

FEATURE SECTION: HOW TO BE A BIBLICALLY-BASED PARENT

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Proclamation!

FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS
INQUIRING ADVENTISTS
SABBATARIANS
CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

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WHY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM PROMOTES CHOICE
ABORTION IN ADVENTISM



COLLEEN TINKER

ABORTION AND ADVENTIST PARENTING ADDRESSED BY THE GOSPEL

Many years ago I agreed to ghost-write a chapter of a book for an Adventist hospital administrator. This man was participating in a jointly-authored work, and his assignment was to submit a chapter on Adventists' contributions to the particular field being explored.

One day as I (still an Adventist) met with this man to discuss the details of the chapter and the sources I would need, the conversation turned—I have no memory of how or why—to the subject of abortion. This administrator told me that abortion is necessary as a means of helping underprivileged population groups. For example, he said, suppose a 15-year-old teenaged girl from an impoverished southern black family became pregnant. Unmarried, she would have no way to support her

ing pain and shame. Within Adventism, however, where life is defined as body + breath = living soul, that pain is explained and justified without ever addressing the guilt the mother carries. Only the gospel can address her ongoing suffering.

In this issue of *Proclamation!* we will look at the ways Adventism may contribute to hurtful parenting and how the gospel transforms us, even if we have no good human role models. We will explore how the Adventist doctrine of the nature of man supports an entrenched culture of abortion that hides just below the awareness of the members but which is allowed to flourish within the medical community.

Lisa Winn shares her story of how God removed her idol of perfect parenting, restoring her ability to love her infant son. Nicole Stevenson tells how the gospel transformed her ideas of how to manage her children and her reputation, and Mary Seeley Stockler gives us a glimpse of the dissonance, the pain, and the joy she has experienced as the Lord Jesus has transformed her through His gospel and rescued her and her children from their life-threatening environment in the SDA Reform Movement.

Amy Herwig, a home-schooling mother of three who has never been Adventist, shares with us how to live biblically so our children will learn to love Scripture from their youngest years, and I unpack the history of abortion within Adventism and show how and why it flourishes just barely out of sight. Of course, we also hear from our regular columnists, Rick Barker, Chris Lee, Carolyn Macomber, and our pastor, Dale Ratzlaff.

We pray that as you read, the power of the gospel of the Lord Jesus will transform you with the reality of His forgiveness, life, and truth. Only in Him is fulness of joy. †

We will explore how the Adventist doctrine of the nature of man supports an entrenched culture of abortion

child, and she herself would likely have to drop out of school. Abortion, he explained, would prevent adding another child to the welfare rolls; it would allow the girl to finish school and become qualified to get a job, and it would spare her family the new burden of caring not only for her but also for her baby. Abortion, he concluded with conviction, was a necessary service to protect quality of life and to prevent a growing welfare state.

His argument impacted me—indeed, this particular exchange is the only conversation I clearly remember from my collaboration with him—and I remember thinking it made logical sense, although I knew it did not address all the arguments against abortion. Nevertheless, his reasoning fit my Adventist understanding of life and the unborn.

Since that day, however, I have thought more deeply about how abortion affects the mother who sacrifices her baby in this way. Just as a parent never gets over the death of a child at any age, a mother who aborts will always carry the memory of the child that was part of her. Furthermore, women for whom abortions become a means of birth control cannot help but stifle their maternal instincts. Abortion is not only a decision that victimizes the weakest person involved, but it also affects a woman's emotions and reactions as she eventually parents any children she may have.

Abortion is perhaps the "ultimate" means of managing one's reputation in extreme circumstances; those watching without knowing might never perceive that a woman's success may have been partially purchased at the cost of soul-shatter-

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THE BIG DEAL ABOUT ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES

Why make such a big deal out of Antiochus Epiphanes and Daniel 8:14?

I have received many wide-ranging responses to the Daniel 8:14 article published in the last *Proclamation!* I will again summarize my understanding and address why we give this attention to such an obscure text.

Support for Antiochus Epiphanes (AE) as the fulfillment of Daniel 8:8-14 is strong:

- John Calvin understood that AE was in view in Daniel 8.¹
- Martin Luther said, “This chapter in Daniel refers both to Antiochus and Antichrist.”
- *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* applies this section of Daniel to AE.²
- *Keil-Delitzsch Commentary of the Old Testament* concludes that Daniel 8:8-14 is a prophecy of AE.³
- Des Ford said, “Daniel 8:10-14 had its primary application to the days of Antiochus Epiphanes.”⁴
- *Matthew Henry’s Commentary* states that AE is in view in Daniel 8.⁵
- Josephus applies Daniel 8 both to AE and to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Josephus has a different number for Daniel 8:14. Instead of 2300 “evening mornings” he lists the number as 1,296 “days”.⁶

THE REASON DANIEL 8:14 IS A HOT BUTTON IN ADVENTIST CIRCLES IS THAT ITS “CENTRAL PILLAR OF THE ADVENT MOVEMENT,” THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT, IS FOUNDED ON THIS OBSCURE APOCALYPTIC PASSAGE.

There are many other scholars, too numerous to list, that support AE as the fulfillment of Daniel 8:8-14.

Some of the letters mentioned that the vision (or book) of Daniel was sealed until the “time of the end” which, they said, would exclude AE. One writer said that the first “time of the end” was AD 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed. This view has biblical and historical support. This writer said the second “time of the end” was 1968. Another writer stated that the “time of the end” was 1948 when Israel was again given a home. In the Adventist schools I was taught that the time of

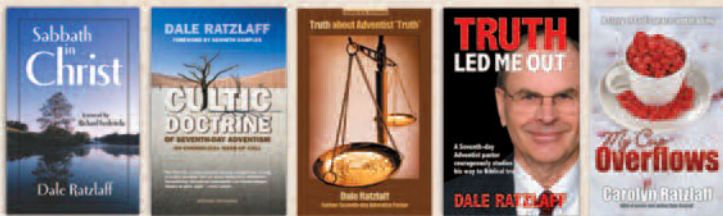
the end was 1798; therefore, the fulfillment of Daniel 8 must be after that date.

So what is the correct interpretation of Daniel 8:14? If you have done your own study, you will know that there is great disagreement among scholars. Here is our point, however. The reason Daniel 8:14 is a hot button in Adventist circles is that its “central pillar of the Advent movement,” the investigative judgment, is founded on this obscure apocalyptic passage.

This is the fundamental error of Adventism. Doctrine should always come from clear, didactic passages studied in context. Paul said that he “fully preached the gospel.” Jude tells us to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 1:3). Too often obscure, apocalyptic passages divert our attention from simple truths of the gospel. Rather than quibble over the exact or multiple interpretations of Daniel 8:14, let us feed on the richness of the gospel found, for example, in John and in Paul’s epistle to the Romans.

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).

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction (Rom. 3:21-22). †

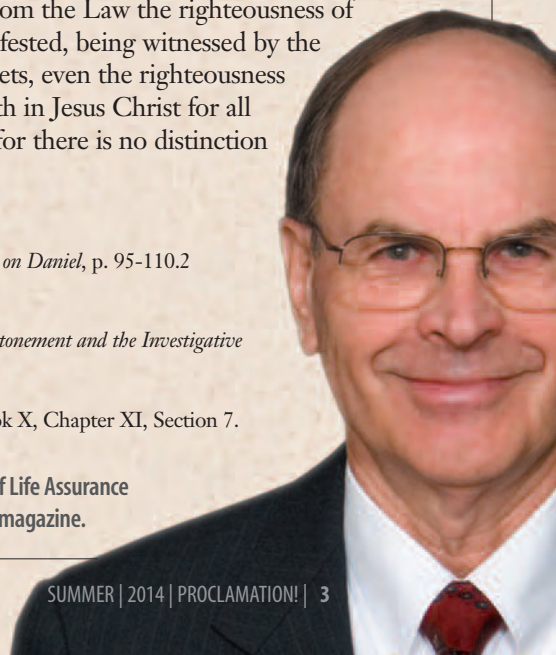


Dale and Carolyn Ratzlaff have authored five books concerning Adventism: *Sabbath in Christ*—a volume that explains new covenant Sabbath rest, *Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventism*—explores the unique doctrine of a pre-advent judgment that decides eternal destinies, *Truth About Adventist Truth*—a little book that’s perfect to give to Christians that need to understand Adventism, *Truth Led Me Out*—in which Dale Ratzlaff tells his own story of following Jesus, no matter the cost, and *My Cup Overflows*—Carolyn’s autobiography. Each of these books is available at Ratzlaf.com or by phoning (928) 554-1001.

Endnotes

- ¹ John Calvin, *Commentary on Daniel*, p. 95-110.2
- ² P. 95-101.
- ³ P. 295-306.
- ⁴ *Daniel 8:14, The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment*, p. A-76.
- ⁵ P. 1080.
- ⁶ Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book X, Chapter XI, Section 7.

Dale Ratzlaff is the founder of Life Assurance Ministries and *Proclamation!* magazine.



THE TRUTH HA

MARY SEELEY STOCKLER

Pedigree

I was born at White Memorial Hospital to two second-generation Seventh-day Adventists. A year after I was born, my mom got her medical degree from Loma Linda University, and then we moved to Uchee Pines Lifestyle Center in Alabama, where my first memories include Friday night vespers, thinking that pants under dresses was normal, and going to bed hungry because we were trying to follow Ellen White's counsel that two meals a day were better than three.

My father believed Adventist doctrine but didn't feel welcome in Adventist congregations (he called them the frozen chosen), so he often visited other churches because he felt less judged. One day my dad took us to a Christian concert put on by Agape International, and I responded to the call to accept Jesus as my Savior. They welcomed me to the family of God and sent me back to my home church to be baptized.

I was eight years old. My local Adventist pastor led me through a series of classes that included the special "truth for this time", baptized me, and thus set my life on track. I was now part of God's special people and had a chance to be a part of the last generation of people on earth who proved that God's law could be kept.

For a couple years I lived as a good little Adventist girl—learning all I could about wild edibles and ways to survive in the wilderness, wondering if I would be able to stay true to the truth when probation ended. I spent many bedtimes trying to remember all my sins so I could confess them.

Leaving the Church

Then came the pro-life movement. My parents, especially my dad, got involved in the movement in the early eighties and ultimately led us out of the Adventist church. We could not, my parents explained, support by our membership a church that refused to



AS SET ME FREE

take a pro-life stand against abortion. I agreed that abortion was a terrible sin and agreed to have my name removed from the church rolls—although I was under the impression that church membership was necessary for salvation. I was ten; I hoped God would still find a way to save me, but I figured I was probably already lost.

Still, we didn't reject the doctrines of Seventh-day Adventism. We started homeschooling, having home church, and looking for likeminded people with whom to fellowship. Within a couple years my dad made friends with some Mennonites and asked them if he could send us kids to their school. Surprisingly, they said yes, so long as we wore clothing according to their patterns, got rid of our radios, and didn't discuss our beliefs at school. I enjoyed the two years I spent there and learned a lot—but too soon eighth grade was over.

Searching and Return

By this time I was a teenager and was intent on figuring out how to live a perfect life so I would be “safe to save”. I read Ellen White's (EGW) *Messages to Young People* and made lists of do's and don'ts. I dreamed of being a missionary, and I questioned those around me about our doctrines, especially the Three Angels' Messages. “Oh, you know...” I would hear. I decided they didn't really know, either.

I went away to Pine Forest Academy in Mississippi when I was 15 and learned that some Adventists HAD come out and said abortion was wrong. I longed to be a part of God's church and believed Adventist doctrine was correct, and so I chose to rejoin the Adventist church and was baptized back in. Before the service, however, I asked the pastor why we believed that Ellen White was a prophet and was told that I didn't have to believe that to be a member. I could just not answer when that part of the vow was read.

After graduation I worked at Pine Forest and later at a lay-mission in Alaska. I became increasingly disillusioned; the Adventists I met all seemed to be Adventist in name only, and I could not find definitive answers to explain what a good Adventist really was. My confusion grew, and I finally got mad at God and told him that I wasn't going to try so hard any more to be Adventist; I was just going to be a good moral person, keep the commandments to the best of my ability, and if it turned out that my efforts were good enough, He could save me. If not, at least I wouldn't burn too long. Maybe someday I'd have time to study it all out for myself.

The Reform Movement

Meanwhile, my parents found the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement and invited one of their Bible Workers to stop by. When I returned home I found him regularly meeting with my parents. I joined in and was excited to find people who actually

seemed to be living what they preached—and who had better answers to explain why they believed the things they did.

The rapid-fire Bible studies (or studies from “inspiration”) usually lasted about two hours and seemed to explain the doctrines—although they seemed to think questions usually came from rebellion. They also believed the church took precedence over the individual member's conscience for, after all, Ellen White told us, “But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but surrendered” (*Testimonies For The Church*, vol. 3, p. 492). I asked questions anyway, but I soon decided I would understand it better if I studied it for myself. My confusion was my fault, not theirs.

My dad never did join the Reform Movement but my mom did, and a year later I did, too. Shortly after I was baptized into the Reform Movement, they offered me work as a Bible Worker, and they sent me to Missionary Training School. I went eagerly, still longing to study to show myself approved—longing to practice Adventism because I understood it for myself.

The Reform Movement Missionary School was a good experience. The lead teacher would assign topics, suggest resources (the Bible, Spirit of Prophecy books, Adventist books from before 1914, and so forth), and then have us present the doctrines from our own research. The first topic assigned to me was, “Why we don't accept the Apocrypha.”

The “right answer” to this question was that the Apocrypha teaches doctrines that contradict the Bible—for example, “angels lie.” This argument against the Apocrypha, ironically, came from a church that teaches doctrines that contradict the Bible—for example, that God lied when He held His hand over William Miller's mistaken date in 1843!

Studying to be approved

School was also life-changing in another way. I got to know my future husband. Two years later we married and were sent to work for the church in Ontario, Canada, and studying began in earnest. I had a great study partner now. We would gather as many Bible translations as we could, pull up a Greek/Hebrew lexicon and an E. G. White CDROM on the computer, and work on understanding doctrine. Before long we found ourselves in Romans and moved forward slowly, trying to understand each word, each sentence, and each passage before leaving it. Somewhere in the process we started focusing on the Bible more than Ellen White, promising ourselves to check out her commentary later.

I got tripped up early in the process. “The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17). What does that mean? “Whatever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23).

I'd been living my life trying to be right, but much of my observance was based on believing that if the church taught something, it was right. It was not by faith. I kept Sabbath—but not by faith. Suddenly I realized that my Sabbath observance was just as much a sin as not doing it at all—because I was not doing it by faith.

What was going to save me? I was proud; I'd done my best, even while my parents and I were not in the church, to hold to the doctrines of Seventh-day Adventism. Now I realized that, if I'm not alive in Christ, being a good moral person made me no less a sinner than a profligate is.

But what about the rules? Didn't being a vegetarian or wearing the right clothes or only making friends to evangelize count for something? No, Romans answered! Whatever is not of faith is sin.

Then what was I supposed to do? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31). But surely it's not that simple? "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1-4).

That was wonderful news! But how did that fit with Adventism? I decided then to take back my "deal with God" to be a good moral person. Now I would seek to live only by what was clear from Him. I started studying even harder, thinking I could study my way to salvation. It doesn't work!

I started studying topically and found that what the Bible said and what Adventism said did not agree. Time passed. Our three children were born, and we moved to California. Still I kept trying to harmonize my Adventist doctrines with Scripture, to no avail. The Bible was clear, but it did not mesh with Ellen White's teachings.

Answers

One day I came across an Internet forum. My faith in Ellen White had been thoroughly shaken already, but I was still put off by the "anti-Adventist" tirades I often saw online. This time I read that forum, and eventually I wrote to the moderator, Colleen Tinker. I asked her to pray for me if she wasn't too busy, and to write back if she had time. It all spilled out: "I'm having trouble seeing how Ellen

White is a prophet, and what about Sabbath, the state of the dead, diet and alcohol, and meat eating? Oh—and if you're going to get rid of the Ten Commandments, let me know before you start sleeping around!"



Mary Seeley Stockler grew up in a family that spent time in Adventism, then moved into a conservative Mennonite community, and finally landed in the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement (SDARM). Ten years ago she learned the gospel and was born again. Her new life and faith in Jesus were not understood nor well-received within her SDARM community, and for the sake of safety, the state's district attorney allowed her to move with her three children to her home state of Kentucky where the four of them are thriving and attending a Lutheran church in Glasgow.

Colleen wrote back to me and said, "God doesn't trick us. Ask Him to take away what is not from Him and to confirm what is."

I had worked myself into a corner of contradictions and confusion and could not find my way out. So, at work one day, I took a minute and asked God to take away what wasn't from Him and to confirm what was. Before I opened my eyes, I knew I was no longer an Adventist.

I felt like a cage door had opened and I was free. When I stepped out, I found the openness of God's grace; He really knew me—with all my pride, Adventist arrogance, and attitude—and He loved me. He took those away and let me know that I was safe in His hands.

This change did not sit well at home. One of my heartbreaks to this day is that my study partner couldn't grasp the gospel. As soon as I told him I couldn't accept Ellen White, he told me, "There's nothing for you here." He told me that I would become an atheist, that there is no reason to believe in God if one doesn't believe in Ellen White.

I protested that my reason for leaving Adventism is for the joy of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone. He was unmoved, and thus began the best and the worst year of my life, 2004. For the first time I knew I was safe in Jesus, but at home there were endless discussions, dueling prayers, and struggles. My husband insisted that the God I served was not his, and that we were unequally yoked.

One day during this tumultuous time, a friend of mine suggested that I ask God to fill the house and send away what wasn't from Him. So I went from room to room and asked God to send away what wasn't from Him and to fill it with His presence instead. That evening when my husband came home, he walked in the door and said, "I don't belong here anymore." That night he prayed for God to come back to the house. I had not told him what I had done. Looking back, I am certain that he did worship a different god than I do.

By the end of that year, it was no longer safe to stay there. It felt like stepping off a cliff to take the children and leave, but every time I took a step, the ground came up to meet us. God never left us hungry or shelterless or without clothes. When we left we had what was on our backs and in the car, but every step of the way, what we needed was provided.

I had been a proud Adventist. My heritage was there. My life had been there. But God gave me something so much better—Himself!

"But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith."

His truth has set me free! †

Fundamental Belief #10: Experience of Salvation

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example. This faith which receives salvation comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment.

Comments About The Belief Statement

At face value this statement has much with which we agree, and Damsteege's explanation in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* is even more compelling, including:

- The Holy Spirit is responsible for creating our repentance
- The faith by which we are saved is a gift from God
- We can have assurance of salvation now

Unfortunately, this statement is an example of the deceptive language common in Adventist publications. At face value it appears Adventism teaches the assurance of our salvation, but exactly the opposite is taught. Ellen White counsels,

Those who accept the Saviour, however sincere their conversion, should never be taught to say or to feel that they are saved (*Christ's Object Lessons* p. 155.1).

The entire concept of salvational assurance is counter to Fundamental Belief #24 concerning the Investigative Judgment. If one's salvation is secure, there is no point in conducting any investigation. The key to understanding this deceptive language, however, is a careful look at the beginning of the last sentence where one finds that "abiding in Him" is what provides the assurance. While this statement sounds very acceptable to evangelical ears, "abiding in Christ" has a different connotation within Adventism than within evangelicalism. Within Adventism, one "abides" in Christ by living without willful sin including observing the seventh-day Sabbath. Ellen White, in fact, specifically describes this Adventist form of "abiding":

In Christ, God has provided means for subduing every sinful

ADVENTISM'S FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF #10

EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION:

SALVATION
NOT SECURE

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**Within Adventism, one "abides" in Christ
by living without willful sin including
observing the seventh-day Sabbath.**

Church, vol. 5, p. 214).

Not only must we have characters that are perfect, but "it is left to us to remedy" our sinfulness. It is apparent, even within these relatively orthodox sounding statements of the official belief and unofficial explanations, that Christ's imputed righteousness is not sufficient for our salvation. We must also change our characters to become "fit for heaven". The little "but" attached to the true Gospel moves it from true to false. This little "but" is enough to criticize Adventism for teaching "another gospel".†

¹ Jerry Moon, 2003, "Are you

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trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong. But many feel that they lack faith, and therefore they remain away from Christ (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 429.1).

Each sin moves the Adventist from the position of abiding in Christ to a point of separation from Christ. Forgiveness is possible, but not guaranteed, through confession of the sin—since those who do not show sufficient repentance will not receive forgiveness. Ultimately, the only way that an Adventist can be certain that he or she is abiding in Christ is to live without sin. This theoretical sinlessness would resolve the apparent contradictions and confusion about how an Adventist can have assurance of salvation; the assurance is found in living a sin-free life. This conditional assurance is presented by Dr. Moon in his work arguing that Ellen White taught that Adventists can have assurance, if they are "living the biblical conditions for assurance" which include not "rejecting the law".¹

Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement (*Testimonies For the*



LISA WINN

DAWN GREGG PHOTOGRAPHY

s for God, his way is perfect: the Lord's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him. For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure (Ps. 18:30-32).

Perfect Preparation

Before I gave birth to my son Daniel, I read every pregnancy book I could get my hands on and scoured the internet for articles on pregnancy and child rearing. I imagined bliss-filled days—my baby and I. We would cuddle, read endless stories, and play and laugh together. Part of the way through my pregnancy I quit my job. My husband Jonathan and I bought a house, and we moved out of the city. I was going to be the perfect mother, the perfect homemaker, and the perfect wife. I would always be skinny, yet there would always be warm, homemade cookies in the cookie jar! The house would be perpetually clean, and my family would be content in all their physical and emotional needs, having my undivided attention. Of course, if you had asked me, I would have told you that I knew this dream was not possible, and that I would fail in one way or another, and that even if I could live up to my expectations for myself, my family could probably not live up to my expectations. But that didn't stop me from aspiring to this vision of perfection deep down inside.

Preparing for baby Daniel was new and exciting. I meticulously researched baby products, making sure he would have the safest environment and the coolest toys. Keeping in line with my expectations of perfection, I started having early labor pains at 12:01am on my due date! We had taken a natural childbirth class because I had decided I wanted to experience the full weight of the Genesis

curse, and give birth without any pain medication. I wasn't convinced it was safer or healthier for the baby or for me; I just got a kick out of trying! By the time I hit seven centimeters, I am sure the whole hospital floor could hear my screams. One epidural and four hours later, little Daniel popped out with rosy cheeks and a full head of hair. He had big blue eyes and tiny baby acne on his nose. The first time I held him was surreal: he was just a little stranger in my arms even though he had been with me in my belly for nine months.

I wanted to be the best mommy ever for Daniel. I was going to self-sacrificially give him my whole life—everything I could for this little goober. I would raise him to be the cutest, brightest, politest, healthiest home-schooled child on the block, if not on the continent. Boy, was I setting myself up for disappointment!

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you (Rom. 12:3).

"Breast is Best"

We had taken a breastfeeding class at the hospital, and naturally I was going to breastfeed my baby. The class made nursing sound so essential and so easy. My mother had failed to breastfeed me, because, as she says, "It hurt!" In my mind I don't think I had forgiven her for what might have been a lack of two IQ points (according to studies!). There was one complication, however: Daniel would not latch. We spent two days in the hospital trying to get him to nurse, and four lactation consultants later I found myself at home, tethered to a breast pump with my little goober screaming for his milk.

HOW I GAVE UP BEING A

Perfect Mother

Jonathan and I were both sleep-deprived by this point. We were still learning how to take care of Daniel, and I had to wake up three to four times during the night to pump. Between pumping and feeding I would have been up all night, so Jonathan quickly took over bottle-feeding at night as well as during the day, and I just pumped milk. I became a veritable milk-making machine.

I cannot rationally explain to you the instinctual desire I had to nurse my newborn infant. The fact that I was struggling to make it happen broke my heart. Just a few more days, I'd tell myself, and surely he will latch. We would visit the lactation consultant, and with her help plus six hands, we could get Daniel to nurse. However, as soon as I would return home, we could not reproduce the phenomenon! Days turned into weeks, and the doctors encouraged me to "keep trying!" The people closest to me, however, could see me quickly deteriorating. I was losing sleep... and sanity.

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! (1 Cor. 10:12).

At moments I felt near to giving up, but I had become a slave to my own expectations. When I would consider quitting and switching my little goober to formula, the guilt I would feel was overwhelming. I would cry myself to sleep—I would cry at the thought of the trials of persevering, and cry at the thought of quitting. I felt that if I were to give up and switch to formula, it meant I did not love my baby. I would be giving up on him, denying him, and somehow missing out on a special mother-infant bond. The most important thing to me was that my baby was drinking breast milk. It didn't matter at what cost. Formula was "poison." If I were not able to feed Daniel my own milk, then certainly I would be a failure.

It is surprising how quickly I replaced my unmet expectations with new ones. If I wasn't able to breastfeed, I could certainly control every other facet of my existence. Ironically, I was barely spending any time with my baby. The house had to be clean, the laundry done, and I rarely took the time to hold my newborn son.

Subconsciously, I had an all-or-nothing mentality. If I could not be perfect for him, I wanted nothing to do with him. Jonathan, who had already taken copious amounts of time off of work, was relegated to 90% of baby-care, and when I was not sitting in the corner, suctioned to a breast pump, I was furiously running around the house doing chores.

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Lk. 10:41,42).

An Idol Is Born

I never meant for my list of rules to trump loving and caring for my son. That list existed because I loved him! I can imagine how offended I would have been had you told me that I was neglecting Daniel. I did not realize that the list had become an idol in my heart. I had unwittingly replaced the object of my affection with a set of rules. I had begun to love my idealistic view of "the perfect mother" more than my actual family. All this time I thought I was being a good mother and wife.

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away (Is. 64:6).

Under all the stress and lack of sleep, it wasn't long before Jonathan and I started fighting. Being the closest person to me, he could see how my obsession with nursing was destroying me. He went out and bought a container of formula and told me to quit pumping. It hurt me that he was not more supportive. Couldn't he see how hard I was trying to make the best decisions for our baby? When he would encourage me to quit, I couldn't see him as trying to help me but only as a wicked temptation to give up. I felt on top of things—I felt in control and coherent. I didn't realize I was slowly self-destructing.

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. (Jas. 4:1-4)

When Love Grows Cold

"O love is sweet and love is kind; the sweetest flow'r when first it's new, but love grows old and waxes cold and fades away like morning dew" (lyrics from "The Water is Wide").

It is shocking how so much love, when filtered through a perfectionist mindset, can turn into so much resentment and hate. The day of reckoning came: Jonathan needed to go back to work, and I was forced to deal with the reality of motherhood. Nothing was going my way. I remember one afternoon trying to put Daniel down for a nap, desperately needing that precious hour of rest. The crying babe would not go to sleep. I could feel the rage building up in me, and I wanted to scream at him and shake him. I was angry at him for having destroyed my body, taking over my life, and taking away all my sanity.

My days used to be spent somewhat selfishly, doing what I wanted, and now this tiny entity was demanding every ounce of my attention and energy. My list of rules hadn't left any room for him in my life. I wasn't able to give him what he needed the most: my patience, grace, mercy, and love. I had been trying to show him love through my idol of perfectionism; I wasn't able to simply let go and joyfully love my baby.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law (Gal. 5:22-23).

Destroying Idols

Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them (Jonah 2:8).

In His infinite wisdom and mercy, God snatched away my idol. After two months of pumping milk—and not having much strength or energy left, I noticed a large lump on my right breast. I had an abscess filled with backed-up milk, and it was tainted with MRSA, a serious bacterial infection. There was a point during this experience where I genuinely thought I might die (perhaps an exaggerated feeling, but very real at the time). I ended up in the emergency room twice, and they put me on a myriad of antibiotics. The doctors concurred: it would be wisest for me to stop my milk supply and switch Daniel to formula. Even though I complied with great sadness, I can't express the immense relief I felt at the same time. I was truly humbled, yet thankful that my idol had been ripped from my hands.

[Our human fathers] disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it (Heb. 12:10,11).

I realized that I had been rescued from subjugation to a yoke of my own creation! I now had concrete evidence that I could not be a perfect mother, and frighteningly, the more I had tried, perhaps the worse parent I had



DAWN GREGG PHOTOGRAPHY

Lisa (Gilbert) Winn graduated from Adventism's Pacific Union College in 2002 with a B.S. in graphic design. After college she moved to North Hollywood, California, where she worked as a video editor. She was baptized at Grace Community Church on February 10, 2007, and later met her husband, Jonathan Winn, at Calvary Bible Church in Burbank. Lisa now lives in Yucaipa, California, with her husband and their new baby boy, Daniel. They are currently members of Trinity Church in Redlands.

become. I had barely started down this journey of motherhood and had already failed in every aspect that I deemed essential!

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (2 Cor. 12:9).

While I am still saddened sometimes when I think about not being able to breastfeed Daniel, I am far more thankful for God's grace in rescuing me from my bondage of perfection.

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law [in my case, my made up law of perfect motherhood], but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith (Phil. 3:7-9).

Seeking Satisfaction in Christ

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:23,24).

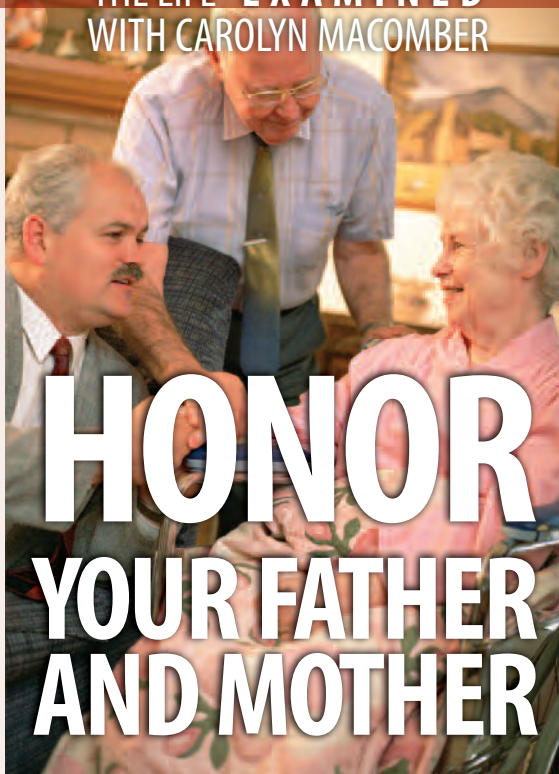
As I write this, Daniel is 9 months old. It has still been quite an adjustment. Even though I would probably call him "the best baby in the world," being a mother definitely has not lived up to my unrealistic expectations. He isn't the perfect baby, and I am far from the perfect mother. I am surprised by how often I feel like I am failing him or doing the wrong thing, or how often I find myself frustrated by him, or acting selfishly towards him (wishing I had more time to myself, or wishing he could appreciate all that I do for him).

I know I can't base my worth on fleshly accomplishments: how clean my house is, how soon my baby walks or talks or feeds himself... I have humbly accepted that I can't be the perfect mother. The only way I am perfect is through Jesus Christ, and knowing this frees me from the cares of worldly pursuits, as well as my unrealistic expectations of motherhood.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory (Col. 3:1-4).

I am only able to love truly and selflessly through my faith in Christ. I will always disappoint me, and my family will most likely disappoint me at times, but only in Christ lies true satisfaction and rest. Only in this satisfaction, through the work of the Holy Spirit, can I truly give selflessly and expect nothing in return.

We love because he first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19). †



HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

**...these verses are saying that
adult children need to be set free
to live their own lives—just as the
parents once left to live theirs.**

The topic for this column is laced with potential emotional triggers, because all of us have parents. Moreover, many reading this column are parents. Parent relationships can span the entire spectrum from loving to abusive, from shaming to empowering, and from guilt-producing to forgiving. Since the spectrum is vast, I will limit my focus to the commands to honor one's parents and for parents not to embitter their children.

Recently I had a conversation with an adult child who was distraught over a recent talk with his/her parents. (To protect confidentiality I will use general terms.) Unfortunately, the parent was wielding the Bible like a sword to get a desired response from the adult child. Instead of seeking to find common ground, the parent was manipulating the adult offspring with Scripture. The point of this exchange, in fact, wasn't biblical obedience but spiritual abuse. I was saddened as I listened. The parent quoted the command in Exodus, "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you," and then said, "I don't understand how you can say that you follow the Bible when you don't honor me, your parent." The parent wanted to push past a boundary the adult child had tried to set and was upset about bumping into it. The "child", on the other hand, wanted to follow Scripture but knew that a boundary needed to be established.

When Scripture is wielded in this way it always concerns me. This type of Scripture use is not meant to encourage or to convict but to produce false guilt for selfish reasons and gain.

Let me be clear; I do believe we are to follow Scripture and honor our fathers and mothers. This command becomes tricky, however, when manipulation or abuse is present. Often those who quote, "Honor your father and mother" seem to forget that Scripture also commands, "Parents, do not exasperate your children" (Eph. 6:4).

Instead of using the word "exasperate", the English Standard Bible translates the Greek word in Eph. 6:4 (*parorigzo*) as "provoke to anger", or irritate. Parents are not to provoke their children. Similarly, Colossians captures the tension in parent-child relationships in chapter 3:20-21: "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged." The Greek word *erethizo*, which is translated above as "embitter", can also be translated "to incite". Moreover, the word for "obey" means "to listen". In other words, children are to listen to their parents, for this pleases the Lord, and parents are not to incite or embitter their children.

How does a person deal with the tension between honoring one's parents and setting healthy boundaries? Does honoring a parent mean doing whatever they ask? Are children, even adult ones—to obey their parents even when the parent asks the child to do something against the child's own conscience? These questions are heavy. Furthermore, each backdrop behind these questions is different. It would not be wise, therefore, to write a quick answer to such emotionally charged concerns.

Nevertheless, I do want to point out a designation in Scripture that identifies when someone's child transitions into behaving as an adult. Genesis 2:24 mentions that a man will leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and Mathew 19:5 echoes this command. The word for "leave" in each of these verses indicates departing, going away almost with a component of abandoning. In other words, these verses are saying that adult children need to be set free to live their own lives—just as the parents once left to live theirs. This "leaving", however, is hard to do when a parent's heart has been enmeshed with one's child. Ironically, giving an adult child the freedom to leave also gives him or her the freedom to come back and visit—guilt free.

In conclusion, adult children are not to be controlled or manipulated into doing whatever a parent asks (embittering), and Scripture asks both the parent and the child to give precedence to the marriage relationship.

Ultimately, these commands are for us all, "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged" (Eph. 6:1, 4). Finally, these commands clarify as we live them out with the sacrificial love Jesus said would be the mark of His disciples (Jn. 13:35). †

Carolyn Macomber was a doctoral student at Andrews University when she discovered inconsistencies between Adventism and the Bible. She withdrew her membership from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2009. She is a member of The Chapel Evangelical Free Church in St. Joseph, Michigan, where she is the leader of a Former Adventist Fellowship. She works helping families prepare their children for school readiness.



HOW THE GOSPEL TRANSFORMED MY PARENTING

NICOLE STEVENSON

Looking back over the four years that I've been out of Adventism, I'm overwhelmed with how much the Father has worked in me to align me with truth and reality. He has been dealing with my heart in many ways, but I've been especially aware of His pruning of me in my parenting. Through Scripture reading, trials, and examples from the body of Christ, I've come to see how different my understanding of "good parenting" was from what God calls parents to be. At the same time, I have also seen that my experience in Adventism as well as my Adventist understanding of God played a significant role in my misconceptions about successful parenting.

It is no surprise to me that I needed a great deal of help with parenting. For various reasons much of what I learned about raising children came from looking outside of my own growing-up experiences. I actually spent a great deal of time studying other families, watching how teachers interacted with us students, and paying close attention to the gossip of the adults around me as they spoke about so and so's parenting or children. Being a keen observer driven by the desire to get things "right", I came to believe that "good parents" can control their children and elicit unquestioning obedience. Thus, the children of "good parents" grow up to be well-liked, well-rounded, and successful contributors to society.

This result, I concluded, could happen in a couple of different ways. On the one hand, middle to lower middle-class children, fearful of angering or disappointing their parents, could work hard to maintain good standing with the adults in their lives. In these cases, parents managed their children with approval for good behavior and shame or outrage for unacceptable behavior. On the other hand, more well-to-do parents had more leverage and were able to "inspire" their kids to work hard and obey by offering them incentives such as money, possessions, and privileges which would be theirs if they conformed to expectations.

As I studied those around me I also noticed how adults handled disobedience. Truthfully, disobedience was more familiar to me than conformity; had you asked either of my parents, they likely would have told you that I was one of those difficult children. Many of my peers (probably also in that "difficult child" category) received the same reaction I did when we disappointed our parents: they withdrew. The withdrawal could be either emotional or physical and could include steps as drastic as sending us away to boarding school or to a distant state to live with a different parent or relative. In fact, the greater or more public the offense, the greater or more public the withdrawal.

The message jelled: good behavior meant acceptance and perhaps rewards; bad behavior meant withdrawal and shame no doubt intended to motivate new obedience.

Prepared for parenting

Eventually I met my husband, was married, and had children of my own. As we entered the world of parenting, my husband and I were prepared! We had a long list of things we would never allow our kids to do including never allowing them to throw food on the floor at restaurants, never allowing our little girl to scream when she played or threw fits, and never allowing our son to be one of those rowdy, rough-housing boys. Moreover, our list included things we would never do. We would never count to three to speed up obedience; we would never permit our home to be overrun by toys or by reruns of Elmo—you get the drift.

Yes, we were "those" people—trained, disciplined, and ready to rear up our self-controlled, well-rounded, successful children.

Needless to say, reality hit us hard. Our expectations, which we thought we could easily accomplish, became the condemnation of our own hearts as we watched our ideals prove to be impossible. I, the stay-at-home mother, was trying my hardest to follow the

rules I had so carefully learned through years of observation—and I was failing to be a good parent.

I see my sin

It was after we left Adventism and I had begun spending a great deal of time in Scripture that things started to change for me. As I began to seek to live under the authority of the Bible and to trust that God's word was sufficient and trustworthy, I began to see the Lord meeting me in the places of my greatest need. For me, as a mother, that needy place was in my parenting. The Holy Spirit met me in the full light of truth and began to reveal to me the wretched sin in my heart that was manifesting in my attempts to be a good parent. I came to see that the lack of parenting I received while growing up and my own broken reactions to the abuses I endured as a child were driving my need to “get it right” and to receive external accolades that would reassure me that I was doing better than my own parents had done for me. I came to see that the trauma I experienced from the sins done against me as a child, trauma I had not previously acknowledged nor submitted to the Lord, was causing me to sin against my own children. In reality, my desire to “get it right” was nursed by a need for my children to make me look good in order to soothe my own fears that I would never be successful, rather than by a commitment to nurture them and to teach them trust and godly obedience.

I believe it is God's grace and entrustment that He gave my husband and me two incredibly strong-willed children. I was learning that when it came to a battle of the wills, we were all tied for first place. Increasingly the notion of “breaking their wills” to elicit obedience was becoming absurd and beginning to look abusive. Furthermore, I was discovering that children with strong wills are not motivated by losing their prized possessions, because there is no possession they prize more than “victory” in a battle. Everything I understood about controlling or inspiring obedience evaporated, and I was left helpless and filled with shame and inner rage about my own inadequacies.

Furthermore, I saw myself repeating a pattern that I had despised in adults when I was growing up: the more publicly my child would rebel, the angrier and more punitive I became. The Holy Spirit made it clear to me that yelling and shaming were destroying my older child (the younger was still a baby at the time) and that I was living well outside the realm of “self-control”; I was convicted that I was in sin, and I needed help.

By this time I had already learned to trust the people God put in my life to help me grow in Him, and I decided to seek help from my dear friend and mentor from the local former Adventist group. She prayed for me and my son and was a great source of support to me during this time. She shared her own battle with yelling when her children were young and her own sense of helplessness to get them to obey as she thought they ought. She told me how she repented of her yelling and how the Lord helped her learn how to deal with her kids by imagining herself responding to Jesus instead of to her own anger.

As we discussed where we learned our early ideas of parenting, I began to see that my focus was wrong. My reactions to my son were rooted in my own brokenness and sin! He was not the problem, I was. As we talked she told me to pray that the Lord would love my kids through me and to thank Him for what He was doing that I couldn't see. We had talks like these many times, and then one day, everything changed.

“I can't obey...”

It was an afternoon like many others, and my son and I had locked horns over a much-needed nap. This time, though, I recognized our dynamics and saw where we were headed. Tearful and trembling with frustration, I walked away from the situation and went into my bedroom and prayed. I asked the Lord to love my son through me and to help me be the parent



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I WAS DEEPLY MOVED THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT ALLOWED ME TO SEE MY SON'S NEED FOR COMPASSION, FOR TRUTH, AND FOR THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL, AND HE ALLOWED ME TO SEE HIS HELPING AND COMFORTING HIM.

He wanted me to be. I told Him how badly I wanted to be a good mother, but I had no idea what to do with the sin in me. I pled desperately for Him to help me.

I finally emerged and slowly walked down the hall to my son's room, continuing to pray in my heart as I went. Then I saw him; he was face-down on his bed, crying helplessly. As I entered he turned and looked at me. Huge tears had smeared his face, and his eyes were filled with despair.

Suddenly I saw the effects of my shame and anger on my son's heart, and I was overcome with grief and compassion for him. He saw that my face was no longer tense, and he felt safe to begin to speak, "Mommy, I want to obey you so much, but no matter how hard I try I just can't..."

In that moment his sorrow and honesty articulated the agony in my own heart that, just moments before, I had been pouring out to the Lord. I began to cry with him, identifying with his despair, and took him into my arms. I asked him to forgive me for yelling and explained that I was sinning when I spoke that way to him. "That is not how God teaches His children," I said.

We talked there on the floor of his room, and I reminded him of the gospel and all we had been teaching him about human depravity and God's grace. In those moments we were brother and sister in Christ, and we shared in the agony of longing to please God and being confronted with our own sins of rebellion. We prayed together, and when we were done my son looked at me with joy in his eyes and said, "Mommy, He did it! He helped me! I know I can obey you!" Then he climbed into bed peacefully and fell asleep.

I was deeply moved that the Holy Spirit allowed me to see my son's need for compassion, for truth, and for the hope of the gospel, and He allowed me to see His helping and comforting him. The wonder of this exchange was not that my son slept; it was that the Holy Spirit allowed me to see past my sinful anger to recognize what my son needed, and that He equipped me to provide it!

Informed by the word

Once more the Holy Spirit helped me see how biblical reality informs every area of life. I am learning that it is unrealistic to expect unquestioning-first-time-perfect obedience from my children. As my son and I talked together that afternoon about the human condition and the hope of the gospel, I realized that, according to Scripture, what anyone should expect from their child is depravity, and that what God expects from Christian parents is that we train up our children in biblical truth, teaching them obedience to God through a heart changed by the gospel. I've realized that what my children need is loving parents who

take their hands and keep them close, even in their disobedience, while guiding and discipling them with the truth of God's counsel. They need our unconditional love and relationship—the very things we receive from Jesus!

When my heart was embittered and I was pierced within, then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before You.

Nevertheless I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterward receive me to glory (Ps. 73:21-24).

Now I frequently ask for my children's forgiveness when I sin against them in frustration or anger, and in turn they often do the same. These moments have opened up more opportunity to show them that God is bigger than mom and dad and that we are all sinners in need of a Savior and of His word. As time has passed my kids have come to know that God is "compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness and truth, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin..." (Ex. 34:6,7a). Both of my kids are able to separate my husband and me from the ways God deals with them because we have been honest with each other. We are all growing in Christ and in our understanding of truth; all four of us are sinners who need Jesus.

The Holy Spirit convicted me that at the root of my efforts to control my son was an idol of "perfect" parenting to which I clung, hoping that I would be honored for my success and thus find relief from my shame. Certainly it is still my desire that my children learn obedience, contribute to society, and learn to love and be loved. These desires are not wrong!

Now, however, I see that my fundamental responsibility to my children is to point them to the Lord Jesus Christ as their primary object of affection and obedience. Their purpose is to bring glory to Him—not to me. My shame is not their problem. As I have asked the Lord to deal with my shame, I have been learning how to remain emotionally present with my children even when they are acting out. Both they and I are learning that while there are consequences for poor behavior, those consequences don't include emotional punishment or loss of "standing" in the family. As these truths have fallen into place in my life, I find myself becoming less self-protective, and I understand in a new way that the object of glory in all things must be the Triune God.

Adventism's role

As I've reflected on how the culture of Adventism affected my upbringing and my understanding of parenting, I've identified two ways it shaped my perception of family dynamics. First, both chil-

dren and parents learn that obedience must be exacted by fear of shame and loss, and second, it is the responsibility, within Adventist culture, of the least “important” members to uphold the reputation of those with the greater importance.

For example, all one must do is read Ellen G. White’s letters to her sons or Arthur Maxwell’s *Bedtime Stories* to see a pattern of shame and fear of loss being used to engender unquestioning obedience in children. With Ellen White being “a continuing and authoritative source of truth” (Fundamental Belief #18) and A. Maxwell lining the bookshelves of most good Adventist libraries, it’s no wonder this sort of parenting permeates the Adventist culture.

Even God, as I understood Him, punished, rejected, and ousted human failures. I had been taught in Adventist schools that if I was not prepared to die one day for the Sabbath, or if I didn’t confess every sin properly, I would be cast into the lake of fire. Similarly, unless I had the character of Christ perfectly reproduced in me and I kept the law, especially honoring the Sabbath, I could not be saved. My success, therefore, as a daughter, a parent, or a child of God depended upon “getting it right” and thus avoiding the shame of rejection and ultimate loss.

Closely related to avoiding shame was the issue of “reputation management”. In my experience as an Adventist I knew that it was my job to uphold and defend the reputation of my faith community, academic institutions, and religious authorities to outsiders. One way I protected them was by not sharing all the peculiar details of our beliefs with non-Adventists unless I knew they would be easily accepted. I also knew that it was our job as Adventists to share the “fuller message of the gospel” (according to the writings and visions of Ellen White) and to strive to vindicate God to the watching universe through my obedience to the 10 Commandments. It was reputation management from the bottom up!

As I’ve processed how these underlying dynamics shaped my ideas about parenting, I have become convinced that when leaving a religious cult it’s not enough simply to reject false doctrines. The nature of a cult is that it permeates every area of one’s life and world view because it requires one to experience life outside of reality. It is my opinion that Adventism promotes a toxic view of relationships that, intentionally or not, creates an environment where abusive family systems can hide. Without the reality of the biblical gospel, there is no ground of truth to reveal and correct the dynamics of blame, shame, and protecting the secrets.

If those of us who grew up in a world of insidious deception are left to our programmed perceptions and our natural coping methods, we will continue to sin against others from a place of dark and un-examined brokenness. The only hope for healing is found in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the washing of His suf-

ficient and unerring Word. As the friend I mentioned earlier also told me, “Nikki, truth is not in our heads. Truth is in the word of God.” For this reason, Psalm 139:23, 24 has become very precious to me, and He is faithful to answer me.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”

It has been necessary for me to examine my heart regularly, allowing the word of God to cleanse me from the deep-seated effects of growing up in a false religious world view, an unsafe social structure, and a broken family system all held together by a shared misunderstanding of God and reality.

The Holy Spirit continues to refine my understanding of reality as I remain in Scripture and submit my mind to its authority. He reveals to me my wrong perceptions of truth and teaches me how I am to interact with the world as I live in Him.

The God revealed in Scripture is a Father to His children; He disciplines us for the purposes of transforming us into the image of His beloved Son. It is true that, as believers, we bear the name of Jesus to the world, but our true Father does not depend on us to make Him look good; on the contrary, we depend on Him even to understand what good is.

Our Father is patient, gracious, and abounding in steadfast love. He does not forsake us or shame us when we fail. He will not oust us if we do not measure up; He knows our frame (Ps. 103: 14). If the Son sets us free, we are free indeed, and the Father is faithfully and eternally committed to us because of the work of the Son. Jesus has set us free from the fear of man so that we can live in truth, walk in integrity, and serve Him in love.

When we are alive in Jesus, even parenting is about learning to trust Him instead of struggling for success. Because Jesus has been successful, I can rest, and I and my children can gratefully receive the love of our one Good Parent. †



Nicole Stevenson lives in Yucaipa, California, with her husband Carel and their children Joshua and Abigail. A graduate of La Sierra University with a degree in social work, Nicole’s joy is knowing Christ Jesus and living for the gospel as she teaches her children and participates in ministry with Former Adventist Fellowship and the community outreach Loma Linda Word Search.

RAISING CHILDREN WHO

AMY HERWIG

The daunting task of teaching and training our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord is a subject which has filled numerous books over the centuries. If you doubt it, just check out the parenting section of any local Christian book seller or Amazon Bookstore. There are more titles on this one subject than one could read in a lifetime. These books are written by well-meaning authors hoping to provide the worn-out parent with the secret of how to produce near-perfect, godly children. The problem with many of these books is that they can only address part of the challenge that we as parents face.

Here's our dilemma as Christian parents: how do we fulfill the command found in Scripture to bring up our children to love and fear God (Eph. 6:1-4)? I believe one of our biggest obstacles to achieving this command is that we get caught up in this culture's pragmatic, post-Christian, and formulaic thinking. We want a 7-Step program that will ensure first-time obedience in our children and end with the assurance of heaven-bound offspring.

Wow! Wouldn't that be nice?

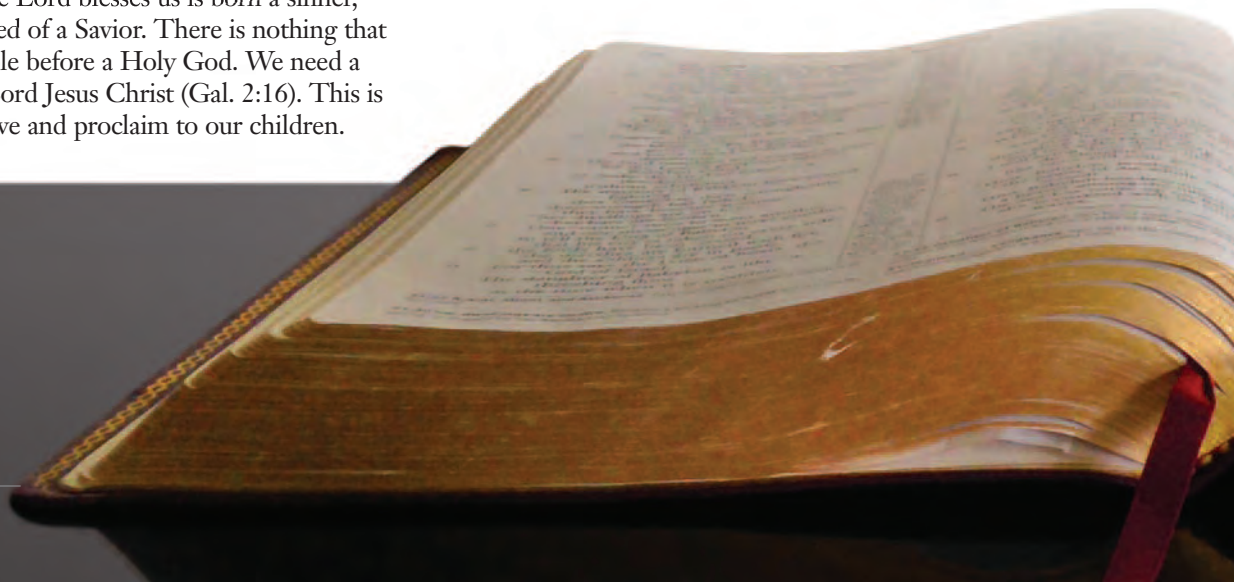
However, in our self-absorbed, American, quasi-Christian culture we find that though we involve our children in many "Christian" activities, encouraging them to listen to "Christian" music and to read "Christian" literature, these activities often occur at the neglect of teaching them the Scriptures. It isn't uncommon to find that many Christian parents don't talk with their children about eternal things but rather about moral things. After all, it is much easier to give children a list of do's and don'ts than to teach them about our Lord Jesus and the good news of the gospel as it is revealed from Genesis to Revelation. The gospel, though, doesn't come to us as a list of things to do or not to do but as truth to be believed (Acts 10:34-43), and in this truth we find the problem: we are all born in sin and are children of wrath (Eph. 2:3). Each child with whom the Lord blesses us is born a sinner, alienated from God, and in need of a Savior. There is nothing that we can do to make us acceptable before a Holy God. We need a Savior, and that Savior is the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:16). This is the Good News we must believe and proclaim to our children.



Challenges we face

I would argue that there are at least three things that prevent us from teaching biblical truth to our children. One is that we are lazy. Admit it—isn't it easier to find a good Christian video on a subject and plop our children in front of the T.V. than it is to open our Bibles, read portions of Scripture to them, and then discuss the passages together? We would rather use our time to do something else.

The second thing keeping us from teaching our children is the assumption that our church programs or our Christian schools will teach them what they need to learn about God. As parents, however, it is our primary responsibility before the Lord to train our children according to His Word. Of course we welcome godly input from other men and women in the body of Christ, but this enrichment should only be in addition to what they are learning about God from us.



The third thing blinding us to our need to teach our children is a fallacy that has crept into our evangelical thinking: that children growing up in Christian homes are more likely to be saved. After all, they go to church, sing praises to Jesus, pray, serve with their parents, and know all the answers to quizzes on well-known Bible stories. Moreover, they pray the prayer to receive Christ and are often baptized at a young age. We know, of course, that children come to faith in Christ at various ages and that we are to help them grow in that faith, yet we often evaluate them on outward appearances. We cannot know the hearts of our children, but we are commanded to look for

fruit—the kind of fruit that only the Holy Spirit can bring forth in their lives (Gal. 5:22-23). We often

but if we look at most of the children's books, Bibles, and curricula available today, we will see a very different God and gospel than what is taught in Scripture.

For example, most current children's books depict biblical characters as cartoons with cute, charming faces. Furthermore, they often omit portions of the biblical accounts and focus on specific moral or character-building lessons. In reality, however, there is nothing "cute" about the Bible, and we do our children a disservice by treating it as we would a good storybook or novel. We are commanded to teach the whole counsel of God, and this counsel includes the portions that are harder to study. In fact, the word of God stands alone as a unique book in its entirety; it is the Lord's authoritative, inspired, inerrant, and sufficient word.

WE THE WORD

fail to look for such fruit because we see them "fitting in" with their Christian environments.

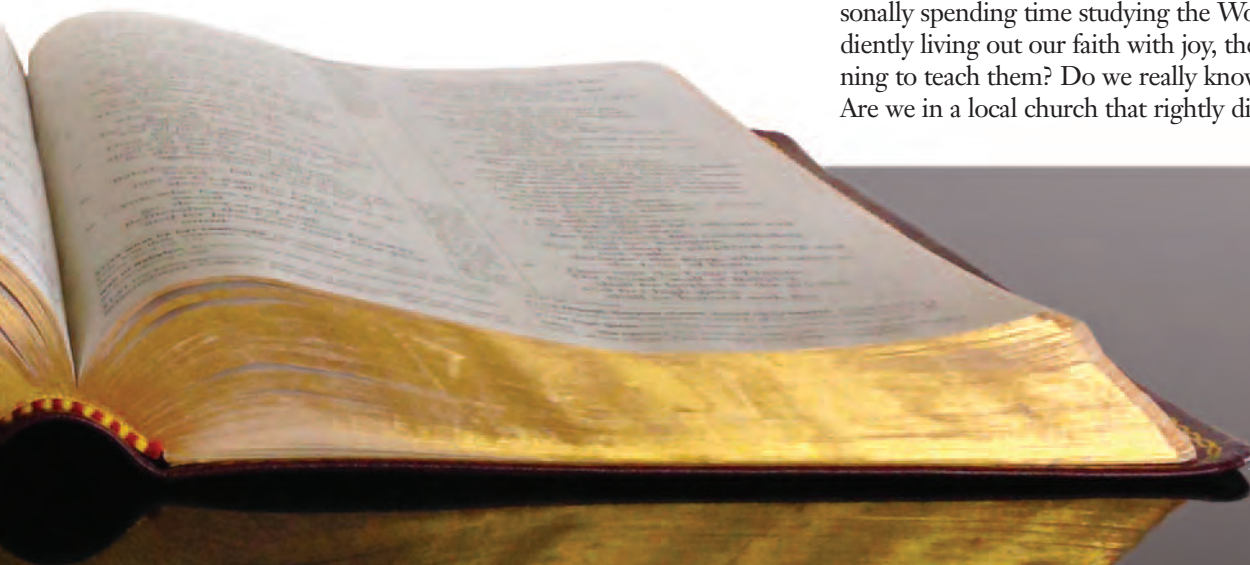
One Track

There are many false gospels flaunting themselves as the "real deal" in the world today, but it is our responsibility to teach our children the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ found only in the Holy Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-8). One may say at this point, "That sounds nice, but how do we do that?" It struck me the other day, as I pondered the answer to this question, that there aren't two separate tracks of coming to faith in Christ, one for adults and another for children. One may say, "That's obvious,"

It's worth remembering that all believers come to faith in Christ by the Holy Spirit opening their hearts and minds to hear, understand, and believe the Gospel which is found only in the word of God. This same Gospel, moreover, is the means by which we grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:17-18) after we come to faith. All this—coming to faith and growing in Christ—is brought about by the inner working of the Holy Spirit through His Word. In other words, our salvation is not of our own making (Eph. 2:8); we don't save ourselves, and we cannot save our children.

Studying so we can teach

Before I go any further I want to stress that we can't teach our children something that we don't know ourselves. If we're not personally spending time studying the Word of God, praying and obediently living out our faith with joy, then what exactly are we planning to teach them? Do we really know how to study the Bible? Are we in a local church that rightly divides the word of truth (2



Tim. 2:14-15)? Are we serving the Lord within that local church? These are questions we will humbly need to answer for ourselves.

The way in which we study the Bible will often determine how we teach it to our children. Since we aren't given permission to teach whatever we want but to teach what the Bible says, it is important for us to follow good rules of biblical interpretation, or hermeneutics. Many of us, though, were never taught how to interpret Scripture, and we may need some basic help. T. Norton Sterrett wrote a very helpful book called *How to Understand Your Bible*. While it is not inspired, it has proven to be a great resource and may be helpful for anyone learning to read the Bible as God's inerrant word.

Once we realize the importance of studying the Bible for ourselves, we can echo Paul's words in 2 Timothy 3:15-17, "...and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Help them discover the Bible's meaning

One way to approach contextual Bible study is to do some research on the backgrounds of narrative accounts in biblical history. If our children are old enough, we can let them help us find the author of a particular book of the Bible, the time period it was written, and to whom the book was written. This information gives context and aids in accurate interpretation. Alternatively, we can start with a particular verse and work out from there. What chapter is the verse in, what book of the Bible is it in, what testament is it in? Is this a narrative account? Is it poetry? Is this portion of Scripture descriptive or prescriptive? I think you get the idea.

The Holy Spirit gives believers illumination about what Scripture passages mean; He does not, however, give a new revelation every time we read the same passage. Our children, therefore, will benefit if they learn to ask good questions such as: what do I learn about God from this passage, or what do I understand about mankind from this passage? What do I know of Christ and the plan of redemption from this passage? Where else in the Scriptures is this truth mentioned? Is there something for me to believe, or something for me to obey? What testament am I in? Is this under the old or new covenant? These are very basic principles but very important.

One of the easiest ways we can teach our children the truth of the Bible is to talk with them about what we are currently studying. In fact, we all need to make this sort of conversation a priority, whether we talk with them at the breakfast table, when they get home from school, while driving in the car, or before we put them to bed at night (Deut. 6:6-8). These times of teaching or discussing God's word along with spending time in prayer are important and can become very meaningful. In our family these biblical discussions produce questions that we answer by going to the Scriptures themselves. By going to the Bible to answer our children's questions, we are modeling for

them "best practices" for Bible study: allowing Scripture to be its own interpreter.

Even young children can begin to learn basic truths from the accounts of creation, the fall of man, Noah, Abraham, David, and so forth. When we teach our kids, therefore, we try to connect the biblical accounts with the doctrines they teach. For example, we tell them that God is sovereign, and then we show them confirming Scripture passages such as those found in Job 38-42 or in the account of Joseph in Genesis 37-50. Furthermore, we are confronted with the fact that the way we approach Scripture must be consistent whether we are talking to children, to grandparents, or are reading for ourselves. While there will be things that we may need to explain in ways that are clear and applicable to our children's ages and stages, we are never allowed to change the meaning of a passage to make it more palatable or to use it to manipulate anyone to do what we want.

Other ways to impart Biblical truth

When our children were very young we would sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to them (Col. 3:16), and as they have gotten older, they have begun to sing along with us. As we choose the songs we sing, however, we've discovered how important it is to choose those with words that declare truth—the same truth found in the Bible. If the songs we sing don't rightly define the God of Scripture, something is amiss, but it's great when we can trace a worship song or hymn back to the Scripture passage that inspired it. We've discovered that the test that we are called to use with the teaching we receive, checking everything we hear against Scripture to see if it is true (Acts 17:11), is the same test we should apply to the songs we sing. We can't underestimate the influence of music in the lives of children; the words they learn in songs are the words that stay in their heads, form their understandings of Christ and redemption, and shape their world views.

Another great way to help our children learn about God is to study His names. For example, *Yahweh* is the name He has given to reveal to us that He is the Great I Am, the self-existent God. *Elyon* means God Most High, and *Elohim* means Strong Creator. When studying the names of the Lord, we can turn to passages of Scripture that confirm what we know to be true of Him. For example, in Genesis 1 and 2 we see the Lord as *Elohim*. In Exodus 3:14 we get to know Him as *Yahweh*, and in Psalm 91 he is called the Most High. By learning His names, these truths about the Lord become reinforced in the minds of our children and can serve as anchors in the midst of the trials we know they will face in life. In his book *Knowledge of the Holy*, A.W. Tozer stated, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us" (p. 9). In other words, it is vital that we give our children an opportunity to come to know the true God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture, and not an imitation. They will not come to a right understanding of Him by trying to find out who He is apart from His word.

As mundane as it might sound, don't neglect memorizing Scripture; it's a wonderful way to teach biblical truth even to very young children. In our home we not only memorize it, but we explain to our kids what the content of the verses or passages

mean. We are then able to memorize and teach biblical truth simultaneously. In fact, we have found it helpful to memorize single chapters at a time because the context of the passage is much clearer.

With older children, studying church history is a great complement to inductive Bible study. We are living in an age where historical fact is being replaced by subjective, emotive thought. “If it’s not relevant to me, it must not be relevant,” is the post-modern (now post-Christian) philosophy.

In reality, it is important to understand the history of our orthodox faith and what happened to the Church in centuries past. In fact, this history is a great backdrop against which to talk about what is currently going on in the church today. We should not be afraid to discuss the challenges facing Christians around the world in our time. When we do, we can seize the opportunity to pray for our missionaries, either the ones we support personally or the ones supported by our local church. When we pray for our missionaries we come face-to-face with the great sacrifices they make for the Lord Jesus by proclaiming the Gospel to people who have never heard.

They watch us pray

Praying for the extended body of Christ brings us to the realization that being part of a local church where there is sound Biblical teaching and fellowship is not only important for our spiritual health as parents but also for our children. As believers we are commanded to have fellowship one with another around truth, and when we’re part of a local church, we worship and serve together for the glory of Christ. Our children need to know what it means to be part of the body of Christ, and we find it a joy to have our children in the main service with us, worshiping and learning from the word of God together as a family.

Praying with and for our children is a powerful way to teach them about who God is. I’m not referring to rote, memorized prayers but to thoughtful prayers prayed according to the pattern of the Lord’s Prayer (Matt. 6:8-10). Our children can learn a lot about our faith by the way in which we pray, and especially for what we pray. First, we need to remember that Jesus taught us to address God as “Father”. When we talk to our Father, we are declaring what we know to be true of His character and what he has done for us in Christ, and we confess our sins knowing that He

is faithful to forgive. Then, knowing that in Him we are forgiven, we also proclaim that He is faithful, and He will answer according to His holy will (Matt. 6:10). Our children are paying attention when we pray whether we like it or not and will often mimic what they see and hear us do. Knowing they pay attention, we need to pray not only with them but especially for them. It is powerful for them to hear what we bring to the Father on their behalf. We should pray for their salvation by grace alone through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ and that they would be used by God for His glory (Eph. 2:8).

Ultimately, there is no formula for teaching our children the Word of God. As parents, however, we are to teach what we know to be true of God and His Word. If we don’t know much, then we need to become students of Scripture (2 Tim. 2:15). Furthermore, the lives we live should make it evident to our children that we love the Lord Jesus and desire to serve Him faithfully. Our children know if we are faking it or not, and they will make many conclusions about God and His eternal word as they observe whether we live under its authority or whether we try to place ourselves over it.

Children don’t stay children for long, and we need to trust God to give us His wisdom to teach them according to His ways. Our desire is not only for their eternal salvation but that the Lord will use them to teach His glorious gospel to the next generation.

As believing parents we know that our ability to faithfully parent our children is only possible through our Lord Jesus. We can commit ourselves to Him and declare His faithfulness along with his brother Jude who wrote, “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen” (Jude 1:24-25). †

Amy Herwig grew up as the daughter of an Independent Baptist pastor. Today she lives in Highland, California, with her husband Bruce and their daughter and two sons. She and her family attend Trinity Church in Redlands, California. She enjoys her role as a home-schooling mother and finds teaching the word of God to her children to be one of her greatest joys. She currently serves in Trinity’s women’s ministry as a small group leader.



ABORTION

WHY SEVENTH-DAY

COLLEEN TINKER

When I was in college, I seriously pondered the question of abortion for the first time. A friend of mine, also a student, got married during a vacation between school terms, and before long she realized she had become pregnant on her honeymoon. She wanted to finish college, and the pregnancy threw her into a personal crisis. To her credit, she did not consider aborting her baby, but I found myself thinking about what I would do if I were her.

I vividly remember looking at her during band rehearsal and thinking, “Why would she not abort? I would!” As a loyal and well-taught Adventist, I “knew” that a fetus was an unviable mass of tissue, at least until the third trimester or, at the earliest, the late second trimester. A human embryo, I believed, was similar to an unborn kitten; it was technically “alive”, but as long as it could not survive independently, it was not truly living. Only when a body could breathe and stay alive on its own was it a real being that should not be aborted.

Years later, I began to realize that humans were far different from kittens. We are made in the image of God—a fact that meant He made us with physical bodies and immaterial spirits that can know God who is spirit (Jn. 4:24). Even more amazing, God the Son, who is spirit, took a human body in a singular act of identity with His creations. Forever our Lord Jesus is our Substitute, our Head, and the Firstborn of many brothers.

One day in 2003 I was revisiting
the subject of

ADVENTISM PROMOTES CHOICE

abortion from the perspective of having a biblical understanding of the nature of man, and with tears I repented before my true Father and asked Him to forgive me for having held such a low view of human life. Aborted babies are not like kittens; they are body plus spirit from the time they are conceived, because body plus spirit is the nature of humanity. For years I had believed abortion merely eliminated an insentient mass of tissue that contained potential but no viable identity. I finally understood that a human fetus is no less a person than I am, and I was grief-stricken.

Adventists and abortion

In August, 2013, George B. Gainer published his paper, *The Wisdom of Solomon? or The Politics of Pragmatism: the General Conference Abortion Decision 1970-71*, on the Internet. Gainer, currently the senior pastor of the Pleasant Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church in Happy Valley, Oregon, had written and presented this comprehensive history of the Adventist's abortion policies in 1988 at the Loma Linda University Conference on Abortion. This conference was "the prelude to the Christian View of Human Life Committee"¹ which began meeting in 1989 and which eventually produced the now-official guidelines for abortion which were adopted in October, 1992.

Gainer explains his decision to publish his paper with these words: "The competing guidelines and failure to address the issue directly has resulted in the widespread ignorance and confusion among SDA clergy and laity and the public that persists to this very day. It is time for Adventists to learn our history on the subject of abortion."²

I am indebted to Gainer's research and refer to his findings as I trace the history of abortion within Adventism.

Gainer documents that the early Adventists, including James and Ellen White, J. N. Andrews, and Dr. John H. Kellogg, opposed abor-

tion. This pro-life position reflected the prevailing attitude in the medical community in general after the discovery, in 1827, of the human ovum. Although scientists had understood that mammals' procreation involved some sort of female egg and male sperm, the mechanism and structures of human conception were not known.³ This discovery resulted in scientists realizing that "a distinct human life was created through the fertilization of the ovum with a sperm."⁴ As a result of this realization, the first right-to-life movement in the United States, led by Dr. Horatio Robinson Storer, formed under the name "The Physician's Crusade Against Abortion" during the years 1850 to 1890. The founding Adventists supported this popular position which, significantly, opposed the common practice of abortion prior to the stunning discovery of the ovum in the 1820s.

The Physician's Crusade was successful in effecting anti-abortion legislation in the United States, and once those laws were in place, the public debate over abortion cooled. Gainer quotes Kristin Luker in her 1984 book, *Abortion & the Politics of Motherhood*, saying that the next 70 years became known as the "century of silence",⁵ and Christians as well as society in general held a strong anti-abortion stance into the 20th century.

The 1960s, however, saw a strong push for abortion growing in the United States. Many Christians as well as the general public began arguing that quality-of-life for the mother and the family trumped the life of the fetus, and this movement to overturn the anti-abortion legislation of the 19th century culminated in the infamous Roe v. Wade decision in 1973 which legalized abortion in the United States.

Meanwhile, Adventist health care began grappling with this problem in 1970. In January of that year, the state of Hawaii repealed its anti-abortion law, and the Adventist hospital Castle Memorial suddenly faced a crisis. There were two public hospitals on Oahu that took maternity and OB cases; one was exclusively an OB-GYN hospital, and Castle Valley was the only general facility that took maternity cases. Prior to the state law being changed, Castle Memorial had performed "therapeutic abortions", or terminations of pregnancy in cases of the mother's life being endangered, rape or incest, or extreme mental anxiety in the mother.

liberalized abortion laws, however, Castle Valley risked losing its OB-GYN clientele if it did not offer elective abortions as did the Kapiolani Hospital nearby.

This situation reached a crisis one day when a man approached Marvin C. Midkiff, the administrator of Castle Memorial Hospital.

He wanted his 16-year-old, two-months-pregnant daughter to have an abortion. This man reminded Midkiff that, when the hospital was fund-raising for its original building, the brochure (which the man brought with him) declared that “this hospital will be a FULL SERVICE HOSPITAL and will provide every service that is needed by the residents of the community.”⁶ Then, to add emphasis to his demand, he showed Midkiff the cancelled check he had given him years before towards the construction of Castle Memorial Hospital.

That encounter was only the beginning of increasing pressure for Castle Valley to provide on-demand abortions as part of its self-identification as a full-service hospital. W. J. Blacker, the president of the Pacific Union Conference, asked the General Conference for guidance, but no church administrators knew of any position the church had taken on abortion.⁷ Consequently, Castle Memorial drafted a temporary decision that, because there was no official church position, the hospital would do on-demand abortions during the first trimester if the patient had first received counsel from clergy and two physicians.

In March, 1970, the general conference officers met to discuss this question. Neal Wilson, then president of the North American Division, made a statement on March 17 that was picked up by the Religious News Service. He was quoted as saying,

We would not feel it our responsibility to promote laws to legalize abortion...nor oppose them...though we walk the fence, SDA's lean towards abortion rather than against it. Because we realize we are confronted by big problems of hunger and over population we do not oppose family planning and appropriate endeavors to control population.⁸

Finally, after ongoing discussion and editing, on May 13, 1970, the General Conference (GC) officers voted to accept “suggestive guidelines for therapeutic abortions.”⁹ This vote, however, reveals the sleight-of-hand way the Adventist organization avoided officially approving abortion. An official statement or guideline would have to come from a vote by the General Conference Committee. This “suggestive guideline”, however, came only from the GC officers. It was “official” enough to suggest that Adventist doctors and hospitals could perform these procedures, but it was “unofficial” enough that Marvin Midkiff returned to Hawaii without an official position of the church.

The officers had planned to take their suggestive guidelines to the GC Session the next June for an official vote. They dropped this plan, however, because many of the medical community said these statements were not really any different from the common practice that had been in place before Hawaii repealed its anti-abortion laws. The guidelines under discussion were:

It is believed that therapeutic abortions may be performed for the following established indications:

1. When continuation of pregnancy may threaten the life of the woman or seriously impair her health.
2. When continuation of the pregnancy is likely to result in the birth of a child with grave physical deformities or mental retardation.
3. When conception has occurred as a result of rape or incest.

When indicated therapeutic abortions are done, they should be performed during the first trimester of pregnancy.¹⁰

THE NATURE OF MAN

DALE RATZLAFF

First, we note in Gen. 2:7 that the Lord “formed man out of the dust of the earth”. There is no hint of an evolutionary process in the creation of man.

Second, the origin of man's life is completely separate and distinct from that of the animals and is made in the image or likeness of God, and God is spirit (Jn. 4:24; 2 Cor. 3:18).

When Stephen was being stoned, he cried out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” (Act 7:59). His “spirit” was more than the air in his lungs. Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:24). Paul says, “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom. 8:16). As used here, “our spirit” cannot be the Holy Spirit. By itself our spirit cannot testify that we are members of God's family, but our spirit can receive this testimony and is the site of God's regenerating work in us.

The writer of Hebrews states:

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

One of the most insightful statements on the human spirit is found in Hebrews 12:23, and as born-again believers we are ushered into this reality:

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect (Heb. 12:22-23).



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The unofficial adoption of these guidelines did not make the problem go away, nor did the fact that the officers quietly took them off the GC agenda. From July, 1970, to the end of the year, discussions about this subject burgeoned. Castle Memorial (CM) was becoming increasingly demanding because their non-Adventist physicians were threatening to take their patients to a different facility if CM didn't support the procedure officially. An expanded group called the Abortion Problems Committee convened on July 20, but by its second meeting on September 25, this committee managed only to recommend that a still larger group convene to develop uniform guidelines for North American hospitals.¹¹

In December, 1970, the chief of staff at CM, Dr. Raymond DeHay, wrote two letters, one to the CM chairman of the board of trustees, and one to the GC president Robert Pierson, fairly begging them for an official decision. Pierson responded by affirming the unofficial guidelines already in place and announced that a "competent committee" would meet the next month in Loma Linda, California, to further discuss this issue.¹²

On January 25, 1971, 11 of the 18 members newly appointed by the GC officers to sit on this committee convened. Four new members were added to the eleven attending, producing an *ad hoc* committee of 15. Those present were: W.R. Beach; David Hinshaw, MD; P.C. Heubach; C.B. Hirsch; Gordon Hyde; Joann Krause; Elizabeth Larsen, MD; R.E. Osborn; Jack W. Provonsha, MD; A.G. Streifling; W.D. Walton; N.C. Wilson; Mrs. C. Woodward; Harold Ziprick, MD; and C.E. Bradford. General Conference president Robert Pierson was absent, but he had stated just 20 days earlier his support for the existing guidelines.

W.R. Beach, Harold Ziprick, chief of Loma Linda University's OB-GYN department, and Jack Provonsha presented papers. Beach reviewed the past year's work done by the Abortion Committee and concluded that changing circumstances, especially in Hawaii and New York, mandated an updated statement. Ziprick discussed the complexity of the abortion situation, and Provonsha advocated always attempting to save both the lives of the mother and the child, but in situations where this goal could not be achieved, "the lower [fetus] must be sacrificed in favor of the higher human value."¹³ The meeting concluded with a recommendation that the GC officers appoint yet another committee to further study this issue.

New Guidelines Emerge

During February, 1971, the Abortion Committee went to work in Washington, D.C. As they revised the existing guidelines, an entirely new document emerged. Entitled "Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines", its recommendations reflected the ethical and medical concerns presented in the papers of Drs. Ziprick and Provonsha at the earlier Loma Linda meeting.

The committee added two more guidelines to the existing three. Initially these two additions, numbers four and five, allowed:

4. "In case of an unwed child under 15 years of age" abortion was permitted.
5. "When, in harmony with the statement of principles above, the requirements of functional human life demand the sacri-

ifice of the lesser potential human value."¹⁴

Over the next few months, significant changes occurred to several of the guidelines as a result of correspondence between W.R. Beach, committee chairman, and N.C. Wilson, then the president of the North American Division who would later succeed Robert Pierson as General Conference president. It is interesting to note that Wilson's suggestions persistently moved the guidelines to become more liberal.

In a letter dated March 8, 1971, Beach agreed with Wilson's recommendation written in a letter dated March 2, 1971, that the word "grave" be dropped from guideline #2. Thus, abortion would be allowed not just in cases likely to result "in the birth of a child with grave physical deformities or mental retardation," but would be allowed in any cases of possible deformities or retardation.¹⁵

After this exchange of letters between Beach and Wilson, the committee made two more significant changes to the emerging guidelines. The word "seriously" was deleted from guideline #1, allowing abortion not only of pregnancies that threatened to "seriously impair" but merely to "impair" the life of the mother. The second and most far-reaching change occurred in the rewritten #5: "When for some reason the requirements of functional human life demand the sacrifice of the lesser potential human value" abortion is permitted.¹⁶ The addition of the words "for some reason" opened the door for abortion to be performed for any reason at all. Thus, a woman who felt her pregnancy interfered with her ability to finish school, keep her job, or in any way live the life she wanted would be able to abort.

The committee finally filed this new statement with the GC officers in March, 1971, but still they took no action. In spite of the mounting pressure from the Pacific Union Conference to have something definitive to give the hospitals, committee chairman Beach dragged his heels. He was worried about endorsing a too liberal policy. Nevertheless, on August 10, 1971, C. E. Bradford, the secretary of the now-renamed Committee on Interruption of Pregnancy, released a statement that identified the guidelines

"as the opinion of a representative committee of theologians, physicians, teachers, nurses, psychiatrists, laymen, etc., who met at Loma Linda, California January 25, 1971, with the understanding that the report is to be used as counsel to denominational medical institutions."¹⁷

This statement apparently revealed a new focus: the document the committee had created was not a general church policy on abortion; it was considered a policy for Adventist hospitals. In fact, this new statement was titled, "Recommendations to SDA Medical Institutions".

Not only was the focus of the document specifically for institutions and not for the general membership, but Bradford also revealed that the Adventist organization was not actually "owning" the statement as an official position paper. He said in his cover letter, "I suppose you would say this [document] is *quasi official* without the full imprimatur of the brethren."¹⁸

And what were those 1971 Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines? They are as follows:

1. When continuation of the pregnancy may threaten the life of the woman or impair her health.
2. When continuation of the pregnancy is likely to result in the

- birth of a child with physical deformities or mental retardation.
3. When conception has occurred as a result of rape or incest.
 4. When the case involves an unwed child under 15 years of age.
 5. When for some reason the requirements of functional human life demand the sacrifice of the lesser potential human value.

When indicated interruptions of pregnancy are done, they should be performed as early as possible, preferably during the first

trimester of pregnancy.¹⁹

After more than a year of meetings, letters, committees, and discussions, the Adventist organization still had no official abortion policy. They had a new set of guidelines that were far more liberal than before—guidelines that the highest level of church administrators and professionals had helped to create. In fact, this new set of guidelines would now be used by Adventist hospitals to determine their own abortion policies—yet the Seventh-day Adventist Church would not call it “official”. They could deny it was their policy.

Castle Memorial Hospital, however, finally had what it needed. Even though it was only *quasi official*, this set of guidelines was provided by the General Conference and, in the words of administrator Marvin Midkiff, was “broad enough to interpret any way you chose to.”²⁰ This statement allowed CM—and any other Adventist hospital—“to offer abortions on demand through the twentieth week (and even later for ‘compelling social or medical reasons’²¹) and still be in harmony with General conference guidelines.”²²

It must also be noted that this permissive policy predated by two years the Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* ruling that made abortion legal in the United States in 1973.

Internal duplicity

Where do Adventists really stand on abortion? Since the 1971 guidelines were never “official” and were addressed to medical institutions, do they represent Adventist guidelines? Do Adventist members know what this hospital policy allows?

Historically, it appears the “right hand” was not informed what the “left hand” was doing. In March, 1971, the same month that N.C. Wilson and W.R. Beach were hammering out new, liberalized abortion guidelines for Adventist hospitals to follow, *The Ministry* magazine published an issue on abortion. In addition to articles that cautioned against going beyond first-trimester therapeutic abortions, the magazine published the original three guidelines approved by the GC Committee on May 13, 1970. Ironically, the liberalized Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines were written by March 2, 1971, and were undergoing final revisions at exactly the same time this issue of *The Ministry* was published.

One person passionately opposed this publication: Robert E. Osborn, a GC officer and a member of the Abortion Committee. Knowing that those original guidelines were generally considered too restrictive and were being overridden by the Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines even then in production, Osborn wrote to committee chair W. R. Beach and said, “It seems to me that the articles [in *The Ministry*] are completely premature, or else the appointment of a committee to look into the matter in depth is a farce.”²³

Beach defended *The Ministry*’s publication of the early guidelines in a confusing response that said they provided context for the introduction of the new liberalized guidelines in an “upcoming report.”²⁴ The new liberalized guidelines, however, were never published. Since that 1971 publication in *The Ministry*, the original 1970 guidelines for therapeutic abortion were the only guidelines available to the membership at large until the current

SAFE IN JESUS’ ARMS

GARY INRIG

As a pastor sitting with parents when their children died, I have prayed for words and wished for a satisfying Scripture verse.

Although God has not given us a comprehensive passage dealing with children’s death, He has given us insights. The first is God’s own character—He is consummately loving and gracious. Second, Jesus’ compassion for and value of children shines in passages such as Matthew 18. He treats children as blessings and delights to bless them, despite complaints (Mk. 10:13-16). Third, the Bible affirms that even infants bear sin, and salvation comes only through faith in Christ. Concurrently, God deals graciously toward those unable to comprehend and believe His revealed gospel (see Jn. 9:41; Rom. 1:20; Deut. 1:39; Is. 7:16). Their security, however, is only through Christ’s work applied to them, not their righteousness.

The most direct insight comes from David. Explaining why he stopped weeping and fasting when his infant son died, he cried, “Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me” (2 Sam. 12:23). Many have read resignation into those words: “He’s gone, and I can’t bring him back.” David, though, knew where he was going at death—to the Lord’s house, where he would dwell forever (Ps. 23:6), and into His presence with fullness of joy (Ps. 16:10, 11). David is saying, “My son may have gone, but I will be reunited with him”.

God provides both for children’s prenatal life (Ps. 139) and for their life beyond this one. He who said, “Let the little children come to Me” (Mt. 19:14), by his death has opened the door and welcomed them into his Father’s house (Jn. 14:1-6).



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Adventist guidelines on abortion were established on October 12, 1992.

There is no evidence that the Adventist organization ever attempted to inform the clergy or the laity that there was a newer set of guidelines actively allowing Adventist hospitals to practice abortions on demand. It seems, in fact, that leadership has used that original premature release of the outdated statement as something behind which to hide in order to present a conservative face both to its members and to the Christian community at large.

For example, at the time of Gainer's writing, the Columbia Union Executive Committee had given copies of the discarded 1970 guidelines to the Ohio Conference when they requested guidance on the subject of abortion in 1987. Moreover, in 1984 the Christian Action Council published their *A Community Planning Guide for Sanctity of Human Life Sunday*. This publication included a "Summary of Attitudes Toward Abortion by Religious Organizations." Because of Adventism's public use of the outdated guidelines, the Action Council placed Seventh-day Adventists in its Group 2 as "generally opposed to abortion but would make exceptions in hard cases."²⁵

Since 1971, Adventist publications have continued the confusion. Through the years Adventist columnists and editors have published statements using the superseded 1970 guidelines as the official Adventist policy. In fact, a particularly alarming situation occurred in the official publication of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the *Adventist Review*, in 1986. In its February 13 edition, the magazine ran an article entitled, "In-depth look at the Adventist Health System" including a seven-page interview with Donald Welch, the founder of what became known as Adventist Health Systems, conducted by editor William Johnsson and associate editor Myron Widmer.

In the interview, Welch stated,

The Church developed guidelines for hospitals and health-care institutions in regard to abortions back in 1969 (sic). Those guidelines strongly discourage abortions. They do allow for abortions in certain cases where there is medical consultation—several doctors agree that it needs to be done for the health of the mother, and in certain other cases such as rape.²⁶

In this statement Welch was referencing the 1970 statement, not the 1971 Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines. He proceeded to make several more astonishing statements including this: "I will be frank and tell you there was a time when a number of our institutions did quite a few abortions, and that situation led to these guidelines."²⁷

It is difficult to believe that Welch was ignorant of the fact that Adventist hospitals had been permitted to practice abortions on demand since 1971 since he had been the administrator of Adventist hospitals since 1961 and had founded Adventist Health System Sunbelt which eventually became Adventist Health Systems.

Even worse than Welch's prevarication was editor Johnsson's reaction when he received six specific confrontations in three meetings over a period of two months addressing discrepancies in Welch's interview. He decided to run two letters in the "Letters To the Editor" section of the magazine that would correct the misinformation—but he never published them.²⁸ Instead, the official Adventist publication has allowed "Welch's statements

to stand without challenge, and the Church-at-large was once again spared the truth."²⁹

Today's policy

Today the Adventist organization publishes a guideline on abortion on its official website. It is difficult to find and is tucked away on a webpage called "Official Statements/Guidelines" under the menu button "Information". The guideline is long and complex including seven statements of principles, but in spite of the pious tone, they contain the following declarations. The numbers of the statements where these sentences are found are at the beginning of the following paragraphs:³⁰

1. Thus prenatal life must not be thoughtlessly destroyed. Abortion should be performed only for the most serious reasons.
4. Women, at times however, may face exceptional circumstances that present serious moral or medical dilemmas, such as significant threats to the pregnant woman's life, serious jeopardy to her health, severe congenital defects carefully diagnosed in the fetus, and pregnancy resulting from rape or incest. The final decision whether to terminate the pregnancy or not should be made by the pregnant woman after appropriate consultation. She should be aided in her decision by accurate information, biblical principles, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, these decisions are best made within the context of healthy family relationships.
5. Therefore, any attempts to coerce women either to remain pregnant or to terminate pregnancy should be rejected as infringements of personal freedom.
6. Church institutions should be provided with guidelines for developing their own institutional policies in harmony with this statement.

In other words, Adventism's public statement on abortion today appears to echo the guidelines of the original 1970 statement—with a significant change of emphasis in point #4: "significant threats to the pregnant woman's life" has become a separate statement from "serious jeopardy to her health". Instead of the original "When continuation of pregnancy may threaten the life of the woman or seriously impair her health," today's statement distinguishes between threats to the woman's life and jeopardy to her health. This distinction allows for those "threats" to be other than health risks and could conceivably include not being able to afford the baby, hurting the family reputation, threatening one's educational and professional career, and so on. At the same time, point 6 states that institutions (hospitals) "should be provided with guidelines for developing their own institutional policies." This statement clearly suggests that hospitals have a set of guidelines separate from this official, public statement.

In fact, the wording of the public statement on abortion attempts to conceal the fact that for over 40 years there have been two sets of guidelines within Adventism: the 1970 generally-used statement which, in spite of careful wording, is pro-choice, and the internal Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines for hospitals and medical providers which have been in place since 1971. Nevertheless, in this current document, the permissive guidelines of the 1971 institutional statement are carefully

woven into the wording of the organization's official public policy on abortion. A careful reading reveals that a woman may choose whether or not to terminate a pregnancy for any reason important to her, and Adventist hospitals are free to perform them at their own discretion.

What is the truth?

When George Gainer was researching his paper, the *American Hospital Association Guide to the Health Care Field*, 1986, stated:

Twelve of the 56 Adventist hospitals in the United States [are] offering 'abortion services' including 'a program and facilities.'³¹

The hospitals listed are as follows: Castle Medical Center, Hadley Memorial Hospital, Hanford Community Hospital, Loma Linda University Medical Center, Porter Memorial Hospital, Portland Adventist Medical Center, Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, Shawnee Mission Medical Center, Sierra Vista Hospital, Walla Walla General Hospital, Washington Adventist Hospital, and White Memorial Medical Center. One could be forgiven for wondering if our other hospitals [which] supplied reports on which the Guide is based are accurate as to the difference between therapeutic abortion and elective abortion.³²

Nic Samojluk of Loma Linda has been researching Adventists and abortion over a period of several years for his doctoral dissertation. He has some follow-up information that sheds some light on the current data available about abortions and Adventist hospitals. On his website www.Adventlife.Wordpress.com he refers to George Gainer's paper and lists the hospitals above. He states, "A survey conducted three years later by the Loma Linda University Ethics Department revealed that five of these Adventist hospitals were engaged—like our [Adventist] CMH—in elective abortions."³³

He confirms what many have discovered: it is extremely hard to obtain accurate information about abortions done at Adventist hospitals. He has been able to obtain some information about Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH) in Maryland, however. First he quotes Gainer's research published both in his paper and

in the Washington Post: "As to numbers, participants in the 'Pastors' Protest Against Abortion' [held on October 5, 1985] supplied the figure of 1,494 abortions performed at Washington Adventist Hospital from 1975 through July 1982. They said that the medical records office of the hospital supplied these statistics."³⁴ This number translates into an average of 213 abortions per year. Interestingly, there is a sudden drop in WAH's abortion numbers after 2005.

Samojluk further refers to independent Catholic investigator Patrick Murebil's findings: "a decade later the same Adventist hospital reported 547 abortions per year;³⁵ but by 2006 the number of abortions in the same institution dropped to 47, with 48 reported for the 2007 year."³⁶

In subsequent years, WAH reported 38 abortions in 2008, 27 in 2009, and 29 in 2010. The substantial reduction in numbers is apparently explained by the fact that WAH stopped reporting data for outpatient procedures, while the numbers prior to 2005 included both inpatient and outpatient. When Samojluk requested outpatient statistics for the years 2008-2010, he was told they were not available. He says, "A correspondent of mine who has close connections with the General Conference office told me that he was informed that the church has made it almost impossible for anyone to secure accurate data about abortion statistics in Adventist hospitals."³⁷

In February, 2011, Samojluk attended a public meeting in Redlands, California, at which GC president Ted Wilson (the son of N.C. Wilson who helped frame the 1971 Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines) was the featured speaker. Samojluk asked him about elective abortions in Adventist hospitals. Wilson responded that the church did not condone them, and they were down to almost zero. He suggested Samojluk contact Dr. Alan Handysides at the General Conference for more information, and although Samojluk did write to Dr. Handysides, he received no response.³⁸



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TAKE US ON VACATION THIS SUMMER

This summer when you head out on vacation, don't forget to take along your *Proclamation!*. We have heard stories of "chance" meetings when someone asks about the magazine. And don't forget that you can stay in touch online at the ministry website and blog at ProclamationMagazine.com.

Summer is a time for a break from your busy life, but please don't take a break from your support of this work. We usually experience a "summer slump" in support, which makes it very challenging to produce the last two magazines of the year.

Thank you for your generous support. We also ask that you pray for us that we will be faithful in presenting the Gospel and also warn-ings against legalism and false religion.

IN FACT, THE WORDING OF THE PUBLIC STATEMENT

What we know

The history of Adventism's abortion policies, both public and internal, is an interesting study in deception and "impression management". This dynamic would be significant on its own; however, this issue is significant for a more profound reason than simply that Adventism has obfuscated the truth. The underlying reason Adventism, which is generally considered to be a Christian denomination, has nevertheless held to a pro-choice policy and has even provided abortions is its view of the nature of man. Adventists believe and teach that humans are body plus breath—the literal breath in their lungs; when the breath ceases, the body dies, just as a light is extinguished when the electricity is turned off. Thus, they teach that humans do not have an immaterial spirit that is separate from the body.

While it is true that many individual Adventists oppose abortion, its persistent presence within Adventism and among Adventists makes sense when one understands what they believe about a fetus.

In the landmark March, 1970, issue of *The Ministry* magazine mentioned earlier, Dr. Ralph F. Waddell, secretary of the General Conference Department of Health, wrote an article that was titled, "Abortion Is Not the Answer". He supported therapeutic abortions, but he stated that they should be performed "during the first three months, before the embryo can be considered to possess life in itself."³⁹

Let anyone argue that Dr. Waddell's quote above is merely his opinion, that Adventism does not officially teach that the unborn are technically not alive, please note in the following quotation that Adventism's official teaching is far less conservative than Dr. Waddell's. The passage below is from the current edition of *Seventh-Day Adventists Believe*, the book listing and explaining the organization's 28 Fundamental Beliefs, and overtly states that a soul "comes into existence" when a child is born. Importantly, the quotation inside this quote is from the *SDA Bible Commentary*, revised edition:

As we have already mentioned, in the Old Testament "soul" is a translation of the Hebrew *nephesb*. In Genesis 2:7 it denotes man as a living being after the breath of life entered into a physical body formed from the elements of the earth. "Similarly, a new soul comes into existence whenever a child is born (emphasis ours), each 'soul' being a new unit of life uniquely different and separate from other similar units. This quality of individuality in each living being, which constitutes it a unique entity, seems to be the idea emphasized by the Hebrew term *nephesb*. When used in this sense, *nephesb* is not a part of the person; it is the person (emphasis ours) and, in many instances, is translated 'person'..."⁴⁰

This foundational belief, that a living person begins to exist only when a baby begins to breathe, helps explain why Adventists have been key figures in the abortion world. For example:

• In 2003, *Proclamation!* magazine ran a three-part article by Richard Fredericks, PhD, entitled, "A Biblical Response to Abortion". The three installments appeared in the January/February, the March/April, and the May/June issues of the

ON ABORTION ATTEMPTS TO CONCEAL THE FACT THAT FOR OVER 40 YEARS THERE HAVE BEEN TWO SETS OF GUIDELINES WITHIN ADVENTISM. . .

magazine. In the first installment Fredericks tells this account:

A young female Adventist pediatrician told me of a late saline abortion in an Adventist hospital in which the abortion

failed. The baby was born alive and crying, but placed in a sealed bucket to suffocate. She was horrified by such an act of murder. Beyond the initial horror she was stunned on two accounts: first, during her own training she had stated she would withdraw from medical school (University of Virginia) rather than perform or participate in an abortion due to her religious convictions as an Adventist. After first saying she must assist in an abortion to graduate, the University backed down. She assumed as a church we took a strong stand against abortion. Then she found that abortions for convenience (non-medical emergencies) were regular occurrences in Adventist hospitals. I will never forget her tears as she looked at me and said: "How can we do this?"⁴¹

• In 2011 a two-year competition between Adventist HealthCare and Holy Cross Hospital came to an end when Maryland officials approved Holy Cross to build a new hospital in the state's northern Montgomery County. The battle to win the contract had attracted much attention from women's groups and reproductive health advocates. A story appearing in the *Washington Post* on January 6, 2011, written by staff writer Lena H. Sun states:

In a 105-page document of exceptions filed Thursday, Rockville-based Adventist asks Maryland Health Care Commission to hold off on a final decision at its Jan. 20 meeting and to reopen the review because of what Adventist contends are flawed and unsupported conclusions about cost and other key factors...

One of the flaws that Adventist cited in [commission chair] Moon's recommendation involves reproductive services that would be offered by Holy Cross, a Catholic hospital.

Reproductive health advocates across the country have raised concerns about religious directives that prevent Catholic hospitals from providing a variety of services, including fertility treatments, abortions, tubal ligations and hormonal contraception. Several women's groups say that because of those restrictions, the Holy Cross proposal would undermine public health priorities.⁴²

Sally Quinn, also a writer at the *Washington Post*, wrote a piece entitled "Seventh-day Adventists and Abortion" and posted it in January, 2011. Although the original article has been removed, it is quoted in a December 9, 2013, post on ReligiousLiberty.tv. In her article Sally wrote,

Christians of all denominations are gathering on the national Mall today to protest the 38th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion nationwide. But one denomination that may be sparsely represented is Seventh-day Adventists whose large worldwide network of 170 hospitals allows elective abortions.

This stance was revealed last week when Maryland state regulators gave Holy Cross hospital, a Catholic institution, permission to build a hospital in growing northern Montgomery County shutting out the Seventh-day Adventists who also wanted to build a hospital

in the area. Some abortion-rights advocates opposed the Holy Cross proposal because it does not allow abortions.⁴³

- On June 30, 2014, the Supreme Court decided in favor of craft store chain Hobby Lobby in what has become known as “the Hobby Lobby case”. According to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), contraception is now considered a “preventative service”, and as such, it is to be covered by insurances without requiring a co-payment. Christian-owned Hobby Lobby sued for exemption on grounds of religious freedom, stating that while they do cover 16 different types of contraception, they objected to providing insurance coverage to employees for “morning after pills” or for hormonal or copper intrauterine devices (IUDs) which prevent a fertilized egg from implanting. Under the ACA, however, these products are called “birth control”.

The North American Division (NAD) of Seventh-day Adventists issued a statement the same day stating they were “encouraged” by the ruling which “safeguards the broad religious liberty protections available to all people of faith.” As the statement continued, however, it made the point that the Adventist Church has an established commitment to health care and to “improving the health of all, including women.”

In the next-to-the-last paragraph, the NAD’s statement says, “The Seventh-day Adventist Church, in its Fundamental Beliefs and teachings as based on the Bible, does not object to providing the methods of contraception at issue (see Official Seventh-day Adventist Church Statement on Birth Control), and has fully complied with this provision of the AHA for its U.S. based employees.”⁴⁴

This current statement reveals that the Adventist organization does not consider conception to mark the beginning of life nor does it see a need to protect a fertilized egg. Furthermore, this statement shows the foundation underneath the organization’s pro-choice position and practice.

- Louise Tyrer, MD, known as “a true pioneer of the pro-choice, pro-family planning movement,”⁴⁵ was the daughter of Seventh-day Adventist missionaries to China and was a graduate of Loma Linda University School of Medicine in 1944. She was a founding member of the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP) in 1963 and “one of the first voices for the pro-choice movement.”⁴⁶ In 1975 she became the vice president of medical affairs for Planned Parenthood Federation of America and held the position for 15 years. After the age of 70, she continued consulting for groups such as Abortion Rights Mobilization in New York and the U.S. State Department, did medical direction for Planned Parenthood in Northern Nevada, and campaigned for RU-486 medication abortion.⁴⁷

- Edward C. Allred, MD, an Adventist graduate of La Sierra University and Loma Linda University School of Medicine, founded the Avalon-Slauson Medical Group in 1969. Later renamed Family Planning Associates (FPA), Allred’s clinic was performing abortions in situations legalized in California before *Roe v. Wade* legalized it nationally (1973). He invented the “assembly-line abortion” technique used in the FPA chain,⁴⁸ and, he claimed, in 1980, “to have personally aborted a quarter of a million fetuses in the preceding 12 years.”⁴⁹

In an interview with Anthony Perry, “Doctor’s Abortion

Business Is Lucrative” in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, October 12, 1980, pages A-3 and A-14, Allred is quoted as saying, “Population control is too important to be stopped by some right-wing pro-life types...take the new influx of Hispanic immigrants. Their lack of respect for democracy and social order is frightening. I hope I can do something to stem that tide. I’d set up a clinic in Mexico for free if I could. Maybe one in Calexico would help. The survival of our society could be at stake.”⁵⁰

In 2005 Allred sold Family Planning Associates to Adventist dentist Irving (Bud) Feldkamp III. In 2010 La Sierra University founded the Edward C. Allred Center for Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship in his honor. Significantly, this new center was funded by a donation from Dr. Allred, and La Sierra University had no problem establishing its new center for entrepreneurship using money purchased, at least in part, with the lives of unborn infants.

- Irving (Bud) Feldkamp III, DDS, an Adventist, purchased Family Planning Associates, the nation’s largest privately-owned abortion chain, from Edward Allred, MD, in 2005. Although not an abortionist himself, his 17 California clinics provide more abortions in California than any other provider including Planned Parenthood,⁵¹ and they perform them through “14+ weeks.”⁵² Feldkamp’s son, Irving IV, is an MD and works at Family Planning Associates.

Tragically, two of Feldkamp’s daughters, their husbands, and their five children were killed in a plane crash on March 24, 2009. They with another family were flying to a ski vacation when their private plane, flown by an experienced pilot, crashed into a Montana Catholic cemetery—ironically just feet away from the “The Tomb of the Unborn”, a memorial dedicated to babies who have died in abortions.⁵³

Conclusion

The hidden history and practice of abortion within the Adventist organization is the fruit of a religion that believes and teaches a false view of humanity on one hand while offering medical care on the other to some of the most vulnerable members of society: women with unwanted pregnancies. Because they believe human fetuses are unviable forms of life until they can survive outside the womb, many Adventist doctors offer their patients the option of abortions as a “compassionate” way to resolve their dilemmas. Other Adventist doctors, soothed by the idea that fetuses are not truly people, capitalize on the perpetual problem of unwanted pregnancies as a way to make the money that desperate women are willing to pay.

At the same time, Adventist hospitals allow their physicians to perform abortions in their surgical suites—and often those abortions are on demand, although they may be named something other than “abortions”, or they may be hidden in unobtainable out-patient surgery records. The 1971 Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines have opened the way for Adventist hospitals to determine their own abortion policies, and most Adventist laypeople do not know of those guidelines’ existence.

The extent and magnitude of Adventist-performed abortions is hard to calculate, but the facts we know emphasize one bottom-

line reality: Adventists need to understand the true gospel of Jesus. Without understanding of the true nature of man as taught in the Bible, the reality of the Lord Jesus' identity, incarnation, death, and resurrection lose their power.

Every life is known by God as it is formed in its mother's womb. The Lord Jesus came to earth as a fetus in an unmarried mother's body. He and His mother were precious to the Father even when people whispered behind her back, and he taught Joseph to trust Him to take Mary as his wife while she was pregnant. God provided Joseph to protect the unborn Jesus by keeping Mary safe so their own Savior could be delivered.

No life is hidden from God; no pain of a suffering mother, no loss of an unborn baby, no regret of an unmarried father is outside the Father's care. The Lord Jesus came to redeem that pain; He knew what it meant to be thought "illegitimate". He knew poverty

and suffering, and he took into Himself all the pain, all the evil and sin that has been done to each of us, and by His scourging we are healed (Is. 53:5). Moreover, no sin we have committed, including receiving, condoning, or performing an abortion, is unforgivable. The Lord Jesus cleanses every stain of guilt and shame when we repent and believe that He shed His blood and broke the curse of death to reconcile us to God and to transfer us out of death into life (Jn. 5:24; Col. 1:13; Eph. 2:1-10).

I have completely turned away from my early belief about the unborn. From my early days of believing a fetus to be unviable potential, I have come to see each tiny life as a person known and planned by God. Abortion is untenable as I realize that each new conception is a life with its own spirit that is its unique identity, and God knew us before we ever took a breath.

My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have

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- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
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- ²⁹ Gainer, p. 30.
- ³⁰ <http://www.adventist.org/information/official-statements/guidelines/article/go/0/abortion/6/>.
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Colleen Tinker and her husband Richard co-lead Former Adventist Fellowship at Trinity Church in Redlands, California. Colleen is editor of *Proclamation!*, and Richard is president of Life Assurance Ministries. They have two sons, and in October their third grandchild will be born.



Resonating with Cochran's story

I just finished reading Charles Cochran's story in the Spring *Proclamation!* It was so much like my story that it was taking a trip down memory lane in my own reprogramming. The "soul sleep" belief was one of the hardest for me to adopt when I became an Adventist; the investigative judgment was also hard. I am so happy for Charles.

Thanks for continuing to help those of us who don't have personal support where we live!

MT. PLEASANT, SC

Read for "soul-honesty" sake

I normally read most of your magazine just for soul-honesty sake. Hardly have I ever written a Letter to the Editor, but this time I just couldn't help myself.

I don't doubt your convictions or maybe even your sincerity, but please—if you wish to portray your positions as coming from deep honesty, I implore you to at least be that. A statement from your most recent issue (Spring, 2014) is just preposterous. I don't know if it's honest self-delusion or intentional deception:

"If you are a regular reader of *Proclamation!* you should know that we rarely mention Adventists by name."

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

What? In that issue I did a quick perusal and came up with a tally of 123 uses of "Adventist" on just the first 23 pages. Please take notice of what is either faulty self-delusion or intentional deception. It's the least that can be done if you wish to portray your journal as one of integrity.

SOUTH LANCASTER, MA

Pastor Ratzlaff's response:

Apparently I did not make myself clear in my statement. Everyone knows we speak of "Adventists" in general as you so amply demonstrated. What I intended to communicate was that we seldom mention Adventists by name, meaning, for example, that if we chose to respond to your letter, I would probably not include your name.

No, this was not written in self-delusion or intentional deception.

I DO NOT LIKE TO GET MAIL FROM THE DEVIL!

Again, thank you for the time you spent tallying the general term "Adventists". I trust you will keep reading *Proclamation!* for "soul honesty sake". I trust that we each would better understand the glorious new covenant gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ that needs to go to the ends of the earth.

Abuses against the disabled

Thank you for your article "Spiritual Abuse Among Religions" by Joanie Yorba-Gray in the Winter, 2012, issue of *Proclamation!* I found it via a search engine. I'd like to mention that I am a former Adventist who lived in the closed Adventist community of Collegedale, Tennessee, from 1976–2003. As a person with disabilities, I can tell you that abuses against the disabled were active among the community.

Once again, thank you for the article.

VIA EMAIL

Dear Way-Off Shoots,

The cover picture on the Spring, 2014, slick-papered magazine looks like Dale Ratzlaff after

the close of probation. What a pile of trash...you lie and are a cousin to Lucifer, the Father of Lies. Success as you prepare for the judgment. You are on the wide road, and you know where that leads.

May you enjoy failure.

CHAMPAIGN, IL

Greatly helped

It is with deep love and appreciation that I write this letter to you. Over the past several years, I have been greatly helped through reading your wonderful magazine. It is really a great blessing to me that I can get all those food-for-the-soul messages that have given me insight to leave my former Adventist Church and to be in the truth in which God wanted me to be. Your work is rewarded. Please keep sending me the magazine at

my new address. I am always praying for you. May God keep and bless you all.

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Poisoned views

I am a Seventh-day Adventist with traditional beliefs and am very happy and satisfied with Ellen White's Spirit of Prophecy and guiding light.

Your views have been poisoned by the world, and I do not appreciate your attempt to invade and spread your poison into my home or that of others that are faithful Sabbath believers.

However underhandedly you received the names and addresses of Adventist believers, it is a wolf-in-sheep's clothing attempt to proselytize lies to God's true remnant Church. For each precious soul you pluck out of God's fold, you will be held accountable when Jesus returns to redeem His children.

Shame on you that your underhanded method of placing unsolicited material in Adventist homes is your chosen way of attempting to con believers over to your poisoned point of view. I'm sorry for you and all the rest that are disgruntled

once-Adventist members. Like the Pharisees, you will one day regret your error.

Your magazine is not worth the paper it was printed on. Your time and money was wasted on it in my home; I enjoyed burning it on my campout.

ELFERS, FL

Mail from the devil

Please remove my name from your mailing list! I do not like to get mail from the devil!

JENSEN BEACH, FL

We have been stunned

Thank God for your ministry to the body of Christ all over the world. The articles featured in *Proclamation!* have been powerful sources of information as you unveil the dangers of Adventist teachings, doctrines, and beliefs. Those of us who have come from a non-Adventist background were stunned to learn that the Adventist movement was founded on cultic errors like the failed prophesy by William Miller...Also very surprising was the fact that E.G. White re-interpreted the false prophesy, cementing the Adventist cult outside the true new covenant gospel and Christianity. Can truth be extracted from error? How can E.G. White reinterpret a false, deceived guess/prophesy and turn it into a founding doctrine of Adventism, claiming it is truth?... What a judgment on misleading souls to believe doctrines of demons and deceiving spirits!

Adventist teachings trample underfoot the glory of the new covenant and the marvelous work accomplished by our great Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

May God bless you as you continue this great ministry of leading souls out of the dungeons of error into the Savior's marvelous light and truth!

SOLOMON ISLANDS

MAIL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO:

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Redlands, CA 92375
 OR EMAIL EDITOR:
proclamation@gmail.com

Michigan
FORMER ADVENTIST FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE 2014

ROMANS
NO SHAME

A STUDY THROUGH THE BOOK OF ROMANS

SEPTEMBER 26–28, 2014 • ST. JOSEPH, MICHIGAN
FEATURING DALE RATZLAFF

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COST

- \$70/person, \$115/couple for both Friday and Saturday, \$35/person for one day (no fee for Sunday)
- Fee includes all sessions, session binder, handouts, free stuff, snacks throughout, lunch on Friday, lunch and dinner on Saturday. Scholarships are available.
- You must make your own lodging and transportation arrangements. A limited number of local church member's homes are available. Call for more information: (269) 429-1041.

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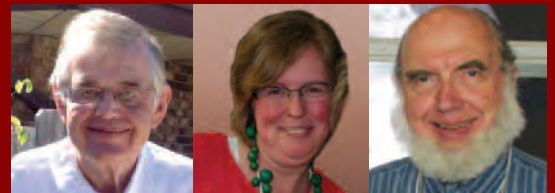
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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2014

- 9:00 "Without Excuse," Rom. 1:1–7, 16–23, Dale Ratzlaff
- 10:10 "God's Righteous Judgement is Just," Rom. 2: 1–16, Corey Kugle
- 11:20 "Learning to Lament," Psalm 73, Colleen Tinker
- 1:30 "Special Privileges Don't Save Us," Rom. 2:17–3:8, Dale Ratzlaff
- 2:30 "Spiritualism and Ellen G. White," Jim Valentine
- 3:30 "No One is Righteous," Rom. 3:9–20, Dale Ratzlaff
- 6:30 "God's Solution to Save Sinners," Rom. 3:21–4:25, Charles Schultz
Testimony by Mary Seeley Stockler

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2014

- 9:00 "Freed From Sin and The Blessings of Justification,"
Rom. 5:1–6:14, Dale Ratzlaff
- 10:10 "Male and Female," John and Julie Castidy
- 11:20 "Freedom From Bondage to God's Law," Rom. 6:15–17; 7:1–14,
Dale Ratzlaff
- 1:30 "Struggles Between Two Natures," Rom. 7:14–25,
Carolyn Macomber
- 2:30 "No Shame," Julie and John Castidy
- 3:30 "Life in the Spirit," Rom. 8:1–13, Carolyn Macomber
- 4:30 "Children of God," Romans 8:14–30, Colleen Tinker
- 6:30 "The Big Three of Adventism," Dale Ratzlaff
Testimony, Skit, and Q and A Panel

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2014

- 9:00 Adult Bible Study: The Chapel
- 10:35 Worship Service: The Chapel
- 12:00 Fellowship Lunch: Restaurant (no host)

WEBSITE FOR REGISTRATION COST, MAP AND LODGING:

FormerAdventist.com

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

PROCLAMATIONMAGAZINE.COM

THE LIFE AFTER WITH CHRIS LEE

I never knew my father. I met him once, briefly. A series of strokes had left him incapable of fully comprehending who this 28 year old man by his bed was. He died not long after. It turns out we had a number of things in common like a love of writing and of photography. I often grow melancholy when I daydream about what could have been, but never was.

The adoptive father who raised me was capable of love and warmth at times, but he was equally capable of great evil, depravity, and violence. It's better not to dwell on such sordid history lest I write myself over the precipice that descends into darkest depression. Suffice it to say that neither I nor my siblings had happy childhoods. For my sisters, it was an especially hellish nightmare.

Then there's me. I've always felt like I was blindly stumbling my way through the "father thing". Somehow, I ended up with two wonderful daughters. One has already been out of the house for a year, and the second will be leaving in three years. While a parent never ceases being a parent, at a certain point the lion's share of the parenting job is done. My wife and I are nearing that point, but we've already entered the phase where we no longer stand on pedestals in the eyes of our children. I'm sure my kids see all too well the flawed individual I am. I wonder what resentments they have or will develop with time. How will I, as a father, be judged as they age? I catalogue my many failures and fear that they do, too. After all, what

do I know about being a father?

The Bible speaks of God as our Father. I struggle with this concept. What does that even mean? Is he like the father I never knew, the father who committed familial atrocities, or the flawed father that

MY TRUE FATHER



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WHILE I MAY NOT HAVE HAD AN EARTHLY FATHER TO MODEL, I NEED NOT SETTLE FOR PASSING THAT DYSFUNCTION ON TO THE NEXT GENERATION. I HAVE A HEAVENLY FATHER TO MODEL.

I am? I suspect that those of us who didn't have good home lives have the most trouble relating to God as Father, just as we struggle to learn to be fathers ourselves. Earthly fathers are supposed to reflect certain attributes of our heavenly Father to our children, and those children are then, in turn, able to reflect those attributes to the next generation. But what happens when there is significant dysfunction? How does one build a right view of God as Father if one has no proper reference point?

I don't have all the answers, but I'm learning a bit at a time. I'm starting to see the ultimate Father who is revealed in Scripture. I'm learning that a father's love is unconditional. I'm learning that a father's discipline is rightly motivated and full of grace. A father is present and dependable. A father is trustworthy. A father is protector and provider. A father is self-sacrificing. A father is worthy of emulation.

While I may not have had an earthly father to model, I need not settle for passing that dysfunction on to the next generation. I have a heavenly Father to model. My heavenly Father is the Father I aspire to imitate, and, ultimately, is all the Father I truly need. Whatever my past, life with Jesus is new life. My childhood and my past family life need not rule who I am today or define who I am as a father. In Christ, I am a new creation, have been adopted by a true Father, and have been given a clean slate. Now it's time to start living the Life After. †



Chris Lee lives in Lincoln, Nebraska with his wife, Carmen, and daughters, Ashlyn and Alyssa. They attend the Lincoln Berean Church. Chris is a self-described "theology junkie" whose mission is to proclaim the unfathomable grace of Christ in a clear, understandable, and Biblical way. Chris is the editor of the *Proclamation!* Blog at ProclamationMagazine.com. You may contact Chris by email at ambulator@gmail.com.