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FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS

Reflections on a Personal Journey:

Is there life after Adventism?

Jerry A. Gladson, Ph.D.

“LET ME ASK YOU a personal question,” Alice said, looking me in the eye. Being used to all kinds of questions, many of them personal, from years of teaching inquisitive college students, I felt confident I could handle whatever she was going to toss at me. Alice had recently joined my congregation after several years of searching for the appropriate church for herself. An avid reader, in one sitting she had devoured my book, *A Theologian’s Journey from Seventh-day Adventism to*

was one about recovery, the kind of question one might ask a recovering alcoholic. I was a “recovering” Adventist. Her question was born of the deep suspicion—even fear—most Christians harbor about the Seventh-day Adventist church. Is it a cult? Is it truly Christian? Will it undermine my faith?

I REMEMBERED AN INCIDENT that happened some ten years earlier, shortly after I had been pressured out of the Adventist ministry. While I was walking through a large Atlanta mall, anger suddenly, without warning, spilled over into my consciousness like a raging, uncontrollable torrent. “How dare you!” I said aloud, as though speaking face-to-face with one of the Adventist church leaders who had abruptly terminated my Adventist life, causing passers-by to stare in puzzled amazement. My wife, Laura, and I had struggled through most of the 1980s, while I was teaching religion at what is now Southern Adventist University, to find a way to function within an authoritarian Adventist system while negotiating through the ever increasing morass of the Adventist political and theological dilemma. It

“Have you fully gotten all the Adventism out of your system?”

Mainstream Christianity,¹ the story of my own struggle with the Seventh-day Adventist church. I gathered my thoughts and became silent, wondering what her question might be.

“Have you fully gotten all the Adventism out of your system?”

Her question caught me completely off guard. No one had ever asked me that before! Quickly my mind raced through the decade since I had left the Adventist Church. I realized her question

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Life Assurance Ministries (LAM), Inc

Mission: To proclaim the good news of the new covenant gospel of grace in Christ and to combat the errors of legalism and false religion.

Motto: Truth needs no other foundation than honest investigation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and a willingness to follow truth when it is received.

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

Hermeneutics No. 2

We are extremely happy to have Dr. Jerry Gladson writing for Proclamation. Those of you who have read his *Theologian's Journey* probably feel you know him on a personal basis! You will find his article interesting, insightful and very challenging. Currently Senior Minister at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Marietta, Georgia,

and we believe it is—the funds will come in. We are pleased to announce that we have received our 501-(c)-(3) status from the IRS so your contributions are deductible (retroactive to September, 2000) when sent directly to LAM, Inc.

Second, some of the names sent to us were apparently very conservative, historic Seventh-day Adventists and we have received dozens of letters from people who were extremely upset that they received Proclamation (See Letters to the Editor). It is not our intent to create bad will or send Proclamation to people who do not want it. If you were one of these persons, please forgive us. Proclamation is not designed for the status quo. We believe that iron sharpens iron and are not opposed to looking at several viewpoints in our search for truth. We take our motto very seriously and believe that truth can stand investigation. If it can't then it probably is not truth.

Please do us a favor. Some of you are making one check to pay for books ordered from LAM Publishers and including a donation for LAM, Inc. These are two separate entities with separate accounting systems. It would be appreciated if you could make one check to pay for books you have ordered from LAM Publishers and another check to LAM, Inc. for your donations. It would save us a lot of extra work. Thanks!

An artist friend of mine spent some time drawing cartoons to drive home some of the truths and errors we have been discussing. Please do not be scandalized by these. Enjoy a good laugh! The artist has asked to remain anonymous.

Articles from earlier issues of Proclamation will be posted our web site. Look under "Downloads"

I want to thank all of those who have given of their time, means and talent to make this publication a reality. None of the writers, our designer, our artist or board members have received anything for their services. This is not because we do not feel they are worthy of compensation, but all of us feel this ministry is more important than compensation—as much as we all would like it and need it! Keep us in your prayers.

—Dale Ratzlaff

We believe that iron sharpens iron and are not opposed to looking at several viewpoints in our search for truth.

Jerry Gladson holds the M.A. and Ph.D. in Old Testament from Vanderbilt University.

Dr. Fred Mazzaferri will continue his careful study on Ellen White and the Investigative Judgment. Dr. Verle Streifling will explain the Logical Fallacies many have fallen into in their interpretation of Scripture. I will have a short article on "Primacy."

Many of you have been sending lists of people whom you want to receive Proclamation. Our mailing lists have grown from about 3,000 to around 13,000! We thought we could only afford to send out about 3,000 of the last issue. However, while it was at the printer, I received a phone call asking me what would be needed to send to our whole list. Well, this person feeling it was God's will that everyone get a copy, sent \$10,000. This with the other donations that came in allowed us to mail to the 13,000 names. We thank those of you who have sent donations. It is our prayer that God will "meet all your needs in Christ Jesus."

Now, however, we have two problems: First, now that we have sent out 13,000 how can we afford to keep this up? We can't expect such large donations to "bail us out" next month. We are placing this in the hands of God. If it is His will—

Proclamation!

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Primacy

DALE RATZLAFF

It is not our comprehensive understanding of the Scriptures, nor our theological training nor even our expertise in the interpretation of Scripture that will save us. These are all good, even necessary, but unless these disciplines lead us to place our faith solely in the living Christ they fall woefully short—and short here is disastrous.

Currently I am preparing a series of study guides in connection with a Sunday school class I am teaching on the Gospel of John (These are posted on LAM's web site under "Downloads"). Immersing myself in this most precious Gospel has once again underlined in my thinking the importance of making first things first. In John 3, Nicodemus is described as "the teacher of Israel" (Jn. 3:10). In today's vernacular, we would call him the Chairman of the Department of Theology at Jerusalem University. Yet, despite his knowledge, degrees and training, Jesus looked Nicodemus in the eye and said, "You must be born again." Then Jesus pointed Nicodemus forward to the time when He, as the Son of Man, would be lifted up "so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life" (Jn. 3:15). Jesus makes it clear that belief—the Greek word means belief and trust—in Christ as the Savior of the world is the primary, ultimate goal to be reached. In fact Jesus states, "He who believes has (now) eternal life" Jn. 6:47.

John then moves from Nicodemus, a trained and respected religious leader to the other end of the social/religious spectrum: the woman of Samaria. The Samaritans were half-breed Jews, had an incomplete, competing religious system and were thus despised by the Jews. This woman was living in sin, going from one immoral relationship to another. Skillfully, Jesus led her step by step to the primary truth. When she brought up issues about the right place to worship, Jesus told her that true worshipers will worship God in Spirit and in truth. It was to this sinful woman Jesus made one of the most direct revelations about His true identity and in so doing offered her the gift of eternal life. When she started talking about the coming Messiah, Jesus said, "I who speak to you am He." John, in his characteristically subtle

way indicates she believed that Jesus was the Christ. She drank so deeply of the "living water" that she left her water pot there at Jacob's well (Jn. 4:28). Her thirst had been quenched!

Could it be that we, too, are like Nicodemus wanting to discuss theology when we need to be born again? Or, perhaps, we are like the woman of Samaria and are so concerned about the details of worship (and minor theological points) that we miss what is primary and important. Too often our discussion centers on minor points which are not clearly stated in Scripture. Perhaps we would be better off to focus our attention on that which is clearly stated and primary in emphasis and importance.

Good New Testament hermeneutics will give major emphasis to that which is primary—the good news that salvation is a free gift to be received by faith in Christ. Conversely, a hermeneutic that gives emphasis to peripheral things of questionable interpretation is weak, even dangerous.

I believe the Gospel of John has one primary truth.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, Jn. 1:12.

Whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life Jn. 3:15–16.

He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God Jn. 3:18.

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him Jn. 3:36.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life Jn. 5:24.

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and the
Sabbath.***

Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent” Jn. 6:29–30.

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst” Jn. 6:35–36.

For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day Jn. 6:40.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life Jn. 6:47.

Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins Jn. 8:24.

Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?” Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you.” And he said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped Him Jn. 9:35–38.

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to Him, “Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world” Jn. 11:25–27.

“I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness Jn. 12:46.

Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed” Jn. 20:29.

But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name Jn. 20:31.

Simple belief in Christ is primary. Any teaching that puts emphasis anywhere else is to be rejected. Once we have placed a true faith in Christ, then we immediately are led to the first result: intimate fellowship with the Godhead.

Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him” Jn. 14:23.

I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me Jn. 17:20–21.

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you Jn. 14:16, 17.

Christ, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, lives in us. He will never leave us because He has promised to be with us to the end. This intimate relationship with God—the indwelling Holy Spirit—brings about the second result. The Holy Spirit in our lives becomes the engine that drives our Christian walk. We do not serve to be accepted into the family of God, we serve because we have already become sons and daughters of God. We seek to live like the kind of people we now are “in Christ.” This standing (the simple gospel of faith in Christ) creates the relationship (intimate fellowship with the Holy Spirit) and this in turn causes us to “keep His commandments.”

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another Jn. 13:34.

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments Jn. 14:15.

He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him Jn. 14:21.

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love Jn. 15:10.

This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you Jn. 15:12.

When I was an Adventist pastor, I always used the “commandment” passages in John to put people back under the law and the Sabbath. After all, the Sabbath is in the heart of the Ten Commandments and if we loved God then we must keep the Sabbath. I found, however, that I knew other Christians who were not Sabbath keepers who expressed a profound love for God.

How could this be? If one did not keep the Sabbath, I concluded, that person really did not love God, he just appeared to. However, during my long inductive study of the Sabbath I discovered that John never uses *entole*—translated “commandment”—to refer to the Ten Commandments or any other old covenant law. When John refers to the old covenant he always uses *nomos* translated “law.” (See *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 310, 311 for a complete listing of these words used in John’s writings). What, then, does John mean by “commandment”? Simply this:

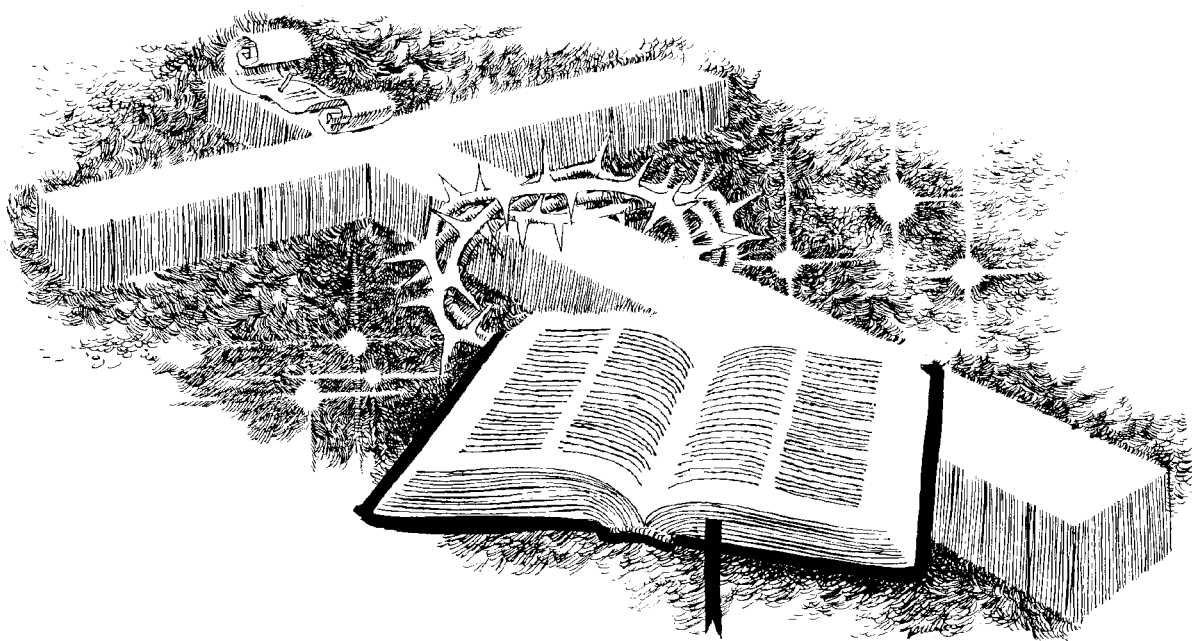
This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us 1 Jn. 3:23.

Good hermeneutics will consider primacy: putting first things first. Placing our faith in the death and resurrection of Christ as number one. This, in turn, brings about the intimate fellowship with God. Then divine indwelling of the Holy Spirit

motivates us to keep trusting Christ and loving one another.

Jerome reports that when John was too feeble, through age, to walk to Christian assemblies, John was carried there by young men. His only address was, “Little children, love one another.” When asked why he repeated these words so much, he replied, “Because this is the Lord’s command, and enough is done when this is done.” (Commentary on the New Testament, John, R.C.H. Lenski, p. 22) Yes, this is the clear teaching of the new covenant. “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law” Rom. 13:10. “For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “You shall LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF” Gal. 5:14.

It is my prayer that we, like John, will put the primary, important things first and observe the correct order of salvation: (1) Place our faith in Christ, (2) Experience the intimate fellowship with God, and (3) Love others as Christ loved us. Enough is done when this is done. !



Seventh-day Adventism's dogma of an investigative

A brief evaluation

BY DR. FRED MAZZAFERRI

In the last issue of Proclamation, Dr. Mazzaferri showed very convincingly that in the Old Testament Sanctuary service, the blood of the sacrifice for individual sins never entered the sanctuary. This fact, alone, if there were not over a dozen others, completely undermines the SDA theology of the investigative judgement as taught by Ellen White.

Having examined the foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist dogma of a pre-Advent judgment, it is time for a careful look at the structure itself. An open-minded observer always accepts the possibility that a perfectly sound building rests upon a flawed foundation. For example, if the NT teaches clearly and unambiguously that there will be a scrutiny of the saints before Christ returns, the nature and the timing of that pre-advent judgment concern this study. Too many critics throw the proverbial baby out with the bath water when rightly rejecting Seventh-day Adventist heresy.

The "building" to be examined has three distinct parts. The first is the claim that, just as the OT sanctuary had two separate apartments, so does the heavenly original. Its corollary is that, just as the earthly priest served day by day in the Holy Place, while the High Priest alone served for only one day in the Most Holy Place as the year closed, so also Jesus ascended to serve for long centuries in heaven's Holy Place, moving to its Most Holy Place for the brief time just before his Return.

The third part of the Seventh-day Adventism "building" is its claim that Christ's change of ministry fulfilled the forecast of Dan. 8:14 in 1844. Actually, this is where its pioneers began, under the quite sincere yet deluded leadership of William Miller, only looking backward to Leviticus and forward to Hebrews with their dogma firmly in place. Logical sequence offers a fresh, edifying perspective.

As we evaluate each of these unique, minor dogmas in that sequence, remember that our overall interest is what Ellen White claims, not where her Church may stand today, after its "fine tuning."

How Many "Apartments" in the Heavenly Sanctuary?

What Ellen White Claims

Ellen White is extremely careful to remind her readers that, although the "Matchless splendor of the earthly tabernacle reflected to human vision the glories of that heavenly temple where Christ our forerunner ministers for us before the throne of God (GC 414) that temple, filled with the glory of the eternal throne, . . . could find, in the most magnificent structure ever reared by human hands, but a faint reflection of its vastness and glory. (Ibid.)

However, she still claims that God's heavenly sanctuary "is the great original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy (Ibid., and PP 357) in accordance with the divinely revealed pattern. It was "A figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and offerings;" its two holy places were "patterns of things in the heavens;" Christ, our High Priest is "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Hebrews 9:9, 23; 8:2. As in vision the apostle John was granted view of the temple of God in heaven, he beheld there "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne." He saw an angel "having golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne." Revelation 4:5; 8:3. Here the prophet was permitted to behold the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven; and he saw there the "seven lamps of fire" and the "golden altar" represented by the golden candlestick and the altar of incense in the sanctuary on earth. Again, "the temple of God was opened" (Revelation 11:19), and he looked within the inner veil, upon the holy of holies. Here he beheld "the ark of His testament" (Revelation 11:19), represented by the sacred chest constructed by Moses to contain the law of God.

Moses made the earthly sanctuary, "According to

judgment through Ellen White's eyes:

the fashion that he had seen." Paul declares that "The tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry, when completed, were "the pattern of the things in the heavens". Acts 7:44; Hebrews 9:21, 23. And John says that he saw the sanctuary in heaven. (Ibid., 252f.)

Moreover, even Ellen White claims to have been given a "guided tour" of God's heavenly temple:

I came to the first veil. This veil was raised, and I passed into the holy place. Here I saw the altar of incense, the candlestick with seven lamps, and the table on which was the shewbread. After viewing the glory of the holy, Jesus raised the second veil and I passed into the holy of holies.

In the holiest I saw an ark; on the top and sides of it were purest gold. On each end of the ark was a lovely cherub, with its wings spread out over it. Their faces were turned toward each other, and they looked downward. Between the angels was golden censer. Above the ark, where the angels stood, was an exceeding bright glory, that appeared like a throne where God dwelt. (EW 32, cf. 251f.)

She likewise claims to have viewed the earthly sanctuary for comparative purposes:

I was also shown a sanctuary upon the earth containing two apartments. It resembled the one in heaven, and I was told that it was a figure of the heavenly. The furniture of the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary was like that in the first apartment of the heavenly. The veil was lifted, and I looked into the holy of holies and saw that the furniture was the same as in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. (Ibid., 252f)

There is no doubt whatever, then, that Ellen White insists that, detail by detail, a close copy of the heavenly sanctuary was constructed by Moses as the wilderness sanctuary. Most importantly, she asks then answers one of the chief questions for the paramount Seventh-day Adventist dogma:

What is the cleansing of the sanctuary? That there was such service in connection with the earthly sanctuary is stated in the Old Testament Scriptures. But can there be anything in heaven to be cleansed? In Hebrews 9 the cleansing of both the earthly and the heavenly sanctuary is plainly taught. [9:22f. cited] "...the cleansing, both in the typical and in the real service, must be accomplished with blood: in the former, with the blood of animals; in the latter, with the blood

of Christ. Paul states "that without shedding of blood is no remission. Remission, or putting away of sin, is the work to be accomplished. (GC 417f.)

What the Word of God States

The Reference Moses Employed in Building the Earthly Sanctuary

Ellen White's basic surmise is that Moses was shown "a miniature representation of the heavenly temple" (K.A. Stand, "Victorious-introduction' Scenes," DARCOM 6, 55f., sees the point clearly, but still proceeds to defend SDA dogma. This struggle involves him and he bears silent testimony that John is scarcely sketching any two-roomed Temple.) like a scale model. Actually, the key Hebrew noun is *tabnit*, cognate with the verb *bana*, he builds, with the nuance "blueprint." By no means, however, does this prove Ellen White's case.

For one thing, in Ex. 26:30 the noun becomes *misipat*, common for justice, hence a specification, as in 1 Ki. 6:38. This implies an ideal, not a scale model. For another, alluding to Ex. 25:4, Acts 7:44 and Heb. 8:5 use the Greek noun *typos*. This invites us into the fascinating sphere of biblical typology.

All that needs to be said here is that Scripture does not teach the common lay idea that there is a point-by-point, positive correlation between type and antitype, quite apart from the fact that in Heb. 9:24 the earthly sanctuary is the antitype of the heavenly! For example, in Ro. 5:14 Adam is a type of the coming Christ. Yet the correspondence extends merely to their uniqueness. In all other respects they diverge sharply: "just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous"; 19. Shortly this will become even more evident when Christ's High-priestly service is compared with Aaron's.

What the NT Reveals about the Heavenly Sanctuary

The NT has no unequivocal support for the notion that, like its earthly counter-part, heaven's sanctuary consists of two separate rooms, even if the detailed evidence directly pertinent to Christ's

There is no doubt whatever, then, that Ellen White insists that, detail by detail, a close copy of the heavenly sanctuary was constructed by Moses as the wilderness sanctuary.

High-priestly ministry in that sanctuary still awaits open-minded consideration.

For example, note the sublime scene greeting John of Patmos as he peers through heaven's open door, Rev. 4:1. Here is God's throne, 2, which can only be in the Most Holy Place, if heaven's temple does have rooms. Yet here, too, are the golden incense bowls depicting the prayers of the saints, 5:8, associated with "the golden altar before the throne" 8:3, where those prayers are cited again, 3f. And the altar of incense stood before the inner curtain in the Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary.

However, the seven lamps burning before the

only a single lampstand in that very temple.

Objectivity surely demands a candid reply, too, to the searching question, If this is the prototype of the OT sanctuary, detail by detail, what about that "sea of glass, clear as crystal" before God's throne, 6, just like the seven lamps? If it has any earthly counterpart, the best option is the bronze basin between the bronze altar and the complex's first curtain, outside in its courtyard, Ex. 30:17-21. (PP 343)

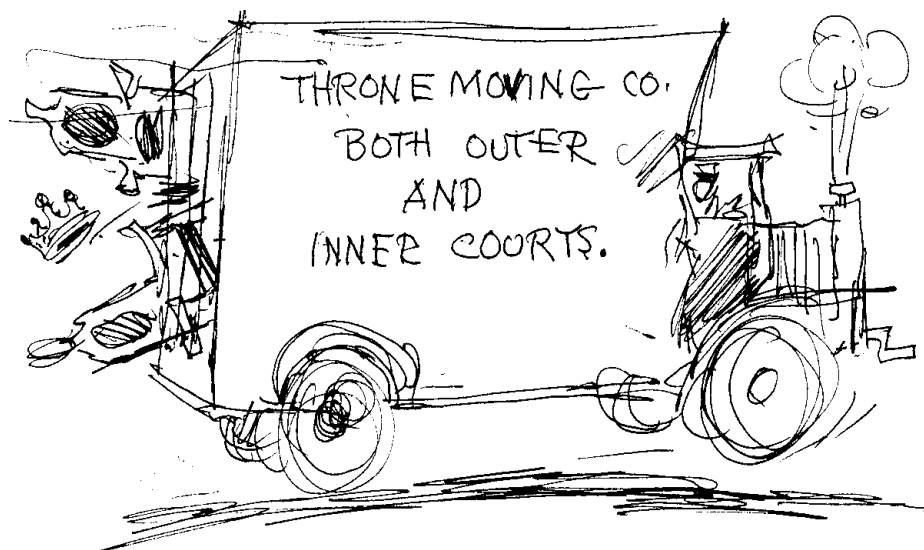
Objectivity equally asks, What about the table on which the bread of the Presence was renewed each day, Ex. 25:23-30? Ellen White reports viewing it in heaven's temple. In contrast, one searches the NT quite in vain for any hint at all that this item of furniture exists, in either reality or symbol.

In short, if John were meant to give us an unambiguous glimpse of the heavenly sanctuary as the precise prototype of the earthly, he has made a very poor job of it! We think at times that we are in its Most Holy Place, at others in its Holy Place, and once even outside in its courtyard, with no hint of any partitions between. Clearly, he had no such intent. There is a temple in heaven, where the Father sits enthroned. But we cannot even be dogmatic that it has "bricks and mortar" in view of manifest symbolism associated with it. If Ellen White's theology is to survive, it depends, then, entirely on the Book of Hebrews and its doctrine of Christ's High-priestly ministry in heaven. !

(To be continued in the next issue. Those wanting to receive this complete essay now, may do so by going to www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.org, click on downloads, and go to Investigative Judgment by Dr. Fred Mazzaferri.)

If this is the prototype of the OT sanctuary, detail by detail, what about that "sea of glass, clear as crystal" before God's throne

throne do not assist us to draw a plan of heaven's temple, even if we ignore the paramount fact that they depict the Spirit of God, 4:5. For the earthly Holy Place contained a single, seven-branched lampstand, in the Greek designated *lychnia*, Heb. 9:2, while heaven's temple contained seven separate lamps, in the Greek designated *lampas*, Rev. 4:5. Compare Ellen White's counter claim that she saw



Logical fallacies in biblical interpretation

DR. VERLE STREIFLING

Many SDAs refuse to hear anyone who has left their church, even for God's truth since they're 'apostates.'

Having seen some 35 methods of Scripture Twisting which cults frequently use to pervert God's truth (last issue), we will now review numerous logical fallacies which are easily made, yielding misinterpretations.

1. Question Begging: Saying 'A' means or shows 'B' without giving the needed evidence to substantiate the claim. SDAs affirm the Sabbath is excluded from Col. 2:14-16 since the word for 'Sabbath' is plural, so speaking of the 'other sabbaths' of Lev 23. Yet they admit the plural spelling takes singular meaning as in Ex 20:8; and the seventh-day Sabbath is the first of the feasts in Lev 23, so their excuse fails.

2. Red Herring: This speaks of raising a minor issue to avoid the main issue, like blaming the other driver for your hitting him, since his license expired. JW's go to extremes over the 'torture stake', to avoid dealing with why Jesus died, and what should be our response. SDAs raise the issue of whether or not the Millerites wore 'ascension robes' when waiting for Jesus to return in 1844. But the main issue was the false prophetic teaching, substantiated by Ellen's visions—and their later false excuses.

3. Non Sequitur: Like the guy who drove into the ditch because the car ahead of him did, this means 'not in sequence' and speaks of reasoning from 'A' to 'B' when the supporting links for this logic are missing. SDAs teaching Paul or Jesus going to the synagogue proves they kept the Sabbath, so should we, is a good example, for the Bible shows Christ broke the Sabbath, (Jn. 5:16–18) and Paul repudiated it, in Col. 2.

4. Ad Populum: Means appealing to the emotions of the public, like JW's calling all Christians 'Pagan Christendom' to draw people from the church and into their cult. Conversely, appealing to people's ego, e. g., "Anyone with any religious horse sense knows that Jesus can't be God", is a ploy to make one feel stupid for even thinking Jesus is God! The words 'Pro-Life sounds better than 'Anti-Abortion' and 'pro-choice' sounds better than 'pro-killing the unborn.'

5. Ad Hominem is another kind of 'name calling' which refuses to hear what one has to say because of a fault found in the person, instead of his theology. An ex-JW won't be heard because he's part of an 'evil slave class'. Many SDAs refuse to hear anyone who has left their church, even for God's truth since they're 'apostates'. Sometimes even false allegations are made of one 'living in sin', for this reason.

6. Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc is a long Latin name for building a case before showing the evidence, then when it comes, it's often inadequate. Seventh-day sects assume the seventh creation day was a Sabbath, then build their whole theology from this error. On a larger scale, a theological system which hangs from prophetic interpretation begins with many assumed but unproved doctrines. When these doctrines are refuted, the whole prophetic apparatus collapses! For example, since Rome didn't change the Law or the Sabbath, it isn't the 'beast' or Babylon, so Sunday worship isn't the mark of the beast.

7. Circular Argument: This describes an argument where 'A' is used to sustain 'B' when in fact 'B' is used to support 'A'. Often these become complex with as many as a dozen links in the chain, when finally 'M' is used to sustain 'A' and each link depends on all the others. A good example is *The Sabbath Under Crossfire* by Dr. Bacchiocchi, which starts in the middle of SDA teaching, builds out from there assuming a 'creation Sabbath' and '24 hour creation days' and patriarchs keeping the Sabbath, and two laws, etc. It builds on these assumptions, then uses its case to prove these assumptions! The JW's mistranslate Rev 3:14 to support misinterpreting Col. 1:15, 16 to sustain mistranslating Jn. 1:1 to uphold misinterpreting Prov. 8:22 which is used to validate their mistranslating Rev. 3:14! Sometimes they'll add a few more into the circle, which largely depends on their highly unreliable New World Translation to exist!

8. Hasty Generalization describes drawing a conclusion from limited evidence, as in saying all

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women (or old men) drivers are bad, because one makes a mistake! Many of the 'Hyper Faith Laws are drawn from two or three historic events, such as 'Jesus always healed all who were sick'. But at Bethesda, He only healed one man, leaving the others around the pool. JWs teach 'ho Theos' (the God) never applies to Jesus, as seen from Jn. 1:1c where he is 'Theos' without the article 'ho', so He's a lesser god or 'little god'. But some 20 NT texts call Him 'ho Theos', e. g., Matt. 1:23; Heb. 1:8; Jn. 20:28; and in Heb. 1:10. He is YHWH!

9. Mistaking Signs for Causes: This is like supposing a car will stop because the traffic light turned red, when it's the brakes that stop the car, if they're applied! Sometimes we assume one has repented from sins, because we see him crying; or someone received baptism with the Holy Spirit as we hear her speaking in tongues. But crying could evidence homesickness or strained emotions, and even the occult and Mormons speak in tongues, having anti-Christian religion with counterfeit gifts!

10. Unreasonable Extrapolation: Though similar to hasty generalization, this describes extending a pattern, etc., beyond the limits of the variables. SDAs teach the Sabbath will be observed throughout eternity, but in eternity, time will be no more, there's no night, sun or moon. So there are no sabbaths there! In *Women in Today's Church*, George Watkins turns Phoebe (Rom 16:1) from a 'servant' into a 'deaconess', a 'powerful woman', a 'ruler', an 'evangelist', a 'bishop' over 2 churches who spiritually ministered to Paul. While 'diakonos' meant both a deacon and servant in 55 AD, the church only had deaconesses after 100 AD; the word never meant 'bishop' nor were women ordained as elders until after the reformation! It was 'Phoebus' who was bishop over 2 churches in the end of the 2nd century.

11. Cognitive Dissonance: This speaks of refusing to accept point 'A', even though proven, as it will lead to point 'B' which one doesn't want to deal with, or it will upset a point 'B' which I must cling to in blind faith, to escape disillusionment. For example a JW refuses to accept the Deity of Christ, since it may lead to 'the pagan Trinity'. He'll be even more tenacious against the Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit for the same reason. So their NWT never gives the article 'the' before the Holy Spirit.

12. Logical Proof over Bible Proof: This is refusing to accept a Bible truth, since 'that's not logical! We fail to realize that our 'logic' is part of our fallen human nature and thus it must submit to God's objective truth. It wasn't logical that Jesus should die for our sins, yet we should receive His Salvation any

way! Cults say it's not logical that God should send those who reject Christ to Hell, for they fail to see Christ paid an infinite sacrifice for our infinite sin against an infinitely Holy God. So rejecting His infinite sacrifice is an infinite sin worthy of infinite punishment! (Matt. 25:41, 46; Rev. 10:20; 20:10).

13. Emotional Proof over Bible Proof is holding one's emotions over Truth in the course of action he takes. After learning of their cult's Anti-Christian teachings, some stay there as their 'loved ones' are there, or they'll be disowned from their families or inheritance if they should leave the organization. Early Christians made such stand for Christ without hesitation for they loved Christ first and foremost!

14. Charisma /Character vs. Bible Proof speaks of accepting a teaching you know isn't true because of the 'charm' of the teacher, or not accepting truth because of the bad reputation of the teacher. Waco Texas, or Jones town are good examples of the first, while people leaving a good Christian church for the JWs because of a pastor's sins, fits the second. Jesus' warning in Mk. 9:40 is very significant!

15. False Balances speaks of taking a nickel today for a dime tomorrow, or not rightly weighing out values. Those teaching presumptive hyper faith healing messages affirm 'if only one person is healed by hearing this message, it will be worth it! 'Yet, they fail to see the cost of the shattered faith of the ones not healed, especially since they're told they didn't have enough faith or there's secret sin in their life! Many elders or circuit servants of the JWs have a hard decision to leave the organization because of their high position. It's more difficult for those whose years of service affords a retirement benefit to leave the organization for Bible truth! Yet, Rea, Ford, Prescott, Ballenger, Canright, and hundreds of others have done this.

16. Authoritarianism becomes a logical fallacy (as #14 above) in accepting something just because a 'Dr.' is the teacher. Sadly, in the SDA prophetic seminars, most there don't check out what the evangelist says, simply because he sounds like he knows what he's saying is true, while it may really be in error, but he thinks he's preaching 'Sabbath truth'. Often, to discourage listeners from checking the Biblical references, the presentations are made with slide projectors, so the Bible's words can be cited selectively from their verses and contexts, which, if they were checked out, may give a different story! Thus, authorities must be weighed out and carefully evaluated, for even scholars make mistakes. So we must account for which authorities are right, and why their opinion is preferred over others.

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17. Indirect Close: This is when the minor point being consented to, really gives consent to a major point. The car salesman will ask 'When do you want it delivered?' or 'What color would you like it?' instead of 'Do you want to buy it?' Some affirm the story of the rich man and Lazarus was a parable, instead of a true story. But when they read Jesus' words "There was a certain rich man" and are asked 'Was there?' and 'Why don't you want to believe Jesus?' this forces an indirect close to the issue if there's a hell, or not, which they try to evade. Rom. 3:5-7 shows Jesus spoke the truth!

18. Assumed Sale refers to statements made, which if not rejected, imply agreement. A question like "Why does God say we [New Covenant Christians] should keep the Sabbath?" implies He does say we are to keep it, but He does not! So the unsuspecting will be caught and begin looking for reasons to answer the 'why'. A question like "How many more things must I show you before you'll leave the JW's?" assumes one is leaving.

19. Limited Choice: This speaks of giving two alternatives, either 'A' or 'B', when there may be other choices, and even these two give four choices: either 'A', or 'B', or both, or neither! The statement "If Jesus didn't keep the Sabbath, then He was a sinner" is a good example of this. Here neither is right, for He admitted breaking it (Jn. 5:18; 9:16) yet He challenged "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" (Jn. 8:46; 1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15). D. A. Carson speaks of this as "Unwarranted Disjunction" in Exegetical Fallacies. This usually describes choices that are opposites, while our reference is to choices, which may really be not related but are given because of presupposed logical fallacies. To illustrate, a Christian reads "the Word was God" so a JW responds "Satan is the god of this earth". Now the Christian must ask, "Are you saying Jesus is a false god like Satan, or is He a true God?" Now the JW must say whether Jesus is a Devil, or is He a True God. Yet if He's a true God as the Father, there are two Gods!

20. Loaded Statements and Question Framing: These are statements that have multiple assumptions in them. Any statement or question that assumes a when, where, who, how, why, to whom, especially a what, or several of these at once, is a 'loaded statement' or 'question framing'. These are more hazardous when several of these are assumed at once, for whichever you try to deal with, the other not being rejected is foisted upon you. In the practicum (Apx. 2 C [of unpublished book]) we uncover many of these regarding the Sabbath.

21. The Sharp Angle: This is gaining hypothetical commitment to something on the basis of evidence

yet to be given if and when it is given. For example, when a JW says 'You can't prove Jesus is God', a Christian should ask 'Will you believe and accept it if I do?' There 's importance to this, if it's used to evaluate the sincerity of the JW studying with you. If he says 'No' then your study is wasting time, unless you can lead him to holding Jehovah's Word above his cult, which is his false god!

22. Grinding one's Axe describes someone preaching his facet of truth to such extreme it leads to an imbalance or becomes heretical. Some denominations refuse to accept other Christians as 'Christians' or 'saved', since they don't hold to their 'Truth'. For example, Ellen White's teaching that the Sabbath is God's mark or seal and that He'll 'never, never' bring one into heaven who does not bear His mark. So, accordingly, only Sabbath keepers can be saved! But sadly, while their 'Sabbath Truth' becomes all-important, yet believing in the Deity of Christ or the Bible as God's Inerrant Word is immaterial!

23. Witness Leading: This is often a complaint in a court, where a lawyer leads a witness to make the conclusions he wants the witness to make, instead of his own from the objective facts at hand. Ministers may do this at the expense of their hearers or readers, e. g., SDA's George Vandeman's book Planet in Rebellion where he composes and carries on a dialogue with you his reader, by using lines like "But how, you ask, 'will it all come about?'" (p. 319); then the obvious fallacy "you can readily see that" (p. 320); "let me take you" and "for instance we read that" (ibid.); then assuming control over you in the conversation he dictates "Now listen" (p. 321) and asks "Is that clear?" (p. 322); and he stuffs more words in your mouth "Oh, you say, 'it came from _ and you are right'". In this manner he leads you, his reader in stately 'pied-piper' fashion down into the sea of Seventh-day Adventism!

24. Accepting Categorical Statements: This refers to blindly accepting the many statements that are made as being universally true, when many are not. For example, E. G. White's vision that Satan had taken full possession of the churches as a body, all their prayers and professions are an abomination to God. Yet Joseph Smith of the Mormons had the same vision 20 years earlier. Since professing the Deity of Christ is not an abomination to God, the categorical statement is in error, as shown by the SDAs accepting this doctrine half a century after she wrote this! Too often we'll accept blanket statements without question, for a scholar has made them, as when Matthew Henry's Commentary says "In all Roman Catholic catechisms and devotional

We must be careful to read Scripture in its contextual setting using an accurate translation of the Bible.

books, the command forbidding images is left out." Their many books, Bibles and catechisms world-wide when he wrote this should impugn his statement. Had he seen them all? Today it's not true, for we listed seven catechisms having that command, in Apx. #1 [in unpublished book].

25. Syllogism Fallacies: A syllogism is a method of deductive reasoning that begins from a categorical statement, then applies it to a specific situation, then draws a conclusion from this. We illustrate below: Categorical statement, (called "Major Premise"): All men are mortal Specific situation, (called "Minor Premise "): I am a man Conclusion, or, "Deduction ": Thus, I am mortal As long as the syllogism takes this form, it will reveal truth, and is a proper tool of deductive reasoning. But many fallacies can beset such a syllogism, to turn it into faulty logic. We explain eight of these below:

a. Four figure fallacy: Sometimes called 'Equivocated Middle Term', this happens when the 'middle term' is changed or redefined (given a different sense) in the syllogism. An illustration of this is: The creator of Heaven and Earth is God. The Bible calls Satan 'the god of this earth' Thus, Satan is the creator of Heaven and Earth. Here, the term 'God' in the major premise is speaking of the True God by nature, having all the attributes of deity, while in the second line it is applied to Satan as merely the 'ruler' of this earth, for Adam surrendered dominion to him. Similarly 'Ye are gods' has an equivocation of 'god' from the first line.

b. Undistributed Major Premise: To remain universally true, the Major premise must cover all situations. As soon as it changes from 'all' to 'most' or 'some', the deduction is illogical, such as: Some men are rich. I am a man, Therefore I am rich! This shows the error of 'Mortal' and 'Venial' sins, as it allows me to commit 'some' sins and yet have eternal life. But the Bible's saying 'the Wages of sin is death' is universal, so all sin and all sins yield death. 'So death passed upon all, for all have sinned! Thus all must come to Christ for salvation, and when they do, 'the Blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin!

c. Illicit Major Premise: This speaks of making a categorical statement which is not true, like 'All animals are vicious', or 'God has cast off all Jews forever'. In such cases, because the Major Premise is in error, then any syllogistic logic which deducts from this would be in error.

d. Illicit Minor Premise: Similarly, if the Minor Premise is not true, the deductions are erroneous, e. g.: 'Dogs won't go to heaven' (Rev. 22:15) 'Gentiles

are called dogs' (Mk. 7:28) So I won't go to heaven. The error here is that though the Jews called the Gentiles 'dogs', yet they aren't really so at all. Also, 'dogs' in Revelation has a different sense than in Matthew, so here is an equivocated middle term. But Jesus used this 'Jewish cultural expression' as a test—not as a truism, for the Cananite woman.

e. Positive deduction from a Negative Major, like turning the 'Don't Walk' Sign into 'Run!' or as in: 'No man deserves to be saved.' I am a man. Thus, I deserve to be saved!

f. Negative deduction from a Positive Major: This is the reverse of the above, as in: "Jesus said we must worship God alone. Thus we must not worship Jesus." Here we have (.) for the minor premise, for to be true the minor premise must say 'Jesus is not God and this must be absolute truth. The Bible shows Jesus IS GOD, so the negative deduction is wrong!

g. Fallacy of Two Majors: This is drawing a deduction from two Major Premises, with no minor premise to link them to a specific situation. For example "All Jews are sinners. All Gentiles are sinners. Thus I am either a Jew or a Gentile." The deduction may be true, but the process isn't complete.

h. Undistributed Middle Term: The 'Middle Term' must become the subject in the Minor Premise to make the syllogism correct. The example below is incorrectly structured: 'All Jews are Sinners' 'All Gentiles are Sinners' "Thus all Jews are Gentiles' Here 'sinners' (the middle term of the first statement) is not the subject of the second line. The correct way would be 'All Jews are sinners. All sinners will die, thus All Jews will die.' They need the gospel!

26. Errors in Hypothetical Syllogisms: The above errors can be made in hypothetical syllogisms that begin reasoning with "If", such as "If I am a man, then I am mortal. I am a man. Thus I am mortal!"

27. Errors in Disjunctive Syllogisms: The above errors can be made in disjunctive syllogisms as in: 'I am either mortal or immortal. I am not immortal. Therefore I am mortal.' But there can be added hazards in these syllogisms, for both sides of the statement must be able to be universally true, and free of all the fallacies #1 to 25 above, as well as the Scripture Twisting methods that may belie them.

So what is the conclusion? We must be careful to read Scripture in its contextual setting using an accurate translation of the Bible. Equally important, we must use sound methods of hermeneutics and logic as we interpret it.

Former Adventist Fellowship Emphasis on the Bible

Richard and Colleen Tinker

Former Adventist Fellowship exists to provide biblical grounding and prayer support for people who are leaving or have left the Adventist church. Before we became involved with Former Adventist Fellowship, we became increasingly aware how limited our exposure to the New Testament had been. While we had read it some on our own, our formal Bible classes had focused mostly on the Old Testament. Our personal need was for systematic, inductive Bible study. We needed to know what was really true, and we began to read the New Testament one book at a time.

Our experience with Bible study helped shape the content of our Friday evening Former Adventist Fellowship. While we need the fellowship and unique support of other fellow “formers,” concentrating on the personal and psychological aspects of our painful experiences does not ground us in truth.

Rather, it focuses the group on the past rather than on God’s grace and love. While it’s true that many (if not most!) former Adventists have significant emotional and spiritual trauma from their experiences living in the church, there are many venues including Christian counseling and

support groups for dealing with this pain.

Former Adventist Fellowship (FAF), on the other hand, is committed to providing Bible study, prayer, and fellowship to those leaving the

church. The miracle of Bible study is that as we study God’s word with honest prayer for the Holy Spirit’s guidance, we become acquainted with Jesus. His love begins to heal many of the wounds we bear deep inside, and the Holy Spirit, our seal and guarantee of belonging to Christ, becomes real to us. We begin to understand the truth of our completed salvation, and we discover an amazing truth about God: He is sovereign; He is gracious; He wastes nothing, and He redeems everything we submit to him.

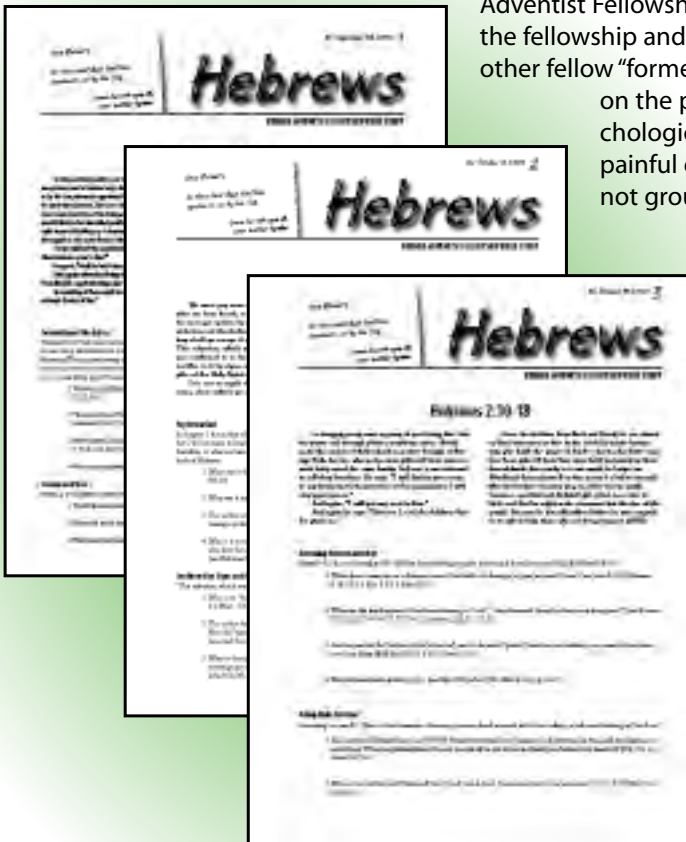
When FAF began meeting in April, 1999, we began going through the book of Galatians. This book made the truth of the New Covenant and salvation by grace completely clear. Galatians leaves no doubt that the law was a pedagogue to lead us to Christ who became a curse for us. The law, says Galatians, was given 430 years after Abraham and was to be in effect until the Seed—Jesus—would come.

When we finished Galatians we studied 1 Corinthians. The Corinthians suffered internal divisions and loyalties, immorality, problems with marriage and divorce, competition between men and women, irreverence toward communion, flaunting of spiritual gifts, and temptations to participate in the rituals of their old pagan religion. In this book Paul explains how to live as born-again Christians without being legalists.

Our group is currently in the last half of the book of Hebrews. This book explains in detail how Jesus is the fulfillment of the entire Old Covenant. It explains how Sabbath rest is still available TODAY (whatever day it is!), and it shows that Jesus, from the royal tribe of Judah, became our high priest. This change in the priesthood required a change in the law.

The Bible studies we use including the weekly study guides and the commentary notes are available on our website, www.FormerAdventist.com. They can be downloaded and used free of cost, but they may not be sold. We encourage you to visit our website, read our stories, and join our live forum discussion.

And we encourage you to take out your Bible, pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you, and begin reading. You will discover a new world of truth!



Is there life after Adventism? CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

didn't work. In 1987, under pressure from Adventist leadership, I left Adventist employment—after twenty-two years—and moved to Atlanta to take a position at the Psychological Studies Institute.

Naively assuming even then that I could still find a useful place within Adventism after being exiled from the denomination's educational system, I soon found out the utter impossibility of such a dream. Now a pariah, I was an untouchable, so to speak, one who could only hope to live from the crumbs falling on the floor under the Adventist table. Finally, I faced the facts and realized that there was no longer a place for me within Adventism, and began the search for a new Christian community. I was lucky.

“dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul bird” (Rev. 18:2). Those who do so are condemned, unless they turn around, recant, and head back. So the church has historically taught, and this belief in one form or another has been absorbed into the psyche of most Adventists. It viscerally keeps within Adventism many who otherwise would look for a healthier spiritual climate.

Since 1980, however, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has experienced a phenomenon it has never known before: wholesale defections. No statistics of this exodus have been compiled, but some estimates run as high as one million defections, including hundreds of clergy and other denominational leaders. In

search, answering the question of whether life existed after Adventism first presented itself in the form of getting over the anger Adventism had engendered. Leaving Adventism, especially under pressure, as was the case for me, often results in bitter anger, anger over disillusionment, what one person aptly called the “agony of deceit,” the discovery that the Adventist church isn't what it claims it must be either in theory or in practice. Anger over unfair treatment merely compounded this bitter theological struggle.

I knew enough psychology to realize I should first try to understand my anger. Why was it there? Why couldn't I, like any ordinary Christian, simply transfer my membership to another denomination instead of constantly reviewing the circumstances that had led to my demise as an Adventist, and wondering why it had happened?

My search for answers led me to the growing body of literature on spiritual abuse.² Faith communities, I found out, could harm as well as help. Not all faith communities are wholesome. Sadly, some are abusive, even destructive. In a twist of painful irony, those that are abusive are also often addictive. That is, a person gets “hooked” on them, unable to break free, much like the addict of a powerful drug. The drug, in this case, is the powerful ideology that informs and shapes the religious organization and the community shaped by that ideology. When they leave, without this ideology in place, they experience “withdrawal” just like an addict.

Did Adventism fall into this category? I asked myself.

As one who has perhaps studied more thoroughly than others the phenomena of toxic social systems and addictive organizations, Anne Wilson Schaefer has conveniently gathered together the “symptoms” of such organizations.³ Typically, they operate with a closed system, a kind of “group-think” mentality, and seek to limit exposure to new information,

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Soon I found the United Church of Christ, an ecumenical Christian denomination which cherishes the right of each individual to discover their own theological path. Later, I also joined the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), another denomination that affirms personal autonomy, and today hold ordained ministerial standing in both these churches.

Within these new Christian communities, I began the long journey toward spiritual recovery and to finding an answer to the question, Is there life after Adventism? It is this issue that troubles many disillusioned Adventists and either keeps them within the Adventist church, albeit on the “fringes,” or prevents them from moving on into other religious bodies. Adventists are programmed to believe that any other religious community is somehow defective if not outright misleading. To wander into another faith community is to ally oneself with mystical Babylon, the

some cases, entire congregations have separated from Adventism. Prior to 1980, the church could boast about numerous conversions to it from other faiths; now it must humbly endure the opposite, as many abandon it for the friendlier environment of other religious communities.

What ought to be a time of deep soul searching on the part of the denomination has instead been one of smug indifference. Rather than inquiring into the reasons for these defections, Adventism has attempted to shore up the tattered remnants of its beleaguered doctrinal system—the cause of many of the departures—and go about business as usual.

What about those who leave? Where do they go? Do they find spiritual life somewhere outside Adventism? Is there life after Adventism?

IN MY OWN CASE, which I am going to refer to as an example of one person's

particularly if that new information challenges the long held principles of the organization. Such closed posture fosters a self-centeredness in which everything is perceived as either an attack or an affirmation of the self. Dishonesty emerges from this closed manner of operating. The organization commonly deceives itself, the people within it, and the world outside. Whatever the cost, it is tacitly assumed, control over the organization and its adherents must be maintained. Often this is done by fostering a false perfectionism, "always knowing the answers, being first with the solution, and never making a mistake." Finally, abusive organizations, at some point, frequently lapse into a coverup and subsequent ethical deterioration. Adherents are confronted with a sharp choice: go along with the dysfunction, that is, the coverup, or get out. "The addictive process attacks one's morality and deep spiritual values," notes Schaefer, "the addictive system invites us to compromise our personal morality by inviting us to engage in all the processes just described [closedness, self-centeredness; dishonesty; perfectionism; ethical compromise]."⁴

Amazingly, I recognized all the processes Schaefer listed. Every one of them had been living realities within the Adventism I knew. Does this mean Adventism is an addictive or abusive system? I have never been able finally to answer that question. As it presently exists, in my judgment, its inter-related, triumphalistic theology and authoritarian hierarchical government, predispose Adventism toward dysfunction.⁵ Its closedness to any theology outside its own and its reluctance to admit—humbly—its mistakes raise red flags, warning of the potential for spiritual abuse. Being an Adventist, particularly in the 1980s, had become a source of deep emotional and spiritual pain for me and for many other people. For me, the Adventist church had become an irritant rather than a solace. My existence within it over the last ten years of my association had been literally one of terrible personal agony. For me, it had become abusive. Sadly, that was the only way I knew how

to put it. Schaefer's words became prophetic for me. Burdened with a "sense of moral exhaustion and deterioration," she writes, "they [members of the organization] decided they could not change the company ... but they could take responsibility for their own lives. Most left the organizations."⁶

When I began to realize that anger, rooted in deep hurt, initially came when one left Adventism, and that some of the dynamics commonly found in abusive spiritual systems applied, I took the first giant step toward recovery. "Withdrawal pains" lingered for some time, but gradually lessened as I have been able to

rebuild my life. Time, perhaps, does heal all wounds.

SINCE I HAD BECOME an Adventist because of its theology, more difficult for me was the struggle to come to terms with distinctive Adventist doctrines such as the Sabbath, the remnant church, Ellen White, and Adventist eschatology, or teaching about end-time events that tended to define the church. Freed from the restraints of the Adventist system, harbored in a Christian community where one was encouraged to think for oneself, I discovered precisely the environment I needed to rethink and reframe my Adventist belief. Taught not to question, even the idea of rethinking is scary for the former Adventist. When one realizes that truth needs no defense, however, that questioning is wholesome and natural in faith development, it becomes easier to take a closer look at what Adventism teaches. I decided to take Paul's counsel literally with reference to my Adventist background: "Test everything; hold fast to what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).⁷ I realized I had to come to terms with the major

Adventist doctrines if I was ever going to find spiritual recovery.

So I decided to apply to Adventist teachings the same rigorous hermeneutical criteria I had learned while studying at Vanderbilt University for my Ph.D. in Old Testament. These distinctive Adventist teachings, under this scrutiny, it quickly became evident, wouldn't hold up.

A close reading of the New Testament showed me that Adventists have greatly overstated their case for the seventh-day Sabbath. This is perhaps the most "sacred" of all the Adventist doctrines. But the New Testament nowhere demands that Christians observe the sev-

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enth-day Sabbath. Nowhere does the New Testament explicitly make this a sign of Christian allegiance, as Adventism teaches. True, some Christians—perhaps even most—observed the Sabbath in the New Testament period, at least those from a Jewish background. Out in the Greco-Roman world, in Paul's churches, another custom seems also to have been emerging. "Do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ" (Col. 2:16-17, author's translation).⁸ For these Gentile Christians, Colossians suggests, the Sabbath was merely an option, not a requirement. Discovery of this simple fact undermined for me the entire emphasis Adventism gives to the Sabbath. I realized that Adventist teaching went far beyond the New Testament in insisting on the Sabbath as obligatory for every Christian.⁹ As a Christian, one is welcome to observe the seventh-day Sabbath, but not to make it a test of fellowship for other Christians (see Rom. 14:5-6).

As far as the Adventist claim to be the remnant, or “true” church, I began to realize this notion had been so embellished by Adventist tradition over the years that it had literally enveloped the whole of its theology and polity, giving it the aura of infallibility. This is the source of the hidden premise that Adventism has made few, if any, mistakes theologically or in polity. Because it assumes it is the true church, how could Adventism be misinformed in

ology, White’s role in the theological process greatly diminished.¹¹ I started looking more and more to the Bible for guidance.

Finally, given these conclusions, I was compelled to revise my understanding of Adventist eschatology. I did not see anywhere in the Bible the idea the final test of the ages will be the Sabbath. Obviously, if the New Testament tends to regard the Sabbath as optional or a non-issue, it can-

linger around it merely “feeds” the addiction, slowing down recovery. Once a person has decided to leave, it is best to do so completely, “cold turkey,” so to speak. True, the denomination may someday change, grow kinder, more compassionate, but probably not in the lifetime of anyone living. To cling to a false hope only prolongs the agony. It is better to move on, putting the past behind.

Move on? To where?

I resisted trying to “go it alone,” in isolation from other Christians. A variety of options exist for former Adventists looking for a nurturing Christian community in which to grow in faith and spirit. I determined to find these.

A number of independent fellowships, many of them spinoffs from Adventism, have formed. Some of these today are called Former Adventist Fellowships.¹⁴ These focus on prayer support and Bible study, helping those within them re-think their Adventist orientation. Unfortunately for me in 1991, the Former Adventist Fellowships were not in existence.

Evangelical churches often welcome refugees from Adventism, I realized. Such denominations as the Evangelical Free Church, Calvary Chapels, Grace Brethren, Presbyterian Church of America, Reformed Church in America, Christian Reformed Church, and Seventh-day Baptist, have opened their doors to people departing from Adventism.¹⁵

Mainstream denominations often present an array of diversity that is strange and intimidating to a recovering Adventist, but that very diversity means that an individual is free to explore and develop their own views of theological questions. One can be a “conservative,” a “moderate,” or a “liberal” Christian—or anything in between—and still participate fully in the life of the faith community. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), for example, only asks that members accept Jesus as Savior and Lord. There are no other doctrinal requirements. In such an environment, one may find the security to grow and develop spiritually and theologically.

A list of Mainstream denominations could include the Episcopal, United

My experience taught me that, once a person has realized they must move on, they should not linger around the fringes of Adventism.

theology or in structure? I turned once more to re-examine the basis of Adventism’s claim, namely, that it is the “remnant” of Revelation 12 and 14. Again, I discovered this contention rests upon a strained interpretation of these two passages, and that there is actually no biblical basis for the Adventist claim to be a reforming movement in the last days, nor is there any justification for holding that other contemporary religious bodies are to be identified as “Babylon.”¹⁰

Ellen White, in my mind, had already been severely compromised by her secretive borrowing of contemporary writers and her denial of this borrowing. Such cribbing, which I wouldn’t tolerate in student papers, seemed to undermine the moral appeal of her writings. I found myself forced to fall back upon Paul’s advice relative to the prophets in the early church: “Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good” (1 Thess. 5:19-21). From henceforth, because I could not rely upon Ellen White’s honesty, I would have to “test” each statement she made upon its own merits, and discard or hold onto it, depending upon the results. That meant I could no longer rely upon Ellen White’s authority, but could accept her counsel only when it correlated with other criteria. Using such method-

not be the final test of the human race, I reasoned. The mark of the beast, furthermore, had nothing to do with the Sabbath/Sunday dispute. Such an interpretation rests solely upon Adventism’s peculiar reading of Revelation 13, which ignores the ambiguity inherent in the passage.¹²

This re-examination of Adventist theology, indicated here only in brief, took a number of years and was a very painful re-orientation for me, but necessary if I were going to be able to move beyond it into the larger Christian world.

REALIZING I COULD NOT go back to Adventism, not merely because it had forced me from its ministry, but also now because I could no longer subscribe to several of its key teachings, I asked myself, Where should I go? I was still a Christian. My religious experience was really now stronger and more virile than it had ever been. I wanted to keep it that way, and thus to find a suitable faith community where that would be welcomed, supported, and affirmed.

My experience taught me that, once a person has realized they must move on, they should not linger around the fringes of Adventism. Again, the language of addiction applied.¹³ If Adventism exhibits the processes of an addictive system, to

Methodist, Presbyterian (U.S.A.), Evangelical Lutheran, United Church of Christ, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and American Baptist churches. And there are others. In these churches, while theologically generally more liberal than Adventism, there is considerable latitude and tolerance for the development and expression of one's own views. I found an excellent spiritual home in the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Whatever alternative the recovering Adventist may find best, I came to realize, it is important to be in community with other Christians. There, surrounded by loving Christians who accept people as they are, one may begin, not only to find life after Adventism, but to experience it to its fullest.

"HAVE YOU FULLY GOTTEN all the Adventism out of your system?" Alice's question jerked me back to reality and made me forget, for the moment, all that painful journey. I paused for a second, then smiled, thinking of the peace and happiness that were now mine, and replied, "Yes, I think I truly have. At least, I've been able to leave the 'bad' parts behind, and hold onto the good."

There is life after Adventism!

[Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992], pp. ix, x). We might compare the alcoholic. Few alcoholics will admit to a problem. And it is often only after the abuse has become intolerable that the victim of domestic abuse will admit the problem is real and seek help.

⁶ Addictive Organization, p. 209.

⁷ All Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission.

⁸ The use of the formula, annual, monthly, weekly, in this text means that the seventh-day Sabbath is included in the stricture. Observance of the annual festivals of Judaism, or the monthly celebration of the New Moon, or the weekly observance of the Sabbath, is not to be insisted upon, says the text. For use of this formula, see 2 Chron. 8:13; Hos. 2:11. Hosea 2:11 is most instructive. The Hebrew in this passage literally reads: "I will cause to cease all her mirth, her festival [annual], her new moon [monthly], and her sabbath [weekly], that is, all her appointed festivals" (author's translation [v. 13 in Hebrew]). There can be little doubt in this passage the weekly, seventh-day Sabbath is included. Such a formula provides the background for Colossians 2:16.

⁹ For further study from an alternative perspective to Adventism, see D. A. Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical and Theological*

rather suggestive in declaring her "seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated" (Rev. 17:9). Ancient Rome was said to be built upon seven hills, and was the archpersecutor of the saints (17:6). A first-century reader of Revelation would have had no doubt that the city of Rome was what was being depicted as "Babylon the great, mother of whores and of earth's abominations" (v. 5). Early Adventists defensively applied this symbolism to those churches that had resisted the Millerite movement, but it has no basis in fact.

¹¹ I will not try to unravel the enigma of Ellen White here. From a scientific point of view, the best explanation of her is that she suffered from partial complex seizures, but because she is no longer around for examination, that must forever remain only a hypothesis. See Delbert H. Hodder, "Visions or Partial-Complex Seizures?" *Evangelica* (November 1981), pp. 30-37. Interestingly, John Harvey Kellogg, who knew White personally, was once asked what he thought of Ellen White's visions. "It is my belief," he replied, "that her condition while in vision was that of catalepsy" (John Harvey Kellogg, Letter to R. B. Tower, 3 March 1933). Catalepsy is a condition generally associated with schizophrenia in which the muscles become rigid and the arms and legs remain in any position in which that are put. Both Hodder and Kellogg suggest a psychiatric explanation for Ellen White rather than a theological one. Pragmatically, the best approach seems to be that of examining her statements as one would that any other writer.

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Investigation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982); Dale Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Crisis*, Rev. ed. (Glendale, AZ: Life Assurance Ministries, 1995). Of these two studies, that of Ratzlaff is more accessible to the average reader.

¹⁰ Neither Revelation 12 nor 14 clearly establish the identity of either the "woman" or the "three angels." Nor do these chapters define the content of the "commandments," or fill in the meaning of the "testimony of Jesus," all key ingredients in the Adventist claim. No one reading these chapters, unbiased by the Adventist claims, would ever reach the conclusion that they are talking about a movement arising in or around 1844 and constituting the last, true manifestation of the church. This interpretation has been read into these chapters, in part to provide a "biblical" basis for the Adventist claim. One should keep in mind that abusive churches tend to see themselves as special (Enroth, *Churches That Abuse*, pp. 111-24). As for the identity of "Babylon," the text is

¹² For proof of this statement, the reader may consult almost any standard commentary on the Book of Revelation, e.g., J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, Anchor Bible 38 (New York: Doubleday, 1975), pp. 217-30. The writer of Revelation clothed his message so enigmatically, Ford suggests, because "the warning had to be given in such a way as to obscure its meaning for the pagans into whose hands the Book of Revelation might fall" (p. 227).

¹³ See Leo Booth, *When God Becomes a Drug*.

¹⁴ See the Former Adventist Fellowship Website: www.FormerAdventist.com.

¹⁵ A handy guidebook, describing the beliefs and polity of these and most other denominations mentioned here and below, is Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 10th ed., rev. Samuel S. Hill (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995).

¹ (Glendale, AZ: Life Assurance Ministries, 2000).

² Some recent studies in this area include: Leo Booth, *When God Becomes a Drug: Breaking the Chains of Religious Addiction & Abuse* (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1991); Earnie Larsen and Janice Parnegg, *Recovering Catholics: What to do When Religion Comes Between You and God* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1992); Stephen Arterburn and Jack Felton, *Toxic Faith: Understanding and Overcoming Religious Addiction* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991).

³ Anne Wilson Schaef and Diane Fassel, *The Addictive Organization* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), *passim*.

⁴ Addictive Organization, pp. 64, 67.

⁵ Adventists will obviously disagree. Ronald Enroth points out that the proof of abuse on the part of churches may only be found in the actual experiences of people who have encountered it. Few people within these churches will admit to the abuse, and "it is not always possible to 'get through' to people already caught up in abusive churches. They do not see themselves as being manipulated, or in any danger of spiritual abuse" (*Churches That Abuse*

You are doing the work of your father—the devil. Keep it up and you will have your part in the Lake of Fire. The blood of souls will be required of you.

Praise God for the peace we have received from the information written in your book. Finally, the picture is complete!

Recently I received a copy of your magazine, Proclamation. I enjoyed it very much. Keep me on your mailing list.

I am just dropping you a note to thank you for sending me the Jan-Feb 2001 issue of your magazine. I have found it to be well written and helpful. The articles on Fender Benders and Hermeneutics are written at a level that I can appreciate. They are not the drivel that I have seen in some Christian magazines, but are substantive and informative... I have read both of your books, listened to your tapes on the Law, and was impressed with your apparent love for the Lord, His Word and your fellow believers. Even when ____ started coming across in a pompous manner you continued in a kind and gracious manner, one that I wish I could emulate.

Who or whatever gave you the mistaken idea that we had time to read your drivel? I did not ask for it and no member of our family could be so deranged as to think we'd like it. I feel pity along with anger at your nerve to try to indoctrinate others with your sick lies. You can keep sending it—I don't care. It'll make good material to start my fireplace with. I wouldn't waste my precious time. Have you considered this? You will have to give account of all the dirty lies you've told in God's judgment. May the Lord have mercy on your soul. (From a SDA teacher)

Nice talking with you on the phone. Here is my check for the two books. We will be supporting you each month with a \$____ donation. Hang tough, my brother, and God will continue to bless. (From a SDA pastor.)

Please remove our names from your Proclamation journal. We are sorry that you have departed from the truth. You need to read Isa. 8:20. Your false and critical teachings should be destroyed. The books you are presenting are all written by off-shoot people who are unhappy

with themselves and want attention. We pay that you will change your thinking and writing before it is too late.

I just received Proclamation. I'm an exSDA and have not been in church for years. Your magazine came as an answer to prayer.

I have made the decision to leave the SDA Church but am struggling with telling my friends and family members who are still very much in the church. I do not attend church because we are in ... so my friends assume that is why. However, I feel like I am hiding my true feelings and beliefs in order to keep peace and not have to deal with their shock and/or rejection. I know you have helped many people through this transition. Do you have any advice on how I should handle this in a godly way. I am concerned that I will be a stumbling block to them to the point that from the moment I tell them I am no longer a SDA they will not hear anything I have to say about spiritual matters. If they think I am still a SDA believer, they are then open to have discussions on such things as healing, the Holy Spirit, prayer and other unfamiliar topics. I will continue to pray about it, but I am finding that this duplicitous life is causing me stress and pain. Any words of guidance you may have would be very welcome. My husband and I want to have open dialogue with our friends and family, but we have found that when they find we have "studied our way out of the church" and no longer believe EGW was inspired, they shut down so drastically that any searching discussion is like throwing pearls before swine. It's difficult. Thank you for your ministry. As a former Adventist, I can attest to the lost feeling that accompanies this new life. In your Oct/Nov 2000 issue of Proclamation you listed several questions former Adventists ask. I, too, harbor all those questions inside of me. Have you published answers to these questions in a similar, concise format? God bless you as you continue in your calling. I hope to one day have the complete peace that you do about your decision. I believe God has led me out of the church, but it is taking time to get rid of the "tapes" and the guilty/fearful feelings that go with them.

Please take my name off your mailing list, and don't sow tares among the wheat. You will not succeed, and further more, let me tell you something prophetic. Your ministry will crumble and

fall down as the walls of Jericho before the eyes of the Adventists whom you detest.

Thank you very much for what you do. Your books have made studying SDA issues so much easier. I have asked for my name to be removed from the SDA membership. I ask your prayers as I come from a very active traditional SDA family. They do not want to know the truth and are, of course, deeply disappointed. I have questioned the SDA church my whole life. Thank God that there are answers to my questions that are easier to obtain. Keep up the good work.

I have just learned of the various former-SDA web sites. I was raised a SDA and attended their schools in California and Arizona. I had a lot of problems in life because of my upbringing and was a rebel and an angry young man. Finally in the mid-70s I learned of Grace and it completely changed my life. It was the most important discovery of my life! Now I am a champion of the message of God's Grace!

Proclamation arrived in my mailbox without request. What a sad, sad issue it is. All criticism, which is not inspired by God. Satan is the author of criticism and lies. It appears you have lost contact with a loving God, and have joined forces with Satan who is desperately trying to tear down God's remnant church, and anyone else he can deceive. What a waste of time, effort and expense...

I'm a fourth generation "Former"! I've been out for about 10 years. And I've been a Christian for about 8 years now. A year ago I found FAF on the web. I was so thrilled to know there were other formers out there... I speak to Colleen Tinker about once a month and she's become a dear friend... Well, our small group of about six regular attendees has been meeting once a month for a few months now. What a blessing it is! We call ourselves FAF also.

I don't know if you are the Dale Ratzlaff that had to leave Monterey Bay Academy for playing games with the devil. But your current work shows that you are now in partnership with him. You are fulfilling Christ's prophecy of false teachers and if you do not change I fear you will be held accountable for teaching error and for the lives of those who follow after you. Please take

our name off your mailing list... It would be better to have no spirit at all than to have the wrong one which your magazine and teaching shows. (Note: I was voted teacher of the year, the year I voluntarily left MBA to pastor a neighboring SDA church. I know of no Dale Ratzlaff that had to leave Monterey bay Academy nor one that played games with the devil.—not me!)

Thanks for Proclamation. Dale's books on Cultic Doctrine of SDA and Sabbath in Crisis have been so helpful to many. We resigned from the SDA several years ago and find so much joy as we worship with all who believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The seven last plagues are awaiting you. Go to hell. Get thee behind me Satan.

...Did you know that you are not the first to believe that the Sabbath is not relevant. "Cain and his descendants did not respect the day upon which God had rested." "They chose their own time for labor and rest, regardless of Jehovah's express command"... I hope you will all take a second look at what you're doing and come back to God way, it's the only way.

Dale, some years ago someone sent your book, Cultic Doctrine of SDAs. At first I didn't want

it. After I read some of it I was glad that someone thought enough of me to send it to me. My first impression was to put it in the trash, but as I was mending from surgery, I had nothing else to do so I started to read it. I didn't believe what I was reading until I saw the quote from EGW, Early Writings, about the day and hour of Jesus coming, I said, "I think I have that book in my garage." Sure enough, I did and found what you were talking about. That started this [my study] I am so grateful for you and the person who sent me that book. Since then I have found about 100 comments that EGW made that are in contrast to the Bible or out and out lies. Thank God for you and those that are about telling the truth. Keep up the good work. Let me know what I can do to help.

Dale, there is not even any sense in talking to you. Your sole purpose behind all of this is to attack people who love God. You are not soul winning, you are destroying. Ellen White said that God gave her light for a small remnant to point out that the 2300 year prophecy was correct. You cannot prove that Jesus was or was not physically in the most Holy or the Holy place. His work is in the ENTIRE SANCTUARY as our High Priest. Because His ministration took place in the Holy place, it obviously involves the Most Holy since that is where the presence of God is. His ministra-

tion was in the Holy place from Adam until He returns again. In 1844 He went into the Most Holy to perform the Judgment for all those who will be saved (for the first time) and he continued His work in the Holy place. You make a big issue of attacking statements about the Holy and Most Holy places with such a narrow human viewpoint. You attack God's people by twisting simple statements. God is in the entire Sanctuary all the time and we cannot comprehend His ministry. Hebrews 9:12 refers to the entire Sanctuary NOT the Most Holy. God gave Ellen White pictures so that His people would have a concept of the work going on in Heaven and you have no right picking it apart. You are in dangerous ground, my friend. What I say to you is wasting my breath as better men than I have tried to straighten you out. I pray that you will get your life together and find yourself before it is too late.

(From a SDA pastor)

Mail letters and donations to:

**Life Assurance Ministries
PO Box 11587
Glendale, AZ 85318**

An Adventist pastor writes: CONTINUED FROM BACK PAGE

ing up my SDA faith and its accompanying lifestyle/culture/friendships/work/identity. What I realized was that changing my life is not as easy as changing my clothes. And it has already begun. ...my wife, an honest, committed believer in Christ, ...is sympathetic but she is on her own journey and is also deeply involved in our local church. She has stated that she will go with me in a new direction if I can prove from scripture my newfound belief about the Sabbath in Christ. There is more at stake... We pray earnestly and talk often about ____ spiritual and formal education in SDA schools given our divergent views from the church, let alone this one about the Sabbath in Christ. All of... friends are SDA. ...[He goes on to describe his full involvement with SDA ministry] they are my brothers and sisters in Christ and know and love Jesus and try to follow

him to the best of their ability. They gave me a place to belong and a place to do ministry... I am a respected, trusted minister with heavy responsibilities in my SDA community. I am deeply rooted in every conceivable way in my SDA life with the exception of my theology. But I can't see myself living in this constant tension indefinitely. I no longer count myself as a Seventh-day Adventist. I am a child of God, a member of the mystical body of Christ, and I desire to be led by the Spirit into the direction Jesus wants me to go regardless of my present circumstances. I know that God will not abandon me. But I know Adventists. You are either in or out. Some are "in" while emotionally and even theologically "out" but they do it by covering their real identity. I can't do that. I once thought that I could serve God as an agent of His grace in the SDA

world. This weekend changed that thinking. I can undoubtedly be an agent of grace and change, but I can't see doing it from inside the walls. The doctrine and culture and longtime deeply ingrained a priori assumptions that guide Adventism prevent it from changing. If anything, it is getting more entrenched due to its xenophobic reaction to the outside influences of Evangelicalism and its own numeric growth in fundamentalist third world membership. But you know all that. And you went on your own journey at great cost as I have heard from ____ Everyone's journey is different in some ways, but I left... praying for guidance from God as to how to navigate through to a new life and ministry in harmony with my newfound beliefs and my desire to serve Jesus and be led by the Spirit. Could we get together sometime, somehow, and talk?

An Adventist pastor writes:

(Note: the following letter is edited to give this SDA pastor anonymity. It is, however, typical of a number of communications I have with currently employed SDA pastors. You can feel the deep struggle he is going through. Please pray for this pastor and many more like him.)

Dear Dale,

...I also want to update you on my progress since receiving your two books, *Sabbath in Crisis* and *Cultic Doctrine*. I devoured the first one and have scanned the second. My life is very busy, but I took every spare second I could to read *Sabbath in Crisis*. I have a good friend and great brother in Christ, _____, with whom you are acquainted, I believe, and to whom you have sent books, also. I want to avoid speaking for him, but I will reference

son I am going into so much detail is because my life has been changed; my new belief about the Sabbath and its fulfillment in Christ was born ... I will never be the same. I have found joy and understanding and freedom in Christ regarding the Sabbath. I want you to know that I deeply appreciate your work in writing the theological treatises which have impacted me deeply, so deeply and profoundly, that I have been challenged by the Holy Spirit to turn my entire allegiance and ministry over to him instead of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I also need guidance about how to proceed from here... Let me explain. This weekend of reading, and praying, and conversing with ... has been pivotal. I shared how one by one, my belief in the "unique" aspects of SDA faith has been

wondered how God could want us to keep the 10 (or even at best reduce them to "love God...and your neighbor as yourself") when statements in Romans and Galatians revealed that we are no longer under law but under grace. All the attempts by our church to keep these two concepts of law and grace married have required a continual effort, like shaking oil and water together, to somehow create an illusion that they really do blend in the Christian's life. The best I ever heard on that was ... , but his theology of "doing right because it is right" falls short of the New Testament emphasis on following Jesus' commands and being led by the Holy Spirit. It is also heavily dependent on Ellen White, who I now view as no more authoritative than me or you or whoever makes theological statements that have to be compared to the Bible for validity. I have now come to see that she was part and parcel of the early creation of SDA doctrine, and without her, I doubt the early group of Adventists would have grown into the vast cultic juggernaut it is today. Keeping her firmly seated on the throne of authority in interpreting the Bible is all important, because her authority is required in keeping all of our "unique" beliefs chained together. I see now that if one falls, they all fall. For me, they have fallen. But I am still deeply ensconced in Adventist culture and life because of my work and daily life. I am in a dilemma. I need some guidance. The gospel always frees people but also requires they make a choice to fully devote one's life to Jesus instead of whatever dependence, however benign.

I was confronted by that dilemma this weekend. My life is at a crossroads. ... gave us his Sunday afternoon to study together about these issues, a blessing for us and a gift by the Holy Spirit. At one point, towards the end of our time together, I began to feel deep grief over the possibility of giv-

I am a respected, trusted minister with heavy responsibilities in my SDA community.

our interactions and the running conversation we have held for the last ... months since I, ... visited him and his family... At that time we both, without realizing the other was on the same identical journey, articulated our feelings of doubt about the Sabbath as we have long understood it as Seventh-day Adventist pastors and believers. I didn't know he had purchased your books. He shared his copy of *Sabbath in Crisis* with me during that weekend. I read some of it, then came home and ordered my own copy, as you know. Over the next ... months we conversed frequently by phone and email, sharing our new discoveries and testing arguments pro and con. He sent me Clay Peck's information and told me he had a set of cassettes by Richard Fredericks, entitled "Sabbath in Christ." He also revealed that a handful of his pastoral friends in ... were on the same journey... The rea-

losing its meaning to me over the years. Ellen White's authority, the Investigative Judgment, Adventist eschatology, the Remnant, the Sabbath as a testing truth in the time of the end, and the Old Testament basis for the health message—all have fallen by the wayside for me over the last few years because I couldn't find them in agreement with the Bible. The only thing remaining was the Sabbath as a rule of faith and eternal requirement of God with its related and all important belief that the 10 commandments are still binding.

As we read more passages from *Sabbath in Crisis*, Peck's materials, and listened to Richard's "Sabbath in Christ" tapes. ... , I began to see that there was a problem with trying to fit the 10 commandments into a faith relationship with Jesus Christ as my only source of salvation. It has always been a source of confusion for me. I have always

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