

# LIFE ASSURANCE MINISTRIES, INC Proclamation!

VOLUME 5  
ISSUE 6  
NOVEMBER  
DECEMBER  
2004

FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS

## Absolute necessity of sound doctrine in the epistles The doctrine of doctrine

R. K. MCGREGOR  
WRIGHT

**Most people attending Christian churches seem to function as if somehow sincerity will always do instead of truth.**

Does the Bible make correct teaching, or orthodoxy, necessary for the progress of the Christian life? If so, how necessary is it?

I will argue the case in favor of sound doctrine on the basis of New Testament teaching alone. The Old

Testament supporting data is vast and must await its own study, but it only strengthens the argument. We will

address two questions: 1) how does the New Testament present the doctrine of doctrine, and 2) what is the relationship between doctrine and life?

### The Problem

We live today in the most privileged and free civilization in the history of the world. We have total freedom of worship and evangelism. Never before in Christian history have we had so much of this world's goods at the disposal of the saints of God. We have every imaginable advantage of education, time, and resources. We have libraries and millions of books

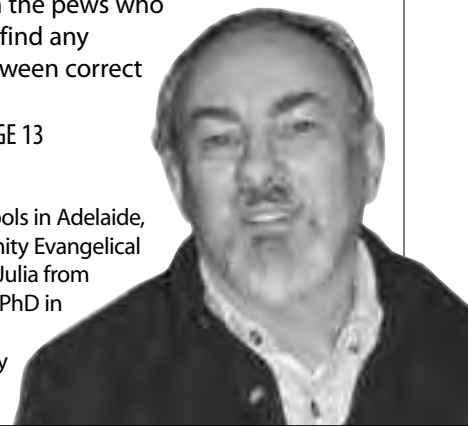
including great collections of reformational texts of theology, Bible exegesis, commentary, and sermons.

Despite more free time than ever to spend how we wish, however, the average evangelical Christian still cannot explain to a Jehovah's Witness why he or she believes in the Trinity; the average Calvinist cannot explain to an Arminian the "mortification of sin"; and the average Protestant cannot explain to a Catholic how justification is distinct from sanctification. I spent from 1976 to 1985 in one of the largest and most innovative Baptist churches in our area. During that time, I never heard one sermon on the relationship between the Trinity and worship; I never heard one sermon on the dominion of sin or grace; never one sermon on even such a fundamental commonplace as the security of the believer, and nothing on the reliability (let alone the inerrancy) of the Bible.

As a result of this neglect, there are fewer and fewer people in the pews who even expect to find any connection between correct

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

**R.K. McGregor Wright** was born in Australia in 1940. After teaching in high schools in Adelaide, he left to study in England and then came to America in 1970 to do a ThM at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in the area of apologetics. While studying there, he met his wife Julia from Tennessee. During ministry to international students in Denver, he completed a PhD in historical theology. In 1996 his book *No Place For Sovereignty* (InterVarsity Press) was published. At present he is writing and developing a Bible-teaching ministry in East Tennessee.



### Life Assurance Ministries, Inc

#### MISSION

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

#### MOTTO

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

#### MESSAGE

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

**CONTENTS** I stand alone on the Word of God ESTHER SHU 3  
We can trust the Bible DALE RATZLAFF 5  
In Christ alone, by grace alone DESMOND FORD 17  
Dumping the bath water CORA HOLDER Back page



**Worshiping in Spirit and in Truth** COLLEEN TINKER

**S**ometime in 1999, Richard and I took our first Bible-study class from Elizabeth Inrig at our new church, Trinity Evangelical Free Church in Redlands, California. It was called "Walk Through the Old Testament," and we were sure it would be a simple review for us, weaned as we had been on Old Testament stories.

We were wrong. For the first time we began to see God's sovereign hand making consistent connections from creation

**...the Holy Spirit makes God's will clear when we seek Jesus through the truths of Scripture.**

through His call of Abraham, through His revelation at Sinai, through the flourishing and crumbling of the nation of Israel, and through the eventual rebuilding of the wall under Nehemiah's leadership. We learned paradigm-changing concepts such as "Egypt was the womb of Israel" (think how many times God spared His people in Egypt, beginning with Abraham and culminating in Jesus), and "God wastes nothing but redeems everything we submit to Him."

One vivid memory I carry from Elizabeth's teaching was the first time I saw her raise her Bible above her head and declare, "Everything you need to know for a godly life is in this book. If you want to know God's will for you, look in here."

I flinched when she made that ringing declaration. It sounded so... *fundamentalist!* The Bible, after all, hadn't been the only source of our direction to leave the Adventist church, to resign our positions with an Adventist publication, and to join Trinity church. The Holy Spirit had done that directing. Where in Elizabeth's assertion was there room for personal revelation from the Holy Spirit?

Since that day, I've become as convinced as Elizabeth that the only way we come to know God's will for us is by being immersed in His Word and submitting ourselves to the Holy Spirit's teaching while we study. When we are born again by the indwelling Holy Spirit, we recognize the Holy Spirit in the words of Scripture. The book ceases to be a collection of facts which we analyze as if it were a piece of literature. It becomes a "living book" which actively reveals reality and the mind of God when we are submitted to Him.

Jesus made a profound statement to the Samaritan woman at the well: "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Only when we are born again by the indwelling Holy Spirit can we begin to worship God in spirit. But spiritual worship is only half of Jesus' command. We must worship in truth. Truth is objective. It is rooted in facts and external evidence. Jesus said if we hold to His teachings, we will know the truth, and the truth will set us free. (John 8:32) In order to know His teachings and to worship God in truth, we must actively pursue His truth as recorded in Scripture.

If we seek to experience the Holy Spirit separately from grounding ourselves in the Bible, we will open ourselves to deception and weaken our ability to make disciples. Conversely, if we pursue Biblical knowledge without surrendering to Jesus and asking for His Spirit to teach us through Scripture, we will see the Bible as just one more sacred text open to our analysis and judgment.

Both pursuing the Holy Spirit at the expense of learning Biblical truth and idolizing the Bible without surrendering to Jesus and being born again lead to heresy. Our commitment to worshiping in spirit must be equal to our commitment to worshiping in truth.

Looking back, I realize our decisions to leave the church, to resign our magazine positions, and to join Trinity church were grounded in the Bible. Through the Bible we learned the truth about Jesus and the gospel, the necessity of acting in integrity and of surrendering all of our lives to Jesus for His purposes, and the necessity of immersing ourselves in sound Biblical teaching. We learned that the Holy Spirit makes God's will clear when we seek Jesus through the truths of Scripture.

In this issue we introduce McGregor Wright who outlines Scriptural teaching on the necessity of sound doctrine. Dale Ratzlaff discusses how to choose a Bible translation, and Esther Shu shares her story of finding the freedom of the gospel. Cora Holder writes of discovering the cross of Christ; Desmond Ford shares a gospel appeal, and Walter Rea confirms that he has not repented of writing nor recanted his findings in *The White Lie*.

As you read, our prayer is that you will discover the Bible as a living book where you will find the "knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness" through whom you will experience "his divine power" which gives you "everything [you] need for life and godliness." (1 Peter 1:3)

**Proclamation!**

Founding Editor  
**Dale Ratzlaff**

Editor  
**Colleen Tinker**

Copy Editor  
**Cristine Cole**

Design Editor  
**Richard Tinker**

**Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.**  
**Board of Directors**

Dale Ratzlaff, President, CFO  
Colleen Tinker, Secretary  
Bruce Heinrich  
Carolyn Ratzlaff  
Richard Tinker

Published by Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.  
PO Box 905, Redlands, CA 92373  
©2005 Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.  
All rights reserved.  
Phone (909) 794-9804

[www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.org](http://www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.org)  
[www.FormerAdventist.com](http://www.FormerAdventist.com)  
E-mail: [proclamation@gmail.com](mailto:proclamation@gmail.com)

# I stand alone on the Word of God

E S T H E R S H U

**M**y mother and my father came from large families of thirteen and eleven children, respectively. My mother completed third grade, and my father completed seventh. Living in Mexico and in poverty made it difficult to complete an education. Eventually, my parents settled down in Bakersfield, CA. My mother cleaned homes, and my father was a custodian for a local grocery store. Even though our family had limited means, my parents always made sure that we received what we needed even though it may not have been what we wanted.

Unfortunately, there was no religious center to our family. Everyone believed something different. My mother was a Catholic by name only. My father was raised in the Apostolic Church but never claimed it as his own faith or belief system.

One summer, a friend invited my older siblings to the Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Vacation Bible School (VBS). Members of the congregation befriended my mother, and church soon became the center of our lives. In fact, our circle of friends soon became primarily church members. Many of these people are still my closest friends even though I no longer fellowship at the church.

Every Sabbath my mother packed us into the car, and we went to church. My father continued to work six days a week from Monday to Saturday. He didn't have a problem with us going to church on Saturday as long as my mother didn't push him to go to church. He joined us only on special occasions such as at Christmas programs.

When I was eleven, I made a genuine commitment to accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior and was bap-

tized into the SDA church. My pastor then obtained financial scholarships for my siblings and me to attend the local Adventist Academy. My mother was thrilled. After all, she wanted us to have the American Dream—a strong moral foundation, a good education, and the ability for us to rise above our station in life. Suddenly, all of this was about to come true. The hard work of my parents seemed to have borne fruit.

Fortunately or unfortunately, my parents did not know about many of the Adventist traditions or teachings. This ignorance left my religious education to the Church and Academy.

I thought that I was growing in my faith during religion classes at school, but I now realize that my understanding of the gospel and the Christian walk was limited. During my high school years, I remember trying to find Ellen G. White's teachings in the Bible. But I could never find them! I had assumed that the sermons that I had been listening to had been based on Scripture when in fact the vast majority were Ellen G. White's non-biblical teaching. We were spoon fed information and never taught how to study the Bible properly. I had no idea what a concordance, Bible dictionary or a Greek lexicon was. Being a Berean (Acts 17:11) never even crossed my mind.

Was there someone that I should have blamed for my naïveté?

**Esther Shu** earned her Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene at Loma Linda University School of Dentistry. She was in private practice for five years and is now a full-time mother of three children. Esther and her husband, a physician, are involved in health care evangelism through the Medical Strategic Network, and she also participates in Women's Ministries at Trinity Evangelical Free Church in Redlands, CA.



## During my high school years, I remember trying to find Ellen G. White's teachings in the Bible.

My mother? My pastor? My teachers at the Academy? Who? Ultimately, it was my fault. I had the Scriptures in front of me but never took the time and energy to study them. I guess I was content with being a spiritual baby and being spoon-fed information. It is only now that I am realizing the depth and breadth of Scripture and the various aspects of spiritual maturity. As I look back on those years, I wish that I had had a mentor to disciple me, challenge my faith and encourage me to grow.

After graduating from high school, I left for Pacific Union College (PUC). Coming from a graduating class of twelve students, PUC was intimidating. My spiritual life consisted of reading the Psalms on a daily basis and studying for my religion classes. Going through the motions would be a good description of my spiritual walk. Not once did I hear of a Bible study. I am sure that they existed, but I didn't think that they were a high priority. After two years, I went to study dental hygiene at Loma Linda University. During my senior year, I was elected class pastor. I had the proper outward appearance of a good Adventist. Inwardly, I was hollow.

Soon after I became class pastor, I was invited to an off-campus interdenominational Bible study. It was the beginning of the end for my old self. I was no longer being spoon-fed information as an infant but had moved from milk to the solid food of sound Biblical teaching.

Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Hebrews 5:13-14

Many people in the Bible Study showed a love for Christ and His word that I had never seen. They were actually having fun studying Scripture and digging deeper into the Word. In this group, I met two people who would challenge my faith and pray with me—my future husband Stanford and my friend Laura.

Up until that time, I had been praying for a godly husband, not for an Adventist husband. I had assumed that all godly men were Adventist. God did bring a godly man into my life, but unfortunately, Stanford was not Adventist—even though he knew more about my belief system than I did. Stanford appeared to be the man that God had prepared for me; in the back of my mind, however, I could not let go of my anxiety over the fact that he wasn't Adventist.

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 2 Corinthians 6:14-15

These words had been drilled into my mind. Unfortunately, I had been taught an erroneous interpretation of the passage. I thought that the passage meant that one should not marry a non-Seventh-day Adventist. The passage actually means that a believer should not marry a nonbeliever. I had to learn how to study the Bible accurately before I could apply Scripture to my life.

While Stanford and I dated, we went to church on Sabbath—to please me, of course! He didn't mind which day he worshiped

because of the principles from Romans 14:5. After church he would take out his Bible and ask me questions about the sermon to see if what was taught was true and had a Biblical basis. I was ill prepared to answer his questions (1 Peter 3:15).

After we had dated a year and a half, an Adventist pastor in an Adventist Church married us. How odd was that? I remember that in my home church in Bakersfield, the non-Adventist betrothed was quickly baptized into the church before a marriage to make everything seem proper.

After we were married, I continued to grow in my faith and learned about many of the basic foundations of the Christian walk, but I was still ashamed to be seen in a Sunday church. Two years later, my friend Laura and I began to study Galatians and *Sabbath in Crisis* (the first edition of *Sabbath in Christ*) by Dale Ratzlaff in order to understand the Old and New Covenants. I had previously learned about the differences, but they didn't become real and palpable until I began to study the subject in depth for myself. I needed to study my way out of the church, not just leave. Understanding Scripture was the only way to bring closure to my religious past and to open up the future.

After much studying and prayer, I left the Adventist church. No one forced me out of the church, but neither did anyone force me to come back. I left a denomination and not Christ. I am a daughter of the King of the Universe. My identity is in Christ.

Those who know Your name trust in You because You have not abandoned those who seek You, Lord. Psalms 9:10

The gospel is now clear. The cross is meaningful. The Law has a new meaning that I never understood before. I now live to please God and keep the laws as a natural outflowing of the Holy Spirit that dwells in me and not because I am trying to deserve salvation. I am constantly reminded that our lives are not our own and that salvation came at a very high cost—the death of Christ.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!" Galatians 2:20-21

After I left the SDA church, my mother was initially disappointed and sad that I had "left the things of God" even though her love never wavered. Since then, my mother has seen the fruits of my spiritual walk and has come to appreciate that I have become closer and more intimate with God. I don't know how my sister and brothers feel because even though I try to develop spiritual depth in our conversations, they always keep our talks at a surface level. I am grateful that my childhood friends from the Adventist church continue to be my friends. My father went home to be with the Lord in March, 2004. Fortunately, he had accepted Christ four years ago, and I know that I will see him in the future.

I praise God for His patient leading and for bringing me into the freedom of the gospel! I now stand alone on the Word of God. !

# Which version is best?

## We can trust the Bible

DALE RATZLAFF

**How does one choose the right version of the Bible? Do we choose the one that translates our favorite verses the way we learned them? Do we choose the version that best supports our beliefs or the doctrines of our church? Is choosing a version of the Bible akin to buying a new car? Do we “test drive” them and see which one “feels good” to us?**

**A**s one should never purchase a new car without doing some research as to cost, economy, value and size—to say nothing about power and style—in the same way we should do some research before choosing the version of the Bible upon which we will base our theology and Christian experience. But this reality raises many questions. Where does one start? How does one do the needed research? Perhaps we don't even know the questions to ask to find the answers we need.

Most of us realize that there are two main categories of Bibles that are widely available today. These are literal translations, including the *King James Bible*, *The New International Version*, and the *New American Standard Bible*, and paraphrases such as *J.B. Phillips*, *New Living Bible* and *The Message*. We immediately note that the reading of some verses varies widely. Even if we compare two literal versions such as the KJV<sup>1</sup> and NASB, we see that some verses are identical, others quite different. Why is this so?

Which is correct?

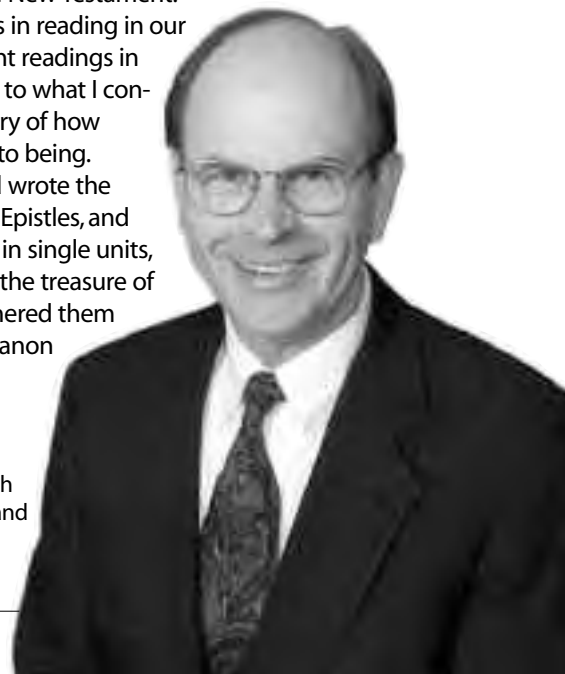
Before we can answer these questions, we need to examine how scholars derive modern versions from the original languages. In this article we will limit ourselves to a discussion of the formation of the New Testament. Both the literal versions and *good* paraphrases are based on the underlying Greek text of the New Testament. Often—not always—differences in reading in our English Bibles spring from variant readings in the Greek text. This fact leads us to what I consider to be a fascinating discovery of how today's New Testament came into being.

No one person sat down and wrote the Greek Bible. Rather the Gospels, Epistles, and the Apocalypse were all written in single units, and later, as the church realized the treasure of these various writings, they gathered them together into what we call the canon

**Dale Ratzlaff** is president of Life Assurance Ministries and founding editor of *Proclamation!*

In the 1980s, while nearing the end of his doctoral program at Andrews University, Dale did an in-depth study of the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment. When he became convinced he could no longer teach this doctrine in good conscience because it was scripturally unsupported and contrary to the gospel, he and his wife left the denomination.

Dale and his wife Carolyn live in Peoria, Arizona, and worship at Calvary Community Church.



**While it is true that the church counsels voted on what would be included in the canon of the Bible, their vote did not make the included works inspired. Rather, the self-evident witness of the Holy Spirit in these writings is what prompted the church to recognize them as the Word of God, while it rejected other popular early documents.**

of the New Testament.<sup>2</sup> The Gospels and Epistles of Paul (including Hebrews<sup>3</sup>) were the first documents to be included in the Christian canon along with the Old

Testament. Some years later Acts was added, and then the General Epistles and Revelation. In some geographic areas of the early church there were several other writings that were, for a period of time, included in the Christian writings. *The Shepherd of Hermes*, for example, was one such document recommended as reading for Christians. However, as the church read and studied the early manuscripts, they came to realize that the books we now have<sup>4</sup> in the canon of Scripture were inspired of God. While it is true that the church counsels voted on what would be included in the canon of the Bible, their vote did not make the included works inspired. Rather, the self-evident witness of the Holy Spirit in these writings is what prompted the church to recognize them as the Word of God, while it

rejected other popular early documents. But this internal witness of the Holy Spirit is only part of the saga of how our Bible came to be.

### How Variants came in

**Faulty Hearing Variants:** The early manuscripts of the New Testament documents were hand written on papyrus scrolls with quill and ink, and later, parchment and vellum<sup>5</sup> were used. As the papyrus scrolls were rolled and unrolled during use, they would wear out in a few years and need to be copied. This copying was often done in what is called a Scriptorium where one person read the exemplar,<sup>6</sup> and a group of scribes would write down what they heard. This situation allowed for many minor errors, called variants, to enter in. Sometimes words (which we call homonyms) sounded alike but had different spellings and meanings, and scribes would accidentally write the wrong word. In Koine Greek, the language of the New Testament, a number of vowels and diphthongs came to be pronounced alike, all of them sounding like the long

“e” in “feet.”<sup>7</sup> This similarity in pronunciation led to occasional confusion. For example, in English we have “read” and “reed” and “great” and “grate.” An illustration of the problem these homonyms create is found in some manuscripts in the presentation of 1 Corinthians 15:54. Some read, “Death is swallowed up in victory” (*nekos*); others read, “Death is swallowed up in conflict” (*nikos*).

**Faulty Seeing variants:** Sometimes, because of the way the Greek letters were printed on the original manuscript, or exemplar, the scribe copying from the exemplar misread them. Those who read my handwriting can certainly understand this problem! Because of misreading the Greek he was copying, one scribe miscopied Romans 12:11. It actually reads, “not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,” but mistaking the writing on the exemplar, he wrote “...serving the time” instead of “serving the Lord.”

**Memorization variants:** In Colossians 1:14 most modern translations read, “In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” However, one scribe, probably having memorized a lot of Scripture, remembering Ephesians 1:7 expanded the verse in Colossians to, “In whom we have redemption *through his blood*, even the forgiveness of sins” (KJV). While the statement is true, it is true based upon Ephesians 1:7 and not Colossians 1:14.

**Scribal addition variants:** Sometimes scribes would add historical and/or geographical details. For example, the reading of John 5:4 is a case in point. The KJV reads, “For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.” This verse, however, is not included in the earlier manuscripts. Therefore, verse four is left out in all modern translations.

Another similar variant is that of adding scribal notes to the text. One monk working on a text might make a note below the text or above the text to explain the meaning or add clarification. Another later scribe would understand the notation to be a correction to the text and insert the scribal note into the text, believing it was a correction to a previous omission.

There are also variants which occur from omissions and additions because of similar sounding ends or beginnings of verses. The scribe would look back at the text and either duplicate or omit parts of sentences thinking he had (or had not) already copied those portions.

**Conflation variants:** In Acts 20:28 there are two early readings: “church of God” and “church of the Lord.” In some later manuscripts at this point these two have been combined to read, “the church of the Lord and God.”

**Doctrinal variants:** Marcion, (second century) took out all the references to the Jewish background of Jesus in his copy of Luke and also omitted the other gospel accounts. Purposeful changing of the Bible is perhaps the most des-

picable thing a person can do as others who read do not always know that changes have been made to God's word. Purposefully changing the doctrines of the Bible is tantamount to deception and must be opposed vigorously.

One interesting variant in the *Codex Bezae* is the addition of the following account in Luke 6 between verses 4 and 6 (what we know as verse 5 is inserted after verse 10 in this codex): "On the same day, seeing one working on the Sabbath day, he [Jesus] said to him. 'Man, if you know what you are doing, you are blessed; but if you do not know, you are accursed and a transgressor of the law.'" Although this sentence, which is found in no other manuscript, cannot be regarded as part of the original text of Luke, it may well embody a first-century tradition, or it may be one of the "many other things which Jesus did" which are not written in the gospels.<sup>8</sup> *Codex Bezae* also has a number of other unique readings.

These are but a few of the ways that hundreds of variant readings come into the text of the Greek New Testament.<sup>9</sup> At this point, some of our readers may begin to wonder if, with all the variant readings, the Bible can be trusted as the Word of God. Keep reading, and you will find that not only can it be trusted, but we think that in nearly every case, the original wording has been restored!

### How the correct reading is being restored

In the Reformation period, as the Bible was being translated into German and other languages, the translators had but comparatively few Greek MSS from which to work. Often their Bibles relied on the Latin Vulgate. Later in the nineteenth century, as more MSS were discovered and the discipline of textual criticism was developed, scholars set upon the task of attempting to determine the "correct" reading of the Greek New Testament.

Scholars developed certain guidelines which have helped them restore, as far as possible, the correct wording of the text. The following are not hard and fast rules, as each text in question must be judged independently by many different criteria; however, they serve as illustrations.

#### **The earlier manuscript witness is to be preferred.**

The earliest witness is more likely to be correct as there would be fewer copies behind it and thus less chance for scribal variants. As mentioned before, John 5:4 is missing in the early manuscripts of John.

**The more difficult reading is to be preferred.** When copying a manuscript, scribes had a tendency to try to make clear that which to them was unclear. Most of us today would do the same. However, what they thought was helpful, often corrupted the text. Therefore, NT scholars think the more difficult reading is to be preferred.

**The shorter reading is to be preferred.** New Testament scholars have found that most variants were

added words rather than subtracted words. Therefore, the shorter reading is often, but not always, to be preferred.

**Compare with early versions.** Versions are translations of the Bible into other languages. Some of the Greek Christian writings were translated into other languages such as Syriac, Latin and Coptic quite early in the history of the church. By comparing these versions, scholars are sometimes able to determine what the Greek text was from which these versions were copied.

**Compare early patristic quotations.** The early church fathers, in writing their commentaries and defenses of Christianity, often quoted verses from the Bible they were using. There are tens of thousands of such quotes. In fact, "so extensive are these citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament."<sup>10</sup> These writings are now being computerized, as are the manuscript fragments of the New Testament, and will make the discipline of textual criticism even more accurate.

**Compare manuscript "families."** As the Christian church spread throughout the world there was a natural tendency for "families" of manuscripts to be created. In each major geographical area, manuscripts tended to be similar to each other in that they had similar source manuscripts. By comparing the different manuscript families, scholars are aided in their goal of finding the correct wording.

An article such as this on the transmission of the Greek New Testament would not be complete without recounting the fascinating story of one of the most important manuscript discoveries.

"In 1844, when he was not yet thirty years of age, Tischendorf, a *Privatdozent* in the University of Leipzig, began an extensive journey through the Near East in search of Biblical manuscripts. While visiting the monastery of St. Catharine at Mount Sinai, he chanced to see two leaves of parchment in a waste-basket full of papers destined to light the oven of the monastery. On examination these proved to be part of a copy of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, written in an early Greek uncial script. He retrieved from the basket no fewer than forty-three such leaves, and the monk casually remarked that two basket loads of similarly discarded leaves had already been burned up! ... He warned the monks that such things were too valuable to be used to stoke their fires... In 1859 his travels took him back once

**Scholars developed certain guidelines which have helped them restore, as far as possible, the correct wording of the text.**

more to Mount Sinai, this time under the patronage of the Czar of Russia, Alexander II. The day before he was scheduled to leave he presented to the steward of the monastery a copy of the edition of the Septuagint which he had recently published in Leipzig. Thereupon the steward remarked that he too had a copy of the Septuagint, and produced from a closet in his cell a manuscript wrapped in a red cloth. There before the astonished scholar's eyes lay the treasure which he had been longing to see. Concealing his feelings, Tischendorf casually asked permission to look at it further that evening. Permission was granted, and upon retiring to his room Tischendorf stayed up all night in the joy of studying the manuscript—for, as he declared in his diary... 'it really seemed a sacrilege to sleep'. He soon found that the document contained much more than he had even hoped; for not only was most of the Old Testament there, but also the New Testament was intact and in excellent condition, with the addition of two early Christian works of the second century, the *Epistle of Barnabas*... and a large portion of the *Shepherd of Hermes*, hitherto known only by title.

"The next morning Tischendorf tried to buy the manuscript, but without success. Then he asked to be allowed to take it to Cairo to study; but the monk in charge of the altar plate objected, and so he had to leave without it."

Later, Tischendorf importuned the abbot of the monastery of St. Catharine, who happened to be in Cairo, and Tischendorf was allowed eight leaves at a time to copy.

Some years later, the purchase of the manuscript was arranged for approximately \$500,000 and today resides in the British Museum.<sup>11</sup>

If you have not guessed

by now, the manuscript that Tischendorf discovered is known as the *Codex Sinaiticus*, the oldest *complete* New Testament, and it also contains the other books mentioned above.

The number of known New Testament manuscripts (some are only fragments) is about 5,000. The earliest known manuscript of the New Testament is a small fragment from the Gospel of John that has been dated early second century.

Scholars now believe that only a very small proportion of Christians could have owned, or even seen, a copy of the complete canon of the New Testament before the invention of printing.

## Today's Greek New Testament

The facts show that even though there are many variant readings in the New Testament documents, scholars have been able to reconstruct what is believed to be the correct reading in most instances!

Today there are several NT Greek Bibles. These are very much alike<sup>12</sup> and very trustworthy. As more ancient manuscripts are found that may influence a word or two, the Greek New Testaments are revised. One of the most popular Greek New Testaments is *Nestle*. It is now in its twenty-seventh edition. It is a wonderful source of scholarship; it has a very detailed and systematic footnote system which shows the manuscript support for the Greek text used in a given passage. The footnote also gives the source and wording of the important variant readings. Most scholars believe that today's Greek New Testament is the most well-documented and accurate ancient writing available anywhere in the world. Yes, we *can* trust it!

Now that we have some idea of the many hundreds of thousands of painstaking hours of careful research and work that has gone into the formation of the Greek New Testament, we turn our attention to translating the Greek text into English.

Greek is a very precise language. It has five cases, three voices, four moods and six tenses. Some of the preciseness of Greek is difficult, even impossible, to translate into English. While both the *New International Version* and the *New American Standard Bible* are good literal translations, my favorite is the *Updated New American Standard Bible Reference Edition*. This translation, while it may have some rough readings, seeks to be accurate with the Greek grammar. Often when there is a significant variant reading in the Greek manuscripts, it will have a footnote with an alternate reading. At times the Greek can be translated in more than one way even if there is no variant reading in the manuscript evidence. The NASB will often give a secondary translation in the margin or footnote. For example in the last part of Romans 4:17 we read, "...calls into being that which does not exist." Another way this can be translated, (which I like best) is, "calls things which do not exist as existing." In context, this verse refers both to the "multitude of nations" that did not exist when God changed Abram's name to Abraham and also to our righteousness that does not exist when God changes our name from "sinner man/women" to "saint" at the point when we believe!

Here is an illustration from the NASB. The verses from John 7:53 to 8:11 have brackets around them. In the margin we read, "Later MSS [manuscripts] add the story of the adulterous woman numbering it as John 7:53-8:11." This section of Scripture is not found in the earliest MSS. However, it is of interest to note that the *Codex Sinaiticus*, which does not have the story of the adulterous woman, nevertheless has a blank section that the scribe left open.

**Most scholars believe that today's Greek New Testament is the most well-documented and accurate ancient writing available anywhere in the world. Yes, we can trust it!**



When counting the letters needed to write this section in, it is just the right size. Therefore, it seems clear that the scribe who copied the *Codes Sinaiticus* knew of this story and left room for it. The point I am making, however, is that the NASB often informs the reader regarding the Greek behind the English translation so the reader can participate in the final decision.

In Romans 1:17b. The NASB text reads, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." In the margin we have this alternate reading, not from a variant in the Greek text, but another way the Greek can be translated into English: "But he who is righteous by faith shall live." You will also note that when the NASB contains quotations from the Old Testament, it shows these in capital letters to call attention to this fact. Note the "*man*" in italics shows that this is an added word which can be assumed but is not in the Greek text.

**What about the King James Version?** The old KJV is a good literal translation; however, it has several weaknesses. First, it was translated from a Greek manuscript made by Erasmus who depended heavily on the Latin Vulgate. Some parts of his self-made Greek text have readings which have never been found in any known NT Greek manuscript—but are still perpetuated today in printings of the so-called "*Textus Receptus* of the Greek New Testament."<sup>13</sup> Second, there have been many MSS discovered since the KJV was translated which correct some of the KJV faulty variant readings. Many of these will be found in the footnotes of the New KJV. Third, many of the English words have changed meanings since 1611. Language is dynamic and not static. For example, 1Thess. 4:16 in the KJV reads, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep." The NASB reads, "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep." Four hundred years ago, "prevent" meant "to come before, to precede." We can see how from that definition we have derived the meaning of "taking action in advance to keep something from happening." While the evolution of the word makes sense, the meaning of the KJV is no longer clear to modern readers. Fourth, while the "thee"s and "thou"s are accurate and precise, most people find these outdated and odd. For these reasons, I suggest that those who are serious Bible students carefully consider the *Updated New American Standard Reference Bible*. I think you will be happy.

Paraphrases, on the other hand, operate under a different set of rules. Rather than translating the Greek word for word, as good literal Bibles seek to do, paraphrases intend to discover the *meaning* of the text and may use different words to express that meaning to make it relevant in

today's language and culture. These are very good for devotional reading and to give one a new and fresh look at Scripture. However, paraphrases should not be trusted for serious doctrinal study. It is easy for the paraphraser to give his/her idea of what he/she thinks the text means rather than what it says. *The New Living Bible*, *J.B. Phillips N.T.* and *The Message*

are examples of paraphrases that seek to be true to the intent of the Greek and are good for devotional reading.

There are some translations and paraphrases, however, that are untrustworthy, and people should be warned about them and avoid them. *The New World Translation of the Greek Scriptures* is an example of what is supposed to be a literal translation. This Bible was prepared by the Jehovah's Witnesses and is strongly biased and poorly translated in areas where a typical literal Bible would show Witness teaching to be in error. It compromises the deity of Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, and man's condition in death.

One of the worst paraphrases I am aware of is the *Clear Word*. While it purports to be true to ancient texts, it purposely reads into the text, "facts," ideas and words which simply are not in the Greek. It also changes the *meaning* of the Greek in dozens, if not hundreds, of places and deletes dozens of words in other places. It is *not* a safe guide to the Christian life. Why the Adventist church has not pulled this "Bible" from their bookstores and openly condemned this paraphrase when it is so obviously filled with denominational bias is a mystery to me. While some Adventist scholars have written against it, pointing out its obvious shortcomings, the last time I was in an Adventist Book Center, it was still being displayed and sold. While it is technically not officially an Adventist Bible, nevertheless it was written by the religion chair of an Adventist university, printed in an Adventist press, advertised in Adventist periodicals, and sold in Adventist book centers. It remains, in my opinion, one of the strongest evidences of the cultic nature of Adventism.<sup>14</sup>

So what is the bottom line? The most trustworthy Bibles are those not written by an individual but by a committee of scholars. For serious theological study when seeking answers to doctrine, one should use a modern lit-

**One of the worst paraphrases I am aware of is the *Clear Word*. While it purports to be true to ancient texts, it purposely reads into the text, "facts," ideas and words which simply are not in the Greek. It also changes the *meaning* of the Greek.**

eral version. *The New International Version* and the *New American Standard Bible* are good examples.

Even though many variants have crept into the Bible, thanks to the leading of the Holy Spirit, the providence of God, and the meticulous work of thousands of scholars, our modern Bibles are indeed trustworthy. Yes, they are the living and active Word of God! Choose at least one good literal translation for serious doctrinal study and also get a good but trustworthy paraphrase. Study these, and God's Spirit will meet you there!

### What about Inerrancy?

Today one of the tenets of the Evangelical Christian faith is that the *original* manuscripts of the Bible were inerrant.<sup>15</sup> However, we do not have any of the original manuscripts, so this is a statement of faith and not fact. This tenet, however, causes the Bible student to consider the word of God as authoritative and not something to be disregarded, taken lightly, or tampered with. Yes, when rightly translated and interpreted, the Bible is, indeed, the living and active word of God, authoritative, inspired, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.<sup>16</sup>

Let us thank God for the Bible, study it and open our hearts to its central message: Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior<sup>17</sup> and the salvation He brings by grace alone through faith alone! "He who believes has eternal life."<sup>18</sup>

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Either the old King James Version or the New King James Version.
- <sup>2</sup> It is beyond the scope of this short article to fully describe the formation of the Christian canon.
- <sup>3</sup> While there are many scholars who do not consider Hebrews to be authored by Paul, the early manuscripts included this book as part of the Pauline Epistles.
- <sup>4</sup> It is recognized that the Catholic church included the apocryphal books in the canon while the Protestant church generally rejects them.
- <sup>5</sup> Leather prepared for writing.
- <sup>6</sup> The manuscript being copied.
- <sup>7</sup> The Greek pronunciation taught in most New Testament Greek classes today is not the same as Koine Greek was pronounced at the time the manuscripts were copied. See, Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, Third Edition, p. 191.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50. See also John 21:25.
- <sup>9</sup> Some say that there are as many as 3,000 variants.
- <sup>10</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, Third Edition, p. 86.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42-45.
- <sup>12</sup> It should be noted that there are also differences. Sometimes the textual "weight" may be nearly equal with two or more variants. One Greek NT may put one in the text with the variant in the footnote. Another, may put another variant of equal weight in the text with the first variant in the footnote.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- <sup>14</sup> For documentation on the perversion of the *Clear Word* go to: <http://www.ratzlaf.com/corrupt.htm>.
- <sup>15</sup> This tenet has been variously interpreted. For an excellent discussion of the infallibility of the Scriptures see *Scripture and Truth*, by D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992. See also Appendix 6B in *Bible Answers to Sabbath Questions* by Verle Streifling, now available as an e-book from LAM Publications, LLC.
- <sup>16</sup> Tim. 3:16.
- <sup>17</sup> Jn. 5:39.
- <sup>18</sup> Jn. 6:47.

## \$100,000.00 reward for missing scripture!

**You will be the recipient of \$5,000.00 a month for twenty months, totaling \$100,000.00** if you can find a single scripture in a traditional Bible (such as the New KJV, KJV, NIV, NAS, TEV, Amplified, and the New English) that states any one of the following beliefs:

1. The Sabbath was given to "all mankind at creation."
2. The Sabbath is the "memorial of creation."
3. The Sabbath is the "seal of the living God."
4. Sunday observance is the "mark of the beast."
5. Jesus never broke (or violated) the weekly Sabbath.
6. The weekly Sabbath, unlike the ceremonial Sabbath, is not "a shadow of things to come."
7. The Ten Commandments constitute God's moral law. The other laws given to Moses at Mt. Sinai were ceremonial and were nailed to the cross.

References from Catholic, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Seventh-day Adventist (and other denominational Bibles), the Koran, the Catechism, the Clear Word, and the New Covenant Version are excluded. All rights reserved by BBN.

### Mail your responses to:

Brantley Broadcasting Network, PO Box 665, Ardmore, Tennessee 38449 or email [brantleybroadnet@ardmore.net](mailto:brantleybroadnet@ardmore.net)

# Recant, no! I stand firm

WALTER REA

*Editor's Note: In 1982 Walter Rea published *The White Lie after Seventh-day Adventist administrators failed to keep their promise to reveal Ellen White's plagiarism to the church members. Rea had spent several years researching White's writings and comparing them to sources available at the time she wrote. His findings determined that a significant percentage of White's material was plagiarized, while some was written by ghostwriters. He met with church leaders and showed them his research, and they promised to devise a plan for informing the church. He made the information public in his book when the church did not keep its promise to expose the truth.**

*Today rumors abound that Rea has retracted his book and "repented" that he wrote it. This open letter is Walter Rea's statement, written in 1992 and renewed and notarized in October, 2004, that he retracts nothing. He introduces his notarized document with a statement written September 1, 2004.*

**T**wenty-five years have come and gone since my meeting with Adventist church administrators during which they examined the material my research revealed—the facts concerning Ellen G. White, the Adventist so-called "Spirit of Prophecy"; that the church had covered up for over one hundred years. Because many of the new membership of the church have not been given the facts and results of that meeting, many have asked me to bring those who are interested up-to-date. In brief, here are outcomes of that meeting:

1. Church leaders and theologians had known for over one hundred years that the books and writings of Ellen White were taken from the works of other authors. This fact was confirmed at the January, 1980, meeting.

2. Because the church leaders did not keep their word as they promised to inform the members of White's plagiarism, I released the material and was terminated from my church employment for that reason. After two years without pay or medical insurance, I finally received a settlement from the church for a small amount of back pay with some conditions.

3. Records from that time will show that I was trying to work within the system but did not realize that the system could and would be dishonest.

4. Fred Veltman, a faculty member of Pacific Union College, received the church's contract to conduct a church-sponsored study of White's writings to verify or deny my findings. His study took eight years and included only a portion of *The Desire of Ages* (DA), White's famous book on the life of Christ. He concluded that in the small percentage of the book he studied, 30-40% of White's material was plagiarized. Research will show that even Veltman's study did not reveal the large amounts of source material she used in the rest of her books. Chapter five of DA alone shows dependence on outside sources for up to 80 or 90 percent of its contents.

5. Then-General Conference president Neal Wilson denied that I was going to be fired but admitted the church's concern that I was telling others what I had found. The committee that had reviewed the material had said it was startling. I had been led to believe that the purpose of my meeting with them was to verify the facts in order to inform the membership of the truth.

6. I was never allowed to defend my action or have a fair hearing. Further, I was never given a written statement explaining why I was fired.

7. After I was fired, Ron Graybill, associate secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate, spoke in a morning worship service at the General Conference headquarters. He revealed much, much more than I showed the administrators in the Glendale 1980 meeting. His revelations proved once and for all time that my research was correct, and that I was fired for telling the truth about Ellen White. The Adventist leaders, even to this day, do not want the people that pay their bills to know the true facts: Ellen White was human and got her information from other humans. Instead, they want all to believe that God told her where to find and copy those facts and ideas and inspiration from others.

Only the future life will tell us how many men have been marked and destroyed by church leaders because those men could not believe the White lie. If I have made mistakes, they were not in the revealing of facts and materials others also discovered. My two great errors were these: I questioned and went against the divines in a powerful religious system, and I questioned the system and its promoted "truth." History will show that more people have been destroyed one way or another over these two issues than over any others. It is very hard to teach people that the foundation of any religion is not men or prophets or interpretation of "truth." Rather, it is living and showing love to one another.

## Walter Rea's notarized letter

*Following is the letter first written in August, 1992, and renewed and notarized on October 20, 2004. This letter confirms that Rea has never retracted his findings regarding Ellen White's plagiarism but stands by them today.*

Dear Friends, In the December issue of *Spectrum*, 1991, which calls itself *The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums*, there appeared an article by Jerry A. Gladson entitled "Convert To Scholar: An Odyssey In Humility". Jerry Gladson is vice president and dean of academic affairs of the Psychological Studies Institute, an interdenominational graduate school of psychology and religion in Atlanta, Georgia. Previously he was professor of religion at Southern Adventist College from which he received his BA. He holds an MA and PhD in Old Testament from Vanderbilt University.

In the article he says, "Neither have we dealt adequately with the questions raised by Walter Rea regarding Ellen White. Although his claims tended to be overstated, the church has gradually come to concede almost all his major points. In 1990, Fred Veltman reported to the church at large his findings in two articles appearing in *Ministry Magazine*: "The Desire of Ages Project, The Data" (October, 1990, and December, 1990). Careful to point out that he had examined only a small section of *The Desire of Ages*, thus making it difficult to generalize, Veltman concluded that Ellen White did use sources without giving credit, and that she, at times, even denied doing so. *The Desire of Ages*, he noted, was dependent on secondary materials. On the whole, an average of about 31 percent of the 15 chapters he examined was in some way indebted to other material. Worse, her history, chronology, and theological interpretation often

cited confidently by Adventists were not always reliable.”(*Spectrum*, volume 21, number 5, December, 1991)

While it is true that the church has tried to conceal information from its members as to what issues have been resolved by the studies of both Fred Veltman and me, the administration has admitted several facts we uncovered. These include:

A. There was massive borrowing on all levels of Mrs. White’s writings. The church had never before either known or admitted such borrowings to the membership or the public. (*Glendale Tapes*, 1980).

B. What she wrote was not always accurate; that is, she made mistakes. It cannot be said, therefore, that she was always speaking for God. (Robert Olson, Ron Graybill, *Glendale and Longbeach Tapes*)

C. Others helped her to gather her material and also to do her writing. (Graybill paper, 1919 Bible Conference)

D. Not all of what she said she saw came from visions. (Don McAdams, Ron Graybill, Robert Olson Papers, White Estate)

## ...we met in a lead-lined room in the radiology department so no one could unofficially record the meeting from outside the room.

E. Not all that came to the church in her writings was inspired. (1919 Bible Conference, Robert Olson, White Estate)

G. Mrs. White ate meat most of her life and did not take much of the advice she claimed came from God. (White Estate papers, Don Graybill study)

H. She was not as uneducated and unread as we have always been told.

The church now admits most of the above issues, whether or not each individual has settled them for himself. The discussion about “inspiration” [the all-embracing word used to define Ellen White’s revelations and her writings in general] will go on as long as people look for ways to maintain views that are no longer logical or tenable.

What has concerned me more than the reaction of the system of Adventism to what has been found regarding Ellen White has been the reaction of so many people to me personally. It is indeed astonishing to find people in Adventism who, while professing to believe and keep the Ten Commandments, violate the one that says, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” It would be impossible to relate all the false and nasty tales and stories that have been told about me by people who have never met me or taken the time to even read the book *The White Lie*. Even the system keeps on lying. I know of no one with an average I.Q. who believes that the *Adventist Review* speaks with all knowledge or is “inspired”.

It is interesting to me that a denomination that has failed to recognize its fellow human beings in the religious world as anything other than the whores and harlots of Revelation and have publicly called them that, would then profess to be hurt when someone points out to them some of their own failings and faults. For several years I have been hearing that I have repented of writing the book *The White Lie*, yet no one on the planet has ever discussed with me either my “repentance” or my “recanting.” I am proud of what I have

accomplished by my research recorded in the book. While we have heard from a few who claim to have been hurt by reading it (and have even claimed they were hurt when they have not read it), we have heard from thousands who have been blessed because of the material that we found and brought to the attention of the church.

No one can change history no matter how or why they try, and that history is that the then-president of the General Conference, Neal Wilson, at my urging asked eighteen scholars of the church to meet with me and review my material on January 28–29, 1980, at the Glendale Adventist Hospital (where we met in a lead-lined room in the radiology department so no one could unofficially record the meeting from outside the room).

Those scholars were: G. Ralph Thompson, G.C. Chairman; R. W. Olson, White Estate; H. L. Calkins, Conference President; H. E. Douglass, Pacific Press; F. E. J. Harden, G. C. Education; W. G. Johnsson, Andrews University; Harold Lance, Attorney at Law; W. R. Leshner, General Conference; Walter D. Blehm, President, Pacific Union Conference; and D. R. McAdams, College President.

Also included were Jack Provonsha, Loma Linda Minister and Faculty of Religion; W. L. Richards, Bible Department, Pacific Union College; Otilie Stafford, English Professor; M. C. Torkelson, Administration; L. D. Venden, Loma Linda University Church Minister; J. O. Waller, English Department, Andrews University; Marvyn A. Warren, Oakwood College; and J. J. Wiley, Attorney at Law, USC Law School.

At the end of the meeting these eighteen people made the following recommendations: 1. that we recognize that Ellen White, in her writings, used various sources more extensively than we had previously believed; 2. that, as soon as possible, a plan be developed for thoroughly informing our church administrators concerning the nature and extent of Ellen White’s use of sources; 3. that immediate study be given to a plan for educating the church in easily-grasped steps on the subject of inspiration and Ellen White’s use of sources; 4. that an in-depth study on the writing of *The Desire of Ages* be implemented; 5. that a person trained in scholarly methodology be asked to work with Elder Rea; and 6. to express their appreciation to Elder Rea for the enormous amount of work he had done.

I rest my case. It was only when the church backed out of its agreement to inform the church at large of Ellen White’s massive “borrowing” that I wrote and published *The White Lie* in order that all who wished to know the truth could know what the committee had promised they should know. Who lied, they or I?

Now you know. I love you all.

Sincerely, Walter T. Rea

**Walter Rea** began his employment with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1945 when, at the age of 22, he began holding evangelistic meetings with Ernest Perry in Central California. In 1975 the Southern California Conference constituency voted him treasurer. He declined because he refused to continue the covert practice of reimbursing unauthorized, cross-country, personal administrative trips. In 1980 the church terminated his employment after he revealed the scope of Ellen White’s plagiarism which he made public in *The White Lie* in 1982. He resides today in Patterson, California.

## The doctrine of doctrine CONTINUED FROM FRONT

doctrine and correct practice. There seems to be an assumption that doctrinal orthodoxy is really just “a head trip” and is not necessary for defining correct practice. Most people attending Christian churches seem to function as if somehow sincerity will always do instead of truth. This assumption leads to:

### The head vs. heart heresy

It is very common in these days of rich sources of books and of religious freedom to hear talk of a mysterious gap supposed to exist between the “head” and the “heart.” The assumption, of course, is that the mind or intellect is the “head,” while our faith resides in something called the “heart.” It is possible, therefore, to have “head knowledge” without “heart knowledge” and so to miss out on the reality of faith. Likewise, a mysterious gap is also supposed to exist between “theory” and “practice” which we are somehow unable to bridge. People who ask too many questions are admonished to “be practical.” Their problems, somehow, should be solvable by their having the right kind of experience rather than by their getting their questions answered from learning correct Biblical doctrines and believing the Bible’s truth. Rather, current thought suggests people find solutions for their problems through understanding their emotions, improving relationships, obtaining counseling, making a new commitment, or getting to know God better. Human problems, people think, cannot be resolved through doctrine since “mere theory” is not “practical!”

Some even suggest that there really are no “answers” in the end, since the ultimate questions dissolve at last into mysteries. True Christian maturity, some say, is measured by our commitment in the face of final paradox rather than by any kind of knowledge. People who want “answers” are just immature, that’s all!

This article will not refute these absurdities as completely as they deserve. It will, however, respond that specialists in comparative religion widely recognize Christianity, as compared with all forms of modern irrationalism, to be by far the most intellectual religion of all. The New Testament puts a heavy priority on the regeneration of the intellect, and both Testaments make clear that the term “heart” means the seat of the intellect, the mind, the capacity to reason.

We are to solve all our problems, therefore, by first allowing the Bible to change our minds about the truth, then by learning what God’s answer is to our problem, as God defines and explains both problem and answer in His Word. The spiritual breakthrough comes when in humble dependence on God’s mercy we accept His account of the matter and obey what He tells us to do about it. The results of this obedience are predestined to be successful and to meet infallibly the need of the believer sooner or later. The Bible calls this process “making disciples,” and the primary method of disciple-making is by something called “teaching,” a noun synonymous with “doctrine.” Jesus set forth the priority of “teaching” in the Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:19-20.

The word “teach” occurs twenty times in the Gospel of Matthew alone, and the same book calls Jesus the Teacher about ten times. In the entire New Testament, the two nouns for “teaching” and “doctrine” occur over fifty times, while the verb “to teach” occurs over ninety times. The word “teacher” appears at least fifty-eight times. Half a dozen other related words appear on another twenty occasions. A total of over 240 references to teachers teaching doctrines occur in the New Testament alone. We must conclude that Scripture is teaching an extremely important subject which we may call “the Bible’s doctrine about doctrine.”

### The doctrine of doctrine in the New Testament

For convenience, we will concentrate on the Pastoral epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, with only a few illustrations from elsewhere. The two New Testament words for doctrine may be considered synonymous for our purposes and occur in these three epistles seventeen times. The verb appears another six times. A term meaning “able to teach” appears twice, and “teacher” three times. There are therefore at least twenty-eight passages in these letters alone which will show how important Paul thought doctrine to be. They may be

**We must conclude that Scripture is teaching an extremely important subject which we may call “the Bible’s doctrine about doctrine.”**

classified as those passages (a), commanding or exhorting us to teach and be taught, and we shall refer to these as positive passages, and (b), those verses that warn against false teaching and teachers, which we shall call the negative verses. Following the Bible’s pattern of giving us the “bad news” first followed by the “good news” to address the problems, we shall consider the “negative” verses first.

### Negatively

To begin, certain verses contain repeated warnings of the damage done by false doctrine. The very first occurrence of the word “doctrine” in these epistles warns Timothy to resist false doctrine by proper instruction of those involved in teaching it (1 Timothy 1:3). Anything incompatible with the apostolic deposit was to be actively resisted. According to 1:10-11, this deposit covers moral matters in essential harmony with the ethical content of the Old Testament Law, since the Old Testament was the first Bible of the early Church. Everything else is “contrary to sound doctrine.”\* In 4:1, specific teachings are described as “doctrines of demons,” including forbidding Christians to marry, and spiritual vegetarianism. Paul traces much false doctrine to demonic influence in other epistles also (see

Genesis 3, Ephesians 6, 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 10:20; Romans 1:21-32. Cf. also Revelation 9:20-21).

In 2 Timothy 4:3, Paul introduces the final end-time apostasy as being the result of a turning away from sound doctrine to a multiplicity of popular teachers who tell the people what they want to hear and substitute mythology for divine revelation. Myths are exactly what the Bible does not contain, according to Peter (2 Peter 1:16).

In Titus, likewise, Paul warns us of those who wreck whole house-churches with false doctrine, while generating both revenue for themselves and damnation for their hearers (1:11). He says (1:9) that a key responsibility of a Christian leader is to challenge and refute false doctrine from anyone who presents it. Elders are to be active in opposition to these things and ever vigilant against them. There is no mistaking Paul's attitude here; by exhortation (by actively challenging error when presenting the biblical alternative) and by reasoned argument (intended to convince opponents), sound doctrine is to prevail. The dreadful alternative is suggested in verses 10-16, that those deceived will be rendered useless for good works. This connection between good doctrine and good works is not surprising when we recall Jesus' words about good trees bringing forth good fruit (Matthew 7:15-20).

## **Apologetics and evangelism**

At this point we must consider the relationship between reasoned argument and evangelism. Christians today unfortunately tend to accept the artificial distinction between "preaching the Gospel" and "doing apologetics." Evangelism and apologetics are usually treated as separate subjects in Bible College or seminary curricula, and this division has determined our modern practice. Consequently, many people thank God for His gifts of Josh McDowell, Francis Schaeffer, and Cornelius Van Til and assume that less intellectual, non-seminary trained Christians need not worry about apologetics. After all, you can't argue someone into the kingdom...

The New Testament answers this evasion of responsibility with bold instruction and examples.

First, apologetics is an essential part of the Gospel. All the evangelistic speeches in the book of Acts contain apologetic arguments based either on the Old Testament prophecies and Jewish history, or on recent events such as the coming of Christ. Read Peter's speeches in 2:14-40, 3:12-26, and 4:8-12, or read Stephen's in 7:2-53 or Paul's in 17:22-31. These demonstrate only some of the apologetic material in New Testament preaching. The mere idea that someone called "Jesus of Nazareth" is in fact the long-promised Messiah who has come at last is the basis of the difference between Judaism and Christianity. Jesus' Messianic identity can be established only by understanding whether or not He fulfilled specific Old Testament prophecies and shadows.

Second, 1 Peter 3:15 and Jude 3 command the task of defending the faith, and almost every New Testament document we have illustrates this task. Most of Paul's epistles contain arguments against various errors of his own day. Apologetics is therefore not an option but an integral part of the apostolic mandate to evangelize the

nations. Its constant neglect in the local church is simply disobedience to Christ as the Logos of God. Many Bible-believing churches preach and pray for revival but habitually present only half the Gospel or less, and they offer no reasoned arguments for its truth.

Third, Acts records the methods of the apostles as they carried the gospel to the world. Consider the verbs used in 17:2 (reasoned with them), 17:17 (disputed...daily), 18:4 (reasoned and persuaded), 18:11 (teaching), 18:13 (persuaded), 18:19 (reasoned), 18:28 (convincing), 19:9 (disputing daily), 19:26 (persuaded), 19:33 (defended himself)—and these are from a mere three chapters.

Paul links apologetics consistently with evangelism in both his writings and his practice. In Philippians 1:7 he describes his own work as being "the defense and confirmation" of the gospel. Clearly in the apostles' minds, apologetics is for unbelievers a defense of the truth, and for believers a confirmation of the apostolic message already accepted as true.

We must conclude from even so brief a survey that the apostles argued with unbelief as well as preached to it. They expected their arguments to convince at least some hearers, and they saw both proclaiming and defending the gospel as two sides of the one coin of evangelism. There is no disjunction here between the head and the heart; gospel truth is to be addressed to the mind.

## **Positively**

The Apostle Paul identifies himself as "a teacher of the gentiles in faith and truth" (1 Timothy 2:7) and indicates that at that time he was not allowing women to teach or to arrogate teaching positions to themselves over the existing leaders. Apparently despite such a male-dominated society as we know the ancient world to have been, Christian women were bypassing the orderly procedures of church administration by rejecting the all-but-universal male leadership. He warns that these women must learn the same way the men did, Let the women learn, he says, "in quietness and full submission" (2:12, NIV) and not usurp authority over the men in teaching positions. The warning example of Eve transgressing because of false doctrine deceiving her is to be noted. A woman cannot teach anyone unless she is capable of teaching (3:2), and she cannot teach without first learning. Therefore, "let the woman learn" is a mandate roughly equivalent to "educate your women for doctrinal leadership also," and is in harmony with Jesus' radical answer to the Jewish refusal to teach their women the Law, when he accepted Mary as a student disciple "at his feet" (the traditional privilege of a male student), warning Martha that her sister had chosen "the better part" which would never be taken away from her (Luke 10:38-42). Paul agreed with Jesus' attitude, apparently.

In chapter 4, verses 6, 11, 13, and 16 are an interesting group. In order to be a good minister, Timothy is to be "constantly nourished" (NASB) on good doctrine in harmony with the apostolic deposit. The alternative again is "fables" or myths. Verse 10 rebukes idolatry, since we serve the "living God," the ultimate preserver of all people, and especially the Savior of believers. This truth, he says, we must teach. In verse 13, the (public) reading of the Scriptures was vital for the life of churches in which so many were illiterate. Exhortation, then, involves presenting the challenge of the truth and "the doctrine."

Only by taking heed to the doctrine (v. 16) can both the teacher and the learners (i.e. disciples) be kept safe.

Elders may spend most of their time “teaching the word” (5:17) and are therefore to be paid “double honor.” The epistle closes with three verses (6:1, 2 and 3) in which it seems that “our doctrine” can be blasphemed as well as “the name of God,” as a result of unworthy lives. These things, he says, we must “teach and exhort.” Paul sees teaching and challenging the faithful as two sides of the one coin of properly communicated truth for a growing church. In verse 3, Paul equates his own teaching with the words “of our Lord Jesus Christ” as “the doctrine conforming to godliness.” Those who “advocate a different doctrine” are motivated by pride and other sins which, he warned, will eventually “plunge [them] into ruin and destruction” (verses 4-9).

Second Timothy is, if anything, even stronger. Again, Paul opens the subject (1:11) by identifying himself as an apostle sent to announce the Gospel “according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus.” In 2:2 the word *anthropoi* behind the word “men” means “people,” human beings in general, and cannot be restricted to males. It links up with the mandate to educate women in 1 Timothy 2:11 and is a collective mandate to educate Christian leadership in doctrine, thus preparing them to teach. In 2:24 God’s servants are warned not to be “macho” (yes, that’s the Greek word!) but to be gentle, patient, “apt to teach.” The word for this is *didaktikos* and means “having a didactic or doctrinal emphasis.”

In verse 3:10 Paul notes that the consistency of his doctrine and his life is part of his exemplary Christian leadership. This consistency is what it means to “live godly in Christ Jesus,” and he adds that we can expect it to bring on persecution. The inconsistent and hypocritical believer is no challenge to heathenism! A godly consistency in which life is controlled by truth is a terrible affront to the false autonomism of unbelievers, and they cannot leave it alone. A “form of godliness” is fine, but “the power thereof” is an irritant to unbelief (3:3-7).

The classical spot for the doctrine of doctrine is 2 Timothy 3:16. “All Scripture is God-breathed,” says Paul, and as a result is profitable for *doctrine*. This term is then expanded by the rest of the verse into reproof (telling us when we are wrong), correction (telling us the right alternative), and instruction in righteousness (or ongoing discipleship training, *paideia* or education). The purpose is then described as being “in order that the *anthropos of God may be properly equipped, totally and completely equipped or furnished with a view to every good work*” (my paraphrase).

There could be no more comprehensive statement of the perfect sufficiency of Scripture than this influential verse in 3:16. When it comes to the place of doctrine in the life of the believer, it’s *sola Scriptura* all the way! The alternative is the disaster outlined in 4:3, in which relativistic mythology replaces sound doctrine, as in modern liberal theology and New Age mysticism.

Paul sums up Timothy’s task in 4:2, as “Proclaim the Word, be on the spot every chance you get, since all seasons are in season. Reprove sin, admonish the sinner, challenge to godliness. The

method is by patient and persistent doctrinal teaching, and nothing less will do” (my paraphrase).

In the letter to Titus, Paul expands on the need for doctrinal leaders. In 1:5-7, he notes that he has ordained elders in every city to be overseers (*episkopoi*). They are to hold fast to the faithful word of doctrine (v. 9) in order to challenge and convince contradictors through sound doctrine. In 2:1 “sound doctrine” is the foundation of life for elders.

## **The inconsistent and hypocritical believer is no challenge to heathenism! A godly consistency in which life is controlled by truth is a terrible affront to the false autonomism of unbelievers, and they cannot leave it alone.**

Paul began in 1:5-7 to explain the basic qualifications for generic leadership. The leaders are then related by their overseer status to the younger women and men to whom they minister. It is particularly mentioned that teaching is part of an older woman’s ministry (2:3-4). In 2:6-7, the younger men are warned to be uncorrupt in their doctrine. In 2:9, slaves are to decorate the Christian doctrine by their godly lives, in view of the blessed hope of Christ’s coming, towards which we are all moving (12-13). In verse 14, God is said to be the ultimate teacher of his children, educating them (*paideuo*) toward a consistent holiness.

And all this is in the Pastoral Epistles alone!

### **The necessity of sound doctrine and the teaching of the prophet, priest, and king**

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is the agent of God’s regenerating of the human soul, effecting this change through the Word of God (John 1:12-13, 3:5-8, Titus 3:5, James 1:17-18, 1 Peter 1:21-25, etc.). The process of renewing the soul into the image of Christ continues all through the believer’s life until its consummation in the very presence of Jesus Himself (see John 15:3, 17:17, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 2:9-16, 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, 4:4, etc. concluding with 1 John 3:2).

When Adam and Eve fell, they lost the ability (but not the responsibility!) to act as God’s vice-regents over creation. God created them in his image to function as His prophets, priests and kings. As prophet, Adam was to hear God’s word of interpretation, part of which He revealed by speaking to Adam directly, and, assuming God’s interpretations to be true, Adam was to extend that interpretation to all of creation as he encountered it. Today, the believer’s epistemology, or interpretation, presupposes God’s exhaustive knowledge and responds in faith to it. The realm of the prophet is truth, knowledge, exhortation, and proclamation. His exhortation and proclamation are based on God’s special revelation of truth and knowledge found in Scripture, not on his own reasoning. When

Adam and Eve made themselves instead of God their ultimate reference-point and began interpreting their experience through their own understanding, beginning with the serpent's promises of autonomous knowledge akin to God's, they automatically failed as God's vice-regents in the realm of interpretation; they failed as prophets.

Likewise, our first parents failed as priests. They should have represented God to each other, and each other to God. When Adam saw that his wife was encountering false doctrine, he should have acted as her prophet and challenged the heresy involved in the false worldview Satan was offering. Likewise, Eve should have prophetically challenged Satan's word as being inconsistent with God's prior interpretation. Neither of them challenged the heresy they heard.

**...the qualities of holiness (our being, or ontology), righteousness (our actions, or ethics), and truth (our interpretation, or epistemology) are being renewed in us daily through the redemptive activity of the Word, thus restoring us as kings, priests, and prophets in these three realms. Only through regeneration can we recover these attributes.**

Nor did either Adam or Eve go to God to intercede as priest in the realm of ethics, thereby obediently responding to God in righteousness. They both rejected responsibility for the other. We might note incidentally that the presupposition of autonomy (or free will) which Satan offered did not lead to a sense of responsibility, but rather undermined it.

Similarly, they fell in the realm of *ontology*, or being, not presupposing the Creator-creature distinction that underlies holiness of one's being. In making themselves, rather than their Creator, the reference point for meaning, they lost both the ability and the authority to act rightly as vice-regents or kings under God over the creation, for they were now servants of another (Romans 1:25 and 6:16).

Just as humanity lost the offices of prophet, priest, and king through Adam and Eve's sin, however, Christ recovered them for believers. The image of God lost in Adam is available to us through redemptive regeneration (Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10, 2 Corinthians 3:8 and 4:4, Romans 8:29 and 12:1-2) in Christ who is Himself the Image of God (2 Corinthians 4:4, Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:3). These verses show how the qualities of holiness (our being, or ontology), righteousness (our actions, or ethics), and truth (our interpretation, or epistemology) are being renewed in us daily through the redemptive activity of the Word, thus restoring us as

kings, priests, and prophets in these three realms. Only through regeneration can we recover these attributes.

### **Theory and practice, doctrine and life**

We have seen how sound doctrine helps to fit us for the tasks of prophethood, priesthood, and kingship. These offices are the models for our obedience towards God by which we create and influence culture. God's redemptive reign is manifested on earth to the extent that believers develop a redemptive culture or civilization. The Christian Church is the pilot plant for the coming Kingdom. The Church is to the world redemptively what the Garden of Eden was supposed to be to the rest of the Earth before the Fall. Just as Adam and Eve were to be obedient in fulfilling their mandates as prophets, priests, and kings in governing the whole earth to subdue and rule it, so the believer is to bring all of life and culture under the lordship of Christ. All culture, whether economics, politics, arts, or the sciences, and every thought must be made captive to the Lord Jesus (2 Corinthians 10:5). Jesus is Lord of all of life.

It seems, then, that in the Christian vision of reality, all theory has an effect in practice, and all practice, whether true or false, is the practice of true or false theory. It is impossible, therefore, to function as a believer at all without sound doctrine.

There is no escaping the tremendous weight with which Paul freights this doctrine of doctrine. It is a major theme in these last letters he wrote, and we should give them the same consideration we do to the "last words" of Jesus in the Great

Commission in Matthew 28:19-20. These aspects of the Pastorals should be compared with the advice Paul gave the elders when leaving Ephesus for perhaps the last time, in Acts 20:17-38. He warned the Ephesian leaders that they were to expect false teachers to rise up "from among your own selves," "not sparing the flock." The parallel with the same warning of Jesus in Matthew 7:15 is unmistakable.

In view of the radical revolution proceeding apace among Evangelicals in the matter of the Incommunicable Attributes of God at the hands of the Free Will theists, and of the lessons of history in the matter of Socinianism, it is quite appropriate for us to insist on the *absolute necessity of sound doctrine*. With the Apostle Paul, we must "not shrink from declaring... the whole purpose of God," (Acts 20:26-27). Only then will we be "innocent of the blood of all men." Attention to this remarkable Pauline language was never more needed than it is at this hour. !

\*Editor's footnote: This "essential harmony" of the New Testament with the Old Testament does not mean that the Old Testament laws are still authoritative for new covenant Christians. (see Romans 10:4, Galatians 3:23-25; 1 Timothy 1:6-7; Titus 3:9.) What it means is that the New Testament Christians had only the Old Testament Scriptures available to them, and the New Testament writers were revealing how sound doctrine and living by the Spirit equip believers to experience the righteousness of Christ which the Old Testament law foreshadowed (see Colossians 2:16-17). While the New Testament describes the fulfillment of the Old Testament law, the Testaments are in "essential harmony" in their revelation of God's eternal morality and grace.



# In Christ alone, by grace alone

DESMOND FORD

**M**ay I speak as though I would never speak again, as a dying man to dying fellow travelers? The one certainty is death—some do avoid taxes. But Scripture adds another inevitability for all: “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment” Hebrews 9:27. How shall we fare in that great day? Rare is that man or woman who asks himself the crucial question: “Where will I be in 100 years’ time, and how will it be with me?”

The answer to these most pressing questions is not to be found in our intelligence, or virtue, or in governments or in science. The answers are to be found only in the gospel.

What is the gospel? It is not advice (not “Here’s how to raise yourself to heaven by pulling on your bootstraps”). It is not good views (that you can be saved if you understand all these doctrines and attend the right church).

It is Good News. News is about something that has happened; it is about someone else. The good news of the gospel is that God the Son took our nature to pay the debt we owe to righteousness, to remove the barrier between earth and heaven.

The good news is that all that is necessary for salvation has already been accomplished, and it only remains for us to accept it. This is the meaning of the words from Calvary: “It is finished.” Christ was treated as we deserve that we might be treated as He deserves. Thus John 3:16.

## Only Two Religions

There are and always have been only two religions in the world. The most popular religion is where humans endeavor to make themselves good enough for God to accept. It preaches: “Be holy and God will love you.”

But the true religion of the gospel proclaims: “This man (the God-man) receives sinners” (Luke 15:2); God “justifies the ungodly” (Romans 4:5); for Christ goes to be guest with those who acknowledge themselves as sinners (Luke 19:7).

**Desmond Ford** was born in Australia but spent several decades in the USA. He taught theology at Pacific Union College and subsequently founded Good News Unlimited (GNU), a non-denominational Christian organization whose purpose is to spread the Gospel through means of international seminars and printed materials. In 1980 at Glacier View, Colorado, Desmond Ford defended his scholarship to Adventist administrators, showing the investigative judgment is not biblical. The church responded by reaffirming the investigative judgment and removing Ford’s pastoral credentials. In August, 2000, Dr. Ford returned to Australia and continues traveling and speaking.

- False religion majors in law and minors in love.
- True religion majors in love and minors in law.
- The first majors in what God requires of us.
- The second majors in what God has done for us.
- One religion puts all its stress on Christ our example.
- The other puts its stress on Christ our substitute and representative.
- One is a religion that leads to bondage, despair and death.
- The other is a religion that leads to joy, salvation and life everlasting.

Scripture says that we were all ruined without asking for it and that we inherited a sinful nature. But the gospel teaches that we have all been saved without asking for it in the atoning work of Jesus our Lord. (See 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Romans 5:10; Romans 5:18-19)

## Crucified with Christ

The good news is that our sins were crucified with Christ and nailed to His cross. Therefore, the law has no more power to condemn us than to condemn Christ.

If we do not see our complete death in Him, sin will reign in us. No sin can be crucified either in heart or behavior unless it has been first pardoned in conscience through the precious blood of Christ. When the guilt of sin is not removed, the power of sin cannot be subdued. Sin ceases to reign in us only after we have received the forgiveness of sin (Romans 6:14). Because of the cross, “whosoever will” may come and be counted righteous for “all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men” (Matthew 12:31). “...whoever comes to me I will never drive away” (John 6:37).

We are saved by grace alone received through faith (trust) alone because of the work of Christ alone as revealed in the only infallible teacher of truth—the Word of God alone.

The moment we believe, Christ’s own perfect righteousness is imputed to us and remains ours for all our days provided we continue to look to Him, despite a hundred or a thousand failures.

At all stages of our experience we are saved by faith alone, though the faith that saves is never alone. We are not saved by faith plus works but by a faith that works. For the whole truth compare Galatians 5:6; Galatians 6:15, and 1 Corinthians 7:19. Even on Judgment Day we will be saved by faith alone though our works will testify to the reality of that faith despite their infinite imperfections. The gospel is the sweetest melody from human lips, “the good, glad and merry tidings that make a man’s heart to sing and his feet to dance.”

### Spirit: breath or identity

I recently received the September/October issue of *Proclamation!* and shared it with my sister-in-law. She would like to be added to your mailing list.

I was recently listening to a series that Charles Stanley presented on "living a Spirit-Filled Life"; then I read your article on "Breath or core identity." It really brought it all together for me, and now I feel that I understand the work of the Holy Spirit in a way that I never did before.

I do have some questions about your article. As I read the article, I looked up the verses and could not locate two of the verses you cited. The first verse is 2 Corinthians 2:1 on page 14. It does not say anything about what contaminates the body and spirit. The second verse was on page

15—2 Corinthians 4:20. There is no verse 20 for 2 Corinthians 4.

I apologize for sounding nitpicky, but after seeing how verses were sliced, diced, manipulated, and taken out of context at a Revelation Seminar this past summer, I question and read everything for myself.

**Editor's response:** Thank you for pointing out the two typos. The real verses are 2 Corinthians 7:1 (instead of 2:1 on p. 14), and 2 Corinthians 5:20 (instead of 4:20).

### Spirit of man article outstanding

I wish to thank you for sending me *Proclamation!* It is an excellent magazine, and I read it carefully from cover to cover and look forward to every issue.

I thought the article on the spirit of man being more than mere "breath" was outstanding... I commend you for this. Many of the transitional Adventists and ex-Adventists have difficulty with this whole area because of the brainwashing that if you don't believe in soul sleep, you are in danger of being deceived by spiritualism. That is unfortunate and is a fear tactic that keeps people away from the beauty of what the spirit of man is all about.

Keep up the good work, and keep *Proclamation!* coming to my mailbox.  
Tom Durst

### Former Jehovah's Witness

I just felt the desire to write you and let you know how much I get out of the journal

### I felt I was the only one

Words cannot begin to express how I feel as I read the testimonials on the former Adventist website. My mother became an Adventist after she was married and raised my sister and myself in the church without the support my father. There were many times that she told me that the church (the church, not the Lord) had to come before her relationship with my father, and their relationship was not close because of that.

My upbringing was very strict, and all I remember were all the rules, not the love of the Lord. I struggled then and often continue to struggle with feeling different as a result of my childhood. My mother put me in the Adventist school when I was in grade 5. The church taught that if children were not in their schools, they did not stay in the church. My father was most angry about that decision, but of course, the church came before family relationships.

At school our Bible classes involved Ellen G. White's writings and the doctrines of the church (I can still recite the third angel's message!). I lived in incredible fear that I would not get to heaven because of my sin.

When I was 10, I was encouraged to be baptized and join the church. I had some classes, and when the issue of Ellen G. White came up, I said that I did not believe in her. The minister was most concerned and worked me over at great length to change my mind, but interestingly I ended up getting baptized even though I did express concerns. I guess they thought that as I matured, I would understand better.

I went to the Adventist school for five years but always had questions about the doctrines I was being taught. I failed grade 9, and my father insisted that I attend a public school.

The next year I met a Bible-believing friend who welcomed me into her home. I had devotions with her family, and they treated me better than my own family did. One day when I was in grade 11, I asked to have a Bible study with her so that I could show her the importance of keeping the Sabbath.

I prepared all my verses and came totally convinced that I would make a Sabbath-keeper out of her. Praise God it didn't happen, but instead she talked to me about the grace of the Lord and His gift of salvation.

I went home and got my Bible out, and for the first time I studied the Bible exclusively. I was amazed at what I read in Galatians and Romans about grace. The more I studied, the more I realized that the church that I was being raised in was wrong.

The most amazing part of this story is that I found myself in the kitchen one day telling my mother that I was not going to attend the Adventist church anymore. I do not remember walking into the kitchen or deciding that I would tell her. As I listened to the words coming out of my mouth, I remember thinking, "Now what am I going to do?"

Anyway she cried and said that she had been a bad mother, and that's why I was doing this. It wasn't pleasant, but I could not turn back. That day I took the bus downtown, and a church that was a few blocks from me had just put up their sign: "Portage Avenue Baptist Church." I thought that was as good a place as any to start (my friend was German so I couldn't attend her church).

The following Sunday I went, and, interestingly enough, spent more time checking out how many women were wearing jewelry and make-up than listening to the sermon. At the end the pastor greeted me at the door and asked why I had come. I told him that I was an Adventist who was wanting to learn what other churches believed. He told me that I could come and ask him questions any time. Over the next nine months I continued to study the Scriptures on my own and attend the church. On December 21, 1969, I went forward during an altar call at a Sunday School Christmas program and committed my life to Christ. I was baptized six months later.

Since that time I have always felt that I was the only person that had experienced leaving the Adventist church and becoming a born-again believer. I had the church elders visit me, and after I shared my testimony tell me that I must come back to the "truth." My mother sat and cried through the entire visit. I tried to witness to my friends in the Adventist church, but they were not interested. Most of them left the church and wanted no part of spiritual things.

I am interesting in receiving *Proclamation!* I know that it has not been easy for you or any of the others who have left to speak out, but the Lord has used you and this ministry greatly, and I personally have been so blessed by it.

*Proclamation!* I am not a former Adventist. I was raised Jewish and at the age of 19 became a Jehovah's Witness until I was 39 years old. Leaving that organization (in 1996) is so similar to leaving the Adventist church. I particularly enjoyed the letter in the latest issue from Anita Davidson who didn't think you would publish her letter. You're right: I'm sure a lot of Adventists feel the way she does, and I pray that the Holy Spirit convicts her of the Biblical response to all of her statements and questions. I would love to be a part of a similar project regarding Jehovah's Witnesses!

God bless you and all the staff for your diligence and hard work for the Lord!

#### Thank you

I want to thank you for your ministry and the books you've written which I've also read. My husband and I had our names removed from "the church" in the early 90s. At that time it wasn't over anything doctrinal; we had seen a lot of corruption in the local church and several of the conferences. I see that things have gotten worse if anything since then. How can one build "truth" on a false foundation?

#### Sends appreciation

I write this letter to further send my appreciation toward your ministry. I love you in Christ. God has worked powerfully through the past issues of *Proclamation!* that you sent a while back. Thank you, Jesus, for LAM!

#### I read it twice

Thank you for the *Proclamation!* of July-August. I read it twice. I am sending you a small donation to make an effort to cover at least a part of the costs.

#### Slippery slope

In vol. 5 issue 3 of *Proclamation!* you revealed good insight and honesty and courage as you answered a pastor's letter. You stated that a specific verse concerning the sanctuary in the book of Daniel, if "proven" to you, would [cause you to] immediately return to your former denomination.

I have observed from that lack of "proof" in one text you, through your magazine, support a rejection of many unrelated apparently believed biblical truths. Obviously it was a slippery slope.

A few observations. Proof exists only in the language of science and math. Outside of math,

likelihood, probability, correlation, weight of evidence is all that's available. Your demand of proof goes beyond what is available in this or in any other area of your life. Again when walking a path in the woods, I might have no overpowering weight of evidence at a divergence which is the right one, but as I progress down the correct one, other paths enter seamlessly, enlarging, clarifying and confirming the way. Pure personal human logic at the junction might be more fallible than trustworthy to help put us on the correct track.

I would like to visit with you in the kingdom of heaven, but for now I observe more emotion and subtle breaks in logic in your magazine than I feel comfortable with.

#### Please add our names

Bless you for your important ministry. I would love to receive *Proclamation!* I am a concerned Baptist who would love to see the Adventists renounce their anti-biblical tenets and really be part of the Church.

#### Response to article against abortion

In your abortion article, you're shouting where the Bible is silent. And like Pharisees, you're taking a pristine, politically safe position on the murder commandment that was never intended and "teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."

Your whole case hangs on the myth that the reason the New Testament is silent on abortion is that the Apostolic Jewish Christians weren't likely to have abortions, so nothing needed to be said. Jews are now and always have been solidly in the pro-choice camp. They consider the fetus to be only potential life. As you acknowledged, abortion was common in the Roman world. Even with preaching against it, the church today has abortions at the same rate as the rest of society. So without a prohibition against it, we can be doubly sure that the apostolic church was also having abortions at the same rate as the rest of society.

In your obsession with how human the fetus looks, you've forgotten that it is the SOUL, not the body, that is created in the image of God and endowed with certain inalienable rights. Science has shown that the fetus doesn't have sufficient brainwaves before seven months to support a soul. So it's impossible that a newly fertilized egg, the size of a printed period, could have a soul, since it not only has no brainwaves, but it has no brain!

If God created the soul before the body was mature enough to support it, then we should all have vivid prenatal memories of heaven, just as people with near-death experiences have.

**Editor's note:** You are assuming that a soul requires a brain in order to exist. The Bible does not explain exactly how the soul, or spirit, functions. Further, the soul is outside the scope of science to examine. There is no proof that a soul cannot exist in a fetus from the moment of conception. We cannot dismiss the possibility simply because we have no scientific evidence.

#### Mace's article gave hope

I was especially encouraged to read Jan Mace's article regarding her children in the September/October issue. During the time I distanced myself from Adventism, as many former Adventists do, I initially did absolutely nothing and was disenchanted with many Christians. Then, though I no longer believed Ellen White was a prophet, I was still afraid to worship on Sunday. During this time I went through a divorce which furthered my guilt. It took several years of studying online and reading *Proclamation!* and other books to take the step to start attending a Sunday church. I have since remarried a wonderful believing man. What freedom and peace I have finally found regarding my faith!

However, these years were the formative years of my son, and I have much guilt as he now is a teen with only a generalized belief in God, but no real understanding or relationship with Jesus Christ. As many restless teenage boys are, he is living for himself and the world. I cover him in prayer every day, but I have much guilt over not "training" him and giving him a firm foundation during that time and sometimes feel hopeless that he will turn to God's call. I pray that now that my husband and I have a living faith it will be a witness to him and that he will eventually turn to God. Jan Mace's article gave me hope this will happen, and I was glad to read the passage she held dear, Joel 2:25, which will help me as well during this time.

Many thanks for your great publication which continues to minister and strengthen me.

LETTERS MAY BE EDITED FOR CLARITY OR SPACE

#### Mail letters and donations to:

**Life Assurance Ministries**  
PO Box 905  
Redlands, CA 92373

## Dumping the bath water

CORA HOLDER

**B**e careful not to dump the baby out with the bath water."That is probably the most over-used catch phrase that questioning Adventists hear. I used it myself when my children learned the truth about Ellen White and began to question the Adventist doctrines. Most of us understand what the phrase means; that even though there are problems, you need to avoid discarding the truth that the denomination has, the good things about it that you can't find in any other church. I still hear this phrase and am actually starting to get annoyed when someone says it to me. It implies that my decision to leave the Seventh-day Adventist Church was a rash and impulsive one. In actuality the decision was a very long, carefully studied out, difficult process. I'd like to share my thoughts with you about dumping the water.

When I first started dumping the water, I was so careful. The water that filled the tub had been there since 1844, and it was really murky. There was green algae floating on top. There were some pretty water lilies; they were carefully tended and helped distract from the putrid water. Everyone was so proud of the lilies. There were all sorts of varieties: *Lillium* Educational Institutions, *L. Medical* Institutions, *L. Community Services*, and *L. Seven-day Stop Smoking Program*, just to name a few. I was proud of the lilies, too.

As I poured, I was carefully watching for the baby. I strained the water, and the strainer got clogged. I threw out the E. G. White algae and continued carefully pouring. The next clog was really sloppy;

there were altars and candlesticks, curtains, and priestly garments. On closer investigation my judgment was that this also needed to be thrown out. There was definitely not a baby in all that mess. The water was getting really shallow, and I still couldn't see a baby. The more I learned about grace, the larger the chunks in the water became, especially the one with the number "four." That one seemed to hold on the tightest. I was sure that the baby had to be in there, somewhere under those stone tablets that were becoming visible at the bottom of the tub.

I started thinking that maybe I didn't know what a baby looked like. It was time to consult the manual. In the whole of the Old and New Testaments none of these things that I was finding were the baby; they were only meant to describe Him, to lead to Him, were shadows of Him. What a shock!

The baby wasn't in the bath water at all! The baby never was! The baby, Jesus, came to this world to fulfill and finish the Old Covenant and set in place the New. Because the ones who filled the tub refused to accept that New Covenant, it was impossible for the baby to be placed in the tub.

There was no longer any reason to keep the tub filled. The rest of the doctrinal clogs easily poured out: the fear of death and of never coming close to perfection were gone. Dietary restrictions became only a matter of preference, not a qualification for acceptance. So many things came spilling out.

When the tub was upended, the most awesome symbol of all was under it. There, hidden from the view of anyone who was focused on the dirty water, was an empty cross!

**Cora Holder** is a graduate of Loma Linda University School of Nursing. She currently works as an RN for Kaiser Permanente in Colton, California. She and her husband Wally were both fourth-generation Adventists. Today they are approaching their sixth year of living in Christ's freedom. They have two adult children, and they worship at Calvary Chapel Redlands.



### Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.

PO Box 905  
Redlands, CA 92373

*Address Service Requested*

NON-PROFIT  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PHOENIX, AZ  
PERMIT No. 1735