

LIFE ASSURANCE MINISTRIES, INC Proclamation!

VOLUME 4

ISSUE 1

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

2003

FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS

LAM's first missionary:

Reporting from Uganda

Greg Taylor

Greetings in Jesus!
I am writing this to the *Proclamation* family and some of the others that have been supporting this project. God truly has been incredible to us! We started our meetings under direct threat of Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) denominational

We started our meetings under direct threat of Seventh-day Adventist denominational interference.

interference. The pastors were made aware that if they invited members of the SDA church including their own former members, there would be legal repercussions. Since many in the SDA church have government connections, that left them no choice but to withdraw all advertising plans and just start in the theater they had rented for the meetings in the town of Kalerwe with a totally cold start. This was indeed difficult. Since no one knew about the meetings we could only invite those from the area and from cold contacts. Still, in spite of the odds against us, we prayed and sought Jesus to provide. There was no question in any of our minds that this thing was of the Lord. The timing of all the details preceding my going including clear impressions long before I even heard of the project, were confirmations to us all. So we started with just a handful of people. Several came from a local Sabbatarian Gospel

church that had formed shortly after Desmond Ford's teachings on the investigative judgment came to light back in the 80's. Some of these folk had read material from *Proclamation* and came to argue the necessity of adhering to old covenant practices. There was a spirit of debate in them that felt confrontational. Then there were a few people in the neighborhood that were curious and showed up.

The first few meetings we just taught the Gospel. As we clearly taught grace vs law, the combative spirit left and a heart to learn took its place. Behind the scenes we were earnestly praying for God to do what He had sent me there for and set these pastors free to accomplish. Meanwhile among the pastors there was a true hunger and learning going on about the ways of the Spirit. We learned about the fullness of the Holy Spirit and how God truly wants His church to have everything that the disciples were given. They were wide open and found that the power to pray is given to all that ask!

During the first couple of meetings God sent a young woman named Joyce to join us. She had heard about us from a young ex-Moslem named Abdul. She started to attend from his invitation and soon she was joining us in prayer and fasting for the meetings. We decided that we would fast

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Life Assurance Ministries (LAM), Inc

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

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

Uganda Mission:

We at LAM want to publicly thank Pastor Greg Taylor for his willingness to go to Uganda and encourage, guide and help start a new work there. You will sense God's power in his article. I have put together a few of the many emails we have received from our pastors in Uganda. As you read these accounts you will see that they are facing real spiritual warfare on several fronts. But—and this is the good news—God is working in miraculous ways to confirm the message of the simple gospel of grace in Christ! He is opening doors so fast that we can hardly keep up!

Abortion:

Recently we posted the resignation letter of Arthur & Teresa Beem from Keene, Texas on our web site at http://www.ratzlaf.com/resignation_letter.htm. One paragraph from their letter has caused much discussion.

Several weeks ago, I called Jan Paulsen's office to see if there was any update on the church's position. Though President Paulsen was not there, his secretary assured me that the pro-choice position had not changed. She then advised me to get the "official" word from Dr. George Reid, head of the Biblical Research Institute. I was shocked at his admission that the church was indeed pro-choice. I told him that I was speaking at an ethics class, taught by Pastor Bill Kilgore at Southwestern Adventist University and needed a quote. He said "Adventists are pro-choice but under strict guidelines." He then went on to say that each Adventist hospital could choose to accept or reject the church's guidelines. Some Adventist hospitals performed many abortions. He even said, "Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park has become an abortion mill."

Many Adventists do not seem to know how involved Adventist hospitals are in performing abortions. Several have asked that LAM address the issue of abortion from a biblical standpoint. We contacted Dr. Richard Fredericks of Damascus Road Community Church who prepared a paper on this topic when he was an Adventist theologian. This paper was presented at a symposium when the SDA church was deciding which way it would go—pro life or pro choice. We feel Dr. Fredericks' paper, while presented some years ago, is up-to-date and relevant. Biblical truth does not change. While I am not personally involved with the abortion issue, as I read this paper I was drawn to a better understanding of the gospel, radical discipleship, the need to reach out and

help those in crisis pregnancies, and the need to submit my life to the Word of God regardless of consequences. Yes, I was blessed and challenged to be a fully devoted follower of Christ. I think you will be also. We thank Dr. Fredericks for his willingness to let us print this important and timely article. As this is a long article, we will continue it into the next *Proclamation*.

Thank You!

Once again I want to thank those of you who are so faithfully supporting the ministry of LAM. Your partnership has made it possible for us to not only publish *Proclamation* but also help support the former Adventist pastors in Uganda. In the emails from Uganda they always express their thanks to the supporters of LAM. We expect that there will be more calls for the financial support of transitioning pastors in the future. Join us in prayer that God will supply the means for us to help them. We are happy that LAM is now, through the Uganda Mission, directly involved with ministry to the unchurched! It is our prayer that this ministry will grow and we can at least play a small part in taking the gospel to the world.

Donation Receipts:

You should have received your year end donation receipt. If you have not, or if you find any discrepancy, please let us know. We have also had many envelopes returned for unknown addresses. We do our best to keep our mailing list up to date, but if you move, let us know as soon as possible.

Letters to the Editor:

Thus far we have tried to keep a balance in the letters we print. Some of the letters we receive leave the arena of discussion that "formers" must deal with and focus on personalities. Please keep your letters directed to the issues. I always read all the letters we receive. However, because of time restraints I am not able to answer all of them. We do appreciate them and will print as many as possible in *Proclamation*. Keep them coming! **!**

Discussion forum, Bible studies, and testimonies for former Adventists:

www.FormerAdventist.com

A sister ministry to Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.

Proclamation!

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FORSAKE NOT YOUR Assembling

Dale Ratzlaff

One of the questions I am repeatedly asked by people transitioning out of the Seventh-day Adventist church is, "What church can you recommend for me to attend?" Or, "I can't seem to find a church where I feel comfortable."

Carolyn and I can certainly relate to those of you who are having a hard time finding a church that meets your needs. When I resigned the pastorate of Christian Community Church some years ago, we thought that we would continue to worship there. However, it was not long until the new leadership increased the volume of the worship music so much that we could not tolerate it. We then started attending different churches hoping to find the right one. We found several where we were comfortable with the pastor but again the worship was either too "rocky," too loud, or so much of a performance that it had little meaning. We also visited some churches where the pastor was very controlling and we felt he did not have a good grasp of the gospel. We almost joined three churches, but each time decided they were not quite right for us.

At first we felt Mark Martin's Calvary Community was too large (8,000) for us to call it "home." However, now we have tried it and find it very acceptable. Mark is a gifted speaker and has a solid grasp of the gospel. His worship team is excellent, with real, heart-felt worship. With hundreds of people packing out the adult worship center and overflow chapel in each of three Sunday morning services, with a Saturday night service, and a Sunday evening service he is making a real impact in Phoenix. He had five Christmas Eve services and the one we went to was packed out and over 25 people made first-time decisions for Christ. We feel very fortunate to be in a good church again. At the conclusion of this article, I will suggest a few things to look for in choosing a good church.

Those of us who have come from a strict Sabbath-keeping background can appreciate one thing about the Sabbath. It made us take time to focus our attention on God. While the new

covenant is not concerned with specific times and places, it does, nonetheless, stress the importance of meeting together on a regular basis and taking time to be with the Lord.

Forsake not our own assembling together

Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the [most] holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our body washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; *not forsaking our own assembling together*, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near (Heb. 10:19-25; emphasis added).

The passage quoted above gives several admonitions, and, I believe, also tell us how to keep these admonitions. The following may help.

- Let us draw near, in full assurance
- Let us hold fast the confession of our hope
- Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds
- (by)
- not forsaking our own assembling together

Fellowship necessary for faith

All Christians should understand why regular Christian meetings and regular time devoted to God are so necessary. In the new covenant we are saved, not by works, but by *faith*.

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Heb. 11:6).

So faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17).

When Christians come together for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, His presence is manifest, especially in the breaking of the bread.

The early church had a living faith in their Lord. We have this short but important description of its activities.

So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they were *continually* devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer (Acts 2:41, 42; emphasis added).

Christ is present in Christian fellowship

Jesus said that where two or three are gathered together He would be in their midst (Mt. 18:20). And the appearances of the risen Lord, most of which were on the first day of the week, are designed to teach us the reality of His promise. When Christians come together for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, His presence is manifest, especially in the breaking of the bread.

Today we live in a secular culture and are constantly bombarded with information that is targeted to undermine our faith. In order to combat this we must be careful to regularly feed upon the Word of God. It is only when we meet together with other Christians that we are able to follow the admonition of Hebrews 10. It is imperative that Christians meet together on a *regular* basis to experience the presence of the risen Lord.

Fellowship needed for personal growth

In the new covenant, the Holy Spirit fills the place that the law held in the old. It is the Holy Spirit that guides the believer in how to implement the new covenant law of love. Therefore we find Paul's beautiful exposition on love recorded in 1 Corinthians 13 sandwiched between 1 Corinthians 12 and 1 Corinthians 14, two chapters dealing with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In these chapters Paul shows how all Christians have some gift of the Spirit. In order for these gifts to operate, the church must *come together* in order to become the "body of Christ." It is only within the fellowship of believers that the Holy Spirit can lead us to become all that He wants us to be. Each Christian is likened to an organ of the body with every Christian ministering to and receiving ministry from every other "organ" of Christ's "body." In His final talk with the disciples before His death, Jesus said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you" (Jn. 15:12). Just as the "book of the law" interpreted

and applied the "tablets of the law" in the old covenant, so the epistles interpret and apply the law of love in the new covenant. One-another ministry is an example of this interpretation and application. One-another ministry is not an option if we are to experience authentic Christianity. Following is a partial list of "one-another" passages in the New Testament which serve to guide us in one-another ministry:

- Greet one another. Rom. 16:16
- Accept one another. Rom. 15:7
- Be kind to one another. Eph. 4:32
- Care for one another. 1 Cor. 12:25
- Be at peace with one another. Mk. 9:50
- Be members of one another. Eph. 4:25
- Be devoted to one another. Rom. 12:10
- Give preference to one another. Rom. 12:10
- Be of the same mind toward one another. Rom. 12:16
- Admonish one another. Rom. 15:14
- Wait for one another. 1 Cor. 11:33
- Bear one another's burdens. Gal. 6:2
- Show forbearance to one another. Eph. 4:2
- Be subject to one another. Eph. 5:21
- Bear with one another. Col. 3:13
- Teach one another. Col. 3:16
- Comfort one another. 1 Thess. 4:18
- Stimulate one another to love and good deeds. Heb. 10:24
- Confess your sins [faults] to one another. Jas. 5:16
- Pray for one another. Jas. 5:16
- Forgive one another. Col. 3:13
- Be hospitable to one another. 1 Pet. 4:9
- Build up one another. 1 Thess. 5:11
- Encourage one another. 1 Thess. 5:11
- Serve one another. Gal. 5:13

While Christians should meet together in weekly worship celebration, "one another" ministry often works best in small home groups where authentic, dynamic Christianity really lives.

Pastoral teaching needed for spiritual growth

Every Christian does not have the skill, time or training to be a thorough Bible student. It is the duty of the pastor to "equip the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). Thus it is important for the Christian to receive weekly teaching from one who does have the time and training to dig out the precious ore of Bible truth and refine it so that it is relevant for today. This does not mean the Christian is to blindly follow what the pastor says. Nor does it mean that the Christian layperson cannot be individually guided in his Bible study by the Holy Spirit. Rather, the Christian is to examine the Scriptures himself to see if the pastor's teaching is true (see Acts 17:11). But a Christian who does not regularly attend Bible study and church is going to be stunted in his personal growth. Our Lord wants us all to experience authentic, dynamic Christianity; therefore, He gives us pastoral leaders.

Not long ago, Mark Martin gave an illustration of how he was Christmas shopping and it seemed every time he wanted to purchase something he was met with a new clerk at the cash register who did not know how to do his/her job. He told of one experience where he waited patiently for 20 minutes for the clerk to figure out how to correctly ring up the sale. The Holy Spirit used this illustration to admonish me how I had become impatient in a similar circumstance. I usually make deposits at an ATM at the Wells Fargo Bank in the Safeway where we trade. However, this day the ATM was down so I made the deposit at the bank window. A young man waited on me whom I had seen and made transactions with before. He asked me to run my bankcard through the machine when I made the deposit and punch in my pin number which I did. The deposit I made was over one thousand dollars and I had about five hundred in the account before the deposit. After making the deposit, I wrote out a \$300 check I wanted to cash, and gave it to the same teller. He again asked me for my bank card which I handed to him, then he wanted my driver's license which I showed to him in the window of my wallet. He copied down the number and my birth date. Then he asked me if I would take it out so he could feel it. He said he wanted to make sure it was not a fake. I pulled out the driver's license, handed it to him and said, "This is foolishness." He assured me that it was for "my protection." I'm sure I projected my frustration with such legalistic, unthinking treatment from someone who knew me.

However, when Mark told how he had to wait patiently for the new clerk, the Holy Spirit used his illustration to admonish me how I had failed to allow the fruit of the Spirit—patience—to operate in my life. There in the church I was led to confess my shortcoming. God had used "another" to help me mature.

It is easy to think we can allow the Holy Spirit to develop the qualities of love in our lives without fellowship with other Christians, however, that is not God's plan. Review again the "one another" activities listed above and you will see that we need each other if we are to grow as God would have us.

Fellowship needed for evangelism

The church is commissioned to take the gospel to all the world (Mt. 28:18-20). The fellowship of believers plays an important part in this expansion of the church. It was the church that sent out Paul and Barnabas on their missionary trips (Acts 13:1-3). The Philippian church on several occasions sent money to Paul so he could spend more time in preaching the gospel (Phil. 4:15, 16).

While Life Assurance Ministries is not a church fellowship, nevertheless our readers have responded with generosity so that we were able to send Greg Taylor to Uganda, pay the five pastors we are sponsoring in Uganda, and we are also sending them 100 Bibles to use in their ministry.

The New Testament knows nothing about Christians who are outside of fellowship. Even when they were in jail, the New Testament Christians wrote letters to encourage others to hold fast their faith in Christ (2 Tim. 4). Those who were not in jail visit-

The New Testament knows nothing about Christians who are outside of fellowship.

ed and encouraged those who were (Phil. 2:25). The underlying dynamic of new covenant life is *relationship*. And regular fellowship is a prerequisite for this relationship.

Thus, with the fellowship present in New Testament times even Paul's imprisonment was an asset to the spreading of the gospel.

Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear (Phil. 1:12, 13).

Fellowship needed for worship

It is true that the Christian can worship God by himself.

Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased (Heb. 13:15, 16).

It is equally true that the Christian can experience complete, corporate worship only in fellowship with other Christians. In Acts 4:24-30 we have the account of the congregation lifting up "their voice to God with one accord." After this time of rehearsing God's power and His work they prayed that they might

...speak Thy word with all confidence...the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

Thus, it is imperative that Christians have a regular time for worship. It is imperative that they assemble together in order to strengthen their faith, to meet in Christ's presence, for personal Christian growth, for the extension of the kingdom, and for corporate worship.

Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the [most] holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our body washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our

hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; *not forsaking our own assembling together*, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near (Heb. 10:19-25).

We must recognize, however, that there are times when circumstances keep us from regular attendance. Health, distance, imprisonment or the lack of a suitable church as well as many other conditions may prevent us from attending church as we would like. In these situations we should not feel guilty; rather, seek fellowship with God in prayer. We think of John the Revelator, the apostle Paul, John Bunyan and others who have been incarcerated or isolated who have had close fellowship with the Risen Lord through the ever-present comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Marks of a good church

Coming back to the question that many of you are asking, "What church should I attend?" What Carolyn and I do when we move into a new community is to visit most of the churches we think might be suitable. Here is what we look for:

1. Biblical teaching. We think those who preach or teach *contextually* will be most likely to preach the whole counsel of God, not ride hobby horses, and avoid the pitfalls of "proof-text" religion. The pastor should be honest with Scripture and not just quote a text or two and then ride off on his own theological journey. The teaching should also be practical with application to everyday life. Illustrations and a little humor make truth clear and the service more enjoyable.

2. Gospel centered. Probably one of the most important criteria for a good church is to make sure it is gospel centered. While there are many good admonitions that we receive from the Word of God, we are saved by faith. If the pastor harasses the congregation with many things they must do to be saved, that is a red flag. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ, period. Any works we do after that are a *result* of salvation, not the *basis* of it.

3. Meaningful worship. Today there is a vast range of worship music, styles, volume, content, etc. We like music that is not dissonant, has a melody that can be followed and words that are expressive of our submission to a holy God. True worship is directed to God, not the congregation. Occasionally we have found some churches that we felt were controlling in their worship.

4. Happy, friendly people. Healthy churches have happy, friendly people. If the church is "cold," you are not welcomed in a genuine way, and the people all look burdened with life, it may be a legalistic church you don't want to attend.

5. Authentic. There are some churches where some who attend put on a religious appearance, dress, may even change the tone of their voices and the way they act. Often these will be churches you want to avoid. Look for "real" people in the pastor, leaders, and members. Granted, many good churches that are proclaiming the simple gospel of Christ may have many immature Christians attending and that is good. However, the leaders should be mature and real.

6. Open, not deceptive. Avoid churches and meetings that do not honestly tell you up front who they are. Some of the cults mask their real identity with generic names designed to make you think they are main-stream Christians when really they are not. This is especially true in evangelistic or revival meetings.

7. Sound Doctrine. Ask the church for their *complete* doctrinal statement. We have noticed that sometimes a church may have one doctrinal statement for visitors to see, then another behind the scene statement that may contain additional information.

8. Freedom to ask questions. Any church has the right to clearly define what it believes to be truth. But some go beyond this, and even do not want any questions to be raised regarding their established doctrine. However, I believe that asking *honest* questions is healthy not only for the questioner but for the church as well.

9. Majors and minors. Good churches major on the majors and minor on the minors. Find a church that focuses on the gospel of Christ and seeks to develop their congregants to be fully devoted followers of Christ.

10. Flexibility in the gray areas. There are some areas in Christian faith that are not clearly defined and where honest Christians can come to more than one conclusion. These might include last day events, speaking in tongues, limited atonement, etc. I believe that where the Bible is clear we can and should be certain. Where the Bible is unclear we must be tentative. Stay away from churches that find an obscure section of Scripture, give their definition as to what this passage means and then force everyone to adhere to their understanding. This is the recipe for a cult. Look for a church that allows personal freedom in non-essentials.

11. Opportunity for personal growth for the whole family. This might include many things such as small Bible study/growth groups, men's accountability groups, women's ministry functions, youth groups, children's ministry, etc. It is important that safety and accountability are major concerns of the pastoral leadership.

12. Freedom to leave. A healthy church and pastoral leadership allows one to leave fellowship without being threatened. True, there should be a healthy "family bond" between members and the pastoral leadership. However, when church leadership seeks to hold people who want to leave, speaks against someone who leaves, and acts like it owns people, it can be unhealthy. A good church leader will encourage people to leave if they can be ministered to in a better way in another church, even another denomination.

No church is perfect. Therefore, one must be content to attend a church that may not measure up in every point. Even Christ's group of disciples had their problems, as did the churches to which Paul wrote. When we join a church we should seek to grow in our relationship with the other members and also allow the Holy Spirit to help us love those who are unloving, immature and different from us. That is the essence of Christianity.

Probably the most important thing to do in seeking a church is ask for God's guidance. Consider the points listed above and pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit.

A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO ABORTION

Toward a Compassionate and Christian "Quality of Life" Ethic

Part I: Less Than Human?

Richard Fredericks, Ph.D.



he apostle John wrote: "Dear children, let us not love simply with our words and tongues, but with our deeds and in truth" (1 John 3:18); and Paul concurred that the goal of authentic Christianity is "love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:5).

The first two sections of this paper are analytical, but the third is evangelistic. Part one examines the ethical presuppositions that undergird abortion; the second portion offers a Biblical analysis of its morality and motivation.

The final section states my goal for this symposium, based on our common ground as Christians of desiring to be truly compassionate. It suggests the real question facing us is not what we should tell a woman in a crisis pregnancy to do, but what we should do for her. The real threat to happiness and self-worth for women in crisis pregnancies is not their developing child; but isolation and fear caused by indifference and apathy, or hostility and rejection from those they should be able to turn to for love, forgiveness and for emotional, physical and financial support.

Part I: Less Than Human?

In 1973 a 7-2 Supreme Court decision (*Roe vs. Wade*) overturned the legislation of 48 states that prohibited or severely limited abortions except in life-threatening situations or rape. A simultaneous decision (*Doe v. Bolton*) made the "termination of the fetus" more simple by removing the need for medical review. A woman need only state that her unborn child was somehow

detrimental to her "health" including her emotional health or simply her material or social well-being.¹

In the United States today, one out of every four pregnancies end in abortion. In fourteen metropolitan areas such as Washington D.C., Atlanta and Seattle abortions outnumber live births.² Three abortions are done per minute, 4,200 abortions per day, 1.5 million per year—a total of more than 21 million since the Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1973. Since 1975 the 'war on the unborn' has produced twice as many casualties each year as have the combined deaths in all the major wars in U.S. history, from the Revolutionary War through Vietnam.

Less than 3% of all abortions are for serious defects, rape, incest or danger to the mother. In almost every case the abortion is done because someone perceived it would be an inconvenience: a social or financial hindrance to 'personal happiness.' The unborn are allowed no jury, defense or stay of execution by the law.

The mother's womb is now the most dangerous place throughout one's entire lifespan. The chance for a premeditated and fatal assault is never again as high. Simultaneously, abortion has made the medical profession, whose entire orientation was once geared toward preserving life, the nation's foremost terminators of life.³

How Did We Get Here?

Is this a gross violation of the sixth commandment? If 97% of

ABORTION

all abortions are performed for matters of personal convenience is this murder—the violent killing of innocent human life? The answer depends on how one views the “fetus?” The term itself “fetus” is simply a Latin word that means ‘unborn child’. Is the fetus really a child, a member of the human family and thus deserving of protection? Or is it only tissue, a part of the woman’s body, whose sole right to survival is based on whether or not the mother feels she wants it?⁴

In their 1973 decision the Supreme Court justices gave their answer to this question by ruling that while the unborn are

“What conditions should be used as the criteria of personhood? Can an entity [a human] be considered a person merely because it possesses certain biological properties? Or should other factors be introduced, such as consciousness, self-consciousness, rationality, and the capacities for communication and moral judgment?...For example, if we believe it is the capacity to think and reason that makes one human, we will likely associate the loss of personhood with the loss of rationality. If we consider consciousness as the defining characteristic, we will be more inclined to consider a person to have lost that

status when a number of characteristics such as the capacities to remember, enjoy, worry, and will are gone.... This doesn’t mean that a death decision necessarily follows when an entity is determined to be a nonperson. But it does mean that whatever is inherently objectionable about allowing or causing a person to die dissolves, because the entity is no longer a person (emphasis supplied).”⁵

Recent developments demonstrate that this ethic has extended beyond the question of abortion.

Euthanasia, the medically induced “good death” for those deemed no longer fit to live, has become more acceptable⁶ — and active euthanasia is increasingly practiced by members of the medical profession.⁷ And there already have been several instances of infanticide, cases in which newborns with some type of genetic deficiency were placed in a hospital nursery crib marked “Do Not Feed” and allowed to die of dehydration—a process that took six days in the case of Bloomington, Indiana’s “Baby Doe” in April 1982.⁸

All arguments that support this ethic recognize a hierarchical structuring of the value of individual humans based on relative worth. So, for example the mother’s happiness may be considered more important than the child’s life, or society’s financial well-being above even basic extended care of the terminally ill. This is a dramatic shift away from the Judeo-Christian view of human life as sacred which gave the preservation of innocent human life⁹ priority over any socio-economic consideration.

An article that appeared in the journal *California Medicine* three years before *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion-on-demand illustrates the need to repudiate the old ethic based upon the sanctity of life in order to be comfortable with abortion:

“The process of eroding the old ethic and substituting the new has already begun. It may be seen most clearly in changing attitudes toward human abortion.... Since the old ethic has not yet been fully displaced it has been necessary to separate the idea of abortion from the idea of killing, which continues to be socially abhorrent. The results have been a curious avoidance of the scientific fact, which everyone really knows, that human life begins at conception, and is continuous whether intra- or extra-uterine until death.... This schizophrenic subterfuge is necessary because while the new ethic is being accepted the old one has not been rejected.”¹⁰

Basic to the quality of life ethic is the concept that all human beings do not necessarily have intrinsic value nor even equal value.

human, they are not persons. The fetus is only a “potential life” and therefore does not have legal right of protection. This understanding of the human fetus is rooted in the quality of life ethic.

Stated in its most simplistic and essential terms the quality of life ethic responds to modern social and economic problems by stating that some humans are a.) not really true “persons,” and b.) a great hindrance to a better lifestyle for individuals and society, thus c.) it is not wrong to kill them because it enhances (in an expedient and cost effective way) the quality of life for those who are true persons. Abortion is the first pragmatic illustration of this ethic in action. It is exhibit A, the tip of the iceberg.

Basic to the quality of life ethic is the concept that all human beings do not necessarily have intrinsic value nor even equal value. Indeed, many homo sapiens should not be seen as persons at all. Rather “personhood” is assigned according to various levels of physical and mental development. One must attain and then maintain these qualities in order to have a life worth living—or protecting. Simply put, personhood is based on achievement and unless a human achieves (and maintains) a certain level of intellectual or physical development he/she is not a person, and therefore is disposable if seen as a threat to a full person.

Abortion is the first application of this ethic. Its logic legitimizes further questions: “Are all post-fetal humans truly persons? If not, who are not? Who should decide?” The unborn, because they are at an early developmental stage, are denied personhood and placed in a free fire zone. They are dependent, non-productive, not able to defend themselves, and a potential economic burden. Why should other problematic humans be treated any different if they also fit into similar categories? In his widely used college textbook on ethics, Vincent Barry illustrates the dilemma well:

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If personhood is based on capabilities or achievements, then who has the authority to draw the line between mere entities and genuine persons? What barrier will keep those in the next generation who hold power in society from expanding the category of nonpersons to include others whom they consider a threat to the general welfare of the state? The crucial point is that we have moved from an objective (all innocent human life is protected by law) to subjective (only those defined at this point in time as “persons” are legally protected) base in our legal-ethics. The door is open for the circle of “non-person humans” to expand.

The twenty-week old fetus of a drug addict father and a mentally distraught, economically deprived mother can be legally terminated to enhance the quality of life for those involved and society. Based on that reasoning why could not a totally dependent twenty-week old newborn in the same circumstances also be killed? Or a two-year old? There is no objective or logical basis to prohibit such a step. The only barrier against such an expansion in our present legal system is subjective opinion. If one believes in the fallen condition of humanity, this is terrifying.¹¹

Thus the quality of life ethic radically alters the moral mandate against murder. It is no longer a species-centered injunction against killing humans but a more selective prohibition against killing persons-as defined by society at any given moment. It allows society to adjust to the idea of solving social and economic problems by killing problem people. The two ethical arguments then become: who is worthy of life; and who decides?

Classifying humans as nonpersons.

The questions just raised are not idle ones. The 1973 abortion decision was not the first time that, based on economic considerations and the supposedly superior rights of others, the U.S. Supreme court ruled a certain class of humans to be nonpersons.

In 1857 the Supreme Court ruled in the Dred Scott case that the Black race was less than human and the property of the owner. To free a slave would violate the Fifth Amendment by causing an undue financial hardship to those who were truly human [White slave owners]. Listen to the precise reasoning of Chief Justice Taney (himself a slave owner):

“They [Blacks] have for more than a century been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his own benefit. He was bought and sold, and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic, whenever a profit could be made by it (emphasis supplied).”¹²

This also was a “pro-choice” decision, in this case the choice of the slave owner that enabled one human to treat another as personal property to be kept or disposed of at will—especially if a profit could be made. Like the unborn children of the late 20th century, Black men, women and children in the 19th century were

denied the rights and protection that come with personhood. The basis of that tragic decision was a narrow view of humanity that arbitrarily limited personhood to a particular skin color.¹³

This century contains a more direct analogy to America’s increasing implementation of death-laws as solutions to social and economic problems. That analogy began in the Weimer German Republic (1919-33) and climaxed the Nazi Third Reich (1933-45). Death as a solution gradually culminated in Hitler’s “Final Solution” in which the Jews (a religious group) were declared nonpersons, an unacceptable burden and threat to soci-

In Adventist hospitals where abortions are done the overwhelming percentage are elective abortions...

ety. The result was the Holocaust, the extermination [termination] of 6,000,000 Jews.

Most people today know about Hitler’s Final Solution, but few know its ethical and medical precedents. In 1920 Felix Meiner published a small volume in Leipzig, Germany titled: The Release of the Destruction of Life Devoid of Value that paved the way for the physicians of Germany to become the directors of the Nazi killing program. In this volume German psychiatrist Alfred Hoche and lawyer Karl Binding declared the Hippocratic oath obsolete, denied that there is an absolute right to life, and decried the ‘wasted manpower, patience and capital investment’ needed to ‘keep life not worth living alive.’ Hoche and Binding forcefully argued that the terminally ill, the unproductive, the feeble minded, and all ‘useless eaters’ have the ‘right to the complete relief of an unbearable life’ and should be ‘given a death with dignity.’¹⁴

At the same time German schoolchildren were taught the Hegelian principle: “whatever is useful is right.” Mathematics problems were given in which they were asked to figure the costs of supporting “useless” old people versus building housing for productive newlyweds. They were taught that the handicapped represented an obstacle to their economic prosperity. Killing the ‘useless’ for financial reasons became acceptable moral reasoning. Before the first Jews entered the gas chambers, the “Charitable Transport Company for the Sick” carried 250,000 German citizens deemed “unfit to live” to places where they were given “good deaths.” Among those no longer fit to live were World War I veterans who were amputees, the incontinent elderly, and Gypsies.¹⁵

Finally the Nuremburg Race Laws declared Jews, Gypsies and “half-breeds” (children who were part Jewish by heritage) had lost all rights to legal protection because they were “partial Germans” who were “less than human.” Their extinction was called an economic “strengthening of the State” through the “cleansing of the race.”

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At the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, psychiatrist Dr. Leo Alexander demonstrated that the people who participated and condoned the atrocities of those two decades were not demented monsters. They were very ordinary people who chose to remain silent rather than risk losing their own prosperity, popularity or positions. The majority of Christians in Germany continued to attend church regularly but remained silent. Silent!¹⁶

Adventist Involvement: A Personal Analysis

The Adventist role in this drama is what moved me from apathy to involvement.

The baby was born alive and crying, but placed in a sealed bucket to suffocate. She was horrified by such an act of murder.

In Adventist hospitals where abortions are done the overwhelming percentage are elective abortions (no defect in the child or danger to the life of the mother); a practice allowed for under #5 of the Church's official guidelines. I soon realized there would not be a pro-life or a pro-choice movement if the abortion question actually centered around the tiny fraction of abortions involving rape, severe mental retardation or danger to the mother. The real issue is two views of human value.

Next I saw pictures—real pictures of what happens in an abortion. What was being torn apart by a suction curette 10-13 weeks into a pregnancy is not a "blob" or "unwanted tissue" but a child with perfectly formed little arms, hands, fingers and even fingernails; feet with toes and toenails; faces with eyes and expression; a brain that had already emitted strong brainwaves for a month before the "termination." I was looking at a human being with potential, and not at potential life.

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

And I met Patti McKinney, the President of the fastest growing organization in America: WEBA (Women Exploited by Abortion).

Starting five years ago with two members, it currently has 36,000 members with chapters in 30 states, Patti introduced me to the "women's issue" in abortion from another angle—the incredible sense of betrayal and the equally tremendous physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional scars left with many who choose to abort.¹⁷

Meeting Patti had an impact on me for another reason. This courageous lady, who appears regularly on national television, was at one time a member of our church. She left us because she believed we were not serious about our call to keep all the commandments of God. Her question was: "OK Adventists, what about the sixth commandment?"

Next to basic apathy ("I don't want to get involved" or "If the church is neutral so am I.") the predominant response I have found among Adventists, especially clergy, is a denial that the Scriptural principals have anything to say concerning this issue. Because no proof-text against abortion can be found, it is argued, the Bible is neutral or, at best, non-definitive. This, to me, is a view that discredits Scripture and God Himself. Is God indifferent

to the reality of America's 22,000,000 abortions in fifteen years—the tip of the iceberg in terms of handling economic threats and social inequality by death. Has He really left everyone to "do what is right in his own eyes"?

If so, society and the church are left with a diminished view of humanity in which only those who are truly "persons"—as defined by society at any given moment—have a legal and moral right to life. The only barrier against killing humans for reasons of socio-economic expediency becomes nothing more than the subjective opinion of society or its power-elite; and history indicates that if social and economic pressures become severe enough, such a self-serving barrier will quickly give way to a quiet holocaust with the medical profession taking the lead. **!**

In part 2 of this article, presented in the next issue of Proclamation, we will shift from a review of the ethical source for abortion to a biblical analysis of that ethic, and offer a suggested model for an authentic Christian response.

Footnotes

¹ See Doe v. Bolton, 410 U.S. 179, 192 (1973). These decisions came too late to terminate "Jane Roe's" pregnancy, and today her child (whom she gave up for adoption) is an eighteen year old teenager.

² Documentation for these statistics is given in Curt Young: The Least of These, (Chicago, Moody Press; 1984); p.30.

³ The Hippocratic Oath, which appeared for centuries on physicians' degrees calls on the doctor to never cross the line and become executioner upon penalty of divine curse, specifically stating: "I will neither give a deadly drug to anybody if asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect. Similarly I will not give a woman an abortive aid. In purity and holiness I will guard my life and art." This is a far cry from Edward C. Allred who was trained at Loma Linda University. Allred decided to go into medicine instead of law because of his "fundamentalist Seventh-day Adventist background." He is the largest provider of abortions in the state of California, running ten clinics that do nothing else. Allred was quoted

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in the San Diego Union (October 12, 1980) as stating he has personally terminated over 50,000 unborn children.

⁴ With 3 million couples longing for a child to adopt, the phrase “unwanted child” is, in the truest sense, a misnomer.

⁵ Vincent Barry, *Applying Ethics: A Text with Readings*; 2nd ed., (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 198): pp. 189-190. Look carefully at the options Barry suggests for deciding when a human becomes a nonperson [an entity], and therefore can be exterminated without moral objection. Among the criteria are inadequate moral judgment [based on whose criteria of morality?]; irrationality [based on what definition of rationality—Jesus was declared insane repeatedly by the most educated religious leaders of His day]; or even the loss of the capacity to worry (ponder Matthew 6:24-31 in this light.) The bottom line is one human deciding another is not worthy of life. The line of death is not fixed by any infallible or unchanging objective standards.

⁶ In March, 1986 the American Medical Association's Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs ruled that it is “not unethical” to selectively kill patients who are in comas judged irreversible by withholding all food and water even when death is not imminent. The bottom line again was economic – the rising cost of caring for such individuals. Dr. Nancy Dickey, the chairman of the AMA Council said the judgment of which patients were deemed irreversible would be left up to the individual doctors: “there will be no checklists.”

⁷ See “The Doctor Decided on Death,” *Time*, February 15, 1988.

⁸ During those six days ten couples came forward and offered to adopt the child, knowing that the majority of Down's Syndrome children are not massively (and often not even moderately) retarded. A few days after Baby Doe died Joseph Sobran in his syndicated Los Angeles Times column (April 20, 1982) declared that “opposition to infanticide will soon be deplored as the dogma of a few religious sects who want to impose their views on everyone else.” The State of California currently is considering ratification of a bill, which will require all pregnant women to have a test done to determine if their child had Down's Syndrome or Spina-bifida. If either situation is present they will be required to go into counseling emphasizing the trouble and cost to raise such children and offered State's assistance if they decide for the option of abortion. Spina-bifida children are not usually mentally retarded. They are crippled. But now their personhood is a matter of debate. Colorado Governor Richard Lamm, speaking to a group of lawyers on the rising cost of caring for the elderly declared the terminally ill had a “duty to die,” and posed the question concerning mentally retarded children: “In a world of limited resources does it make sense to spend \$10,000 a year educating a (mentally retarded) child to roll over.” (Reported in *National Right to Life News*, vol. 11, no. 7: April 19, 1984: p.1.) Virginia Abernathy, a psychiatrist at Vanderbilt University's School of Medicine advocates that an individual becomes a person only when he or she becomes a responsible moral agent—around age three or four. Until then, infants and defective children, like fetuses, are non-persons. Their only claim upon persons is compassion, they do not possess a moral right to life. Simply put she is seriously advocating that parents be allowed to make a check list of required qualifications in a child, and should be permitted to dispose of any infant or young child (non-person) who fails to measure up.

⁹ The term “innocent” is used for accuracy to qualify this statement. Arguments for capital punishment and “just war” can be derived from Scripture, but no such argument can be derived favoring the killing of an innocent human to enhance the quality of life of another human. As discussed in part II of this article, such an argument denies the biblical doctrine of one all-sufficient divine atonement.

¹⁰ *California Medicine* 113, no.3 (September, 1970): 67-68.

¹¹ In the *Roe vs. Wade* decision, the Supreme Court justices did not support their reasoning with scientific evidence, but rested it on a particular value judgment about humanity. Even today, a decade after *Roe vs. Wade*, when one speaks in purely scientific terms it is taken as a biological fact that the fetus is alive, human and unique—a developing human being. “If anyone seriously doubts that,” says Richard McCormick of the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University, “they need only wait 266 days (from conception to birth) and see what they get.” (Quoted from *Newsweek*; January 14, 1985: p. 29.) In 1981 a U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Separation of Powers addresses the specific question of when human life begins and listened to twenty-two expert witnesses (geneticists, biologists, medical researchers) who were evenly divided on their views of abortion. They reported: “No witness raised any evidence to refute the

biological fact that from the moment of human conception there exists a distinct individual being who is alive and is of the human species.” US Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Separation of Powers, Reports to Committee on the Judiciary Regarding the Human Life Bill-S. 158, 97th Congress, 1st Sess., p. 11-12, 18. The Supreme Court justices in 1973 assigned the unborn the euphemistic term “potential life.” To avoid the idea that in an abortion a human life was being destroyed the justices spoke of “terminating a pregnancy,” though medically a normal pregnancy terminates naturally in nine months while abortion exterminates life. Henceforth State laws could only “consider” offering legal protection for a “potential life” when it reached the point of “viability” (arbitrarily assigned to be 24 weeks). In 1973, 24 weeks was the earliest most physicians thought the child could live outside the womb if born prematurely. Since then babies born as early as 21 weeks have lived. In June of 1986 the Supreme Court denied States the right to even “consider offering” legal help to the unborn by striking down a Pennsylvania Law that required a woman considering abortion to be informed of the gestational age and developmental level of the fetus and the availability of other options such as adoption. Their reasoning was that the woman might be “intimidated.” See also *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S.; p. 163, see also pp. 113, 116, and 152.

¹² *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 60 U.S. 393 at 404-407

¹³ For a detailed and documented treatment of the *Dred Scott* decision, see: Curt Young, *The Least of These*; pp. 1-20.

¹⁴ Gary Bergle, “The Never Again is Happening Now,” (“People of Destiny,” September/October, 1984): p. 12; quoting from Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche: *The Release of the Destruction of Life Devoid of Value*, English Reprint; (Santa Ana, CA: Robert Sassone; 1975): p.76. For a far more complete treatment of the involvement and mindset of the medical profession in Hitler's extermination program see: Robert Jay Lifton; *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*, (Basic Books, 1986).

¹⁵ John Powell, *Abortion, The Silent Holocaust*, (Allen, Texas; Argus Communications, 1981): pp. 30-39; see also Gary Bergle, “The Never Again is Happening Now,” p. 1.

¹⁶ Language propaganda was used in Germany. Jews became “bacteria.” The vans that carried the people to their deaths were dubbed “the Charitable Transport Society.” The killing centers were called “medical experimentation centers.” This language propaganda has analogies to American's abortion industry as well, as Jean Staker Garton, a former abortion activist writes in her book: “Who Broke the Baby?” She tells how counselors were taught to describe the baby as “uterine tissue” or “the blob” but never the baby. The “rights of the woman” and her “freedom to choose” were to be stressed, and childless couples were praised as “child free” at abortion clinics dubbed “centers for reproductive health.” To further remove the idea of killing, verbal descriptions have become increasingly vague, until now most abortion literature refers to the “interruption of a pregnancy.” This is a classic euphemism—couching a horrible reality in comfortable words. First it was “termination of the pregnancy” which of course really meant extermination of the developing child. But now we are only “interrupting” the pregnancy. Imagine saying to a history class: “Lee Harvey Oswald interrupted John F. Kennedy's Presidency.” This type of verbal conditioning in favor of abortion is blatant in a paper prepared for the Planned Parenthood Physician's Association by Dr. Willard Cates: “Abortion as a Treatment of Unwanted Pregnancy: The Number Two Sexually Transmitted Disease.” Here the fetus is not even given the status “potential life,” but is identified as a “disease.” (Paper presented November 11-12, 1976; Planned Parenthood Convention, Miami Beach, Florida.)

¹⁷ WEBA is not alone in this type of ministry. There are numerous organizations at the grass roots level for women suffering from what is medically termed: “post-abortion syndrome” (PAS). Also at the national level is American Victims of Abortions (AVA), founded and directed by Dr. Olivia Gans. This organization seeks to help and educate the public concerning the physical, psychological and emotional effects abortion has, not only on women, but also on the fathers, siblings, grandparents and other significant people. Research into PAS indicates frequent aftereffects such as marital dysfunction, job dysfunction, sleep disorders, eating disorders, substance abuse and chronic depression. I personally have had six women come to me after their abortions who are experiencing severe emotional and, in several cases physical aftereffects.

UGANDA REPORT

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

for the duration of the meetings because there was so much heavy resistance and we needed to have God do something in power in order to break down the strongholds. This woman has powerful intercessory prayer gifts and is part of several cell groups around Kampala that were sensing that God had called them out of their current churches to meet regularly and pray for a new move of the Lord that He was calling them to be a part of. None of them knew what it was. By the end of the first week Joyce invited us to meet with one of these cells. We had been in the cell meeting just a few minutes when we all started praying, and the Lord came over that room in such power it is hard to portray. There was a depth of prayer that can hardly be described. This intense prayer time lasted for an hour or so. At the conclusion, several of the prayer leaders expressed their conviction that this new church was the one that God had been preparing them to be part of. That next Sunday night they came and started to pray for a couple of hours before the meetings. They would come and lay out their prayer mats behind the curtains on the stage and seek the Lord with an intensity that cannot be described. There was a turning point in the meetings that

took place at that point. The debate and arguing mindset left. The unchurched people started to come.

In our after-meeting prayer invitations people started coming for prayer, and God did awesome things. We saw a woman suffering with what I think was tuberculosis. For weeks she had serious coughing and a painful chest condition. We prayed for her and she was healed instantly. Another woman came for prayer for a financial thing. She came back the next night with some friends and she shared how God has resolved her problem in a miraculous way in answer to prayer. The two friends she brought from very far away both came to Christ that night. They are attending churches in a town near them now. They were touched by the power of the Lord. Another woman came for prayer and was dealing with confusion in her thinking. As we started to pray for her, she went into convulsions and started making guttural screaming noises. She was possessed by demonic forces. We immediately commanded the demon to come out of her in the name of Jesus, and she became calm. She had no recollection of what had happened but was truly free. The next day she told us that she had been hanging on to some charms she had from witchcraft experiences in the past. She brought these



The Redeemed Evangelistic Church, a local evangelical congregation, that is praying for and encouraging the former Adventist pastors as they preach the Gospel and lay the foundation for a new church.

to be burned. Another woman came with several of her children for prayer. She too was possessed and started going into a fit as we started praying. She was delivered and the next day had us go with her to destroy the shrines of witchcraft that were at her house. (See picture, right, of burning the articles). A young woman with AIDS came too and was aching and hurting so badly all she could do was cry through the meetings. We came to her after the meeting, prayed over her, and God took the pain away. She received Jesus and two nights later testified to God's healing power and love! Many other stories like this could be told. A family with children with the measles on their way to the hospital came by. Measles is so bad in Uganda that many of the children die. These kids were looking hopeless. We prayed with the father and by the time they got to the hospital, the doctors were removing the IVs because the children had no more signs of fever!

Meanwhile, the enemy was doing everything He could to shut us down. Some elders for the SDA churches were coming in during my preaching and trying to spot SDA people. We had a small eight-person choir that was serving us with music each night. We paid their expenses as part of our meetings. These came from area SDA churches but were not invited to the meetings except to perform. The elders went to these folks one by one and to their friends they had brought with them and told them that if they did not leave immediately they would be disfellowshipped from the SDA Church.

Disfellowshipping is a frightening thing in Uganda. It means shunning and separation from family and friends. It means total isolation. Some of them left. Then the Moslems got wind of the growth of our meetings and started blaring loud speakers outside our meetings to try to drown us out so we couldn't hear ourselves.

So we prayed and sought the Lord again that He would make a way for us to continue. We were encountering witchcraft on many fronts, SDAs on another and Moslems on yet other. This called for continued fasting and prayer. And God broke through again. We prayed that God would shut down the Moslem speaker system and that is just what He did. The next night the speakers would not work. We saw them out trying to fix them. The next night the same thing happened. The final night they got the speakers working, but as we prayed, they started malfunctioning again so we had our meetings undisturbed. When we had a call, there were people from across the street that responded because they had been listening from their places of business!

On the last Sunday we had our first official service and Freedom Chapel was born. A non-denominational Evangelical



After a demonically possessed woman, center, heard the Gospel and was set free from the demons through prayer, she asked Pastor Greg Taylor to come to her place and participate in the burning of her witchcraft shrines.

church that is Christ centered, Bible centered and committed to prayer and to allowing the Holy Spirit to lead and set people free. We had about 50–60 people there for the first church meeting, including several from the gospel church that had been there to debate. One of their lay pastors joined us and is planning to take the message of the new covenant to all the places that he had preached before. He wants to take the rest of the good news to them. He travels to Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and all over Uganda. We had eight baptisms including some of those that had been delivered from demonic power and witchcraft. The choir ended up coming back. They started to ask questions of us about the covenants and spent time till the wee hours of the morning asking about all these things. The Choir has decided to join the new church. One of the large evangelical churches in town has taken an interest and will be sending teams of musicians and workers to help also. Stanley Lincoln of Mission Aviation Fellowship is a missionary that will be serving on their board. God truly is at work. The cell groups are making this their new Church home and are bathing the church in prayer. There will be cell groups around the city during the week, Bible studies

at the church on Sunday, daily prayer meeting at lunch hour, and services all day on Sunday.

So, in conclusion, a great work of God has been born. A church with powerful intercessors, eager new converts to Jesus, several former SDAs with a new grasp on the New Covenant gospel, and enthusiastic Pastors Daniel Nsubuga, Drake Moses Luswata Christopher Damulira! Joyce would like to say on as a Bible worker and Abdul, the one that invited her would also like to continue as a Bible worker for this new church. He has been a ministry to the Moslems and has several that are near to making a decision for Christ.

I want to thank each of you that made this trip possible. God is doing a new thing there. This is just the surface of what will take place. The "Nicodemus types" that would come to the house by night are studying and many of these will go public at the right time. Many of these are prominent SDAs that are being careful to keep anonymous while they study for obvious reasons. The fact that God has sent so many intercessors is clear indication that He wants to make the Kalerwe market a place of powerful ministry. It is the second largest market place in the multi-million populated city of Kampala. God is doing a new and powerful thing outside denominational lines.

What are the continuing needs there? Resources are always a concern: the salaries for the pastors (\$350 per month each), and I

am also suggesting a part time salary for the Bible workers (\$100 per month each). They need a keyboard with drums in the program ASAP. (\$350) Eventually they will need a video projector and VCR for showing the Jesus film and other such films for the community. Any children's materials would be helpful since the Lord has sent bunches of kids! With a video projection set up, a kid's hour would be a fantastic hit. (\$1650 for the set up) And Bibles! There is a need of good study Bibles in English for the educated ones and Luganda language Bibles for those that have not been able to go to secondary school. If you have an interest in helping with this project, or in helping with things like building rent, transportation needs, etc, please let me know. I would love to hear them. You can reach me by email at gregt@pngusa.net.

Finally, there is a need for people with a heart for Africa to pray on a regular basis for these people. God is doing a great work there and they need our prayer support. If you have any interest in going to visit them or wish to sponsor return trips by myself or others, you can let us know as well! God bless each of you, and thank you so much for your help in making this all possible. It is making a tremendous difference!

In Christ,
Greg Taylor.



Pastor Greg Taylor standing by the Nile River near it's source, Lake Victoria, Uganda.



Pastors Ddamulira, Luswata and Nsubuga with Stanley Lincoln of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), based in Redlands, California. Stanley Lincoln serves on the board of the new church established by the these former Adventist ministers.

Former Adventist pastors write from Uganda:

Persecuted pastors Stand faithfully

"Praise God who has shown me that I am worthy of being persecuted for His name, even me!"

The following emails are only a small fraction of what our pastors in Uganda have been communicating to us at LAM. Please read these and hold these courageous men, their wives, children and ministry up in your prayers. It is not easy to be cut off from all financial, social and housing support for the sake of conscience and belief in the simple gospel of grace in Christ. Greg and I and many others can testify to this. Yet, these men have done just that. God supplied our need when we stepped out in faith and we at LAM are doing everything within our means to help these dedicated workers make the same transition. There is a wide open door of service in Uganda. The simple gospel seems to be setting a fire that only God knows where it will burn. Almost every day we hear of new openings, new needs, new commitments and yes, new persecutions and trials. I believe the Holy Spirit is speaking to us at LAM that we must help these men and stand with them at this crucial time. We thank so many of you who have given liberally to help us help them!

Greg, I am glad that you intend to write a book "Why I left Seventh-day Adventism." You just get the work done straight away and my request to you is as soon as you finish a chapter you send it over here such that I translate it to Luganda by the time the books will be ready in English it will also be ready in an African language.

This is a time to face all the eyes to Africa. Kenya has stopped its theology students from coming to Uganda because of what they have called the spirit of off-shootism has invaded Uganda. Because of this Bugema [SDA] University School of Theology will lose over 200 who come from Kenya. And Bugema is in a terrible shaking in theological matters. Reports say when ever a lecturer comes in students drag him into a theological discussion and other arguments, so you can imagine your lame brother how he moves up and down in groups and arguments. This quarter I do not know his fate for ever since you came he spends much of the time with us and the little he spends at school he spends it preaching Christ.

**Yours in a blessed hope
Nsubuga Daniel**

Please accept my warmest greetings from Kampala and from your loving brother Valentine Okello from Bugema [SDA] University. It is true that we have not communicated much but it is not the first time for me to do so. Since I am a very slow typist, I will cut down on the introductions and leave them to Br. Greg to whom this letter is copied.

I wish to update you on what is happening to me. On account of my throwing my lot with LAM especially at the time when I used to translate for Br. Greg, reports reached the Field Headquarters and I was immediately summoned to appear before the Field Director. But because their spies constantly found me laboring in our new congregation, the Director did not wait for me to appear before him and immediately wrote circulars in all his churches and the Ministerial Director made radio announcements denouncing Brs. Nsubuga, Damulira, Luswata and myself. He made a lot of slanderous allegations, a characteristic which is almost becoming their trade mark nowadays.

These are the people who hitherto have used me in their camp meetings, efforts, weeks of prayers, seminars, fundraising drives and on many committees in the University [SDA] church in Bugema. To hear them throwing all kinds of rubbish at me within only a week is astonishing not only to me but also to their own members who are confused as to what is happening in their church more especially since by God's grace I have been one of their frequent servants in the field of public evangelism. [We understand that Valentine baptized many hundreds into the SDA church]. Now the problem is at the University. The theology students are in a state of aggression asking their professors embarrassing questions concerning the "heavenly sanctuary" and the like, questions for which unfortunately their men can supply no Biblical answers, since no such biblical answers exist. Guess who they are using as the scape goat for their theological catastrophe? It is Okello of course!



Pastor Daniel Nsubuga

So everybody at the University has moved in to persecute us. First, save for the theology students who sympathize with the cause of our theological stand, we are completely cut off from the university society who now treat me and my family almost like the lepers were treated in Israel, and sanctions are rapidly being brought to bear. The garden where my wife and I used to grow food for the family has been taken away from us. We are being threatened with eviction from the University house because, they say, they are meant for SDA married student pastors, a group that I no longer belong to. Worst of all, somebody of substance in the administration recently met me and told me confidentially that somebody may communicate to ____ about my present theological stand. This person is an SDA American who pays part of my fees at Bugema. Since this person deals directly with the administration, I think you can see how precarious the situation is. For my family upkeep and children's fees, I have been relying on the benevolence of the SDA church members, and now brothers, that source is now unthinkable and as I write this letter, all my kids have been sent home for non payment of fees and what to put on the table is just a matter of Providence. So right now, the situation is financially, socially and materially desperate.

Through you, I earnestly request the brethren who have come to our aid in Kampala so often, the help we so much appreciate, to also extend the same kindness to me and my family in our present crisis.

So that is the state of affairs regarding me. At the time when Br. Greg left, the storm had began gathering, and it has now matured.



[Left to right] Pastor Okello, former SDA evangelist who was just dismissed, Pastor Nsubuga, Pastor Ddamulira, Steve (Nsubuga's brother who is still a student at the SDA university), and Pastor Luswata.

Honestly I do not know whether I will be able to finish from this University the way things stand. For the good of the family, I am contemplating upon transferring to an Anglican University around Kampala to complete the remaining 18 credit hours this coming term, but this will depend on what you will advise me. However, within two weeks we are going to hold a crusade at Kalerwe and I am going to be the speaker during the two weeks the crusade is to last. I am also in charge of evangelism in our church establishment. Pray for us. I am determined to declare the Good News of my salvation and that of everybody through my Lord and Saviour Jesus and let them do their worst. I will never fear for I know my Saviour lives!

I told you that I am a lousy typist and this letter has already made a big damage into your brother's already empty and shaky pocket [paying for computer time] so good bye and may the Love of our God be with you always.

Your brother in the Blessed Hope, Pastor Valentine Okello

Praise be to the Lord our God for the kind action you took and the haste in which you did take it. I received the \$400 just a few hours ago and I am just about to run to the market to buy some food for Betty and the children. You missed seeing the expression on her face when I broke the news to her that you had sent us the money! May God reward you and the brothers who work with you for the generosity and care to us and may He bring you to us so that we can see you face to face and touch you and thank you and pray with you. I know He will one day.

All the brothers greet you, Valentine Okello

I thank God for the good work you are doing Africa. I have seen the magazines that you have sent, we really appreciate them and may the good Lord bless you

Since the departure of Pr. Greg and my subsequent declaration, things have changed. I have seen God working in my life and since that time my fear is gone I am now working with the rest of the team at our meeting place.

However, things have not been easy. I have been sent out of the house I have been occupying at Bugema University. Because I had no money to get another house and to transfer my property, all of it has been thrown into the university container. This has divided my family into two parts, my wife is staying with the children at my mothers place and I am staying at LAM work place with the rest of the team. Nevertheless, I thank God for pr. Daniel and his companions who have squeezed their meager income at least to get me and my family something to eat. May the good Lord bless them abundantly.

I know it is your prayers that have made us stand even in this difficult time. I need your support—especially prayers, moral support, and any other as the Lord may make available.

Yours in the Lord, Mukiibi Israel.

I would like to share with you some of your prayers the Lord has answered. My wife, Prossy, did not embrace this new faith at first, but this morning she came to see me at LAM where I live and work now since mid last month. As I told you in my previous mail,

since our expulsion from the university house, we are no longer living together so sometimes she comes to see me. This time she brought some good news! She told me together with my fellow pastors that God had shown her in a dream that she had already left the SDA church. When the brothers talked to her, she said this is the truth; surely God wanted me to understand. Though sometimes we may go without food for a day, the testimony of my wife this morning is a clear indication that God is on our side. Therefore, your prayers should continue to ascend on our behalf so that God may also take care of our physical needs.

May God bless you, Mukiibi Israel

Praise God who has shown me that I am worthy of being persecuted for His name, even me!

The Executive Director, Central Uganda Field, wrote to the Vice Chancellor (VC), telling him to take action against me that I was teaching heresy in the churches where I was doing practicum. The VC then chose a team of three people: two professors and one theology student to interrogate me. This happened on Thursday this very week.

These men of God had quite difficult time since they were working on false information since the leader of this group was the practicum instructor who due to his haste in dealing with the heretic, forgot to check in his records to establish whether it was

true that I was registered for practicum this quarter or not. I hated to be in his shoes when I took him to task to tell the team what church it was that had accused me of heresy since it was him who assigned these churches to us. The fact is that I am not registered for practicum this quarter, and their accusation fell flat whereupon we prayed and adjourned the meeting.

Yesterday, the Executive Director's Secretary brought a letter to me from her master. The contents of the letter were that I had to appear before the Field Committee on Monday next week at 9 am without fail and that I would regret if I did not.

Dale, I am not afraid of them for I know that they are working out of spite. But the fact is that we are beginning our final exams on that day throughout the week and I cannot miss my exams for a meeting, the results of which bear no consequences to me anymore.

However, out of politeness, I am going to contact him on phone to postpone the meeting until I finish my exams. These gentlemen, I am told will not rest until they expel me from the University. But if they do that I think I will be compelled to take them to court.

Please brothers, pray for me. My fellow theology students feel very bad for the way I am being treated. As for me I am not perturbed except that they are rather disturbing my study mood more especially due to the impending exams.

Betty sends her regards to all of you and may the Lord be with you, Valentine

New book: Sabbath in Christ

CONTINUED FROM BACK

confusion of Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–8), when faced with the glorified Christ and with Moses [the Law] and with Elijah [the prophets]. This volume will help you preserve all God's truth and yet, at the center, truly see "no one, except Jesus Himself alone" (17:8, NASB).

Dale is an expert guide through the covenantal tapestry in all of Scripture as God brings about eternal redemption and true rest in Jesus Christ for all humanity. Dale's analysis (in chapters 9–12) of why Jesus intentionally instigated so many Sabbath controversies, especially those recorded in John 5 and 9, is alone worth the price of the book—even just his exegesis of John 5:18. Powerful!

This is the second edition of "Sabbath in Christ." The first edition, titled Sabbath in Crisis, was honored with a forward by the eminent New Testament theologian, D. A. Carson, who said "the merits of this book are three, and they are considerable." He then cited Dale's very accessible writing style, especially his chapter summaries; Dale's own pilgrimage from Adventism into a deeper New Testament faith, and Dale's careful adherence to time-honored biblical hermeneutics. I echo Dr. Carson's sentiments that this volume, especially in its revised edition, could become the benchmark study of the Sabbath in Scripture.

Here is the bottom line. Dale calls us to realize that Jesus alone is the fullness of Prophet, Priest and King, Sacrifice and High Priest,

Righteousness and Wisdom, Perfection, Covenant, Temple, Most Holy Place and Law. Jesus alone is our true Atonement, no longer a day. He alone is our true Passover, no longer a day. He is our true Provider of Pentecostal blessing, no longer a day; and Jesus alone is our true Sabbath-rest—it is no longer a day! We are complete in Him (Colossians 2:10). It is my prayer Sabbath in Christ will help thousands to "make every effort to enter that rest" (Hebrews 4:6–11), that heaven's courts may indeed resound with joy. **!**

Richard Fredericks, Ph.D. is the senior pastor of Damascus Road Community Church in Maryland.

Free Sabbath in Christ limited offer

As funds last we will send a free copy of Sabbath in Christ to any SDA, Seventh day Church of God, or other sabbatarian pastor, local church elder, conference administrator or theology major. To take advantage of this free offer, just state your leadership position in your church, email your address to dale@ratzlaf.com with a statement that you will read this book through. This offer will be withdrawn when funds run out without further notice.

Thank you so much for your help

Hello Dale, I wanted to write and let you know how much I enjoyed reading *The Cultic Doctrine of SDA*. It wasn't too surprised at what I was reading but I was certainly glad to see the bigger picture of the Investigative Judgment doctrine. Could you possibly send me a copy of your other book, *Sabbath in Crisis*, and a copy of *White-Out*? I am not able to send any funds right now because my financial situation is limited. But I should be able to help out in another month. Also, if you have any back issues of *Proclamation* I would appreciate it if you could send those along as well. Your site and the links that you have provided, have been very helpful in seeing the whole cultic nature of Adventism and makes it so easy for me to "wash my hands clean" of the church system. I have already started an outline and some notes on writing my resignation letter to the SDA Church here in Daytona Beach. I'm just happy that I have started going to a Christian, grace-filled church. Thank you so much for your help in studying my way out of the SDA Church. Sincerely in Christ.

As good as any material as I've read

I am writing to congratulate you on the very good article entitled, "Righteousness Beyond the Law"... It was as good as any material as I've read on the subject of New Testament "righteousness." In fact, Brother Ratzlaff, you made some things quite clear that I had really not given a great deal of thought to. Quite frankly, I've always contented myself with obeying that which I found in the New Testament, I don't mean to imply I've totally disregarded the Old Testament, and have always felt that to be sufficient. Thanks again, dear brother for the very "right on" article.

I have heard too much

I have two of your books and would like to receive your newsletter. I was raised SDA and almost all my relatives are SDA. They are constantly sending me Ellen G. white material. They think I'm not Adventist because I haven't heard enough but it's the opposite. I've heard too much. Please keep me in your prayers and I will keep you in mine.

More effective theology

Just received *Proclamation*. Great!!! I hope you will continue to focus on the nonsense of some of the tenants of SDAism. General theology is

great however there is a more effective theology through LAM which will be a help to those in bondage. Wish we could be of greater help.

This is truly hell on earth!

I cannot help but respond to the "Adventist Watch" section in the Nov./Dec. *Proclamation*. I read with deep regret the two news items given there. Paulsen's clarifications of Adventist exclusivity betray what SDA's have believed all along, but have been reticent to admit to other Christians for fear of being perceived as arrogant. Adventists have been uncomfortable admitting their exclusivity and has resulted in many talking out of both sides of their mouth. Many SDA's I have known feel very uncomfortable with looking upon others as "second class Christians." Conversely, they struggle with their own identity as Adventists believing their personal salvation is hinged upon that identity. Therefore, they have no where else to go. Those SDA's who struggle with or don't believe in Ellen White, the Investigative Judgment, remnant church theology, etc., are trapped in a denomination that claims sole proprietorship of final revelation, yet they don't believe in the key ingredients of that message. This is truly hell on earth!...

I'm at a loss and I am on the verge of breaking up the friendship

Mr. Ratzlaff, I am a believer in the in the Lord Jesus Christ and have been for several years. While I attend a Southern Baptist church, I don't call myself a Baptist—I am simple Christian. However, I've recently befriended a Seventh-day Adventist and she has made it her personal mission to covert me. She quizzes me, hounds me, and brings it up every time we're together. The other night, she spent over an hour trying to tell me that "true believers" will see the truth, that Catholics are the church of Satan, and that I'll stand in judgment for worshiping on Sunday. I have tried to explain to her that while I understand Saturday is the Sabbath, I worship on Sunday to commemorate Christ rising on the third day. I told her that when Jesus came, he took away the legalism of the law and created a new law i.e. which is why we don't have to sacrifice lambs to be forgiven! She fights me constantly, even after I told her I didn't feel convicted about it. What can I do?? I'm at a loss and I am on the verge of breaking up the friendship, which I don't want to do. I've talked with my pastor and

even he's frustrated! I'm praying, for sure, but I need help with all the confrontations I'm in...

They seem to be compromising their integrity

We did happen to notice several articles in this issue that were purportedly written by current Seventh-day Adventist pastors who did not wish to have their names attached to the articles. Would it be that these pastors are afraid that if their true beliefs were known they would be out of a job? They seem to be compromising their integrity by attacking the very institution which sustains them. That would place in question the integrity of their viewpoint as we see it. If one does not have the courage of their convictions then they should refrain from propagating them.

Editor's note: I certainly understand your comments. Here is the dilemma of informed Adventist pastors: To speak openly against Adventist errors while one is still a pastor in Adventism is seen as disloyalty and a reason to be fired and lose any influence within the church. However, once an Adventist pastor leaves Adventism, then he is vilified and called "an apostate" and Adventists are then told not to listen to apostates. An example of this is seen in "A brief Reply to the book *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*, Ronald C. Thompson, Ph.D. Rebuttal No. 2, 2002, where the following is stated: "...the remaining two individuals, D.M. Canright and Dr. Desmond Ford are prominent Apostates. Why should one be wary of reading a book that has drawn from Apostates or hostile witnesses? Because Apostates are those who were once stalwart believers, and then rejected everything outright, and became sour and bitter with chips on their shoulders, having harbored and cherished doubt for a long time. ...Hence the testimony of Apostates must be approached with special caution." Where is the forum for an Adventist pastor to speak the truth and point out error? The pastor(s) who authored the articles in the last issue saw *Proclamation* as a suitable forum.

The blessings that I have received from this are enormous

I would be happy to help you with the project [of sending free *Sabbath in Christ* books to Adventist pastors.]. I will donate \$5,000 to the cause. I know this is not a lot in comparison to what you probably need, but it is a start. If you can give me an idea on the total amount needed

to raise, I will help get the additional funding. If this can be tax-deductible, great, otherwise not a problem. It is the ministry that is most important. Just let me know who to make the check out to. I myself have been very blessed by your books. For the past year and a half I have read every book I can get my hands on regarding the SDA church, Sabbath/Sunday, OC & NC, etc.—many of them from your website. My life has been changed. The freedom in Christ is tremendous! It is hard to describe. I was raised an ardent Adventist. I was third generation and a product of the educational system. I can't say that my transformation was easy, or without any 'ups' or 'downs'. It is hard to jettison a belief that I was part of the remnant with a 'Prophet' to guide my interpretations of the Bible. In fact, it was scary and lonely at times. But, in the end, the Holy Spirit works at the heart and opened up the truth in Scriptures to me in small mouthfuls. The blessings that I have received from this are enormous. I will do whatever I can within my means to help propel your ministry to the World. Dale, the hardest part for me now, is finding ways to spread the good news to my Adventist friends. I am viewed as tainted or off-base in my beliefs. It is frustrating. I have sent care packages with your books to some of my closer friends. Overall, I get the feeling that they think I have 'lost it'. I am praying and hoping that they will see the light that I have seen and jettison their cultic beliefs/doctrines. Maybe it is just my experiences, but reflecting back to how Adventists typically evangelize, it is usually a little bit of 'Cloak and Dagger' with their Revelation Seminars, books, TV programs, etc. This has ALWAYS bothered me. The message seems to be a lot more about conversion of other Christians to their End of Time doctrines, including the IJ, Sabbath, Mark of the Beast, Catholic Church, etc. rather than the INCREDIBLE Gospel of Jesus Christ and spreading the good news to people who don't know Him. As you mentioned, there is a lot of good in the Adventist church. Their health message, education and healthcare systems are great. It is too bad that there is such a hook into EGW, IJ, Sabbath, OC, etc. I'm not a skeptical person Dale, but I do believe that Adventist church as an institution will stay locked into their current mode for a LONG time. I have seen a rise of the Evangelicals within the denomination—who typically don't believe the IJ or EGW. In a sense they really aren't Adventists as measured against the Fundamental Beliefs of the church. I believe there

is a real 'fear' of leaving the denomination. A fear about the Sunday/Sabbath issue—and staying put in the church because of OC Saturday worship. A fear of 'What If' EGW is right about the end of time, Sunday Law, etc. I know I personally had these same thoughts—until I became CONVICTED of the truth, and then there was no fear. It takes a strong person to leave a community of faith that they were raised up into adults. The miracle that happened with the WCOG is amazing, and ONLY possible via the Holy Spirit. I hope and pray a similar event happens to the Adventist Church. As I said before, I'm on board to help you out in anyway possible.

Until you face up to that, you remain a fraud.

Your reason for publication is to oppose Adventism while accepting all other views as valid, even when other views conflict with one another. Until you face up to that, you remain a fraud. (From a Seventh-day Adventist Pastor who requested an answer.)

Editor's note: Our reason for existence is to minister to the thousands of former Seventh-day Adventists who for one reason or another have left the SDA church. This requires that we deal with Adventist issues. Yes, we must point out the errors that these people grew up with and contrast these with the glory of the new covenant gospel of grace. Otherwise they will live in fear and guilt. While Adventism has many good teachings and values, we believe the following doctrines to be in error: Ellen G. White as a source of authority, SDAs being the remnant church of Bible prophecy, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment beginning in 1844, the Sabbath as the seal of God for new covenant believers, Sunday as the mark of the beast, the insistence of the acceptance of soul sleep and annihilation. We do not accept "all other views." We do not compromise on the authority of Scripture, the simple gospel of grace, the deity of Christ, the Trinity, the personality of the Holy Spirit, the fall of man, the need for regeneration through the Holy Spirit, the second coming of Christ, holy living and obedience to the law of Christ. We do, however, believe that where Scripture is unclear or can honestly be interpreted in more than one way, we must allow for differences in these non-essential areas and treat those who disagree with charity. These areas include an array of subjects that can be summarized as last day events, speaking in

tongues, Israel centered prophecies, once saved, always saved, etc. Throughout its history Adventism has opposed the Catholic church, Sunday sacredness, those who believe in the immortality of the soul, and all Protestant bodies that did not accept their interpretation of Daniel 8:14, etc., yet when Adventists are shown to hold unbiblical teachings, they cry foul! Why is this?

I am so thankful you are willing to uplift the gospel of Jesus Christ

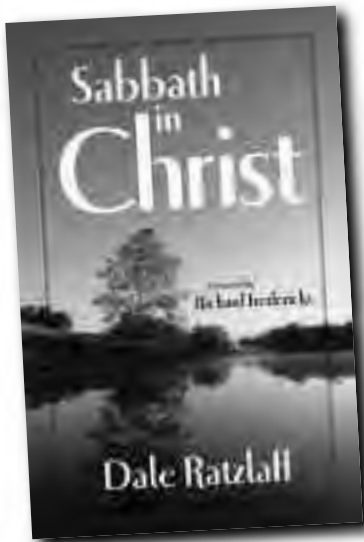
I am so thankful you are willing to uplift the gospel of Jesus Christ and expose error and deception. May His matchless love, mercy and grace flood your soul. As we see the Christmas lights we are reminded of John 8:12—the Light of the World! Praise, honor, glory and Majesty to our Great King.

What a fantastic issue!

Dale, what a fantastic issue! Could you please send me about 6 more issues that I can share with family members? Last Sept. you sent me several issues of the July-Aug. which dealt with the Sabbath/Sunday issue. I have not sent them to family as they would not be well received but I think that if they were to read the Nov-Dec. issue first, especially the first two articles written by SDA pastors challenging the reliability of EGW as a true prophet, they might then read other things that challenge thinking. I am convinced that reaching SDAs depends more than anything else on placing EGW in the proper perspective. I live in Mormon country, and once Mormons are convinced that Joseph Smith was not a true prophet, they leave Mormonism, and once SDAs conclude that EGW was not what she or church leaders claim she was, then they are free to investigate the 'Good News' for themselves and then are on the road to true freedom in Christ. You need to keep hammering away on this theme, and on what EGW says, is the 'central pillar' of the SDA faith and belief; 1844, the IJ and the Day of Atonement. Once these two dominoes fall, all others will follow...

Mail letters and donations to:

Life Assurance Ministries
PO Box 11587
Glendale, AZ 85318



Sabbath in Crisis revised and updated: **Sabbath in Christ**

Richard Fredericks

Editor's Note: This is the forward that appears in the new book Sabbath in Christ available in May, 2003. This book is based on the book Sabbath in Crisis but with many revisions and additional material.

Sabbath in Christ declares its main goal in the title, and then offers a well defended and much needed paradigm shift to the Christian community. Traditionally, Christian debate over the Sabbath has focused on Saturday versus Sunday. Through careful Biblical scholarship, *Sabbath in Christ* demonstrates how the heart of the 'Sabbath-for-Christians' issue (like all true Christian issues) is Christocentric, not a debate about days.

Dale Ratzlaff builds a strong case that arguing for one holy day or the other misses the New Testament's main point about the Sabbath: all old covenant holy days, including the 7th-day Sabbath, predicted and find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. They were the shadows pointing to His substance (Colossians 2:17). In other words, Scripture offers only two real options for seeking "God's rest":

- A. The old covenant way of seeking rest in a day—whether it be Saturday or Sunday.
- B. The new covenant way of entering God's rest through the Person of God's own Son, Jesus Christ, and His finished work of salvation: "Come unto Me, all you who are weary and heavily burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

This clarification, if true, is needed by both that great body of evangelical Christians who accept the absolute authority of Scripture; and by Seventh-day Adventists and other "Sabbath-keeping" groups who believe their 7th-day Sabbath doctrine sets them apart as God's true commandment-keeping people.

I'm honored to write this forward for my friend, Dale Ratzlaff, and

like him, I can speak to both the above groups with some authority. I wore the yoke of Adventism as a pastor, administrator, doctoral student at an SDA seminary and associate professor of theology at an SDA college. Over several decades I served on key church committees and wrote significant portions of the SDA secondary religion textbooks. Adventism is a denomination filled with so many wonderful and highly dedicated people.

But I came to realize that, in practice, the true integrating center of Seventh-day Adventist theology is not Jesus Christ, but the Sabbath. It defines their identity and ecclesiology. Contrary to Romans 11:5, SDA's are taught they are God's true remnant church because they keep the 7th-day Sabbath. It defines their soteriology and their eschatology: for Adventists, the Sabbath is the great issue that ultimately decides who wears the mark of the Beast and receives God's wrath (because of Sunday-worship); and those who are sealed by God for salvation (because of Sabbath-keeping).

In Adventism, anyone may openly question Christ's sinless nature or even the sufficiency of His atonement and still be accepted. But to deny the 7th-day Sabbath as a moral test is grounds for immediate disfellowship. My Adventist friends need to test this focus biblically, with honest hearts, and I know of no other book that could help them do that better than this volume.

Like Dale, the clarity of the Gospel led me to separate from Adventism and move into the larger Christian community as the senior pastor of a large, thriving evangelical church, relishing the profound truth of Romans 7:4–6. Yet on this side, I still find many Christians who fail to grasp and celebrate how Jesus Christ both completely fulfilled and simultaneously deepened the old covenant law given to Moses. They need greater clarity concerning the glory of John 1:17: "The Law was given through Moses; but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

This book is a treasure for any Christian who can still relate to the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

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