist Book Centers. ESV refers to the *English Standard Version* used throughout this article. *The Clear Word Bible*, original edition, is used as necessary.)

#### **Genesis 1:26a, 27**

**TCW:** But this was not the end of His work for that day. Next He said to His Son, "Now let us make beings who look

## **The Adventist church is much more articulate about its day of worship than about the nature of the God to be worshiped. They leave little room for error regarding when the seventh-day Sabbath begins and ends...**

like us and can reflect our thinking and our personality. Let's give them the responsibility of ruling over and caring for the fish, the birds and the animals which we created." So they created two human beings, a male and a female, equal but with different functions, to reflect the unity of the Godhead.

**ESV:** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

**Problems:** The image of God is a physical characteristic in TCW. John 4:24, however, states that "God is spirit", not a physical body. Further, the Godhead in TCW consists of two united beings, not one Being expressed in three Persons as in accepted translations. Since Blanco admits the Son as being present in creation, why does he not also present the Holy Spirit? The oneness of Adam and Eve was never a way to understand the oneness of the Godhead. Paul uses marriage as a symbol of Christ and his church. The Godhead presented in this passage of TCW is a bi-unity, not a tri-unity.

#### **John 1:1**

**TCW:** From the beginning, the Word of God was there. The Word stood by the side of God, and the Word was fully God.

*The Clear Word Bible*, original edition, reads, "In the beginning, going further back in time than can be imagined, the Word of God was there. The Word stood by the side of God, and the Word was fully God."

**ESV:** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**Problems:** "Further back in time than can be imagined" is not equivalent to "In the beginning." Moreover, "From the beginning" is not equivalent to "In the beginning". "From" connotes something continuing since the beginning. "In" connotes a presence not only at the beginning but also before and after. Standing "by the side of" and being "with" carry different theological meanings. One has to do with physical space, the other with identity or "being".

#### **John 8:58**

**TCW:** Jesus answered, "Because I existed before Abraham was born."

**ESV:** Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

**Problems:** Jesus is quoting the name of God from Exodus 3:14. In the Septuagint, the Greek reads ἐγὼ εἰμὶ, which literally translates to I AM. Jesus was not claiming to pre-exist Abraham. He was claiming the title of Almighty God.

#### John 10:30

**TCW:** You see, my Father and I are so close, we're one.

**ESV:** I and the Father are one.

**Problems:** Jesus' statement has nothing to do with closeness, but with exactness. It has to do with identity of being. TCW implies they are separate entities. The biblical text says they are one.

#### John 14:8, 11a

**TCW:** Philip spoke up, "Lord, give us just one glimpse of the Father before you go and we'll be satisfied." Believe me when I tell you that the Father would do everything I have done if He were here.

**ESV:** Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.

**Problems:** Jesus is not speaking about what the Father would do if he were there. He is making a statement of fact that the Father is literally in him. The Father is present in Jesus.

#### John 14:10

**TCW:** You must believe me when I tell you that I am the Father in action and that the Father is living out His life in me. All the things I've taught you were not just my own, but the Father's. It's the Father living in me who's doing all this.

**ESV:** Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

**Problems:** For Jesus to state that he is "the Father in action" is (or is bordering on) modalism. The real Jesus does not confuse the persons of the Father and Son. Moreover, Jesus is not confusing the persons of the Father and Son, as "I

am the Father in action" would suggest. He literally means He and the Father are separate persons but are in each other.

#### John 20:28

**TCW:** Thomas stood there speechless. Then fell to his knees and said, "Lord, you're alive! They were right! I believe! You are my Lord and my God."

Thomas' words in the original *The Clear Word Bible* read, "Lord, you're alive! They were right! I believe! You are the Son of God."

**ESV:** Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

**Problems:** Scripture does not indicate that Thomas was speechless. His declaration is profound. The phrase "Son of God" as used in *The Clear Word Bible* is not equivalent to the Christian understanding of Lord and God. There is an old argument used by Jehovah's Witnesses, (not used much anymore) that Thomas was startled and cried out something similar to the modern, "Oh my Lord, oh my God!" In TCW Thomas seems to be startled, expressing emotion rather than making a declaration of truth revealed by God (compare with Matthew 16:16-17.)

#### Colossians 1:19

**TCW, *The Clear Word Bible, original edition:*** With pleasure the Father acknowledged Him as fully God, in spite of His human nature.

More recently, this has been changed to: The Father was pleased to acknowledge the fullness of God in Him.

**ESV:** For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

**Problems:** This paraphrase is problematic, particularly if His human nature detracted from His deity. The actual Scripture does not allow a question about Jesus' human nature. The Adventist teaching about the "sinful nature" of the human Jesus is a direct result of the teaching of Ellen White. Christ's humanity was absolutely perfect. *The Clear Word Bible*, original edition, paraphrase, has never been recalled as being incorrect. Many still have and use this version for personal study in the Adventist church. Moreover, TCW suggests that the Father was looking on and acknowledging deity in Jesus. The actual Scripture states that the "fullness of God" was pleased to dwell in Jesus, not merely for "part" of God to acknowledge deity in Jesus. The actual Scripture here is reminiscent of God filling the temple in the Old Testament. Jesus the man was also all that God is.

#### Jude 9

**TCW:** In contrast to these ungodly men is the Lord Jesus, also called Michael the Archangel, for He is over the entire angelic host. When He was challenged by Satan about His intentions to resurrect Moses, He didn't come at Satan with a blistering attack, nor did He condemn him with mockery. He simply said, "God rebuke you for claiming Moses' body."

**ESV:** But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not



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presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.”

**Problems:** Scripture never refers to Jesus as an archangel. Further, nowhere in Scripture is there a reference to Moses’ body being resurrected. This comes directly from the pen of Ellen White. The Jehovah’s Witnesses use this same argument to deny the deity of Jesus. If it were Jesus, why did he not rebuke the devil in the same fashion he did when he walked the earth? (See Mt. 17:18; Lk. 4:25, 9:42)

#### Revelation 1:16b

**TCW:** Each time He spoke, a beam of light like a two-edged sword came out of His mouth.

**ESV:** ... from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword ...

**Problems:** Adding extra “information” can be misleading. Hebrews 4:12 compares the word of God to a two-edged sword that judges people. Isaiah 49:2 describes the mouth of the Messianic servant of the Lord as a sword. Ephesians 6:9 identifies the “sword of the Spirit” as “the word of God”. The imagery of Revelation 1:16 connotes judgment, not beams of light.

#### Mysterious, But Not Difficult

In Adventism, numerous concepts of God are equally acceptable, existing simultaneously as shown in the pages of *The Clear Word*. One can be an Arian, semi-Arian, modalist, anti-Trinitarian, even a Trinitarian and find support for one’s position throughout the writings of Adventism, including TCW. The Adventist God is truly an amalgamation.

What God has revealed about Himself in the Bible is neither tricky nor difficult. By adding words and using human logic we can trick ourselves, but the glimpse of God that the Bible provides can be stated simply.

There is one Creator God. This one God has given us the Bible. In the Bible He reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Spirit. These are not three beings, but one Being. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God. The three persons, Father, Son and Spirit, are not confused (i.e., the Father is not the Son or Spirit, the Son is not the Father or Spirit and the Spirit is not the Father or Son.)

Analogies are rarely helpful, often generating as many questions as they attempt to answer. The drawing on this page, however, may help.

#### Adventism’s Claim

“In a very real sense, Adventist emphasis on Scriptures as the sole source of data for executing theology has given theological reflection on God a new and revolutionary start... Adventists were determined to build doctrines on the basis of Scripture alone. The difficulties implicit in this fresh approach may account for the scant number of Adventist statements on the doctrine of God.”<sup>23</sup>

The Adventists’ “new and revolutionary start” is neither new, nor revolutionary. Nor are there a “scant number of Adventist statements on the doctrine of God.” Adventist lit-

## What is scant, perhaps missing entirely, in Adventism, is a willingness to state “we introduced you to a ‘Jesus’ who was not the eternal, Almighty God.

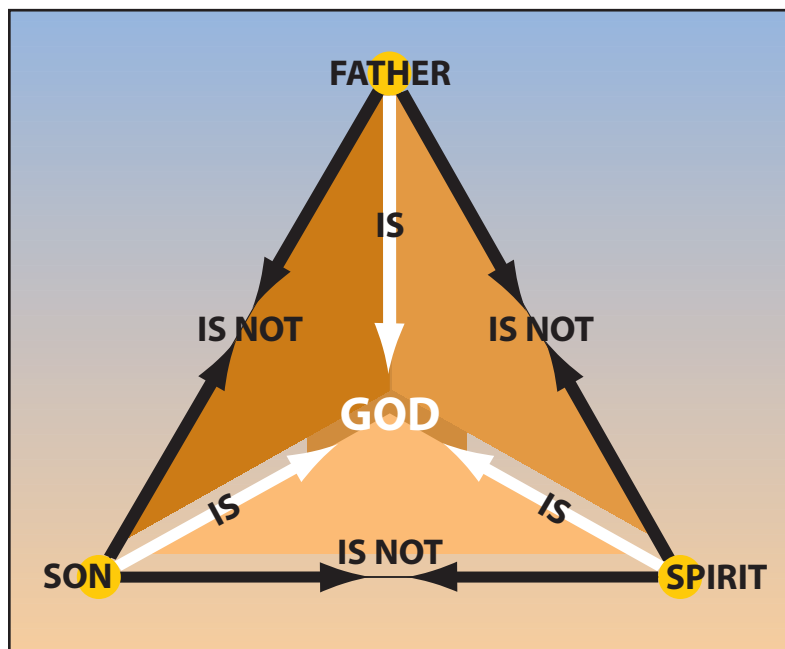
erature is full of often widely-divergent statements about the nature and identity of God.

What is scant, perhaps missing entirely, in Adventism, is a willingness to state “we introduced you to a ‘Jesus’ who was not the eternal, Almighty God. Of this we repent, and we come to the cross to be washed clean by the blood of Jesus Christ.”

Having received severe criticism following publication of *The Clear Word Bible*, the Adventist church has continued to make numerous changes to the text. Christians must continue to hold them accountable for altering the words of the Bible until the organization either gives up its efforts to mold Scripture to its doctrines and repents, or they simply get tired of the ongoing changes and allow the world to see them for who they truly are.

“And Jesus cried out and said, ‘Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20





# Did Ellen White **change** as she aged?

COLLEEN TINKER RESEARCH ASSISTANCE BY JEREMY GRAHAM

**A**dventists have long explained the internal contradictions within Ellen White's writings by saying that she grew and changed as the years passed. They use the phrase "progressive revelation" to explain the sometimes startling changes in her explanations of various subjects from the nature of Christ to the eating of pork.

The generally held view is that as she aged, Ellen White adopted more nearly "orthodox" views of salvation. Hence, Adventists argue, the fact that her early writings often articulated noticeably unbiblical views is "corrected" by her later works which exonerate her as a true prophetic voice.

One problem with this rationalization is that "progressive revelation" is understood as the process of Ellen White's moving from error toward truth. In fact, however, true progressive revelation never begins in error. If a person is inspired by God, He never gives that person "error". God cannot lie, and His revelations are always truth, even if they are not revealed in detail. Revelation from God cannot move from error to truth; it can, however, move from shadows and types, as in the tabernacle ceremonies God gave to Israel, to the fulfillment of those shadows, as in the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

It is generally thought that Ellen White's book *The Desire of Ages*, published in 1898, marked a change in Ellen White's understanding of the identity of Jesus and of righteousness by faith. Below, however, are several examples of Ellen White's statements written between 1898 and her death in 1915. We will show how each of these quotations reflected her still-unbiblical understanding of our salvation, emphasizing that our own perfection and law-keeping are required in order for us to be saved.

**1898**

"His [Jesus'] example declares that our only hope of eternal life is through bringing the appetites and passions into subjection to the will of God." (*The Desire of Ages*, page 122, paragraph 2.)

In the context of this passage, Ellen White emphasizes that Jesus' fasting and victory during His 40 days in the wilderness are directly linked, that His refusal to indulge His temptations thwarted Satan. Jesus' example of restraining His appetites, therefore, is our example as to how we achieve righteousness that qualifies us for salvation.

**...true progressive revelation never begins in error. If a person is inspired by God, He never gives that person "error". God cannot lie, and His revelations are always Truth, even if they are not revealed in detail.**

The Bible, however, teaches that the condition for entrance into the kingdom of heaven is being born again.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn. 3:6, NASB). The new birth is possible only by believing in—placing one's complete trust in—the Lord Jesus and His finished work and thus being saved (Acts 16:31). When we believe, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14) and made alive with Christ, even while we are dead in our sins, and seated in heavenly places with Him (Eph. 2:4-6). This spiritual resurrection and consequent salvation has nothing to do with our own works, not even the work of bringing our "appetites and passions into subjection" (see Eph. 2:8-9).

We are saved entirely by God's miraculous work for us through Jesus' substitutionary death and resurrection (Rom. 3:21-30). Our self-discipline does not play a part in our salvation. Romans 6 and 8 teaches that believers overcome temptation primarily by submission to the Holy Spirit. While self-denial is a part of life after one is saved, nevertheless the primary method of overcoming temptation is the surrender of our desires to the Lord Jesus, releasing to Him our "right" to indulge in sin.

## 1902

"Every one who by faith obeys God's commandments, will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression." (*The Signs of the Times*, 07-23-1902, paragraph 14.)

## 1903

"But in the struggle for immortality we have a part to act. [...] We can never be saved in inactivity and idleness. We might as well look for a harvest from seed which we have not sown, and for knowledge where we have not studied, as to expect salvation without making an effort. It is our part to wrestle against the evil tendencies of the natural heart." (*The Youth's Instructor*, 03-05-1903, paragraph 4.)

First, nowhere does the Bible support these statements. On the contrary, Paul describes his own struggle with sin in Romans 7:14-24. Our bodies, he says in Romans 8:10, are dead (mortal) because of sin, but our spirits are alive because of righteousness. We have living spirits inside mortal, dead bodies.

Second, our trust in the Lord Jesus is what God counts as our righteousness: "But to the one who does not work but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness" (Rom. 4:5). We do not "struggle for immortality"; Jesus took care of that problem.

Moreover, we are saved the moment we believe in the Lord Jesus: "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" (Jn. 5:24).

We have no "part to act" in our salvation. Our activity of wrestling "against the evil tendencies of the natural heart" does not produce any movement toward salvation. Salvation is entirely an act of God bringing us to life through Jesus. We do not contribute to our salvation by any effort or struggle.

## 1906

"He came to this world and lived a sinless life, that in his power his people might also lead lives of sinlessness." (*Atlantic Union Gleaner*, 01-17-1906, paragraph 5.)

Again, "sinlessness" is not a requirement for salvation. God's intention for us is to be credited with righteousness which is alien to us (Phil. 3:9, "...not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith").

His purpose in sending Jesus was to break the power of sin and to open a new, living way by which we can approach the Father freely (Heb. 10:19-20).

Jesus' sinless life was not primarily for the purpose of being our example; rather, it qualified Him to be our "merciful and faithful high priest" and "to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17). His sinlessness qualified Him to offer "Himself without blemish to God" (Heb. 9:14) as our Substitute, the perfect Sacrifice for all our sins.

## 1910

"Man is no passive being, to be saved in indolence. Let no one think that men and women are going to be taken to heaven without engaging in the struggle here below. We have a battle to fight, a victory to gain. God says to us, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' How?—'For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' Man works, and God works. Man is called upon to strain every muscle, and to exercise every faculty, in the struggle for immortality; but it is God who supplies the efficiency." (*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 04-28-1910, paragraph 3.)

The text which Ellen White uses in this passage is Philippians 2:12-13: "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for [His] good pleasure."

In its context, this text is not referring to how one is saved. Rather, Paul is writing to people who are already saved. He is



## Ellen White did not begin to get salvation “right”. She continued writing admonitions to work hard in order to gain eternal life. Her late writings were just as full of confusion and mixed messages as were her early ones.

saying that believers must persevere and express their salvation—their new birth—by honoring the Lord Jesus and dedicating themselves to spiritual growth and obedience to the Lord Jesus.

Paul never addresses unbelievers by telling them to “work out their own salvation” in a joint effort with God whereby they may be saved (Tit. 3:5,6). On the contrary, unbelievers are always admonished to “believe in the Lord Jesus” (see Acts 16:31). Only believers have any salvation to “work out”, or share, from within themselves—and that is a gift from God.

Ellen White is misusing this text and is using it to instill guilt and fear into those who are not confident they are saved. Instead, this text is a statement of how to live from a position of victory, of knowing one is saved. Those who are saved are admonished to express their salvation in the ways they live and interact with others.

### 1913

“He died a shameful death upon the cross, that we might have eternal life; and shall we dare to flatter ourselves that we may follow a course of sin, choosing our own way, shunning the cross, avoiding reproach and self-denial, and yet have a home in the kingdom of heaven?—No; through faith in Christ we must render obedience to all requirements of God; through his merits we may be elevated to keep God’s commandments.” (*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 05-08-1913, paragraph 4.)

Once again, Ellen White says that obedience to all the commandments is the requirement for our salvation. This is not a biblical requirement.

Jesus’ sinless life, His death and resurrection were not merely “down payments” on our salvation. They were not arbitrary requirements He performed to motivate us to emulate Him. His entire life, death, and resurrection purchased us for God.

The Bible never asks us to keep God’s commandments as our proper response to beholding Jesus’ suffering. On the contrary, we are asked to believe (Jn. 5:24) and be born again (Jn. 3:5-6). No one is justified by the works of the law (Rom. 3:20). Rather, the righteousness of God that becomes ours when we believe is completely “apart from the law” (Rom. 3:21, 28).

The righteousness God gives us is His blessing to us in response to our faith in Him (Rom. 4:5, 13).

Jesus’ work on the cross was not for the purpose of “elevating” us to keep the commandments. His death and resurrection accomplished complete payment for our sin and give us His own righteousness and direct access to God when we believe. Salvation is not a “maybe”. Salvation, if we place our

faith in the Lord Jesus, is a certainty, and our works are not part of our being saved but are evidence of our salvation (Eph. 2:8-10).

### Another quote from 1913

“The great crisis is before us, and every one is to act as if his own soul was at stake. The most important question of all is, How shall I save my soul, for which Christ died? How shall I be holy as he is holy?” (*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 05-15-1913, paragraph 2.)

The Bible never instructs us to ask how we may save our souls. Christ’s death and resurrection guarantee our salvation when we believe. We become holy by receiving Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We are totally covered with His own personal righteousness which is alien to us. We do not begin to become saved or to achieve holiness; rather, when we place our trust in Jesus, we are at that moment sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14) and made alive with Christ (Eph. 2:5).

We are made holy, or “set apart” for God’s use, from the moment we believe, for we are His own workmanship, created for the good works which He prepared in advance for us to do (Eph. 2:10).

God saves us; we do not participate in that salvation.

### Summary

This sampling of quotations reveals that as she matured, Ellen White did not begin to get salvation “right”. She continued writing admonitions to work hard in order to gain eternal life. Her late writings were nearly as full of confusion and mixed messages as were her early ones.

While *The Desire of Ages* does represent more correct theology than do the other writings of Ellen White, this fact can be primarily explained by the work of Marian Davis, whom EGW called her “book maker”. Marian was reading from a variety of legitimate Christian authors as she compiled the material for *The Desire of Ages*, as Walter Rea has demonstrated in his book *The White Lie*.

The Bible alone contains the gospel, and no modern prophet can make the Bible any clearer. On the contrary, Ellen White’s “counsels” do not reflect biblical truth but lead people into the despair of not knowing either how to be saved or whether they are saved (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 155).

Our hard work and law-keeping never assist us to be saved. Salvation is entirely the work of God, and our response to His grace is to worship, praise, and surrender to His Spirit.

Our triune God is faithful, and He is all we need. His word is sufficient. We are to trust and honor Him alone. He is the One who saves and transforms us.

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow! †





ADRIAN BURY  
writing from HUNGARY

## How I discovered the TRUTH ABOUT ADVENTISM

I was born and brought up in a small industrial town in north-western England. My father was a Christian, and my earliest memory of church is of enjoying the services and Sunday school of a small mission. My father's family background was Baptist. One of his brothers became a missionary to India, and many of his cousins were staunch members or ministers of Baptist or Methodist churches. In other words, I have a strong Christian background. I remember growing up being aware of needing to "ask Jesus into my heart"—but I did not understand "following Jesus", and my personal experience with Him was not very strong.

After I finished school I moved to London to attend university. I had Christian friends there, but I ended up drifting away from God. I became involved in university life, in the arts, and in ignoring God, just as many others did.

There came a crisis point in my life, however, just before I completed my PhD, when I became overwhelmed with fears about the future. Most of my friends thought I was going nuts, but one Christian friend just dropped the comment that I hadn't been to church recently. At that point I made a decision. I went to my room and just prayed something like, "Jesus, I'm sorry about all this, but I really want to take you seriously from now on, so please come into my heart." The words were simple, but a major change took place. The next day, all my fears had gone, and I had peace. I knew what had happened was real.

### **Different denominations, consistent gospel**

From the time I was saved, I did not consider myself as belonging exclusively to one denomination. While I was still

in London, I attended an Evangelical Anglican church which was popular with the students. When I finished university and returned home, I attended the Baptist church with my parents, and after a few months, I was baptized in water. Meanwhile, my parents were friendly with a Pentecostal pastor who was about my age, and he talked to us about the Holy Spirit. I asked him to pray for me, and from then on I experienced and understood the Holy Spirit as Someone who is real, not merely abstract or theoretical.

Soon after that I moved to Hungary to continue my studies. Although the country was still under communist control, I was able to get involved with a couple of Baptist churches there without experiencing any real problems. On returning home I got married, and we eventually moved to Bangor in Wales where I taught chemistry for about ten years, also attending and ministering in the Assemblies of God church there.

As I review my experience in these different churches, I realize that while practices and emphases varied, the gospel preached was always the same. None of these churches redefined biblical terms. None of them changed or re-interpreted the Bible to make it appear to mean the opposite of what it really says. None of these groups claimed to be the one true church. Each one, instead, taught the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus—His completed, finished work—as the one way we must be saved.

Throughout the approximately 40 years of my pre-conversion and Christian life in Britain, I never remember meeting any Seventh-day Adventists, seeing any of their literature, or being aware of their presence. Adventism was included in some of the books I read on cults, but I did not pay much

attention to this information as I had never met any Adventists.

I had no real concept of the Sabbath either. During my childhood my father must have been a mild Sunday-keeper, but we did not make an issue of Sunday holiness, and I don't know what my father understood about "Sabbath". Much later, when I was attending church in Wales, I remember reading Romans 14:5, that one man considers one day sacred but others don't, and that fact really stood out to me. From that point I decided Sunday did not have to be taken as especially holy; it was just the day on which we held our meetings.

About twelve years ago I felt God's call to move back to Hungary and work for him there. The first church I was con-

connected with, though of the same denomination as my present one, was overly controlling and oppressive. Through this experience I learned about the phenomenon of spiritual abuse, that a church may have a cultic style of practice even if its statement of "theology" seems pretty well in order.

#### Meet Fred

I stayed in the above church for as long as I could, but in the meantime I became friendly with someone from a church about 10 km away. Let us call him Fred. His grandparents on his mother's side were Christians, but his father was a member of the communist party. His grandparents took him to church occasionally, and he accepted Jesus at the age of 16 and experienced a real conversion. His parents were not pleased and felt Fred had shamed them by becoming a Christian.

The church Fred was saved in was Pentecostal (EPF), but this denomination in Hungary is historically very legalistic. His wife and he ended up leaving and joining the Faith Church, which was illegal under the communists but in the period following the political changes underwent a period of rapid growth. This group was the most dynamically growing and charismatically oriented church in Hungary at the time.

Fred has a gift of evangelism, and more and more people around him began receiving Christ. Unfortunately, the local church leadership looked on his success with suspicion as a threat to their authority. Eventually he left that congregation, but because he was not going to give up Jesus, he returned to the more legalistic Pentecostal church. That church experienced a split in the congregation somewhat later, and Fred found himself looked upon as some kind of leader among those who preferred a lively style of worship. Fred then realized he needed to get some training. He was working full time, however, and the only Bible college offering a state-accredited college degree by correspondence at that time was called Sola Scriptura.

A bit of background will be helpful. During the early communist period, state control over the churches began to solidi-

fy, and some of the so-called "small churches" decided to cooperate together in order to survive. They formed the "Free Church Council" in 1950, and the members included the Evangelical Pentecostal Fellowship, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Church of God, the Baptist Church, the Christian Brethren, the Methodist Church, and others. The council was able to operate just one training institute for ministers where pastors for all the churches were trained by teachers provided from all of the movements. During the seventies the Adventist church experienced a split resulting in two movements: the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which continued to cooperate with other churches, and the Christian Advent Fellowship (CAF), which is rather more hard-line, historic Adventist, and did not continue associating with the other churches.

After the political changes, the Free Church Council was dissolved, and the various different denominations, including the two Adventist movements, opened their own colleges. Consequently, in 1976 the Christian Advent Fellowship opened the aforementioned Sola Scriptura. Some of the Sola Scriptura teachers had previously taught in the joint college, so they still have, so to speak, an interdenominational reputation. Other former joint college lecturers now teach at the official Seventh-day Adventist college and still have input into other denominations too, including the EPF. As a result of this situation, the general, interdenominational view of Adventists in Hungary is that they are a Christian denomination, and workers from many of the small churches attend Sola Scriptura for a "general theological education" because it has a good reputation. What they learn theologically at Sola Scriptura, however, is historic Adventism.

#### Blindsided by Adventism

Having had a very bad experience with the Faith Church and being unaware of what the Adventist movement represented, Fred eventually enrolled in a correspondence Bible college course at Sola Scriptura. He was in his first year of a three-year course when we met. We were both keen to see God move in the area, and we had other interests in common as well. I was a little puzzled that he was attending an Adventist college because I had read that some regarded them as a cult, but I dismissed the minor dissonance.

Soon Fred invited me to help teach in the church where he was an elder, so I agreed and made the move. Fred was continuing with his college course, and once I was a visitor to his class and sat in on a few lectures. Most of the teaching seemed fairly normal, except for the lesson on Daniel. They worked out 1844 from a couple of verses but gave no further explanation at the time. That was the first time I had heard about the importance of 1844 to the Adventists, and it sounded—well—strange.

As things progressed, Fred began saying things in sermons that I couldn't quite understand. I remember he once preached a sermon on the Holy Spirit, and I didn't have a clue what he was talking about.

On one occasion we were praying together before a meeting. I vividly remember the picture that came into my mind

**...what had really drawn Fred to Adventism was the Sabbath...**



as we prayed: Fred's head was in the mouth of a huge snake which was trying to swallow him like a python does its prey. After briefly praying about the matter we did nothing more for the time being, but in retrospect I believe God was warning me that Fred was in the process of being led astray. Another time Fred said something like, "This Adventist teaching is either really, really bad, or it's really, really good!" Again, unfortunately, I didn't take the bait at the time. I then heard him give a Bible study, though not in our own church, which was very much based on the Adventist view of Revelation. I considered both his teaching and his secretive behavior in hiding this teaching from his friends in his own church to be highly inappropriate. As time passed Fred made more and more references to Adventist ideas. He started making cryptic comments about the Sabbath and soul sleep but without explaining what he really thought or understood by it. He also ended up getting into conflict with his wife about eating pork as well as over other issues of doctrine or practice. The next thing I knew, he was suicidal and wanting to drive into a brick wall on his motorbike. At last I became alarmed and realized I needed to do something.

Fred was clearly unwilling to explain properly what Adventism was really all about, though I had begun to suspect something was badly wrong, so I decided to check up on it independently.

I began researching Adventism, mainly using the internet. I discovered the Adventist teaching that the Sabbath is the seal of God and Sunday worship is the mark of the beast. I could not understand how anyone could take that notion seriously. I also came across the scapegoat teaching, according to which it is Satan who finally bears our sins. I must admit I was shocked by that.

### **Crisis intervention**

Fred had finished college by this time and was thoroughly confused about doctrine. Although he had accepted the Adventist state of the dead teaching and found the Sabbath pretty convincing, he never really accepted Ellen White as a prophet. The whole situation caused quite a lot of stress for Fred's family because his wife was not at all happy with Adventism. I don't think she ever perceived it as being quite as unbiblical as it actually is, but she never accepted the distinctives. Our friendship also became strained, as did our ministering together in the church, as by this time we disagreed on quite a few things. I became quite worried and stressed, particularly as I began to study Adventist doctrines in more detail.

My relationship with Fred had reached a crisis. We could not discuss anything about doctrine without becoming angry and quarreling, so I really prayed and asked the Lord what I should do. I understood Him to say that Fred was suffering from spiritual abuse and what he really needed right then was a friend. I realized I needed to drop theological discussions with him for the time being: no more going on about the Sabbath, or the law, or whatever! I just had to leave it! I probably had become quite obsessive about these issues by then, so I found "leaving it" rather difficult, but I tried.

In the meantime, I decided to fast and pray for him, asking God to release him from the demonic forces I was by then convinced were latching onto him. I also continued to research and read. I could find no material on Adventism in Hungarian, so I decided I would have to write some myself. I began, therefore, to write a series of articles in Hungarian both for myself and for Fred, based on the research I had carried out.

About six months after my decision not to discuss theology, just before Christmas, I had to go to Budapest with Fred to pick up some Christmas parcels for distribution to poor families in the area. On our trip he made the comment that he was totally confused, his head was full of chaos, he did not know what to teach, and he had no idea anymore what was right and what was wrong. (It should be noted that he had already been saved for around ten years and had an acquaintance with Evangelical theology before any contact with Adventism). I then mentioned that I had certain studies on Adventism available which I could let him look at if he was interested. He was!

The result of his desperate agreement to read my studies was far more positive than I could have hoped! Fred did not become an Adventist after all, and we are still ministering together in the Pentecostal church. I praise God that He used my studies, among other things, to help Fred regain his foundation of biblical faith.

On this side of Fred's crisis I realize several things clearly. First, what had really drawn Fred to Adventism was the Sabbath, and what subsequently convinced him that a weekly holy day was irrelevant to the Christian life was a study of the covenants. Christians are vulnerable to Adventist Sabbath teaching if they are not aware of what the Bible teaches about the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, and the new covenants.

Second, I realize how subtle but pervasive Adventist teaching is. It is now several years since Fred's experience with Adventism, but even now he occasionally says things he must have learned at the college. Although on the whole he is pretty clear, we still need to discuss these doctrinal fallacies as they arise.

Finally, as a never-been Adventist, I have become quite familiar with Adventist theology and history. God is using my research in broader ways, and there have been occasions when I have been asked to teach on Adventism, both on a personal level and to larger groups. He is faithful to use all our experiences for our instruction as well as for His glory! †

**Adrian Bury** moved to Hungary from North Wales in 1995 at what he believed was the leading of the Holy Spirit. Since 1999, he has been part of the leadership team of a Pentecostal congregation in a small town in Western Hungary. At various times he has also ministered in other local churches and taught systematic theology at the Pentecostal Theological College.

**...and what subsequently convinced him that a weekly holy day was irrelevant to the Christian life was a study of the covenants.**



## Amazed by the Bible FROM PAGE 5

Creator, and not on a day. The Bible actually doesn't say that "Sunday-keeping" is the mark of the beast or that the Sabbath is the seal of God.

### Not a true prophet

One of my first conclusions following my study was that Ellen White (EGW) cannot be a true prophet of God since she gives Sabbath-keeping, tithing, and vegetarianism salvational importance. (If you don't believe me, check her writings on your own.) This realization set me mentally free to look up some of the criticisms that have been raised against her. I learned that research sponsored by the General Conference and by independent scholars has proven that EGW copied from other sources without giving credit, even claiming the material was what she received in vision from God.

As Ellen White is the source for the Adventist teaching of the sanctuary, 1844, and the investigative judgment, I have renounced this teaching as well. I fully reject EGW and Uriah Smith's understanding that the atonement was not completed at the cross. At the cross Jesus cried out, "It is finished", and the Bible is full of texts that show that salvation is a completed fact since the cross!

To discover that most of what I have believed in is not biblically

correct left me with mixed feelings. It is not easy to leave a church that shaped my identity, education, and social network. At the same time I really want to belong to God and follow what the Bible says. When I accepted that many of the Adventist doctrines are unbiblical, it was like an unseen burden fell off me! I felt so relieved! I am saved and can be a Christian without the complicated EGW-based theology! Jesus has promised that the truth shall set us free, and I praise him for setting me free from legalism and false teachings!

Because of my study, I concluded that I had to resign my membership from the Seventh-day Adventist church as I no longer can believe and support its main teachings. This has not been an easy decision because I know it will disappoint and hurt many. For those of you who might worry that I now have gone completely astray, I'd like to assure you that God knows my heart and knows that I belong to Him and want to do His will. I rejoice in the salvation that Jesus Christ has given me, and I want to love and serve Him who is greater than all laws and commandments and has made me into a new creation in Him! †

**Berit Fischer** works part-time as a registered nurse. She and her husband August, a native of Austria, have two children: five-year-old Christopher and one-year-old Christine. They live in Hokksund, Norway.

## Is this word clear? FROM PAGE 13

world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me" (John 12:44-50).

Not one iota or dot will pass from Scripture until heaven and earth pass away, and this unaltered word of God will be our judge. We dare not add, subtract, or amend it. Our eternal reward depends upon it! †

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, *English Standard Version*®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup>2 Corinthians 11:4.

<sup>3</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:21.

<sup>4</sup>George Knight, "Introduction to the Annotated Edition", *Questions on Doctrine*, annotated edition, Andrews University Press, 2003 (original 1957), pp. xvi-xvii.

<sup>5</sup>From the Biblical Research Institute of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, official website;

<http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/Inspiration%20&%20Authenticity.htm>. Copyright © 2008 Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®. (All emphases mine.)

<sup>6</sup>From the Biblical Research Institute of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, official website; <http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/issues/revelation-inspiration.html>. Copyright © Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®. (All emphases mine.)

<sup>7</sup>Ellen W. White, *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup>Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults*, Eerdmans, 1963.

<sup>9</sup>Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Copyright, 1890, 1894, 1901, 1902, 1906, The Mary Baker Eddy Foundation, p. 589.

<sup>10</sup>*ibid*, p. 583.

<sup>11</sup>Jack J. Blanco, *The Clear Word*, back cover of hardcover edition, © 2003, Review and Herald® Publishing Association.

<sup>12</sup>Jack J. Blanco, *The Clear Word Bible*, © 1994, Review and Herald® Publishing Association.

<sup>13</sup>Jack J. Blanco, *The Clear Word*, © 1994, Review and Herald® Publishing Association.

<sup>14</sup>Jack J. Blanco, *The Clear Word*, © 2003, Review and Herald® Publishing Association.

<sup>15</sup>Jack J. Blanco, *The Clear Word*, Pocket edition, © 2004, Review and Herald® Publishing Association.

<sup>16</sup>Jack J. Blanco, *The Easy English Clear Word*, © 2005, Review and Herald® Publishing Association.

<sup>17</sup>Jack J. Blanco, *The Clear Word for Kids*, copyright © 2005, Review and Herald® Publishing Association.

<sup>18</sup>Jack J. Blanco, *Savior*, © 2008, Review and Herald® Publishing Association.

<sup>19</sup>Jack J. Blanco, *The Clear Word*, © 2003, Review and Herald® Publishing Association.

<sup>20</sup>Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, John W. Reeves, *The Trinity*, p. 191, © 2002, Review and Herald® Publishing Association.

<sup>21</sup>George R. Knight, *Questions on Doctrine, Adventist Classic Library, Historical and Theological Introduction to the Annotated Edition*, p. xiv, © 2003, Andrews University Press.

<sup>22</sup>*Crosscurrents in Adventist Christology* is now available online and can be found at the following link: <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/books/webster/index.htm>.

<sup>23</sup>Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, John W. Reeves, *The Trinity*, p. 202, quoting Fernando Canale, from *Doctrine of God*, p. 148. © 2002, Review and Herald® Publishing Association.

**Thanks for your offer**

Thank you for your offer of a free subscription. We received two of your magazines from my wife's brother. I read both of them last night and found them to be very intriguing. My wife and I left the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1984 over the very doctrinal discrepancies that you describe in your publication.

FAIRBORN, OH

**God bless all of you**

Please continue in your great work among the Adventists. I read with humor some of the mail you receive—I know at times it must hurt, but some are so hurtful—at least the writer thinks they are—that they turn out funny. How misguided some have become. God bless all of you and your families.

MOUNTAIN HOME, AR

**Death, heaven, and Chris Lee**

I read your article about being with Jesus when I die (see "What Happens When We Die?" by Chris Lee, May/June, 2008). Unfortunately, you are playing God. You see, when one of those gang "brothers" died, the priest said that he was now in heaven with Jesus. If you were to die, should I say that you went to be with Jesus, too? Who gave you the authority to judge who should be with Jesus and who should not?

Somehow, determining who will be there is difficult. Some years ago, Dr. \_\_\_\_, the president of [an Adventist] University, was doing a good job. Anyone would have said that he would have gone to heaven when he died—except that he was found in a [gay] bar in the city. How can we

judge? Will Colleen Tinker or Lyn Behrens go to heaven? How about Saddam Hussein or Paul Newman?

Maybe the very religious types we could be sure will be there, and the really wicked, in our eyes, will not—but how about the in-between types like some church members I know, or John Travolta's son?

Will Chris Lee be in heaven when he dies?

Fortunately, only God can judge, and that is why there is an investigative judgment now going on in heaven to determine who will and who will not [qualify].

**Who gave you the authority to judge who should be with Jesus and who should not?**

If I were to be the judge, what standard would I apply to those I know? Would it be Standard 2465 for you and Standard 666 for Pope John Paul?

Scrap your theory; it is too dicey. Let God the Almighty be the Judge.

VIA EMAIL

**Chris Lee's answer:**

Thank you for reading *Proclamation!* magazine, and thank you for taking the time to write. It might be helpful to clarify the perspective

from which the article "What Happens When We Die" was written. The article was written by a believer to believers and specifically focused on what happens when those who are in Christ die. Nothing, not even death, can separate the believer from love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. For the believer, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

No attempt is made in the article to judge who is truly in Christ and who is not. I am certainly not qualified to do so. What I can say, on the basis of Scripture, is that there is only one standard which is applied to determine who will be with the Lord at death. That standard is whether that individual has believed in God's one and only Son, confessed Him as Lord, and believes that God raised Him from the dead. The person who has come to true saving faith in Jesus is in Him and will never be parted from Him.

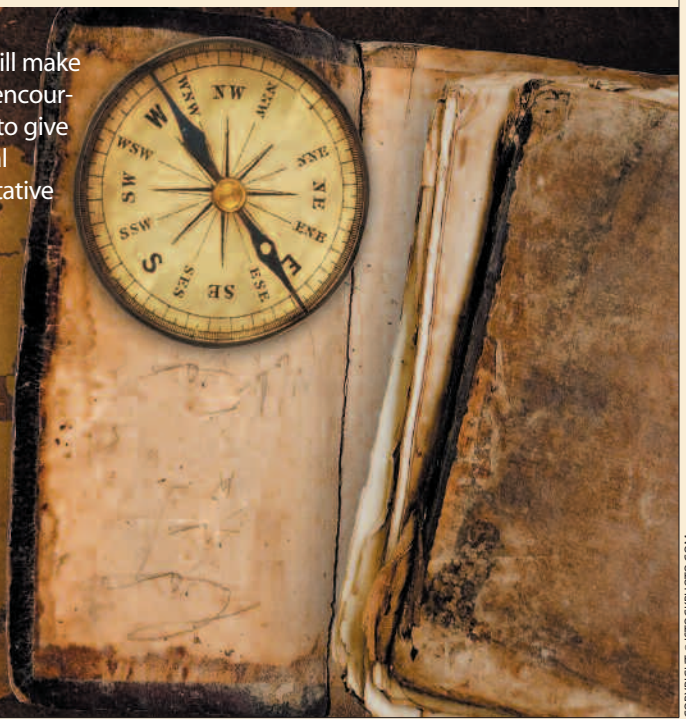
The article was written to those people who know they are in Christ. I am not qualified to see beyond the external person, but Jesus knows those who are His and they know Him. I cannot answer your questions about others, but the one question I can answer is, "Will Chris Lee be in Heaven when he dies?" The answer to that question is a very assured "Yes, absolutely!" How can I be so sure? Because I have quit depending on anything at all about myself to qualify me for Heaven. I have fully and completely put my all my hope, trust, and faith in Jesus as my Substitute. I am putting my full trust and dependence in Jesus' perfect life in place of my own imperfect life. I am putting my full trust and dependence in Jesus' perfect sacrifice as the full and com-

**SUMMER 2009  
Tour of  
Encouragement**

- June 9, 10 Auburn/Sacramento, California
- June 12, 13 Roseburg/Day's Creek, Oregon
- June 26, 27 Lincoln, Nebraska
- July 1, 2 St. Joseph/Berrien Spring, Michigan
- July 13, 14 Huntsville, Alabama
- July 17, 18 Fort Worth/Keene Texas

Updates, and times will be posted at: [www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.org](http://www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.org). If you live near one of these areas, mark the dates and plan to attend! If you plan to attend one of these meetings please inform us by email, [dale@ratzlaf.com](mailto:dale@ratzlaf.com), or phone (877) 349-6984 by May 3.

Dale and Carolyn Ratzlaff will make a road trip this summer to encourage former Adventists and to give presentations to evangelical Christians. To date their tentative itinerary is as follows:



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plete payment for every sin I have ever committed or ever will commit. I am putting my full trust and dependence in Jesus' righteousness covering my own filthiness. I am putting my complete trust and dependence in Jesus' bodily resurrection as the promise and guarantee of my bodily resurrection. I know I will be with Jesus always and forever, not because of anything I have ever done or ever could do, but because of what He has already done. He is completely sufficient and because of that I have great assurance and confidence.

#### Angels of a different gospel

I would like to have *Proclamation!* sent to my daughter-in-law as I cannot witness to her. I come across as attacking her church, but I would like to see her come out of the chains of condemnation and guilt because she cannot live

He will not look at anything against EGW.

I find it strange that anyone who studies the Bible could believe anyone claiming to be visited by angels (EGW and Joseph Smith). But I believe now that, if they were visited, Galatians 1:8 indicates they bought into a different gospel, not the gospel of the Word of God. Paul said not to listen to him or angels from heaven if they preached a different gospel.

VIA EMAIL

#### Jesus keeps the Sabbath

There is much I could say about my 7th Day (sic) Adventist faith. I thank God each day for it.

The cover feature "Protect the Faith Given To Us" by Chris Badenhorst (Nov/Dec, 2008), is so wrong. You only need to study the sanctuary truth and you find the Day of Atonement in type and antitype. It is so simple.

**It saddens me that former Adventists who were raised in Christian homes could just turn their backs on their first love and partner with Satan as the accuser of the brethren. There is so much good you could do with your time, energy, and money instead of trying to destroy God's church. His church will stand long after you and I are gone.**

up to the teachings of EGW. I would also like to have a list of questions to challenge her father (pastor of their SDA church) that he could not prove without using commentary outside the KJV Bible. He might be up to a challenge to prove his so-called truth if I had questions he could not back up with Scripture; only then could I see him yielding to the power of Holy Spirit. If he came out, many others might also.

### LIFE ASSURANCE MINISTRIES

#### 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

The articles about "What Happens When We Die?" (May/June, 2008) are so wrong. The Bible says death is a sleep—so simple.

The idea of God's law being changed or done away with is so wrong. If God could change, He would not have had to die—so very simple.

When I see Jesus in heaven, if He asks me why I keep the 7th Day Sabbath—my response will be simply—"Because You do!"

FLEETWOOD, PA

#### Comforting

Thank you so much for your ministry. I am always encouraged by reading *Proclamation!* So many people are not aware of the false teachings of the Adventist Church. It is comforting to know your ministry is trying to educate people.

My husband is very Adventist and unfortunately will not read *Proclamation!* Please pray for him.

IDAHO FALLS, ID

#### Partner with Satan

I have not written sooner because I've waited to read something worthy, something truthful, something lovely or a good report or

something to point me to God, and haven't found it, so please remove my name from your mailing list. It saddens me that former Adventists who were raised in Christian homes could just turn their backs on their first love and partner with Satan as the accuser of the brethren. There is so much good you could do with your time, energy, and money instead of trying to destroy God's church. His church will stand long after you and I are gone.

You seem to think the Adventist church is the only church that has problems. Believe me, when I was a member of the Baptist church, we had many more problems in Babylon. I will never go back there. The people love each other, but they don't love God.

He said, "If you love me, keep my commandments". I would rather be associated with people who are flawed sinners saved by grace and who love God and His Son Jesus than self-righteous hypocrites who dwell on the faults of God's people. You have no right to judge anybody, for with what measure you judge, God will judge you.

I am honored to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian and a member of His church that He is coming back for.

It is not too late for you to come back to Jesus. He loves you and is waiting for you to come home.

HENAGAR, AL

#### On the verge

I am on the verge of leaving the Seventh-day Adventist church after 36 years having been born into it. Your magazine would definitely encourage and give me the support that I need. I am living in Trinidad and Tobago (Caribbean). There is a strong Adventist presence in this part of the globe, and this is partly because of the lingering colonial mentality. I am praying for us!

VIA EMAIL

#### The work of Satan

It is with so much sadness and regret that I ask that my name be removed from your mailing list for a magazine I thought would be proclaiming the beauty of the gospel. Instead of proclaiming the gospel of love, it is proclaiming the gospel of hate about Seventh-day Adventists. It claims to correct errors in the Adventist Church...but it spends more time telling people why Adventists are cultists, misguided, and away from the mainstream.

For God's sake and for truth, stop leaching on Adventists and their supposed errors of doctrine. If you are in the truth you will survive without bashing on Adventists. Dale should concentrate the preaching of "his gospel" to

non-Adventists. To try to work among the “discontented” or innocent among the ranks is not the work of God...but of Satan.

So please take me off the mailing list...at least it will save you some dollars.

GLENDALE, CA

#### Helped us understand

Thank you so much for your wonderful publication. Our son-in-law was involved in Seventh-day Adventism, and your *Proclamation!* magazine helped my husband and me understand just what the Adventists believed. Praise God, our son-in-law has since left that group. We still enjoy your articles but now have internet access at home and can read your publication on line. For that reason (only) we would like for you to remove us from your mailing list. Thank you.

COVINGTON, OH

#### Editor's response:

The current issue of *Proclamation!* magazine, as well as all the past issues, can be read online at [www.lifeassuranceministries.org](http://www.lifeassuranceministries.org).

#### Really don't understand

I don't get it. I really don't understand why you seem to think you need to leave the Seventh-day Adventist church and its precious doctrines to feel free in Jesus. Every week on Friday night, I am reminded that God created the world in six days and then invited freshly made man to join Him in celebrating God's completed work on the Sabbath. Every Friday as the sun sets I lay aside all my works including anything I am tempted to do to try to earn my way in God's sight and rejoice to rest in His perfect and complete works. It is a weekly reminder that my works will never be sufficient but I can join Him and rest in His. It is so wonderful to set mine aside. Why would anyone ever want to give that up? Please remove our names from your mailing list as we don't find your magazine helpful in our walk with Jesus.

GLENDIVE, MT

#### Editor's response:

“Giving up” the Sabbath was one of the hardest things I had to face. I, too, loved the Sabbath and often said, “I don't understand how anyone can live without it.” I realized, however, that if I truly trusted Jesus alone for my salvation, I had to give up “hedging my bets” and risk whatever it might mean to leave behind my Sabbath-keeping. As long as I clung to the Sabbath, I knew I was quieting my deep fear that I could be lost if I gave it up.

When I finally decided to stop holding the Sabbath as “special” and deliberately did the laundry and worked on that day, I experienced the tangible presence of Jesus every day of the

following week—and beyond. I was not expecting that response. In fact, I experienced the peace and presence of Jesus throughout the week more profoundly than I ever had on Sabbath. Jesus confirmed that He is enough. He alone guarantees my salvation; He alone fulfills all the meaning of the sign of the Sabbath.

We who honored Sabbath as the sign and seal of our salvation have to be willing to submit ourselves to every word of Scripture, taking Jesus seriously when He says in Matthew 11:28, “Come unto me...and I will give you rest.” We

me. My brother has been to [Pastor Ratzlaff's] house twice. He wanted so badly to help correct your steps that are leading yourself and others to eternal death.

OSSEO, MI

#### Nearly doubted my salvation

I am writing to inform you of a change of address and to thank you for your magazine.

I have been receiving your publication for about four years now, and each one has been a blessing to me. I am an evangelical

**All of my life, I thought that there was really no real difference between myself and the Adventists that we knew. They just went to church on Saturday, and I went on Sunday. I was never aware of the true beliefs of the church until I began working with a woman who was Adventist who did her best to convert me.**

have to be willing to trust Jesus alone for our eternal security—without the “insurance” of honoring a day.

I have some questions for those of you who hold tightly to the Sabbath while asserting it is a sign of your trust: can you rest every day of the week, or is Sabbath the one day you can rest? Are you confident of your salvation? Could you be saved if you gave up the Sabbath?

Jesus calls us to risk trusting Him alone. He is faithful; He will not deceive us or confuse us. He cannot lie; He is all we need.

#### Nothing!

You stand for nothing. You are nothing. You don't have anything to believe in, so why can you say you're protecting it? Funny people.

ST. PETERBURG, FL

#### Heart is longing

I am a baptized and faithful member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from age seven up to 22, but I have been retreating from much restriction of the church for the past 13 years now. My heart longs to have a true fellowship with God. Now that I found your website, I am curious and wanted to know more about your ministry. Please send me your free *Proclamation!* magazine. Thank you, and God bless your ministry.

DAVAO CITY, PHILIPPINES

#### Leading others to eternal death

It is very sad that you have turned your back on God and His last message for a fallen world. Please stop sending your material to

Christian and was raised in the Baptist church. But I live in a town with a large Adventist university and was exposed to Adventism in a very minor form at a very young age.

All of my life, I thought that there was really no real difference between myself and the Adventists that we knew. They just went to church on Saturday, and I went on Sunday. I was never aware of the true beliefs of the church until I began working with a woman who was Adventist who did her best to convert me. I can tell you that it sent me scrambling to the Word to find out what I truly believed. I thought I knew what my beliefs were and could stand on them based on Scripture, but the constant, daily hounding of this co-worker almost made me doubt my salvation. That was when I found your website and subscribed to your magazine. It has been a true gift.

I no longer work directly with this person, but your magazine has truly helped me to stand firm in my beliefs. I have not yet gotten the courage to share your magazine with this person, but each time I get a new one, I keep it on my desk for several days as I'm reading it in the hopes that the door will open to share it with her.

So, thank you again for all that you do.  
HARVEST, AL

MAIL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO:

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**Y**esterday I threw it in the waste paper basket. It's not the kind of paper you have to shred; no one wants a December calendar with penciled scratches and red stars on special dates. There was no reason to worry about identity theft, and everything written was done and finished, never to be dealt with again.

I reflected on the ease with which I tossed out the very paper that had defined my life for 31 days. In retrospect, the energy required to follow the plans and attend the events on that page overwhelmed me. Now, this twelfth month of 2008 was thrown in the trash—gone like a vapor. Or was it?

My mind went back to one of the favorite places our group visited in November on the Holy Land trip. We stood on Mt. Nebo in the land of Jordan where Moses (escorted by the mysterious hand of the Lord) had peered longingly into the Promised Land. He'd finished writing the copy of his fifth book of God's will for His people. Now, he gazed sadly below on the land of God's promise: Jericho in front of him, Galilee to the North, and the winding Jordan River as it dumped into the Dead Sea in the South. He had forfeited the

right to enter this land because of a moment of anger. We have no record of the date or cause of Moses' death or how the Lord transferred his spirit from earth to heaven. We only have a brief reference to it by Jesus' half brother Jude because of the scuffle the devil and Michael the archangel had over Moses' bones (Jude 1:9).

But tucked away in the first Psalm of Book IV in Israel's song book, Moses gives us important

# INVESTING FOR ETERNITY

ELIZABETH INRIG

insights about the finished calendars of our lives. This is from a man who had to learn to fear the Lord while leading two million not-so-easy Israelites through rugged terrain for 40 years!

## Psalm 90:9-17

*"For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh. The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. Who considers the power of*

*your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you? So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom... Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil. Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!"*

So—that 2008 calendar we threw into the trash basket isn't just a collection of full days or busy activities. It has the potential of representing the best set of times and numbers we could ever have invested this year!

The smallest choices we make about how we spend days and hours matter to the Lord. It is 2009! Why not count your days (70 or 80 years minus your present age) so you can figure out how to wisely invest the time you have left for eternal matters. Any investment of heart, mind, and work for the King won't crash like the stock market did this past year. Why not ask the Lord for a heart of wisdom so what you do will be marked by His favor, motivated by His power, and established for His glory and the good of future generations! †



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