

A SPECIAL STORY OF MY 2ND GREAT SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The year was 2017. Two years prior, we had moved into our 5th-wheel trailer, sold our home and our land to get out of debt as quickly as possible. Or Father blessed our efforts to cooperate with Him. Now we were purchasing a small primitive home on 8 acres in the forest in the spring of 2017 with no debt. We were praising God for doing all this for us in two years after I thought it would take at least 10 years! Friends, we need to trust our Father with all we have and all we are. Then He will direct our paths in ways we that we would choose for ourselves if we could see the end from the beginning, as He can.

We hadn't even closed on our property when I received a phone call from a member of the nearest SDA church. She was very friendly but had a strange message. She said that there was a controversy in that small church over the identity of God -- PROMPTING #1 - ignored. This is the first I had EVER heard of this! I decided right there and then that we weren't even going to set foot in that church. Why? I had no time for that nonsense. I'm about to start homesteading and there's way too much work to be done for me to get side-tracked into some theological debate -- been there... done that... not doing it again! End of story! So I thought...

We were buying our homestead from non-SDA Sabbath keepers who knew quite a few SDAs. We got to know them quite well because, after we closed on the purchase of our property, they continued to live in the house, renting from us for the next month. One day, they wanted to take us for a short drive to visit with a nearby SDA family. As they were driving us over there, They asked me a question that no one had ever asked me before => "Do you believe in the Trinity?" I honestly never thought of that before, so I didn't know what to say. After I thought about it for about one second. I said, "Well, there's the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That's three, so, yeah, I guess I do." They replied, "Well, this family doesn't believe in the Trinity." It was an awkward meeting because I didn't know what to think of all this. They were nice people, but I wasn't about to ask them about this weirdness because I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS CRAZINESS! -- PROMPTING #2 - ignored.

Now, please don't take me wrong. I knew who my God was! Or... did I...? I had been in a Christ-centered recovery(sanctification) process for 23 years! I wrote weekly 12-Step devotionals for the SDA University that I worked at and facilitated a recovery Sabbath School for the University Church, as well as for another SDA church. On Monday nights, I did yet another Christ-centered recovery group at the State Penitentiary for some of the inmates. At times I also mentored other men on how to live a life of victory over those sins which most-easily beset us. You'd think I would be clear on who God is, right? Wrong. I grew up SDA attended SDA schools from 1st grade all the way to college. But, even while deeply devoted to the God of my understanding since the beginning of my own recovery in 1994, my understanding of who God is was always "fuzzy". I knew what I'd been taught, but when I studied my Bible, with that knowledge it didn't really click for me. In spite of that I loved God, as best as I knew how and every time I fully gave myself to my God, He always delivered me from those temptations that were hardest for me. I still praise Him for this!

But, whenever I heard conversations about the Trinity, I felt that it was "over my head" so it just "went in one ear and right out the other", with no comprehension on my part. In retrospect, I see now that I was never a Trinitarian. Rather, I think I was a tritheist -- believing in 3 Gods. Since the Trinity was not an official SDA doctrine until 1980, and because I'm old, I think I was taught tritheism, but I'm old to remember that very well :-).

Back now to 2017. A few months later, I received a phone call from an old acquaintance of 40 years prior. I was a little embarrassed about because of memories about him living in an apartment directly above mine, but that's another story... I'm thinking, "Why is this guy calling me and how did he even get my phone number!" I wasn't even sure I wanted to talk to him! But, as it turned out, it was a very interesting conversation, as he was quite the intellectual. Oh, that reminds me... I should have mentioned that I'm not that. I only have an AS degree -- not even sure they call that a degree. So, even though I worked an SDA university for many years, I obviously was NOT a professor of anything. However, while there, I had many stimulating conversations with intellectuals, which I came to enjoy. So, I talked with this guy on the phone for around 3 hours, while I should have been working on our new homestead. Fortunately my wife wasn't there at the time to keep me in line :-). So, you may be wondering, what did this guy talk about so long? Well, for the first two hours, he talked about astronomy and the Bible -- his specialty. I think he said he has read over 3,000 books on astronomy. Anyway, it was interestingly stimulating and very enjoyable. Then, he shifted to the Bible and the SDA church. Yes, he is SDA. Once again, it was regarding the identity of God -- PROMPTING #3 -- I started to wonder... After this conversation, I had a little talk with Google about it, using some phrases from my new phone buddy, which resulted in me reading a lengthy article on the subject. I realized at that time that if what I have been hearing/reading is true, then we have a problem. But, I wasn't sure if it was true. Besides that, I thought to myself, "BUT I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS! I MUST KEEP WORKING TO MAKE OUR HOMESTEAD MORE LIVEABLE!!" So, I studied it no more.

One to Two months later -- late 2017: About the time we purchased our homestead in the Spring, we started making new friends at our chosen(not the nearest!) SDA church. So, now we brought one of our favorite couples home for Sabbath dinner. He and I were becoming good friends. We both had a deep interest in spiritual matters, as well as any and all aspects of homesteading. I felt like I could learn from him on both topics. He also had previously mentioned some things about the identity of God, but I hadn't taken much notice... then today, he told me about an article in Ministry Magazine(a periodical for SDA ministers) that he thought I should read. He told me that, in the Oct. 1993 issue, the author began his article with this statement: "Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination's Fundamental Beliefs. More specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the Trinity...." -- PROMPTING #4 -- NO WAY!!!!!!!!!!!! YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS!!!!!!!!!!!! Now, I'm thinking, "I must know what's up with this. I cannot ignore it any longer! I MUST FIND THE TRUTH!" After four(or more) promptings over a period of about 6 months, the God of my understanding finally got my undivided attention.

This began an 18-month deep study into the inspired writings(of Ellen and the Bible), SDA history, as well as early Christian church history up to 538 AD. By late 2018, I began posting my findings on Facebook. It is now my deep conviction that the God of my understanding, which is no longer fuzzy at all, enabled me to retire 10 years earlier than I thought, brought us out of debt in 2 years, brought us to this wonderful place in the forest to live, and taught us about who He really is, in preparation for the soon-coming, time of trouble -- the worst this planet has ever seen. Words cannot express my gratitude to my Father and His divine, "beloved", "only-begotten Son", Jesus Christ! Like Ellen, we "have one God and one Saviour; and one Spirit—the Spirit of Christ" (EGW, 9T 189.3, 1909). That's my God! Everything I have and everything I am, I give to Him... My greatest desire is "Christ in [me], the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27). "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."(2 Peter 1:4). "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)