

LIFE ASSURANCE MINISTRIES, INC Proclamation!

VOLUME 4

ISSUE 2

MARCH

APRIL

2003

FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS

A former Adventist Pastor from Uganda writes: In touch with the Spirit

Daniel Nsubuga

I thank God for His grace which has led me to the truth. As a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, I began my ministry in Mityana District as an associate pastor stationed at Kiryokya (Ssinga/Mubende political district). I served there for three years from 1990 to 1993, and all along I preached sermons which I

when I was still an Adventist, my life was dry and I could not feel the influence and the presence of the Spirit.

thought were powerful and conducted efforts, but my faith in Jesus was lacking. I believed in the presence of the Holy Spirit but with a lot of limitations. What do I mean?

The Holy Spirit works in phases, for example, in every generation he has been working for the purpose of fulfilling the plan of God. I used to say that during the time of apostles the Holy Spirit descended on them in form of fire and they spoke in other tongues. He did that during that time because the gospel had just begun and the apostles did not know all the languages, therefore it was necessary for the apostles to speak in other tongues. But, today, people have increased in knowledge so that in every tribe there are some people who can read and preach. Hence, we do not need the gift of tongues.

The Bible says, "Tongues are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers..." 1Cor.14:22.

When I read that verse with an open mind, I

found out that the Bible does not say that there should not be a gift of tongues in the church, but it suggests that this gift should be a sign to unbelievers for them to glorify God when they see it in the believers. 1Cor.14:26-40.

Secondly, I believed in the Holy Spirit performing miracles but with a lot of reservations. I could say that God answers our prayers in three ways: "Yes," "Wait," and "No." I do not know where we got that formula, but that formula helps when things have failed to work out.

That's when you can say that God has replied "Wait" or "No." The most dangerous thing is to associate with spiritualism other Christians who believe in miracles and healing. This is not true work of God, because the presence of the Holy Spirit is to perform miracles among the believers.

Additionally, when I was still an Adventist, my life was dry. I could not feel the influence and the presence of the Spirit. This caused a lot of doubts in me whether the Holy Spirit's presence is real even though I was a pastor who preached and taught the Adventist believers about the work of the Holy Spirit.



Daniel Nsubuga

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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

"Unless you believe that I AM..."

Today our modern culture is not opposed to the use of the word "god" because "god" is somewhat of an undefined term. God can mean many varied things to different people including Christians, new age, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, etc. so there is not much opposition to the phrase, "You must believe in God". However, much hostility may be generated when one says you must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved. This is often seen as narrow, exclusive and condemning of other religions. Yet if we are to follow the New Testament there is no other way.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." Jn. 14:6

While many believe in Jesus, not all believe in the Jesus of Scripture. Mormons believe that Jesus is the brother of Lucifer. There are some groups within the "Christian" church who hold Jesus to be a created being or even an angel. Some early Seventh-day Adventists held the Arian view that Jesus was a created being, or at least not God in the highest sense of the term. In fact, there seem to be certain elements within Adventism that still hold to forms of this teaching. Those who believe in all the writings of Ellen White and believe that the early Advent movement was a movement of God, are sometimes led to compromise the truth of Christ's full deity as will soon be seen.

We feel that it is vitally important to Formers that Christ's full deity be firmly established because it is necessary for salvation! Jesus said,

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

In the verse above, the "He" is added by the translators to make for easier reading. However, by the use of the term "I AM" Jesus was clearly communicating that He was the "I AM" mentioned in Exodus 3. He was telling his listeners that He, Himself, was and is the YHWH of the Old Testament. This truth is what caused the Jews to try to stone Him. (See Jn. 8:56-59)

Perhaps some of our readers who have grown up on Adventist writings, who still hold the writings of Ellen White to be "a continuing and authoritative source of truth", or have read The Clear Word Bible unknowingly have to some degree or another compromised this important truth. In the "Letters to the Editor" you will note a short letter from a Former

who has now joined the Jehovah's Witnesses. The importance of knowing for sure the truth on this subject is of vital importance. For this reason we are including in this issue of Proclamation two works by Verle Streifling that will help our readers understand the solid foundation of the deity of Christ in Scripture.

LAM Mission in Uganda

We are excited to see what God is doing in Uganda. The need there is tremendous. Many of the converts are living in very poor conditions and are not able to lend much support to this work. Like Jesus, these men and women are preaching the gospel to the poor and proclaiming release to the captives. We at LAM are doing everything within our means to support the work of these pastors and Bible workers. Because of their need we have raised our monthly support for these sincere men and women. We now have seven people we support. We are paying the rent for their meeting place, have sent a PA system, a lap-top computer and printer and have now sent a video projector and VCR so that they can show the Jesus films. LAM Publishers just sent them 338 of the new Sabbath in Christ books as well as many other books and tapes. Nsubuga Daniel will soon translate important materials into the Luganda language. We hope to be able to print small booklets in Luganda as well as dedicate a portion of our web site to this language so all may know the truth. There are many who are hungry for the simple gospel of Jesus Christ and doors are rapidly opening up for extended ministry of the gospel, not only in Uganda, but elsewhere in Africa and other countries. Please pray for this ministry that God will continue to provide the personnel, the writers, the funds and give encouragement to these pastors. Most importantly, pray that God will send a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit to direct the work and soften hearts as these pastors exalt the cross of Christ. As we go to press we have just received word that two Moslems have accepted Christ!

Thank You!

We at LAM have stepped out in faith to support this mission work and you have not let us down. Thank you for your support. It is our prayer that God will supply all your needs in Christ Jesus. Please pray for us that we will write, speak, support and live totally in step with the Spirit of the living God. We want to do what God is blessing rather than ask God to bless what we are doing.

Proclamation!

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FIVE-FOLD WITNESS OF Christ

Verle Streifling, Ph.D.

In John 5, Jesus had just healed the invalid at Bethesda on the Sabbath, telling him "Arise, take up your bed and walk." Because the man obeyed the command of his Healer, the Jews were enraged for he had broken the Sabbath command which said, "You shall carry no load on the Sabbath," and when they learned Jesus had commanded this, they immediately accosted Him for causing the Sabbath to be broken. Jesus then gave a five-fold witness in defense of who He really is, including 1. His witness; 2. John the Baptist; 3. The witness of the Father; 4. His miracles; and 5. The Scriptures, "for in them you think you have eternal life, but they are they which testify of me, yet you won't come to me that you can have eternal life" (5:39).

Jesus' Witness of Himself

Jesus began saying He only does what His Father tells Him to do, and just as the Father had life in Himself, so too Jesus the Son has life in Himself. Thus in 5:17+18 the Jews set to stone Him, not only for breaking the Sabbath, but for calling Himself the Son of God, thus making Himself equal with God. Christ underscored this by stating, "The Father Himself judges no one at all, but has committed all judging to the Son, in order that all men should honor the Son, just as they honor the Father, and he who does not honor the Son, neither honors the Father who sent Him" (vs 22-27).

Then after giving incredible witness of Himself, Jesus showed He only began listing his credentials by saying, "If only I bear witness of myself, my witness is not valid (complete)..." (vs 31), "for the Scripture says, 'Out of the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses all things will be established.'" Thus, while His witness of Himself was true, yet Jesus' witness of itself was not sufficient or a valid witness. It had to be upheld by other witnesses. Yet here in John 5, He stated that He would come in glory, and He as both King and Judge would raise all the dead. But this wasn't the only place

where He witnessed of who He was. He did this throughout the Gospels.

In Jn 2:18-22 He told the Jews that He would raise His dead body after they killed Him. In ch. 4 He told the Samaritan woman that He would give the Holy Spirit as living water to whomever asks. In ch. 6, whoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood has everlasting life, and in 10:10 He promised to give the more abundant life, saying in vs 17+18 He had power to lay His life down, and to take it up again, affirming, "I and my Father are One," thus claiming equal essence with God. Again the Jews took up stones to stone Him. Similarly, in 8:24, 28 & 58 Jesus thrice claimed to be "I AM," so the Jews sought to kill Him; and in 13:19 He told His disciples, "I've told you this before it happens, so when it happens you'll know that I AM." These claims were direct allusions to Isaiah 43:13; 45:21 and 46:9+10 where YHWH claimed to be "I AM" on these bases. Ultimately, after His death, Jesus showed His resurrected body, validating all His claims. In this He demonstrated that His witness of Himself was indeed true.

John the Baptist's Witness of Christ

Jesus said John had come in the 'spirit and power of Elijah,' of Malachai 3:1 & 4:5. (Mt 11:10-14). Of Christ, John declared he was unworthy to loose His sandals, that Christ was the Judge of all, and He was above Elijah the prophet, and He was the fulfillment of Isa 40:3-5, which spoke of Jehovah God. In John 1 he declared Jesus the Lamb of God and the Son of God, and he told His disciples to follow Jesus.

In Jn 3:20-36 again John witnessed of Jesus, saying He was ordained from heaven (Yhwh); He is the bridegroom who must increase; He comes from above, and is above all; He is sent from God and does the works of God; He is the Son of God—loved by the Father; He has all things in His hands—ie. His care and

All of these witnesses to which Jesus appealed in John 5, His own witness, John the Baptist, God the Father, Jesus' miracles, and the Scriptures indeed testified to His true deity and messiahship.

authority; whoever believes in Him is sealed by God who is true and has eternal life; but whoever does not believe in Him, will receive the wrath of God.

It was because of John's recognition of Jesus for Who He really is that, when Jesus came to John for baptism, John insisted that instead, he needed to be baptized by Christ. John recognized Jesus was the Lamb without spot, without any sin, without any sinfulness in Him—holy, just and perfect!

The Witness of the Father

In 1 Jn 5:6-9 we read of 'the witness of God' which is greater than the witness of man. Thus Jesus' appeal to the witness of God His Father was to a witness that could not be repudiated. This witness of God began at Jesus' birth where He is "Emmanuel" ('with us is the God'—'ho Theos', Mt 1:23).

In Lk 2:11, Hebrew translations call Him "Jehovah the Messiah" while His name 'Yeshuah' means "Yehweh is salvation". Heb 1:5+6 tells that at His birth, the Father commanded all God's angels to worship Jesus—worship that's due to God alone, Who says in Isa 42:8, "My glory I will not share with another".

At Jesus' baptism, God spoke, "This is My beloved Son...," repeating this at Jesus' transfiguration. Of this 1 Pet 1:17 says, "He received from God the Father, glory and honor" as God acknowledged Christ. Then as Jesus prayed to the Father in John 12 the Father responded audibly. Jesus prayed to God, "glorify me with the glory I shared with you before the worlds were", which the Father did at His resurrection and ascension to the Father's right hand. Here He stated, "Sit at my right hand 'till I make your enemies your footstool," fulfilling the prophecy of Jehovah speaking to "Ha Adon" (Ps 68:18; 110:1)—a Hebrew expression limited to Jehovah God. In Ps 16:8 Christ is YHWH before the Father's face, and seated at His right hand (Acts 2:22-33). Only because Christ was true deity by nature, and thus Almighty God, could He share the Father's throne as Jehovah.

The book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave Him, thus also being 'the witness of the Father'. In 21:23 & 22:5 God and the Lamb are the light and glory of the city. In 21:22, God and the Lamb are its temple. In 17:14 Jesus, the Lamb,

is 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords', showing He as King is Jehovah God Almighty in 15:3. Since John 5:22 shows He is the only Judge, and Mt 25 He as the Judge is the King, then too in Rev 16:5-7 as the Judge, Jesus is the Lord God Almighty "Who is and was, and is to come"—Who also is Almighty God in Rev 1. My! What a powerful witness Jesus called on, when citing the witness of His Father in John 5!

The Witness of Jesus' Miracles

Then Jesus cited His miracles which bore witness to Whom He really was. He showed His power over material matter when turning water to wine or feeding the multitudes. He showed His power over other's vision when passing unseen through crowds, or His disciples' eyes were withheld from seeing Him. He displayed His power over sicknesses such as leprosy, palsies, paralysis, lameness; and His power over disorders including being blind from birth, deafness and dumbness, and even a 12 year flow of blood which stopped.

Christ showed His power over nature when a net was filled with fish; or He walked on water or He calmed the storm; even when He caused the fig tree to be dried up. But there was creative power in His multiplication of loaves and fishes, in the restoration of the withered hand, and the healing of Malcus' ear at the garden arrest. There He demonstrated His power over His enemies by speaking His name, "I AM," causing them to fall backward to the ground (Jn 18:4-6). This power extended over the devil and demons as He rebuked them and cast them out of people—sometimes multitudes of them (Mt 4:23+24; 8:28-34).

Jesus also demonstrated His power over distance, healing a nobleman's son from one day's journey, the Cananite's daughter from Phoenicia, and calling Lazarus from the tomb. Here, too, He wonderfully showed His power over death, not only raising Jairus' daughter or a widow's son at Nain, but Lazarus who had been dead for four days and was already stinking. Yet most magnificent of all, Jesus raised His own dead body from the tomb (Jn 2:18-22), claiming power to lay His life down and take it up (Jn 10:17+18). He promised to do the same for all who believe in Him (5:26-29). In this Jesus also showed His power over hell, as

In this five-fold witness, Jesus' appeal was beyond refutation.

The more one searches the Scriptures, the more he discovers the depths of these witnesses cannot be fathomed.

these resurrections delivered the awakened ones' souls from Hades, or sheol. Acts 2:27+31 states Jesus' soul was not left in Hades. Paul tells us when Jesus ascended from Hades, He delivered its captives as well (Eph 4:8-11; Heb 12:22+23).

Finally, Jesus had power to confer God's power to others, giving the Holy Spirit to His disciples so they had power over diseases and demons. They received power to forgive sins, heal the sick and raise the dead. They were given power to confer the Holy Spirit to others (Acts 8:14-18; 19:1-6).

Anyone who carefully considers Jesus' miracles and His power which they demonstrated can be left with nothing else but a profound conviction of His true deity, being God by nature, especially when He knew men's thoughts, revealing the secrets of their hearts, as only God can do.

Witness of the Scriptures

To Jesus' Messiahship

Just as Jesus told the Jews they must believe He was "I AM" in order to be saved (Jn 8:24) so too He stressed that the very scriptures they were searching testified of Him, to whom people must come if they were to gain eternal life (Jn 5:39), as the Bible profusely foretold Him as the Messiah. The "Alpha Course" speaker Nicky Gumble speaks of over 300 references to Jesus' messiahship, and Herbert Lockier's "All the Messianic Prophecies..." details these as well. It's outstanding that these cover all the areas of His life here on earth, as well as His ascension to heaven and priesthood for us there.

He was to be the seed of the woman, of Abraham, Isaac—not his half-brothers), Jacob, and Judah as well as descendant of King David and heir to his throne. He was to be both Son of God and Son of man.

The time of His birth was foretold as well as the miracle of His virgin birth. He would be born in Bethlehem, yet because of the massacre of the infants he would come from Egypt and be raised in Nazareth—yet His ministry beginning from His home in Capernaum was foretold.

Of His messianic work we were told He would introduce a New Covenant, preach the gospel, die for men's sins and bring us

peace with God. He would unite God's people, call gentiles into the kingdom of God, destroy the works of the devil and bring in everlasting righteousness. He was to be the 'prophet like Moses', the High priest after the order of Melchizedek, the Chief cornerstone, and yet He would be the 'stone of stumbling' for Israel who would make Him the suffering servant. Many events in His ministry were also foretold such as His Galilean ministry, appearing in the second temple, working of miracles, relieving suffering and sorrows, His forerunner John the Baptist and His messianic zeal. Scriptures foretold that His ministry was to be anointed by the Spirit of Yhwh, and His own would ultimately reject Him.

Of special note were the many prophecies of His suffering, death, resurrection and ascension. These included His triumphal entry and being sold for 30 pieces of silver that were returned and used to buy a potters field after He was betrayed by His friend, whose office would be taken by another. He would be silent before His accusers who hated Him without cause, plucked His beard, smote Him, mocked Him and spat upon Him. His vicarious suffering was foretold, as were His being crucified with sinners, His hands and feet being pierced as well as His side, He would be given vinegar to drink, and pray for His enemies who would also gamble for His garments. While no bones would be broken, He would suffer separation from God, crying out 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me'. He was to be buried with the rich and be preserved from decay for His resurrection from Hades and the grave, leading captivity captive. And after His ascension, He would be seated at His Father's right hand where He would be our great high priest, having blotted out all our transgressions with His own blood.

All of these details and many more were predicted of Jesus' Messiahship. Yet the Scriptures testified of Him in other ways as well.

To Jesus' Deity

While Jesus' deity was well attested by John the Baptist and the Father's own witness (above), by comparing the New Testament Scriptures with the Old, we see virtually boundless testimony to the fact that Jesus of the New Testament was indeed the Jehovah God of the Old. God the Father makes this fact so clear saying to Christ, "Your throne, O God (ho Theos) is

forever” and “You in the beginning, O YHWH, laid the foundations of the Earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands” (Heb 1:8- 10). The Greek ‘ho Theos’ which identifies Jesus as God appears about 20 times in the NT, while the anarthrous ‘Theos’ which speaks of Him as God by nature is also used. In Col 2:9 Paul says of Christ, “In Him is all the fullness of Deity dwelling, in bodily form” so that every aspect of deity, such as omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, eternalness, immutability and creativity are all resident in Christ who is God by nature dwelling in bodily form.

Thus, many OT texts citing Jehovah as creator are defined by the NT showing Jesus as creator. Likewise many OT references to Jehovah as Savior are shown fulfilled in Jesus as Savior. Many OT texts showing Jehovah as King, Judge, I AM, Almighty God, the Rock, Lord of Hosts, Good Shepherd, beginning and ending, and the One who always is are defined by the NT where it is Jesus who is the King, the Judge, I AM, Almighty God, the Rock, Lord of Hosts, Good Shepherd, beginning and ending, the One who always is, etc.

An interesting variation of this is seen in the Hebrew expression “Ha Adon” where the article ‘ha’ precedes ‘Adon’ which *Gesenius Hebrew Grammar* shows limits the application to Jehovah God.

Here Jehovah’s Witnesses emphasize this to restore the name ‘Jehovah’ into their bibles. Yet the exciting reality is that in each of these, the NT application is seen fulfilled in Christ, as in Malachai where He is ‘Ha Adon’ who suddenly comes to His temple as the

‘messenger of the Covenant’; that is fulfilled when Jesus cleansed the temple. Even the plural of this expression, ‘Ha Adon Adonim’ (the Lord of Lords) who is Jehovah in the OT, is fulfilled in the NT by Jesus who is “King of kings and Lord of lords” in Revelation.

All of these witnesses to which Jesus appealed in John 5, His own witness, John the Baptist, God the Father, Jesus’ miracles, and the Scriptures indeed testified to His true deity and messiahship. In this five-fold witness, Jesus’ appeal was beyond refutation. The more one searches the Scriptures, the more he discovers the depths of these witnesses cannot be fathomed. For nearly 2000 years the leaders of the Christian church have not yet fathomed it all, while those who’ve questioned this testimony have in time, even as this writer, found the preponderance of the evidence is all on one side, and when carefully studied, it answers the questions or objections fully and completely.

Thus we must also heed Jesus’ warning to the Jews in John 8, “If you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins.” We must believe in Jesus for who He really is for Biblical salvation. Paul says in Romans 10:9-13, “If you confess Jesus is LORD (Heb. ‘Ha Adon’), and believe that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved...for whoever calls upon the name of YHWH shall be saved.” Yet, the apostle warned that there would come others who would preach another Jesus different from the real Jesus whom they preached, as well as another gospel. Therefore we today must still stand guard in defense of the truth of who Jesus is—even as He defended this truth. We must defend the faith once and for all time delivered to the saints. **!**

BOOK news

Sabbath Circumcision and Tithing

by Michael Morrison

Anyone who reads the Old Testament is likely to wonder: In this mix of ceremonial, civil, and ethical laws, how are Christians supposed to know which laws apply today? Are there biblical principles we can use to evaluate the laws of the Old Testament?

Yes, and the results challenge some common assumptions. Whether we advocate the Sabbath or abolish it, someone will like it, and others will not. Whether we teach tithing or not, someone will disagree, and others will be happy to agree.

So we want to see what Scripture says. What does the New Testament say about Old Testament laws? Which laws are quoted with approval, and which are said to be obsolete? What principles do we use when evaluating Old Testament laws that the New Testament does not specifically mention?

The Truth About Jewelry from a Biblical Perspective

by Kenneth D Brantley and Julie Tivy Boney.

The Truth About Jewelry is an insightful biblical look at the connection between the way we serve God and our adornment practices and customs.

“Formers” who still have lingering doubts and twinges of guilt about this subject will appreciate the biblical truth examined in this little book.

Both of these books are available from LAM Publications online or call 800-355-7073.

A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO ABORTION

Toward a Compassionate and Christian “Quality of Life” Ethic

Part II: The Quality of Life Ethic

Richard Fredericks, Ph.D.



his portion of the article flows from two basic perspectives. First, it takes seriously the authority Scripture has over human reason as the final arbitrator in all significant ethical and moral issues. Then it argues that the principles and themes of Scripture are far from silent concerning abortion.¹⁸ Rather, biblical theology and the morality that flows from it, in both the Old and New Testament, stand in opposition to this type of solution to human problems; as well as the philosophy of humanity and human happiness that supports it.

First consider three ways the Old Testament speaks to the issue:

1. God is against murder. “You shall not murder” (Hebrew: ratsach, Exodus 20:13). The sixth commandment may allow for some forms of capital punishment or self-defense. But the Hebrew term, and its context, consistently defines as murder, then forbids and unequivocally condemns the taking of any innocent human life by violent means (Exodus 23:7). No exceptions are offered, no conditions (economic, emotional or otherwise) are given where taking an innocent life is acceptable to God. He repeatedly condemns (lit. declares a curse upon) any who take the life of an innocent human being in a futile attempt to atone for their own sins as in Deut. 24:16. Proverbs 6:16-17 states “six things which the Lord hates....hands that shed innocent blood.”

More specifically, God views as especially heinous the sacrifice of children for the sins of the parents (see Jeremiah 7:30-34 and

Micah 6:7); and those who “ripped open the pregnant women (double murder) to enlarge their borders: (Amos 1:13). In Psalm 106, verses 35-40 God sends destructive judgments upon His people who have accepted the practices of the Canaanites, leading them to “shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters.” In Jeremiah 22 God directly links child sacrifice with greed, the desire for materialistic self-fulfillment (22:3, 13-17).

This link is confirmed in the Biblical Archeological Review (Jan/Feb. 1984). Archeologists have discovered that the practice of child sacrifices in Carthage similar to those condemned in the Old Testament were motivated by economic reasons, but with religious justification. Child sacrifice was more prevalent in wealthy homes than in poor ones. The wealthy were disposing of their “unwanted” children in order to preserve their lifestyle and standard of living.¹⁹ God declares this mindset both fatal and alien to His kingdom.

2. Because God condemns the taking of innocent human life, the next step is to recognize God affirms the personhood of the unborn. In both the Old and New Testament the term used to describe a human being in the womb is child, the same term used to describe an infant after birth. There is nothing anywhere in Scripture to indicate God views the unborn child as only a potential life. Rather all babies in the womb are spoken of as persons, as unique and distinct individuals with identity and worth, for whom God already has a destiny.

ABORTION

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5)

"Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and the One who formed you from the womb, I, the Lord am the Maker of all things;" "Thus says the Lord who made you and formed you from the womb, who will help you." Isaiah 44:24; 2; NASB.

"Thou didst form me in my mother's womb...Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me when as yet there was not one of them." (Psalm 139:13).²⁰

Fulfillment, on Jesus' terms, is discovered in the midst of a self-denying life lived for others, not through wealth, autonomy and the frantic pursuit of individual rights or self-fulfillment. Christ redefined true fulfillment as valuing all others, especially children, more than we value autonomy or personal comfort.

3. God is especially for the weak, the orphan, the voiceless and the oppressed. Those who are without a power base in society are the objects of His special regard; and are to be so treated by His people: "Vindicate the weak and fatherless, do justice to the afflicted and destitute. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them out of the hand of the wicked" (Psalm 82:3-4). If unborn are persons to God they are the most defenseless of persons. To be God's servant is to defend such as these in a selfish, brutal world.

We could find more in the Old Testament to expand upon these themes. But it is the New Testament's record of God's redemptive acts through Jesus Christ that most clearly rejects the assumptions undergirding the quality of life ethic and all its applications.

The Gospels elicit an immediate sense that Jesus formed a kingdom where the self-centered, materialistic values of the world are turned upside down. "If anyone would be My disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross (sacrifice himself) and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it" (Matt 16:21-26).

Fulfillment, on Jesus' terms, is discovered in the midst of a self-denying life lived for others, not through wealth, autonomy and the frantic pursuit of individual rights or self-fulfillment. Christ redefined true fulfillment as valuing all others, especially children,²¹ more than we value autonomy or personal comfort. This participation, even if it is in the "Fellowship of suffering," (Phil 3:10) with One who gave Himself on the cross for sinners is the heart of Christianity. It declares all human life valuable. This

agape lifestyle is illustrated in a number of New Testament themes:

1. The Gospel reveals a God who accepts and values each of us as persons, but not on the basis of what we have achieved—or ever will achieve. Christ offered Himself in sacrificial love to those who were unworthy, and incapable of earning such love by their attractiveness, achievements or assets. In other words, God does not accept us because we measure up; rather God's love embraces us in our morally and spiritually defective state and declares us acceptable by grace. This is the antithesis of humans having relative status based on an acceptable level of assets or achievement.

"For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom 5:6; see also Eph. 2:3-6; 1 Tim 1:15).

"When the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy..." (Titus 3:4-5).

We must not miss this point. While the "quality of life" ethic is totally consistent to an evolutionary, atheistic "survival of the fittest" worldview; it is antithetical to the spirit of the Gospel. Since Eden, God has shown Himself to be redemptive through great personal Self-sacrifice. He didn't respond to sin by ripping

Adam and Eve to pieces, even though they were now morally deformed and would cause Him great suffering and inconvenience. Instead He opened a way back to the tree of life by giving Himself.²²

Abortion as a False Gospel

Abortion is a false gospel. The Christian Gospel declares that the son of God, in divine love offered Himself as the all-sufficient ("once-for-all") atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. Often abortion serves as a human atonement for moral sin which denies the sufficiency of Christ's death on the cross as God's answer for healing human transgression. Abortion promises redemption and peace through the blood of the unborn rather than the blood of Christ. His sacrifice becomes irrelevant.

For many, abortion is a futile attempt to remove the consequences of sin by terminating the fetus, a solution which ignores their moral guilt, the need for repentance, and Christ's "atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). False guilt (feeling bad about something which is not wrong) is unhealthy, but false innocence (feeling good about evil) is deadly.

Abortion also assaults the Gospel by breeding sociological perfectionism where people who are inconvenient or fail to measure up are denied human value and subsequently denied life. This is the opposite of life lived as a response to God's grace. It conditions us to ask the question: "What can this person do for me?" rather than responding to our own unmerited acceptance from God with the question: "How can I offer such love to those who need it most?"

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Whether we communicate to our children: "Grandma is no longer a functional person and it is expensive to take care of her, so we're going to help her have a good death;" vs. "Grandma can't communicate with us but she is still Grandma; and we can still love her and take care of her until she dies" makes a real difference. Children raised with the first orientation grow up eliminating people who are inconvenient. Those taught the second grow up understanding the power of grace. When she accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 Mother Teresa said:

"To me, the nations with legalized abortions are the poorest nations. The great destroyer of peace today is the crime against the innocent unborn child... In destroying the child, we are destroying love, destroying the image of God in the world."

In the New Testament, love is never simply warm emotions or a fuzzy theological concept. It is a way of thinking and especially, of living. The Apostles' concept of love grew out of a concrete, historical reality—a bloody cross on a windswept hill called Golgotha. Jesus' death for sinners taught them that genuine love is always costly, and above all else, sacrificial and redemptive. To buy into the idea of love as self-satisfaction minus suffering; pleasure minus pain; or commitment only to relationships that promise no inconvenience is to deny the Gospel.

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (1 John 3:16, NIV).

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins, Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:10,11 NIV).

The enemies of early Christians were compelled to say "behold how they love one another," In the book of Acts these first disciples were identified as "the people of the Way." They were a distinct community whose lifestyle was radically different from the society around them. Their values were different—above all, the value they put on human life. This became evident in their relationships, as the earliest non-biblical Christian moral code, the Didache, illustrates:

"Our oldest moral catechism prepared candidates for baptism by instructing them: 'You will not kill. You will not have sex with other people's spouses. You will not abuse young children. You will not have sex outside of marriage. You will not abort fetuses.'" ²³

For these early Christians, the value of the unborn child was a logical extension of the Gospel. This put them at odds with the prevailing practice in Roman society where abortion was rampant. In every age, the way in which the Christian community deals with the weakest and most needy in its midst is an accurate reflection of how personally real the power of the Gospel is to its members.

The church is in serious trouble when its corporate and personal agendas and fears are such that it has no desire to accept into its midst the "burden of unwanted children." In the process of killing our unwanted children we kill ourselves. We must maintain hope, not in ourselves (nor in our children), but in God—thus allowing us to receive the weak, the stranger, the outcast, the "other"—even if it is our own child.

2. The Incarnation speaks strongly against abortion and the ethic supporting it. Jesus Christ identified with all humani-

The church is in serious trouble when its corporate and personal agendas and fears are such that it has no desire to accept into its midst the "burden of unwanted children." In the process of killing our unwanted children we kill ourselves.

ty—even the unborn. When the "Word became flesh" He began as an unborn child, a fetus. Part of the revelation of His "glory" (John 1:14) was to enter into the womb of an unmarried but pregnant teenager. Was He at that moment "potential life" with only relative value?²⁴

Remember, Jesus was born into poverty and hardship, destined for suffering. If we look at the nativity story in all its harsh reality, one wonders what advice we would have offered Mary today about her pregnancy. Birth in a filthy stable. Only rags available to dress the child. Jesus' identification with the poor and underprivileged rather than the successful, powerful or prosperous was so real He had literally "no place to lay His head." This is such a low "quality of life" by modern reasoning it would have been far better for Mary to terminate her pregnancy. Yet this life is the ultimate revelation of the "glory" of God (John 17:1-5).

3. In the New Testament the "love of money" is not the key to happiness, but "the root of all the evils." It is a mindset that causes "those who want to get rich" to "fall into temptation" and "wander away from the faith" (1 Tim 6:5-11). Jesus emphatically declared that "no one can serve.. God and money" (Matt 6:24); that "life does not consist in the abundance of possessions," therefore His disciples must "guard against every form of greed" (Luke 12:16-21). When John, in Revelation, describes Babylon the great harlot in whom is found the blood of "all who have been slain on the earth" (18:24), he pictures her as that spirit in humanity that values gold and silver above human lives (18:11-13).

This is crucial. If listened to carefully it becomes clear most arguments for abortion or killing the defective appeal to eco-

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nomie self-interest. They warn that preserving and protecting such people threatens either present or potential financial prosperity. The biblical priority is radically different. Paul identifies greed as the sin of idolatry—the most fatal sin in the Old Testament (Col 3:5; Eph 5:5). More than any other topic Jesus talked about the danger of basing life's decisions and goals on money, and flatly declared “it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven,” and “turning His gaze upon His disciples, He said, ‘Blessed are [even] you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of heaven.’” This meaning derived from discipleship is in

Happiness is found in the company of the committed whose purpose is to mirror Christ's unearned, undeserved love by identifying with those who need it most: the weak, the frail, the poor and the helpless: “For inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, you have done it unto Me” (Matt 25:40).

direct opposition to the belief that a life of potential material hardship is a life not worth living.

The Epistle of James, while not directly referring to abortion, concerns itself with human injustice and the link between greed and violence against the innocent: “You lust and do not have, so you murder... You have lived on the earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves through slaughter; and murdered the innocent who were not opposing you. Your gold and silver [money] will testify against you... in the last days” (James 4:1-4; 5:5-6.3).

Jesus said, “So therefore no one of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions” (Luke 14:33). Clearly the Christian's goal in life is discipleship to Christ, not self-centered autonomy or financial independence. Christ's call is to simplicity (not to poverty) in order to free up resources for kingdom work—the very work of helping the needy and protecting the weak. Happiness is found in the company of the committed whose purpose is to mirror Christ's unearned, undeserved love by identifying with those who need it most: the weak, the frail, the poor and the helpless:

“For inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, you have done it unto Me” (Matt 25:40).

“The rest of the world goes about disposing of the very young and the very old, the very weak, the very vulnerable, and the very poor, calling that reality. But the church is called to adopt and embrace the little ones in the name of the Lord, who was once a little one.”²⁵

4. Finally, the “quality of life” ethic is rooted in the greatest sin of all: man's desire to play God. Trying to be

autonomous, the creature living as if his finite reason were the highest authority and therefore taking the prerogatives of the Creator—this is the essence of sin. Paul speaks of “the lie” as “worshiping and serving the creature rather than the Creator” (Romans 1:25, see context, verses 18-32).

The first lie the Bible records is Satan's assertion to Eve that she could “be as God” (Gen 3:5). Isaiah identifies the one overpowering determination of the Satanic spirit as: “I will exalt myself... I will make myself like the Most High” (Isa 14:14), and he described spiritual Babylon (the archetypal kingdom of human rebellion against

God, cf. Daniel 4:30) in these words: “You sensual one, who dwells securely, who says in your heart, I am and there is no one besides me” (Isa 47:8).²⁶

In quality of life literature two types of statements reflect the human desire for autonomy and omniscience. The first defends the “absolute rights” of men and women to total sexual freedom, and of each woman to do what she wants with “her own body” (meaning the unborn child). The second suggests that those who are born with physical, mental or emotional handicaps—or even into poverty—would be better off dead.

Do we have absolute rights to do what we want with our bodies? Is personal autonomy a “Christian right” to be defended by the church? “You are not your own: you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:20). The New Testament calls us to accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It never defends “personal autonomy” or defines freedom in terms of autonomy: “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” (Luke 9:23).

God's grace never covers willful, cherished sin, and autonomy is the primordial sin (Isa 14:12-14). Auto-nomy literally means “self-law”—the sinful desire to be one's own ultimate authority. Again, in Genesis 3:4-6 it is the serpent who distorts true freedom into personal autonomy (“Ye shall be as gods”). Jesus' own discussion of authentic freedom is found in John 8:28-36; here it is defined within the context of discipleship and abiding in His Word. Biblical freedom is the opposite of autonomy. Making the will of “God” synonymous with being true to ones self, as in Eastern mysticism, is simply the idolatry the Bible warns against disguised in psychological terminology (see Rev 9:20-21),

As to the second theme, by acting on the assumption that they know some unborn would be better off dead, physicians and others now play God. They act as if they are omniscient, speaking with certainty about the misery “unwanted” children will both cause and experience. Really? Who gave these prophets their crystal ball? Will this new child's life be a continual burden or a joyful praise to God? How can we know?²⁷ The greatest Gospel singer of this century was the illegitimate daughter of a 16 year old, poor, black girl who was raped.

In reality, over 90% of the teenagers who commit suicide come from rich families where they have successful, educated

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parents, no material hardships and no handicaps. Among adults it is the rich, the beautiful and the successful (by material standards) who commit suicide. Suicide among the poor is extremely rare and among the handicapped it is almost non-existent!¹⁸

The lives of most successful men and women are lives of endured hardships and obstacles overcome. Read Beethoven's family background, including a deranged father, a syphilitic mother, a mentally retarded older brother and a sibling born blind. Surely Planned Parenthood would have said to Ludwig's mother: "Protect your freedom, terminate the poor thing." Their "god" is human speculation, and that god is small and impotent. To argue for death as the best answer to life's problems lacks imagination and a sense of God's redemptive might. For an atheist this limitedness is understandable, for a Christian it is bankrupt.

In summary, God is actively involved with the unborn as persons of value. Therefore since abortion is the taking of such an innocent human life it becomes, Biblically, not only an act of murder, but an assault on the purpose of Christ's life, His Gospel and His call to discipleship.

The conclusion of this article will be presented in the next issue of Proclamation.

Footnotes

¹⁸ Personally, I have not seen a "pro-choice" ethic that is even remotely derived from a Biblical base. While the Bible may be referred to as a starting point, the thought forms and language which under gird a defense of abortion are (and I believe, must be) consistently relativistic, humanistic and hedonistic (e.g., personal "rights to autonomy and self-fulfillment," thought forms alien to Biblical Christianity).

¹⁹ Lawrence E. Stager and Samuel R. Wolff: "Child Sacrifice at Carthage: Religious Rite or Population Control?" (*Biblical Archeological Review*; January/February, 1984), pp. 31-49.

²⁰ Some religious scholars, seeking to avoid the twin facts that, Scripturally, an unborn baby is a human child and killing any innocent human, especially children, is murder, have used a very curious rationalization. They argue that since no Bible text specifically states "aborting an unborn child is murder" it therefore is not murder in Scripture. This extreme bit of narrow proof-text logic has even appeared in scholarly articles. If one were to accept it, then one could argue with equal validity it is alright to murder a six year old or a 36 year old, for there is not a single text that states specifically: "thou shall not murder a six year old child." Even casual exegesis of Scripture confirms three clear and consistent principles: the unborn are viewed as developing children by God; the taking of an innocent human life (murder) is hated and condemned by God; and this hatred especially applies to child sacrifices done in an attempt to insure the prosperity or cover the sins of the parents.

²¹ See especially Mark 10:13-16 and Matthew 18:1-6. It should be remembered that Jesus did not say that unless children become as adults they cannot enter the kingdom, but just the opposite. When a society begins to devalue and destroy its children for the sake of personal comfort and autonomy, such a society is quickly becoming immune to conversion.

²² Many have argued for abortion as the lesser of two evils, and suggested as an ethical analogy the deliberate lies told by those hiding Jews from Nazis; or by those helping runaway slaves escape to freedom in the north. It is an illegitimate comparison. In both of the above illustrations those involved risked and at times gave their own lives (personal sacrifice) to save the lives of two groups of humans who had been legally declared non-humans. Abortion is exactly the opposite; it devalues to a sub-human level and terminates another human to preserve one's own lifestyle.

In a Christian worldview, such a decision is not the lesser of two evils, but rather it is akin to the mindset that allowed the horrors of Nazism and the brutality of slavery.

²³ William Willimon: "A Crisis of Identity: The Struggle of Mainline Protestant Churches" in *Sojourners* (Vol 15, No 5/May, 1986), p.28.

²⁴ In this context it is valuable to notice how Luke, a physician, documents the conception of John the Baptist. An angel tells Zechariah that his son will be "filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15, see also vs.41-44 NASB).

²⁵ William Willimon: "A Crisis of Identity: The Struggle of Mainline Modern Protestantism." in *Sojourners*. (Vol 15; No 5; May, 1986). p. 28

²⁶ Emil Brunner writes: "All human sin has an element of weakness; it is mingled with anxiety for one's life, a fear of losing something by obedience to God... Man's arrogance consists in believing that he can look after himself better than God can, that

To argue for death as the best answer to life's problems lacks imagination and a sense of God's redemptive might. For an atheist this limitedness is understandable, for a Christian it is bankrupt.

he knows what is good for him better than his Creator" (Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, [Phila.; Westminster Press, 1939] p.131). Ellen White, in describing the voice of Satan to the soul, writes: "I can give you riches, pleasures, honor, and happiness. Harken to my council. Do not allow yourself to be carried away with whimsical notions of honesty or self-sacrifice. Thus multitudes are deceived. They consent to live for the service of self, and Satan is satisfied" (Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, [Mountain View, CA; Pacific Press, 1948] p. 130).

²⁷ "To have destroyed the defective infant, Hellen Keller, would have been to destroy also the teacher-humanitarian who was Anne Sullivan. In countless cases throughout the world a defective child has not been an expensive, heart-rending burden but a priceless gift that has brought out the hidden strengths of a father, a mother and sisters and brothers....How foolish that we condemn the 'Me-Generation' and then are tempted to remove from them the defective children who offer them the opportunity to forget the me and to remember the others....We will never know how many Helen Kellers and Beethovens are destroyed each year in America's abortion mills, or how many Anne Sullivans are left without the challenge that makes an Anne Sullivan. We climb a mountain because it is there and calls us. We solve a problem because it is there and challenges us. How terrible if someone leveled all the mountains and removed all the problems. How little opportunity would be left for human beings to become both really human and really Godlike." George Tribou, quoted in John Powell: *Abortion; The Silent Holocaust*; p.129.

²⁸ In a recent letter (9/1/88) one of the editorial team of the *Adventist Review*, after affirming the church's pro-choice position stated: "Another important point, it seems to me, is that to take a pro-life position is to say that death is the worst possible fate. This is not so. There are many things worse than death such as a miserable, hopeless life." He then backs up this assertion by quoting Jesus, in reference to Judas: "It would have been better for this man if he had not been born." This thinking is tragic at two levels. First, he apparently argues, in advance of the fact, that many lives are hopeless. This is odd for a man who professes faith in the redeeming and transforming power of God. Secondly, he twists Scripture from a spiritual to a materialistic context and implies Jesus is referring to material or emotional hardship rather than persistent and final rebellion when He acknowledges the horror of Judas' fatal choice. In reality, if this writer were to quote the Gospels accurately he would be compelled to admit that Jesus holds out far more hope for the poor, the outcast and the despised than for the esteemed, the affluent and the powerful.

In touch with the Spirit CONTINUED FROM FRONT

One may ask why I was preaching and teaching things I was not fully convinced of. My answer is simple—I was doing it as any other person would do it: to fulfill his duties.

When I left the SDA church—the church that I loved—I engaged myself in powerful prayers because I needed an answer from God. And God answered my prayers. I started feeling changes in my life, and I became courageous and was able to stand firm on my decision to leave. I thank God that I am now getting new revelations, and I believe this is the work of the Holy Spirit in me. Now I am able to read the Bible with the insight of the Holy Spirit.

When Pastor Greg Taylor came to Uganda, who was sent to us by Life Assurance Ministries, he answered many of my questions. And during his stay in Uganda, I saw God at work through His Spirit. Many miracles were performed, and one day we experienced a sign which God Himself showed us as a confirmation of the Holy Spirit amongst us.

While Pastor Greg Taylor was preaching, he prophesied concerning what I, Pastor Nsubuga Daniel, and Pastor Ddamulira Christopher would become. A few days later, we visited one of the church cell groups where we found a woman that was not in the church on the day Pastor Greg Taylor prophesied. This woman prophesied the same message as was given by Pastor Greg Taylor. I asked her whether somebody had let her know about Greg's prophecy, but she had not heard of it, nor had even known of us. This experience confirmed to me that surely the Holy Spirit is at work in and among us.

Such things I had never experienced when I was still an SDA Pastor. My life was as dry as the desert wind. By writing this I am not trying to humiliate the Adventists, but, the Adventist church limits the work of the Holy Spirit among the church's believers.

When you study what the Adventist church teaches concerning the Holy Spirit, you will discover that according to them, the Holy Spirit does not go beyond reminding them of what they know. But Jesus said that the Spirit will be a counsellor, a teacher, and a reminder of what Jesus taught them [John 26, 27]. When



you look at this scripture critically, you will find out that He talks about teaching—teaching “all truth.”

When a teacher enters into a classroom the students expect to be taught new things. But the Adventists claim to have all the truth making the Holy Spirit not needed. If someone comes with a revelation from scripture, they will pass it off as a false teaching because the Holy Spirit is inactive in the church.

Jesus said, “I have much more to say to you, more than that you can now bear... when the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth...” John 16: 12, 13. Jesus was saying that He could not teach everything, but the spirit would come and continually teach the truth.

To me what I understand is this. The teaching and guiding of the Spirit in the truth is indefinite. Therefore, no one can claim to be the sole possessors of truth. Everyone must have an open mind to allow for new light which comes from the scripture, as is taught by the Spirit.

When the Bible says, “You must be born of water and the spirit,” John 3:5. God has not given any other way that we can become His children except to be born of water and the Spirit. Once we are born of the Spirit, we become His children who will subscribe to His work in us. You can be very wise and brilliant, but to your parents you are still their child. Even when you are an adult, in your parent's house you are their grown-up child.

Likewise once we are born of the Spirit we remain children under the influence of His teaching and guiding. It is very important to be born of the Spirit because He will keep you in the spiritual status which glorifies our God. Once we allow him in, he will take a full control over our lives, and we will agree with him and he will teach us new things which are revealed to us in the holy Scripture.

My appeal to you is this: Be born of the Spirit and be obedient to him. You will experience great wonders of His works in your life, and by faith he will perform miracles in your life. Most importantly, you will enjoy a deeper relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Letter from the pastors in Uganda

God made a way where there was no way

When we left Adventism the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church leadership in Central Uganda field felt so happy. They thought that this was the end of it all, as it was their way of sending off whoever questioned their doctrine. Many are sent off and forgotten due to lack of support and love. But with us it was totally a different case. We suffered but for a short time and then Life Assurance Ministries (LAM) took us up. This did not please the church leadership. We learned from reliable sources that they have decided to do three things:

1. To frustrate us by threatening to contact Dale Ratzlaff to stop our financial assistance.
2. Tarnish our names to the public and the Adventist community at large so that they will not listen to us anymore.
3. Intimidate us to cause us to cease to speak out. But praise be to God for He stood by us just as He did for Paul 2 Tim. 4:17, for they tarnished our names and they also intimidated us, but we are still strong in the Lord, and many more people are still leaving Adventism. Many times we sit down and consider the wonderful miracles the Lord has done for us and the wonderful provision that has been provided every day. So friends who think that when they leave Adventism—that will mark the end of the road for them—it's not true. The One who feeds the birds of the air is faithful to take care of us, too.

We started our meetings with huge crowds of Adventists—and were so proud of that—yet these people came because they did not know that we were no longer members of the SDA church. When they found out, the numbers dropped. The few who stayed were soon called out by friends and pastors of the SDA

church. We prayed and the good God strengthened the few who remained. We worked so hard to strengthen them by visiting them and showing them what the Bible teaches. We put much emphasis on proper Biblical interpretation. Then we looked at length at the fundamental beliefs of the SDA church. We sorted out with those which were Biblically wanting. During this time we consisted of five former pastors of the SDA church. LAM began to give us financial help and it paid for our meeting place. The leadership of the SDA church called on two occasions to try to get us to go back to the SDA denomination. We talked for quite a while. Some could see our point and others could not. When they realized that we could not go back to the SDA church they passed circulars to all SDA churches in Uganda that we are no longer pastors of the SDA church and therefore we were not allowed to preach, attend funerals officiate at weddings, attend lesson classes and any other matter related to church services. The main reason they gave was that we had lost the faith of Jesus.

One day Ddamulir Christopher went to visit the last SDA church he pastored at Kawempe, but the Elders and church pastor chased him away from the church and drove him up to the main road. He was not allowed to stay anywhere on the church compound. This treatment is not new for Adventists in Uganda because they are so fond of chasing away any one who might oppose anything they believe. The SDA church has even taken some to prison. And today, Adventists in Uganda are filled with tension because they fear to say anything which will look like it is contradicting the church. If they do, they are said to be part of our group.



Baptism and prayer for recent converts to Christianity in Uganda. This outreach is supported by Life Assurance Ministries.



In such a time, a former SDA pastor, Greg Taylor, visited us. He was so kind to us and tried all he could to fit into African settings. But the Adventists were not happy with his coming. One day, as he was preaching, the Adventists sent people in the theater we use as our church and started picking out those they knew were Adventists. They also stood by the door to threaten those coming in. But God faithfully saw us through even at that time. Greg prayed with us and gave us courage, and by the time he left five of us were busy in the work with two Bible instructors. We are thankful to LAM for supporting us with \$400 each a month and \$100 a month for each Bible instructor. We are able to care for our family, take our children to school and preach the gospel without complaining. God bless all the directors of LAM and all those who are following up the stories from Uganda, and those who are praying for us.

The names of the pastors, for those who may want to know and to pray for each name, are as follows: Nsubuga Daniel, Ddamulira Christopher, Luswata Drake Moses, Okello Vallentine, and Mukibi Israel. The Bible instructors are Ddamulira Abdul and Nalukambi Joyce.

In addition to monthly support, we have been given money to rent a hall which we use for our worship. We have been given a very good laptop computer and we are translating some materials into Luganda so we can meet the needs of those who cannot read English, yet want to know the truth about the simple gospel of the New Covenant. LAM is also sending us a printer, paying for the Internet connection, sending us a VCR, and a video projector. We will now be able to show the *Jesus* film, project the words of the worship songs, and make PowerPoint presentations, as well as show children's videos for our evangelism and church services.

Today, Adventists are still leaving [Adventism] to find a deeper relationship with the Lord than the Sabbath and diet principles can give. We have registered three Kenyan pastors with a B.Th. that are ready to start work in Nairobi, Kenya's capital. We have promised to give them moral support, and we have instructed them on how to deal with Adventist leadership. Please keep these brothers in prayer.

In Western Uganda there is a group of 30 people who were abandoned by the Adventists because the one who baptized them was not ordained, so they denied them membership. Gato Joshua is taking care of this group, but due to his busy schedule, he has requested us to take over the church. Pastor Okello Valentine has been asked to help this group.

We organized an outdoor evangelistic campaign and it has attracted many people. Yesterday, we had 30 people who accepted Christ, of which we baptized nine. Twenty-one were coming from Adventism, and we honored the baptism they had received as Adventists.

Dale connected us with Stan Lincoln, an American doing missionary work in Uganda for Mission Aviation Fellowship. He has blessed our meetings with *Jesus* films. The first time he showed this film the theater was filled to capacity and some stood at the

overflow. Now we show it outside. Yesterday we had a huge crowd—more than I could count.

We thank LAM that we will soon have our own equipment, as Stan has to borrow the equipment from Mission Aviation Fellowship and at times they have their own programs.

Among those who converted when Greg was here is a woman who allowed us to use her home for a cell meeting. This cell has now grown into a church with at least eighteen people or more in attendance. Some will remain to Kalerwe and others will go to Kasubi for pastoral leadership.

We thank LAM for the many books they have given us. Some are about church administration and others are published by LAM. We have received many *Proclamations* which have helped bring many people to our group. We still get many who are asking questions, and some are still undecided.

We thank Dr. Streifling for the books he sent, and also Calvary Chapel and the many others I do not know who have helped. I wish we could thank each individual.

Currently we have many, many children—sometimes more than adults—in our church, yet we do not have the things we need for their class. Greg left balloons and sweets, but they are all gone. We need teaching aids and picture rolls so that we can also take care of the little ones.

May the good God bless all of you who read this issue of *Proclamation*. God has opened up a large work in Uganda and it is expensive to maintain, but we look to God for help and thank whoever God has used to throw something into the pocket of LAM. I know God counts it all, and I thank those who have cried with us and those SDA members who never joined us but encouraged us and felt sorry for the way the SDA church treated us.

We want to tell you there will be joy when the work is done.

Yours in a blessed hope, LAM Pastors from Uganda. !



L-R: Pastor Okello, Pastor Nsubuga, Pastor Ddamulira, Steve (Nsubuga's brother who is still a student at the SDA university), and Pastor Luswata.

Pastor's wife has dream

"This is the lesson book!"

Dear Pastor Dale,

Here is the full report of what Scovia Mukiibi, wife of Pastor Mukiibi Israel, experienced in a dream prior to her conversion.

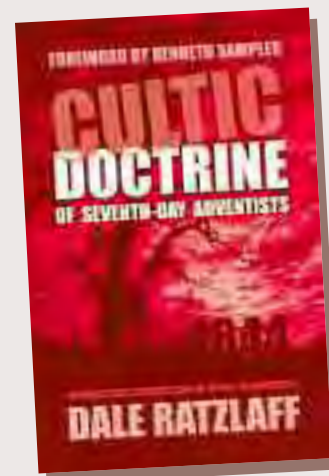
She said, "I took time praying to God about the new teaching that had come to the pastors, Luswata, Ddamulira and Nsubuga, which I realized my husband was getting involved with. I knew these teachings were wrong and I never wanted my husband to leave the SDA church. During this period of earnest prayer, one night as I was sleeping, I saw a man standing before me with a red-covered book and he said to me, 'This is the lesson book.' I protested to him, showing him my [SDA] quarterly lesson book. It took some time, with him trying to convince me that what he had was the lesson book that I should read. Later, this man disappeared to nowhere. I began walking my way and as I walked, I heard music that sounded like the SDA church music and a voice from behind I heard saying, 'You have also left the church.' I was depressed in my heart and then I woke up.

"After some days, I visited my husband who now spends most of his time with the pastors, Luswata, Ddamulira and Nsubuga. When I arrived there, the book I found on the table was the one I saw in the dream, red in color, and on it was written *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*. I demanded to know more about this book, and after looking at some of the points in this book, I made my decision for Christ."

In addition to this we are also glad to inform you that Scovia straight away began to preach the good news, beginning with her friends. She would also like to open up a cell group where she is currently staying. We are also working hard to help her succeed in this.

Yours in a living hope,
Luswata Drake Moses and
Ddamulira Christopher

The book in the dream, *Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*, has recently been updated with a new cover. You may order a copy from LAM Publications online or call 800-355-7073.



Distortions in The Clear Word Bible upholding Anti-biblical SDA Doctrines

Arian views vs. Christ's Deity

Verle Streifling, Ph.D.

A number of cults, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, hold the views of Arius, that the Father alone is Almighty God, who first created his Son, Jesus, who in turn created all else. As a created being, Jesus as the Son of God is not Almighty God. In Heb 1:5, 6; Lk 1:31-35 we find Jesus became the Son of God through his incarnation, not by being created. In order to uphold Ellen White's early Arian views, *The Clear Word Bible (CWB)* has numerous additions, deletions or changes, to force the Word of God to agree with the Seventh-day Adventist prophet, so she will appear to be a True Prophet.

1. John 8:58 *CWB* changes "before Abraham was, I AM" (eternalness) to "I existed before Abraham" [allowing his prior creation].
2. Col. 1:16 *CWB* changes "By Him all things were created" (creator) "through Him the Father created" [only a channel—not source of creation].
3. Col. 1:15 *CWB* changes "He is firstborn over all creation" (nature) to "He has the right to be placed over all creation" [promoted authority].
4. Col. 1:18 *CWB* changes "He is the Beginning" (source of creation) to "He existed from the beginning" [only places him in time—from his creation].
5. Col. 1:18 "He is...the firstborn from among the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence" (what He has of his own self and work), is changed and added "He was the only human who ever died and yet conquered death, therefore He is worthy to be given first place above everything in heaven and on earth."
6. Col. 1:19 "It pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell" changed and added "...the Father acknowledged Him as fully God, in spite of His human nature."

7. Heb 1:10 "You O LORD (Yehweh), in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the works of your hands" changed and added "You existed before the beginning of time (Gen 1:5 *CWB*) You carried out our plan and created the earth, shaping the sky above it (Gen 1:16 *CWB*) with your own hands."
8. John 1:1 "In the beginning, was the Word" (the person and name of Jesus, Rev 19:10) changed and added "In the beginning, going further back in time than can be imagined, the Word of God was there." [the impersonal words spoken by the Father]
9. Jn 20:28 "My Lord and my God." (Jehovah) *CWB* adds and deletes "Lord, you're alive! They were right! I believe! You are the Son of God."
10. Acts 2:25 "I foresaw the LORD always before My face, for He is at My right hand" changed and added "I have seen the presence of God in all my life, and because he is at my right hand." [here future to past; face to life; why I see him to why I shall not be moved; 'Yhwh' to presence]
11. Tit 1:3-4 "But has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the command of God our savior. . . Jesus Christ our Savior" *CWB* adds, deletes & changes "When the right time came, () God kept his promise, entrusting me with preaching () this message of salvation, as ordered by Him, our Savior and God. . . and from the Lord Jesus Christ, [makes the Father 'God our Savior' instead of Jesus Christ]
12. Tit 2:13 "...the glorious appearing of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ" changed to "the glorious appearing of our Great God, and our Savior Jesus Christ [makes Father God and Savior instead of Jesus Christ, as per Granville Sharpe's Greek rule]

13. Tit 3:4, 6 "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared... Whom he poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior" CWB adds, deletes and changes "*But when the kindness and love of God () was shown to us in Christ and we welcomed him in our lives, a new power began to operate within us... God held nothing back which would be for our spiritual good, and He did all this for us, through Jesus Christ () our Lord*" [God our Savior (4) and Jesus as Savior (6) deleted so Jesus is not God; the Holy Spirit's personality and baptism deleted, changed for spiritual good]
14. Rev 16:5 CWB deletes "Who is and Who was and Who is to be..." changes "You are righteous" to "*your judgments are righteous*" adds "*You always have been just, and will continue to be so forever.*"
15. 2 Pet 1:1 "...to those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ" CWB deletes, changes and adds "*to those who received the same precious faith as we have, through () our () Savior Jesus Christ* [omits Jesus' deity]
16. Eph 5:5...the kingdom of Christ and God" changed to "*the kingdom of Christ and the Father*" [as per Sharpe's rule, Christ is God. CWB makes it 'the Father', deleting Jesus' deity]
17. Rev 3:14 "the beginning of the creation of God" changed to "*who is in charge of God's entire creation.*" In Greek, Christ is source of creation; in CWB he's the watchman over it.
18. Jn 10:30 "I and my Father are One" (same nature & essence) changed to "*I and my Father are so close we're one*" [same position, not nature].
19. Rom 10:9-10 "you shall be saved" changed to "*you have the relationship with God that you need*" CWB deletes "that Jesus is LORD (Yehweh)"; also changes and adds "*So we witness for God not in order to be saved, but because we are saved.*" [here confessing Jesus' deity is essential for salvation, but CWB deleted it for SDA founders denied this vehemently]
20. 1 Ths 4:14 "...even so God will bring with Him, those who sleep in Jesus" CWB changes & adds: "*...those who died believing in Him will be raised to life by God just as Jesus was*" Nb. Jesus as God by nature, raised Himself from death (Jn 2:19-21; 10:18 etc) He'll also raise the dead (Jn 5:25-29; 11:25) for He is the 'resurrection and the life'.
22. Rev 10:5 "Then this Mighty Angel... CWB adds... *the Lord Jesus...*"
23. Rev 10:8+9 "Go and take the little open book out of the hand of the Mighty Angel...so I went up to ...CWB changes... *the Son of God and asked Him if I could have the little book.*"
24. 1 Ths 4:16 "When Christ descends... CWB adds "*He as Michael the Archangel will give a shout...*"
25. Rev 12:7 CWB adds "...*God's Son Michael and the loyal angels fought against the dragon...*"
26. Jude 1:9 CWB adds "...*the Lord Jesus Christ, also called Michael the Archangel...*"
27. Prov 8:22 CWB adds & changes "*The Son of God is the source of wisdom. He says...*" Nb. Arian theology says Jesus was the Son of God by having been created by the Father, who then created all other things through Jesus, who of himself did not have power to create. This accounts for Ellen White's many statements of Jesus as 'the Son of God' at the creation of the heavens and the earth, which CWB adds as noted above. One text often used to show Jesus' initial creation before all else is Prov 8:22-30. "Jehovah made me in the beginning of His way..." (New World Translation of Jehovah's Witnesses). Here the KJV uses 'possessed me' but Arians explain the Hebrew word 'kaw-naw' means 'to create'. So Ellen White applies Prov 8:22-30 to Jesus (*Patriarchs & Prophets* p.34, 1913 ed). Thus CWB adds and changes the text to accommodate her. Of this *Gesenius' Hebrews Lexicon* notes there's no valid reason to apply 'to create' to 'kaw-naw' for in all cases the "true meaning appears to be 'to possess' (buy, buy back, redeem). Here Solomon (pen name 'wisdom') says Jehovah redeemed me before creating all else. Jesus as creator (Heb 1:10) is Jehovah our Redeemer!

Several of Ellen White's other statements explain other changes above:

- 1903 "The man Christ Jesus was not the Lord God Almighty" (ms 150, *SDA Commentary* V, p. 1129)
- 1904 "To Christ had been given an exalted position... made equal with the Father" (*Test* viii, p. 268)
- 1900 "The mighty angel who instructed John (Rev 1:1) was no less than the person of Christ" (ms 59)
- 1905 "The instruction... was so important that Christ came... to give it..." (ms 129; *SDA Commentary* VII, p.971)
- Rev 10:6 "In swearing by the creator, the angel who is Christ, swore by himself" (*Ibid.*, p. 978)

SDAs Present Jesus as an Angelic being (Arian theology)

21. Rev 10:1 "Next I saw a Mighty Angel coming... CWB adds... *Then I knew it was the Lord Jesus.*"

We have found a wonderful church

Thank you for sending us *Proclamation*. We enjoy reading it, and want to encourage you to keep up the good work. We attended SDA in _____ for several years. The congregation there is small but close-knit. They were warm and friendly, and we loved them, plus the beautiful music in that church. My wife was a former SDA, having been "kicked out" of the church in California for allegedly not keeping the Sabbath properly, so she understandably was a hard sell. I, at the time, had a more open mind than she; however, neither of us could stomach the way they idolize EGW. Since then, we have returned to our beloved Baptist Church, finding that it is where we belong. We have since moved back to Southern California where we have found a wonderful church in this city: Immanuel Baptist Church. If you are ever out this way on a Sunday, be sure to attend this really outstanding church. People go out of their way to attend Crystal Cathedral. This church is no less awesome. God has truly blessed it though its pastor, Rob Zinn. Again, we send encouragement to keep up your good work. We'll send contributions as able.

Attend meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses...found the truth

Please take me off your mailing list. I am a former Adventist. I am studying with and attend meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses and am happy to

have found the truth. I encourage you to attend one of their public talks. This is the only group who heeds the commandment in Matt 28:19, 20 and are fulfilling Matt 24:14—preaching the good news of the kingdom...

Editor's Note: How tragic. Had this former SDA been taught the full truth of the deity of Christ she would never have joined the JW's.

Praise God for the peace

Thanks you for your ministry. Praise God for the peace I have received from the information written in *Proclamation*.

Adventist pastor writes

Dear Dale, Not all Evangelical Adventists connect the Sabbath with the mark of the beast and many who do, do not make it prominent. We are all on a journey and that journey will not end until we are with Jesus. I was particularly struck by the short note about Teresa Beam...I am revising my view that the Adventist Church is the remnant church based on Rev 14:12 since while we talk much about the fourth commandment we do not uphold the sixth commandment. In this respect the Catholic Church has as much right to call themselves the remnant church as Adventists since they uphold the sixth commandment... (*SDA pastor of a large Adventist church*)

She gave us a testimony of how the Lord has shown her the truth

Greg & Dale, We greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have never given up praying for you that God may do the best of his will for you... We do write this with an intention of giving you a brief report of how the ministry that you inaugurated is progressing. To begin with, we give honor and glory to God who in His Spirit is greatly using us. Although many things have been said against us, all that we have ignored in order that we do not seem to be fighting a mortal war. The congregation you left us with is gradually increasing both in number and spirit. The fee members are greatly interested in the ministry as we shall soon inform you. You have already heard of the crusade and people have contributed as used by the Lord. They are also laboring to see that this comes to reality. On the issue cells, we have pleasure to inform you that, Sr Prossy Namusisi, a newly baptized member, has a cell in her home in Kasubi which is rapidly growing each week we visit this cell we find at least one new member. The members are now eighteen and this number is too big to congregate in her room. But thanks be to God that this same lady has given us space where we can pitch a tent. We meet in this place every Thursday where we pray for people and preach the word of God. We expect to baptize five members from this cell soon. In general we have met several other people from the SDA, and among the many we would wish to tell you about the joy we have for Mrs. Mukiibi, She is one of those who have just left the SDA church to join the new ministry of the new covenant. And she gave us a testimony of how the Lord has shown her the truth. She told us of a dream of a man showing her a book and that book was red in color. She is now witnessing for Christ. We shall communicate to you all about her dream in the next report. For now may the grace of the Lord be with you all. Yours in a living hope

Luswata Drake Moses/Ddamulira Chris

Like wonderful deserts!

Dear LAM, We are former Adventists, long gone for 25 years. We've believed the gospel of "Christ Alone" for 25 years. We still have family and friends, who we thought understood the Gospel, but are back in Adventism (actually never really left) trying to candy coat or change Adventism to fit the Free Gospel of Christ. It won't work. You cannot fit "knowing you are saved" into "judgment pending" or

Letter from a brother in Uganda

Dale, I am happy to have this chance to communicate with you through the internet. I am the one who the Ugandan pastors Nsubuga and Okello wrote you about. I knew this ministry when I was talking to one of them that we should start our own church which does not have the teaching of E. G White. Fortunately it is good to know that there was already one established to join—Life Assurance Ministries. My conviction is great that the course I am about to take is God's way to reveal His true gospel to the world. It requires no hesitation because the devil may take advantage to distract the mission the way I am seeing currently through Okello's suspension which has led to fear among the pastors who wanted to join. Although I still have one pastor...who is exceedingly willing to join by this coming June and another is on the way. Dale, it is God who showed you the way. Remember it is not the way of the majority which is always right but, the way of the true seekers of the word of God. Our simple strategy is that we should start preaching in Nairobi by mid June this year—God willing. Because of this, it will require us to go to Nairobi soon if we could have some money to go and set a proper strategy from the ground. We request for you to help us please to start this work in Kenya. Thanks and may God bless you. We hope for your reply soonest.

Editor's Note: We are keeping the name of this pastor confidential at this time. We emailed this pastor and told him that we could not take on any more mission expenses unless God provided additional funds. We also told him that we have seen God do that time and again! Please keep this pastor and others who will be joining him in your prayers. Pray that if it be God's will that LAM take up mission work in Kenya he will provide the funds. We will soon send this pastor a good supply of books to help him in this new work.

"Jesus plus the Sabbath" Gospel. We have enjoyed your *Proclamation* so much, because we can now hand something to someone, (no discussions, where things get misunderstood, etc.) so they can read it, in order, quietly, with our prayers of the Holy Spirit going with them. Thank you so much for sending a whole box of these, to us, with our first donation. We knew nothing of your *Proclamation* magazine until last month or we would have been supporting it all along. We have no computer, but we need to order the *Cultic Doctrine* and *Sabbath in Crisis* from the correct department. We've already devoured all the *Proclamation* magazines you sent, like wonderful deserts!! We mailed out most all of them to friends and relatives. We will definitely be your full supporters and send as much financially as we can. We believe this is the beginning of the loud cry. Hallelujah! We are going home soon!

One Question

One question—what about Isa. 66:22–24? Our relatives keep bringing this one up, as Sabbath in the new earth. Help!

Editor's note: Find an answer to this on page 359-361 in *Sabbath in Christ*.

Straight shocking heresy indeed!

Dear LAM, I just wanted to say thank you and bless you with some little financial help that I can give. I was very blessed by *Sabbath in Crisis* and I'm halfway through *Cultic Doctrine* right now...quite an eye-opener! I always wondered why there were sins in heaven in the first place that warranted a "cleansing" of heaven's sanctuary...the answer is straight shocking heresy indeed!

You have found the true Spirit of Christ

Dear LAM, I wish to thank you for sending me my first issue of *Proclamation*! I am an ex-Adventist and I contribute [sic] this to God's word not EGW's word. I myself have found so many mis-leading by the SDA church and I found after reading my issue of *Proclamation* that you have found the true Spirit of Christ. I will continue to pray for other Adventists, as it says in Jer. 50:6. I pray that the Holy Spirit leads the lost back to the truth. It is so hard to see the problem especially when you are a co-dependent and are inundated with false teachings by EGW. I have a message for all SDA, "take a little time off from the church and do your own studies without interference from others. Let the Holy Spirit lead you, not the mis-teachings of others and see for yourself that EGW isn't a true prophet. We

are warned not to listen to false prophets in Deut. 13:13, Jer. 23:16, 27:9, 15, 16. Her "shut door prophecies" were a sign of false prophecy and then she admitted she made a mistake; and what about the association with Israel Dammon!

The gospel of Jesus is so simple

Dear Dale, I am enclosing my tithe check. I will need a receipt. Thank you. If this isn't the way I'm supposed to send it let me know. We have a small group studying your material. We agree wholeheartedly with you, but my husband will not even look at it. He says it's from the devil. Please pray for us. My son and I have ordered several of your books and are sharing them with our friends who will read them. The gospel of Jesus is so simple. Why do Adventists want to make it so hard? Thank you so much for your books. We have enjoyed them and hopefully will help you monthly.

My "Boss" wanted me to have those books!

Well bless His wonderful Name! I got the books and back issues of *Proclamation* that you sent me!! The officer told me he couldn't figure why the package wasn't sent back to you, but would I please come and get it out of his way. I told him it doesn't matter what his boss said about it, my "Boss" wanted me to have those books! Thank you soooooo much. I am already half way through *Sabbath in Crisis* for the first time. I can't wait to finish it so I can read it again. I praise God that with prayer and the Holy Spirit's guidance I was given the truth about Pentecost being on a Sunday. In my last letter I told you that I haven't heard any-one address that important issue. Well I skimmed through *Sabbath in Crisis* and there it was on page 253. Then I skimmed H.M. Riggle's *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day* and there it was again on pages. 145, 146. Thank you so much, pastor, for your ministry. I just pray that God will use me on this prison yard to touch the Sabbatharians that are here.

Proclamation is so nauseating!

Please, please, do NOT send your magazine to my address! *Proclamation* is so nauseating! I don't want to spend time reading material that is tearing down our "Solid Foundation"! I am a firm believer in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. I am a believer that this "gift" was bestowed upon Ellen G. White. Remove this mailing immediately. I pray your spiritual eyes will be opened before it is too late. God loves you and wants you to be saved. Yours truly,

Coming to a beautiful understanding of Grace

Thank you so much for the ministry you're providing. My husband and I are coming to a beautiful understanding of Grace. Your book *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists* and some other works, have shown us how much brainwashing takes place in Adventism. We are SDA born and bred and it is going to be a long road to extract "Ellen White" theology from what we are now learning to be actual Biblical theology. Anyway, I just wanted to say thanks. God bless you, truly, in your work.

What he teaches is pretty clear

I've been an Adventist for about 45 years...but for the past few years I have understood a lot although for the sake of the family I still go to this church. Last Sabbath the sermon was given by a retired pastor who receives the *Proclamation*. He mentioned the magazine on the topic—losing our identity. He mentioned Mr. Paulsen's comment about it, but he referred it all to the 10 commandments, and Rev. 12. 17 you know the topic. By this he essentially said the same story, that the commandment keeping is the sign of the true church. Same goes on in the *Quarterlies* they emphasize the [SDA view of the] covenant, etc. I read Sam Pestes's books, and what he teaches is pretty clear, but I wonder if would make any sense to explain it in *Proclamation* so others could see. Maybe you've done it already I only received one magazine for I am new subscriber. When my husband tried to get a discussion going on this subject I only said that Jews were the commandment keepers and killed Jesus. I don't have to tell you all the details, you know what they teach. Anyway it is so hard on me, because my husband doesn't talk to me much because of that, he worries that I am losing my salvation and gives me a cold treatment which is quite hard to bear. You probably know a lot more about this than I do. I feel almost like a criminal, but I cannot buy into it anymore. I love God with all my heart but am getting too old for this. I'd like to remain anonymous.

Mail letters and donations to:

Life Assurance Ministries
PO Box 11587
Glendale, AZ 85318

Even better than frozen root beer!

Dale Ratzlaff

When I was a third-grader we lived in Tucson, Arizona. Our home had one of those old swamp coolers which was mounted in a window along the west side of our house. In the hot summer months my mother would occasionally freeze bottles of root beer and then on a particularly hot day she would give me one. Usually, the cap would be pushed off by the expansion of freezing but I never remember a bottle breaking. My favorite pastime on those hot, 100-plus degree days, was to sprawl out on the floor in front of the cooler with the air blowing directly on me. I would spend a long time with that frozen bottle of root beer, sipping it slowly as it melted, enjoying each drop! The simple new covenant gospel is even better than frozen root beer! And if we drink it now it will deliver us from those particularly hot days in the future.

The writer of Hebrews says, "There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God." He admonishes us to "be diligent to enter that rest." And he says "we who have believed enter that rest" (Heb. 4:3, 9, 11). Christians who believe enter the "rest" of fellowship with God, the "rest" of Eden's seventh day when all was very good. May you personally enjoy each of the precious promises of God.

We can know!

We now have eternal life (Jn. 6:47)! We now know we have eternal life (1 Jn. 5:13). We now have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). We now have been reconciled to God (Rom. 5:10). Our old self (man) was crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6). We are now to consider ourselves to be dead to sin (Rom. 6:11). We are now freed from sin (Rom. 6:18, 22; 1 Jn. 3:8, 9). We are now dead to the law (Rom. 7:4). We now have been released from the law! (Rom. 7:6). We now serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter! (Rom. 7:6). There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus! (Rom. 8:1). We have now received the spirit of adoption! (Rom. 8:15). We now overwhelmingly con-

quer through Him who loved us! (Rom. 8:37). We are now sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise! (Eph. 1:13). We are now saved through faith! (Eph. 2:8). We are now the dwelling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:22). We are now chosen in Christ (Eph. 1:4). We now have redemption through his blood (Eph. 1:7). God is now at work in us to will and to do His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). We are now qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. 1:12). We have now been transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1:13). We now have each received a spiritual gift (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4). The Spirit now helps our weaknesses (Rom. 8:26). We have now been predestined to be like Christ (Rom. 8:29). And this is just the beginning!

Really great news!

Do you see why the gospel is "good news"? One cannot work righteousness from the outside in—that was the old covenant way¹ and it never worked. Rather, in the new covenant God creates or regenerates our spirits. We are born of God. (Jn. 3:3–5) We have the divine DNA, God's life living in us, and that life is perfect.²

If anyone loves Me he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him (Jn. 14:23).

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete (1 Jn. 1:4).

Yes, the gospel is good news. It brings even more joy than frozen root beer on a hot summer day! **!**

¹ "It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the Lord our God, just as He commanded us" (Deut. 6:25).

² 1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:9–12, 1 Cor. 2:12; 1 Cor. 3:16.

Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.

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