

# Proclamation!

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FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS

## Do Adventists preach another gospel?

**Dale Ratzlaff**

This is adapted from a presentation given at the recent X Convention in Kennewick, Washington.

**T**here are two extremes that the Church must continually face; either of which could prove fatal. Like driving down a road while punching in phone numbers on a cell phone it is easy to lose one's concentration and veer off the center of the road. I almost hit the curb the other day doing that very thing.

The first extreme is for churches to start criticizing one another. There is no perfect church

not to condemn other churches which have a different style of worship and differences in other peripheral beliefs, yet on the other hand, Scripture is clear that we must confront false teachers who compromise the basic fundamental of Christianity—the gospel of Christ.

### *The issue to which Galatians was written was one of the first problems the new Christian church had to face.*

and we must remember Jesus' prayer for unity that they all be one. If there was a perfect church it would not be perfect if we joined it. So to argue about worship styles, music, how often we celebrate the Lord's Supper, or just how last day events are going to work out I think is hurtful to the church at large.

The other extreme that many Christians have fallen into is that we just mind our own business. We really don't care what the church down the road teaches. After all, who are we to judge? Our job is to preach the truth and not worry about others. Right? This attitude of non-involvement allows false teachers to pull thousands, yes, millions, into cult and quasi-cult organizations which compromise the gospel which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Therefore on the one hand we must be careful

### **The Galatian Problem**

I have been asked to share with you what I consider to be the main, or at least one of the main, problems with the Seventh-day Adventist church. Adventists hold many good values and practices. Their emphasis on health, education, mission, evangelism, community and giving are to be commended. However, I believe Adventists hold several false doctrines and at the heart of *historic* Adventism there is a compromise of the gospel which is very similar to that which was being promoted to the Galatian churches in the time of Paul.

Galatians was written about AD 50, and many scholars think it is the first letter Paul wrote to the young Gentile churches. The issue to which Galatians was written was one of the first problems the new Christian church had to face. What relationship should exist between the old covenant laws and Christianity? That problem is still a pressing issue in the church today.

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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

### Presented at the X convention in Washington State

#### Proclaiming the Gospel

Recently I gave several presentations at the X convention in Kennewick, Washington. While there I became acquainted with Mike Gendron who has a ministry to Catholics. His presentations to the convention were filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit and had much excellent biblical material. Our book tables were next to each other so we had many conversations. I shared with him some of the issues of *Proclamation* and he shared with me an issue of his periodical, *Proclaiming the Gospel*, in which was his article, "The Assurance of Eternal Life, Why Do So Many Reject It?" I felt our readers would be challenged by it and asked Mike if we could reprint it. He graciously consented. We thank Mike for allowing our readers to benefit from his study. Mike's web site is [www.pro-gospel.org](http://www.pro-gospel.org). He has a number of resources for working with Catholics.

#### Defending the Gospel

Many of the letters we receive from our Seventh-day Adventists readers convey the thought that we should not be pointing out the errors in Adventism. We must all remember that *Proclamation* is targeted to former Seventh-day Adventists even though there are thousands of current Adventists receiving it. There is a real need for Formers to be freed from false teachings. It is true, however, that there is a great danger of condemning other Christian churches and we want to be sensitive to that. The article, "Do Seventh-day Adventists teach Another Gospel?" is adapted from a presentation I gave at the X convention. I trust it will make clear our position in defending the gospel.

#### The Great Controversy Theme and the Gospel

While at the X convention I also met Rodney Nelson with whom I had communicated previously by email and phone. He submitted to me his article analyzing the great controversy theme in Adventism that was printed by Good News Unlimited several years ago. I found it insightful, and I think it will help our readers understand the implications of some of our hermeneutical principles: (1) Where the Bible is clear, we can be certain. (2) Where the Bible is unclear, we must be tentative. (3) Our interpretation must be Christ centered. (4) Our interpretation must be gospel centered. (5) Our emphasis should be the same as the emphasis of Scripture.

#### Teaching the Gospel

As the last issue of *Proclamation* was filled with material from LAM's Uganda mission we have kept it to a minimum in this issue. However, we can report that many good things are taking place there. Many are accepting the simple gospel of Christ. Our pastors there are working hard, often under difficult circumstances. They have a real need for adequate transportation. The old car they were using has broken down. We want to raise \$5,000 to purchase a good used car for them. To date we have about \$1,170 raised for this project. Please pray that God will provide the needed funds. The pastors there have started many new study groups as new doors open up for the gospel.

#### Thanks for your support of the Gospel!

With our faith commitment to the pastors in Uganda our monthly expenses have sharply increased. We have had calls from pastors in Kenya who are ready to start new work there yet we cannot make commitments to help them at this time. Continue to pray for the ministry of LAM that we will follow the leading of our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. !

# Proclamation!

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# When religion brings psychological trauma to the soul

J. LeBron McBride, PhD

**H**ealthy religion has great potential for good, but corrupted religion can bring great unrest to the soul. In fact, there are many spiritual causalities and traumatic injuries of the psyche that occur on religious journeys. This article will focus on some of the ways bad religion results in psychological trauma even for those who flee from its consuming grip.

In the last few decades we have come to appreciate the impact of traumatic experiences upon persons who experience them. We even have a psychological disorder that is recognized as resulting from horrific trauma: Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. While I certainly do not wish to minimize in any the terrible experiences that many have with various forms of abuse, violence, and war; I have found that there are some less intense parallels found in those who experience the trauma of destructive religion. I have also discovered that a purely theological approach to the healing of such persons, while vital, is not as helpful as a holistic approach that includes the psychological and relational aspects as well.

The Awakening Persons reach the exiting of a religious system by various pathways. Often there is a gradual awakening or realization that, without some awkward maneuvering and sidestepping, the pieces of the theological structure simply no longer fit for them. For those who have been "true believers" this awakening can become a disorganizing confusion and an uncomfortable psychological state because things no longer fit in a neat package. Such a psychological state has been called cognitive dissonance because of the internal conflicts it presents.

## Ambivalence and Confusion

Most will experience a back and forth struggle or ambivalence in struggling with what they have always been taught and what they are beginning to understand. An example of this is the person who wrote me the following:

I must admit that there are times when I'm not sure what is going on in my head. All I know is that when I think of going back to the "religious experience" of years past, I can't stand the thought. I've found a freedom and joy that I've never known before, and the more I learn, the better I feel about it. Yet, you can't be raised...under the "old school" and not fear, from time to time, that you're a heretic and a "sign of the end."

This ambivalence and confusion can become extremely intense as the person realizes that many of the assumptions and beliefs they have been taught and have believed for years are not correct. There can be feelings of helplessness, disorientation and being overwhelmed which are also common experiences of those going through trauma. Depression, anxiety, rigidity, or impulsive behaviors may become evident. Anger, despair, shame, guilt, distrust, rage, fear, and irritation may be experienced. Nothing seems normal or secure anymore. Spiritual questioning may become an obsession. The upheaval can be horrific.

Dr. McBride is a former ordained SDA minister who is currently senior minister at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Rome, GA and Director of Behavioral Medicine at Floyd Medical Center Family Practice Residency. A licensed family therapist; he is author of *Spiritual Crisis: Surviving Trauma To The Soul* (available through Life Assurance Ministries Publications) and *Disappointment with the Church* (ISBN 0-595-13060-7).

## Psychological Danger Zone

As one client told me, “My faith has been shaken to the core.” When one’s assumptions and beliefs fail and fall, it creates a psychological danger zone. Dangers can include the following:

- the danger of going back to the old belief structure, not because it is any longer valid, but for a security and safety that actually ends up being false
- the danger of believing that everything spiritual or religious has to be thrown away—“throwing the baby out with the bath water”
- the danger of going to extremes of living such as substance abuse or other addictive behaviors to numb out the pain or to self-medicate
- the danger of the denial of any new concepts and an attempt to shut out any thinking that brings inner conflict
- the danger of accommodating and reworking any new truths to the extent that it compromises integrity
- the danger of treating those who do not grasp the new-found theological perspectives in a non Christ-like manner
- the danger of getting so hung up on theological hair splitting that a relationship with Christ and the central teachings such of grace, gospel freedom and love are neglected

Many who go on to become more balanced may move toward some of these dangers for a temporary time. However, they are very real dangers and they can lead to destruction, especially if continued for too long. At times they result in great compromise of the psyche and soul as persons shut down important parts of themselves and exist as mechanical robots so that the pain can be suppressed. It is important, of course, not to sit in judgment as to the basic manner or how fast a person should be progressing in their struggle with change. This can be a highly individual matter and may depend to some extent on the amount of indoctrination one had as a child into the religious structure one is attempting to leave.

## Loss and Grief

The loss that is associated with leaving a religious system or culture can be another aspect of the trauma. The tighter knit the subculture of the religious system and the greater the isolation from the wider society the greater the loss for many. When all social networks and family members are in the old system, the isolation can create great relational and psychological strain. There is ample evidence of the importance of one’s social network for all areas of health, and when the social network and support are removed, the person is left in a very precarious position. Another factor that can be in operation is that once one has believed that he or she is of “the remnant” or in the “true church” there is a loss of being in that special group for some. There may also be the need to find another theologically “perfect church” which, of course, never existed in the first place.

## Important Considerations

The above has briefly and generally outlined how religious systems, which are destructive, can precipitate psychological trauma when a person attempts to move toward another religious orientation. The following are a few considerations for maintaining psychological health in the midst of such a traumatic experience:

- Stay focused on the gospel and a relationship with Christ. In Him we find our “specialness” and our purpose for endurance.
- Move at your own speed; let no one else dictate when you need to change a belief or leave a church. You are the one who has to live with your decision.
- Seek the counsel of trusted persons and possibly a pastoral counselor. Many pastoral counselors can understand many of your struggles to some degree or another. Such struggles happen in many religious systems.
- Start immediately to broaden your social network if you are isolated. It will take time and may not have the same comfort level as the closeness you experienced with those you have known for years and those who held a common belief system with you.
- Exercise and keep balance in your life. You cannot and should not study the issues all the time. You will need some diversion and healthy distractions.
- Be careful not to go to an extreme. Your anchor has been pulled up, and you will be adrift for a while. Moderation is a key to health.
- Keep your passion but grieve over the loss of some of your idealism. There is no perfect religious structure. However, you will eventually find great satisfaction in being on an honest spiritual pilgrimage where you can discuss with integrity and openness.
- Refocus on the challenge of new ventures of faith and how your life can be an example of the continual renewal and reformation that Christ calls us to in discipleship. Christ does not call us to the status quo.
- Be wise and careful with whom you share your newfound views. There is no merit in causing any more agitation and conflict than is necessary.
- Realize anew that God is bigger and better than any religious system, and your salvation depends upon a relationship with Him, not with any organizational structure.

There is a myth in some destructive religious systems that a person who leaves the organization will not survive spiritually or psychologically. This myth makes it more difficult for some to leave oppressive religious systems. However, this myth is truly a myth. There are multitudes who are enjoying the freedom of newfound ways of serving and worshipping Christ in a spirit of freedom and who have overcome the psychological trauma of a toxic religious system. !

# Why do so many reject assurance of eternal life?

Mike Gendron

THOSE WHO REJECT  
THE DOCTRINE OF  
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SCRIPTURE.

Several years ago a pastor in Pennsylvania, concerned for the salvation of the many Roman Catholics in his community, invited me to come up and teach a seminar. First he asked me to send some of our publications so he could become more familiar with our ministry. After reviewing our Gospel tracts, he called me to cancel the seminar because he discovered that I teach the assurance of salvation. I explained to him that assurance is what makes God’s plan of salvation “good news.” God promises to save forever those who come to Him through Jesus (Heb. 7:25). I asked him, “What good news do you have to share with Catholics if you preach eternal life is not everlasting but can be lost.” Catholics already adhere to a salvation that is dependent upon what they do rather than what God has done through Jesus. After many exchanges, this pastor was unwilling to believe God’s promise that everyone who has been saved by grace through faith shall be brought to glory.

Those who reject the doctrine of eternal security tend to place more emphasis on the subjective experiences of “professing” Christians than the objective truth of Scripture. They may know someone who was baptized, repeated a prayer or responded to an altar call, then later rejected the faith or turned to a life of habitual sin. These experiences become their proof that salvation has no assurance. But is there any way to know if these people were born again? Judging someone’s spiritual condition is risky because no one can see a person’s heart. Opponents of assurance tend to focus on man’s opinions rather than on God’s divine power. Such misunderstandings can be overcome by discarding human reason and accepting divine revelation. Faith should not rest on the wisdom of man but on the power of God (1 Cor. 2:5).

## Consider the Word “Eternal”

The “eternal” Gospel (Rev. 14:6) of our “eternal” God (Rom. 16:26) promises every believer “eternal” life (1 John 5:13) and “eternal” glory (1 Pet. 5:10) in

His “eternal” kingdom (2 Pet. 1:11). The “eternal” King (1 Tim. 1:16) called salvation “eternal” (Mark 16:20) because He has given believers “eternal” comfort (2 Thes. 2:16) by obtaining “eternal” redemption through the “eternal” Spirit who guarantees an “eternal” inheritance (Heb. 9: 12-15; Eph. 1:14). According to God’s “eternal” purpose (Eph. 3:11), every believer has been saved from “eternal” judgment (Heb. 6:2), “eternal” destruction (2 Thes. 1:9) and “eternal” punishment in the “eternal” fire (Mat. 25:41, 46).

Eternal life is not only an infinite quantity of time (people in hell will live forever) but an eternal quality of life. It is an intimate relationship with Jesus whereby His life and divine nature is placed in every believer and every believer is in Him (2 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 5:20). This life begins at the second birth when those who were dead in their sins are made alive in Christ (Eph. 2:4). Eternal life is everlasting because the very life of Christ (who can never die again) has been imparted to believers (Rom. 6:9). But this leads to a provocative question. Knowing that sin is what brings spiritual death to the soul, what keeps Christians from dying again when they sin after their conversion? It is because God will not take into account any sins committed after the believer has been reconciled through Christ (Rom. 4:8; 2 Cor. 5:21). God laid all their sins, past and future, on Jesus (Isaiah 53:6). Our kinsman redeemer “bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness” (1 Pet. 2:24). “With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12). Everyone redeemed has been bought with the precious blood of Jesus and now belongs to Him. Eternal redemption and eternal security are thus one and the same.

Those who reject eternal security must explain why they do not also reject everything else described as eternal, such as the eternal triune God and His punishment for unbelievers. They must also be able to answer, with Scripture, some other relevant questions. Can those who have been redeemed from under the curse of the law



## OPPONENTS OF ASSURANCE WILL SAY THAT PEOPLE CAN GIVE BACK THE GIFTS OR THROW THEM AWAY. BUT THERE IS NO SCRIPTURAL SUPPORT FOR THIS.

be placed back under it? (Gal. 3:13; 4:5). Can one, who has been born again of incorruptible seed, die again? (1 Pet. 1:23). Can a new creation return to what has passed away? (2 Cor. 5:17). Can one who has been perfected forever be found imperfect? (Heb. 10:14). Can those whom God delivered from the power of darkness be sent back? (Col. 1:13). Can those who have been made complete in Christ become incomplete? (Col. 2:10). Can those who were saved without merit or human effort be lost because of demerits or human failure? (Eph. 2:8-9). Does any man have the ability to undo a sovereign act of Almighty God? (Rom. 8:28-39).

### Consider the Promises of Jesus

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life (John 5:24). "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:27-28). Jesus also promises never to cast out or lose anyone that His Father gives Him (John 6:37, 39). The promises of Jesus to all believers are clear and are guaranteed by His divine power and attributes. Having received eternal life, the sheep will follow the Shepherd who will keep them and protect them. Jesus promises they will never be judged for their sins, will not experience spiritual death, will not perish and will never be cast out or lost. How can Christians say they trust Jesus and not believe His promises?

### Consider the Father and Spirit's Power

God the Father has caused His children to be born again to a living hope. They are now protected by His power and will obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and reserved for them in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-5). This inheritance has been securely guaranteed by the sealing of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:11-14). The Father, who calls believers into fellowship with His Son, is faithful and will confirm them until the end (1 Cor. 8:9). He promises to glorify those He justifies (Rom 8:30). God's children have this assurance, "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6). On that spectacular day, all believers will be revealed with Him in glory (Col. 3:4). Everyone who has trusted Christ can have the same confidence as Paul who wrote: "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he

is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).

### Consider the Nature of God's Gifts

Believers also have the assurance that God's gifts and calling are irrevocable (Rom. 11:29). The precious gifts God graciously gives to repentant sinners include eternal life (Rom. 6:23), the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:45) and the righteousness of Jesus (Rom. 5:17). Those who have received these divine gifts will never again be separated from God and never come into judgment for their sins. Opponents of assurance will say that people can give back the gifts or throw them away. But there is no scriptural support for this. When God credits the righteousness of His Son to the believer's account, does man have access to His books to change His accounting?

### Consider God's Chastening of His Sons

The Lord knows those who are His and everyone who names the name of Christ must depart from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19). But what does God do with His children who persist in sinning? He chastens them, as a loving Father, so they will not be condemned along with the world (1 Cor. 11:32). God's chastening has a purifying effect. His discipline will continue until there is repentance or until He calls them home. Those who never experience God's chastening when they fall into habitual sin or fall away were probably not His children (Heb. 12:6-9).

The Roman Catholic Catechism (CCC) teaches that Catholics lose their salvation when mortal sins are committed (CCC, para. 1035). Catholics must do works of penance and merit enough grace to regain their salvation (CCC, para. 1456, 2027). Needless to say, Catholics can never be sure about their eternal destiny because, whenever man is involved in attaining and/or preserving his salvation, there can never be assurance. However, when man forsakes all efforts to save himself and believes the objective truth of the Gospel, he will be more certain of living eternally in heaven than one more day on earth. Paul wrote, "For this reason it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all" (Rom. 4:16).

John wrote his first epistle to those "who believe on the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know [Gk. oida] you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). The Greek word "oida" refers to a positive, absolute knowledge. True believers can rejoice in their salvation with absolute certainty and peace. !

# A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO ABORTION

Toward a Compassionate and Christian “Quality of Life” Ethic

## Part III: The Call to Commitment

Richard Fredericks, Ph.D.

**S**hould the Adventist Church take a stand against the practice of abortion? Yes, for many reasons. The most common argument against this step is a very legitimate desire to protect personal freedom of choice. But for us as a Christian community the crucial question is not whether or not God has given this freedom to His people. He certainly has. Rather, for us the question is whether our choices are just and moral.

Individuals are free to practice adultery or cruelty, but such choices are neither moral nor Christ like. Neither is the choice to kill an unborn child in an attempt to solve a present crisis. Our choices must be in line with God's will for our lives.

Another roadblock to a biblically consistent Adventist position is a curious denial of ethical accountability because of eschatological speculations. What *could* happen is causing us to deny what *is* happening. Prominent speakers within our church have said those on the side of the sanctity of life are the vanguard of the “religious right” that would bring in legislation limiting our religious freedom. They conclude we must avoid being identified with these Christians in their struggle against abortion and infanticide. This is curious. Sad. Speculations about a future death decree should not make us actively participate in a present one. Surely for the unborn of America this is already a “time of trouble such as has never been.”

Others said “It is a Catholic issue.” Is protecting innocent life the private domain of the Catholic Church? Proverbs 24:11-12

and a host of other warnings from God (in the minor prophets especially) call us to defend the weak, voiceless and oppressed. Of Josiah God said:

“He pled the cause of the afflicted and the needy; then it was well. Is not that what it means to know Me?” declares the Lord. “But your eyes [apostate Israel] and heart are intent only upon your own dishonest gain, and on the shedding of innocent blood” (Jer 22:16; cf. Jer 5:26-29).

### The Bottom Line of Agreement: Compassion

Often those on both sides of this debate have seen themselves as the defenders of compassion, either compassion for the unborn child or the woman in crisis. Surely this is a divine impulse and it must be our common ground, our point of agreement as a church. A response which is truly and consistently compassionate to everyone involved in a crisis pregnancy must be our constant goal.

This would require consensus on two points. First, there is a need to admit the increasingly obvious medical and psychological reality that abortion has a second victim: the woman. Abortion not only destroys a child, but damages and sometimes destroys the very person it is suggested it will help. Because of this, compassion for the woman (as well as the child) dictates alternate answers.

The second point of consensus must be our individual commitment to offering sacrificial and redemptive support to these

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women. Are we really motivated by compassion rather than expediency and self-interest? Then we must realize that all truly compassionate people are individually involved people. "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you will have an abundance for doing every good deed" (2 Corinthians 9:8). By God's grace we have the resources to meet the medical, physical, financial and relational needs of every woman in crisis within our sphere of influence. Believing that God's resources are adequate for the situations He gives us we can preserve and affirm life for everyone involved.

***These women who sought abortion as an answer, and there are hundreds of them now beginning to speak out, live with the reality that they chose to destroy the only child they will ever carry.***

In terms of the woman as abortion's second victim, there is a growing body of medical literature that is somewhat begrudgingly admitting the reoccurring negative physical and psychological consequences of abortion. These are reviewed in detail in Pam Koerbel's book: *Abortion's Second Victim*. Let me mention just two aspects specifically. Perhaps as high as 100% of all women who abort their first child are involuntarily made incapable of conceiving or carrying to term another child. These women who sought abortion as an answer, and there are hundreds of them now beginning to speak out, live with the reality that they chose to destroy the only child they will ever carry.

Secondly, does abortion really solve the immediate emotional crisis? Here I want to speak from personal experience. I have counseled with six students and one close friend following their abortions. The story in each case was sickeningly similar. Career plans, money, self-esteem, boyfriend's affection: abortion promised to keep all intact. They were told the fetus was their hindrance to a happy life. The counselor at the clinic promised a quick escape back to freedom once the unwanted "blob of tissue" was removed quickly and painlessly (for only \$500. thank-you).

In each case, the abortion only deepened the crisis and hastened the already deteriorating relationships and self-worth. Two girls who had abortions to stay in school ended up leaving. Another who had it against her will because of extreme pressure by her boyfriend and parents now refuses to have any contact with either, and suffers from severe depression. Another girl, who

worked in the women's residence hall, following a suction abortion, vomited uncontrollably every time she turned on a vacuum sweeper. Another suffered from reoccurring nightmares of a baby girl crying and found herself illogically hoping, each time she saw a little girl from the back, that it would be the child she had aborted. Still another of my students wrote this letter before we talked:

"I am writing to explain the many times I was absent to your class in the month of March. I can't really say the exact reason why I did not come because it is very, very personal. It is so personal, that my parents or friends do not even know what I have gone and am [sic] still going through. A reason, I can mention, for not coming is that some times I was just too [sic] depressed to be around people, and my problem too complicated to concentrate on anything else. Sometimes all I wanted to do was stay in bed. Things got so bad that I felt there was no hope anymore—I now know what it feels like to cry for help within the depths of your soul... when you feel like you are in hell."

Koerbel cites a study of the emotional state of forty-six randomly selected post-abortion women responding to a questionnaire. In this study, 87% of the women reported an increase in feelings of guilt, 78% an increase in a sense of grief, 76% had increased depression and remorse, 67% experienced an increase in anger and more than 60% struggled with a sense of shame and bitterness about their abortion decision.<sup>29</sup> Recently I have had two single young ladies come to me for help who are pregnant and determined to keep this child as a means of compensating for the terrible regret and loss of self-respect they felt from an earlier abortion. Compassionate?

A woman does have the "legal right" and the personal freedom to take the life of her child. But as a Christian we must recognize she does not have God's grace or approval for such an action. Killing the fetus is a violation of God's commandment; it is sin and is therefore futile for healing a damaged life. Doing so will not solve an emotional and moral crisis, but will only horribly deepen it. As Dr. John Wilke stated: "It is easier to scrape the baby out of a woman's womb than to scrape the memory of that baby out of her conscience."

We are false to our calling as Christ's disciples when we intimate to a woman who may lack the support and emotional strength she needs to face her pregnancy that she will find healing and emotional strength by aborting her child. In reality, abortions only terminate innocent children, not the moral or emotional crises of their parents.

Talk is cheap. Our task as individuals and as a community is to provide the support women need to be a giver—not a taker—of life. To encourage women in crisis pregnancies to give their unborn child life we must stand by them and help meet their needs. The real question is not: "What should we tell a woman in crisis to do?"; but rather: "What should we, as Christ's disciples, do



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for her when she reaches out for help?" We need to love, not just with "word or tongue, but in deed and truth" (1 Jn 3:18).

I want to illustrate this point by mentioning a specific story of a young woman named Joan because it has been referred to in several articles within Adventist publications.<sup>30</sup> Joan, after disassociating herself from the church and her parents following high school, became involved sexually with a married man. Realizing the futility of her lifestyle, Joan ended the relationship and found a renewed relationship with Christ. She returned to college with her parents' help, intent on studying for dentistry, only to realize six weeks later that she was pregnant.

She sought counsel. She did not want to contact the man nor tell her parents. The author states: "She had considered continuing the pregnancy and putting the baby up for adoption, but she saw no way of finding a place to live, support herself, and explaining her actions to her family and friends." Her options he says, seemed to be suicide, abortion or dropping out of school and disappearing, and then concludes her story with these words:

"The conclusion to Joan's story will not help—her story has no fairy tale ending. After much indecision, Joan finally elected to leave school and confront her parents with her problem. She also decided to continue the pregnancy and relinquish the infant for adoption. But when the baby was born, she changed her mind and chose to keep it. She felt so little acceptance by her parents and her church that she sought public assistance and now lives alone with her child. She has not returned to college and has no hope of doing so at this time. She, her child, and all whose lives touch theirs will continue to need a special measure of God's forgiving and redeeming love."

What is the tragedy in this story? Is it Joan's courageous decision to give her child life? Not at all. This story graphically illustrates the failure, on the part of the affluent upper-middle class Adventist college community to whom she turned, to be authentic and sacrificial Christians. Listen again to the options listed by Joan's counselor. Abortion, suicide or "disappearing." Why was he and his community incapable of coming up with a fourth? Where were the heart and hands of this church?

Joan should have found, not platitudes or "non-judgmental feedback," but the continued assurance of God's forgiveness and help (in the context of her own recent recommitment to Him) followed by a tangible, practical outpouring of financial, medical and emotional support. All those resources were available, and the reason God had given them was for just such a purpose. The tragic failure here belongs to those who allowed Joan to face the consequences of a brave decision alone.

Are we doing nothing to provide alternatives to abortion because we don't want our lives or prosperity disturbed? Like the world around us, have we become more worried about comfort and affluence than about affirming God's call: "I set before you this day life and death. Choose life!" For a life-affirming church, God is able to give abundantly, so that we may have "sufficiency

in everything....an abundance for every good work" (2 Cor 9:8; see also Romans 8:30-31).

William Willimon, a professor of Christian Ministry at Duke University gives a practical and beautiful example of what it really means to be Christ's agents to someone in crisis:

"One Monday morning I was attending a minister's morning coffee hour. We got into a discussion about abortion. A bunch of older clergy were against it, a bunch of younger clergy for it. One of those who was against it was asked, 'Now wait a minute. You're not going to tell me that you think some 15-16 year old is capable of bearing a child, are you?'"

***Are we doing nothing to provide alternatives to abortion because we don't want our lives or prosperity disturbed? Like the world around us, have we become more worried about comfort and affluence than about affirming God's call?***

"Well," the fellow replied, backing off a little bit, "there are some circumstances when an abortion might be OK."

Sitting there stirring his coffee was a pastor of one of the largest black United Methodist churches in Greenville. He said, "What's wrong with a 16-year old giving birth? She can get pregnant, can't she?"

Then we said, "Joe, you can't believe a 16-year old could care for a child."

He replied, "No, I don't believe that, I don't believe a 26-year old can care for a child. Or a 36-year old. Pick any age. One person can't raise a child."

So I said, "Look, Joe, the statistics show that by the year 1990, half of all American children will be raised in single-parent households."

"So?" he replied. "They can't do it."

We asked, "What do you do when you have a 16-year old get pregnant in your church?"

He explained, "Well, it happened last week. We baptized the baby last Sunday, and I said how glad we were to have this new member in this church. Then I called down an elderly couple in the church, and I said, 'Now we're going to baptize this baby, and bring it into the family. What I want you all to do is to raise this baby, and while you're doing that raise the momma with it because the momma right now needs it.' This couple is in their 60's, and they've raised about 20 kids. They know what they're doing. And I said, 'If you need any of us, let us know. We're here. It's our child too.' That's what we do at my church."<sup>31</sup>

As Adventists, our challenge is to actively adopt the world view of Scripture and find a better alternative than death in the face of economic and emotional problems. Armed with a commitment to life, and confident in the resources of our Creator, we

# ABORTION

are called to demonstrate Christ's alternative within a decaying society:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you should love one another, even as I have loved you" (John 13:34). "For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give Himself as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

"Abortion in our culture [and church] is not only the killing of unborn children, but also the aborting of innocence (by making uninformed women both its partners and its victims), the denigrating of life (by denying the unborns' personhood and promoting death), the aborting of truth (through the prevalence of deceit, propaganda, and euphemism), the aborting of love (by leading to infanticide, child abuse, and euthanasia), and finally, the aborting of humanity itself."<sup>32</sup>



## Footnotes

<sup>29</sup> Pam Koerbal, *Abortion's Second Victim*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986), pp. 140-41. Here again it must be mentioned that there are now four national women's organizations, supporting hundreds of local chapters, created solely to minister to damaged women and significant others suffering from post-abortion syndrome.

<sup>30</sup> See Ministry, May, 1988; p. 12 and 16.

<sup>31</sup> William Willimon, "A Crisis of Identity," *Sojourners*; (May, 1986); p. 27

<sup>32</sup> Quoted from Michael J. Gorman, "The Issues of Life," in *Christianity Today*, September 4, 1987, p. 38.

## Suggested Guidelines for Crisis Pregnancies and Medical Protocol within Seventh-day Adventist Institutions

1. Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) medical institutions do not allow abortions to be performed for social or economic reasons.<sup>33</sup> Such procedures, commonly referred to as 'elective abortions,' are inconsistent with the Biblically derived belief that human life (including the life of the unborn child) is sacred, and of higher value than individual or corporate considerations of convenience, lifestyle preference or economic prosperity.
2. SDA medical institutions will allow an abortion to be performed only if:
  - a.) it is required to save the physical life of the mother; or
  - b.) in exceptional cases of anencephalic fetuses or equally rare cases of clearly diagnosed fatal congenital defects.<sup>34</sup> In such situations the abortion will be performed only after professional consultation between the primary physician, two advising physicians and a hospital chaplain.
3. Individual SDA church congregations will be assisted in establishing a crisis pregnancy network to assist, as necessary, Adventist women and their families in a crisis pregnancy. Such assistance should include affordable pre- and post-natal medical care, support in helping students continue their education, financial planning and assistance, and spiritual and emotional nurture.
4. The SDA church requires at the elementary, academy and college level, (appropriate to the maturity level of each) Scripturally-based, values oriented seminars focused on Christian principles of sexual behavior and accountability stressing the significant consequences of all moral choices.

## Compassion and repentance

On issues of this nature church discipline on a denominational level is a conundrum. No rule or set of rules deal with all possible situations adequately and redemptively. Within the individual congregation, disfellowshipping should be seriously considered against physicians who routinely perform elective abortions.

The woman in crisis who receives an abortion is a dramatically different situation. When a Christian woman in a moral or emotional crisis feels abortion is her only viable option, it signifies a failure on the part of her entire church community to create a redemptive atmosphere that allows acceptance, repentance and forgiveness to occur—and tangible support to be given. In such cases, deeper issues need to be addressed by everyone involved with a corporate attitude of compassion and repentance.

## Footnotes

<sup>33</sup> This does not imply that social (including psychological and emotional) or economic considerations are trivial. Very few, if any, women consider an abortion for trivial reasons. But emotional and economic crises are best resolved with the Christian community, not by killing the unborn child, but by compassionate and tangible support for the mother.

<sup>34</sup> Perhaps the toughest exception often discussed is the extremely rare request for abortion resulting from violent rape. The caution here should be the reality that it is not the unborn child who is a criminal or enemy. The child is an innocent life. If anyone should die, a more logical argument would be in favor of the death penalty for the rapist, not the child. But in those very rare cases where a woman conceives due to a violent assault and rape and believes she cannot carry such a child to term, the protocol committee of each hospital should consider her needs seriously and compassionately. The Christian ideal remains the redemption of both the mother and the child.

# The Great Controversy Theme and The Gospel

By Rodney Nelson

## The Great Controversy Theme and Adventism

Dr. Herbert Douglass, retired president of Weimar Institute, recently wrote an article in *Ministry* (December 2000) entitled, "The Great Controversy Theme: What it means to Adventists" (pgs. 5-7). In it Douglass develops the key arguments for the proposition that the Great Controversy Theme (GCT) is the "seminal, governing principle" (5) of Adventist theology and teaching. "For Seventh-day Adventists, the GCT is the core concept that brings coherence to all biblical subjects" (5). Adventist distinctives and uniqueness originates from this teaching. Using the GCT as the "core truth" of SDA theology, Douglass seeks to demonstrate how "Seventh-day Adventists have been given... a perspective which provides a 'theory of everything.' It introduces us to the 'mind of God'" (6).

## THE Hermeneutical Principle

Douglass maintains that GCT provides the matrix for understanding the "intent of biblical writers when they used words such as righteousness, salvation, gospel, etc.," as well as "work(ing) our way through centuries of theological confusion over the meaning of such realities as justification, sanctification, atonement, obedience, and works" (6). What the GCT provides is the hermeneutical principle for understanding all the diverse elements of Biblical revelation and uniting them into a coherent whole. "This 'grand central thought' provides unity, coherency, transcendence, and lasting relevance to all the pieces of information found in all the books of the Bible" (6). Clearly implied is that "all the pieces of information found in the books of the Bible" were not understood clearly

prior to Adventism "receiving" (5,6) this theological key to understanding the Bible.

Without the GCT, all would remain divided over such subjects as the importance of the Old Testament sanctuary service and the New Testament view of Christ as our High Priest/Mediator, the meaning of faith and grace, the place of obedience in relation to legalism, why Jesus came the first time, why He came the way He did, and when He will return. (6) This is a big claim to make as well as an indictment of historic Christianity. Certainly it provides for Adventism the reassurance they are specially called to reveal this "last day message" to the world in a way no one else can.

## The "Grand Central Thought"

What is the central message of the GCT? Douglass, quoting Ellen White, identifies it as redemption in restoring the "human soul (to) the image of God" (6; quoting from *White, Education, 1903, pgs. 125, 126*). What does this mean? Douglass explains it as "not just one concept among many" but as making "sense of all other biblical subjects or concepts" (6). Without this "grand central thought," Christianity has taught a "limited gospel" for 2,000 years resulting in a fragmented Christian Church (6). Specifically, it means that merely preaching forgiveness as the essence of the gospel is limited because it fails to point higher to mankind's "'restoration' and 'uplifting' as the purpose of the grace of God, undoing everything that sin has damaged" (6).

## Making a Difference

The GCT makes a difference in how one understands the whole Biblical message because it "focus-

"This 'grand central thought' provides unity, coherency, transcendence, and lasting relevance to all the pieces of information found in all the books of the Bible"

## The central thesis of the GCT is that God is concerned with His reputation. Is He loving, fair, just, or arbitrary? God on trial is the thesis of the GCT

es on the reason for the controversy and how it will be resolved" (6). What is the controversy about? It is over whether God's plan of obedience to Him and His Son is better than Satan's plan of "individual self-determination" (6). The scope of the controversy encompasses the universe (6). It centers on Satan's charges that God is "unfair, unforgiving, and arbitrary" (6). Through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, God "revealed His character and trustworthiness... so that all inhabitants throughout the universe as well as on earth are able to make up their minds as to who has been right or wrong in the controversy" (6). As stated elsewhere, "Christ's life vindicated God's justice and goodness and demonstrated that God's law and government were fair" (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, Review and Herald, 1988, pg. 105). It is to answer Satan's charges that God's law is "impossible to obey" and that "law works against the best interests of created beings" (*SDA's Believe*, pg. 102). Finally, Satan "attempts to overthrow God's government and even God Himself" by "constant and insidious undermining of the law" (*SDA's Believe*, pg. 102).

### An Adventist Contribution

The GCT illuminates the plan of salvation, according to Douglass, by uniting the "separated components" surrounding truth (7). Douglass qualifies this idea by stating that terminology conventionally used within traditional theological systems (Calvinist, Lutheran, Wesleyan Methodists) should not be read into Ellen White's usage of them (7; footnote 11). In other words, she must be allowed to say what she says rather than imputing other meanings to her terminology and concepts. Given this qualification, the GCT (as explained by Ellen White) becomes a "distinctly Adventist" insight "compared to the partial insights of conventional theological systems" (7). Therefore, the GCT provides a uniquely Adventist contribution to Christian understanding of salvation as "restoration."

### Affected Areas

Douglass lists thirteen areas where the GCT illuminates Christian understanding of theology, especially in our understanding of salvation (7). They range from the relationship of law and gospel, to imputed and imparted righteousness, to faith and works, to God's work and human work in the salvation process, etc. (7). Douglass believes all Adventist doctrine is informed by the GCT (7).

### The Gospel Assessment

Is the theme of the Bible the plan of redemption whereby the image of God is restored to the human soul? How to restore mankind to a right relationship

with God is certainly the pulsating beat of scripture. However, Douglass asserts the gospel is contained within a larger issue. The central thesis of the GCT is that God is concerned with His reputation. Is He loving, fair, just, or arbitrary? God on trial is the thesis of the GCT. Douglass asserts that the GCT is the truth which bonds together all the disparate elements of the plan of redemption. Yet, what is the GCT itself but an attempt to put upon scripture an understanding that scripture does not support?

Douglass fails to point out that all the varied descriptions of the gospel describe what was accomplished on the cross, rather than disparate components lacking an integrating theme. Justification, redemption, adoption, reconciliation, etc., are descriptions of what resulted from what Jesus did on the cross, not mere components of a yet to be revealed theme. No one term or metaphor could comprehend or capture the work of God through the death/resurrection of Jesus. Paul's proclamation of the gospel declares what God has done for sinners, not Himself. Whatever description Paul or other Bible writers use to describe the gospel, all of them focus on one key fact: the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16). What does the gospel reveal? "For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'" (Rom. 1:17). Prior to this revealing the gospel was a mystery (compare Matt. 13:11, Mark 4:11-12; Rom. 16:25-26; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:9-10; 3:2-6; 6:19; Col. 1:25-27; 2:2-3; 4:3). What is the mystery that has been revealed, notably to Paul? The mystery of the gospel is Christ, called the mystery of Christ (Col. 2:2-3; 4:3).

The gospel is the overarching theme of the Bible. It is the gospel that the Old Covenant held in prospect, and which the New Covenant possesses in fulfillment. The gospel is about the power of God for salvation that is described by various terms in the New Testament epistles. The GCT is not the gospel, nor is the GCT the rationale for the gospel. Paul was very clear what the central point of his preaching was: Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2; cf 1:23). The reason for the cross is basic: the salvation of sinners, not vindication of God's love. It was because of God's love that salvation was offered (John 3:16). That love was directed toward mankind's salvation and benefit, not toward God's salvation and benefit.

The GCT in effect turns the plan of redemption on its head in terms of the motivation for effecting it. The atonement is the center of Christian theology in revealing the love of God. As our substitute, Christ revealed the mystery of the gospel; that God Himself

would become man to take upon Himself the sins of His creation. There is no hint here of self-interest or self-vindication. It reveals a God who is self-less and infinitely loving. Douglass reaffirms the GCT centers on the question of whether the universe will judge whether Satan or God is right; whether God's will prevails or Satan's "notion of individual self-determination." In effect, the GCT makes God out to protect His integrity. The gospel declares that God set about to solve the problem created by man, not Himself.

In the early days of Good News Unlimited a response by Smuts van Rooyen to a letter regarding the moral influence theory of the atonement was printed. He writes:

The Bible does teach a controversy concept but is this the hub of Scripture? Is the Bible basically about how God saves himself or about how he saves people? I would venture to say that if it is the former then his character should be questioned. What impresses me about God is his magnificent disregard for himself in saving man. With the possible exception of Revelation, I do not see a New Testament book that has as its central theme the vindication of God's character. And vindication most certainly was not the burden of the early church. The salvation of man is, despite denials in some quarters, the burden of Scripture.

Allow me to reaffirm other positions of van Rooyen in this same response.

- (1) The GCT is specific where the Bible is not.
- (2) The GCT mistakes the real issues in Scripture.
- (3) The GCT makes central what is not central in Scripture.
- (4) The GCT treats the trustworthiness of God as something that is yet to be established.
- (5) The GCT downplays the substitutionary atonement on the cross by establishing the intent to be vindication of God's character and integrity.

## In Summary

The gospel stands on its own and requires no additional rationale or detail. The gospel is the "good news" of what God has done and accomplished through Jesus Christ. None of these accomplishments required vindication of God's character before His creation. The incident recorded in Job 1:6-12 is often cited to prove a GCT motif. However, it does not focus on God's justice or character, but upon His protection of one man (Job). The controversy regards what Job would do should God's protection be lifted with Satan allowed to have his way short of killing Job. Would Job deny God and prove faithless should God no longer protect him? The controversy centered on Job, not God. And in the end the test proved Satan flunked, not Job, and certainly not God. Likewise, when Jesus returns in His Father's glory he will not return in triumphal vindication of His character, but in triumphal victory over His enemies who have attempted to destroy His people.

Christians would do well to uphold the belief that God's sovereignty is preeminent in all matters and that He is in control. Because He is in control believers can rest assured that He is trustworthy and flawless in character. The test resides in our belief about God, not God's vindication of Himself. !

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## Walter Rea on Ellen White

CONTINUED FROM BACK

before me in vision the precious rays of light shining from the throne." *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 67

5. "McCullagh stated in a large congregation that it was reported by one who knew that I picked up things written in books, and sent them out as something the Lord had shown me." *The Fannie Bolton Story*, White Estate, 1990, p. 77

6. "I have not been in the habit of reading any doctrinal articles in the paper, that my mind should not have any understanding of anyone's ideas and views, and that not a mold of any man's theories should have any connection with that which I write." Ellen G. White Estate, 1887, vol. 1, p. 21

7. "If Mrs. White has gathered the facts from a human mind in a single case she has in thousands of cases, and God has not shown her these things which she has written in these personal testimonies." *Life Sketches of James and Ellen White*, S.D.A. Pub. Assn., 1880, p. 328

8. "When I presented to Mother questions as to what we should do regarding the quotations from historians and the references to these historians, she was prompt and clear in her opinion that we ought to give proper credit wherever we can." W. C. White to A. O. Daniells, June 20, 1919, File 83b

9. "I think that you and Sister White should make a clean, clear-cut statement with reference to this question of plagiarism. Give the exact reasons why there was a failure to give proper credit to the authors quoted." A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, June 24, 1909, File 389.

10. "It seems clear to me that Ellen White was worried over the danger of emptying the messages of their power through her dependence upon the writing abilities of others." Fred Veltman, Washington, D.C., 1988 !

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**Walter Rea** writes from Patterson, California.



## Do Adventists preach another gospel? CONTINUED FROM FRONT

### The magnitude of the Galatian problem

If you compare the book of Galatians to Paul's other books, it will become immediately evident that Paul considered the Galatian problem to be of greater magnitude than any other problem he addressed in any of his letters.

First, we note that there are no words of endearment. If one compares, for example, Paul's letter to the Corinthians we find that he addresses the Corinthians as "sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling" (1 Cor. 1:2). Paul goes on to commend them saying, "you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge (1 Cor. 1:5).

"you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:7, 8). However we know that the church in Corinth was not very "saintly" in their behavior. There were factions, with jealousy and strife (1 Cor. 4). There was "immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife" (1 Cor. 5). The Corinthians were taking one another to court (1 Cor. 6). There was false teaching about marriage (1 Cor. 6) and the list goes on and on. Yet Paul could call them "saints in Christ Jesus!" Why? Because the problem of the Corinthians was one of behavior, immaturity and misunderstanding and not a blatant compromise of the gospel. When writing to the Galatians, however, there are no words of assurance or endearment. There is no mention of "saints" anywhere in the book of Galatians. There are terms of endearment in all of Paul's other letters but not here. Why?—*Because of the magnitude of the problem!* We can justly conclude that for Paul the problem in Galatia was much worse than the situation in Corinth.

Paul comes right to the point and tells the Galatians that they are teaching a false gospel.

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. (Gal. 1:6,7)

The Greek makes it very clear that the "gospel" the Galatian false teachers were promoting was a gospel of a totally different kind from the true gospel of Christ. Paul goes on in the strongest language to condemn anyone who would teach this false gospel.

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is

preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! (Gal. 1:8, 9)

Paul, why such strong, condemning language? Why?—*Because of the magnitude of the problem!*

Next consider the public confrontation with Peter in Gal. 2:11–14. We would expect that Paul would treat Peter more graciously than to condemn him in front of the gathered assembly. After all, was Peter not the head of the disciple band that walked and talked with Christ? Was it not Peter who was used so mightily on the day of Pentecost when 3,000 people were converted?

Was it not Peter to whom Cornelius was directed by the angel of God when the Gentiles received the gift of the Holy Spirit? Why did not Paul take Peter aside and admonish him in private? Why?—*Because of the magnitude of the problem!*

Note the words Paul uses as he describes these false teachers.

You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? (Gal. 3:1)

Here Paul calls them "foolish" and "bewitched." This is passionate language indeed. He did this to jolt them to the seriousness of their actions. Today, we might say something like this. "You stupid idiots, why did you leave the simple gospel of grace through faith in Christ for a false gospel? You dummies!" Why did Paul use such passionate language? Why?—*Because of the magnitude of the problem.*

Paul goes even further. The Galatian heresy, says Paul, has caused them to be "severed from Christ" and they had "fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:1–4). Wow! Paul, why are you so condemning? Why?—*Because of the magnitude of the problem!*

Then, as if his readers had not yet sensed the full enormity of the problem, Paul pulls out all of the stops.

I wish that those who are troubling you would even cut themselves off (Gal. 5:12).

We begin to see the magnitude of the Galatian problem. It called forth from Paul the strongest confrontation. The reason the Galatian problem loomed so large in Paul's mind was that the false teachers were promoting a *false gospel* which undermined the basic foundation upon which Christianity is based.

### The Nature of the Galatian problem

What was this perversion of the gospel? In the Adventist church there is a lot of controversy over just what the Galatian

***Paul considered the  
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problem was. Some have tried to limit the statements about law in Galatians to the so-called "ceremonial law" thus excluding the so-called "moral law" of the Ten Commandments. By doing this they can keep the seventh-day Sabbath out of the Galatian problem. Others have tried to make the Galatian problem some sort of Gnostic heresy. I am convinced beyond a shadow of doubt that the Galatians were mixing faith and works. They were placing both faith in Christ *and* obedience to the law as the foundation of salvation. They were saying that to be saved one must have faith in Christ, yes, but one also had to keep the law. And they went a step further and were promoting old covenant rituals as a sign that one was obedient to the law. The following texts lead to this conclusion.

New Covenant Righteousness does not come through law (Gal. 2:21). This is the consistent teaching of Paul. In Philippians 3:8, 9 we read,

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.

Old covenant righteousness, however, is based upon obedience to the law.

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).

Paul asks the Galatians,

"This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? (Gal. 3:2).

Then he says,

For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them... However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them" (Gal. 3:10, 12).

Paul makes it very clear that the reign of law was from Moses to Christ. He says that a number of times in different ways.

1. The law came 430 years *after* Abraham (Gal. 3:17).
2. He says the law was "added" *until* the seed (Christ) would come (Gal. 3:19). When one adds something, it means that it was not there before. The word "until" means that what was added was then taken away.
3. The law was a tutor to lead to Christ (Gal. 3:24, 25). But now that faith has come we are no longer under a tutor or under the law. (Gal. 3:25)

4. Let us not overlook the significance of Galatians 3:28, 29.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

This avowal that the new covenant makes no distinction between Jew and Greek, slave nor free, male nor female is a statement of grand proportions to anyone versed in the old covenant law! It cuts through the very heart of old covenant law. There are *many* laws in the old covenant that separated the Jew from the Gentile,<sup>1</sup> slave from free,<sup>2</sup> male and female.<sup>3</sup> These two verses completely invalidate the old covenant laws that deal with clean and unclean foods, circumcision, Sabbath, new moons,

fixed festivals and all the laws that separated the Jew from the Gentile.

Paul shows that the new covenant Christian is linked *directly* to the promise of Righteousness by faith that was given to Abraham, completely bypassing all Sinaitic laws.<sup>4</sup>

5. Paul is relentless in driving home this point about the reign of law. In Galatians 4:3–5, Paul states that the Jews were slaves held in the bondage under the law until Christ came to redeem those who were under the law.

So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

He goes on to tell them the good news.

Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God (Gal. 4:7).

With these clear facts in mind, we come to the heart of the matter. Just what were the Galatians doing that prompted such a strong confrontation from Paul?

1. They were enforcing circumcision as a necessary ingredient for right standing with God. (Gal. 5:3)
2. They were enforcing the separation of Jew and Gentile regarding table fellowship. The Gentiles brought something other than a leg-of-lamb to the fellowship meal! This caused the Jews to pull away from the Gentiles which in turn caused Paul to confront Peter to his face in front of the gathered assembly.
3. They were enforcing the holy days of the old covenant calendar.

But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?

***...the Galatians were  
mixing faith and works.  
They were placing both  
faith in Christ and obedi-  
ence to the law as the  
foundation of salvation.***

You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. Gal. 4:9–11

There are some who will go to any length to get out from under the clear teaching of this verse. They will try to bring in some new idea to Paul's discussion of old covenant law and say that the activities outlined here deal with some ancient pagan festivals. However, it is clear that Paul uses "elemental things" for old covenant law in several places and it is definitely in view here.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, we must conclude that the above text has reference to "the Lord's appointed times"<sup>6</sup> of Sabbath days, new moons, the seven seasonal feasts and sabbatical years. In Colossians 2:16, 17 Paul clearly stated that these things (as a group) were a mere shadow but the substance is Christ.

Galatians 5:18 states very clearly,

If but you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

## Summary of the Galatian problem

The false teachers were saying that to be saved one had to have faith in Christ *and* keep the law, including the food laws, the rituals of circumcision, Sabbath, new moons, fixed festivals and sabbatical years. Paul said that this teaching was a false gospel which drew from him the strongest condemnation.

There are two formulas for salvation that have been promoted:

### 1. Faith + the works of the law = Salvation

Our obedience is a necessary component for salvation, or

### 2. Faith = Salvation + the fruits of the Spirit.

Our obedience is not a necessary component of salvation but only an imperfect evidence of it.

Here is a most important statement. The acts of obedience that spring from salvation are not works of law and do not include *any* rituals from old covenant law such as clean and unclean, circumcision, Sabbaths, new moon celebrations, seasonal feasts or sabbatical years. Mk. 7:14–23; Rom. 14:5, 14; Heb. 10:1, Gal. 4:10, Col. 2:16, 17.

The Galatians wanted to be under old covenant law.

They were promoting old covenant rituals.

Paul said that this was a false gospel and condemned this teaching in the strongest possible terms!

## The Adventist Problem

Adventists, too, want to be under law and vigorously promote the law. They too, enforce the old covenant ritual of Sabbath and

the laws of clean and unclean foods. The Adventist problem is much like the Galatian problem. Adventists teach that one is saved by faith alone but in order to stay saved one must keep the law, especially the Sabbath.

They teach that the Sabbath is the seal of God and that those who worship on Sunday will receive the Mark of the beast thus making the Sabbath a salvation issue.

In their official fundamentals of beliefs #17 we read "One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a con-

tinuing and authoritative source of truth..." Here are some of her "authoritative statements of truth".

The name Seventh-day Adventist is a standing rebuke to the Protestant world. Here is the line of distinction between the worshippers of God and those who worship the beast and receive his mark... EGW, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 4, p. 54.

Then I was shown a company who were howling in agony. On their garments was written in large characters, "Thou art weighted in the balance, and found wanting." I asked who this company were. The angel said, "These are they who have once kept the Sabbath and have given it up..." EGW *Early Writings*, p. 37.

I found it instructive at the recent X Convention to learn that many modern-day false teachings had their origin from a communication from an "angel". Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, must have foreseen this when he wrote.

But even if we, or an *angel from heaven*, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! (Gal. 1:8).

Ellen White continues:

I saw that the Holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers. EGW, *Early Writings*, p. 3.

These statements make it clear beyond a shadow of doubt that in Adventism the Sabbath is a salvation issue. However, the Sabbath is *not* a moral law; it is a ritual law.<sup>7</sup> There is no clear distinction in the law (books of Moses) between ritual and moral. They are often, if not usually, all mixed up together. The Sabbath is mentioned two times with moral laws in Exodus 20 and in Deut 5 because it is the sign of the Sinaitic covenant between God and Israel (Ex. 31:16, 17) and ancient Near East treaty documents always had the sign of the covenant in the center of the covenant document.<sup>8</sup> It is mentioned a dozen times with the ritual laws of the old covenant such as new moons, fixed festivals, etc.

***Adventists teach that  
one is saved by faith  
alone but in order to  
stay saved one must  
keep the law, especially  
the Sabbath.***

At best Adventists teach that the “works” that result from salvation are “works of the law” with an emphasis on keeping the Sabbath, an old covenant ritual, as a evidence of salvation. At worst, Adventists teach that salvation is faith in Christ + works of the law with emphasis on the keeping of the Sabbath. As long as Adventism teaches that the Sabbath is a salvation issue there will be a great similarity between those who were preaching “another gospel” in Galatia and Adventism. For Paul any compromise of the simple gospel of faith in Christ met the strongest condemnation. Can we do less?

Let us pray for Adventist leaders. There are many within Adventism who do not believe *historic* Adventist doctrine. Many in Adventism want to change but they are trying to do it without admitting past error. To admit error on these points undermines the whole structure of Adventism because Adventism stands on three legs: The authority of Ellen White, the Seventh-day Sabbath and their 1844 sanctuary theology. If they take out any one of these three, and are consistent in their reasoning and teaching, the others will fall because they are not biblical doctrines. This is why most former Adventist pastors leave Adventism. They become convinced that one of these three legs is broken (contrary to Bible teaching and in error) and soon see the whole structure of Adventism fall.

I have personally spoken with many Adventist pastors who do not believe that Ellen White is a source of authority, they do not believe that the Sabbath is the seal of God, they do not believe that Sunday worship will become the mark of the best, they do not believe that the Adventist church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy. They do not believe in Adventist’s 1844 sanctuary theology. Not only have I spoken with pastors, but also many members and Adventist scholars and administrators who in private tell me the same thing.

Many hundreds of Adventist leaders know that historic Adventism teaches a number of unbiblical, false doctrines. Pray that there will be a reformation within Adventism to biblical truth and to the simple gospel which was once and for all delivered to the saints.

Perhaps there are some readers of *Proclamation!* who still believe your right standing with God is determined, at least to some degree, on your keeping Sabbath. I am going to be bold at this point and tell you that you will never keep the Sabbath according to all the biblical Sabbath laws and, if you are an Adventist and believe that the writings of Ellen White are “a continuing and authoritative source of truth,” you will find it impossible

to follow all of her restrictive Sabbath-keeping rules which are legion. Remember Scripture is clear: if you are under law, you must keep *all* the law. “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law to perform them” (Gal. 3:10).

Read Galatians through in one sitting and do it every day for 30 days. It will bring clarity to your thinking and peace to your life. Also read Romans and Ephesians. These books are like cool water—the living water—on a hot summer day. They lead you into the shade of the Mighty Rock in a weary land where you will find true rest for your soul. “We who have believed enter that rest” (Heb. 4:3).

I appeal to you to humbly recognize that you cannot be good

enough and you cannot keep the Sabbath perfectly enough for it to hold any place in your assurance of salvation. Rather, simply reach out the hand of faith and grasp the free gift graciously given by our good God. Let God pronounce you righteous based solely on the righteousness of Christ. Let the Holy Spirit regenerate you life on the inside so that the fruits of the Spirit will flow naturally from the center of your being. Accept the simple gospel of faith in Christ plus nothing.

He who believes has eternal life (Jn. 6:47).

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom. 10:4).

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved (Rom. 10:9).

Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom. 10:13).

Then He believed in the Lord and He reckoned it to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:6).

Yes, the gospel is good *news*; it is not good *advice*. It is simple. It is the story of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus and it is worth defending with every fiber of our being. **!**

***As long as Adventism teaches that the Sabbath is a salvation issue there will be a great similarity between those who were preaching “another gospel” in Galatia and Adventism.***

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Ex 12:43 Lev. 22:25; Deut. 14:21; Deut. 15:3; Deut. 17:15; Deut. 23:20; Deut. 29:22, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Ex. 12:44; 21:2,5,7,20;26,27,32; 23:12; Lev. 19:20; 20:11; Deut. 5:12; 15:18; 16:12,15.

<sup>3</sup> Lev. 6:29; Lev. 7:6; 12:2,5,7; 7:6; 27:3-7

<sup>4</sup> Gal. 3:29 cf. 4:9-16.

<sup>5</sup> Compare Gal. 4:3,4; Heb. 5:12.

<sup>6</sup> See Lev. 23; 2 Chron. 31:3 and *Sabbath in Christ*, p. 78-80.

<sup>7</sup> See *Sabbath in Christ*, p. 103-111; 150-161,331-350 for more documentation on this point.

<sup>8</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1963), pp. 13, 14, 18, 19 See also *Sabbath in Christ*, p. 41f.



### I look forward to each issue of Proclamation

I look forward to each issue of *Proclamation*. Thanks! Keep up the good work. You are reaching more and more people with the real truth.

### That abortion article blew me away!!!

Dear Pastor Ratzlaff, we just received and read the Jan/Feb issue of *Proclamation* and that Abortion article blew me away!!! We became SDA from Lutheran in 1982 (amidst all the SDA turmoil that our new SDA friends hid from us), but now have read *Cultic Doctrine*, *The White Lie*, *The White Truth*, hundreds of web site pages and so

on. Needless to say, we were in shock and now are in mourning. At the time of this 'discovery', we were Sabbath school teachers, superintendent, assistant elder and assistant deaconess. If you feel we could have a free copy of your *Sabbath in Christ* book, I promise you it will be read! We have not attended SDA church since Dec. 2002, and only once a month from June until Dec 2002, and are in a real dilemma about how to spend Saturday and where/when/how to worship. The Sunday issue is a hot topic in our home. We live in a very rural area with only Lutheran, Catholic, and Assembly of God churches.

### I have so enjoyed your Proclamation issues

Dear Mr. Ratzlaff, I have so enjoyed your *Proclamation* issues. They have been a gift from God that have given me a peace and hope that I've never known growing up in the S.D.A. church and schools. For the first time in my life, I'm enjoying church and Bible study! I didn't realize it was supposed to be enjoyable! I attend a Foursquare church and they preach from The Word and I receive a blessing every time I attend. I'm attending my second Lady's Bible study at church and I am amazed at all the Bible verses I've been coming across in the New Testament that I'd never discovered before, which I feel the SDA leaders did not want us to learn in church or school. In Heb. 7:18-19, "The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God." A light bulb went on in my head when I read this as well as other verses talking about the new covenant. God is revealing to me that we are no longer under the law; we are given grace through Jesus Christ dying for our sins on the cross. And you know, I've heard things like this before, but I'd never really studied it for myself because when you are raised Adventist with mostly Adventist friends and family, you are basically made to accept the church's beliefs and are very much frowned upon if you question anything. Fortunately for me, the Lord brought a wonderful man into my life whom I've been married to for almost eight years who is not and never will be an S.D.A!!! Praise the Lord! I have always questioned the authority of E.G. White, but now the more I learn, the more convinced I am of her NOT being a prophet. I only wish I had believed my husband years ago and saved myself and our family from unnecessary pain and tribulation from agonizing over leaving the church behind for good. As you know, it is very hard to leave when your family and your whole way of life is threatened. I'm very close to my parents who are so deep into the SDA church. Some advice my dad gave me was to search and study the Bible for myself so that I would know what I believe and not just take my parent's word for it. And wouldn't you know it, I no longer believe in their basic doctrines. How sad for my dad, though, because he was sure that I would come around to believe in the Sabbath, etc. It saddens me to disappoint him because I admire him more than just about any other Christian or person I know. He is not like most other people or SDA's in particular. He really studies his Bible a lot (as well as the church's lesson study), so how can he be so wrong in his beliefs on the Sabbath, E.G. White, eating meat, etc.? It must be his other reading material from the church that mixes up his thought process or clouds his views. I am horrified on the SDA's position on abortion. Even after being raised in the church and their schools from first-grade through college, I had no idea that they are pro-choice! This makes me sick to my stomach because I have always believed that abortion is murder. One of the main arguments that I've heard a lot from SDA's for keeping the Sabbath is, if laws and commandments were done away with in the new covenant, then does that make it OK to murder, steal, etc.? And here the church itself is doing exactly that. Murder! They are performing elective abortions in their hospitals. They believe that the fourth commandment of the Sabbath is vital to one's salvation, while ignoring the sixth "Thou shalt not murder." I am more determined than ever to support LAM in any way I can. I'm very interested in joining a former Adventist group in my area...

### I found fellowship in what you wrote

First let me thank you for your two books! They are so timely right now! Here I am supposed to be working hard on my sermon for this week, and I can't put your books down! Made it through more than 200 pages of the book on the Sabbath, and then wanted to taste the other book, and read over a hundred pages today in between what I had to do! I found fellowship in what you wrote because we have shared experiences within Adventism and ministry. I found myself saying "Amen!" so many times it wasn't funny. Your book on the Sabbath is so Christ centered and such a revelation of Jesus Christ that every Christian should read it to understand the depth of our Lord's love and ministry to the religionists of His day! God certainly has blessed you in your scholarship! It is so well presented that any sincere, open-hearted person would have to be moved by the astounding reality of TRUTH presented! Just curious, have any big whigs in the church ever responded to the Wm. Miller / E.G. stuff?? I mean it is mind-blowing and absolutely incredible! How could anyone not see how whacked Miller's scholarship was and still keep a straight face when they read EGW's endorsement? Also the ever changing meaning of the three angels is also pretty incredible, as well as the shut door judgment of other Christians. I wonder if anyone has ever done a side by side comparison of EGW's ministry as opposed to D.L. Moody's? I don't think she supported him in the least, and yet one of the biography's of his life was a life changing book for me. Well still keep me in your prayers I am not out of the woods yet, but I can see the forest a lot better than I used to. So thankful I have such an understanding and open-hearted spouse who also is not afraid to look at what is the TRUTH!

### I am reading my way out of SDA

Dale, I just want to thank you for the copy of *Cultic Doctrine*—the book is good and interesting. There are so many things which could not break the code of Adventism in me, but the book is not resistible. As I told you in my past communication, I am reading my way out of SDA. I was double [minded] but now the book I see has a word. God bless you and continue sending more study works here in Uganda.

### You are liable for harassment

Please get me off our mailing list. Your material is heresy. God have mercy on your souls. If you continue to send the trash you do, you are liable for harassment.



## The freedom, peace, joy and meaning to life

Thank you very much. I am looking forward to reading your book...I rejoice daily in all the blessings the Lord has given me. The freedom, peace, joy and meaning to life that comes from centering our lives in Him cannot be described in words. Your books helped me find this new life! Praise God for his love and grace. May God continue to bless you.

## Interesting and informative articles

I had written last year to be put on the mailing list to receive *Proclamation*. My mother, a Twenty-five-year SDA member, thinks Ellen White has taken the place of Jesus. I needed some good sound information to be able to challenge and prove the false doctrines of the SDAs. You provided me with several issues of *Proclamation*. I have found not only very good articles to challenge the SDA beliefs, but interesting and informative articles for the average Christian to read to enhance his/her studies. I have been incarcerated now for over a year waiting for trial for a crime I did not commit. God will deliver me I know. I have not been able to contribute to your much needed cause but as God is my witness I will upon my release after I get on my feet. I believe in your efforts whole heartedly, if it were not for the two books you sent to me, *Sabbath in Crisis* and *Cultic Doctrine*, I might have fallen under the SDAs spell. As I was a new Christian just learning, and being captivated by the mark of the beast, and graphic drawings of Daniel and so I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart and I pray for you and your team each night my brothers and sisters...

## I will be 85 tomorrow

I have been much happier since I have gotten out of Adventism...I will be 85 tomorrow and still active, but can't get over the fact that I just would not read anything unless E. G. W. wrote it. I believed in it all so deep and overnight and then my dear friend happened to run across what Grant Shurtliff [Canright's book on EGW] had put in the computer and everything has changed. Now I received *Proclamation* which I enjoy. Keep up the good work.

## I was a former member of Worldwide COG

Hello Dale, I just finished reading your new book *Sabbath In Christ*. What an absolutely wonderful book!! Perhaps you will remember me, you called me to make sure the book got shipped to

me, and I mentioned to you I was a former member of Worldwide COG, you also told me at that time you had just spoken to Joseph Tkach (and perhaps Michael Feasel). Anyway, I had found the New Covenant and Jesus through a different source a few years ago. But your book is absolute dynamite!...However I still have a few lingering issues, one of which I will tell you of now (there are just a few others too) and it is passed over in your book on page 218 in the middle of the page, starting with the words "On that Friday afternoon when our Covenant Keeper was dying on the cross..." And this is where I get totally lost. The Bible says that "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale so would Jesus be three days in the tomb" and in the NT it also says he was in the grave for three days and nights. So counting from Friday afternoon (probably late) how does one get to early Sun morning when he was discovered missing? That time period only looks like perhaps 1 1/2 days. So what is wrong here? Please reply.

**Editor's Note:** The term, three days and three nights, as I understand it, was often used for three days in Bible times. Any part of the day was counted a whole day. For example, John 20:26 says "After eight days" this would in our terms mean on the 9th day. However, you will note that most Bibles say "a week later" It means, as I understand it, on the same day a week later. This is my understanding. However—and here is the important point—whether Jesus died on Friday or Wednesday, the fact that he died for our sins is the important thing!

## It has surely changed my life and focus

Hi Dale, thank you for the update and I will pray at all times for the ministry, problems responsibilities and decisions that must be made on a constant basis. I will pray that God will speak His words through you at all times and again thanks for your book *Sabbath in Christ*—it has surely changed my life and focus. I am sharing it with others and I do intend to order the book *Circumcision, Sabbath & Tithing*. God bless and I will pray for all those who are having medical problems. God hears and answers prayers.

## It is a great place to work

First of all I want to thank you for your ministry. I enjoy your *Proclamation* magazine and I read it from cover to cover. As you might remember, I work at \_\_\_ Adventist hospital. It is a

great place to work as they treat their employees better than anywhere else I have worked. The hardest thing for me is seeing all their literature around the patients waiting areas and seeing the many ads for false teachers...

## Give him ideas for sermons

Dear sirs, I thoroughly enjoy your *Proclamation* magazine. I am a member of the Mason City Worldwide Church of God. You certainly know what we have recently gone through. Your book *Sabbath In Crisis* has been a great help for me. I would like to receive your new book *Sabbath In Christ*. I have been a member of the Worldwide Church of God since 1968. A Deacon since 1979. I have given many sermonets before the congregation. I was giving New Covenant sermonets while our minister still followed with Mr. Armstrong's teaching. Our minister didn't say anything to me about it because it was the truth from headquarters. He finally left the church. Our new young minister tells the congregation that I give him ideas for sermons. Some of those ideas are triggered by articles in your book and the *Proclamation*...May God continue to bless the fruit of your contribution in the Work.

## I treasure all the information you have sent

Dear Dale, Just a short note to say, "Keep up the work you are doing." I treasure all the information you have sent. The book *Sabbath in Crisis* really helped a great lot. I am an elder of the Worldwide Church of God. You probably know of the changes we have made. It wasn't hard to see (with the Holy Spirit's guidance) that Saturday was no longer a necessary thing. We know our rest is in Christ. Most of our people hold to the change, a few don't. We pray for SDAs and our members who do not understand yet. I would like to receive the book *Sabbath in Christ*.

## Please use this small donation where needed

Hi Dale, I have read *Proclamation!* and now am reading *Sabbath in Christ* and thank God for this book. I have encouraged others to purchase the book. Please use this small donation where needed in the ministry.

## Mail letters and donations to:

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

# Walter Rea on Ellen White

*Perhaps no other person, unless it would be Dr. Fred Veltman, has done more research on the writings of Ellen G. White than Walter Rea. In the 1980s, Walter Rea, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor and ardent supporter of Ellen White discovered that a large portion of her writings were plagiarized. Here is the report of his latest research. A cassette tape of his presentation on this subject may be obtained from the San Diego Adventist Forum by calling (619)561-2360.*

## The letter from Walter Rea dated May, 2003

Dear Friends: For over one hundred and fifty years many people of good character and some with high position in the S.D.A. Church questioned what was being promoted by the church concerning Ellen White and her claims of divine revelation.

Most, if not all, of the criticism was either dismissed as unfounded or the evidence of such criticism was covered from view. As late as a Bible Conference in 1919, many leaders including Bible teachers, ministers and conference officials were voicing their concerns over the way her written materials were being misrepresented.

The mythology promoted was that by her own admission Ellen White did not read other's written materials, was not influenced in any way by human beings when she wrote, and God Himself was the only author of her material!

It was during the mid 1970's that some of the secrecy and mythology that surrounded Ellen's writings were exploded. For the first time in over a hundred years or more some of the mechanics used in her writings were revealed. Also, some of the names of those who helped in manufacturing her books became known. The amount of human help emerged in the January meeting of 1980 where the committee reviewing past evidence of human involvement announced that such evidence was shocking. It was also declared at that Glendale meeting that "if every paragraph in the book *The Great Controversy* was footnoted in reference to its original source, every paragraph would be footnoted." Thus it would acknowledge that the book was of human ideas and not divine inspiration. During the last several years, seeking to verify or disprove that statement, I have spent hundreds of dollars and thousands of hours accumulating and studying many of the books that have now been admitted by the White Estate as having been used in the compilation and revisions of the book, *The Great Controversy*.

This material is now available to all in its three forms:

- (a) A copy of the early 1887 edition where no credit of any kind was ever given to any human source. The footnotes—added in later editions—are included as well as some of the 1,100 Bible texts used.
- (b) Having obtained many of the now admitted sources, we have photocopied the original materials from such authors as D'Aubigye, Wiley, Bliss, Wellcome and others, some often paraphrased.
- (c) Set three seeks to show the evolution of admission to plagiarism from the early editions to the most recent.

Many of these studies have been made available to the church and its educational institutions, wherefore it is now offered to the public through the internet and other means. As always the church refuses to dialogue and often turns from the issues to the one presenting them. It is very clear from the facts presented after one hundred and fifty years that whatever inspiration Mrs. White had, it did not come from God but from the sources she read and copied, though she denied copying to the end of her life.

Sincerely, Walter T. Rea

## The evidence of Ellen White's denials

1. "I did not read any works upon health until I had written *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 3 & 4, *Appeal to Mothers*, and had sketched out most of my six articles in the six numbers of *How to Live*." *Review & Herald*, Oct. 8, 1867.

2. "My views were written independent of books or of the opinions of others." *Manuscript 7*, 1867

3. "And here I would state that although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation." *Review & Herald*, Oct. 8, 1867

4. "You might say that this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God, to bring before your minds things that had been shown me. In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

## Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.

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