

FREEDOM AND TRUST

THE NEW COVENANT

ProclamationMagazine.com

Proclamation!

FORMER ADVENTISTS
INQUIRING ADVENTISTS
SABBATARIANS
CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

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FROM **WHERE** DID IT COME?

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HEALTH MESSAGE



COLLEEN TINKER

JESUS, NOT LIFESTYLE

I always resented Christians who stridently opposed movements or practices that were widely accepted by other Christians. Especially as I discovered the new covenant gospel and left Adventism, I was startled by the polarizing I began to see within Christianity.

In fact, I understood how the writers of many letters to the editor resorted to chiding us for “bashing”; can’t we just get along? After all, they would say, we all love Jesus. Let our differences slide off the radar screen and just accept one another!

...IT IS NECESSARY TO “UNPACK” THAT WARPED WORLDVIEW BY COMPARING WHAT WE LEARNED TO THE WORDS OF SCRIPTURE IN CONTEXT.

As time has passed and I have watched many former Adventists settle in very different places, from being grounded in biblical teaching to believing that the second coming occurred in AD 70 to believing in sinlessness or even universalism, I have concluded three things. First, the issue of authority is foundational. The Bible is our only source of truth, and we must be committed to reading it using the normal rules of grammar and vocabulary in context and understanding the historical setting of each book.

Second, when people have been systematically mis-taught what the Bible says and how it should be read, it is necessary to “unpack” that warped worldview by comparing what we learned to the words of Scripture in context. This process sometimes looks painstaking to those who grew up without an extra-biblical prophet or authoritative interpreter of Scripture. Nevertheless, as one shines the light of God’s word onto the teachings and practices of a false religion or teacher, that light of truth sometimes reveals more than the deceptions of the false religion. It may actually reveal the ways many widely-accepted practices that have entered the larger Christian community also deviate from the clear teaching and sufficiency of Scripture.

Third, insisting that Scripture is sufficient in revealing all we need for life and godliness as the Holy Spirit applies His revelation to our lives, is often an unpopular stance. No one who loves Jesus willingly embraces untruth, but we all can be deceived by promises of comfort, relief, and power couched in almost-biblical language. It is necessary, therefore, to test everything by Scripture, not ra-

tionalizing or bargaining in order to retain “permission” to believe or practice things that subtly undermine resting in Jesus alone for both our justification and our sanctification.

In this issue Cheryl Granger shares the results from her months of researching the sources and similarities of Ellen White’s health message, Adventism’s “right arm of the gospel”, with the practices and beliefs of other movements and religions. In the process of her research, she has discovered the non-Christian influences behind many of Adventism’s practices—influences which are largely unnoticed even within western Christianity.

In contrast, Bryan Clark, senior pastor of Lincoln Berean Bible Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, shares a verse-by-verse explication of 2 Corinthians 3—the contrast between the covenant engraved on stone, which kills, and the new covenant of the Spirit which gives life. The good news of the new covenant is the answer to the ascetic demands of the health message which ultimately has no power “against fleshly indulgence” (Col. 2:23).

Also in this issue Sharon Clark shares her faith story, and Dale Ratzlaff addresses the “health message” in his Pastor’s Column. We hear from our columnists Rick Barker, Chris Lee, and Carolyn Macomber, and we share a reflection on our tenth annual Former Adventist Fellowship conference in Redlands, California.

I thank God for the life He gave me, raising me and protecting me within Adventism and giving me the understanding I needed of the religion which I loved before overwhelming me with the wonder of the new covenant. When I saw that Jesus keeps the covenant conditions for me, that in Him I am born again of the Spirit and adopted by the Father, I had no choice but to go where He led. The truth of Jesus shined the light on the reality of Adventism. It is Jesus, not the health message, that gives me life. He, not lifestyle, is who I must share.†

FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Back issues of *Proclamation!* and the blog site ProclamationMagazine.com
- Books and other materials by Dale Ratzlaff LifeAssuranceMinistries.com
- Day by day commentary on the Sabbath School lessons BibleStudiesForAdventists.com
- Testimonies, Bibles studies, and the forum FormerAdventist.com
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LIFE ASSURANCE MINISTRIES



DOES ADVENTISM'S HEALTH MESSAGE CONFLICT WITH THE BIBLICAL GOSPEL?

The answer is a clear “yes” and an uncertain “no”. The Adventist emphasis on healthful living is good. Adventists have been leaders in developing hospitals, medical and dental schools, and clinics around the world. However, Ellen White makes a number of statements regarding health that have proven to be incorrect, have no biblical support, may have their roots in pagan religions, put people under false guilt, and most importantly, undermine the gospel.

Ellen White said, meat eating “has always been a curse to the human family”.¹ If true, one wonders why Christ, the sinless One, ate meat even just before the cross, on the day of the resurrection, and later served His disciples a fish breakfast.

For over a thousand years there was no restriction on what man was to eat.² Later, when God wanted to make a separation between Israel and the other nations, God gave them the clean and unclean laws, as well as rituals and dress codes.³ When the old covenant came to an end at the cross and the gospel was no longer associated with a particular people, the clean and unclean rules were removed.⁴

There are a number of negative aspects of Adventist’s teachings on health; we will look at only two. First is their continuing reliance on Ellen White’s statements as the final word on health. For example, she often linked the evils of tobacco and liquor with the use of coffee and tea.^{5,6}

Medical studies have now shown that both coffee⁷ and tea⁸ used in moderation have more positive healthful benefits than negative effects.

A second negative aspect of the Adventist health message is that it confuses the simple gospel of faith in Christ by making healthful

living a means of acceptance with God and/or personal sanctification. Anything that takes away from our completeness in Christ is a false gospel. Ellen White said that the health message is not the gospel but only the “right arm of the gospel”; however, many of her statements confuse the issue. Following are a few such statements while many could be given.

Never should a morsel of food pass the lips between meals.⁹ ...not even an apple, a nut, or any kind of fruit.¹⁰ ... Did the smallness of the amount lessen the sin of the act?¹¹

You place upon your tables butter, eggs, and meat, and your children partake of them. They are fed with the very things that will excite their animal passions, and then you come to meeting and ask God to bless and save your children. How high do your prayers go? You have a work to do first. When you have done all for your children which God has left for you to do, then you can with confidence claim the special help that God has promised to give you.¹²

Scripture makes clear that food is not something that draws us to God or separates us from God.¹³ The gospel is not lifestyle but is our faith in the finished work of Christ centered on His death, burial and resurrection.¹⁴ Health is important. Christians should be intelligent in healthful practices. However, we should never think that our diet will commend us to God.†

...MEDICAL STUDIES HAVE NOW SHOWN THAT BOTH COFFEE AND TEA USED IN MODERATION HAVE MORE POSITIVE HEALTHFUL BENEFITS THAN NEGATIVE EFFECTS.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Health*, p. 412.

² Gen. 9:3.

³ See Lev. 11; 16; Deut. 22:11.

⁴ See Mk. 7:15-23; Acts 10; 11; Rom. 14:14.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 34, 36.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Counsels to the Church*, p. 105.

⁷ <http://authoritynutrition.com/top-13-evidence-based-health-benefits-of-coffee/>

⁸ <http://authoritynutrition.com/top-10-evidence-based-health-benefits-of-green-tea/>

⁹ Ellen G. White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 50.

¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Healthful Living*, p. 55.

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimony to Physicians*, p. 60.

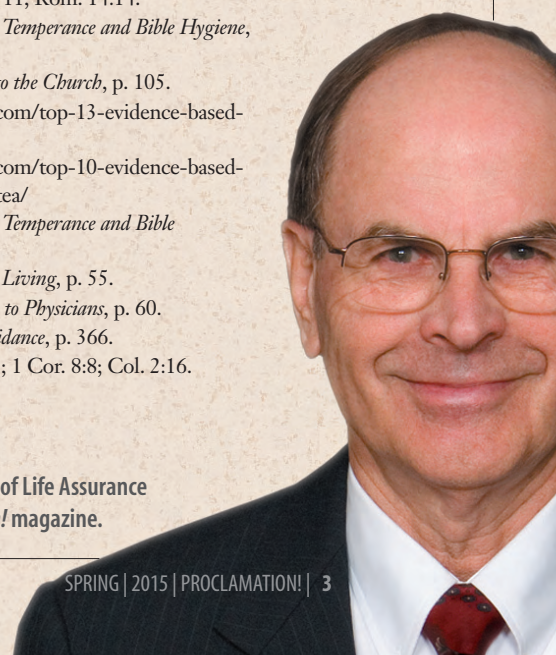
¹² Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 366.

¹³ Mk. 7:14-23; Rom. 14:2-3; 1 Cor. 8:8; Col. 2:16.

¹⁴ 1 Cor. 15:1-4.



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 Ratzlaff.com or by phoning (928) 554-1001.



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

RECOVERY FROM ADVENTISM

A NEW LIFE OF FREEDOM

My name is Sharon. I am a child of God who is recovering from Adventism.

My story is different from many, yet at the core it is typical. For years my focus was mainly on the rules. Now, looking back over my long journey out, I realize mine is a story of recovery from rules, fear, guilt, shame, distress, black and white thinking, approval seeking, and mistrust of God. It is the story of my recovery from religion to relationship, from legalism to grace.

I was born and raised a second-generation Adventist in Wisconsin and went to the church's elementary school, to Wisconsin Academy, and then to Andrews University. I taught at Loma Linda Academy (LLA) for 12 years; in fact, during my last year there I was honored to receive the Zapara Excellence in Teaching Award. My experience in "the church" was positive. I took in all the teachings and was a good rule follower. I enjoyed everything: boarding school, camp meetings, summer camps, and Pathfinders. Even today when old hymns are sung, they bring a surge of love for my past and of memories of baptisms at the lake. In fact, when I was baptized, I felt the Holy Spirit come over me as I came out of the water. I was proud of being an Adventist and felt special because we had extra knowledge from Ellen White that wasn't in the Bible. We had more than regular Christians.

Like a good rule follower, I even studied the church manual to learn the rules. I grew up judgmental, self-righteous, fearful of white clouds (Jesus would return like He went away—in the clouds), of God, of hell, and of the time of trouble.

As a youth I was bothered by the cultural rules that seemed inconsistent. For example, jewelry wasn't allowed because it was adornment and it was costly, yet many Adventists poured much extravagance into their homes and cars. Vegetarianism and the prohibition of unclean meats were promoted for both health and religious reasons, yet potlucks were overloaded with sugar, fat, and gluttony. We couldn't dance, yet we roller skated and did the Grand March with our boyfriends. On Sabbath it was alright to talk about purchasing things, but money never exchanged hands. We couldn't go out to movies, yet movies were brought into the academy. (I guess our angels would not abandon us if we were in the Adventist gym!) Cards were wrong, yet we played Rook on academy band trips. We didn't kill and were

conscientious objectors, yet the pro-choice position on abortion was a subtle underlying belief.

Later, when I moved to California as an adult, I found a new set of inconsistencies. We could go out to eat on Sabbath, and it was alright for others to work to feed us. Nevertheless, we wouldn't have worked in restaurants on Sabbath to feed others. Furthermore, as a Loma Linda faculty member, I couldn't wear jewelry, but my twelfth-grade daughter on the other side of the campus could have pierced ears.

My Adventist family and friends tell me that Adventism has changed, that it isn't what it used to be, but I see inconsistencies in what Adventists believe from one friend to another and from one locality to another. For example, many Adventists say they don't believe in Ellen White, but unknowingly they live within a worldview shaped by the things she said. It seems the external differences among Adventists serve to hide the core reality of the religion.

First Questions

Besides being disturbed by these inconsistencies, I began to question my beliefs when I started reading the Bible in the mid '70s. One of my first insights was reading in the New Testament about people who were baptized. All they did was believe Jesus, and they were baptized. This practice was inconsistent with my raising my hand 27 times to agree with the 27 beliefs the Adventist church professed.

My next steps came within the church about 1979. I came across a book called *Security of Salvation* by Adventist psychologist Richard Nies. It grabbed my attention. You mean I could know? I read it with great interest and intensity, and it took away my fear of clouds.

In fact, one day a few years later as I was getting ready to go to work teaching at LLA, I noticed outside my window a beautiful cloud like those in Harry Anderson's pictures. It seemed open in the middle, and rainbow streaks of light came out of it. I was sure that at any minute Jesus and His angels would appear! I was ready to go home with Him and leave my beautiful house. I wasn't afraid.

I talked to my kids about what we should do. If we stayed and waited for Him to come in the cloud and it wasn't Him, how

SM SHARON CLARK

MAND TRUST

would I explain why I was late to work? “I’m late because I saw this cloud and thought Jesus was coming?” I don’t think they would accept that even at Loma Linda Academy.

As I watched, however, the cloud finally evaporated, and I went to work with tears in my eyes. Nevertheless, I was grateful for the realization that I wasn’t afraid and was ready to go. I had no fear. Not long after that, a young lady in the mall asked me if I was saved. I said without hesitation and with full confidence and assurance, “Yes.” This certainty was a wonderful new freedom I felt inside the Adventist church for nearly 20 years. Yet I had the freedom with guilt.

More questions

I experienced the struggles in the ‘80s when Ellen White’s authority was questioned, and many fell away from Adventism. I heard Walter Rea speak of his research that showed Ellen had copied much of her work. This knowledge didn’t shake me; I had been focused on Jesus, not on a woman. I continued attending church but held a very light view of her. I disliked *Child Guidance*, *The Adventist Home*, and *Messages to Young People* anyway, because they always made me feel guilty. I could never measure up to her standards, and she didn’t have any suggestions for accomplishing her demands.

I was beginning to question the church, and I wondered if it was a cult. I read a book by Walter Martin on cults, and I sighed a sigh of relief when I saw that he put Adventists in the evangelical camp. I was somewhat confused, though, about what an evangelical was.

One year while I and some colleagues were working on a Vacation Bible School (VBS) program for the Loma Linda University Church, we previewed several non-Adventist programs for possible use in our VBS. I remember thinking that they talked about Jesus in a very different way than we did. They talked about receiving Jesus and leading others to Christ. That language was inconsistent with Adventist talk.

In the late ‘80s Celebration Center opened. It was an Adventist church, but it had a different worship style with praise music, freedom and transparency, no rules, and no inconsistencies in its practices. It fit my now-evolving beliefs, and I began to attend. I loved the worship and praise we gave to our Lord



SHARON CAREY

during the service. Moreover, I found something that I always wanted. Grace was freely taught, and I left a load of grief and guilt on the steps during their “Gardens of Prayer”. I learned how much God loved me and how to express my worship and my love for Him. It was here that I first started a 12-step program of recovery.

In spite of the underlying Adventism, God was reaching me and changing me.

Isolation was another issue I had to process. I had been sheltered in Adventist schools and never associated with people outside the Adventist circle. I only knew “Adventist talk”. In fact, after college it was difficult associating with neighbors and colleagues of other beliefs. As a teacher in public school, for example, I never went to the teachers’ lounge. Years later I found myself at a restaurant and noticed I was the only Adventist at the table. I still remember the panic I felt inside my chest.

Finally, after I eventually left teaching at LLA, I learned ballroom dancing and went to Friday evening dances. Those dances were where I practiced socializing and making conversation outside my “Adventist talk”.

Leaving my identity

My first physical step out of Adventism occurred about 1994. Changes had begun to happen at Celebration Center that didn't fit my new recovery, and I could no longer attend. I wanted to continue in a church with this particular style of worship where I could express my love to God, but I had to look outside the Adventist church for such a place since the rest of Adventism seemed to be criticizing Celebration.

Leaving caused me great distress and grief for many years. I was leaving everything I ever knew, all the friends I ever had, and all the institutions of the church. More than that I believed I was truly lost if I didn't keep the Sabbath—or should I say—if I didn't worship in a building on Saturday. Consequently, I went back and forth between another little Adventist gathering, which was a spin-off from Celebration, and Victoria Community Church (now called The Grove) in Riverside on Sundays.

I prayed oh-so-hard for God to help me with this dilemma, and He did. He put books in front of me and provided several pastors (both Saturday and Sunday pastors) teaching on the Sabbath. I was comforted knowing that God was with me, helping me.

After months of wrestling, I finally took a stand on what I considered the bedrock fact: if I was saved according to the day I went into a building and worshiped, then I wasn't saved by grace, and Jesus' death on the cross didn't mean anything.

Although I didn't fully understand the subject, in 1995, I arbitrarily put my Sabbath struggle to rest and joined Hillside Community church in Rancho Cucamonga. For at least five years my weekly cycle was turned upside down; I never knew if it was Saturday, Sunday, or Monday. Sabbath verses continued to nag at me, and I didn't understand why these Bible-fearing people didn't see we were worshiping on the wrong day.

Fifteen years after leaving the Adventist church and dropping my membership, I was still an Adventist going to church on Sunday, and I filtered all the teachings in my Christian church through an Adventist prism. Slowly, I began to realize that there were many more differences between Adventism and Christianity than I had realized. I had not unpacked my Adventist suitcase of doctrines.

In a Bible study group I learned that Adam was with Eve at the tree in the Garden of Eden, and I heard that Michael was an angel, not Jesus. I was having confusion over the end-times, the state of the dead, unclean meats, eternal hell, Easter, Old and New Covenants, and Sabbath verses; and I never understood the investigative judgment.

My evangelical husband said that when I died, I could rest because of all the rules I'd had to follow, but he was going straight to heaven when he died.

Sharon Clark grew up in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Wisconsin and received her education in Adventist schools from grade school through Andrews University. She taught at Loma Linda Academy for 12 years and received the Zapara Excellence in Teaching Award. Unable to reconcile Adventism's inconsistencies, she began attending a "Sunday church" in 1995. In 2009 she began to attend Former Adventist Fellowship and realized she hadn't unpacked her Adventist beliefs. Three years later she finally knew that she was no longer an Adventist, and today she leads the Celebrate Recovery ministry in the church she and her husband Derwood attend in Rancho Cucamonga, California.

In 2009, help arrived. Through a series of connections and through Facebook, I came across a book called *Sabbath in Christ*. In the process of getting it, I found a book called *The Truth About Adventist "Truth"*, both books by Dale Ratzlaff. The "truth" Dale talked about was hard to swallow. After reading those books, I found the Former Adventist Fellowship website and connected with Colleen Tinker. She invited me to a Former Adventist Fellowship (FAF) meeting in Redlands. I decided that I needed to find out the truth for myself. Through Dale's books, through three years of FAF Bible studies, and through reading *Proclamation!* magazines and attending the FAF weekends, I began to learn the truth.

One by one I unpacked all the errors embedded into my worldview, and at the 2011 FAF Weekend, my last pillars fell when Mark Martin spoke. I won't go into all the details of the doctrines that I had to unlearn, for others have done that in their testimonies better than I can. I have to say, however, that when I learned how *The Clear Word* had been changed to agree with Ellen, I was furious. Being the emotional eater that I am, I went straight to the cupboard when I got home, opened a can of my husband's pork and beans, and ate them. I realized that when I left Adventism, I had buried it alive. I had pushed it out of sight, but it was not gone, and it had resurfaced, demanding that I deal with it.

Truly free

I am not an Adventist anymore, and I no longer filter the Bible through Adventist eyes. I recant Adventism and will not pick and choose out of the 28 beliefs as so many do. There is no unity in that. I've gone through a grief I cannot explain, but I move off the fence between my two worlds with integrity as I reveal my story. I've always been afraid to tell it because of all the wonderful former students I have on Facebook. I cannot concern myself any longer over what they may think of me. What's important to me now is that my grieving is over, and I'm adjusted into a new life of freedom in Christ. I've just completed my eighth read-through of the Bible and have found a God Who is bigger than I ever thought; He is sovereign and totally in control. I can trust Him with all my will and my life.

As the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book states, "I don't regret the past or wish to shut the door on it." I received a good education that served me well in my career as a teacher. I learned a work ethic, and I have a great love of nature that came from Pathfinders, junior camps, and their leaders.

I am indebted to the leadership and integrity of the Tinkers, of Mark Martin, of the Ratzlaffs, and of my Redlands FAF friends that have directed me to the Bible alone. It took someone that had been where I was to help me transition out. It's been wonderful not to be traveling this road alone anymore.

Now I've taken my recovery to new levels. For the past five years I have been serving my church as the ministry leader for Celebrate Recovery. I feel more in God's will than ever before in my life.

I thank God for persistently leading me to Himself and for giving me freedom in Jesus. He is faithful, and He is all I need.†

Adventism's Fundamental Belief #14: Unity in the Body of Christ

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children.

Comments about the belief statement

Like many of the Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, the biblical accuracy of this belief statement depends entirely on the context of the claims. In this case, the key issue is the Adventists' meaning of the word "church", or the "body of Christ". We saw in our discussion of Fundamental Belief statements 12 and 13 that Adventism has private definitions for interpreting "church". Their official publication *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* reveals that the phrase "visible church" is code language for the Adventist church which, they say, is "characterized by loyalty to God's commandments and possessing the faith of Jesus".¹

Therefore, it isn't surprising to find nearly identical language describing this statement about unity in the body of Christ:

Diversity of gifts does not mean a diversity of beliefs, however. In the last days God's church will be composed of a people who share a platform of the everlasting gospel—their lives characterized by the observance of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev. 14:12). Together they proclaim to the world God's invitation to salvation.²

According to Adventism, the "last days" described here mark the time—now—of the "Third Angel's message" in which true believers are warned against receiving the mark of the beast, or

ADVENTISM'S FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF #14
UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST:

THEIR CHURCH OR
THE CHURCH

... THE CORE ERROR OF THE
ADVENTIST GOSPEL: THAT THE
EVERLASTING GOSPEL IS
ABOUT US AND WHAT WE DO
INSTEAD OF ABOUT CHRIST AND
WHAT HE HAS DONE.

"Sunday worship". This call to avoid the mark of the beast and to worship on the seventh day is the heart of the Adventist "everlasting gospel" and the "observance of the commandments of God". Thus there is no room for unity in Christ with believers from other churches, because there would be diversity of beliefs. Within Adventism, the unity in the body of Christ (i.e. the church) is limited to those who belong to the Seventh-day Adventist Church which they believe is the only true church—the Remnant Church.

The previous quote also shows the core error of the Adventist gospel: that the everlasting gospel is about us and what we do instead of about Christ and what He has done. Thus this statement elaborates on the "platform of the everlasting gospel" as being a life "characterized by the observance of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus".

Therefore, as we look under the surface of what appeared on the surface to be a biblically accurate teaching of the unity that all believers share because of their common faith, we see that it is actually another case of Adventist double-speak. Adventists believe that they have been uniquely set apart from everyone else with the special mission to call true believers into their church.

The only unity envisioned in this statement is a unity under the umbrella of the Seventh-day Adventist organization and in agreement with its doctrines.†

¹ *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, second ed., Pacific Press Pub. Assn., p. 171.

² *Ibid.*, p. 204-205.

Photo: Unusual steeple on Pioneer Memorial Church at Adventism's Andrews University.

Rick Barker is a native of Southwestern Ohio and facilitates a weekly Bible study for former and transitioning Adventists in the Dayton, Ohio, area. Rick graduated from Andrews University in 1987 and received a Masters degree from the University of Dayton. Rick and his wife Sheryl formally left the Adventist church in 2004. Prior to this they had been active in the Miamisburg and Wilmington, Ohio, churches.



COLLEEN TINKER



WE ARE MINISTERS OF A
NEW COVENANT

2 CORINTHIANS 3:1-18

BRYAN CLARK
SENIOR PASTOR
LINCOLN BEREAN CHURCH

The new covenant is the powerful answer to the Adventist health message explained in this issue. The finished work of the Lord Jesus administered in our lives by the indwelling Holy Spirit is what purifies and sanctifies us. Ascetic practices and lifestyle cannot help us become more like Him.

was pastoring a small church in rural Nebraska when leaders from a large church in the state's capital contacted me and asked if I would be interested in moving to Lincoln to become part of their staff. The arrangement was that I would share some of the preaching and teaching duties, work alongside the senior pastor, whom I knew, and maybe—possibly—over five or six years, transition into the role of senior pastor. What appealed to me about that offer was the chance to work in ministry with someone I highly respected and to be trained and mentored to grow as a leader. So, I agreed to come. That was October of 1993; I was thirty-four years old.

A couple of months later the senior pastor was diagnosed with cancer, and in less than a year I was voted in as the new senior pastor. I was absolutely overwhelmed; I felt I was totally inadequate for my calling. Now, more than twenty years later, I realize that I might not have been right about a lot of things in those days, but one thing I was right about—I was—and am—totally inadequate for my calling. In reality, you are inadequate for yours, too—and we know that fact, don't we? We feel it. We think about talking to a neighbor, or a co-worker, or in some way carrying out the ministry to which God has called us, and we feel a sense of inadequacy—because we are inadequate.

So what do we do? How do we find a sense of confidence? How do we find a sense of strength and boldness?

This dilemma is what Paul addresses in 2 Corinthians, chapter three. In thinking about 2 Corinthians, especially the early chapters, it's probably best just to ignore the chapter divisions and think of this passage as a running train of thought. At the end of chapter two, Paul introduces us to a graphic Roman imagery called the Roman Triumphal Entry. He paints the picture of Christ as the conquering general and us as the conquered slaves that come in with Christ. Paul reminds us that when the parade comes through town, there is only one who receives the applause—and that is Christ Himself.

Furthermore, Paul also reminds us that when God smells us—our performance and our behavior—what He ultimately smells is the sweet aroma of Christ. Whether we think we performed very well this past week or whether we think we performed very poorly, when God smells us, He doesn't smell our personal performance. He smells the sweet smell of Jesus and what He has done for us. In fact, Paul reminds us that Christ is the big divide between those who will experience eternal life and those who will experience eternal death—a reality which then raises the question, "Who is adequate to be a messenger of this gospel?" Paul says, "Well, the 'adequate' are not the religious peddlers; they are those who are sincerely called of God." So, in chapter three, Paul continues to discuss the subject, "Who is adequate?"

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts (2 Cor. 3:1-3).

It was very common in the first century for religious teachers to carry with them a letter of commendation that was their credential

for ministry. We know that the false teachers in Corinth were religious legalists, and it is very likely they carried with them letters from Jerusalem that identified them as official messengers of the message and served as their credentials. The previous passage sounds as if the false teachers are raising the challenge, "What are Paul's credentials? We'd like to see his letter."

Paul responds by saying to his readers, "Do we have to go through those credentialing questions again? My credential is that your lives have been radically changed by the Spirit of God through the power of the gospel."

Paul had lived with the Corinthians for eighteen months. During that time he delivered the message of power, and their lives would never be the same. Now he says, "Hey, your lives are my credential; you're the letter. The Spirit of God has written on your hearts that you have been radically changed." In this way he's drawing a contrast between religion and the message of Jesus.

The legalistic peddlers were peddling mere religion. Religion does have the ability to do a bit of remodeling—to put a little paint over certain areas and to produce external change temporarily. But only the Spirit of God, through the power of the gospel, has the power to change someone from the inside out. Therefore Paul says, "This letter that commends me isn't written in ink; it is written by the Spirit of God. This isn't a tablet of stone; this is someone's heart that has been radically changed. These changed hearts are the credentials."

In other words, Paul is saying that what makes us adequate is not ourselves—the minister is not adequate—but the ministry of the new covenant is adequate. It's not the messenger that's adequate; it's the message that's adequate. The adequacy is not in the individual, but it is in the Spirit of God—in the power of the message of the new covenant.

In addition, the whole idea of religious credentials has always been a problem in the church. In various denominations today there is still a strong emphasis on a clergy class in contrast with everybody else. We separate the clergy out by titles; we separate them out by clothing; we separate them out as a class and apart from everybody else. That separation looks much more like the old covenant than like anything that appears in the new covenant.

The fact of the matter is, in the new covenant there is no such distinction; there is not a clergy class and everybody else. In fact, in order to be adequate for ministry one does not need to go to Bible college; one does not need to go to seminary; one does not need to be ordained nor have credentials. For example, I am a licensed minister of the gospel, and I have four college degrees. I have been at this work for over thirty years, yet none of that makes me adequate for ministry. The only thing that makes me adequate is the Spirit of God changing my heart and the power of the message. Adequacy is not in the minister; it's in the message. It's in the ministry of the new covenant—and that is what Paul is saying.

And such confidence we have through Christ toward God (v. 4).

In other words the Corinthians might be saying, "Wow! He sounds really confident in his relationship with God." Paul says, "I

am, but that confidence doesn't come from myself; it comes through Christ."

Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (v. 5-6).

Paul is very quick to say his adequacy comes from God, and that adequacy comes from the fact that he has been called to be a servant of a new covenant—as we also have been called. In other words, we are messengers of the new covenant. The Greek language has a couple of different words for "new". The one in this passage is a particular word that means new as contrasted with old, which is the meaning we would expect, but it also carries with it the idea of superiority. Not only is this covenant new as compared to old, but it is far superior to the old—and that is the argument Paul is going to make. In philosophical circles we would say, "He is going to argue from the lesser to the greater, and what gives us adequacy is the message of the new covenant."

Next Paul gets very graphic in his terminology when he talks about the fact that this covenant is "...not of the letter, but of the Spirit". And then he says, "...the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." This graphic language certainly raises the question, "What is he talking about?"

But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? (v. 7-8).

With this sentence, the mystery of what he is talking about is gone. Paul is clearly referring to Exodus 34 when Moses went up Mount Sinai and received the law. He came down with tablets that God had engraved. This law became, in essence, the foundation of the old covenant. Paul refers to it as a "ministry of death". The law kills. He refers to it as a ministry of death, but he does say it was from God, and there was glory that came with it. When Moses came down the mount, his face glowed. He reflected the glory of God but—and Paul is quick to say and will say it two more times—the glory didn't last.

There is great theology in the fact that the glory faded away. What God was saying is that the old covenant would not last. It would fade away and give way to a new covenant that would be far more glorious. So Moses came down—he had the glory—but the glory would fade. This fading glory was God's way of saying, "This covenant is temporary. It will serve a purpose, and when the purpose has been completed, it will fade away and will be replaced by a new covenant." God through Paul goes on to say, "If that glory was true of a covenant that faded away, how much more glory is there going to be in this new covenant that is a covenant of life, a covenant of the Spirit?" Again, Paul is making the argument from the lesser to the greater.

One thing I want to bring up right here is the idea of the Ten Commandments. There is absolutely no question that the Ten

Commandments are part of Paul's reference here. They were on the tablets; they're what Moses carried down the mountain. Every statement here about the Old Testament law must include the Ten Commandments. The law kills; it's a ministry of death. We as Christians often talk about the Ten Commandments, but theologically, I am not sure we "get it". We want them in our parks. We want them in our courthouses. We want them in our schools, but somehow we pull them out and separate them from the whole law. Why?

I am raising that question now, and I will come back to it later in the article.

For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory (v. 9).

Again, the language is graphic. The letter kills—it's a ministry of death, but now he is referring to it as a "ministry of condemnation". What is he talking about?

All these references depend on understanding the purpose of the law. The law, in essence, was the foundation of the old covenant. Everything in the old covenant was meant to point to the coming of a Savior. God had made a promise. We track it all the way back to Genesis, chapter 3, where God promised that through the seed of a woman would come One who would crush the head of the serpent. By the time we get to Genesis 15, we can make the case that it will be God Himself who will become a man and shed his blood to atone, or to pay for, our inability to keep the covenant. All of the old covenant, therefore, was pointing to the fact that God had made a promise, and the promise was that He would send a Savior.

But there is a problem: all of us, deep within us, have a desire to be our own god. This desire first shows up in Genesis 3, and it shows up in our lives over and over again. Religion plays into this desire because religion tells us that we can "do it ourselves". Deep within us there is something that says, "I want to do it myself," and religion says, "You can. You just have to keep these rules. You just have to jump through these hoops. You just have to do this and that, and you can make yourself good enough for God."

So God sent the law. The purpose of the law was never to be a means of salvation. Sometimes I hear people say, "Well, people were saved one way in the Old Testament and another way in the New Testament". That idea is false. In fact, it is bad theology! The only difference between salvation in the Testaments is that people in the Old Testament were saved looking forward to the cross, while people in the New Testament are saved looking back at the cross.

In essence, people in the old covenant were saved on credit—believing that God made a promise, and He would keep His promise and would send a Savior—and they died believing by faith that promise would be true. But the tendency we have—because we have a natural desire to be our own god—is to think that God grades on a curve. Thus we tend to measure and compare ourselves, and this comparison is the problem with religion. Religious people tell themselves, by and large, "I'm better than most, so surely God's going to grade on a curve; and if anybody gets in, I'll probably get in".

God, though, sent the law to say, “Whoa, whoa, wait a minute here. We’re not going to do it that way, and I’m not grading on a curve. Here’s the standard—six hundred thirteen commandments—and this is what I want you to use to measure yourself. Unless you can keep every one of these perfectly—every day—you are condemned.” He wanted people to understand that they could not do it themselves. Therefore, they needed a Savior. Therefore, they would believe, by faith, that God would keep His promise, and He would send a Savior.

The law was a ministry of death; it was a ministry of condemnation. It was a constant reminder to humanity, “You don’t measure up; you need help.”

Greater glory

Paul reminds us that the old covenant did come with glory. However, if there was glory in a ministry of condemnation, how much greater will be the glory of a covenant of righteousness? Paul doesn’t go back and restate the gospel in this passage; he’s already stated it several times for the Corinthians. If we look back to 1 Corinthians 15, Paul states clearly that Jesus—God in the flesh—died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. He affirms that those who, by faith, believe Jesus died for them—did for us what we could not do for ourselves—that on that basis, God forgives our sins, and we are reconciled back into a relationship with God, both now and forever.

Therefore, our standing before God has nothing to do with our behavior. It has nothing to do with our religious performance. When God smells you He only smells the sweet smell of Jesus. Therefore, the new covenant is a covenant of righteousness—meaning that on the basis of what Jesus did for us on the cross—today believers in Jesus stand righteous in the presence of God. Now, we may have had a really good week, or we may have had a terrible week spiritually. Either way we stand before God right today, because our standing is not on the basis of our performance but on the basis of what Jesus did for us on the cross. Therefore, instead of a ministry of death, instead of a “ministry of condemnation”, this new covenant is a “ministry of righteousness” and is good news filled with hope and life. If the old covenant had some glory, how much more glorious must this new covenant be? Furthermore, if the new covenant is so much more glorious, why would anyone cling to the covenant of condemnation from the past?

This argument of “greater glory” is the argument that Paul is making.

For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it. For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory (v. 10-11).

Paul is saying that the new covenant is so glorious it’s as if the old covenant had no glory at all. The new is so superior that, by comparison, the old had none. In fact, he reminds us again that the old fades away, but the glory of the new gets more glorious with each passing day. Paul was dealing with false teachers in

SUNDAY IS NOT THE NEW COVENANT SABBATH. SALVATION IS THE NEW COVENANT SABBATH. WE LIVE IN THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS.

Corinth who were religious legalists. We sometimes refer to them as the Judaizers. These were not people who denied the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Rather, these were people who believed and affirmed those events, but they were quick to say, “But that’s not enough”. They were attempting to mesh the old with the new: “Okay, we like the new, but we are not ready to let go of the old.”

For the Judaizers in the ancient world it was, “Yes, Christ died for us, but we also need to be circumcised; we also need to keep the Sabbath; we also need to keep the yearly festivals and feasts.” They were trying to mesh the old with the new, and Paul is making the case that the new is so vastly superior, it makes no sense to cling to the old.

We have the same problem today when people try to mesh something to the finished work of Jesus on the cross. We all know people and denominations that would affirm Jesus’ death on the cross. They celebrate Christmas; they celebrate Easter. They say, “We believe all that. It is Christ and . . . Christ and baptism . . . Christ and communion . . . Christ and keeping the Sabbath . . . Christ and these legalistic rules and regulations.”

Our tendency is to say, “As long as they get the death, burial, and resurrection right, then the rest of it doesn’t really matter. I mean, there’s nothing wrong with being a little bit extra-cautious and doing a few more things on the side, right?”

Paul totally disagrees with that conclusion. When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he said, “If you add one thing to the gospel, it ceases to be the gospel.” In fact, this understanding of the gospel was the great divide of the Reformation: salvation is by Christ alone—nothing added.

Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech (v. 12).

I want to highlight the word “therefore” in verse twelve. Paul is using this transition to say, “Because salvation is by Christ alone, and because the new covenant is far more glorious than the old, therefore we move out with boldness; we move out with confidence; we move out with courage.” Why? Because the minister is adequate? No, because the ministry is adequate—the ministry of the new covenant. It’s not the messenger that’s adequate; it’s the message that’s adequate. So Paul says, “Because this adequacy is true, we have a message of hope; we have a message of life; we have

a message of righteousness. In fact, this superior message gives us our courage and our boldness. We just speak it, and the rest is up to God and His Spirit.”

... and we are not as Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away (v. 13).

Paul, again, is going back to Moses. Moses would put a veil over his face because the glory was fading away, and he didn't want the people to see that it was fading away, so he would hide its fading glory. Paul says, “Hey, we're not like that. The glory of the new covenant isn't fading away; it becomes more glorious with each passing day.”

But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away (v. 14-16).

This is a very interesting part of this text. Paul is saying that Moses hid the fact that the glory was fading, so that up until that moment in the first century as Paul was writing, when the old covenant was read, the people failed to recognize that the old covenant was fading away. Yet its entire purpose was to point to the coming of the Messiah. Paul even told us, at the end of 2 Corinthians, chapter one, that Jesus is God's “Yes”. In other words, Jesus was the fulfillment of everything that was promised, but the hearts and the minds of these Jews were veiled. They couldn't see that the old had faded away, and it was replaced by the glory of the new.

Now that Jesus has come, what is the purpose of hanging onto the old covenant? Why would anyone settle for the old when something far superior has replaced it? Paul says, “The only way to be set free from that old covenant is in Christ. Only when I am willing to accept that my salvation is not on the basis of my religious performance or on my ability to keep the law, but that I'm saved on the basis of what Christ did for me on the cross—only then does the veil come down. Only then can I see that the system that condemned me is gone, and I am now entering into the life of the new covenant which is a system of life and hope—a system of the Spirit.”

Christ is the great divide. Every single person reading this will make one of two choices: believe that Jesus died on the cross for his or her sins and thus by faith trust Christ alone, or decide, “I will do it myself.” There is no other option. Every religious system besides biblical Christianity is a way of saying, “I'll do this myself.” Until we recognize that there are no religious observances we can do, that there is no measure of “being good” that's going to be good enough for God, we will remain alienated from Him. However, when we finally admit that only what Christ did for us on the cross will satisfy God, the veil is lifted, and we see clearly that the old is gone and the new has come in Christ.

Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face behold-

ing as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit (v. 17-18).

Paul reminds us that the Spirit of God who dwells within us is God Himself, and where there is the Spirit, there is liberty—there is freedom. What he is saying is that the only way to be set free from the pressure and the anxiety and the condemnation of a religious system of performance is through Christ. If we have the Spirit of God, there is only one reason He is in us: we have trusted Christ as Savior. If we have the Spirit, there is liberty—there is freedom.

The old system of the law—the system of religious performance, the system of legalism—is a system of death; it is a system of condemnation. It is a system of darkness, because every day one lives in the reality that he may not be good enough that day, and that pressure never goes away. Even though one may be trying to be good, one doesn't know today if one is good enough, so one's day is filled with fear and anxiety. Every day is filled with pressure to measure up, hoping one will make it in—if God grades on the curve.

When we understand, though, that we can't be good enough, we finally understand why Jesus died in our place on the cross. When we believe by faith that Jesus did that for us, we have freedom. Then we have no more religious performance, no more pressure, no more fear, no more anxiety, and no more wondering every day if we're going to measure up. On those days when I completely make a mess of things, and I have plenty of those days, I take solace in the fact that when God smells me, He only smells the aroma of Christ. I stand righteous before Him. The pressure is off; I have been set free.

Paul reminds us that the Spirit is in the process of transforming us into the image of Christ. He says we do this “with unveiled face”. Moses had to hide his face because the glory was fading. Our glory, though, isn't fading. It's becoming more glorious with each passing day. In fact, it will never fade. From glory to glory, it's becoming stronger and stronger as the Spirit of God is transforming us more and more into the image of Christ. That word transforming is the Greek word from which we get our English word metamorphosis. The Spirit of God is “metamorphosizing” me on a daily basis—making me more and more like Jesus. The glory is getting greater, not less. But notice carefully the text; this is not something we are doing. It is something the Spirit of God is doing in us and for us. There is nothing we can do today to make ourselves more spiritual. There is nothing we can do today to make ourselves more acceptable to God or to make ourselves more righteous. If we are born-again believers in Jesus, all that makes us pleasing to God is being done for us on the basis of what Christ did for us on the cross. All God asks of us is that we would seek to live in alignment with what's true of us in Christ—that we would live as if we actually believe that what He tells us is true.

Ten Commandments recapitulated

Now let's go back to our discussion of the Ten Commandments. Many Christians try to make the case that the Ten Com-

mandments are still in effect today. What, though, is the biblical basis for somehow pulling the Commandments out of the law and saying that what was said in 2 Corinthian 3 doesn't apply to them? Of course it applies! They're the very things Moses went up and received on the tablets and brought back. They're a ministry of death; they're a ministry of condemnation. So what are we saying? The Ten Commandments are out and we can live as we please?

The answer is "yes" and "no". They are out—they were part of the law; they have faded with the glory of the law—but the Ten Commandments do reflect the moral character of God. Now, rather than externally trying to uphold a standard, we have the very person of God dwelling within us—metamorphosing us into the image of Christ. Therefore, the moral character of God does not change and, since the Spirit of God is living within us, the Spirit of God is changing us—metamorphosing us to live in alignment with the moral character of God. Therefore, under the Spirit of God, do I go out and violate those commands? Of course not! I would be violating the very character of God. But now my morality is from the inside out. Now it's in alignment with the Spirit of God who's molding and shaping me into the image of God—in fact, now my moral behavior is actually generated by the Spirit of God!

Some people try to make the case that the Ten Commandments are still in effect in order to support the idea of a new covenant Sabbath. As a matter of fact, some of you maybe have been asked the question, "Why don't you keep the Sabbath?" Then, as you look through the Ten Commandments, you might have thought, "Well, boy—that's really a hard question to answer."

Here is the answer. Number one: the Ten Commandments are OUT. Number two: we must understand the Sabbath. The whole purpose of the Sabbath—like the whole of the Old Covenant—was to point to the coming of a Messiah, the promised Savior. The concept was this: God works; I rest. This reality goes all the way back to creation when God created; then He rested, and Adam and Eve entered into His rest. Even before sin entered into the picture, God demonstrated grace. He did the work; we just entered into it.

The law of the Sabbath, however, is not in Genesis; it's in the Mosaic law. In fact, the purpose of the law was that God works; His people rest. That purpose was completed when Jesus died on the cross. He did the work for me, and I rest in the finished work of Jesus.

Therefore, when people say to me, "Do you keep the Sabbath?" I say, "Yes, I do."

"Well, what day is Sabbath?"

"Well, it's today."

"You mean Sunday?"

"No, it's today. Ask me on Tuesday, and I will say, 'Today'; ask me on a Friday, and I will say, 'Today'. Every day I live in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. He worked; I rested."

We make a tremendous mistake when we try to make the case that Sunday is the new covenant Sabbath. Moreover, the Sabbath question is not about whether or not you mow your lawn on Sunday—or Saturday. In fact, reducing Sabbath-keeping to doing or not doing physical tasks is just bad theology.

Sunday is not the new covenant Sabbath. Salvation is the new covenant Sabbath. We live in the finished work of Jesus. He worked; I rest.

Take away the veil

The old covenant—the covenant of law, the covenant of legalism, the covenant of religious performance, the covenant that reminded Israel that they needed help because we all need a Savior—that covenant has faded as it has been fulfilled in the person of Jesus. Jesus was God's "Yes". He kept His promise, and now that the new has come, the old has faded away. Why would we hang onto the old that has faded away when the new is vastly superior?

God, now in Christ, has made a way of salvation so that even on those days when I perform poorly, I stand righteous in the presence of God. I have been absolutely set free from religious performance, from anxiety and fear, from wondering every day if I am going to measure up for God. It is the Spirit of God within me who is metamorphosing me on a daily basis to make me more and more like Jesus; and, instead of the glory fading, the glory of the new covenant of the Spirit is getting greater with each passing day and will culminate in the presence of Jesus.

Compared to the new covenant, the old covenant had no glory at all. What a magnificent message! Our adequacy is not in the minister; it's in the ministry of the new covenant. Our adequacy is not in the messenger; it's in the message—the message of the power of the Spirit of God and the life-changing message of the gospel. Paul reminds us of this magnificent message of liberty, this message of hope, this message of freedom, this message that allows us to stand righteous in the presence of a holy God. What an awesome message that is!

I'm so thankful that when we were lost in our sin, Christ died for us. I'm thankful that the Spirit of God dwells within us, metamorphosing us on a daily basis into the image of Christ. I know there are probably people reading this that have been up to their eyebrows in religion. Maybe you think that if you are a really good religious person that God will find you acceptable. That's an evidence of a veil blinding your eyes, blinding your mind. It's critical to realize that trying to live up to religious standards is a system of condemnation—a system of death. That system kills. My prayer is that the Lord would lift that veil, that every person would understand that Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves, and that in trusting Christ as Savior, we receive His Spirit, and where His Spirit is, there is freedom.†

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C H E R Y L G R A N G E R

FROM V

And He said to them,
'Are you so lacking in
understanding also? Do
you not understand that
whatever goes into the
man from outside cannot
defile him, because it does
not go into his heart, but
into his stomach, and is
eliminated?' (Thus He
declared all foods clean).

MARK 7:18-19

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HEALTH MESSAGE

WHERE DID IT COME?

PART 1

INTRODUCING THE MESSAGE

Does eating pepper or a slice of turkey make me less spiritual? Why, to this day, does the Loma Linda University student cafeteria not have black pepper available for its patrons? Will eating bread warm from the oven ruin my health, blocking my communication with God? Does it glorify God if I live in a catsup-free zone?

These questions sound contrived for effect, but they arise from real practices of generations of Seventh-day Adventists. What lies behind them? Let's explore some of the reasons that Adventists eat the way they do.

"Health" would likely be the top reason many Adventists would give to the outside world to explain the culture of Adventist eating. In fact, the following example is only one of many Adventist stories I remember in which an Adventist would show a non-Adventist a piece of meat under a microscope, thus eliciting exclamations of horror at the "nasty, wriggling little worms" that were making their abode there. Convinced and converted, the non-Adventist would thenceforth refuse to eat unclean meat.

In her book *Valley of Decision*, Leola Woodruff created a conversation in which she asked a "convinced non-Adventist" if she wasn't eating the pork at a meal they shared because she didn't like the way it was prepared.

"Oh, it's cooked fine, but I have never eaten pork since I saw it under the microscope in the laboratory," she answered.

"What does it look like?" I asked.

"Well," she answered, "seeing how you asked for it, I'll tell you that it sometimes is crawling with worms and parasites."¹

Adventist publications have promoted many arguments besides avoiding worms for adhering to the religion's health message. The following examples are only representative of Adventism's growing opus of diet instructions.

What we learned

We learned, for example, that John the Baptist was a forerunner of Christ's first coming, and he was a vegetarian; likewise the remnant church, as the forerunner of His second coming,

should follow John's example. (Adventists are taught that the grasshoppers [locusts] that John ate were really beans from carob pods.)

Further, we understood that 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 teaches that we must adopt healthy eating habits because our bodies are the temple of God. Of course, the context of this verse is sexual immorality in the Corinthian church, not the giving of advice on the choice between turkey and Tofurky (a vegetarian turkey substitute).

Meat, we were taught, is essentially flavored by waste products. "And did you ever eat a steak from which all the blood has been drained? I assure you that you'd never want another! It is the blood that gives meat its flavor. And that blood is carrying the waste products of the animal. Not a happy thought, is it?"²

We also learned that we would have a more successful life by adopting certain eating habits because flesh foods cloud the intellect. Look at Daniel, for example. He adopted a life-long vegetarian lifestyle and became so wise. We need to be as daring as Daniel was when he refused the king's provision of meat and wine. Of course, as Adventists we didn't really pay much attention to Daniel 10:2 and 3 in which Daniel indicates his normal practice was to eat meat and to drink wine.

Intoxicating tea

"Tea acts as a stimulant and, to a certain extent, produces intoxication."³ H-m-m, can I get a DUI driving home from a tea party?

Using pickles, spices, pepper, catsup, and mustard will "poison the blood" and "excite the nerves". "The inflamed condition of the drunkard's stomach is often pictured as illustrating the effect of alcoholic liquors. A similarly inflamed condition is produced by the use of irritating condiments. Soon ordinary food does not satisfy the appetite. The system feels a want, a craving, for something more."⁴

Central to our Adventist health message was the conviction that an unhealthy body and brain makes it difficult or virtually impossible for the Holy Spirit to communicate with us: "The brain nerves which communicate with the entire system are the only medium through which Heaven can communicate to man and affect his inmost life."⁵

Let's face it, the Adventist belief that humans do not possess a spirit puts a lot of pressure on them to have really healthy bodies and brains! If God's Spirit cannot "bear witness" with their spirits

THE INDULGENCE OF THE APPETITE IN FIRST
EATING FOOD HIGHLY SEASONED, **CREATED A**
MORBID APPETITE, AND PREPARED THE
WAY FOR EVERY KIND OF INDULGENCE,
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SACRIFICED TO LUST.

(Romans 8:16), then all they have left are their neurons. Adventist physician William Dysinger wrote, “The brain’s highest function, however, is to be the dwelling place, through His Spirit, of Jesus Himself. Within the highest center of the brain is a mysterious place in which Christ desires to dwell. Although it cannot be pinpointed anatomically, it is a physical place where Jesus stands and knocks, waiting for us to invite Him in. When accepted and invited in, He is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”⁶

“The devil very successfully uses many tools to dull the higher brain powers, thus making humans less able to hear the voice of God.”⁷

Even the Adult Sabbath School Study Guide has emphasized the physical medium of perceiving the Holy Spirit: “Our bodies are the vehicles for our brains, and it is through our brain that the Holy Spirit communicates with us. If we wish to have communion with God, we must take care of our bodies and brains.”⁸

In July, 2014, General Conference president Ted Wilson preached a “Sabbath sermon closing a weeklong health conference in Geneva, Switzerland, and he expressed disappointment that some people liken the church’s emphasis on a plant-based diet to fanaticism,” reported Adventist News Network. Wilson said, “Nancy and I have been vegetarians all of our lives’... ‘That doesn’t mean I’m any closer to the kingdom of God than the person who is eating meat,’ he said. ‘It simply means that I am trying to follow God’s health laws so that the frontal lobes and the delicate nerve endings can receive the impressions of the Holy Spirit in a wonderful way.’”⁹

All of this Adventist emphasis on vegetarianism for the sake of proper communion with God is the legacy of Ellen G. White (EGW):

“The brain nerves which communicate with the entire system are the only medium through which Heaven can communicate to man and affect his inmost life.”¹⁰

“God cannot let His Holy Spirit rest upon those who, while they know they should eat for health, persist in a course that will enfeeble mind and body.”¹¹

To be sure, our minds are renewed (Rom. 12:2) when we are born again and submitted to Jesus and His word. He changes our thinking. Spiritual things, however, are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14-15). The Holy Spirit testifies truth to our spirits (Rom. 8:16).

This idea that poor nutrition—or that any kind of body or brain damage—can affect us spiritually makes me wonder if God deserts

starving Christian prisoners or mentally and physically handicapped persons. If our bodies are enfeebled and imperfect as per the above quotes, does that problem also block the Holy Spirit?¹²

In spite of obvious evidence to the contrary, Ellen White has much more to say about the dangers of eating meat. For example, she states that consuming meat (and especially pork) will give one cancer and maybe even leprosy.¹³ Moreover, she said that the Adventist church will be “shaken” and purified before the second coming; one of the categories of people to be shaken out are those that fail to control their appetites.¹⁴ “God demands,” she said, “that the appetites be cleansed, and that self-denial be practiced in regard to those things that are not good. This is a work that will have to be done before His people can stand before Him a perfected people.”¹⁵

Cindy Tutsch, Adventist author and associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate, explains to teens, “In other words, if we’re really serious about this idea of being part of the Latter Rain and then living victoriously through the time of trouble, we had better make some pretty drastic lifestyle changes....And yes, I have found through bitter experience that what I eat affects me spiritually, my discernment and my ability to work effectively for Jesus.”¹⁶

In other words, Adventism teaches that if we want to have good health, be spiritually sensitive, and live longer, we must give up flesh foods. In fact, EGW teaches that after the flood, God “permitted that long-lived race to eat animal food to shorten their sinful lives. Shortly after the flood the race began to rapidly decrease in size, and in length of years.”¹⁷ Therefore, we must go “back to Eden” and eat as Adam and Eve. The Adamites of seventeenth century England taught this and more.¹⁸

EGW even twists Jesus’ wilderness temptation into an example showing us, by fasting in the wilderness for 40 days, how to overcome our indulged appetites. Indulging appetite, she explains, was what got Adam and Eve into trouble in the first place: “If the indulgence of appetite was so strong upon the race that, in order to break its power, the divine Son of God, in behalf of man, was required to fast nearly six weeks, what work is before the Christian in order that he may overcome even as Christ overcame!”¹⁹

EGW further says, “Adam fell by the indulgence of appetite. In order to impress upon man his obligations to obey the law of God, Christ began His work of redemption by reforming the physical habits of man. The declension in virtue and the degeneracy of the race are chiefly attributable to the indulgence of appetite.”²⁰

The real reason for Adventist vegetarianism

Avoiding disease and premature death in order to perceive the Holy Spirit seem to be noble, even trendy reasons for enforcing the Adventist health message. Nevertheless, Adventist prophet EGW originally delivered these bans for a different reason. The following quotes reveal her fixation on using diet to control desires and passions:

“The blood becomes fevered, the animal propensities are aroused, while the moral and intellectual powers are weakened and become servants to the baser passions.”²¹

“Men and women, by indulging the appetite in eating rich and highly seasoned foods, especially flesh-meats, with rich gravies, and by using stimulating drinks, as tea and coffee, create unnatural ap-

petites. The system becomes fevered, the organs of digestion become injured, the mental faculties are beclouded, while the baser passions are excited and predominate over the nobler faculties.”²²

“The indulgence of the appetite in first eating food highly seasoned, created a morbid appetite, and prepared the way for every kind of indulgence, until health and intellect were sacrificed to lust.”²³

“Food prepared with condiments and spices inflames the stomach, corrupts the blood, and paves the way for stronger stimulants. It induces nervous debility, impatience and lack of self-control. Tobacco and the wine cup follow.”²⁴

“Meat should not be placed before our children. Its influence is to excite and strengthen the lower passions, and has a tendency to deaden the moral powers....The less feverish the diet, the more easily can the passions be controlled.”²⁵

Through the years many Adventist medical professionals have promoted EGW’s dietary counsels to their patients and in their publications. The following quote by authors Dr. and Mrs. Rosen-vold illustrates this fact: “Certainly the stronger spices such as pepper, ginger, mustard, nutmeg, curry, vinegar and other commonly used condiments deserve no place at all in a healthful dietary. We are amazed how many S.D.A. Christians will have catsup on their tables. Why should we dishonor God with these health-destroying practices?”²⁶

Ellen White ahead of her time?

Adventists often boast that Ellen White was “ahead of her time” with her counsels on health. Importantly, however, she did not originate many of her ideas. In fact, in her day, “animal propensities/passions” and “baser passions” referred to the sex drive, and in the Victorian period it was commonly believed that meat stimulated carnal desire. Moreover, Seventh-day Adventist practices became a significant force in popularizing these ideas. The following quotations illustrate this fact.

Joan Jacobs Brumberg writes, “No food (other than alcohol) caused Victorian women and girls greater moral anxiety than meat. The flesh of animals was considered a heat-producing food that stimulated production of blood and fat as well as passion. Doctors and patients shared a common conception of meat as a food that stimulated sexual development and activity....Meat eating in excess was linked to adolescent insanity and nymphomania.”²⁷

“As an appetite for meat signified to Victorian sensibilities a desire for carnality in general, and for sex in particular, vegetarianism came to signify chastity and sexual purity. Accordingly, both of these significations became polarized by gender. Perhaps no American did more to extend this false binary’s reach into the 20th century than Kellogg whose Battle Creek Sanitarium endorsed the vegetarian dietary practices of the 7th day (sic) Adventists and ‘cured’ patients of their carnality by excluding ‘meat and spicy foods for the supposed aphrodisiacal qualities.’”²⁸

The belief that spices and meat should not be eaten is not obsolete among Adventists. One of the local Adventist churches near us in Yucaipa, California, invited the public to a lecture within the last year on “The Danger of Spices” (although I’m quite sure they didn’t mention “animal passions” to the unsuspecting attendees!).



MARGINALIZED TO MAINSTREAM

During the earliest years of my life, vegetarianism was almost unknown in much of American culture. It was almost impossible to go to a restaurant and order food without meat unless one was content with a salad (and even that had to be eaten in an environment tainted with cigarette smoke). Some eateries would provide “vegetable plates” if requested, but in general, people were surprised and puzzled if they heard one say she was vegetarian.

Over the past three decades, however, vegetarianism has grown in popularity. It is no longer only the property of a fringe of people espousing unusual religions, but it has become a lifestyle for many who are seeking better health, longer life, harmony with nature, and political clout for special interests such as the prevention of cruelty to animals. Today most restaurants offer vegetarian menu items, and vegetarianism is considered chic and desirable thanks to the many celebrities who have adopted the practice.

Interestingly, vegetarianism has grown in favor at the same time American culture has gradually adopted Eastern practices including meditation for stress relief and enhanced spiritual experience. Concurrently, Western evangelical Christianity has gradually become more and more inclusive, seeking to capitalize on the similarities rather than on the differences between not only denominations but also different religions.

The real issue behind these social evolutions is not the eating of vegetables only. What one eats is immaterial, Paul says, as long as one eats “for the Lord” (Rom. 14:6). The real problem is the decline in biblical knowledge among those who call themselves Christians.

If the Bible is the one rule of faith and practice for Christians, then one must take seriously the new covenant commands that no one is to call any food “unclean” (Mk. 7:19; Acts 10: 9-16; 1 Tim. 4:1-5). Spiritual growth and maturity have nothing to do with what we eat. God specifically instructed Peter that he was not to call any man or any food unclean so that he would know he was to go to Cornelius’ house and stay in that gentile environment and eat his gentile food.

The new covenant reveals that Jesus has broken the barriers established by the law that separated Jews from gentiles. It is now a gospel mandate that born-again children of God are to eat whatever is set before them “without raising any question on the ground of conscience” (1 Cor. 10:27).

Our standing with God and our reception of the Holy Spirit’s promptings has nothing to do with our diet. Rather it has to do with our trust in the Lord Jesus as the Sacrifice for our sin. Our relationship with God is entirely dependent upon our being born again of the Spirit (Jn. 3:3-6). —*Colleen Tinker*



Elen G. White (1827–1915)

PART 2

ELLEN WHITE AND THE NEW AGE

It's one thing to look at Ellen White's writings as a unique opus and to wrestle with whether or not they are inspired when compared with Scripture. When they are viewed in the larger context of literature advocating vegetarianism, however, their true nature becomes clear; they fit neatly into a genre of work produced by New Age spiritual teachers instructing devotees to clear their minds and calm their spirits through diet. Notice the similarities between the following quotes from EGW and New Age teachers.

Ntabara (Mark) Rollosson, a student of the famous Hindu guru Sri Chinmoy, says, "As we consume meat, meat carries the aggressive nature of the animal, and we are trying to evolve beyond that animal nature. Fruits and vegetables have a more mild quality to them. So vegetarianism helps you have a clearer meditation, because the agitation from the meat manifests in agitated thoughts as you try to clear the mind."²⁹

EGW: "I was instructed that the use of flesh meat has a tendency to animalize the nature, and to rob men and women of the love and sympathy they should feel for every one."³⁰

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own consciences as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. ¹TIMOTHY 4:1-5

Carlos Santana, a musician and one-time disciple of Guru Sri Chinmoy, says, "I don't eat meat because meat brings out negative qualities such as fear, anger, anxiety, aggressiveness, etc. Vegetables peacefully offer themselves to the earth when ripe, thus allowing a sublime and peaceful thought-consciousness."³¹

EGW: "A diet of flesh meat tends to develop animalism. A development of animalism lessens spirituality, rendering the mind incapable of understanding truth."³²

Gabriel Cousens is, among many other things, a senior Essene teacher, a yogi who has apparently reached "innate perfection", a spiritual nutrition expert, a rabbi, a family therapist, a diplomat of the American Board of Integrative Holistic Medicine, a fasting guru, and the founder and director of The Tree of Life Foundation and Rejuvenation Center in Patagonia, Arizona. He writes, "Flesh food (meat, fish, and poultry) increases the animal frequency in the body and it brings into operation more animal-like tendencies such as vibrations of anger, lust, fear, aggressiveness and murderous impulses. The energy of the flesh food diet adds to the impurities of the mind and the nervous system."³³

EGW: "By the use of flesh meats the animal nature is strengthened and the spiritual nature weakened."³⁴

EGW: "Your family have partaken largely of flesh meats, and the animal propensities have been strengthened, while the intellectual have been weakened. We are composed of what we eat, and if we

subsist largely upon the flesh of dead animals, we shall partake of their nature.”³⁵

Madame Helena Blavatsky was a contemporary of Ellen White. She was an occultist and medium, and she co-founded the Theosophical Society in 1875 and described Theosophy as “the synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy” that was reviving the “Ancient Wisdom” which underlay all religions. In her book *Key to Theosophy*, she writes: “We go a step further, and prove that when the flesh of animals is assimilated by man as food, it imparts to him, physiologically, some of the characteristics of the animal it came from. Moreover, occult science teaches and proves this to its students by ocular demonstration, showing also that this ‘coarsening’ or ‘animalising’ effect on man is greatest from the flesh of larger animals, less from birds, still less from fish and other cold-blooded animals, and least of all when he eats vegetables only.”³⁶

EGW: “But we do say that flesh meat is not right for God’s people. It animalizes human beings.”³⁷

EGW: “Oh, if every one could discern these matters as they have been presented to me, those who are now so careless, so indifferent in regard to their character building; those who plead for indulgence in a flesh meat diet, would never open their lips in justification of an appetite for the flesh of dead animals. Such a diet contaminates the blood in their veins, and stimulates the lower animal passions. It enfeebles keen perception and vigor of thought to the understanding of God and the truth, and a knowledge of themselves.”³⁸

A.M. Patel, who after becoming “enlightened” was known as Dada Bhagwan (in Hindi, “dada” means “daddy”, and “Bhagwan” means “Lord”), writes, “Non-vegetarian food is *stbool* (gross, heavy, coarse), and does not allow the development of one’s spiritual intellect. If you want to progress spiritually, you must eat vegetarian food, which is light and does not create intoxication.”³⁹

EGW: “There are those who ought to be awake to the danger of meat eating, who are still eating the flesh of animals, thus endangering the physical, mental, and spiritual health.”⁴⁰

On the “Original Christianity, Original Yoga” website, Atma Jyoti Ashram says, “...the process of liberation is a matter of purifying and transmuting the mind. Since the mind is formed of the subtle energies of that which we eat, we can realize that diet is one of the most crucial aspects of the spiritual aspirant’s regimen, for it will determine the quality and effectiveness of his meditation experience.... Diet, then, can be a major determinant of our success or failure in spiritual life.”⁴¹

Some facts about the history of vegetarianism

“And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant’” (Gen. 9:1-3).

“Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not go into his



Madame Helena Blavatsky (1831–1891)

heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?’ (Thus He declared all foods clean)” (Mk. 7:18-19).

As I have been researching the theme of “animal passions” and the spiritual implications of vegetarianism and eating, it has become abundantly clear that this idea has been around since ancient times and is usually linked with paganism, the occult, mysticism, the Eastern religions, reincarnation, yoga, and the new age. It especially focuses on the idea of “purification” to obtain a higher spirituality by purging the human body and by asceticism so that the soul might unite with, or be acceptable to, the gods.

“The psychic self cannot be yoked to a sick and dying animal but must be purified and so become independent of the human animal,” writes Colin Spencer in his 1995 book *Heretic’s Feast*.⁴² It’s interesting that the yogic scriptures teach practitioners to avoid tea, coffee and spices, which are called *rajasic*, and are said to arouse animal passions.⁴³

Vegetarianism as a moral concept “made its first impact on history in India and Greece at around the same time, 500 BC, within the lifetimes of both Buddha and Pythagoras. It was linked with two other ideas; the wider of the two forbade all killing and hence opposed murder, strife and war, while at the heart of the philosophy was a belief in metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls—more popularly thought of as reincarnation. Yet this moral

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concept can be traced back further; from Buddha to Hinduism and the Rig-Veda, the Indus civilization perhaps, and then to Mesopotamia and Egypt, while the Pythagorean school owed much to the Orphic religion, the Eleusinian Mysteries and the cult of Dionysus, which again, can be traced back to Egypt."⁴⁴

How interesting that certain priests in Egypt did not eat meat! Porphyry, in the 3rd century A.D., observed that Egyptians and Phoenicians would rather become cannibals than consume beef.⁴⁵

The roots of Hinduism, yoga, the transmigration of souls, and the sacred cow are seen in the more than 1,000 ancient Indian hymns (Vedas) and in later classical Indian literature. The *Ramayana*, an allegory, focuses on the principals of yogic living, and the *Mahabharata* describes "the struggle of every human soul to overcome the animal passions and enable the triumph of the divine qualities of our innate, higher nature."⁴⁶

"The thirst for mystical self-revelation by a process of detachment from fleshly pursuits, a process which leads logically and inevitably to a modest vegetarian diet, appears to be in the very soil of the Indian subcontinent, sown there from the earliest times."⁴⁷

The man who became Buddha was first a Hindu. The thread of non-meat eating runs through Hinduism and its variations, through Buddhism and its variations, and on to Jainism. The tradition of vegetarianism at the heart of these pagan religions was practiced for the purification of the body and the suppression of "animal passions" and desires—the same reasons EGW used to argue that Seventh-day Adventists should not eat meat. In contrast, neither the Old nor the New Testaments ever teach self-purification through diet and ascetic living.

Pythagoras not just a math genius

It's also good to be aware of the man Pythagoras as more than just someone we learned about in math class, and a short overview of his life will provide an interesting insight into the pagan root of vegetarianism. He was born on the island of Samos, near present day Turkey, around 580 BC, and as a young man, he became a student of Pherekydes who was one of the *Sophai*, or Seven Wise Men, who taught him about reincarnation. After the death of this teacher, Pythagoras became a pupil of Thales who believed that "all inanimate matter was divine consciousness."⁴⁸ Thales, also one of the *Sophai*, taught Pythagoras mathematical concepts that he had learned in Babylon and encouraged him to go to Egypt to study.

Pythagoras did go to Egypt, but he was captured in 525 BC when Persia invaded Egypt, and he was taken to Babylon. He did not remain a prisoner, however, and was able to study under the Chaldeans, learning sacred purification rites, one of which was giving up meat. Since Pythagoras believed that a person could be reborn endlessly, coming back as any kind of living creature, he taught his students that they dare not kill and eat animals—they might be eating their deceased cousins or fathers! Animals and humans were seen as equals, and transmigration of the soul was at the root of the Pythagorean diet. "This concept, so basic to Pythagoras, emerges clearly again in Vedic Hinduism..."⁴⁹

In about 532 BC, Pythagoras emigrated to Croton in what is now Italy and established a school there. The inner circle in this school reflected Pythagoras' influence; they believed that "eating meat not only would block the ability to prophesy through dreams but also desensitize awareness of the psyche, making, as it were, brutes of us all."⁵⁰

The common theme of being more animalistic if animals are eaten is seen in much of EGW's writing. In addition, her counsels advising that meat clouds the mind were not original with her. Leaving Pythagoras and skipping ahead to the legacy of Plutarch (born 46 AD), a Greek writer and historian, we find an interesting claim in light of EGW's writings: "meat-eating clouds the mind and dulls the intellect..."⁵¹ In fact, in the 1840s, the Pythagorean diet first began to be called by the term "vegetarian."⁵²

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) who was a Swedish scientist but also a Christian mystic, received a vision in 1744 that he was to reform Christianity. He was then able to freely visit angels and demons, and he taught that the last judgment had already occurred. He saw meat-eating as a great evil and representative of the fall of man. A disciple of Swedenborg's, William Cowherd, who was minister of a Swedenborgian congregation in the 1790s, preached that "flesh tended to inflame the passions and to sensualize the many and consequently to impede the reception in the soul of heavenly love and wisdom."⁵³ Does that sound at all familiar?

William Cowherd influenced the Reverend William Metcalf, who eventually came with a group to America and converted Sylvester Graham (from whom EGW "borrowed" heavily—see Ron Numbers' *Prophetess of Health*) in 1830 and later Bronson Alcott, father of author Louisa May Alcott. The health plans of these men were spartan—cold baths early in the morning, raw food, and hard mattresses.

Another interesting detail in the history of vegetarianism occurred in 1821. A vegetarian cookbook was published by Mrs. Joseph Brotherton, a member of the Society of Bible Christians. She could not reconcile the fact that Christ ate fish, so she re-interpreted that word to mean “watermelon” or “lotus plant!”⁵⁴

There are so many other vegetarian groups and famous vegetarians in the long history of vegetarianism that no one article can contain them all. But Adolf Hitler bears mentioning. He gave up meat entirely after his niece shot herself following a terrible argument with him. He became vegetarian “to purge himself of the psychological association that flesh had” with her corpse.⁵⁵ He also believed in the relation between vegetarianism and purification.

Hitler closest to Adventist health reform

In his 1942 diary, Joseph Goebbels, Nazi propaganda minister, wrote that “He [Hitler] believes more than ever that meat-eating is harmful to humanity.”⁵⁶ Heinrich Himmler, the General Plenipotentiary for the administration of the Third Reich, believed in vegetarianism, and Rudolf Hess, Deputy Führer to Hitler, was a strict vegetarian—indeed, many other Nazis either believed in the concept or practiced it.

“Hitler’s vegetarianism proved the fallibility, without any shadow of doubt, of one claim which vegetarians had boldly made since ancient times: that if eating meat led to aggression, the converse was also true, and vegetarians were therefore peace-loving, gentle people.”⁵⁷

I must share a jaw-dropping quote:

“As Robert Proctor showed in his ground-breaking book *The Nazi War on Cancer*, some medical professionals at the time claimed that eating meat, especially in excess, caused cancer, and that vegetable-eating peoples like the Indians were free from the disease. Accordingly, Nazis instructed Germans to adopt more natural diets based on wholesome roots, fruits and cereals, and legally obliged bakers to sell wholemeal bread—the patriotic food of the great German peasant. Failure to comply with the ordinances instructing the nation to clean up their diet and make themselves fit, slim and healthy resulted in persecution. Anyone who fattened themselves on excessive quantities of meat and fat, the Nazis insisted, ‘robs other racial comrades of these foods; he is a debauchee and a traitor to his land and his country.’ These policies attracted some improbable support from German Theosophists [the founder of Theosophy, Madame Blavatsky taught, like EGW, that man had mated with animals prior to the flood], George Bernard Shaw and from the Seventh Day (sic) Adventists, who rejoiced in an August 1933 circular that the nation was now being run by Hitler ‘who has his office from the hand of God, and who knows himself to be responsible to Him. As an anti-alcoholic, non-smoker, and vegetarian, he is closer to our own view of health reform than anybody else.’”⁵⁸

As we look at the long and varied history of vegetarianism, we see that it was originally rooted in ancient pagan religions and was practiced for the purpose of personal purification, morality, and spiritual perception. These original purposes have remained at the heart of vegetarian practices and teaching even into modern times and are so powerful that Adventists endorsed Hitler as being given his office “from the hand of God”, rejoicing because he was closer to their own health reform than anyone else.



LOMA LINDA: HEALING MINISTRY OF JESUS OR ADVENTISM?

Loma Linda University (LLU) is Adventism’s flagship health sciences training center. It has five schools: allied health professions, behavioral health, dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, public health, and religion.

The mission of LLU is to seek “to further the healing and teaching ministry of Jesus Christ ‘to make man whole’”. The foundation of this healing ministry is their particular “health message” that involves vegetarianism, abstinence from tea, coffee, and alcohol, and a healthy lifestyle including exercise and relaxation techniques and an emphasis on rest and the seventh-day Sabbath.

For example, as of this writing, LLU’s Drayson Center has a Facebook page with a timeline photo posted February 20, 2015, showing three women in the “balasana” pose, or resting position (see photo above). This quote by James E. Faust is imprinted over the picture:

“Keeping the Sabbath day holy is much more than just physical rest. It involves spiritual renewal and worship.”

Interestingly, Faust was a Mormon apostle and general authority of the Mormon church prior to his death in 1995.

Loma Linda’s emphasis on ascetic diet and lifestyle practices are explicitly taught to students and patients as means to treat or prevent disease and to increase life span. At the same time, for those who are immersed in Adventism, these practices are also understood to be means of deepening one’s spiritual experience and perception.

Teaching these practices is one thing; identifying them as part of “the healing ministry of Jesus” is another. It was Jesus who “declared all foods clean” (Mk. 7:19) and who ate fish in His resurrection body (Lk. 24:41-43).

Moreover, it was Jesus who received the fury of the Jewish leadership because He broke the Sabbath and called God His own Father (Jn. 5:18). In fact, Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well that true worship was not about sacred places (or times—created things are not holy), but “the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers” (Jn. 4:21-24).

Jesus’ healing ministry was His declaration that He was the Messiah as He fulfilled the prophecies that He would make the dumb speak, the blind see, the lame walk, and the dead live. He taught that the work of God was “that you believe in Him whom He has sent” (Jn. 6:29).

Loma Linda’s “healing ministry” is not Jesus’ ministry; it is Adventism’s health message. —*Colleen Tinker*



Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. EPHESIANS 5:11-12

PART 3

HEALTH, YOGA, AND THE OCCULT

What does yoga have to do with vegetarianism and Ellen White's claims about it? Again, one can't research the subject of "spiritual eating" without finding overwhelming numbers of references to the ancient mysticism that formed Hinduism and yoga—the seedbed of vegetarianism. Thus, at their inception, yoga and vegetarian "spiritual eating" are inextricably linked.

The concepts of Hinduism and the religions that grew out of it are diverse and complicated. Yoga is rooted in Eastern mysticism that is thousands of years old and springs from the ancient Hindu scriptures. There are millions of Hindu gods and goddesses with multiple incarnations and multiple names. Related to these many gods are many forms of yoga, and there are many teachers/gurus teaching these different forms. Hindus believe that everything from a bedbug to a human has its own divinity. Consequently, the greeting that most yoga classes teach students (*namaste*) means: "The God/Goddess Spirit within me recognizes and honors the God/Goddess Spirit within you."⁵⁹

"The word yoga derives from a loose translation of a Sanskrit term meaning to yoke or to unite" and is defined as "a Hindu theistic philosophy teaching the suppression of all activity of body, mind, and will in order that the [divine] self may realize its distinction from them and attain liberation."⁶⁰ Yoga is also given a second definition reflecting the prevalent Western concept of it which says it's basically exercise and strengthening.⁶¹

Really, though, no matter how you dress it up in health and exercise clothes or give the postures Biblical names, yoga remains Hindu to the core. "Although many in the West regard yoga simply as a discipline which strengthens the body and provides relaxation and a quiet mind, in the context of Hinduism it is the means by which a

person strives for salvation."⁶² As Caryl Matrisciano, a former practitioner of yoga, says in her excellent DVD *Yoga Uncoiled*: "In Hindu teaching, Hinduism and yoga cannot be separated."

"Although yoga is now a household word, many people don't know exactly what it is. Far more than physical exercise, yoga can transform you, even if it's not your intention when you step on that mat."⁶³

"Yoga is that state of Absolute Peace wherein there is neither imagination nor thought. Yoga is control of mind and its modifications. Yoga teaches us how to control the modifications of the mind and attain liberation. It teaches us how to transmute the unregenerate nature and attain the state of Divinity. It is the complete suppression of the tendency of the mind to transform itself into objects, thoughts, etc. Yoga kills all sorts of pain, misery and tribulation. It gives you freedom from the round of births and deaths, with its concomitant evils of disease, old age, etc., and bestows upon you all the Divine Powers and final liberation through super-intuitional knowledge."⁶⁴

The above quote demands some reaction. It is not possible for any person to "transmute" his "unregenerate" nature and "attain the state of Divinity". Paul quotes the Old Testament in Romans 3:9-18 and reminds us that there is no one who is righteous, who understands or seeks God, or who does good. The only way our unregenerate natures can be changed is through repentance and belief in the Lord Jesus. Then we pass from death to life (Jn. 5:24) and are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13-14). The Father Himself then transfers us out of the domain of darkness into the kingdom of His Beloved Son (Col. 1:13). Our unregenerate natures remain unregenerate no matter what we do; God makes us alive and counts us righteous when we believe, and then we are "justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24).

B.K.S. Iyengar, (famous Hindu author/teacher who once made the cover of *Time* magazine) writes: "The yogi does not look heavenward to find God for he knows that He is within, being known as the *antaratma* (the Inner Self). He feels the kingdom of God within and without and finds that heaven lies in himself."⁶⁵

Nischala Joy Devi, a yoga expert and teacher, says that the secret of yoga “that brings endless power is knowing that we are divine beings.”⁶⁶

The end goal of yoga is basically to unite one’s “divine self” to the supreme, impersonal god force called Brahman. Controlling the body through breathing exercises (*pranayama*) and postures (*asana*) are two of the disciplines which help the practitioner of yoga work toward this union. Most postures honor Hindu deities or their manifestations as certain animals or objects in nature. (There is even a startling posture called the “corpse pose”.)

Being faithful to practice the various yogic disciplines results in enlightenment, self-realization, and liberation from endless cycles of death and rebirth (reincarnation) caused by past deeds (karma). The details of how this liberation is accomplished is complex and occult. Yoga teaches that we have three bodies: the physical (“food sheath”), the astral, and the causal. I couldn’t make up the description of the astral body if I tried, so will quote a partial description from the book *Yoga: Mind and Body*:

“Every living being has an astral body. This is connected to the physical body by a subtle thread along which vital currents pass. When this cord is cut, the astral body departs and the body dies. It is composed of 3 layers: A. Pranic sheath: More subtle than the food sheath but similar in form, it is often spoken of as the etheric double. It is made up of 72,000 *nadis*, or astral tubes, through which prana, or vital energy, flows.”⁶⁷

The astral body is also made up of a “mental sheath” and an “intellectual sheath”.

These *nadis* are important because the areas where they intersect are called “chakras”. According to Hindu teaching, there are 88,000 chakra sites, but the seven most important go up the spine, from the sacrum to the crown of the head, and each is represented by its own color. Chakra symbols are always drawn as round shapes as the word itself means “wheel”.

Kundalini is the mainstay of yoga

As the yoga disciplines (poses, breathing, meditation, purification, good deeds, correct eating, and more) are faithfully practiced, the kundalini spirit which lies dormant at the base of the spine can be awakened. Chris Lawson, in his excellent booklet *Yoga and Christianity—Are They Compatible?* quotes Hans-Ulrich Rieker, an authority on the occult: “Kundalini [is] the mainstay of all yoga practices.”⁶⁸

The kundalini spirit/energy, which yoga teaches is within each of us, is always represented by a coiled serpent; it has to be one of the most frightening and dangerous aspects of yoga. As the person “clears” his chakras, the serpent is able to slither up the spine by means of an “astral tube or *nadi*”. With the serpent, the divine mother Shakti (the feminine latent energy at the base of spine), also rises up the spine, “giving an experience of union and liberation, re-enacting the sexual union of Shiva, [the major (hermaphrodite) Hindu deity and the third god in the Hindu trinity], and Shakti”.⁶⁹

A regular contributor to the Yoga Journal magazine, Sally Kempton, says this of Shakti:

“True yogic transformation actually depends on your ability to find, feel, and harvest this subtle inner power. Not only that, the

shakti that you kindle in your yoga practice can spill over and enliven every part of your life. What we don’t often realize is possible is dialogue. Words themselves are aspects of shakti, which is one reason why using a mantra can create such powerful results in your practice. But direct conversation is just as important... Because the shakti is innately intelligent, she responds to suggestions and even to requests...Dialoguing with your shakti can take many forms. For instance, if there’s a question you need answered, you can bring the question into your heart and ask the shakti to give you an answer.

“Then you might pick up your pen and write whatever comes, letting your words flow spontaneously, as expressions of shakti. Or you can ask the question and then become attentive to the ways that answers come to you as you go about your daily life.”⁷⁰

The yoga practitioner’s interaction with Shakti sounds very much like that of people who ask God what He wants to say, wait for “inspiration”, and write down what they think they hear.

George Feuerstein further explains kundalini, the serpent power that unites with Shakti: “Above all, the practitioner must never forget that the kundalini is goddess energy. In other words, it is inherently divine; only because of this is it capable of guiding him or her to enlightenment...Because of the divine nature of the kundalini, it can, strictly speaking, be neither coerced or controlled.”⁷¹

Kundalini can’t be controlled, but it certainly can control the practitioner. You may watch actual videos of Hindu devotees online: jerking, twitching, laughing/yelling uncontrollably, shaking, feeling as if they are burning, and so forth. A Hindu “spiritual master” Sri Chinmoy describes into what a person who has awakened this “serpent power” has tapped: “He has brought to the fore the hidden powers, the occult powers, within himself.”⁷²

He further states:

“Here in the West [he taught in America for 43 years] there are many who feel that the powers of kundalini yoga are nothing but rank superstition. I wish to say that those who cherish this idea are totally mistaken. Even the genuine spiritual Masters have examined kundalini yoga and found in their own experiences the undeniable authenticity of its hidden occult powers.”⁷³

Hindu swamis/gurus often issue warnings to the practitioner in regard to the possible dangers of waking up this serpent power. Descriptions of pain when the serpent enters this spinal “tube” have been documented.⁷⁴

When this kundalini spirit reaches the crown, the “divine self” of the practitioner unites/yokes with the supreme Hindu neuter impersonal god consciousness, and the person is thus “enlightened” or “awakened” and is free from the misery of endless death and rebirth.⁷⁵

Ellen White and yoga

Why are we paying so much attention to the mechanics of yoga in an article on Ellen White and the health message?

The answer is this: EGW’s health counsels echoed the beliefs and practices of yoga in significant ways. In fact, her health counsels resembled yoga far more than they reflected biblical teaching.

Pranayama is the yogic use of breathing techniques to control the *prana*, or vital force, the energy in the astral body, and to move it through the *nadis* (tubes).⁷⁶ Remember that the places in the as-

tral body where the most tubes intersect are considered to be concentrated centers of *prana*, or vital force (think of them as multiple freeway overpasses) and are named “chakras”, which means “wheel” in Sanskrit.⁷⁷ The practitioner can control this “vital energy/force” by meditation and yoga to facilitate the upward movement of the coiled kundalini serpent.

“Breath is seen as the outward manifestation of *prana*, the vital force or energy that flows through the physical body but is actually in the astral body. By exercising control over breathing, you can learn to control the subtle energies within the body, and ultimately gain full control over the mind.”⁷⁸

I took notice of all these mentions of “vital force” because EGW used those words many times in her writings:

“God endowed man with so great vital force that he has withstood the accumulation of disease brought upon the race in consequence of perverted habits, and has continued for 6,000 years.... If Adam, at his creation, had not been endowed with 20 times as much vital force as men now have, the race, with their present habits of living in violation of natural law, would have become extinct.... Man came from the hand of his Creator perfect and beautiful in form, and so filled with vital force that it was more than a thousand years before his corrupt appetite and passions, and general violations of physical law, were sensibly felt upon the race.”⁷⁹

“But if the vital force is too rapidly exhausted, the nervous system borrows power for present use from its resources of strength...”⁸⁰

Leaves From the Tree of Life is a current vegetarian cookbook written by two Adventist women, and it says: “Each person has been endowed with a measure of constitutional force, some with more, some with less. Very much depends on parents. Their physical condition, appetites and their mental and moral tendencies, are, to a greater degree reproduced in their children. Much can be done to preserve the vital force received. The vital force can be recklessly exhausted, or carefully preserved.”⁸¹

This book, which is published by an Adventist book publisher that also supplies educational services and materials for teachers, has Ellen White quotes throughout it. Interestingly enough, this book, along with other Adventist cookbooks and lifestyle manuals, is on the recommended reading list published on the website of the Hindu Temple of greater Cincinnati!

The above quotes mirror this message found in a book by a Hindu mystic: “Proper breathing exercises relax the whole body, strengthen the nervous system and conserve the vital force.”⁸² The term “vital force” is used six times on the page from which this statement was quoted.

Vital force is also a crucial factor in theosophical spirituality:

“This vital force or cosmic electric energy is inherently and throughout guided, automatically to us humans, by the mind and will of the cosmic entities from which it flows in emanational series—each unit in such series being what we call this, that, or some other force of nature.”⁸³

In fact, EGW’s vital force was not a concept she received from God but was common in the nineteenth century. It was the force

which controlled one’s life and had to be guarded and conserved. Ron Numbers commented on the fact that Ellen White’s “vital force” was a concept she learned from the practitioners of “vitalistic physiology” of her day:

“Ellen White’s sexual attitudes, as even her publishers recognized, were far from unique. In fact they rested squarely on the popular vitalistic physiology of Broussais that Sylvester Graham had been preaching since the early 1830s. Puzzled by the organic processes that sustained life, the vitalists had invented a mysterious ‘vital force’ (or energy) that supposedly interacted with inanimate matter to produce the vital functions of the body.’ Even Elder John Loughborough defined it, calling vital force ‘that power placed in the human body, at its birth, which will enable the body, under favorable circumstances, to live to a certain age.’ To illustrate the concept of vital force, nineteenth century authors frequently compared it to capital in a bank account, gradually depleted over the years by repeated withdrawal.”⁸⁴

Sylvester Graham taught that, “Like rich foods and drink, sex sapped man of his vital energy and caused physical and mental impairment.”⁸⁵

Sexual activities deplete vital force

Remember that Graham had been influenced by eighteenth-century mystic Swedenborg and in turn influenced EGW. White, then, counseled her Adventist flock against expending their vital force by gratifying their animal passions either within marriage or in “secret habits”:

In *An Appeal To Mothers*, EGW wrote, “The practice of secret habits [masturbation] surely destroys the vital forces of the system....None can live when their vital energies are used up. They must die.”⁸⁶

After EGW warned mothers about their children, she went on to put the fear of God into married couples:

“They have united themselves in marriage to the object of their choice, and therefore reason that marriage sanctifies the indulgence of the baser passions. Even men and women professing godliness give loose rein to their lustful passions, and have no thought that God holds them accountable for the expenditure of vital energy, which weakens their hold on life and enervates the entire system.”⁸⁷

“It is not pure, holy love which leads the wife to gratify the animal propensities of her husband at the expense of health and life. If she possesses true love and wisdom, she will seek to divert his mind from the gratification of lustful passions to high and spiritual themes by dwelling upon interesting spiritual subjects.”⁸⁸

Ellen White never defined exactly what constituted “excessive” regarding the frequency of sex in marriage, but, since she copied so freely from the various health reformers of her time, it would be reasonable to assume that she probably agreed with them on this subject, too. Sylvester Graham considered more than once a month to be excessive.⁸⁹

Because the concept of an exhaustible “vital force” was common among the health practitioners of EGW’s day, one might dismiss the similarity of wording her writings shared with that of occult and new age writers. After all, how can her concern with preserving strength and health be related to yoga and pagan practices?

Even Adventists today admit that she was wrong in her teachings about masturbation and marital relations, and her book *A Solemn Appeal* has long been out of print. Nevertheless, her writings and beliefs about this subject exactly mirror that of Hindu-yogi teachings in her day, and generations of Adventists have lived with guilt and fear over God's gift of marriage. The following is an excerpt from a book from the Yogi Publication Society in 1905:

"The Yogis possess great knowledge regarding the use and abuse of the reproductive principle in both sexes. Some hints of this esoteric knowledge have filtered out and have been used by Western writers on the subject, and much good has been accomplished in this way. In this little book we cannot do more than touch upon the subject, and omitting all except a bare mention of theory, we will give a practical breathing exercise whereby the student will be enabled to transmute the reproductive energy into vitality for the entire system, instead of dissipating and wasting it in lustful indulgences in or out of the marriage relations. The reproductive energy is creative energy, and may be taken up by the system and transmuted into strength and vitality, thus serving the purpose of regeneration instead of generation. If the young men of the Western world understood these underlying principles they would be saved much misery and unhappiness in after years, and would be stronger mentally, morally and physically.

"This transmutation of the reproductive energy gives great vitality to those practicing it. They will be filled with great vital force, which will radiate from them and will manifest in what has been called personal magnetism.... The greatest amount of vital force is concentrated in the smallest area."⁹⁰

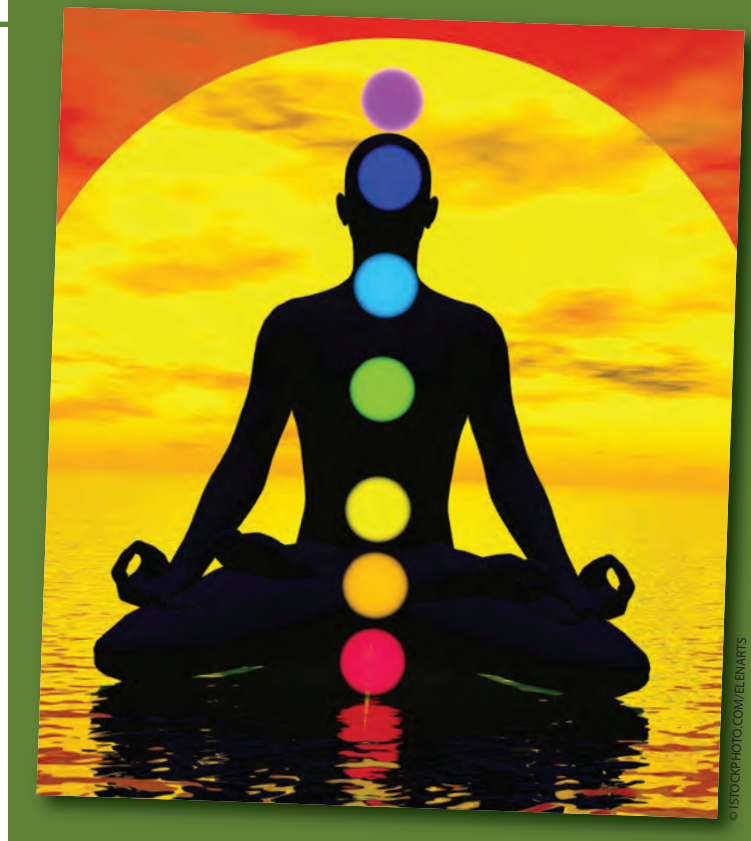
One cannot escape the conclusion that EGW's counsels on the preservation of vital force and the suppression of animal passions through ascetic practices and vegetarianism are the same teachings espoused by practitioners of Eastern meditation, yoga, the new age, Hinduism, and the occult. Significantly, these ideas are never taught in Scripture. In fact, Paul gives quite the opposite message concerning sex within marriage:

"The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does, and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" (1 Cor. 7:3-5).

Ellen White given green cord by spirit guide

We cannot conclude this article without a look at one of Ellen White's strangest visions. In the book *Early Writings* Ellen White recounts a dream/vision she had around 1842 when she felt that the Spirit of the Lord had left her, and she thought she was "doomed". She was 15 years old and had been too afraid to pray in public.⁹¹

Interestingly, Fawn Brodie writes in *Spectrum* magazine, "Importantly, it was her mother who attributed Ellen's initial 'fainting spell', when she tried to pray in public for the first time, to 'the



This illustration shows the seven chakra sites and their colors. In Ellen White's green cord vision, the angel gave her a coiled green cord to place over her heart (the green chakra) with instructions to stretch it out when she wanted to see Jesus.

wondrous power of God.' Thus, the crippled child was supported in her pathology and singled out for greatness."⁹²

Ellen says that in her dream/vision, she was sitting in "abject despair and agony" when a person "of beautiful form and countenance" opened the door, inquiring if she wanted to see Jesus. After being told to bring with her all her possessions, she followed this "guide" as he led her up a "steep and frail stairway" where others, who of course fell off before reaching the door at the top of the stairs, were also ascending. The guide then opened the door, and she went in to visit Jesus, where she was at first afraid, then fell prostrate and while "lying helpless" had a vision of heaven. After a while, her strength returned, her "guide" opened the door, and they both left. Before she went back down the stairs, her guide handed her a coiled-up green cord with instructions to place it over her heart and keep it there, taking it away from her "bosom" to straighten it out whenever she wanted to see Jesus again. She then happily went back down the rickety stairs without her guide.⁹³

Remembering that each chakra in Hinduism has a color, just guess what color the heart chakra is? That's right—it is green.

While doing research for this article I found a most interesting book published in 1874 by a man who had gone through the "Great Disappointment". It is a history of that time period and describes the aftermath of failed date-setting. A Miss Harmon (Ellen White's maiden name) is first mentioned as confirming the "shut door" theory with her visions, and the author recounts that she "traveled from town to town, where she was strangely exercised in body and mind, usually talking in assemblies until nature was exhausted and then falling to the floor, unless caught

by some one sitting near (we remember catching her twice to save her from falling upon the floor), remaining a considerable time in the mesmeric state, and afterwards, perhaps not until another meeting, she would relate the wonders which she claimed had been shown her in spirit...⁹⁴

The author, Mr. Wellcome, describes her condemnation of those Millerites who had admitted that they were wrong about the date-setting and the despair of these same people when Ellen claimed she “saw” that their names had been blotted out of the Book of Life.⁹⁵ Later Mr. Wellcome describes her as “a native of Portland (Maine), and a wonderful fanatic and trance medium, as was supposed by those not under her influence...In her testimony in meetings she would speak with great vehemence and rapidity until falling down...We saw her at Poland, Portland, Topsham, and Brunswick during the beginning of this career.”⁹⁶ Each time the author heard her she would confirm that God had shown her the loss of salvation for those Millerites who had admitted they had been in error about date-setting for Christ’s return. He describes her both as a “devout young medium”⁹⁷ and being in a “clairvoyant state.”⁹⁸

What shall we say?

The Adventist health message, which Adventists internally call the “right arm of the gospel”, is the organization’s primary public relations and proselytizing tool. If one looks closely at this message, however, it becomes clear that it is not a message taught in the Bible.

The Bible never suggests that the indwelling Holy Spirit resides in the neurons of our frontal lobes. It does say, though, that we are born dead in sin, by nature children of wrath (Eph. 2:1-3), and when we believe, we pass from death to life (Jn. 5:24). Moreover, Romans 8:16 says that the Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are children of God when we believe in the Lord Jesus. This new birth does make it possible for us to be “transformed by the renewing of [our] mind(s)” (Rom. 12:2), and as the Holy Spirit ap-

plies God’s word to our lives, we are convicted of truth and reality. We learn to submit to Him and to trust Him in deeper ways.

The Adventist prophetess whose writings have defined Adventist theology claimed visions from God—yet those visions often did not teach nor support biblical truth. Instead, they taught practices and beliefs that were and still are taught by practitioners of paganism, Eastern religions, and the new age.

Vegetarianism and ascetic self-deprivation have no effect on our flesh; they do nothing to subdue our desires. Paul says,

“If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence” (Col. 2:20-23).

Instead of worshipping “lord Krishna” and getting in touch with occult kundalini serpent powers, we Christians worship the Lord Jesus who has crushed the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). Instead of yoking with an occult “god force”, we want to take Christ’s yoke upon us (Matt. 11:29). Instead of our bodies and the universe being run on *prana* or vital force, we need to remember this: “For in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28), and He holds all things together (Col. 1: 17). Instead of focusing on ourselves for divinity, we remember that the word says our hearts are desperately wicked and look, not inward, but outward to our Savior. Instead of “purifying” ourselves with food choices, we remember that Christ has told us that nothing we eat makes us unclean (Mk. 7:17-23). Instead of the idea that we have control over God, we remember that He is all-powerful, and no food that we eat or any physical or mental impairment we may have is able to block Him from us!

Finally, we need to decide whether or not what we have been taught in the past really came from God.†

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- ⁹² Brodie, Fawn, “Ellen Whites (sic) Emotional Life”, *Spectrum*, Jan. 1997, Vol. 8, No. 2, [articlehttp://conversation.spectrummagazine.org/t/the-most-controversial-article-spectrum-ever-published/3728](http://conversation.spectrummagazine.org/t/the-most-controversial-article-spectrum-ever-published/3728).
- ⁹³ EGW, *Early Writings*, pp. 79-81.
- ⁹⁴ Wellcome, Isaac C., *History of the Second Advent Message and Mission, Doctrine and People, Yarmouth, Maine*, published by I.C. Wellcome; Boston: Advent, p. 397, Christian Publication Society; New York: A.A. Phelps; London: Kallaway and Co., 1874, https://archive.org/stream/HistoryOfTheSecondAdventMessage/History_Of_The_Second_Advent_Message#page/n415/mode/2up.
- ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 402.
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 405.
- ⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 406.

Cheryl Granger spent all of her school years in Adventist schools and graduated from Loma Linda University with a B.S. in occupational therapy. A life-long, sincere believer in Ellen White (EGW), Cheryl eventually read and studied the book of Hebrews and found it contradicted the investigative judgment (IJ). She had been taught to “stand alone on the Word of God”, so she ran with her IJ anxiety to the good news of the biblical gospel, wondering how a prophetess of God did not know what Hebrews said. Cheryl and her husband Woody have five children and nine grandchildren between them, and they have found great joy in working with Life Assurance Ministries and Former Adventist Fellowship, getting the good news of the gospel to all who are hungry for it.



I have often heard the phrase, “God’s ways are higher than ours”. I must admit I haven’t liked that phrase much. Too often I want things my way. I’ve wondered where God was at times, and I certainly haven’t understood His ways.

God, however, has an eternal perspective, and the story of the Exodus exemplifies it. For the purposes of this article we will start the story in Exodus 13. The nearly one million Israelites had left Egypt and were camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. God had led them out of Egypt by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. This pillar never left its place with the Israelite people (Ex. 13:22). How comforting!

The Lord has an eternal perspective and desires that people know Him and live forever with Him. Exodus repeats a phrase over and over to tell us the reason God was doing what He was doing: “So that they may know that I am the Lord” (Ex. 6:7; 7:5; 7:17; 8:10; 8:22; 9:14; 10:2; 14:4, 18). In fact, Moses and the Israelites sang a song declaring that the Lord was doing what He was doing so that the “nations” would know Him (Ex. 15:14).

God told the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea (Ex. 14:1-4), in a move that trapped them. How frightening! The Israelites, however, did what we should do when feeling afraid and trapped: they cried out to the Lord (Ex. 14:10).

Then the Lord told Moses that all that was happening was for the “Egyptians” to “know” His Lordship (Ex. 14:18). In fact, God may lead us and guide us in our trials so others may know He is the Lord.



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 and is a marriage and family counselor.

SINGING GOD’S PERSPECTIVE

THE ONE TRUE GOD HAS A
MILLION WAYS TO MEET OUR
NEEDS, PROTECT US,
PROVIDE FOR US, AND HELP
OTHERS COME TO KNOW HIS
FAITHFULNESS.

I love the next thing that happened. The angel of God who had been traveling in front of Israel’s army went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front of them to behind. What a protective move! Now God was visibly between the Israelites and their enemies.

Next God allowed one million people who had walked on a dry sea bed to watch as He threw the Egyptian army into confusion and jammed up their chariot wheels. The one true God has a million ways to meet our needs, protect us, provide for us, and help others come to know His faithfulness.

When we see the Lord’s strength, power, greatness, majesty, and unfailing love, it should cause us to praise Him. In fact, praise was exactly what Moses and the Israelites did when they reached the opposite shore and saw the Egyptians lying dead. God had caused the sea to sweep over Pharaoh’s army, and not one of the pursuing Egyptians survived (Ex. 14:28).

Notice the words Moses and the Israelites used to praise the Lord: Exalted, Strength (Ex. 15:2, 13), Warrior (v. 3), Majestic (v. 6, 7, 11), Awesome (v. 11), Defense (v. 2), Power (v. 6, 16), Works Wonders (v. 11).

The enemy had seemed unstoppable, yet the song of Moses and the Israelites described the enemy with the following words: pursue (v. 9), overtake (v. 9), divide spoils (v. 9), destroy (v. 9), and draw their sword (v. 9).

I love the words Moses sings of what God does to the enemy of Israel. God shatters the enemy (v. 6); He throws down the opposition (v. 7); He unleashes His anger; works wonders; guides (v. 13); He hurls the enemy into

the sea (v. 4); the enemy is consumed like stubble (v. 7); God stretched out His hand and blew with His breath (v. 10, 12); God will reign for ever and ever (v. 18).

The song of Moses is referenced again in Revelation 15:3-4. Those who have been victorious over the beast and its image will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and God’s ways will be known as just and true. We may not always understand His ways on earth, but He has an eternal perspective that brings glory to His name and others to Himself.

We can cry out to Him when we struggle with life, and we will praise Him with the saints when we join in singing the Song of Moses and the Lamb! †

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SOCAL FAF CONFERENCE BLESSED

The tenth annual Former Adventist Conference held in Southern California (SoCal) was memorable for many reasons.

First, it took place at a new venue: The Anchor Bible Church in Redlands, California. Pastor Todd Barnett and the staff and members warmly welcomed and supported the event.

Second, The Anchor requested a pre-session training weekend for its members. Consequently, on the weekend preceding the conference, Dale Ratzlaff spoke twice at The Anchor concluding with a question and answer period in which Dale, Colleen Tinker, and Todd Barnett served as the panel with Richard Tinker moderating.

A third reason the conference stands out is its topic: lessons from the book of Revelation. Since Adventism uses Revelation as the source of many of its fear-inducing proof texts threatening those who do not keep Sabbath with receiving the mark of the beast, Revelation is put on the “back shelf” when those leaving Adventism finally understand the gospel and the new covenant.

This year, Gary Inrig taught Revelation with skill and care, putting Revelation 14 with its “Three Angels’ Messages” into proper biblical perspective and showing that the focus of the book is the centrality of the Lion who is the Lamb. Dale Ratzlaff also taught from Revelation 1 and Revelation 21 and 22. He showed that the Lord’s Day is not the seventh-day Sabbath, and he helped us focus on the glory of heaven that God has promised to share with His people. Sharon Clark and Steve Pitcher shared their testimonies of leaving Adventism and finding the truth of the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

This year we welcomed well-known Christian apologist and the executive director of the Institute for Religious Research, Rob Bowman, as the speaker for the Friday evening public meeting. He spoke on “The Trouble with the Trinity” among the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, Oneness Pentecostals, and Seventh-day Adventists.

PASTOR TODD BARNETT AND THE STAFF AND MEMBERS [OF THE ANCHOR BIBLE CHURCH] WARMLY WELCOMED AND SUPPORTED THE EVENT.

On Friday evening Paul Carden, executive director of The Centers for Apologetics Research, gave a talk entitled “The Problem With Prophets”.

At the end of the weekend we welcomed a new sister in Jesus into our family in Christ. Driving home after the last session—the Sunday sermon by Gary Inrig in which he preached through Revelation 4 and 5 describing the worship of the Lamb by all of heaven—one of the attendees realized that the Lamb who was slain is the reason she can live.

Attendees came from Pennsylvania, Florida, Kentucky, Manitoba, Michigan, Arizona, and California. You can enjoy all the main sessions online at our YouTube channel. Go to YouTube and use the search word “FormerAdventist”.†



PHOTOS BY SHARON CAREY

A. A full house sings before Paul Carden and Rob Bowman addressed the public meeting on Friday night. B. Conference attendees met Friday for a day of meetings. C. Apologist Rob Bowman from IRR spoke Friday night and Saturday. D. Before communion Saturday evening, Gary Inrig prayed for Life Assurance Ministries, Dale and Carolyn Ratzlaff, and Richard and Colleen Tinker. E. Jonathan Winn led worship assisted by Roy Tinker on the piano and keyboard.



Confirming McKenzie's casualties of Adventism

I praise God for your work with *Proclamation!* magazine and your love for the former Adventist community. I was raised in a home that professed Christ; I accepted Him as my Savior as a young girl and was baptized into the family of God.

My dream was to be a dental hygienist, so I sought out Loma Linda University School of Dentistry because it had been proclaimed a "Christian university". I began my sophomore year at Las Sierra and was told I would be required to take the Adventist beliefs class since I was not Adventist.

I sat through the class in naive amazement; there was no arguing

with the professor as he had an answer for every concern (worship on Saturday, soul-sleep, the investigative judgment, Satan as the scapegoat)—all backed up by Ellen White (EGW). She was the authority; the Bible was infrequently quoted or read. I ultimately concluded that they were probably saved, but they had the day of worship wrong.

A few years ago I married a great man who was a former Adventist. In the years we've been married, I've seen the "casualties of Adventism" that Rolaant McKenzie addressed in his story (Vol. 15, Issue 4). Through prayer and study in God's word with people we loved dearly, I now have a husband

Instead you have to bellyache about the Adventist Church.

If your misery is so bad, I'd encourage the whole bunch of you to turn your support to something positive. Listen to Joel Osteen, then give the Adventist message with that kind of preaching. Then maybe we could GO somewhere and fill stadiums with people that want Adventism instead of folks like you with such a twisted, sick message. Your whole theme is so sorry. If you don't want Adventism, then move on.

This is your day, break loose from the attitudes that have you bound. Return to the Only True Message for this Grand Day and have a part in giving it in a new,

It seems that as Adventists we separate ourselves from those "fallen churches". Cults do that. There is no proof that Daniel 8:14 describes the investigative judgment. John 5:24 tells us that if we believe in Christ, we do not enter into judgment.

My decision to leave feels so freeing. I feel I can have a relationship with Jesus. My life is no longer controlled by a prophet telling me what to eat, drink, wear, how to worship, or what music to choose. Did any biblical prophet control his people like she's controlled so many Adventists? No—and that's another mark of a cult. Frankly, she's dangerous, as are many Adventist beliefs.

Jesus is my Savior, and in him alone I put my trust. It's the Bible and the Bible only for me. So I have decided to leave this church and break free from 50-plus years of Adventism. I'm free at last! This decision has caused problems among friends and family; they think I'm going to lose salvation. I love them dearly, but I know who saves, and it's Jesus, not an institution.

VIA EMAIL

Shame on you

I will pray for you. We are not a cult; shame on you. Do not send me any more magazines. At judgment Day you will be responsible for all those you have led astray.

GOWEN, MI

Appreciation for your labor

My dear friends and fellow laborers in God's vineyard, this is a small love offering in appreciation of your labor of love. I trust that, with the gifts of others, it will be sufficient for the need.

I thank you for the much-needed guidance you have provided for me over the years in dealing with my Adventist friends. May God bless all of you and your ministry.

COEUR D'ALENE, ID

Tired of the bashing

Please remove my name from your mailing list. I am tired of the

I CAN'T BEGIN TO TELL YOU WHAT A KEY ROLE *PROCLAMATION!* HAS PLAYED IN MY JOURNEY OUT OF ADVENTISM, AND WHAT A KEY ROLE IT CONTINUES TO PLAY.

who believes God is sovereign and that Jesus knows and loves him personally. There is no Plan B, as Chris Lee wrote.

I would encourage any Adventist to read Galatians without the filter of EGW. Hear what the Holy Spirit says to you about the law.

Thank you from the deepest part of my soul for continuing to be faithful to your calling to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are free indeed!

REDLANDS, CA

Learn from Joel Osteen

You have been sending me your sorry magazine. There are no perfect institutions on earth, so look in your own camp if you feel you need to point out fakes. My dear old dad once said if someone has an issue with the church and its teachings, 99% of the time it's over money. The other 1% are confused. I'm sorry that if you want something different—you can't find what makes you happy.

positive way. Let's live in a New Way in a New Day!

WHITE CLOUD, MI

Breaking free from Adventism

I was born and raised Adventist. In the past three years I have done a lot of soul searching. I even gave up on God. In the past few weeks I have decided to begin leaving the Adventist church, not because I am bitter or have been mistreated, because I am not and have not, but because of the cult-like doctrines they hold.

To leave the church in which I've grown up is most difficult. My husband became Adventist in 2008 and has always felt EGW was not important to his salvation. As for me, I have felt guilty for even daring to question her. To question our doctrines is a fast track to hell. Does that sound like a cult? It is!

My Bible tells me that if I am in Christ, I am Abraham's seed, and an heir according to the promise (Gal. 3:29). Praise the Lord!

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

bashing you do of another denomination. Good, bad or indifferent, it's not very Christ-like. The Jesus I know from the Bible would not stoop so low. He would minister by being an example.
BELFIELD, ND

Editor's response: We often receive mail saying that Jesus never spoke critically or harshly to people but that He set us an example of loving even those who disagreed with Him.

In fact, Jesus did not come to be an example showing us how to be saved or how to live moral lives. He came to be the Sacrifice that would propitiate for the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29; Rom. 3:19-30; Heb. 9:26). His role as an example is for those who have repented of their sin and trusted Him as their Savior and Lord. His dependence upon and obedience to His Father demonstrates to those who are born again and adopted by the Father (Jn. 3:3-6; Rom. 8:14-17) how to live in surrender to Him, trusting God's word and submitting to it.

If Jesus were primarily an example for humanity, then all people would have to imitate Him in identifying sin and judging unbelief as He did in Matthew 23 when He called the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites, whitewashed tombs full of dead men's bones, serpents, and a brood of vipers, and as He spoke in John 8:44 when he told them they were "of their father the

SHAME ON YOU. DO NOT SEND ME ANY MORE MAGAZINES. AT JUDGMENT DAY YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THOSE YOU HAVE LED ASTRAY.

devil". Ultimately, if Jesus were primarily our example, we would have to die in the place of others whose sins deserved a capital penalty.

The Jesus of Scripture is appointed Judge of the world (Jn. 5:22-24). He is the Lamb of God who became sin for us so we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).

When we believe in Him we are brought to life eternally (Jn. 5:24) and are commissioned to make disciples, to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to teach believers to "observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:20).

The book of Acts demonstrates that preaching and teaching the gospel sometimes involves identifying sin and systems which defy the gospel, as did Paul and Barnabas when they told the magician Elymas he was deceitful, fraudulent, and opposed to the way of the Lord (Acts 13:8-11).

Our purpose is not to bash what once defined us. Rather, we want those who live in the system we knew so well to discover that "whenever Moses is read, a veil

lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (2 Cor. 3:15-16).

Thank you, Dale

Several weeks ago our home group started studying Romans, a chapter at a time. By the third chapter I wanted to ask, "What law are we talking about?" with the motive to prove the validity of the fourth commandment. But I didn't say anything.

I looked up the Greek for "law", trying unsuccessfully to prove it meant the Ten Commandments. I started pleading with the Holy Spirit, "Help! You are truth! Please lead me to truth!" I kept reading about the law in Romans and Galatians, not getting anywhere.

Then one day I remembered your book *Sabbath in Christ*. I found it with little difficulty, gathering dust on a shelf.

From the first page, it immediately made sense. Once you convinced me the 10 Commandments were part of the old covenant, I was done. I didn't need to read the rest of the book, but of course I did. I read most of it to my wife, who is in total agreement. What an old covenant load lifted off our shoulders!

Like you and so many other "formers", we have relatives who are still in the system. My wonderful father-in-law is a retired Adventist pastor, attending an ultra-conservative Adventist congregation comprised largely of historic Adventists who believe some of the whacky things the founders believed, including that Jesus was created.

I realized with astounding clarity that their loyalty to the seventh-day Sabbath means the

entire Adventist denomination was founded on a false premise. "Seventh-day" is their first name! Not only are they wrong about the investigative judgment, Ellen White, wine, perfection, the Holy Spirit departing, and other things, but their basic foundation is sand. Whoa!

Thank you so much for standing true to the truth you discovered, and for writing *Sabbath in Christ*!

May the Father continue to bless you and your ministry!
MT. ANGEL, OR

You people

I am impressed to send you this. You may feel good about yourselves ridiculing God and His Church, but are we to trust our feelings? There is new light that God has revealed to us, and we are light years ahead of the nominal churches who are a fulfillment of the 25th chapter of Mathew. I know you don't care. However, there is so much light coming upon His word that it is further proof Jesus is soon to come and those who are tares will soon be bundled up and burned.
SARATOGA, CA

Proclamation! played key role

I sure appreciate the Tinkers, the Ratzlaffs, and the whole LAM board and team. At some point, it would be great to meet you face-to-face. I can't begin to tell you what a key role *Proclamation!* has played in my journey out of Adventism, and what a key role it continues to play.

As someone who works in full-time ministry, I know how rewarding Christian media can be, but I also know there are down days and days of discouragement, and so I hope you are encouraged by my email, and know that what you are doing is worthwhile, despite any challenges. Thank you!
KINGWOOD, TX

THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR US NOW

We thank you all for your support and prayers for Life Assurance Ministries and *Proclamation!* magazine. There are three things you can do for this ministry:

1. Distribute past issues of *Proclamation!*. We have boxes of back issues warehoused; if you want a box to distribute to your local church or other venues, let us know how many you want, and we will send them to you (limited quantities).
2. Donate by mail or online here:
LifeAssuranceMinistries.org (click on the "online donations" button in the top right corner).
3. Make a gift to *Proclamation!* by listing Life Assurance Ministries, Inc., as a beneficiary in your trust or will.

We pray God will bless you with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. He is faithful!

MAIL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO:

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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THE LIFE A F T E R WITH CHRIS LEE

In the summer of 2002, my wife and I were searching for a place to attend church. We decided to try Lincoln Berean Church (LBC) primarily because it had a Saturday night service. The whole “Sunday thing” was still too alien and a little bit scary. LBC had the added benefit of being large enough that we could anonymously slip in and out undetected. Pastor Bryan Clark was preaching a series in Psalms. I was blown away. Never before had I heard the Scripture exegeted line-by-line. I left feeling like I “owned” that passage and was ravenously hungry for more.

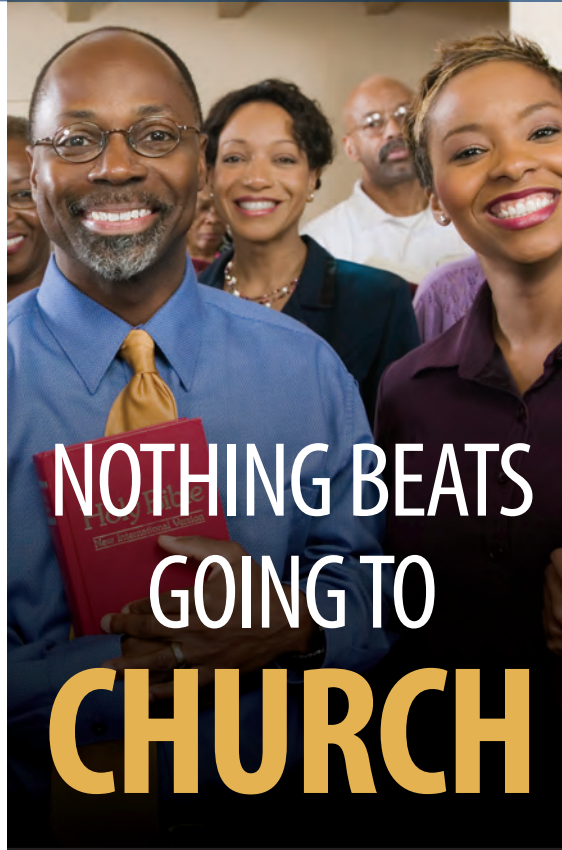
Summer in the Psalms was amazing, but that fall’s series, “Free Indeed”, a study through the book of Galatians, was absolutely life changing. There were times I wept. Everything that the Holy Spirit had been showing me in Scripture, all the revelations that caused me to forsake Adventism, were being confirmed through clear, contextual teaching. This wasn’t proof texting. This was the type of methodical approach that makes it very difficult to hijack a passage with some aberrant interpretation. It was like God was saying to me, “You’re not misled. Grace is real. I want you to see it, believe it, and live it. Trust me.”

Many of us who have left Adventism have experienced the thrill of a biblical truth miraculously coming alive through the illumination of the Spirit. Most of us lived such an isolated life within the Adventist community that personal conviction was the only way to reach us. Maybe that’s why so many formers that I talk to have decided that from here on out it’s, “Me and my Bible and no one else.”

Our desire to go at it alone is understandable. We have all experienced the trauma of realizing that trusted teachers were actually in deep error. But here’s the problem: the Bible knows nothing of a solo Christian experience. Yes, the Spirit teaches us, provides confirmation of truth, and correction of error, but



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 ambulater@gmail.com.



often He chooses to do so through other members of the body.

When it came to Galatians, the Holy Spirit spoke through Pastor Clark confirming and deepening something the Spirit had already taught me. But more often, over the years, the Spirit has spoken through Bryan, and others, to correct some misconception I’ve had or to teach me something totally new. If I were going at it solo, there is little doubt in my mind that I would get off on all kinds of strange tangents and completely miss some key truths.

So why do I trust Bryan? Well, there are many reasons, but to name one, he lives here. I’ve had lunch with Bryan, sat in his office, been to dinner with him and his wife, and heard his daughter tell stories when she cuts my hair. Bryan even finds

time to return my e-mails and phone calls. He’s accountable to his congregation because he lives with us.

There is no substitute for the local church with local leaders. TV, radio, books, and the internet might supplement local teaching and community, but none of those things can replace the local church. God intended us to be in community, learning and growing together. God intended leaders to be accountable to their congregations. I’m so happy that my local pastor has an article in this issue of *Proclamation!*, but this isn’t really about him. It’s about something that has been very much on my heart and mind as of late. It’s about my deep desire for my brothers and sisters to be part of the local body, to be growing and learning, to be guided by men and women of God without the baggage of our past, and to be submitted to church authority. It’s a tough task, given our past, but I thoroughly believe it’s God’s will for us. It’s time to start living the life after.†