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FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS

The human spirit: Breath or core identity?

COLLEEN TINKER

My teacher's simple sentence contained a powerful doctrine—the human spirit is simply breath—that helped set me apart from “apostate Protestants” and protected me from deception.

“Body plus breath equals living soul,” intoned my junior high Bible teacher as he wrote the equation on the blackboard. I was in the seventh grade, and I felt smug as I stared at the concise formula which echoed Genesis 2:7 (KJV): “And the Lord God formed the man

from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” My teacher’s

simple sentence contained a powerful doctrine—the human spirit is simply breath—that helped set me apart from “apostate Protestants” and protected me from deception. This doctrine more than any other shaped my worldview.

Because of this defining “truth,” I was certain of several things. For example, I understood that the

word “soul” was a poetic reference to “a person” or perhaps to his personality. A “living soul” was simply someone who hadn’t died yet. Furthermore, when people died, their souls slept; in other words, nothing of them remained except a memory in the mind of God. Their bodies went into the ground, and their spirit (breath) returned to the Creator. Because of this belief, I could be certain that no dead relative might come back to deceive me into spiritualism. Any potential specter I might see would certainly be a demon, not Grandpa. Further, I was told repeatedly that this belief was a great comfort; because nothing remained of my dead loved ones, they wouldn’t know about my persistent disobedience and suffering. (I always doubted the comfort of this doctrine; I sometimes wished those who died could be with Jesus even if they did learn all my secrets, but I quickly suppressed this longing as a dangerous temptation.)

These were the things I knew as a twelve-year old. As I got older, however, I realized this belief in “spirit equals breath” had implications for the nature of Jesus and of sin as well. Jesus, I was told, was

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Colleen Tinker is editor of *Proclamation!* Previously she taught high school English and edited various other publications. In 1994 she and her husband Richard began four years of intensive Bible study and research, and they finally realized they could no longer support the unbiblical doctrines of Adventism. Since 1998 they and their two sons have attended Trinity Evangelical Free Church in Redlands, California. Today they rejoice in Jesus’ unending Sabbath rest that keeps their hearts safe even in storms.

Life Assurance Ministries, Inc

MISSION

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

MOTTO

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

MESSAGE

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not of works, that no one should boast.” Ephesians 2:8,9

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Letter to Former Adventists

CRISTINE COLE
COPY EDITOR



Did you know that the apostle Paul wrote a letter especially to us “Former Adventists”? That letter is Colossians. OK, I know he also wrote Romans, Galatians, and his other letters to us, but I am studying Colossians right now, and Paul addresses issues Adventists struggle with! I would like to share with you some of the things I’ve been learning and how they have related to my own spiritual journey.

First, Paul wants to make sure we realize the truth of who Christ is. In the first two chapters, he lists some of the characteristics of Christ: He is the image of the invisible God and all the fullness of the Deity dwells in Him (there should be no question that Christ is God); He is the beginning; He created all

What a relief it is to know that my works are not needed to qualify me to be His.

things for Himself; He holds all things together; He is the head of His body, the church; He is the first-born from the dead; He disarmed and triumphed over Satan; and Christ Himself is the gospel.

Next, Paul wants us to know what amazing things Christ has already done for us. Again in the first two chapters he goes through the list: when we were dead in our sins, He made us alive together with Him; He forgave all our sins; He canceled out the debt consisting of decrees against us and nailed it to the cross; He has redeemed us; He has reconciled us to Himself; He has raised us up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead; He presents us to God holy and blameless and beyond reproach; He lives in us and is our hope of glory.

As I go through these lists, it overwhelms me to realize that in Christ I am lacking nothing! What a relief it is to know that my works are not needed to qualify me to be His. Instead, Paul declares not once, but twice, that in Christ I have been made complete. Looking back on my journey out of Seventh-day Adventism, I can see that the turning point for me was when I started to understand the gospel—who Christ really is and what He has already done for me. Until I came to that understanding, I saw no need to change my way of thinking or my beliefs. It was only when I grasped how complete I am in Christ that my heart became open to listen to the truths from

the Bible. And the truth is what Paul addresses next in Colossians.

In chapter 2 he is very concerned that we not be deluded with “persuasive argument.” Hmm. Growing up, I had been urged to read and memorize passages from Ellen White’s books that supported our “unique” Adventist beliefs—beliefs that tied our salvation to what we ate or on what day we worshiped. Paul, as if knowing I was going to read this, follows with this warning in Col 2:16: “Let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day.” Yes, diet and the Sabbath—the two “biggies” in Adventism, and very much a part of the Old Covenant. So, why aren’t we to be judged about what we eat or on which day we worship? The answer is in verse 17: they “are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.” Here, Paul draws us back to Christ. He is the center of everything we do; He is what all the rituals pointed to.

So, then, the question that always follows is this: If we don’t have to live under the old rules and regulations of the Old Covenant, how are we supposed to live as Christians? Again, Paul anticipated that question because he says in Col 1:10, “Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” He adds in Col 2:6, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.” I am finding that as I contemplate the completed work that Christ has done for all of us, my response is thankfulness and a desire to live my life in a manner that would please our awesome God.

These are just a few of the things I have learned from the first two chapters of Colossians. I urge you to read Colossians for yourself and see what Christ wants to teach you!

Once again, Colleen Tinker has put together an inspiring issue for you. Featured in our Faith Story column is Jim Muffo. He will share how he has found Christ and today is overwhelmed at knowing Him! Chris Badenhorst analyses Adventism and explains why it cannot be evangelical. Richard Goyne compares Adventists’ view of biblical inspiration with their belief in Ellen White’s inspiration. Colleen writes about the spirit—is it merely breath? And my good friend, Jan Mace, shares her personal story of how God took her shattered dream for her son and turned it into something more wonderful.

It is our prayer that as you read these articles, your relationship with Christ will grow, prompting you to live a life worthy of our incomparable God!

Proclamation!

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LOVE greater than my

GUILT

JIM MUFFO

I was born and raised in a contemporary Historic Adventist home. My dad was a pastor for almost 20 years, and my mom's brother was a union conference official.

Ellen G. White was a force to be reckoned with in our home. Dad had many of her books in his library, and none of them collected much dust. My parents studied her writings as diligently as the Bible itself and read from them regularly in our morning and evening family worships. I was taught that Ellen White was a true prophet of God and that every word of her writings was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Anyone who questioned her writings was literally rejecting God Himself.

I was taught that only those who faithfully keep the 10 Commandments (especially the fourth) will be saved. I learned that those who kept the Sabbath would earn the seal of God, while those who kept Sunday would earn the mark of the beast. I was further taught that only those who have become perfect by the time Jesus returns will be saved. All others will be forever lost. The angels, I learned, keep a day-by-day record of every sin I commit. If I fail to remember, confess, and ask forgiveness for even one of those sins, I will most certainly be "burned up" when Jesus returns. Moreover, if there is even one unconfessed sin in my life, God will not hear my prayers; they won't even reach the ceiling.

As a child, I was deeply frustrated by these beliefs. Why did God insist that I become perfect before asking for His help? Why did I have to become perfect before

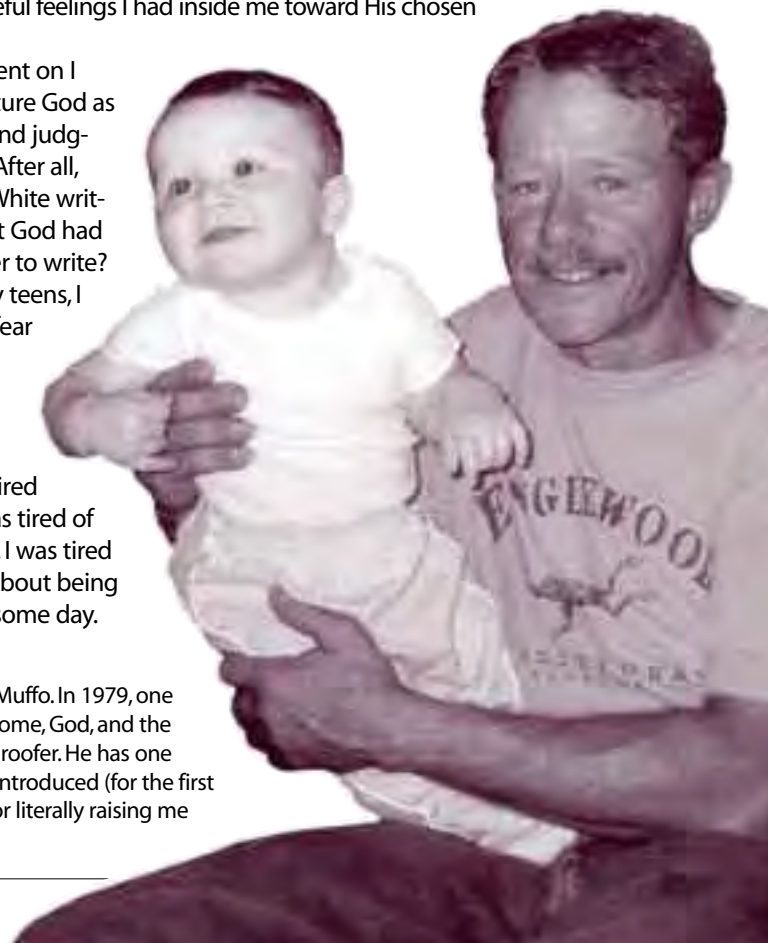
He would hear my prayers? I tried as hard as I could to do everything right. I tried to love and please Him. I tried to be perfect for Him. But time after time I failed.

Ellen White condemned everything from playing sports to riding bicycles to collecting family pictures. She came across as stern and judgmental. Even her pictures portrayed her as an unhappy, miserable woman. Inwardly I despised her, although I still believed she was a true prophet of God. I feared that He was really going to "let me have it" someday for these spiteful feelings I had inside me toward His chosen messenger.

As time went on I began to picture God as being stern and judgmental, also. After all, hadn't Ellen White written only what God had impressed her to write?

During my teens, I drifted from fear of God to indifference toward Him. I was tired of trying. I was tired of failing. I was tired of feeling guilty. I was tired of worrying about being "burned up" some day.

Jim Muffo was a "preacher's kid" born in Menominee, Michigan, to Paul and Evelyn Muffo. In 1979, one year after graduating from Andrews Academy in Berrien Springs, Michigan, he left home, God, and the Adventist church. Today he lives in South Bend, Indiana, and works as a journeyman roofer. He has one son. "The greatest event in my life," he writes, "occurred in August, 2003, when I was introduced (for the first time in my life) to my personal Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I thank Him every day for literally raising me from the dead." He is pictured with his baby granddaughter Bryana.



By the time I was 19, all my previous feelings of fear, guilt, and failure exploded into full-blown rebellion against God. I gave up trying and dived headlong into the world and all its allurements. Suddenly I was accepted; I was OK. Suddenly I didn't feel guilty anymore!

I ran as hard and as fast as I could away from God. I told Him to leave me alone and to stay out of my life from then on. I was convinced that I was already lost, and I determined to enjoy the rest of my life to the fullest. I would worry about hell later.

I spent the next 30 years living in total separation from God. I worried only about pleasing myself, and I became addicted to tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and sexual immorality. I walked away from my wife and ten-year-old son.

There were a few times during those 30 years when I felt an urge to return to Christianity, but I quickly dismissed the thought. My anger toward God escalated to outright hatred of Him. I despised Him for making salvation so difficult to attain. How could I possibly remember every sin I'd ever committed? By now there were mountains of them! How could I ever dredge up the money to pay all my back tithe? What if my name had already come up in the investigative judgment? If it had, my fate was sealed. If it hadn't, I was doomed anyway. After all, I had to become perfect before God would even hear my prayers. I was resigned to the "fact" that there must certainly be a spot reserved especially for me in hell.

Awakening

In August, 2003, while I was driving home from work one day, out of nowhere Proverbs 22:6 popped into my mind: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

I knew that Mom had been praying for me every day until her death in August, 2000. I knew that Dad was still praying for me every day. Mom often quoted this verse as her reason for believing that God would answer her prayers for me to return to Him.

I said out loud, "God, please answer Mom and Dad's prayers." Within minutes, the thought passed, and I forgot all about the incident.

A couple of weeks later I ran across the Life Assurance Ministries website by pure accident. I also followed the link to FormerAdventist.com. At first I was skeptical. I remembered being taught as a child that in the last days, many would fall away from the remnant (Seventh-day Adventist) church and would be deceived and drawn into "Babylon."

As I read the stories and testimonies of former Adventists, a spark of hope was ignited within me. Could it be possible that Ellen White was not a true prophet of God? Could it be possible that God still loved me and wanted to save me? I kept reading; this was too good to be true!

I ordered six books from Life Assurance Ministries and began devouring the contents. I was reading verses from the Bible I had

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never heard in all my life—verses such as Colossians 2:16; Romans 14:5; Galatians 4:21-26, and 1 Timothy 4:3-5. I bought a Bible to check those verses and confirm that they were really there—and they were! I discovered that Ellen White failed the tests of a true prophet and that at best she should be considered nothing more than a successful writer. This discovery was staggering at first. I didn't realize what all was involved in her "de-throning."

The path back to God was being cleared as the heresies fell away from the truth. My hatred of and anger toward God melted away. I saw for the first time in my life that the debt of those mountains of sins I'd committed had already been paid in full, and that if I believed and put all my trust in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, I would be judged in Christ as worthy to spend eternity with

Him. I couldn't believe that it could be this simple!

For the first time in 30 years, I began praying and studying His Word again. I began hungering for truth like never before in my life. I began loving Jesus as I never had before. I've realized that God has always been right there behind me, no matter how hard I've tried to run away from Him.

He loved me just as much when I cursed and hated Him as when I blessed Him. He never changes. Praise God! Salvation is by His grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ alone—and nothing more!

This is more than just good news. He is my Heavenly Father, and I am His adopted son. He wants what is best for me, and all I have to "do" is submit my will to Him and be willing to let Him do His will in my life.

My relationship with Jesus has become a day-by-day, hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute choice of who is in control: He or I. The miracles He has already worked in the inner me are just as glorious as when He physically raised Lazarus from the dead.

My mind was once a toxic waste dump. Praise God, He is taking out the trash bag-by-bag, thought-by-thought. The anger that has lived inside me my whole life has virtually disappeared. Each day I realize more and more just how much I need Him. The moments spent being led by His Spirit are life; the moments spent being led by my own flesh are death.

To think that the Creator of the universe, Who spoke everything into existence from nothing, loves me and wants desperately to have an eternal, personal, individual relationship with me is overwhelming. My mind has great difficulty comprehending it. The fact that Jesus Christ would have come to this earth and died if I were the only sinner is almost too much to accept. And yet I know it is true. Praise God!

I am nearing my first anniversary in Christ. I am thrilled that I was drawn back to Him after 30 years of separation from Him. He alone deserves all the honor, glory, and praise.

I look forward with great anticipation to spending eternity with my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Glory to God!

AD 30 or 1844: I chose the CROSS

CHRIS BADENHORST

I plunged fully into Adventism, getting involved with every possible aspect of it. But because it could not provide me with a sound Gospel foundation on which to secure my salvation experience, I became very 'religious'.

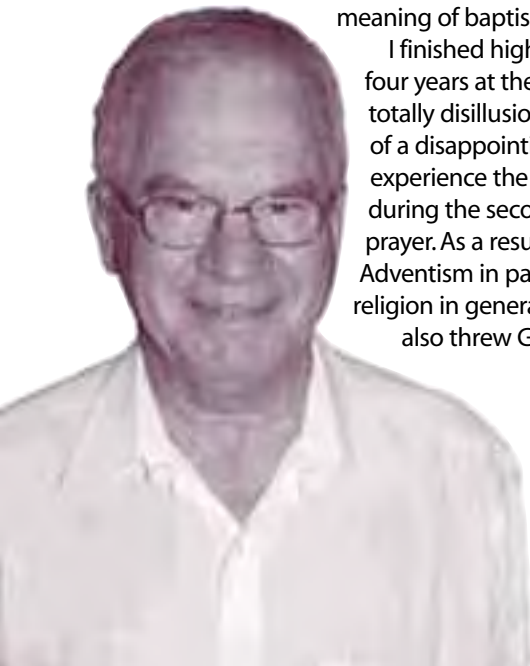
I was baptized into Adventism in 1949 at the age of 13, not because I had received Jesus as my personal Savior, but because I was going to the local Adventist College the next year to begin high school! The pastor told my mother, who was the only born-again Christian in the family at the time, that I would receive special attention at college if I enrolled as a baptized member. I later discovered this was not true. All the pastor was interested in was baptismal statistics. So much for his understanding about the true meaning of baptism!

I finished high school after four years at the end of 1953 totally disillusioned because of a disappointing spiritual experience the previous year during the second week-of-prayer. As a result, I kissed Adventism in particular, and religion in general, goodbye. I also threw God out in the

process—like the proverbial baby with the bath water. I seriously intended never to be involved again. With that behind my back I went into the world at full speed!

After a few enquiries from the local minister to my mother and others as to my religious status, I was written off as a lost cause by him. My mother, however, kept praying for my salvation. As a result, I was dramatically saved seven years later during a Sabbath morning service conducted by world-renowned Adventist evangelist Alvin E. Cook—not because of his message, but by God's direct intervention in answer to my mother's prayers. I was in that meeting because my mother asked me to go this once and because I respected her request. (All this is a story on its own).

After this event, I plunged fully into Adventism, getting involved with every possible aspect of it. But because it could not provide me with a sound Gospel foundation on which to secure my salvation experience, I became very religious. (Adventism could not impart that which it does not possess). For the next two years my life consisted of cramming my head with religious information by doing a



Chris Badenhorst is a retired civil engineering technician who still works part time on one of South Africa's oil refineries in the city of Durban on the east coast. He is married with three step-children and one grandchild. His wife is also a former Adventist who shares his enthusiasm for the gospel of God's free grace. Although they are not members of a particular denomination, they attend a local Baptist church for worship and fellowship.

number of doctrinal courses, and by slavishly following various religious programs prescribed by the denomination such as a Through the Bible reading program, a Systematic Bible Study program, a Bible Marking program, a Morning Watch Devotional program, and a Missionary Outreach program, to name but a few.

I did all these things with precision and religious devotion in preparation for the Investigative Judgment. This, we were constantly reminded in church, was soon to “pass to the cases of the living” (GC 490). But none of these efforts facilitated any advancement in my understanding of the New Testament Gospel and how to have a relationship with God as my heavenly Father.

On the advice of Mrs. White I became a strict vegetarian because, according to her, vegetarianism is indispensable for being ready for the coming of the Lord... She also states that it is an important aid in subduing the passions of the flesh so as to make progress in sanctification! This, however, did not work in my case.

They were only a means of acquiring a categorized knowledge, something like a denominational systematic theology. Thus did I confound religion with spirituality.

After having worked through all the doctrines a number of times, I began

concentrating on Adventism’s cardinal doctrine—its 1844 theology which consists of four parts: 1) the date October 22, 1844, 2) the Investigative Judgment into the cases of God’s people, 3) the cleansing of the sanctuary by blotting out the record of their sins based on the final atonement made for them, and 4) the probation of believers. I remembered how the importance of this doctrine was stressed while at college and why: 1) it constitutes “the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith” (GC 409) ever since the days of William Miller; 2) it constitutes the only original contribution Adventism has made to Christian theology; 3) it alone justifies the existence of Adventism as a religious body; 4) it alone gives Adventists their true, unique and special identity: God’s only true Church and end-time Remnant—a special people, with a special message, for a special time (to quote a popular Adventist slogan)! I once again got out all the lessons pertaining to this doctrine from among the courses I had done. I also got out all the books by Mrs. White in which she expounds it fully, such as *The Great Controversy* and *Early Writings*. Thus equipped, I began studying this most important of doctrines intensively.

But not long afterwards I began having problems with recurring sin in my life—something I thought I was done with forever the day I got saved. I did not understand about the sinful nature that remains in the believer and how to deal with it so as to have daily victory over it. On the advice of Mrs. White, I became a strict vegetarian

because, according to her, vegetarianism is indispensable for being ready for the coming of the Lord. (She states that no meat eaters will be translated!) She also states that vegetarianism is an important aid in subduing the passions of the flesh so as to make progress in sanctification! This, however, did not work in my case. I then adapted my diet even further by only eating Adventist health foods such as gluten patties and True Links sausages. But this did not solve my problem either. All I got from them was a strong dose of heartburn!

I then began to have serious doubts as to whether I would be ready for the Investigative Judgment. I realized more and more that unless something radical happened in my life, I was not going to pass the Investigative Judgment. I would not, therefore, receive the final atonement so the record of my sins could be blotted out. This meant the sanctuary would not be cleansed from my sins and I would not receive God’s verdict of justification “full and complete” (GC 484). I would not, therefore, go to heaven when Jesus came again. Instead, I just knew I would be lost forever! At this point in time I was sorely tempted to again give up on God, Adventism, and religion.

But God intervened again. In 1965 Robert Brinsmead visited South Africa to promote his Sanctuary Awakening Message. This was a revival of traditional (historic) Adventism launched by him in 1960 to counter the Evangelical “Babylonian friendly” movement that had infiltrated the church during the 1950s culminating in the publication of *Questions on Doctrines* in 1957. It was from him I heard good news for the first time.

In his lectures he explained Adventism’s cardinal 1844 doctrine emphasizing its significance for Adventists. He also addressed the question that I and many other Adventists had become concerned about: “How can we pass the Investigative Judgment?” To this question Brinsmead had a simple answer: “Jesus stands for the contrite believer in the judgment!” This, he said, is our only hope. We do not come to this judgment presenting the perfection we have attained. No one will ever pass the judgment on this basis because no one can attain this perfection! This clearly was a radical deviation from traditional Adventism. But it was good news throughout the denomination. It gave hope to many of us who had despaired of ever reaching that required goal of perfection required to pass the Investigative Judgment.

It is important to be clear regarding the special message of historic Adventism as much confusion existed about it when I was still an Adventist. There was Evangelical Adventism, Liberal Adventism, and Traditional Adventism—all claiming to constitute true Adventism and all basing their claims on statements by Mrs. White! But, as Brinsmead pointed out, there was always only one authentic form of Adventism—that formulated by the pioneers within the first decade after the Great

Disappointment when Jesus failed to return as predicted by William Miller. All this was clear confirmation of what I was taught at college. I therefore sided with traditional Adventists behind Brinsmead as our main spokesperson.

The main figure behind Evangelical Adventism at this time was Dr. Desmond Ford. Besides the Gospel he was preaching, he contended that those doctrines that make Adventism unique—its 1844 theology—do not constitute true Adventism. He pointed out that William Miller proclaimed the imminent return of Christ, which was biblical. The mistake he made was to put a date to this event, which was not biblical. Ford then made an appeal that the unbiblical innovation of the pioneers be discarded and that Adventists return to proclaiming the message for which God had raised up the Advent movement—the imminent return of Christ as Miller had done but without the date!

No, no, no, we protested! The subsequent explanation given for the Great Disappointment, we pointed out, is in fact what constitutes authentic Adventism. F. D. Nichol explains it this way: “Seventh-day Adventists, as a distinct religious body, most correctly could be described as beginning at the moment that a *new* interpretation was given to the prophecy of the 2300 days” (*The Midnight Cry*, p. 478. Emphasis mine). As far as we were concerned, this understanding was also clearly stated throughout the writings of Mrs. White.

We did not, therefore, see the neo-Adventism of the pioneers as a mistaken extension of the Millerite movement as Ford concluded. We believed that after the Great Disappointment God gave the pioneers the correct understanding of Daniel 8:14. Thus did He raise up a *new* end-time movement with a *new* end-time message—“A *special* people, with a *special* message for a *special* time.” Because we did not agree with Ford’s conclusion, we rejected his appeal. During this time we fearlessly staked everything on the new and special truth of 1844.

Then, at the end of the 1960s, Brinsmead caused a major upheaval in the traditional camp by admitting that Dr. Ford was correct in his evaluation of Adventism and in his presentation of the Gospel. At about this time Dr. Ford rose to prominence on the Adventist public scene. Independently of each other, Ford and Brinsmead shook Adventism in two areas: 1) they showed that Adventism’s traditional interpretation of Daniel 8:14 cannot be substantiated from the Bible using basic principles of hermeneutics; 2) they broke through the stalemate of Adventism’s version of the Gospel with the real Good News as recorded for us in the New Testament by the Lord’s chosen apostles.

In the first area, they convincingly showed that Adventism’s cardinal doctrine (its 1844 theology) is out of harmony with its cardinal text—Daniel 8:14—both contextually and linguistically. In other words, Adventism’s

1844 Sanctuary doctrine cannot be substantiated by an exegesis of Daniel 8:14 using sound hermeneutic principles such as considering the immediate context and the correct meaning of the original language.

By this confrontation, Adventism was shaken as I never thought possible. Many Adventists despaired as they were made aware that the foundation on which they had built their religious house was not the solid rock they had presumed it to be, but sinking sand instead! This was also no less a traumatic experience for me.

In the second area, their Gospel messages brought hope to the shaken and traumatized. These messages were based on the New Testament affirmation of: 1) a complete, final and all-sufficient atonement made by Christ upon the cross in AD 30 (John 19:30; Rom. 3:24b-25) by which He obtained an eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12); 2) His resurrection from the dead; and 3) His once-for-all entrance into the real Most Holy Place—heaven itself (Heb. 9:24) at His ascension where He sat down at the right hand of God Almighty “with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him” (1 Pet. 3:22; Heb. 1:3b; 8:1; 10:12); 4) also, this Gospel was once-for-all committed to the Christian Church (Jude 1:3).

Based on this finished work of Christ, it was stated that every believer: 1) is justified and forgiven full and complete by God the moment he believes (Rom. 3:24a, 28); 2) has the record of his sins

blotted out by God immediately (Rom. 4:8; Acts 3:19; Ps. 51:1; Isa. 43:25) and, as a result; 3) stands before God fully in the clear from that moment on until the last day if he continues to believe.

Therefore, it was further stated, every believer in Jesus can know exactly where he stands with God now and where he will stand with God on the last day if he continues to believe—fully justified and forgiven by God and fully in the clear with Him (Rom. 5:9)! Thousands of Adventists rejoiced in their message.

I had to admit to myself that I had never heard anything like it, and I was touched by it! I, however, felt responsible to defend what was bequeathed to us by the pioneers. I, therefore, stated that I was fully prepared to go along with Mrs. White’s inspired interpretation of Daniel 8:14 as was given her by God in vision. I also pointed out that this “new” Gospel was fundamentally different from Adventism’s cardinal 1844 theology and that historic Adventism and Mrs. White had always clearly taught that Christ began His real work of redemption in heaven on October 22, 1844.

By this confrontation, Adventism was shaken as I never thought possible. Many Adventists despaired as they were made aware that the foundation on which they had built their religious house was not the solid rock they had presumed it to be, but sinking sand instead!

I, in turn, drew their attention to Mrs. White's explanation of what is involved in this work of redemption. First, she states that only those believers who pass the Investigative Judgment will receive Christ's final atonement. Then, based on this atonement, the record of their sins will be blotted out. Thus will the sanctuary be cleansed from their sins. Then, and only *then*, will they receive "pardon and justification *full and complete*." Only then will they be granted "a share in His (Christ's) glory and a seat upon His throne. Then, and only then, "Christ will clothe His faithful ones with His own righteousness. . . . Thus will be realized the *complete* fulfillment of the new covenant. . ." (GC 484-485. Emphasis mine). I emphasized the fact that once all this has been done for believers who have passed the Investigative Judgment, only then can they claim to be saved—not before! Only then can they be sure of heaven—not before!

In the meantime, according to Mrs. White's clear teaching, all believers alive are on probation. Now then, I asked, how can one be sure of salvation while on probation? You can't for the simple reason you aren't! I reminded them of Mrs. White's warning that while on probation, believers should never claim to be saved (COL 155). Salvation is contingent on having this work of redemption accomplished for them in heaven.

What aggravated my frustration was that, in order to substantiate Adventism's cardinal doctrine, I had to resort to the writings of Mrs. White every time!

I also pointed out the implications of this: *no* believer alive can therefore be sure of heaven. To claim such assurance would be presumptuous in the

extreme. Only *after* we have passed the Investigative Judgment, *after* we have received Christ's final atonement, and *after* we have had the record of his sins blotted out—all still in the future—can we claim to be saved and will we be ready for the coming of the Lord (GC 424-425; 483-486).

During this time I was desperately trying to show that Ford and Brinsmead were not authentic Adventists because they were not preaching authentic (traditional) Adventism as defined by its 1844 doctrine! But the more I was confronted with the Gospel, the less peace I had in my soul; the more I was trying to prove Adventism's 1844 doctrine from the Bible alone, the less successful I was.

What aggravated my frustration was that, in order to substantiate Adventism's cardinal doctrine, I had to resort to the writings of Mrs. White every time! What aggravated my frustration even further was the expository preaching and teaching of both Ford and Brinsmead. These constituted a new paradigm radically different to the Adventist proof-text one I had been familiar with during all my years in Adventism and which now proved totally inadequate.

Eventually and virtually overwhelmed with frustration, I was persuaded in my soul to take a deep and careful look into the theology of both sides objectively and without prejudice as far as possible. This brought me to a serious re-evaluation of Adventism and all it stood for—particularly its cardinal doctrine as contained in its 1844 theology.

But despite the clarity of the New Testament Gospel, I found this re-evaluation extremely difficult in the light of Mrs. White's spirit of prophecy—especially her "The Lord showed me" and "I saw" claims. I did not realize how brainwashed I was by these and how shrewdly the hierarchy in Washington had used them to keep the likes of me in bondage to the system. As a result, I kept subjecting God's word to that of Mrs. White. I kept questioning my interpretation of God's word (despite its clarity) in the light of Mrs. White's contrary but inspired interpretation of it! This was no easy matter for me because I took God seriously, I took His word seriously and I took Mrs. White's spirit of prophecy seriously.

Ultimately, after what seemed like an eternity, the light of heaven broke through to my brainwashed mind as a result of the faithful and patient ministry of the Holy Spirit who finally tipped the scales in favor of the New Testament Gospel! I gladly accepted, without compromise, the good news as recorded for us in the New Testament by the Lord's chosen apostles. A great peace flooded my soul and I knew I had made the right decision. There were four factors that contributed to this assurance:

1) There was the *Sola Scriptura* principle of the Reformation which was emphasized in Brinsmead's *Present Truth* magazine. In its light I had to admit that I did not qualify as a Protestant. On the contrary, by basing my understanding of truth on an extra-biblical authority—that of Mrs. White—I could see that I qualified as a good Roman Catholic instead!

This was quite a traumatic eye opener especially in the light of Adventism's claim that it was raised up by God to complete the Reformation so nobly begun by the Reformers. Also, Adventism has always vehemently denounced Catholicism as the anti-Christ! I was glad to be free so as to honor God by basing my understanding of truth on a clear "Thus saith the Lord" from His word alone!

2) Then there was the exposure of Mrs. White's fraudulent ministry. Firstly, there was the extent of her plagiarism. This was a great shock for me as I really believed all she ever wrote came from the Lord as claimed by her and as taught me at college and as a layman. No face-saving reason tendered by Washington for this deception could soften the blow. This was enough reason for me to label her a false prophet.

Secondly, and worse, she claimed special revelation (a direct word from the Lord) to endorse, support and promulgate Adventism's 1844 doctrine which was consistently

shown, not only to have no support from the Bible, but to be contrary to the New Testament affirmation of Christ's finished work of redemption upon the cross, His once-for-all entrance into the Most Holy Place at His ascension, and His sitting down at the right hand of God! In this she clearly had spoken presumptuously, thereby invalidating her claim to possess the spirit of prophecy. This ended my bondage to Mrs. White once-for-all! For this I was most thankful to the Lord.

3) There were also the invaluable contributions by Ford's *Good News Unlimited* magazine in which Gospel articles were a regular feature. In these were emphasized the finished work of Christ on the cross, His triumphant resurrection from the dead, and His once-for-all entrance into the Most Holy Place to sit down at the right hand of God as clearly stated in the book of Hebrews. Written in the first century A.D. it declares, "He (Christ) entered (past tense) the Most Holy Place once for all" (Heb. 9:12 NIV) at His ascension and not eighteen centuries later, on October 22, 1844, as taught by Mrs. White!

Then there was Dr. Ford's Glacier View defense manuscript, *Daniel 8:14, the Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment* published in 1980. This monumental work was indeed the last nail into Adventism's coffin for me. It convincingly showed that Adventism's 1844 doctrine has no Scriptural support at all. It was now clear to me that by preaching this doctrine Adventists were going beyond the New Testament witness. They were therefore preaching "a different gospel" (Gal. 1:6) to that preached by the apostles! In this, Adventism stood exposed as a sect. I then renounced it as such.

4) There was also my temporary involvement with the strange phenomenon that featured prominently in the church during the decade of the 1970s known as Evangelical Adventism. I say "strange" because once a person understands both theologies clearly, he will understand that a person cannot possibly be both! At the time, I understood traditional (historic) Adventism far better than I understood the Gospel. But in the increasing light of the Gospel, two basic aspects concerning both theologies began crystallizing in my mind: 1) The fundamental difference between them; 2) The finality of both. In view of these two aspects, I eventually came to the conclusion that an impassable gulf exists between them which cannot be bridged without modifying both. But the finality of both admits no modifications or compromise.

So it was that during that time some scholars who sided with Ford tried to salvage Adventism by trying to create a synthesis between its 1844 theology and the apostolic New Testament Gospel. In the beginning I decided to go along with this noble objective. *Evangelica* magazine promoted Evangelical Adventism during this time. But after a while on this road I began to realize that

our objective would never be achieved without compromising both theologies. And as neither of these theologies allow for any compromise, I found myself at a split in the road where I had to choose. By God's grace I chose to go on the Gospel road.

I then concluded there was no such a phenomenon as an Evangelical Adventist. One is either an Adventist, standing by AD 1844 with its related teaching of Christ's ongoing work of atonement and redemption in heaven, or an Evangelical, standing by AD 30 with its related teaching of Christ's finished atonement and redemption accomplished on the cross. Evangelical Adventism was therefore a contradiction in terms and a half-baked theological system. As such it was a dead-end road with no future. This proved true as it eventually fizzled out as a recognized movement within the church, having served its purpose as the temporary means of making a transition from Adventism to the Gospel for many including myself.

So, after having looked at Adventism from all possible sides, I had to agree with the statement of Dr. Donald Barnhouse, the Evangelical scholar who investigated Adventism's doctrines during the 1950's, that Adventism's 1844 Sanctuary doctrine is indeed the greatest face-saving philosophical phenomenon in religious history. Yet, it has been proudly touted as the only original contribution that Adventism has made to Christian theology. What a contribution—the biggest conundrum in the history of the Christian Church! No wonder Adventists have never yet been able to convince one single recognized Evangelical Bible scholar that their cardinal 1844 doctrine, as based on their unique interpretation of Daniel 8:14, is worthy of a second thought, notwithstanding the fact that Mrs. White claims that it is based on a direct revelation received by her from God!

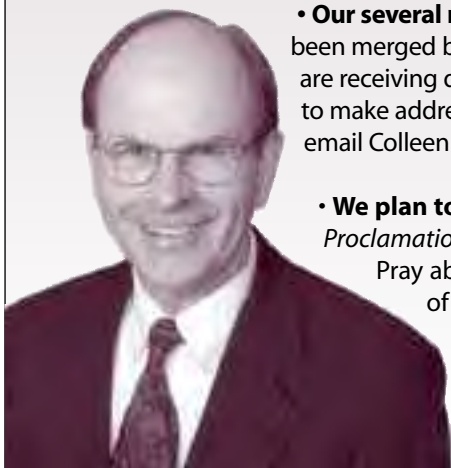
Then, after I had reached the verdict that Adventism's unique interpretation of Daniel 8:14 (its cardinal doctrine) has no biblical support and that it is anti the New Testament Gospel, I had to face squarely the implications of this for Adventism: 1) its foundation and central pillar had collapsed and with that the entire edifice. Nothing salvageable remained; 2) it no longer had a unique message to give to Christendom and the world;

I then concluded there was no such a phenomenon as an 'Evangelical Adventist'. One is either an Adventist, standing by AD 1844 with its related teaching of Christ's ongoing work of atonement and redemption in heaven, or an Evangelical, standing by AD 30 with its related teaching of Christ's finished atonement and redemption accomplished on the cross.

Life Assurance Ministries seeks God's direction

We recently held our annual Life Assurance Ministries, Inc. board of directors meeting. Here are some of the highlights:

- **We are adding** a pdf version of *Proclamation!* which can be downloaded from www.formeradventist.com. We will also make all former issues available in this file format as soon as possible. The downloaded files may be emailed and printed, using Adobe Acrobat Reader, available free at www.adobe.com. Those who receive the LAM Publications email news letter will be sent this file each month. We feel this will greatly expand the ministry as everyone receiving it can pass it on to his/her contacts anywhere in the world.



- **Our several mailing databases** have been merged by Colleen Tinker. If you are receiving duplicate copies or need to make address corrections, please email Colleen at proclamation@gmail.com.

- **We plan to double** the *Proclamation!* mailing list in 2005. Pray about adding the names of family or friends that might be blessed by a free subscription to *Proclamation!*

- **New Covenant Conference** is the name chosen by a group of former Adventist leaders for a fellowship of churches. (See July/August issue of *Proclamation!*) Kenneth Brantley is the acting coordinator. They are planning a number of area meetings, including a play they will put on in Evangelical churches.

- **Life Assurance Ministries is exploring** making several presentations that people can use to teach the simple gospel as compared to Adventism.

- **Pray for Life Assurance Ministries** and those of us who write, format, and do the multitude of behind-the-scenes activities required to keep *Proclamation!* coming. Pray that we will continue to follow God's leading. We have seen many answers to prayer and are encouraged by the hundreds of letters, emails and phone calls we receive from those who have been blessed by this ministry. Pray that God will continue to supply the funds that are needed.

- **Ministry to Spanish speakers** is growing. Please pray for this new and important area of outreach. We hope to have an email version of *Proclamation!* in Spanish this year. LAM Publications now has a number of Spanish books available. Check these out at www.ratzlaf.com.

- **New Former Adventist Fellowship** forming in Peoria Arizona. I will be facilitating this Bible study group. Phone 623-572-9549 for more information.

—Dale Ratzlaff

3) its continued existence as a religious body was no longer justified. Therefore people should no longer give it their support; 4) this meant the end of Adventists' unique self-image as "a special people with a special message for a special time." They were no more special in God's sight than any

This meant the end of Adventists' unique self-image as 'a special people with a special message for a special time.' They were no more special in God's sight than any other forgiven saint.

other forgiven saint. All this was a matter of simple honesty with us as Adventists and with the rest of Christianity. With that conclusion I severed all ties with Adventism forever in 1980. It took this long (1970-1980) because I had to be fully convinced in my own mind about all of it—step by step. And after renouncing Adventism completely I was free to fully embrace the New Testament Gospel without compro-

mise. Thus ended my twenty years in Adventism's house of bondage and to this day I thank God for His liberating Gospel by which that was made possible.

As a result, I know that all my sins are blotted out—fully and completely, that I have received pardon and justification—fully and completely—and that I am released from the condemnation of the law—fully and completely. Therefore, I do have full assurance of eternal life and heaven now. And all this, not because I have passed some fictitious Investigative Judgment, but because Jesus made a final, full and complete atonement (payment) for my sins with His precious blood shed on the cross. As a result I now have a dynamic relationship with my Lord in which I daily enjoy intimate fellowship with Him through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. I therefore live my life fully committed to Him "who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

Anyone who would like to hear more is welcome to contact me. My e-mail address is: chris.badenhorst@engenoil.com

A word (or two) from GOD

RICHARD GOYNE

When Adventists accept the divine inspiration of Ellen White, haven't they given her writings the status of Scripture?

The year 1980 was significant to the Seventh-day Adventist Church because the events that transpired at that time resulted in a critical consideration of some of the church's doctrinal teachings. The defrocking of Desmond Ford and subsequent dismissal of other ministers for alleged doctrinal dissent has raised questions about the basis for the doctrines of the Adventist church.

In its statement of Fundamental Beliefs, the Adventist church says that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by divine inspiration and are an authoritative revealer of doctrine. In the same Fundamental Beliefs the church affirms the writings of Ellen White as a manifestation of the Spirit of Prophecy and as an authoritative source of truth.

Because the Adventist Church has by these statements accepted two sources of authoritative revelation, the question arises as to the role of each in the formulation of Adventist doctrine and practice. The church has attempted to answer this question with the assertion that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching, including the writings of Ellen White, must be tested. These writings of Ellen White are said to function as a guide to Scripture.

The Adventist position that Ellen White's writings are inspired by the same Spirit that inspired the biblical writers yet do not function as Scripture is difficult to maintain because Scripture is a written revelation which a religious community accepts as being divinely inspired. When Adventists accept the

divine inspiration of Ellen White, haven't they given her writings the status of Scripture?

The dismissal of Desmond Ford from the Adventist ministry resulted from his study of the church's sanctuary doctrine—that Christ entered the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary at the end of the 2300 day period of Daniel 8:14. Ford's study was seen as a challenge to traditional Adventist doctrine and to the authority of Ellen White who had written that Christ entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary at the end of the 2300 days in 1844 (*Great Controversy*, p. 422).

The extent of Adventist reliance on the testimony of Ellen White as the basis for the sanctuary doctrine was evident in a two-part article entitled "The Sanctuary Truth" which appeared in the *Adventist Review* (November 6 & 13, 1980). The article contains more than 250 lines quoted from Ellen White and only one verse from the Bible: Daniel 8:14. The General Conference president endorsed this reliance in his Glacier View statement that "the bottom line, of course, is the role of Ellen White in doctrinal matters" (*Spectrum* 11[2] 5).

That this Glacier View statement was to be Adventist policy was made very clear by the revisions made to the Fundamental Beliefs that same year (1980). The wording of the Fundamental Belief concerning the Holy Scriptures was changed from "...an all-sufficient revelation of His will to men and are the only unerring rule of faith and practice," to "...are the infallible revelation of His will and the authoritative revealer of doctrine..."

The wording of the Fundamental Belief concerning the Spirit of Prophecy was changed from "...this gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen White" to "This gift was manifested in the ministry of Ellen White. As the Lord's messenger, her

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When President Reagan designated 1983 as the “Year of the Bible” ...the Adventist Church named 1983 as the “Year of the Spirit of Prophecy” ...

writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth...” It is evident that these revisions to the fundamental Beliefs have elevated the writings of Ellen White to an authoritative status comparable to that of the Bible, which is no longer the “all-sufficient” and the “only unerring” rule of faith and practice.

Permeating Influence of Ellen White

This emphasis on Ellen White’s writings extends into all Adventist activities. Sermons quote Ellen White in the same context as the Bible and often to a greater extent. Students in Adventist schools are indoctrinated in her writings from the earliest grades through college. The sources by which Adventists are instructed and informed place an emphasis on the writings of Ellen White that has been traditionally reserved for the Bible. When President Reagan designated 1983 as the “year of the Bible” in honor of Gutenberg’s achievement, the Adventist Church named 1983 as the “Year of the Spirit of Prophecy,” i.e. the “Year of Ellen White.”

The effect of such emphasis on these extra-biblical writings was illustrated by the publication of the *Clear Word Bible* (later amended to the *Clear Word*). This book was promoted by Adventist bookstores as a paraphrase version of the Bible.

Instead, the *Clear Word* was a deliberate alteration of God’s word in which the author deleted some texts and changed the wording of others that did not agree with Adventist teaching. He also made extensive additions for which there was absolutely no manuscript basis. There was no loud outcry against this deliberate alteration of God’s word. In fact, the *Clear Word* was widely circulated among Adventists and even used in some Adventist pulpits. A people who had been taught that the White writings were divinely inspired and authoritative evidently saw no reason why the wording of a Bible could not be altered to agree with them.

While the Adventist Church recognizes the Bible as an authoritative revelation, in practice the biblical message is understood in accordance with Ellen White’s comments. From this perspective the Bible is not the unique revelation of God’s will nor is it the sole standard for the Christian life—it is functionally subordinated to the writings of Ellen White. Such a position negates the primacy of the Bible and the leading of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s understanding of the Bible.

The central issues of the Reformation were not only points of doctrine but also the role of Scripture itself. The term *sola scriptura* expressed the reformers’ position that the Bible was the ultimate authority, in contrast to their opponents’ position that the Bible was authoritative as it had been interpreted by an inspiration that existed within the church. The same issue of the role of Scripture is present in the doctrinal problems that exist in the Adventist Church today. Is the Bible the “all-sufficient” and “only unerring rule of faith and practice” as stated in the church’s Fundamental Beliefs prior to 1980, or must it be supplemented by the writings of another authority? !

Join a worldwide prayer chain

Join Former Adventist Fellowship in their weekly prayer chain. Every Friday at sundown and every Saturday at 1:00 p.m. Pacific Time, pray for your Adventist friends and family. Pray that the veil covering their hearts will be removed and that they will embrace the gospel and experience true Sabbath rest in Jesus.

“But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.” (2 Corinthians 3:14-16)

Church took the steps of apostasy

“...the first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth

to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And, fifth, to commence persecution against such.” (Statement made by John Loughborough on the occasion of the Adventist church’s organizing its first state conference in 1861.)

Amazingly, in the short space of 30 years, the Adventist church followed all five of these steps in their effort to discredit D. M. Canright. Although they declared the Bible to be their only creed, in reality the Adventists have continued to practice the very behaviors they denounced in their early formative years.

(This information is detailed in George Knight’s book *A Search for Identity*, c 2000, chapter 1, “The Dynamic Nature of Present Truth,” p. 22. Contributed by Verle Streifling.)

DISCUSSION FORUM • BIBLE STUDIES • TESTIMONIES
for former Seventh-day Adventists

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Breath or core identity CONTINUED FROM FRONT

exactly as we humans are; He had no advantage over us, despite his being conceived by the Holy Spirit. While He was definitely God, on earth He took on humanity and laid aside His divine advantage for my sake. His miraculous conception, as I understood it, gave Him one-half of His chromosomes from God and the other half from Mary—yet this strange arrangement yielded 100% God and 100% human. This genetic anomaly bred discussions in the church which have not yet been resolved: did Jesus inherit Mary's sinful flesh, or didn't He? Ellen White herself wrote statements that lent authority to both sides of the argument.

If Jesus did inherit Mary's sinful flesh, then could He be said to be without sin? Yet if He did not inherit Mary's sinful flesh, He had an advantage over us which meant we had no hope of being righteous. Jesus, we were told, was our example. Because He kept the law perfectly, potentially we could also. If He did not inherit Mary's sinful flesh, however, He couldn't properly be our example. This dilemma could not be solved. Every time I tried to think it through to a conclusion, I became confused and had to quit thinking.

Eventually I realized that this perplexity did have a solution, but I wasn't able to find it until I revisited my understanding of "spirit."

I understood that both the Hebrew and the Greek words for "spirit," *ruah* and *pneuma* respectively, have to do with wind, breath, air, or divine power. The word *ruah* frequently referred to God's divine power in the Old Testament, although it sometimes also meant the human spirit. In the New Testament, however, the word *pneuma* occurs 379 times. Of those occurrences, 250 refer to the Holy Spirit. Forty times the word denotes the part of the human personality that can have a relationship with God. The rest of the word's appearances refer to demonic, unclean, evil, or heavenly spirits. In spite of the root words' literal meanings of breath, air, or wind, however, their use, particularly that of *pneuma* in the New Testament, clearly denotes a non-physical yet real conscious identity.*

Holy Spirit In My Nose?

About seven years ago Richard and I were in that rarefied place of knowing we were on a trajectory out of Adventism but not yet knowing how or when we would exit. We had devoured Dale Ratzlaff's Bible study on the New Covenant in his book *Sabbath in Crisis* (now *Sabbath in Christ*), and we were experiencing security and the tangible, daily presence of Jesus for the first time in our lives. As I continued to study, I prayed that God would direct me to the books He wanted me to read. One day I walked to our bookshelves and picked up a book I'd been carrying around with me since—well, since when? I have no memory of how or when I got that book; I only knew I'd had it for years and had never read it. It was entitled *Like A Mighty Wind* and was written by Mel Tari, an Indonesian evangelist. Published in 1971, the book detailed events and miracles that occurred during the Indonesian revival of the 1960s.

Today I remember few details about the book. My unforgettable experience with it, though, came as I read one chapter in which Tari explained his understanding of what happens to a pagan when he accepts Jesus and must turn his back on the demons of his previous religion. As I read and pondered, I suddenly put the book down and stared out the window. With the startling effect of a floodlight shining in a subterranean cave, the certainty filled my mind: my spirit must be something real and conscious if the Holy Spirit communicates with me through it. My spirit cannot be my breath; if that were so, the Holy Spirit would be speaking to me in my nose. The absurdity of my life-long belief shocked me.

I knew the Adventist counter to this idea; the Holy Spirit communicates with us through our minds. In fact, one of the reasons we were to observe the Adventist food and health laws was so we could have clear heads in order to be sure we would "hear" the Holy Spirit. Similarly, we needed to immerse ourselves and our children in

...my spirit must be something real and conscious if the Holy Spirit communicates with me through it. My spirit cannot be my breath...

Adventist schools in order to develop our intellects so we would perceive the Holy Spirit.

Yet Paul, quoting Isaiah in 1 Corinthians 1:19, wrote: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Farther into the letter, Paul continued, "This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:13-14).

Paul was clearly describing some kind of "knowing" apart from intellectual analysis. The Holy Spirit, he was saying, is "spiritually discerned"; not recognized by the mind. Further, Paul said that a person without the Holy Spirit would not discern Him—yet people without the Holy Spirit have intellects.

What the Bible Says

After my startling revelation that I had a spirit that knows God and can communicate with Him, everything began to look different. Texts I had passed off as metaphorical suddenly had new meaning. When Jesus in Gethsemane asked his disciples to watch and pray in order to resist temptation and said, "The spirit is willing, but the body is weak," he was talking about two distinct components of them. Their spirits, which were sensitive to God's truth, were willing to watch and pray and resist temptation, but their bodies

were flesh, and they were vulnerable. Jesus knew they needed to be actively submitted to God or their flesh would succumb.

When Luke wrote about the birth of John the Baptist and concluded, “the child grew, and became strong in spirit” (Luke 1:80), he wasn’t speaking metaphorically. He was speaking about the part of John that was surrendered to and responsive to God, not about his body or his physical mind.

One text that had puzzled me for years now became clear: John 4:23-24. When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, she asked him where people were to worship. The Jews declared that Jerusalem was the only holy place where true worship could happen, but the Samaritans were not allowed to associate with Jews and worshiped instead at Mt. Gerazim. Jesus overturned the idea of holy space in one short answer: “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Jesus clearly could not have been referring to mind, intellect, or breath in this reference to *spirit*. “God is spirit,” He said, and His followers were to worship Him in spirit—in the part of themselves that knows God’s Spirit—and also in truth. Truth requires the mental functions of knowing and deciding, and truth finds its fulfillment in Jesus. Spirit, however, is compared to the essence of God. Spirit must have volition and some sort of knowing or consciousness in order to worship God.

Later, Paul wrote to the Corinthians again, challenging them to keep themselves from “everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God” (2 Corinthians 2:1). If the spirit were the breath—or even a metaphor for the essence of a person—it would not be subject to contamination or holiness.

These and other texts clearly indicate that the spirit is not the breath in our respiratory systems. Similarly, it is not a metaphor for a person’s personality. It is, rather, something vital in us that can know God—or it can refuse to know Him. Finally, it is what goes to God when one of His children dies. When Jesus cried from the cross, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit,” he was not sending his literal breath back to God. He was committing to God the part of Himself that knew the Father and loved and trusted Him.

Christ’s Identity

The discovery that a human’s spirit is something volitional and aware instead of merely breath has finally solved my confusion over Christ’s nature by resolving the nature of inherited sin. Here’s what I realized: when Adam and Eve sinned, they did die that very day, just as God had warned them. They died spiritually. Oh, yes—I’d heard that they died spiritually, but in Adventism “spiritual death” was a metaphor for suddenly being guilty and afraid of God and unable to relate to Him because one had broken the law. In reality, Adam and Eve’s shame and fear resulted from something much more serious than simple disobedience. Their spirits—the essential parts of them that knew God—were suddenly out of communion with Him and had died.

In fact, their spiritual death was so serious that the rift between them and God could never be repaired until a Redeemer would come and shed His blood and carry the sins of all humanity. Only when the Son of God Himself would finally open a new, living way to the Father by dying for all the race could a human spirit again be connected directly with God’s Spirit. Until this sacrifice happened, people could be saved by faith in its promise, but they could not be restored to intimacy with God. Not until Pentecost was any human restored to communion so intimate that God’s Spirit lived in him and brought his dead spirit to new life.

Adam and Eve’s spiritual death, I finally realized, was the sin I—and all humanity—inherited. Since the spirit is a real thing, not merely breath, this idea no longer had to be explained in physical terms. I had always understood inherited sin in terms of genetic flaws. Through my parents’ DNA, apparently, my “sinful flesh” had inherited not only sin-induced physical flaws but also all my propensities toward evil as well. Sin was inevitable, I had been taught, because I had inherited sin in my genes.

This explanation of inherited sin, however, had created the dilemma of whether or not Christ had “inherited” Mary’s sin. Now I finally understood. Jesus was human; of course He inherited Mary’s genes! It was not her genes, however, that determined His “nature.” From the moment of Jesus’ conception by the Holy Spirit, Jesus was spiritually alive. Unlike every other human ever born, Jesus had a living spirit intimately connected to the Father from the moment of His conception by the Holy Spirit. He did not have to experience a new birth the way His followers would. He was born spiritually alive. The details of Jesus’ genetic inheritance are a mystery God has not revealed to us. It is enough for us to know that, while Mary was his sinful, human mother who also needed a Savior, His human inheritance from Mary did not make Him sinful. His sinlessness was not primarily a genetic issue; it was spiritual.

This intrinsic spiritual life is what made Jesus the “second Adam.” Just as Adam was created with a living spirit in intimate connection with God, so Jesus was conceived as a sinless, spiritually living human. Jesus, however, was not merely human. He was also God. What heresy it was, I finally realized, to have thought that Jesus could not have had an advantage over me. Only a spiritually living person could bring the spiritually dead to life. Only my Creator could have the authority to restore me to Himself. If Jesus had not come as a human untouched by the spiritual death of original sin, we could never have been saved. Concurrently, if He had been merely a creature instead of the Creator, He could not have taken responsibility for all of us. It was not Jesus’ perfect law-keeping that saved us and set the standard for our lives. It was His innocent shed blood that saved us. His perfect life redeemed our lives, but His sinless spirit saved our souls.

It was his living, sinless spirit which Jesus committed to His Father at His death. His body, marked by Mary’s genes, died and lay in the grave. Upon His resurrection He received a glorified body different from the mortal one he inherited from Mary. His resurrection body is the proof that we, too, will shed our mortal flesh at death, and in the resurrection, we will receive spiritual bodies untouched by inherited flaws, just as Jesus did. (1 Corinthians 15:35-49)

The New Birth

Understanding that my spirit is a real, knowing, volitional part of myself finally helped me understand the new birth. Jesus told Nicodemus, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" (John 3:5-6). When a person accepts Jesus' death and resurrection as atonement for his sin, the immediate result is that God places His Spirit in that person as a seal of His position in Christ and as a guarantee of his future resurrection and glorious inheritance with Christ (Ephesians 1:13-14, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22). This indwelling of the Holy Spirit yields the new birth Jesus described to Nicodemus: "Spirit gives birth to spirit."

In other words, when I accepted Jesus and His Spirit came and indwelt me, my own spirit which was separated from God and dead in my inherited sin came to life. At that moment, I was a new creation, a true child of God born of His Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17; John 1:12-13). Only those who are born of the Spirit are truly God's children, and the Holy Spirit confirms this new identity (Romans 8:16).

Pentecost marked the beginning of this new work of God. Because Jesus' broken body had opened a new and living way to the Father (Hebrews 10:19-20), it was now possible for humanity to have a new relationship with God which had been impossible before Jesus' death. Because Jesus shed innocent blood and conquered death, He is present on the earth in us, His new creations. We function as His ambassadors, and because we are born of the Father by His Spirit, we are carrying out His work of reconciliation "as though God were making his appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 4:20). No longer are we "in Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:22); we are "in Christ." We are completely new beings with new identities, new power, new potential, and a new position in God.

Sin, Salvation, and the Savior

It has been said that all false religions have a wrong understanding of sin, of salvation, and of the Savior. Unless we understand these three basic facts of life, we misunderstand our true condition and our need of Jesus.

I have come to see that my old belief—my spirit is merely breath—twisted my perception of all three of the "essential S's." As long as I believed my spirit was breath, then my inherited sin was physical and centered in my mind and personality. If it was physical, then I could have some effect in modifying it. Just as I could work out to build up muscle strength, so I could practice clean living, observe the law, and exercise my willpower, thus helping to perfect myself and to attain the righteousness the law demands.

Further, if my sin were based in my genes, accepting Jesus could not really change that sin until the resurrection. My righteousness would really be only a hope or a promise for the future, and I could only hope that eventually I would "make it to heaven" and find the perfection which I pursued on earth. Such a belief makes salvation a future reality, not a present one. Further, if sin is merely physical, then the Holy Spirit has no job other than to help us to change our self-

indulgent mindsets and make us good. Romans 6:22, however clearly states that Christ-followers "have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God." The Holy Spirit functions in our spirits. Our wayward minds and emotions do not define our sin; they merely reflect our sinful inheritance. Obviously, my flesh still sins; but if sin is ultimately spiritual, when the Holy Spirit brings my spirit to life, the power of sin in me is broken. My salvation is not about my behavior or my mind. The God of the universe lives in me, and I am born of the Spirit—a new creation. My salvation is assured and effective now. Because of my new identity, I now have the power of the Holy Spirit at work in me, not only bringing life to my spirit but also bringing healing to my sin-scarred emotions and mind and witnessing to my spirit that I am God's child. His presence in me now makes it possible for me to choose to surrender to Him instead of being overcome by sins when I am tempted. He has broken the power of sin in me.

Finally, if sin is genetic instead of spiritual, then Jesus could not truly have been our Savior. Biologically, He would have had to have inherited Mary's sin-marked genes, and He must have had a com-

Finally, if sin is genetic instead of spiritual, then Jesus could not truly have been our Savior. Biologically, He would have had to have inherited Mary's sin-marked genes, and He must have had a compromised nature.

promised nature. If His spirit were merely breath, then His spiritual condition would have been defined by his physical performance. His perfect law-keeping would have had to be the basis for our salvation. If sin were merely genetic, then Jesus' human perfection must also be possible for us, because He inherited human flesh just as we do. If his spirit, however, is more than breath, then Jesus' spirit defines His spiritual condition. His Spirit was alive from conception; he had no need of a new birth. Because He had a living spirit from conception, he did not inherit humanity's sin. His sinless spirit and intimacy with the Father gave Him the power never to succumb to the temptations which he endured as a human.

My seventh-grade Bible teacher almost had it right: "Body plus breath equals living soul." His Adventist interpretation of *ruah* as merely "breath" or "air," however, denied the eternal life-giving power of the Holy Spirit implicit in the Genesis text. My teacher's explanation of human life rendered us no different from animals: we are bodies that breathe. When we die, our breathing ceases, and so do we. Instead, he should have said, "Body plus God's Spirit of life equals a living soul." The difference between his equation and mine is tiny—an interpretive variant of a Hebrew word. It's a difference, though, that leads one either into the quicksand of heresy or onto the solid rock of security in Jesus.

It's the difference between life and death. !

*New Bible Dictionary, third edition, reprinted 1997; Inter-Varsity Press; p. 1125

Better than my dream CONTINUED FROM BACK

My siblings and I were raised in the Adventist church and school system. On the outside we looked good and were highly achieving. Inside our home, however, there was abuse, addiction, and pain that was never addressed or dealt with. We worshiped as a family at the altar of education—the one thing we revered in common.

The Dream Is Born

I brought my wounds from this fractured background to my own new family. John and I were married during his sophomore year of medical school at Loma Linda. Our first child, a girl, was born just before John graduated. When she was six months old, I became

...a cultic religion says there is only one right church, and I wasn't free to go anywhere else. I turned back to the altar I knew: education and achievement, but I felt a void.

pregnant again (oops!). I vividly remember the delivery of our second child. There was a mirror somewhere above my knees. I watched a head emerge—shoulders...one more push—a boy! My husband, John the IV, was the only son of his parents' eight children. I had produced an heir! "Whew," I thought, "I'm off the hook!"

I looked in the mirror as that tiny boy emerged and said, "Male, John the V, Pediatrician." My dream was born. Even though we had another son after John, this first boy was the one I designated to fulfill my wishes. It was my job to work it out.

I started on my kids' CV's in grade school. 4H? That would look more rounded on the resume. Student government? Perfect. "You got an A-? Which one did you miss?"

I was pleased that my three children were excellent students. Of course John V with his high grades would go into medicine! I never considered another possibility. I never considered his natural bent, talents, creative or artistic abilities.

Spiritually, our growing family was empty. My interning husband worked long hours including half days on Saturday. I took my toddlers to the church of my childhood alone. I desired a relationship with God but couldn't find it. My final straw was when my sister's husband, an Adventist psychiatrist, committed suicide. Where was the church when he needed help? Although I feared God, He was very distant. I had nothing against Him, but I had a lot against organized religion.

A few years later I abandoned dropping my children off at church. I didn't want to raise them without God, but a cultic religion says there is only one right church, and I wasn't free to go anywhere else. I turned back to the altar I knew: education and achievement, but I felt a void.

During high school, my daughter accepted the Lord Jesus at a Sunday night high school students' meeting at Harvest Fellowship in Riverside, California. She began taking her brothers, and they also accepted Christ. Their acceptance of Jesus was the first step, but they were neither grounded nor churched, and when they went to college, their faith got shelved.

About the same time my children accepted Jesus, a casual acquaintance invited me to Bible Study Fellowship. I told her I was too busy finishing graduate school, but she persisted, and I finally agreed to go just so she'd leave me alone. I went, and I could not believe what I read and heard. God not only loved me unconditionally, He wanted a relationship with me. I didn't have to work to be perfect; my acceptance was accomplished on the cross! Because He rose from death, I would be filled and sealed through eternity with His Holy Spirit if I accepted His finished work and asked the Lord Jesus into my heart.

I went home, knelt down, and said, "Lord, I've tried this before and it lasted 48 hours. Now I know what your word says. It's not about me; it's about what You did. I want you in my heart and life." I knew a peace I had never known before. It was life changing! I was born again.

It took almost a year before I could go to church on Sunday, but finally my husband and I joined a healthy Bible-teaching church, and Sunday mornings became a joy!

My new relationship with God caused me to begin praying that God would bless my dream for John V. I still didn't ask my son if my dream was his dream. John was accepted into UC Davis, a place where he could get a good science education. While he was there, he began to play acoustic guitar and sing at a local coffee house. I considered his music a nice hobby, but my main concern was my guilt that I hadn't raised him or my other two children well spiritually. I clung tightly to two Bible promises God had given me:

Joel 2:25: "The Lord says, I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten." I understood that text to mean whatever broken and painful things you give to God, He redeems and uses for His glory.

John 10:28: "I give my sheep eternal life, and they will never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand." I knew John had accepted Christ and that He was held in His hand. I had to trust God's word.

The Dream Shatters

Two weeks after John started medical school, he came to us saying, "If I don't do music, I'll die." And I said, "If you quit medicine, you'll die because I'm your mother."

He quit.

I was devastated. I had failed as a mother. I awoke each morning with a rock of pain in my stomach. Seeing my distress, my husband suggested that we begin praying together. We did, and a daily habit started.

John moved to Los Angeles and for two years studied harmony, music theory, and writing at a school run by the entertainment industry. His rock and roll band began playing at parties and on the Strip. Those awful things they say about Hollywood—they're true. It's a place that can break people into small pieces.

I fell on my face before God. One day as I prayed, crying out in fear for John, I was stopped. It was as though God's hand was on me, and I could not move. Indelibly, supernaturally, these words were etched in my mind: "Don't be afraid; he's mine." I calmed down and clung to God's promises. I began to thank Him, even though my feelings rebelled, that my dream had shattered because God had other plans. I asked God to help me understand John, to love his friends, and to show me how to encourage him. I asked God to draw John back to His heart.

Over the next few years, my husband and I would go hear John's band play in those places where all the kids were dressed in black Gothic with blank eyes. We wore earplugs except when John played. I'd look around and pray, "Lord, I don't know why I'm here, but You love these kids. Thank you for whatever is ahead." Please understand that this change in my attitude was happening over a period of several years. I didn't wake up one morning and say, "Thank you, Lord, for the paradigm shift," but my heart was slowly changing, and God was teaching me in the process.

John's band had a following. Record companies invested in demos, but they wanted darker music than John wrote. He began to discern there was an agenda in the industry. He lived with his band and made a living with his hands. He learned to drop in motors and transmissions, to paint, plumb, and do electrical wiring—whatever kept the band running.

He met a lovely young woman with the voice of an angel in one of those places on the Strip. She had been following his band for two years. He brought her home to meet us, saying, "You'll like her, mom; she's shorter than you!"

Just before their marriage a recording contract hit an impasse. Together John and Tonya decided to leave L.A. and move to Redlands. They bought a little Victorian house with a carriage house made of thick, soundproof rock. They started their own mom and pop remodeling and restoration business, and the carriage house became a recording studio for the music they write together.

It was as though God's hand was on me, and I could not move. Indelibly, supernaturally, these words were etched in my mind: "Don't be afraid; he's mine."

John's wife was raised in a Mormon home (why was I not surprised that he married a small blond with a big prophet in her background?), and although she had put the religion of her youth on hold, God had a hold on her heart. Five years ago she became a Christ-follower, and within a year, through her patient love, John came back into fellowship with the Savior.

Not long ago at a family dinner, John played a new song he'd written about the Lord Jesus. As I listened I had such gratitude toward God. He had taken my dream that was not evil—that maybe even was good—and had replaced it with His best.

Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." My prayer for John and Tonya as godly, talented, loving parents of Mary Elizabeth and John VI, is to know God's heart regarding their children.

God is so good, and I praise His name for all He restores. Nine years ago I was able to share Christ with my "agnostic" dad, and he prayed to receive Him. As he was dying, his last words to me through tears streaming down his face were, "I'll see you in heaven." During the next four years before her death, my mother suffered mini-strokes which rendered her childlike. The Lord allowed me to see in the last months the beautiful child He had always loved. He healed my heart and I think hers as I would hold her hands and hug her—two things that hadn't been allowed.

And my dream? God took it from me and gave me Himself instead. My children are His, and His plans for them are far better than mine could ever be. !

John and Tonya's latest recording, *Reservoir Road*, includes their own compositions as well as those of other musicians from the worship team at Trinity Evangelical Free Church. For information about obtaining the CD, email www.redlandsrecords.com.

Praise God!

I praise God every day for calling me to Him after so many years apart from Him. I thank Him, that through your ministry, the obstacles that once blocked the path to Him have been forever removed, and that I have been richly blessed with the opportunity of developing a personal, meaningful relationship with my Creator for the first time in my life.

I know there are thousands of former Adventists who right now feel that they are most certainly lost, and that the only way to be saved is to return to the SDA church. May the Lord smile upon you. May He richly bless your ministry, so that every one of these former SDA "lost sheep" may indeed hear the truth and be blessed—as I have been blessed—with knowing Jesus Christ in a very real way.

Well Done!

Well done for the ministry specifically for former Adventists and transitioning Adventists like myself. I find *Proclamation!* highly informative and very helpful and indeed comforting. It tells me the falsehood of Adventism is not just experienced by a "lost" (as the confused Adventists love to class us "apostates" of Adventism!) handful of lovers of truth of the gospel of Christ.

I want information on how to give regularly to your ministry in appreciation of your work you are doing and to help further it.

I am originally from Africa. The reason the likes of Adventism and Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormonism penetrate places like Africa and Asia is the prominence of poverty and illiteracy coupled with mythical beliefs transferred through traditions and culture by generations of families.

I consider the ploy of groups such as Adventists to be dubious for capitalizing on people's very poor economic states (which usually affect people's mental states over long periods) to lure them into false religious beliefs filled with lies and deadly doctrines that are awash with "do's and don'ts" that are in contradiction to the true words of God. Christ has done away with them!

By default and out of courtesy, poverty-stricken people that are shown "pseudo-love and kindness" such as food and shelter (as ADRA deceptively, usually with a hidden agenda, provides) will see the need to pay back the "superficial kindness" by listening to the benefactor and unquestioningly buying the product that is being "sold" to them, even though it might cost them

their souls! This obligation to pay back kindnesses is typically cultural in Africa.

When I see ministries like yours and others venturing into places like Africa bringing truths of the Word to counter the deceiving religions and fake Christian denominations, I just praise God Almighty continuously in my heart! Many are being released from the shackles and yokes of Adventism.

On the surface Adventism seems innocuous, as do many false religions; but strip the top layer, worship with them, and intently tune your ears to what is being said and "preached" from the pulpit, in campaigns, and even subtly during Sabbath lunches, and you will see the major faults in their statements. Spotting their errors, though, is only possible if you are a true, diligent student of the Word and the Spirit of God is with you.

Adventism is destructive; it throws out the claims of Christ and selectively twists or reinterprets words to fit their theology, and all I can say from a biblical position to people in Adventism is that the future is grim. I feel sorry for some bold Adventists that repeatedly say to themselves that the lies or inaccuracies are OK; God will overlook these as He cannot really send us to hell for unknowingly believing the lie.

Please never be perturbed by the confused and angry sabbatarian, Ellen White-believing Adventists. Rest assured that with Paul, you and I and everyone genuinely in Christ can say to ourselves also, "There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8).

God will protect all of you that are exposing their chicaneries!

Giving to LAM

As a Christian and former Seventh-day Adventist, my greatest concern is that my own family and loved ones will also find spiritual freedom and rest in Christ. The most important legacy I will leave to my children will be their memories of my own spiritual struggle to break the bonds of legalism. I am deeply grateful to the LAM team for providing the resources that set me free from the theological maze that left me without peace or assurance for 50 years. How can I leave a gift to LAM through my will?

Editor's note: We have talked with a person experienced in dealing with wills and trusts about this question. Here is the response:

Leaving a gift to LAM through your will is easy. Just ask your attorney to include a statement similar to this in your will:

"I give to Life Assurance Ministries, Inc., of PO Box 905, Redlands, California, 92373, the sum of [dollar amount] or [percentage] of the residue of my estate so others can learn to trust fully in Jesus."

This is an easy way to make a gift, and it's a reminder to your loved ones of your trust in Jesus.

Heat over Helsius

I was amazed to read the assertions made in Jeffrey Helsius' recent article, "Dear Conference President"; Part 1. Mr. Helsius is certainly entitled to his opinions. However, I could not disagree more.

The Clear Word is nothing more than a paraphrase. A paraphrase reflects the author's understanding of Scripture. We have seen that in Kenneth Taylor's *The Living Bible* and Eugene Peterson's *The Message* among others. Why should we expect more from Jack Blanco in *The Clear Word*? If we were dealing with a real translation of Scripture rather than a paraphrase, Mr. Helsius' charges regarding changes in the text would have more merit. However, both Mr. Helsius and Dr. Blanco are entitled to their opinions on biblical texts. All serious Bible students recognize that we should use Bible translations prepared by committees of scholars for serious study. Biblical paraphrases serve more as a devotional tool.

Mr. Helsius' charge that publishing *The Clear Word* created a blasphemous Bible which is sectarian is baseless. What credible evidence is there that by publishing *The Clear Word* the Seventh-day Adventist Church was publishing its own sectarian Bible as have the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses previously? Such a charge is without merit.

One last item deserves comment: Mr. Helsius' comments regarding Michael the archangel. Unfortunately, the word angel is not translated. This article relies on the common transliteration. If the word were translated, it means "messenger". Thus Michael is the arch messenger, the preeminent messenger far superior to any angel. Aside from the textual evidence which suggests to me that Michael is another name for Jesus, we also have the meaning of the name, Michael, "Who is like God?" Who only could legitimately bear that name? Only Jesus Christ Himself.

I trust that my letter will be published in its entirety and that my identity will also be included. I have served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an ordained minister for more than twenty-seven years. I currently serve as the Corporation Secretary, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Director, and Trust Services Director for the Oklahoma Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Cordially, Vialo Weis, Jr.

The writings of Ellen White have helped me understand the Trinity [in ways] that I fear Jeffrey Helsius has not considered.

God the Father has always chosen to relate to His created beings by becoming one of them. Before the Son became Jesus, He became Michael the archangel so He could relate to His angelic hosts. Just as God the Father created human flesh in the womb of Mary for God the Son, God the Father created angelic flesh for God the Son when He created Michael. But uncreating Michael who appeared similar to other angels, and could love and relate to them more intimately, God the Father also created the possibility that Lucifer, the next highest being, would have the freedom to develop jealousy.

The nature of this triune God is a mystery. God is not one head with three bodies; God is three separate persons. It seems that God is teaching His creatures relationship skills when He shares how the Godhead relate. Jeffrey has problems with Ellen White describing the Son pleading with the Father (page 9), yet in Gethsemane Jesus pleads the Father that the cup of His suffering might pass from Him, but not His will but the Father's be done. Does this not sound like two persons with different takes on the matter? Jesus teaches acquiescing to the Father's will which is not identical to His own desire or will.

When Jesus asked God on the cross why He had forsaken Him, that also sounds like two persons in the midst of a misunderstanding. Therefore what Ellen White states about the relationship between the Father and Son is not out of harmony with what we read in scripture. The Trinity relationship shows give and take between two differing viewpoints that through a communicative process blend into harmony of action and purpose. Thus our Divine Teachers show us how they work together to work out complex problems into creative unanimous harmonious solutions.

Jeffrey seems concerned that Ellen White describes the Father surrounded by an envelope of light into which the angels cannot see. Would not this be expected if the Son were in the angelic form of Michael, rather than the shrouded form of the Father?

Jeffrey seems to find fault with Ellen White saying there was anxiety (which Jeffrey feels is a sin) in the hearts of unfallen angels as the war in heaven was fought. Who says anxiety is always sinful? Cannot sinless angels fear, have deep concern (a form of anxiety), over the fate of their fellow beings as they see them choosing Lucifer's side?

I pray Jeffrey will more fully and with the counsel of patient others analyze each and every one of his conclusions. Jeffrey, do not harden your heart to truth. Conference Presidents are very busy, and are not always the best persons to ask deep theological questions. I would hope that before Jeffrey was terminated, he could have been referred to the most thoughtful, wise, and possibly retired pastor, who could have taken lots of time with his every question.

Sincerely, Elizabeth Iskander, MD

Editor's Note: The idea that Jesus became Michael the archangel so he could relate to the angels is found nowhere in Scripture. Similarly, the Bible never suggests Jesus was a preeminent messenger. Rather, the Bible reveals Jesus actually to be the Message—the Word (John 1:1), God's final revelation to us, the heir and creator of all things. (Hebrews 1:2). Hebrews 1:7-14 specifically addresses the issue of Jesus' superiority over the angels and contrasts God's treatment of angels with His treatment of Jesus. The Bible does not support the idea that Jesus was in any way a form of angel or superior "messenger".

What nonsense

Please do NOT send us *Proclamation!* I am so sad all of you ministers have left the true gospel of Jesus Christ, His very own Seventh-day Adventist church. What a shame! What nonsense you all have adopted.

I believe in all the principles of the Seventh-day Adventist church and E. G. White as an inspired messenger of our Lord and Savior.

Fantastic Service

I pray that God will continue to bless you in His service. I am really convinced you are rendering a fantastic service in helping Adventists and

former Adventists through *Proclamation!*

I truly love *Proclamation!* and find so much encouragement from it.

Law Not Separated

The June/July *Proclamation!* is another home run regarding biblical truths and how they relate to the Adventist message. Your attention to what Paul says in Galatians 3:15-25 is right on target. The law was given at a specific time, for a specific time, and for a specific people. This is one of the clearest set of verses regarding the law in the New Testament.

One of the hurdles I have when speaking with my Adventist friends has been the issue of the law. They have continued to discuss from the assumption that the law is separated into ceremonial, civil, and moral law. Well, the Holy Spirit gave me the answer. As my wife and I were traveling in the Mountains of Tennessee, she was reading to me from Ephesians when I said to her, "Stop! Read that again."

She had just read Ephesians 2:15: "by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations." Now, when we read that we knew what we had just read was an answer to prayer. Let me ask you, what does abolish the law mean? Does it mean do away with for now to be brought back at another time?

No! It means to do away with. Then Paul tells us what the law is in the second half of that verse. The commandments and regulations make up the law. Period.

So if Paul does not separate the law into ceremonial, civil, and moral components, why do the Adventists? Could it be that is the only way to make their doctrine work? Does Jesus separate the law into ceremonial, civil, and moral?

NO! It is Ellen G. White and the Adventists that have separated them in order to make their doctrine make sense. The only problem is that it does not stand the biblical test. Nowhere in the Bible is the law separated. Quite the opposite is true as evidenced in Ephesians 2:15.

Thank you for your clear and understandable message regarding truth and grace.

Letters may be edited for clarity or space.

Mail letters and donations to:

Life Assurance Ministries
PO Box 905
Redlands, CA 92373

Better than my dream

I was born into a Seventh-day Adventist medical family. My grandmother, mother, sister, and I all became nurses. My dad and brothers were either in medical practice or research. I thought everyone talked about tonsils and varicose veins at the dinner table. As in countless Adventist families, medicine was *The Goal*. It was what we were expected to do, and it was what gave our lives meaning.

As in countless Adventist families, medicine was *The Goal*. It was what we were expected to do, and it was what gave our lives meaning.

Our common devotion to medicine gave us focus, but my third-generation Adventist heritage greatly affected us. My paternal grandmother became an Adventist when she was in nursing school. She married a classmate who subsequently took medicine. Sadly, he died unexpectedly during his senior year. Even if he had lived, however, he would never have become a father or grandfather, because he and my grandma lived "as the angels" awaiting the eminent return of Christ for His remnant.

Following his death, Grandma married a widower 10 years her junior. He was a kind, loving man who steadfastly refused to convert to Adventism in spite of Grandma's

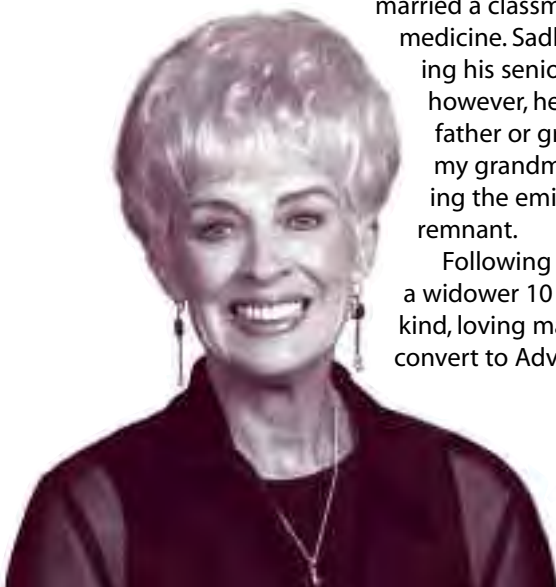
JAN MACE

pressure, and from this union came my father. Grandma, a difficult woman, had a singular dream for her only child which determined the course of his life. He took medicine.

On the other side of the family, my mother's Swedish parents met in Brooklyn. When my grandpa immigrated to the USA from Europe, he found board and room in the Adventist home of my grandmother and her father who were also newly arrived from Sweden. After Grandfather converted, he and my grandmother married and left New York for California. They had five children within seven years. My grandmother, overwhelmed with her sudden family responsibilities as well as with the culture shock of America, developed post-partum depression after the last child that progressed into chronic schizophrenia. Grandfather held the family together. My emotionally neglected mother turned to the church, and Adventism became her rock.

Eventually, while he was in college, my father began dating my mother, a nursing student. They were married after his junior year in medical school at the College of Medical Evangelists (now Loma Linda University School of Medicine). Upon graduating, my reserved but highly intelligent father became an agnostic. My Adventist mother, on the other hand, had strong faith but little peace as she strove for perfection, angry that she had been left "spiritually alone" and frightened that she might not be "good enough."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



Jan Mace earned her Master of Science degree in nursing and spent several years teaching pediatric nursing part time at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles and at Loma Linda University School of Nursing. She and her husband live in Redlands, California, and have three married children. Highlights in their lives include their five grandchildren and their involvement in Trinity Evangelical Free Church.

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