

Proclamation!

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FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS

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Jesus: More compelling than His shadow COLLEEN TINKER

As we discovered Jesus, we discovered He fulfilled all the shadows of Himself in the law and the prophets.

One day in 1995 I received a phone call from a dear friend. We had walked with each other through a variety of life-changing events during the past six years, and we had talked often about our growing cognitive dissonance between what we believed to be truth and what we were experiencing as we immersed ourselves in studying the Bible and investigating the foundations of our faith.

Consequently, I was surprised but not completely shocked when she dropped her bombshell: she and her husband had decided to leave the Adventist church.

As the days passed, her announcement bothered me more and more deeply. I cognitively understood their decision—except for one thing. No matter how I looked at the issue, I could not understand how they could leave the Sabbath.

Richard was as disturbed as I was, and we discussed their defection repeatedly.

"I don't understand it," Richard would say; "How do they justify leaving the Sabbath?"

"Oh," I would reply, "I believe they'll come back. They have to walk away from the day in order to get perspective. They've had so many painful experiences, they have to give up the Sabbath in order to rediscover how wonderful it is."

But they didn't come back. On the contrary, my friend was not only delighting in her worship at a Christian church, but she was also making plans to pursue a masters' degree in theology at an evangelical seminary.

Meanwhile, Richard and I were discovering Jesus. Oh, we had accepted Him—over and over—throughout our lives. We had struggled to make the Sabbath holy and relevant. We believed we had finally figured out how to live with Ellen White's writings by considering her to be a significant historical figure whom God used but whose writings were not all intended to be taken literally today. As we pursued deep Bible study, however, reading whole books in context, the Jesus we had known faded as the real Jesus—the eternal God, Lord of

lords, Savior, Redeemer, and King—began to emerge.

The Jesus revealed in the Bible was far more powerful and compelling than the Jesus we knew. This biblical Jesus is the Lamb slain from the creation of the world—before Adam sinned (Revelation 13:8). He did not supplicate the Father for permission to die for humanity—He is God and chose to die. The real Jesus disarmed Satan and his angels—his rebellious creations—when He died on the cross (Colossians 2:15). He is not locked into a battle with a legitimate adversary, Satan. The real Jesus died as our Substitute, became a curse (Gal 3:13), and became our sin so that we "might become [not 'attain'] the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21). He did not die to demonstrate our depravity or to begin the process of our salvation; He died and rose and ascended to the Father, completing everything we need for salvation.

The biblical Jesus opened a new, living way through his body to the Father (Hebrews 10:19-20). He is not vindicating his fairness or determining who is to be saved. His fairness is not in question; the cross demonstrated His justice (Romans 3:25-26), and God does not have to explain his sovereign decisions to His creations (Romans 9:20-21; Isaiah 45:9).

As Jesus revealed Himself to us through His Word, we discovered He fulfilled all the shadows of Himself in the law and the prophets. With humility I finally realized that I had misjudged my friends' leaving the church. They did not leave because of painful experiences; they left because Jesus was far more compelling than His shadow.

In this issue David Dykes, senior pastor of Green Acres Baptist Church, exegetes Colossians 2:16-17 and shows how misunderstanding the shadows of Christ result in unhealthy churches. Dale Ratzlaff responds to Jud Lake's presentation at the Ellen White Summit held in Gladstone, Oregon, in November, 2005. Geoff Drew and Karen Earp share their stories of coming to true faith in Jesus, and I examine what it means to be born again.

We pray that you will be drawn to the Jesus of the Bible as you read these pages. In Him are joy, peace, freedom, and complete security. He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" (Revelation 5:13)

Proclamation!

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Hello, we'd like to introduce ourselves...



Richard Tinker, president and **Dale Ratzlaff**, founder

You, along with our regular subscribers, are receiving this special mailing of *Proclamation!* because of generous donations which made it possible for us to send it to a large number of Adventist leaders in North America. Our prayer is that God will reveal Himself to you in new ways as you read, and that the desire of your heart will be to know and act in truth.

Proclamation! is produced every two months by Life Assurance Ministries. It is created for people who are questioning Adventism, for those who are Sabbatarians, and for others who are studying Adventism. Subscriptions are free. All past issues of *Proclamation!* are available as PDF files online at www.formeradventist.com. If you would like to confirm your continued free subscription, return the attached envelope.

Spanish translations of *Proclamation!* in PDF format, beginning with January/February, 2006, are also available at www.formeradventist.com.

What is Life Assurance Ministries?

Dale Ratzlaff founded Life Assurance Ministries in 1999. He is author of *Sabbath in Christ*, *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*, *The Truth About the Seventh-day Adventist Truth*, and *Adventist to Christian*.

Dale was an Adventist pastor for 13 years, seven of which he spent teaching Bible at Monterey Bay Academy, La Selva Beach, California. During his doctoral studies at Andrews University in the 1980's, Dale became convinced that the investigative judgment could not be supported by Scripture. Since he could no longer teach this doctrine, he and his wife Carolyn left the Adventist denomination.

Richard and Colleen Tinker officially left the Adventist church early in 1999 after discovering the true gospel of grace by studying the New Testament, one book at a time, with their Christian neighbors. Although they had some initial thoughts that they might convert their neighbors, they soon discovered that what the Bible actually said was different from what they had understood it to say from their Adventist perspective. Coming to know they were secure in Jesus' finished work transformed them.

Richard, a graphic artist who worked for the School of Dentistry at Loma Linda University, designed *Proclamation!* from its inception.

In 2004 Colleen quit teaching high school English and assumed editing *Proclamation!* as Dale needed to step back from some of his responsibilities. During the fall of 2005, the board voted Richard the president of Life Assurance Ministries with Dale remaining active on the board of directors. In June of this year, Richard was fired from Loma Linda University because of his work with this ministry and *Proclamation!* Since that time he has worked full time for Life Assurance Ministries.

This ministry and the production of this magazine are supported entirely by donations.

Resources for further study

www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.com
www.EllenWhite.org
www.ExAdventist.com
www.FormerAdventist.com
www.TruthOrFables.com
www.SendingTheLight.com
www.OneFlockMinistries.org

Books by Dale Ratzlaff and others (English and Spanish)
Extensive research concerning Ellen White
Mark Martin's articles, online audio studies and sermons
Testimonies, Bible studies, online forum for those questioning Adventism
Resource material concerning Ellen White and Adventist doctrines
Sam Pestes presents books and materials on the New Covenant
Greg Taylor's story, mission projects, and ministry news

Jesus found

GEOFFREY DREW

Many of my Adventist friends have been saying apologetically, "I'm sorry for the bad experience you have had within Adventism." But I didn't have a bad experience with Adventism; I had a bad experience with me. I could not gain victory over sin, freedom from guilt, or peace with God. These all proved elusive to me when I was an Adventist. It was not the fault of Adventism, however, that I did not gain this prize. The problem was in me; I was the one dead (Ephesians 2:1), blind (2 Corinthians 4:4), deceived and not seeking after God (Romans 3:11), and ignorant (Ephesians 4:18). In

addition, there was an enemy of souls in the world causing the world system to lie to me. I was heading for hell and eternal punishment, but God intervened.



Our Little Friend

From my earliest days the Lord God was drawing me to Himself. "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (John 6:44). I had a loving grandmother who took me on her knee and told me the story of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:32-33, "All of the nations shall be gathered before Him, and He will separate them from one another as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats, and He will set the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left." Grandmother admonished me, "Geoffrey, you must not be a goat; you must be one of the little lambs belonging to Jesus." That moment on my grandmother's knee was one of the first times I heard His name.

My grandmother sowed the seed, and I was left with a distinct impression that I needed to be ready for the judgment and needed to please God. I did not know, however, that I was born blind, bound and needing a Savior, but the Lord shed a beam of the lamp of life on my path.

Geoffrey Drew is a family physician from Simi Valley, California. Born and raised in South Africa, he was a Seventh-day Adventist for 32 years. He attended Patterson Park Adventist School (1959-60), Sedaven High School (1961, 1963-64), Helderberg College (1965-67) and Walla Walla College (1970-73). He did medical research at Loma Linda University (1973-75) and has been practicing in Thousand Oaks for 17 years. He and his wife Holly attend Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California. This story is excerpted from Geoff's testimony given at the 2006 Former Adventist Fellowship weekend in Redlands (pictured).



Speak, Lord

We were not church-goers, but when I was nine or ten years old, Dad suddenly packed us off to Sunday school. I got the distinct impression that my parents were worried; I was beginning to swear. Mr. Thompson, my teacher at the Methodist Sunday school where we went, though, had a reputation for his clean mouth.

From Mr. Thompson in that Methodist Sunday School I learned many Bible stories; my favorite was the one of Samuel. One day Mr. Thompson caught me by the shoulder and said, "Geoff, if the Lord speaks to you, say to Him, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant is listening.'"

As we began to attend Sunday school regularly, not only was I learning Bible stories from Mr. Thompson, but my father was also ministering scriptures to me. About this time, dad admonished me, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Perhaps he saw my pride. Such scriptures ministered to me in ways I could not think or understand.

Standards to Uphold

It was then that we became Seventh-day Adventists. I was ten or eleven years old, and my parents started a church in their living room in the town of Sasolburg, South Africa. Actually, for them this church was a return to the fold. My grandmother had been begging them to return to the church of their young marriage. Now they had children, and they had to do battle with sin.

I began to live under the law. People were telling me we had standards to uphold; I took this to mean I was to be a good little boy. Would that we could have learned about justification, faith, sanctification, and God's great mercy, but God took us on this path.

We were now Sabbath keepers, and we were guarding the edges of the Sabbath. I did not like sunset Friday, and I looked forward with a kind of naughty glee for sunset Saturday. Between sunsets I went to church, but the Sabbath hours were marked by the rebellion in my heart.

I was also hearing about the Health Message. I read *Counsels on Diets and Foods* by Ellen G. White, and I learned that the Health Message was the "entering wedge" and the "right arm of the gospel." It made me wonder what the preachers were doing if the doctors were exercising the "right arm." It seemed to me they were using the left arm. A desire sprang up in me to be a preaching doctor so I could wield both arms.

I wanted to become holy so immersed myself in upholding the law and living by the rules. Mandates about haircuts, trousers, ties, and when and where to talk to girls proliferated at Sedaven High School. Vegetarianism also seemed to be a great discipline to promote holiness.

When I was about fourteen, some friends and I were in a small town going door to door collecting small change for missions during Harvest Ingathering. We were tempted to buy meat pies, but I piped up and said, "No, we are trying to be vegetarians. We have standards to uphold." My young friends responded with ridicule and mockery, and they proceeded to buy the meat pies. I did not partake, but by that little act I was able to feel superior.

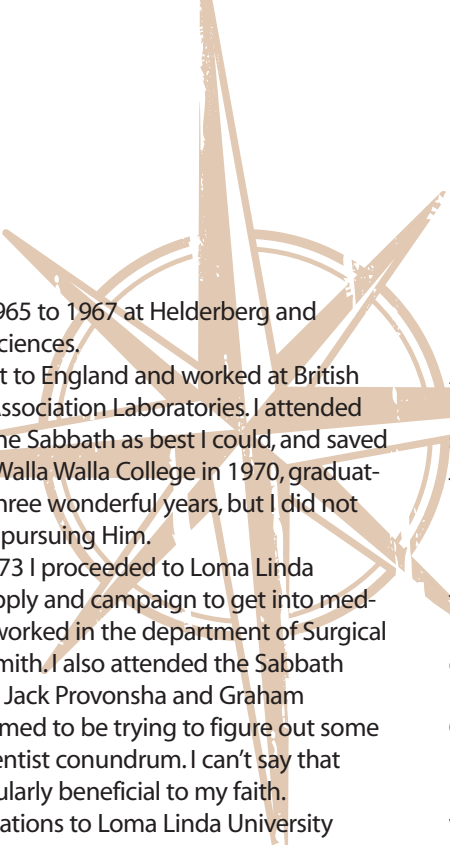
Without realizing it I had been led into a worldly religious ideology instead of into Biblical truth. Nobody was teaching me the freedom we have in Christ.

Faith Comes by Hearing

I shall always be grateful that the Adventist school system left me with a knowledge of the Bible stories—but they always had a Sabbatarian twist. Teachers would say, "You cannot know that you are saved." Or they would talk fearfully of the coming time of trouble and recite Psalm 91:6, "Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness or of the destruction that lays waste at noonday." My fearful response, however, was the result of the fact that I was yet unsaved and could not discern and have the peace that passes all understanding.

During the weeks of religious emphasis, I remember giving my heart to God many times, making a decision and walking down the aisle. One time I asked a teacher a serious question, and he gave me a copy of *Early Writings* by Ellen G. White. I read about the vision of the narrow mountain path but lost my appetite for the rest of the book. To this day I wonder how that book was supposed to be evangelistic to me. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

I finished high school and went to Helderberg College, determined to prepare for medical school at Loma Linda



University. I spent from 1965 to 1967 at Helderberg and immersed myself in the sciences.

In January, 1969, I went to England and worked at British Iron and Steel Research Association Laboratories. I attended church weekly, keeping the Sabbath as best I could, and saved enough money to go to Walla Walla College in 1970, graduating in 1973. Those were three wonderful years, but I did not know Christ and was not pursuing Him.

After graduation in 1973 I proceeded to Loma Linda University. I planned to apply and campaign to get into medical school. Meanwhile, I worked in the department of Surgical Research with Dr. Louis Smith. I also attended the Sabbath School classes of Doctors Jack Provonsha and Graham Maxwell. They always seemed to be trying to figure out some evangelical trend or Adventist conundrum. I can't say that those classes were particularly beneficial to my faith.

After four failed applications to Loma Linda University Medical School, a friend encouraged me to go back to South Africa since I was "skating on thin ice." I first went to Cape Town University in 1975 and applied. I was turned down at the end of the year and was in deep dismay.

While discussing my dilemma with Donald Pitchford in Johannesburg who was already in medical school, he advised me to approach Professor Phillip Tobias directly. This I did; I called him at 1:00 A.M. in his Cape Town hotel on a Friday morning. He encouraged me to file an application. I was instructed to report to him on Monday morning and was immediately inducted into

Toward the end of medical school I married Jenny, the mother of my children, a lovely Adventist girl from a prominent Adventist family. The marriage was difficult. I was running it legalistically in a dominating and controlling way. No relationship could survive this imperious legalism. At the end of 1985 Jenny went on a holiday from our home in Canada and never returned. Divorce followed.

The Purdys, fine Christians in Russell, Manitoba, where I was practicing, ministered to me and introduced me to biblical truth. I started receiving tapes.

I listened to Charles Stanley preaching Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ." I had never heard or believed this before. In 1986 I came to La Canada, California, in preparation for my California medical license. One evening I heard on the radio a beautiful message of heaven, of how the saints were there rejoicing in the presence of Jesus. I thought, "How wonderful." I wanted with all of my heart to believe it was true.

I began listening diligently to Christian radio. Soon I discovered "Grace To You" and the teaching of John MacArthur. His study guides were wonderful, and they were leading me into the truth of the supremacy and Lordship of Christ. Christianity is Christ. Again and again I learned truths that I had simply never heard before.


One day at the end of 1989, when I had been going to Grace Community Church on Sundays and serving as an elder in the Simi Valley Adventist Church on Saturdays, I realized I was weary. A dear friend said, "Choose you this day whom you will serve." My ambivalence was exhausting me; I was trying to repair the Adventist church from the inside. My friend said, "This will never work; run, don't walk. Look for the nearest exit; turn purely to Christ."

At the end of 1989 I heard Pastor John preaching on 2 Peter 3:10ff about hell and eternal punishment and the coming destruction of the great day of the Lord. He distinguished this judgment from the translation of the church. His teaching fed my soul; I gripped my seat and knew I had never believed this truth before. Instead I had believed inventions and imaginations that diminish the Lordship and Deity of my Lord Jesus Christ.

"Lord," I cried, "deliver me from falsehood."

The Lord forgave me. I knew that I was instantly placed in the spirit of His forgiveness and grace. In that moment I became a sheep safely grazing, hearing the voice of my master: "My sheep know my voice."

That day was sixteen years ago. The Lord gave me ears to hear, I listened. I followed Him, and He has led me in abundant green pastures of His food, the Word!

So why did I leave the Seventh-day Adventist Church? I left because my Lord called me. He had called me at my grandmother's knee, and He was faithful. His voice echoed and reiterated tirelessly in all my days. Yet before I could hear, He found me. One day, at the end of myself—by His grace, I received ears to hear. That has made all the difference. Soli Deo Gloria. 

"...deliver me from falsehood."

the class of anatomy in medical science. I was in. The Lord had overruled many things and fulfilled a long-held desire.

Nothing could have dominated my young life more than the passion to be a doctor. I ate, slept and thought it and conspired in many ways to do it. It took me fourteen years of higher education to achieve my objective. Now when I look back, I have pain recognizing that this passion functioned as a huge and monstrous idol in my experience. I did not know Christ and often did not even pray for His will in my life.

The Sower Went Forth to Sow

Every Thursday lunchtime at medical school I attended the Student Christian Association (SCA) where I met Tony Lewin and Monty Showlund who discipled me in the ways of Christ. Tony was a Jewish Christian. I asked of him why he did not keep the Sabbath, and his reply was to give me the book, *The Gospel in the Feasts of Israel* by Victor Buksbazen (available at www.foigm.org). I did not read the book, however, until years later. Also at SCA, I met Dr. Charles Fienberg. I had no idea in whose august company I was standing when I asked him the question, "How come you as a Jew do not keep the Sabbath?" He was gracious in his reply saying, "Read the book of Galatians." This, too, I was to defer until many years later.

Leave the Shadows


[THE REALITY IS CHRIST]

DAVID O. DYKES SENIOR PASTOR, GREEN ACRES BAPTIST CHURCH

In the time of the apostles, there were people in the churches who were teaching that once a person became a Christian, he still had to obey the Jewish regulations and rituals to be religiously correct. That kind of false teaching still exists in the 21st century, and I want to warn you about the dangers of dead, dull legalism promoted by those I'll call grace-robbers.

Let's read what the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write about the problem of grace-robbers. Colossians 2:16-18: "Therefore [remember, never start at a "therefore" in the Bible—glance back to verse 14 to review the truth that when Jesus died on the cross, God took away all the Old Testament rules and regulations and nailed them to the cross] do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ."

When I was growing up in Lower Alabama, we usually had four or five dogs and cats to claim as our pets. Because my sister Judy had the dubious virtue of being the eldest child, she demanded the right to name all our pets. We had a dog that was part German Shepherd which Judy named Rex. While Rex was a ferocious looking dog, he was a big



chicken at heart. He was scared of everything. Further, like the rest of our pets, Rex was a yard animal and never came inside.

One time when it thundered Rex illustrated his fear. He was so terrified he broke through the screen door and came in and hid under the table!

Unlike many dogs, his bark wasn't worse than his bite, because he seldom barked...and he never bit. There was one thing, however, that could make Rex bark. Sometimes when a bird or a flock of birds flew over on a sunny day, Rex chased their shadows on the ground. One day I watched as one bird flew around in a circle while Rex chased the circling shadow on the ground, around and around, barking the whole time.

Poor, dumb, bird-brained Rex—he never figured out the shadow wasn't real. Sadly, there are many well-meaning Christians who are doing the same thing. They are chasing shadows; they are still trying to please God by keeping religious rules and observing religious rituals. In this article I want to examine some of our legalistic substitutes for God's grace and then talk about the differences between legalism-based churches and grace-based churches.

Cheap substitutes for grace

One scientific definition of "shadow" is: "An area that is not or is only partially irradiated or illuminated because of the interception of radiation by an opaque object between the area and the source of radiation." To put it simply, shadows are merely a one-dimensional outline of the real thing. When you see a person's shadow around the corner in the

late afternoon, you know the person is coming right behind it. You don't greet the shadow; you greet the person. Those who are chasing spiritual shadows are still trying to please God by focusing on the shadow, not the real thing. Keeping religious rules and observing religious rituals in order to be close to God is only a shadow of the "real thing"—a relationship with Him through Jesus.

Jesus is the substance of grace, and legalism chases the shadowy substitutes for grace. In this passage we find three legalistic substitutes for grace.

Dietary Regulations

Colossians 2:16 says, "Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink." The Old Testament contains a long list of foods that were clean and unclean. For instance, the Jews could eat beef, but they were forbidden to eat pork. They could eat fish with scales, but not fish without scales, like catfish. To this day, Orthodox Jews only eat Kosher foods. (The word "kosher" comes from the Hebrew word for "fitting" or "proper.") There are some groups who call themselves Christians that still observe these Old Testament dietary regulations. They would tell you if you're eating bacon or ham, you can't be right with God—or they might say these foods lead to bad health, thus compromising the temple of the Holy Spirit. But the Bible clearly states these regulations are no longer in effect.

The legalistic attitude about food and drink, however, can go beyond the Old Testament. There are plenty of people around today who will try to condemn you based upon what you consume. A few days ago, while dining in a friend's home, we sat at a table with a young man named Seamus from Ireland. He had a delightful Irish accent, and as he answered our questions, we were all enjoying the Irish lilt of his voice. We asked him about his family, and he said, "One of me brothers is an engineer, and another brother is taking care of the family farm, and me sister is a vegetarian kook."

I was on the verge of blurting, "Yeah, all those vegetarians are kooks!" But in the instant before I stuck my foot in my mouth, I realized he meant "vegetarian COOK." I wasn't the only one who thought he said "kook," however, so we all enjoyed a big laugh.

Later I reminded myself that it's wrong for me to judge someone just because he or she is a vegetarian—and vegetarians shouldn't condemn those of us who are carnivorous. In Matthew 15, Jesus made it clear it's not what goes into the mouth and stomach of a person that defiles him. It is what comes out of the heart that defiles a person. The Old Testament dietary rules were nailed to the cross, and we don't have to obey them anymore.

Holy living is not about the kind of food or drink we consume. It's not even about eating and drinking the bread and wine for Communion. The Christian life is knowing Jesus.

Holy living is not about the kind of food or drink we consume. It's not even about eating and drinking the bread and wine for Communion. The Christian life is knowing Jesus.



Religious Holidays

The Bible goes on to say, “do not let anyone judge you with regard to a religious festival, or a New Moon celebration.” The Hebrew lunar calendar was 360 days long based on the phases of the moon. Every year, the Jews celebrated four major festivals: (1) Passover in the spring followed by (2) the Feast of weeks, or Pentecost; (3) in the fall there was the Festival of Tabernacles followed by (4) the Day of Atonement, called Yom Kippur. In addition, there were monthly festivals (new moon celebrations) and special celebrations every seven years and every 50 years. They loved their holidays!

Before we’re too harsh on the Israelites for their love of holidays, though, let’s remember we have more holidays than the Jews. As Americans we have become *holidazed*! Congress has officially designated most days of the year as some sort of holiday. For instance, did you know that June 8 is “Best Friends Day” and June 11 is “Hugs Day”? June 15 is national “Fly a Kite Day”. And don’t forget next June 24, national “Take Your Dog to Work Day”!

Legalism rears its ugly head when we take our holidays more seriously than the things they are commemorating. For example, each year I usually get several letters and emails from people saying they were disappointed I didn’t preach a Father’s Day message on Fathers’ Day. The complaints triple when I don’t preach a Mother’s Day message! Am I intentionally trying to ignore Moms and Dads? Not at all. Holiday legalism can swing both ways, too. Consider Halloween as an example. If people allow their children to dress up and trick-or-treat, some people will condemn them and pray for them to get right with God.

I never want my teaching to be calendar-driven. God has called me to teach the Bible systematically and consistently, verse after verse, line upon line, precept upon precept. The whole point of this passage in Colossians is that we aren’t to let someone JUDGE us about whether or not we observe the exact holidays they observe.

Those religious holidays referred to in Colossians 2 were only shadows. For instance, on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, a spotless lamb was sacrificed for the forgiveness of the sins of the Israelites. That was a shadow. When Jesus came, John the Baptist said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29) No more shadows! Jesus is the light of the world that causes the shadows. Sadly, the Jews kept chasing the shadows when the real Lamb arrived! When we start idolizing the holiday itself rather than the truth behind the holiday, we can be guilty of chasing shadows, too.

Sabbath Observance


The third substitute for grace is found in these words from our text, “Do not let anyone judge you with regard to a Sabbath day.” What day is the Sabbath day? There are two extreme mistakes people often make about the Biblical

Sabbath. Some people insist that the Fourth Commandment is still in effect, and Christians should worship and do no work on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. They claim the rest of Christianity is wrong, because we are worshipping on Sunday. I’ve heard some groups even say those of us who worship on Sunday bear the mark of the beast mentioned in Revelation. It’s extremely important to note the Bible lists the Sabbath observance in the same category as dietary laws and Jewish holidays. My friend, if you worship on Sunday, never let anyone condemn you with regard to a Sabbath. The requirement to keep the Jewish Sabbath was nailed to the cross, and God took it out of the way.

The other Sabbath mistake is just as dangerous. It is the belief that somewhere in the Bible, Sunday became the Christian Sabbath. Through the years there have been many Christians who have tried to treat Sunday like the Jewish Sabbath. In the fourth century, the Roman Emperor Constantine outlawed work on the day of the Sun—but it wasn’t for any particular religious reason.

Later it became part of official Roman Catholic dogma that God changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Even after the Protestant Reformation, Christians still followed this unbiblical belief. The 17th century theocratic American Puritans established laws responsible for many of our false ideas about Sunday. They gave us laws called “Blue Laws” prohibiting certain businesses from opening on Sunday. The term “blue” probably comes from the idea of a strict rigid position (like bluenoses, or bluebloods). Originally, the “blue laws” prohibited a variety of activities in addition to Sunday commerce. Blue laws stipulated stiff

We don’t need a Sabbath day,
because we have a Sabbath Person.
No longer do we have to work for
salvation, we only have to rest
(Shabbat) in Jesus.



punishment for those who didn't attend church on the Sabbath (Sunday). Swearing, dancing, lacy clothes, blasphemy, card playing, and Christmas observances were also prohibited.

The early church worshiped on Sunday because the resurrection of Jesus was discovered on a Sunday morning—but it is not a day more holy than any other day. The Bible never directs us to treat Sunday as the Old Testament Sabbath. The word “Shabbat” doesn’t mean “seventh”; it means “rest.” And Jesus is the substance behind the shadow. We don’t need a Sabbath day, because we have a Sabbath Person. No longer do we have to work for salvation, we only have to rest (“Shabbat”) in Jesus. He said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you SHABBAT” (Matthew 11:28).

If someone asks me, “Which day is the Sabbath day?” My answer is, “Saturday is the Sabbath day...and Sunday is the Sabbath Day...and Monday is the Sabbath Day...and Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday are the Sabbath Day”—because all day, every day, I am resting in Jesus. I’m not chasing shadows; I’m resting in Jesus—the substance behind the shadow!

Congregational signs of grace

Legalism is a terrible threat to the spiritual health of churches and individual Christians. Some people, not understanding the danger, prefer legalistic churches because following the rules gives them the feeling they are doing well as Christians—especially compared to the other people who aren’t keeping the rules as well as they are. Legalism,

however, is the AIDS of the Christian life, and it’s important that you be able to distinguish between legalistic and grace-based churches.

Following are five points of contrast between legalism-based congregations and grace-based congregations.

1. Legalism-based congregations tend to be judgmental and critical. Members of legalistic churches tend to pick at each other and pick at others. Their mentality is, “I’m doing really well compared to other people.” A legalistic Christian compares himself to other people, and he likes what he sees.

Grace-based congregations demonstrate acceptance and a desire to help people who have problems. Grace doesn’t ignore or minimize flaws and faults, but the attitude of a grace-based church isn’t “You can’t come here until you clean up your act.” Rather, it is more like, “How can we help you be set free from your addictions and problems?” This attitude is at the heart of what we call our Celebrate Recovery ministry. It is a support network for people struggling to be set free from the grip of sin.

2. In legalism-based churches it is important to maintain appearances. You really can’t afford to be honest about your faults and struggles in a legalistic church, because the people will cut you out of the herd. If you start talking about how many problems you have, you’re going to be judged faster than you can blink your speck-filled eye. In a legalistic church, your Christian friends would be the last people you would tell about your problems. You would tell a co-worker or a counselor, but you couldn’t afford to let your guard down at church. After all, appearances must be maintained at all costs.

In contrast, in a grace-based church there is honesty and transparency. People are able to be vulnerable and admit they have problems. In a grace-based church a person can tell his or her friends, “I’m struggling with porn, or prescription drugs, or with anger...will you please pray for me?” And the response is not making the sign of the cross. It’s “Yes, I’ll pray for you, and we’ve got a support group for people who struggle with the same thing.”

3. A legalism-based congregation creates inter-personal distance. In other words, members may seem outwardly friendly. They will smile and shake your hand and may even offer you a brotherly or sisterly hug. But while legalism creates acquaintances, it seldom produces true friendships. You have to hold people at arm’s length. You have to build walls so that nobody can find out how messed up you may be.

Grace-based congregations encourage inter-personal closeness. Grace creates an atmosphere in which you can find friends who will love you warts and all. The love goes deeper than a smile and handshake. Grace gives us the

But while legalism creates acquaintances, it seldom produces true friendships. You have to hold people at arm’s length. You have to build walls so that nobody can find out how messed up you may be.

power to love and accept someone as a friend, even though we know all about his or her weaknesses and faults. Legalism keeps a long list of rules and keeps score about what everyone is doing. According to I Corinthians 13:5, however, "Love keeps no record of wrongs."

4. Legalism-based congregations emphasize external righteousness. Legalists are interested in things like the clothes you wear to church; for guys, the length of one's hair may be important. Ladies may be judged by whether they have on makeup, or excess makeup, or too much gaudy jewelry. And of course, tattoos and piercings aren't just taboo; they are of the devil. In some churches one of the first questions you have to answer is, "What version of the Bible do you have?" The list goes on and on...remember, a legalist is someone whose list of sins is longer than God's list.

Grace-based congregations focus on Christ's righteousness, which is the only kind of righteousness that God recognizes. The critics of the gospel of grace often claim those who teach grace teach an "anything goes" kind of theology. But grace doesn't teach that there are no standards or rules. Understanding grace gives you a desire to please God—to not to earn His favor, but because you are loved, and you love Him.

5. Finally, Legalism-based congregations create a spirit of underlying depression. On the surface, there may be a thin veneer of happiness, where people "put on a happy face," but at the heart there is deadness and depression. The reason for this deep hopelessness is that legalists can never live up to the standard of keeping all the rules. People are constantly reminded of what failures they are.

If you went to the doctor and he discovered you had cancer, how would you feel on every visit if all he did was bring out your MRI or X-ray and say, "You've got cancer! That's right. You've got cancer, and if you don't do something about it, you're going to die." The next week you get the same speech, "You've got cancer! Look, here's the proof. You've got cancer, and if you don't do something about it, you're going to die!" Before much more of that you'd say, "Yeah, Doc, I know I've got cancer, but tell me what I can do to have it cured!" If all he ever did was pound away at your cancer, you'd do well to get another doctor! It's amazing to me that some Christians can keep going to churches where they are beaten up week after week with a reminder of how

sinful they are but almost never clearly hear the hope of the gospel of Jesus.

In stark contrast, grace-based churches are characterized by a spirit of release, liberty, and joy. The law binds us, but grace sets us free. Legalism frustrates, but grace liberates. The attitude present in a grace-based church isn't that we're a bunch of perfect people, but that we are a bunch of sinners who have been forgiven and are being forgiven because of Jesus' sacrifice, even though there's nothing in our lives that would merit or deserve God's grace. That kind of truth will set you free and fill you with real joy.

Legalistic churches often teach they have the corner on truth and that other groups are wrong and may be headed for hell. Grace-filled churches usually admit they aren't the only ones going to heaven.

Conclusion

When you're outdoors in Texas during the summer, you'd better have a can of OFF or some other insect repellent. If you don't, those pesky mosquitoes will feed on your flesh. Insect repellent is formulated to keep them away from you.

In the spiritual realm legalism is "Jesus repellent." Legalism actually drives away sinners who are seeking forgiveness. Lost people may go to a legalistic church seeking God, but what they find is a long list of dos and don'ts. They look at dead, strict, joyless legalists and say, "If that's what the Christian life is, I don't want to be like that!"

You may be thinking, "Pastor are you saying that we ought to try to make the gospel attractive to sinners?" Not at all. In fact, we don't have to make the gospel attractive—it already IS! It's called Good News! If legalism is like repellent, the gospel of grace is like walking through a mall and smelling the fragrance of one of those places that bake fresh cinnamon rolls! You can't eat the fragrance, but you can follow your nose to the place where you can eat. Grace doesn't save you—Jesus does. Grace, though, is the aroma that leads us to Jesus. God wants to set you free from the notion that the Christian Life is about a special diet or special dates or a special day. It's all about Christ in you, the hope of glory. Stop chasing the shadows of religious performance and surrender to Jesus who will fill you with His grace. !



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The Ellen White Summit: A response to Jud Lake

DALE RATZLAFF

INTRODUCTION BY COLLEEN TINKER

Introduction to Dale Ratzlaff's response

The Ellen White Summit 2005 convened on November 11 and 12 at the Gladstone Park Conference Center in Gladstone, Oregon. The weekend featured four speakers: George Knight, Professor of Church History with a specialty in Adventist Studies at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University; Craig Newborn, Director of the Oakwood Branch Office of the Ellen G. White Estate; Jud Lake, Professor of Preaching and Adventist Studies at the School of Religion at Southern Adventist University; and Jon Paulien, Professor of New Testament Interpretation at Andrews University Theological Seminary.

George Knight presented two talks entitled, "Meet the Real Ellen White" and "Using and Interpreting Ellen White," a talk which developed "an Ellen White hermeneutic" and discussed appropriate ways to use her writings. An example of the Ellen

White hermeneutic included separating EGW's objective counsel from her reasons for it. Knight separates EGW's "what" from her "why," saying that God inspired her direct advice, or the "what," but He did not inspire all of her explanations for the advice, or the "why." He advised people to see her explanations

for various counsels as her own attempts to explain God's directives based on the science of her day.

Craig Newborn spoke on "A Path to Disengagement." He explored how a belief in verbal inspiration has led Adventists to misuse EGW's writings and to lose confidence in her.

Jud Lake also had two presentations. The first was "Ellen White and Her Critics," and the second was "Ellen White and Inspiration." In the first talk, Lake discussed the anti-Ellen White websites: www.ellenwhite.org, www.sdaoutreach.org (now www.exAdventist.com), and www.ratzlaf.com, www.truthorfables.com, and www.xsda.com. He also named six books which have damaged Ellen White's reputation: *Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists* by Dale Ratzlaff, *White Out* by Dirk Anderson, *Whitewashed* by Sydney Cleveland, *The White Lie* by Walter Rae, and *Ellen G. White and Inspiration* by Maurice Barnett, and he also mentioned this publication, *Proclamation!*, as defaming EGW. He labeled Dale Ratzlaff as "the fountainhead of the critics."

The fourth presenter was Jon Paulien, and his two talks were entitled "Ellen White, the Church, and Its Mission" and "Ellen White and the Youth of the Church." The first talk looked at the mission of the Adventist church "from the context and counsel of the writings of Ellen White." His second talk examined the challenge of introducing Adventist youth to EGW in a way that would inspire them to accept her.

The meetings culminated with a Q & A session in which the four guests answered pre-written questions from the audience.

Dale Ratzlaff is the founder of Life Assurance Ministries and publishes books through LAM Publishing. He served as an Adventist pastor for 13 years, seven of which were at Monterey Bay Academy where he taught Bible. He and his wife Carolyn left the Adventist church in the 1980's when he realized he could no longer teach the investigative judgment in good conscience. He has authored *Sabbath in Christ*, *Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*, *The Truth About Seventh-day Adventist Truth*, and *Adventist to Christian*. They are available through his website, www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.com.





http://ellenwhitesummit.foxyresearch.com/

Jud Lake speaking at the Ellen White Summit, November, 2005

“[The critics] are burned, they are mad, they are relentless, they are ferocious in lashing back at the [Adventist] church and Ellen G. White.”

These talks illustrate the ways in which the church is attempting to shore up Ellen White’s reputation. They are apologizing for having misused her writings in the past and for not telling the “truth” about her “borrowing.” They are redefining inspiration and are comparing her to the Bible writers. In fact, one statement that came from these meetings affirmed that Ellen White was inspired exactly as the Bible writers were inspired. The reason, they said, that her work is not considered to have Biblical authority is that the function of her writing was different. Her writings were intended to be a “lesser light” pointing toward the “greater light” of the Bible. In other words, Adventists are to see Ellen White as equally inspired as Isaiah and Jeremiah and Paul, but God intended her work to point toward the Bible. Thus, they are to consider the Bible to be the highest authority while her writings guide the reader to understand the Bible.

Further, they are attempting to separate her “inspired” counsels from her “personal writings,” saying that things she wrote “as a mother,” for example, are not inspired for all people. An example of personal writing not to be considered inspired for all is her formerly often-used comment—which was published and considered inspired in the past—that God does not love naughty children.

The church sees that the questions about Ellen White’s prophetic veracity are creating a serious problem, but they also see that without Ellen White, Adventism loses its distinctiveness. Instead of admitting that her legacy has separated Adventism from evangelical Christianity and has colored every doctrine, they are attempting to give her a figurative face-lift and to introduce her to new members and young people as a warm, human, accessible role-model and Biblical commentator.

Following is an edited version of an open letter Dale Ratzlaff has written to Jud Lake in response to Lake’s lecture on the critics of Ellen White. The full letter is available at: <http://www.ratzlaff.com/JudLakeLong.pdf>

Open Letter to Jud Lake

Dear Elder Lake,

Several people have sent emails asking me to listen and respond to your presentation given at the Ellen White Summit 2005 held on November 11, 12 at the Gladstone Conference Center in Oregon. I have now listened to it twice and am very saddened by your presentation. After prayer and counsel with other believers I feel it now my duty to respond. You stated several times that “Dale Ratzlaff is the fountainhead of all the critics,” so if I am the “fountainhead,” I should be the one to respond.

As your presentation was given in a public setting and is posted on the Internet at <http://ellenwhitesummit.foxyresearch.com/> and in your presentation you stated that you receive and read *Proclamation!* I decided that this would be an acceptable venue of response.

I appreciated your counsel to the Adventists in your audience that they should never attack the character of the critics of Ellen G. White, rather Adventists should respond to the issues. I also commend your instruction to them to “never be afraid of open, honest investigation of the writings of Ellen White.” I heartily agree with this statement, and it is upon this foundation that I write.

There were a number of statements and inferences made in your presentation that I felt were misleading. Since I have never met you personally, I will not assume ill intent in your characterizing me and all the critics of Ellen White as being “burned, mad, relentless, lashing-back and ferocious.” You also stated in your summary of the characteristics of the critics of Ellen White that they—again with a broad brush— (1) have a wrong view of inspiration; (2) ignore the historical context; (3) use fallacious logic; (4) ignore books that uplift Christ; (5) don’t engage the Adventist apologetic books; (6) are dysfunctional with the writings of Ellen White.

I did note, however, that you rightly stated that as former Adventist pastors, we used the principles of interpretation we learned in our Adventist schooling and in our reading of Ellen White as we studied our way out of Adventism.

Those of us who have left Adventism for theological reasons, with few exceptions, **have found a closer relationship with Christ**, a new hunger for the Word of God and yes, most (not all) of us have a more conservative, “higher” view of inspiration.

I think the thing that saddened me the most was that you stated that I and the other critics of Ellen White set out in our study with the goal of proving Ellen White wrong, as if we started with a hatred of her writings. While I cannot speak for all the critics of Ellen White, I know for certain that was not the case with me. I loved her writings as my students will attest. Neither do I feel I had a dysfunctional relationship with them. I read them regularly, appreciated them, memorized them, lived by their counsel—and yes, read all, or nearly all, of her writings, studied the historical context, and was a strong supporter of Ellen White and her writings.

Another thing that saddened me was your comment about my mention of the Ellen White “tapes that played in my head.” You set these statements in a false context implying that these “tapes” were quotations of Ellen White that were pointing out open sin in my life—implying that I was harboring known sin—and this is what prompted my statements. I have written four books and numerous articles since leaving the Adventist church, so I do not know the exact context to which you referred in your mention of the “tapes.” However, I wish to clarify that I have used this analogy in two ways: First, I mentioned the “pesky tapes” of Ellen White that played in my head in my latest book, *Adventist to Christian*.

The tapes I had reference to were the many statements of Ellen White like the following: “It is Satan’s plan to weaken the faith of God’s people in the *Testimonies*. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the *Testimonies*, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction.” 4T 211. “If you lose confidence in the *Testimonies* you will drift away from Bible truth.” 5T 98.

I, and hundreds of thousands of other Adventists who left Adventism, have had to come to grips with these statements. If they are true then those of us who have left Adventism have left salvation. Thankfully, biblical truth and history have proved all such statements to be cultic lies. When plagued by these “pesky EGW tapes” one can change channels to the Word of God where the simple gospel of faith in Christ plays the gospel song of good news: “Therefore, having been justified by faith we have peace with God.” Rom. 5:1 “He who believes has (present continuous tense in Greek) eternal life.” Jn. 6:47 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” Jn 5:24.

The second way I have referenced these Ellen White “tapes” is in connection with her statements placing her readers under heavy loads of *false* guilt. Here I am listing only a short summary of this tape set: “It is a sin to forget, a sin to be negligent.” “It is a sin to eat between meals;” “cheese is wholly unfit for food.” She said that displaying photographs of family pictures was “a species of idolatry.” If you let your children play out of doors “upon the Sabbath God looks upon you as Sabbath-breakers.” “Upon the purification of our character rests our only hope of eternal life.” (See *Cultic Doctrine*, p. 229ff. for many more such statements).

Those of us who have left Adventism for theological reasons, with few exceptions, have found a closer relationship with Christ, a new hunger for the Word of God and yes, most (not all) of us have a more conservative, “higher” view of inspiration. We don’t have to pull down the Bible in order to build up Ellen White.

As you stated in your presentation, one should never be afraid of honest investigation of the writings of Ellen White. Most of us “critics,” as you call us, have given years of thorough and prayerful study to the writings of Ellen White, and while there are good things therein, there is enough basic error, self-contradiction, disagreement with Scripture and anti-gospel statements that we must in good conscience remove these writings “as a continuing and authoritative source of truth” in our walk with God. As Protestants we adhere to the Bible and the Bible only as our source of truth.

When I was an Adventist pastor and Bible teacher I always (with a few possible exceptions) consulted the writings of Ellen White in my study before preaching a sermon, teaching a Bible class or Sabbath School lesson. I left the Adventist church because I could no longer in clear conscience teach Adventism’s 1844 sanctuary theology. After extensive study I knew Ellen White was wrong on this central doctrine, but I still valued her comments on other topics. When starting a new church I made a commitment that I would teach from

the Bible and the Bible only. However, in my private study, what would I do? Again, I made a promise to myself that I would not look at the writings of Ellen White for six months. I boxed up all her books—and I had most if not all of her published writings—and put them in the garage. Many times in my study I wanted to refresh my mind on what Ellen White had to say on the topic at hand. However, I forced myself to stay with the Bible alone. An amazing thing happened as I started real contextual, inductive Bible study and teaching. I began to see a new harmony in Scripture. I began to realize that my previous Bible study was often clouded by interpreting “the greater light” through the lens of the “lesser light.” At the end of the six months, I was in love with the Bible as never before. I began to realize that not only was Adventism’s 1844 sanctuary theology in error, but contextual study through the New Testament did not support several of the unique teachings of Adventism.

Since leaving Adventism I have made two profound (to me) conclusions. You, and perhaps some readers of *Proclamation!*, may find these very offensive, but I believe they are nevertheless patently true and are of utmost importance, and that is why I share them here:

One cannot understand the Bible correctly when continuing to read the writings of Ellen White.

While an Adventist, I would have reacted violently to this statement as some readers may now be doing! The concept is more easily acceptable, however, if applied to another group. No Mormon will be able to understand the Bible correctly while continuing to read the writings of Joseph Smith. No Jehovah’s Witness will understand the Bible correctly while continuing to read the *Watchtower*. Both groups would argue vehemently they were indeed interpreting the Bible correctly. In fact, they would say that their interpretation was the only correct interpretation and other churches were wrong. Why

Where the Bible is clear we can and should be certain. Where the Bible is unclear or honestly open to several interpretations we must be tentative.

The recipe for cultic teaching is to find some obscure passage, define what that passage means and then make that interpretation normative for others. For example, Mormons find in 1 Cor. 15:29 an elaborate theology of baptism for the dead. They go to great lengths in tracing their genealogies back as far as possible and then make sure they get baptized for their ancestors. However, other Bible scholars do not find this theology in this text. Why can only the Mormons find it there? It is because Mormons read into the Bible the theology of their modern prophet. The same could be said for Jehovah’s Witnesses. Using some of the same prophecies early Adventists used, they come up with an invisible second coming of Christ in 1914. Here lies what I have concluded to be the fundamental error of Adventism. Early Adventist theology was built on obscure apocalyptic passages, and frequently even these were taken out of context. Ellen White said that Daniel 8:14 is the “central pillar of Adventism.” Like it or not, this is the foundation stone of Adventist teaching. Adventism’s 1844 sanctuary theology is like an octopus with tentacles around and under nearly every unique teaching of Adventism as admitted by Adventist scholars.ⁱⁱ This tendency to find doctrinal “truth” in obscure apocalyptic passages continues to this day as seen in Adventism’s many “Revelation Seminars,” “Amazing Facts Seminars,” etc.

Most former Adventist pastors—at least the ones I know—have found that once they took the Bible as their only source of truth, they found a number of the unique teachings of Adventism fall away because they cannot be supported in contextual Bible study. In other words we believe that Adventism stands or falls with the acceptance of the writings of Ellen White. It is my personal conclusion this is so, and that is the reason why the Adventist church is now promoting her

writings with such vigor. Without her writings the church will unravel because it is not truly Bible-based in its theology.

My study leads me to hold and defend a few foundational, Christ-centered truths that spring from clear, contextual, inductive study from the Gospels and Epistles and then leave room for private interpretation on peripheral issues.ⁱⁱⁱ It is my settled conclusion

that the gospel truth I teach today must be the same gospel truth taught by the Apostles of Christ as recorded in the New Testament.^{iv} To add or subtract from the New Testament Gospel is to move away from the truth as it was once and for all delivered to the saints.^v

Most former Adventist pastors—at least the ones I know—have found that once they took the Bible as their only source of truth, **they found a number of the unique teachings of Adventism fall away** because they cannot be supported in contextual Bible study.

would this be? Because both groups would be looking at the Scripture through the veil of their modern prophet or the official teachings of their organization. It is my settled conclusion that the same thing holds true in Adventism. The second weighty conclusion I reached is this:

You mentioned Dirk Anderson and the web site, www.EllenWhite.org, he developed. I felt your comments about him were unfair and not in harmony with the facts. As you may know, Dirk was a strong supporter of Ellen White and used to pass out *Steps to Christ* and other books of Ellen White to his neighbors and others. When he started www.EllenWhite.org he was strongly in support of her writings. He and I exchanged emails a few times, and in so doing I began asking questions about some of Ellen White's statements. He agreed to read *Cultic Doctrine*. He followed your advice and was not afraid to consider her writings openly and honestly. He set out to show that the book was wrong and that I had taken things out of context. He later told me that he looked up every EGW reference—there are over 650 footnotes—and concluded I had not taken the statements out of context, and Ellen White was the one in error. He did not set out to prove Ellen White wrong as

you accuse the critics of doing, and it was not his dysfunctional relationship to her writings that caused him to give them up. Rather it was his sincere, diligent and prayerful study that caused him to make the change.

I had to smile as you told Adventists to be sure and not send emails to me or write *Proclamation!* as we might print their letters. You made it sound as if there was some evil in us for printing letters to the editor!

You mentioned that the church has always answered the critics of Ellen White. For the record, several years ago I sent the General Conference President a registered letter asking if the church still believed a number of the statements of Ellen White. Some long time later I received a letter from one of his assistants stating that the President did not have time to answer my letter and that it was well known what Adventists believe. Perhaps you could answer them:

Questions **not answered** by the Adventist General Conference President

1. Do you believe, as Ellen White taught, that an angel from God guided William Miller in his study of the prophecies?
2. Do you believe, as Ellen White taught, that William Miller discovered a "perfect chain of truth"?
3. Do you believe, as Ellen White stated, that Miller's 1843 chart which had his fifteen lines of prophecy pointing to 1843, was directed by God's hand, and no part of it should be altered because the figures were just as God wanted them?
4. Do you believe, as Ellen White was shown in vision that God held His hand over the mistake in Miller's chart and his time reckoning?
5. Do you believe, as Ellen White taught, that the pastors of Christian churches who rejected Miller's 1843 message "had the blood of souls on them" and Jesus "turned his face from" those churches? These pastors had no problem with the preaching of the second coming of Christ but rejected Miller's date setting in harmony with the teachings of Jesus.
6. Do you believe, as Ellen White taught, that Miller's 1843 message was a "saving message"?
7. Do you believe, as Ellen White taught and as she was shown in her first vision, that those who had accepted Miller's message and then after 1844 rejected it, were "left...in perfect darkness," and it was "impossible" for them to get back on the path toward heaven?
8. Do you believe, as Ellen White taught, that the prayers of Christians who rejected the 1844 sanctuary message were "useless"?
9. Do you believe, as Ellen White taught, that "no sanctified tongue" will say, "I am saved"? (I noted in your presentation that you stated you were saved. Has your name already come up in the investigative judgment?)
10. Do you believe, as Ellen White taught, that the death of Christ on the cross did not completely vindicate God's character of love and justice before the universe?
11. Do you believe that the writings of Ellen White should continue as an authoritative source of truth?

Elder Lake, I am sending you my newest book, *Adventist to Christian*, which is on four CDs. There I have recorded the events, information and study that caused me to leave Adventism. I am sure I am opening up myself to your criticism as I share my mistakes as well as my discoveries of truth and error. I am also going to send you *Sabbath in Christ*. If you are ever in the Phoenix, Arizona, area you have a standing invitation to come with me to the 10,000 plus member Calvary Community Church pastored by Former Adventist pastor and Ellen White critic, Mark Martin. Carolyn, my wife of 49 years, and I would also like to invite you and your wife, if she is with you, for lunch.

We in this ministry pray for the Adventist church on a regular basis that it will be true to the New Testament Gospel and become a "Bible only" church. I hope you receive this letter in the same spirit in which it was sent.

In His joy, Dale Ratzlaff

i See Ratzlaff, *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 263-272.

ii From a tape of Angel Rodriguez in a 1999 meeting for Adventist pastors held in Washington to discuss how to stop the influence of *Cultic Doctrine*.

iii See Romans 14.

iv 1 Corinthians 15:1-5.

v Jude 1:3.

If what you believe is **NOT BIBLICAL** Would you want to know?

COLLEEN TINKER EDITOR

The voice on the phone was intense and agitated; the young woman speaking to me was bright and articulate—but confused. She considered herself a former Adventist and had been attending church with her never-been-Adventist husband for several months, but her growing discomfort had climaxed in a spiritual crisis that morning after her weekly women's Bible study.

Her study group had met one morning a couple of weeks before and had shared their stories of coming to know Jesus, but Beth* had dissolved in tears when she realized she didn't have a story. She believed she was a Christian, but she could not tell about coming to know Jesus personally. "I have a lot of issues," was all she could say.

And now one of her class members had cornered her after their study and had asked her if she had thought any more about knowing Jesus personally. Feeling frustrated and trapped, Beth had called me, hoping I could help her sort out her ambivalence.

Praying, I began to ask questions. She understood that the law had been a shadow of Jesus, that He had fulfilled it and had initiated the new covenant by completing all that was necessary for our salvation, writing His law on our hearts. Further, she believed that the Bible is God's inerrant word and is all we need for knowing God's will for us without the help of extra-biblical sources.

She admitted, though, that she believed Christianity was the best religion because it is based entirely upon grace instead of works, but she couldn't accept that "Jesus is the only way." She felt her Buddhist acquaintances, for example, would be better off if they were Christians, but she couldn't believe that they needed to know Jesus in order to be saved as long as they were sincere in their own understanding and practice. She also acknowledged that she didn't understand what Paul meant when he said we are all "by nature objects of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). This confusion kept her from understanding that apart from being alive in Christ, the only other possible condition

is to be bound in the "domain of darkness" (Colossians 1:13). It seemed harsh and unfair to say there is no "neutral" place in the universe—that either one is in the "kingdom of [God's] beloved Son" or in the "domain of darkness" (Col 1:13).

Spiritual understanding

Together we began to look up texts in our Bibles, and she read them to me over the phone. After reading Ephesians 2:1-4, I asked her if she understood what was actually dead in us, and she admitted she did not. I asked for her understanding of the human "spirit." She was unclear about the nature of the spirit or its significance. Similarly, she did not understand the new birth that Jesus told Nicodemus was necessary in order to see the kingdom of heaven (John 3:5-6).

In order to help her understand that the spirit in a person is more than breath and is different from our personalities, we read John 4:24, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, and Philippians 1:22-23. We saw that "God is spirit" and we are to worship Him "in spirit and in truth." We learned that this spirit that can worship God is the same part of us that leaves the body and goes to be with Christ when we die. We also saw that Paul said that he would prefer to be away from his body and present with the Lord, that such a condition is much better than staying in the body on earth.

Further, we read together from 1 Corinthians 2:10-16 where Paul explains that just as a man's spirit is the only entity that can know the thoughts of that man, so the Holy Spirit is the only One Who can know the thoughts of God. When we have the Spirit, we know God's thoughts, and "we have the mind of Christ."

Still praying, I clarified that we have responsive spirits that can know God, that survive the deaths of our bodies, that can literally worship God—and this fact is necessary to understand the new birth Jesus explained to Nicodemus. "Flesh gives birth to flesh," Jesus said to him, "but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" (John 3:6).

With the understanding that we have spirits, however, the “new birth” is no longer a metaphor. It is a distinct reality that occurs when God awakens our hearts to the truth about Jesus, and we place our trust in Him and His sacrifice for our personal sin.

Without understanding that we have spirits, the term “new birth” is nebulous. With the understanding that we have spirits, however, the “new birth” is no longer a metaphor. It is a distinct reality that occurs when God awakens our hearts to the truth about Jesus, and we place our trust in Him and His sacrifice for our personal sin. When we submit to the truth that we are by nature objects of wrath and embrace the eternal gift of Jesus’ blood shed on our behalf, a miracle happens. God seals us and marks us as His by placing His Holy Spirit in us (Ephesians 1:13-14), and our once-dead spirits come to life by Jesus’ resurrection power (Ephesians 2:4-7, Romans 8:10).

This new birth results in a complete change in us. Instead of being “in Adam” and spiritually dead (1 Corinthians 15:22, Ephesians 2:1-4), we are made alive. We are indwelt by God Himself, and our now-living spirits which previously were in bondage to sin and the domain of darkness (Ephesians 2:1-2, Colossians 1:13) have the power to resist the sins of the flesh by the power of the Spirit (Romans 8:13). Further, the Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of sonship,” and “the Spirit himself testifies with our spirits that we are God’s children” (Romans 8:16).

Before Jesus died and rose again, the Holy Spirit was in the world and inspired and taught people—but He did not permanently indwell people and give them new hearts. Only when the new, living way to the Father was opened by Jesus’ blood was it possible for mankind to be intimately reunited with God. This reuniting is what Paul calls the mystery of “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

Jesus—spiritually alive

We must understand this fact of being born with dead spirits in order to realize that we need a Savior. It is this unavoidable, intractable sin which makes it utterly impossible for any person to be able to please God. It is this foundational sin which causes us to commit “sins.” This sin is not only genetic. It is spiritual, and every human ever born on earth—except the Lord Jesus—is born spiritually dead.

The Lord Jesus was born spiritually alive; He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and did not need to be born again. He was God, and His spirit was alive in God from the moment of conception. His innate spiritual life is what made Him sinless. To be sure, He never committed “sins”; but His living spirit—his never being spiritually dead as is everyone else—this life qualified Him to be our perfect Sacrifice.

Because we as humans naturally have dead spirits which are in bondage to “the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient” (Ephesians 2:2), we can never emulate Jesus. He could never be our “example” of how to become perfect. He can only be our substitute.

Many of us were also taught that Jesus had no advantage we don’t have. Of course He had an advantage! He was God—He was born with a living spirit; He had no trace of a fallen or a sinful nature. That advantage is what qualified Him to be our perfect Substitute and Sacrifice.

Just and Justifier

“If Adam and Eve died spiritually when they sinned,” Beth asked me, “how did they become spiritually alive since they lived before the cross?”

“That’s a great question,” I responded; “turn to Romans 3:21-26.” As I looked for the passage in my Bible, I realized that it did not exactly answer Beth’s question. “Well,” I thought, “We’ll read it and then I’ll take her to Romans 4 where Paul discusses God crediting Abraham with righteousness because he believed God.”

But God knew why He had me take Beth to Romans 3. That was the passage He used to awaken Beth to the essence of what Jesus did. She read, “God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus” (verses 25-26).

“God did not punish anyone for their sins before the cross,” I explained, “because He was going to send Jesus. He saved people, like He saved Abraham, when they believed God’s promises of a Savior. Jesus came to take the curse of sin and to take the punishment for the sin of the entire world. He required justice, and paid His own price for justice...”

“Oh, I see it! I get it! Oh, my!” Beth interrupted. Even over the phone her emotion was intense. I could tell she was tearful, and so was I.

From that moment our conversation changed. Beth no longer seemed puzzled; everything we discussed seemed to fit together in her mind. At last the two realities made sense to her: either people are spiritually dead and lost in Satan’s domain, or they are spiritually alive and hidden in Christ.

“Adventism has twisted the details of every doctrine,” she said to me.

“When we read that passage from Romans 3,” Beth later confided, “I realized for the first time that Jesus’ death was actually a sacrifice. I am experiencing the security of my salvation for the first time!”

Beth’s experience, I believe, is amazingly consistent with that of almost all Adventists. Whether one is a true-blue historic Adventist, a liberal, or an evangelical Adventist, the core of one’s convictions and the foundation of one’s loyalty is the same. Perhaps most Adventists say today that they are saved entirely by grace, not by works. Many even state the Sabbath is not related to their salvation, that it is merely something they observe to demonstrate their loyalty to God. Some even say Ellen White was not perfect and should never have been presented as being infallible. Yet underneath these nearly-orthodox confessions lies a deep misunderstanding of the heart of the gospel.

The simple truth is this: each person is born “in Adam” and spiritually dead, cut off from the life of God. We are intrinsically depraved, doomed to eternal destruction. Our sin is not primarily genetic; we are intractably sinful because our spirits are dead.

While we were sinners, however, God sent His Son Jesus to be a sin offering for us. He—the Living Word—nailed the law to the cross in His flesh. He—the reality behind the shadows, became our true Sabbath rest (Col. 2:15-17). His blood and broken body opened a new, living way for us to be reunited with the Father (Heb. 10:20).

Forty days after His resurrection, He ascended to His Father, promising to send His disciples the Holy Spirit.

On the Feast of Pentecost, God fulfilled the shadow of that Jewish holiday by pouring out His Spirit on all who believed in Jesus and His sacrificial death and resurrection. He brings each believer to life by the resurrection power of His Spirit.

When Jesus hung on that cross, He literally became our sin (2Cor. 5:21) and experienced the infinite punishment that is rightfully ours. In order to offer us grace, He took into Himself the penalty His own justice demanded for our sin. We cannot live in saving grace if we do not acknowledge our own incurable sin and accept the unpayable debt of Jesus' death on our behalf.

When we accept the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf, we also release to Him the weight of all our debts. When we kneel at the foot of the cross and see our own sin and judgment in Jesus, when we accept that suffering on our account, we are released from all the burdens of guilt that we carry as well as from all the wounds inflicted on us. Jesus Himself now carries them. His grace and sacrifice are sufficient for the payment of all of them, and He will deal justly with all those who have transgressed against us.

Would you want to know?

Many things conspire to keep those immersed in Adventism from experiencing the complete joy, peace, and freedom that are available in Jesus. As Beth said to me, Adventism has twisted the details of every doctrine. Because Adventism still honors Ellen White as a continuing and authoritative source of truth; because it still sees Sabbath sacredness as part of the life of a person who will be saved; because the church still endorses the investigative judgment and its unbiblical teachings of an incomplete atonement at the cross, of Jesus beginning his intercessory work in 1844, of Satan being the scapegoat who will carry the sins of the saved into the lake of fire, and of humanity helping to vindicate God's reputation against Satan's accusations against Him thus proving God to be fair; because Adventism holds to an unbiblical understanding of the human spirit and thus clouds the truth about sin, about the nature of Jesus, and about our own means of salvation—because of all these things, most Adventists do not really know the Biblical gospel nor experience the assurance of salvation. They do not live in the freedom and intimacy of literally knowing Jesus.

Although the words Adventists use to describe salvation sound much like the words the rest of Christianity uses, they do not mean the same things. Yet, like Beth who could not discern the nature of her confusion and anxiety, many (if not most) Adventists cannot explain why their experiences seem so different from that of non-Adventist Christians.

The veil that clouds their vision is the "Adventist truth." The question God brings to each of us is this: if what you believe is not Biblical, would you want to know?

Call to integrity

Adventists today often say the church is like a big tent, a smorgasbord or a salad-bar; any number of variant beliefs are acceptable within its boundaries—as long as one stays a member. Such rationalizing, however, is disingenuous; Adventism has a clear definition. Its beliefs were established by the founders, and although the words and explanations of those beliefs have changed, the core has not.

Many of us were also taught that Jesus had no advantage we don't have. Of course He had an advantage! He was God—He was born with a living spirit; He had no trace of a fallen or a sinful nature.

God is calling each of us to integrity. He is asking us to be honest in our recognition of the church's true foundational doctrines. He is calling us to stop deceiving ourselves into thinking we can both endorse the church by our loyalty to it and reject its core tenets. When one claims to be an Adventist but rejects its doctrines by hiding behind phrases such as "healthy pluralism" or by claiming the 28 Fundamental Beliefs do not require one to adhere to Ellen White's clear instructions (although she is considered a continuing source of authority), one deceives oneself.

If we do not believe in both the explicit and implicit teachings of Adventism yet support them by our loyalty to the denomination, we are not acting with integrity. In fact, we are deceiving others, implying that Adventism is truth when in fact we do not believe such to be the case.

God is asking each of us to be willing to examine our beliefs according to the Bible alone, praying for the Holy Spirit to teach us truth from His word. God is asking us to risk trusting Him with our friends, our social circles, our families, even our incomes and careers. He is asking us to be willing to know if what we believe is Biblical or not. He is asking us to be willing to give up everything for the sake of being true to Him, to embrace truth even if it means losing everything we love.

God is faithful. He promised that when we seek first the kingdom of God, all our daily needs will be added to us (Matthew 6:31-34). Jesus promised that anyone who leaves houses, family, or possession for His sake will "receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life" (Matthew 19:29).

Following Jesus wherever He leads often feels like jumping off a cliff with no view of one's landing spot. But Jesus Himself catches us as we risk leaving all that we know and love for Him. Jesus Himself is our great reward—and there is no possible way to know how He will provide until we risk being truthful and obedient by faith.

God is asking us to trust Him. He is asking us to be willing to give up rationalizing and to know the absolute truth of the gospel of God. He is asking us to release whatever stands between us and complete trust in Jesus. He is asking us to allow Him to be our only identity.

Jesus is asking us to be willing to give up even the Adventist church and its teachings if that is the "world" that keeps us from complete rest in Him.

God's call is never easy—but it always comes with His equipping and His peace and authority. Whatever He asks of us, He enables us to do.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21). **!**

*Not her real name.

My steps to Christ



that Adam was with Eve! I knew then I needed to investigate Ellen White. It was at this time that I was introduced to *Proclamation!* magazine and Life Assurance Ministries by a family friend, Ed, while he was in town for a few days. I read Dale Ratzlaff's books as well as several others having to do with Ellen White and the Adventist church. The more I studied about Ellen White, the more convinced I became that she was not who the Adventist church makes her out to be nor is she a messenger of God. God's messengers do not claim that God intentionally misled them, nor do they make false prophecies claiming that an angel from God directed them.

As is true of so many former Adventists, I was studying my way out of the church. I had begun to understand the new covenant and God's gift of grace, and I now understood that Ellen White was not a prophetess. It was at this point in my walk that Royce and I decided to attend a "grace" Seventh day Adventist church in Franklin, Tennessee. We loved the message and presentation, so we decided to stay there. But God had other plans.

After these significant steps, God led me to take another one when my sister introduced me to Sam Pestes's book on tape, *The Stone Cutter's Bride*. She told me I had to listen to these tapes. These tapes began to fill in the gaps of my understanding of the new covenant. The more I listened and followed with my Bible, the more the new covenant became clear. Then another encounter with Ed, the family friend in his eighties, tied everything together. This man had spent his life as an Adventist but in the last few years had seen the truth about Ellen White and the Adventist message. He helped us to see what Paul says about the law, and I finally stopped looking at things with an Adventist understanding.

I realized I was an Adventist that did not believe in Ellen White, but I was not ready to give up the Sabbath or the laws of Moses. One day I was on a treadmill at the YMCA when I began talking with the lady next to me. I soon discovered that she was the next person that the Holy Spirit put in my path. Our talk turned to religion, and I found out that she had grown up in a very legalistic belief system and had gone through many of the steps that I had gone through. She was the wife of a local pastor who had a growing non-denominational church. She told me to go home and read Galatians,

emphasizing that I was to read it over and over. I came home and told Royce about my God encounter, and we began to read Galatians.

The final step came when an Adventist preacher at Grace Point Adventist Church made it clear that grace is a free gift and that there is nothing we can do to earn our salvation. Royce and I were finally breaking free. If grace is a free gift, why were we wasting time at a church to which we would never bring visitors because of the teachings of Ellen White espoused by the denomination? We couldn't do it anymore. To continue in this religion and this life would be hypocritical.

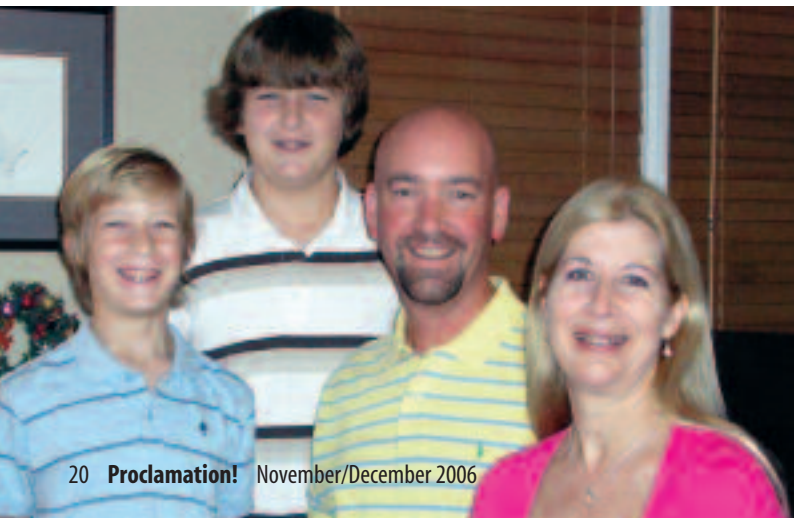
Now that I was studying the Bible without an agenda to prove, the Holy Spirit was showing me things that I had never seen before. I discovered that reading Paul's writings was enjoyable rather than a task ending in frustration. I was finally accepting the free gift of what Jesus has done for me. Assured of my salvation, I was free to grow in Christ and to allow the Holy Spirit to guide me.

God had guided me to so many people and situations that I could not ignore where he had led me. But what was I going to do now? I had never attended one of "Babylon's" churches. Where were we to begin? On our knees! Royce and I had been on separate journeys that led to the same place at the same time. So we knew God would continue to lead us. We asked the Holy Spirit to guide us, and people in our lives began inviting us to come and visit their churches. We now attend World Outreach Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. It is an inter-denominational church that preaches the Bible only. Our spirits are reborn.

The joy that is now in my life is like nothing I have ever experienced. I am free to worship Christ without a filter. The scales are now off of my eyes. I worship God with all of my energy, resting everyday in the work He did. As I look back at how God has guided me, I can now see times in my life where He was leading me, but I wasn't following because to follow would have taken me away from Adventism and the Sabbath. Now I am so happy in the truth of the Christian life.

Royce and I would like to invite you—our family, friends and readers that remain in the Adventist religion—to read Galatians and open your hearts to understand that God did change the day of worship. In Hebrews 4:6, 7 the writer says, "Therefore, God again set a certain day, calling it Today." Worship of God is not about a day of worship, but it is about a daily relationship. I pray that God touches your heart through our story and that you, too, shed the yoke of slavery and the worship of a day for a relationship with God through His Son and our redeemer Jesus, The Christ. Amen. !

Karen Earp graduated with a BSN from Southern Adventist University in 1986. She is a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist working for Eden Anesthesia, an anesthesia services company Karen and her husband Royce own and run. They have two boys that they home school. The Royces attend World Outreach Church, an inter-denominational church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. She is involved in children's ministry at church and volunteers for many of the church's community outreach programs.



The Gospel is Good News!

DALE RATZLAFF

The New Testament makes it clear that obedience to the law is neither a good definition of the righteousness of God nor a valid means of its achievement.

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets (Rom. 3:21).

"For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified" (Rom. 4:13, 14).

"What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law" (Rom. 9:30, 31).

"For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Rom. 10:3, 4).

"I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly" (Gal. 2:21).

"You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

"...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" (Phil. 3:9).

Those verses indicate that the righteousness of God which comes on the basis of faith is not even associated with the law. Rather, it is a much higher righteousness beyond the righteousness of the law.

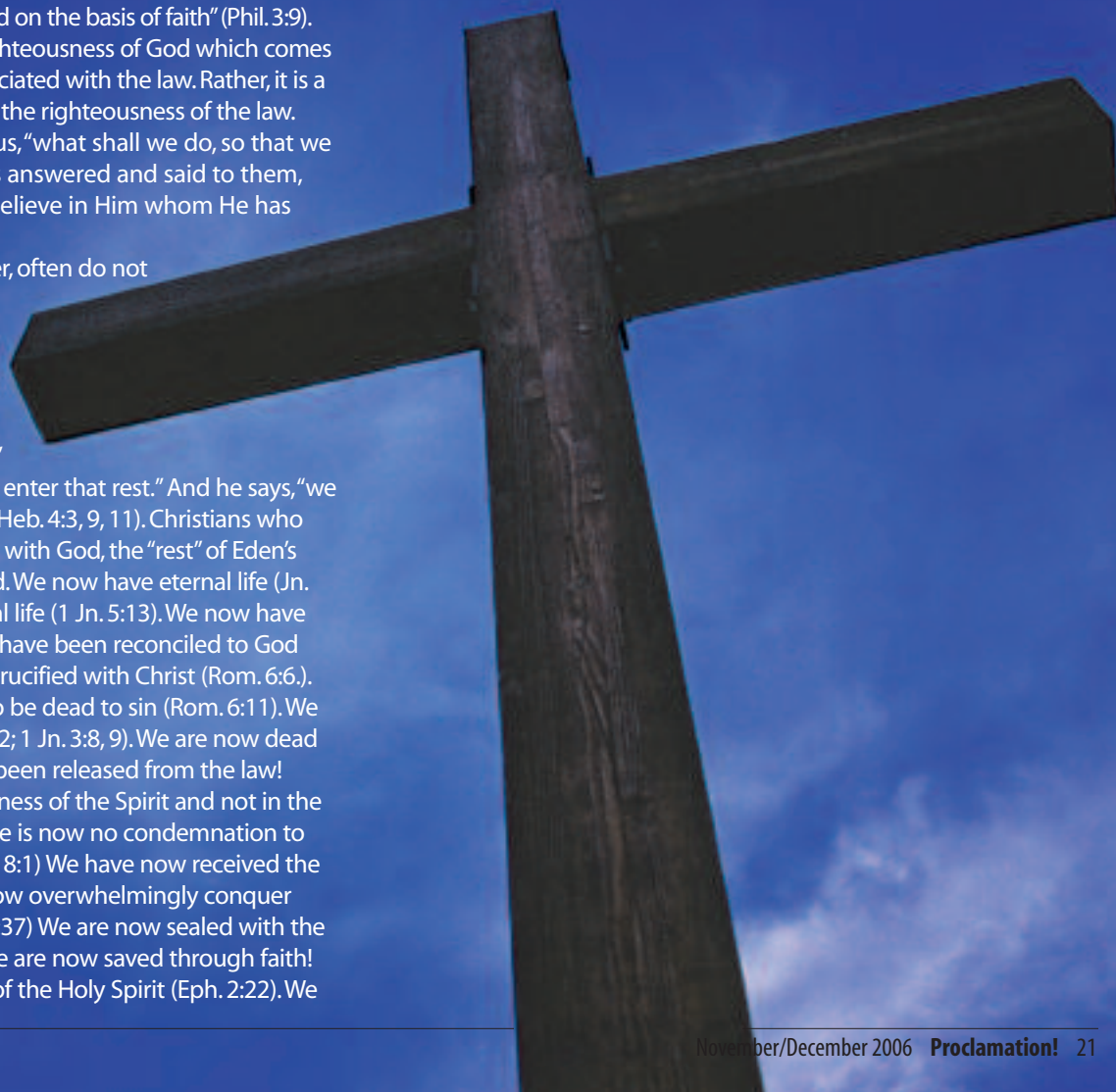
In John 6:28 the Jews asked Jesus, "what shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent" (Jn. 6:28, 29).

Those of us who believe, however, often do not fully understand the magnitude of God's abundant grace and what we can now claim as born-again children of God! The writer of Hebrews says, "There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God."

He admonishes us to "be diligent to enter that rest." And he says, "we who have believed enter that rest" (Heb. 4:3, 9, 11). Christians who believe enter the "rest" of fellowship with God, the "rest" of Eden's seventh day when all was very good. We now have eternal life (Jn. 6:47)! We now know we have eternal life (1 Jn. 5:13). We now have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). We now have been reconciled to God (Rom. 5:10). Our old self (man) was crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6). We are now to consider ourselves to be dead to sin (Rom. 6:11). We are now freed from sin (Rom. 6:18, 22; 1 Jn. 3:8, 9). We are now dead to the law (Rom. 7:4). We now have been released from the law! (Rom. 7:6) We now serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter! (Rom. 7:6) There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus! (Rom. 8:1) We have now received the spirit of adoption! (Rom. 8:15) We now overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us! (Rom. 8:37) We are now sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise! (Eph. 1:13) We are now saved through faith! (Eph. 2:8) We are now the dwelling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:22). We

are now chosen in Christ (Eph. 1:4). We now have redemption through his blood (Eph. 1:7). God is now at work in us to will and to do His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). We are now qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. 1:12). We have now been transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1:13). We now have each received a spiritual gift (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4). The Spirit now helps our weaknesses (Rom. 8:26). We have now been predestined to be like Christ (Rom. 8:29). And this is just the beginning! Do you see why the gospel is "good news"?

When we understand more fully the abundant grace of God as revealed in the new covenant, then we can join Paul in his exalted flight of praise: "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen" (Eph. 3:14-21).



Thank you for Proclamation!

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of the *Proclamation!* magazines you sent to me. I am so grateful for the support you people are giving to us. The magazines are wonderful and can do a lot to help us reach out to Adventists very fast. The articles in them are well researched and presented. I only wish we could have more copies so that our members could have a copy each. Thanks for everything, and may God supply all your needs for the support of his work. Amen!

Blessings!

Philemon Omwega Aroni

Director: One Flock Ministries, Kenya

Too much protest

"Me thinks thou dost protest too much." If you no longer wish to be Adventists, then no longer be Adventists. But to put together a slick publication devoted to spewing your anger, pain, disbelief, whatever—seems so mean spirited. How can it be from God?

Christ, the solid Rock

I was a pastor and preacher for around thirty years. Actually, during that time very little of what I preached was truth, even though I would not allow myself to think otherwise. I studied the Bible feverishly to prove first to myself and then to others what I preached was absolutely true. After all, it came from the Bible! But there was a "veil that covered my mind so that [I] could not understand the truth" (2 Cor. 3:15). Had you told me that was the case, I would not have believed you. After all, I gave my heart to Jesus and then I joined His "true church," the "remnant" Sabbath-keeping church....

It finally became clear to me that most of what I preached as "truth" was in reality my

opinion as drilled into me by the "culture" which, in reality, had become "my savior"....

I did not realize that, in my youthful presumption, after giving my heart to Jesus, I turned to the Adventist culture and legalism for my "way," my "truth," and my "life." Thank God, when my empty heart finally realized the new covenant was a new and effective way of salvation, no longer would I listen to the investigative judgment heresies and doubt my salvation. The veil was removed (2 Corinthians 3:16), and I saw Jesus alone as my Redeemer. I was "free at last." No longer did I look at my sins and doubt my salvation. The law, like the husband in Romans 7, only condemned me and never lifted a finger to help me. But I died to that "law husband," and my new "husband," Jesus, has a higher standard: "Don't murder—don't even hate; don't commit adultery; don't even lust."

Jesus does all for me the law demanded, and I have no condemnation. The greatest truth one can know is that "therefore there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). What a relief—what joy!

When I was a pastor some days were grim. When I saw that in spite of my "laying down the law" people were breaking it and breaking my heart, and worse yet I... was breaking it, every night I went to bed condemned. I prayed that my name would not come up in the investigative judgment. I would try harder and hopefully tomorrow would be better. Most of the time things went worse. Wretched man was I! Who could deliver me from this condemnation?

Thank God, Christ removed the veil. I passed the judgment and entered into life (John 5:24). I am no longer under condemnation. I'm "under the blood" and had been for over 40 years and didn't know it! The veil is gone, and I see Jesus!

"On Christ the solid Rock I stand! All other ground is sinking sand."

Thank you

Thank you for your labor of love. You are using your talents well, and the Lord is blessing. I am praying for you daily.

Fortify your courage

For many years now you have sent me *Proclamation!*, and for many years I have been blessed by many of the articles. They have consistently proved challenging, thought provoking, but most of all, they have always underscored the assurance of life eternal through no other source but our Lord's grace and righteousness.

Please, please do not become discouraged by some of the negative letters I see that you receive from those still in chains. I pray that Christ will fortify your courage as you continue in your ministry.

Please remove my name

Wouldn't it be better if you lived what you believe, rather than throwing dirt at other churches? I am not interested in condemning others or hearing [condemnation] from others.

On Target

Reading Dale Ratzlaff's book *Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists* validated my whole experience with the Adventist church. I studied my way into the doctrines of the church through materials provided by them. Three years later I studied my way out by use of the Bible and the Bible alone. I now know that there is no church that holds 100% truth and that Jesus and His saving work is the foundation of our faith. When an organization requires 28 fundamental beliefs, that large requirement should be a red flag. I look forward to more issues of *Proclamation!* and am sharing it with others. Thank you for all your efforts... they are life saving, indeed!

Transitioning out

I'm writing to you to tell you how much I'm enjoying your study on Romans [found on www.FormerAdventist.com]. My husband and I are transitioning out of Adventism. Someday I'll tell you the story. When we left the church, I received an email from a church member. She was "concerned" that we had left the church and was worried that we were not keeping the Sabbath anymore. I wrote back and told her that I was "surprised" that she wasn't interested in my relationship with Jesus, but she was more interested in the fact I wasn't worshipping on the Sabbath.

Anyway, she wrote to me about a recent study she had done on Romans. She wrote that the book was all about keeping the 10 Commandments. I told her that I had read the whole book a few months ago and I didn't read that at all. So when I saw your study on the book, that was for me. I'm also looking forward to studying Hebrews....

This has been a journey!... I just want to thank you and everyone else for all of your work with *Proclamation!* and with the Former Adventist website. It has been a great big support for my husband and me.

Thanks for everything!

Mail letters and donations to:

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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

Former Adventist Fellowship Weekend 2007

TRINITY CHURCH, REDLANDS, CALIFORNIA

FEBRUARY 16 TO 18

The Body of Christ

WEEKEND PRESENTERS



Galen and Joan Yorba Gray



Gary Inrig



Elizabeth Inrig



Leslie Martin



Mark Martin



Dale Ratzlaff



Greg and Paula Taylor

SCHEDULE

- Friday, February 16, 2007, 6:00 to 7:00 PM • Arrival and registration
- Meetings and breakout sessions Friday through Saturday evening
- Worship service with Trinity Church on Sunday morning

TO REGISTER (SPACE LIMITED TO THE FIRST 200)

- \$65 per person on or before Dec. 31, 2006 (\$75 per person on or before January 19, 2007)
- You must register by January 19, 2007 so that we can make meal plans.
- Make check payable to "LAM" and return in enclosed envelope.
- Fee includes cost of sessions, handouts, three meals, and snacks. Scholarships are available!
- You must make your own lodging/transportation arrangements.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PHONE TOLL FREE (877)-349-6984

YES, I WANT TO REGISTER for the Former Adventist Fellowship weekend at Trinity Church in Redlands, California, February 16-18, 2007.

Name _____

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Number attending _____ X \$65 (each person) = Total amount enclosed \$ _____

Vegetarian? YES ☐ NO ☐ (\$75 each person after December 31, 2006)

Please return with check or money order in included envelope.

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*Living
with the
Spirit*

...we have been released from the law so
that we serve in the new way of the Spirit.
Romans 7:6 NIV

Jesus is coming to pick up his friends." That statement, coupled with my desire to teach my children about Jesus, started me thinking about Who He is. I knew religion! I knew about the seventh-day Sabbath, and I knew about our "Sabbath rules" and Ellen G. White. I knew about the state of the dead—I knew about so many things associated with the Seventh-day Adventist religion—but I did not know who Jesus is. It was my fault that I did not know Jesus, but I was a loyal Adventist and never thought to make an in-depth, intellectually honest study of the religion and how it measures up to the Bible.

My husband Royce and I began to study. Royce was on his own journey having begun a dialogue with a "Sunday Keeping" friend of his about the Sabbath and the new covenant. So I began my own journey to know Jesus. I was a fourth generation Adventist. My family was instrumental in the founding of both the hospital and college in Madison, Tennessee. In fact my mother-in-law took some classes from my grandfather at Madison College before she continued her education at Emmanuel Missionary College. Our family worship was not a consistent or important part of our family life. The only consistent part of our spiritual life was keeping the Sabbath and going to church. We learned our religion in school. I went to Adventist schools from Kindergarten through college, and I even went to an Adventist school to become a nurse anesthetist. I graduated from Madison Academy in 1981 and Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists (Southern) in 1986. Royce and I met in the spring of 1991, and we were married on Valentine's Day, 1992.

My steps to Christ

KAREN EARP

**The joy that is now in my life is like nothing
I have ever experienced. I am free to worship
Christ without a filter. The scales are now off
of my eyes. I worship God with all of my
energy, resting everyday in the work He did.**

When our children were young we decided it would be best if we attended church more regularly. We attended several of the Nashville area Adventist churches but never felt like any of them fit. During this time I studied Adventism and loved reading *Signs of the Times* magazine. Concurrently, I was praying that Jesus would lead us to teach our children more about Him. Almost everything I read was from an Adventist publisher, so things seemed to fit together neatly. I was happy in my understanding of my religion.

In October, 2000, God led me in my first step toward knowing Him truthfully. I changed jobs and started work at a hospital closer to home. Soon after beginning at the new hospital I met a surgical nurse who was also an alumnus of Southern, and I asked him where he went to church. He told me that he was not an Adventist any longer but was now a new covenant Christian. He could tell by my expression that I did not know what he was talking about. Slowly, over the next few months whenever he had time, he explained the new covenant to me. While I did not understand the new Bible insights all at once,

they did begin to make me study and pray. This man was the first person the Holy Spirit put in my path to begin to teach me about the new covenant.

Soon after I began my study of the new covenant, my father-in-law baited me with a question about where Adam was when Eve took the fruit and ate it. I had always understood the Ellen White story about Eve leaving Adam's side, but then I read in Genesis 3:6

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